

RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

PART V

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

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

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

CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
43.	In Hitler's Clutches	3
44.	Dr. Goebbels and Rhodesia	8
45.	The Passing of the Rev. M.K. Cohen	17
46.	Rhodesian Jews in World War II.	19
47.	On the Battle Fronts.	24
48.	Attack and Defence	26
49	Some Jewish Gifts	32
50	Sir Roy Welensky's Story	34
51	Federation and After	38

CHAPTER 43.

IN HITLER'S CLUTCHES.

Although each step by the Nazis, in their Satanic programme for the annihilation of the Jews in Germany, provided yet another shock for the outside world, their very frequency and scale of the attacks began to blunt the feelings of many people who had been outraged by the earlier news. By the cunning application of psychology to their own purposes, the major collaborators of Hitler realized that consistent ruthlessness was likely to induce a mixture of disbelief and boredom in those not directly concerned. For the moment, the process of rendering life intolerable to the Jews in Germany sounded unspectacular to the outsider - a series of malicious pinpricks rather than preparations for a holocaust. Orders to boycott businesses, expulsions from Universities, dismissals from employment, confiscations of property, prohibitions on the use of telephones, of public transport, and of benches in parks: all seemed disgraceful manifestations of stupidity and hate, but unless people had lived through such things, they found it hard to get the events into focus. Every now and then the papers published nightmare narratives about Dachau, Buchenwald or some other concentration camp, but they were not yet synonyms in every country for torture and death, while Auschwitz and other centers for the future Gas Chambers were still secrets buried in the distorted minds of the Nazi Mandarins. Indeed by 1937 the German refugee, although he had already become a type, seemed part of the international scenery, much as was the Armenian victim of the Turk in Victorian days or the exile from Czarist Russia - very sad and regrettable, but something about which nothing particular could be done. Such at any rate was the outlook of the ordinary non-Jewish Man in the Street and the further removed he was from the scene of the outrages the more widely this viewpoint was maintained. Even among Jewry in Rhodesia, although there were hundreds to whom words of Heinrich Heine applied: "Denk ich and Deutschland in der Nacht, so bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht" (If I think of Germany at night, I cannot sleep well again), the slumbers of far too many remained undisturbed.

All this, however, underwent a radical change between 1937 and 1938. By this time Hitler's frank declaration of intentions towards the Chosen People were no longer clothed in phrases, and the stream of men, women and children who found existence in the Reich unbearable swelled from thousands to tens-of-thousands. In

addition the tension over German territorial ambitions on the Rhine and even more in Czechoslovakia plainly showed the Fuhrer's complete indifference to Allied fears and threats.

So much has happened in the ensuing years that episodes of world-wide importance in the nineteen thirties can hardly be recalled today. One of these was the shooting in 1938, by a young Jew named Greenspan in Paris, of a comparatively unimportant and inoffensive attaché named Von Rath at the local German Embassy. Pointless and unorganized though it was, the incident gave an eagerly-awaited flavour of justification to the steps the Nazis were waiting to apply against the luckless Jews under their control... As the barrage of speeches, proclamations and administrative edicts descended over them, the outflow of refugees attained dimensions of which no one had ever dreamt - not even the Jews themselves. Families established in the Reich longer than many of the Germans themselves, families, who until then, had regarded Nazism as another outrage which they would be able to outlive, suddenly realized that this was something different, and, what was even more serious, that time was running out. Millionaires and professional men, industrialists and social workers, children and authors, grandparents, who in the evening of their days, had never dreamt of moving away, were now on trek. In the centers of Overseas Jewry, the despairing cry went out for millions to pay for steamship fares, accommodation, re-establishment in other lands. Extraordinary projects, most of them wildly impracticable, were examined and, in certain cases, even attempted. No country was now regarded as too remote or too unsuitable a target for Jewish emigration from Central Europe. Nor was the calamity limited to Germany: Austria and Czechoslovakia were both to be engulfed. Among the obvious answers was to open the gates of Palestine but on this subject Britain, still in the position of a Mandatory Power, found her interests in placating the Arabs so important that she would permit the entry of only a minute fraction of those who applied.

Something of the feeling of those days even in Christian circles is brought out in a short but significant letter, dated October 24, 1938, and addressed by the Reverend W.J. Smith as Secretary of the Bulawayo Ministers' Fraternal, to the Reverend M.I. Cohen: "At a meeting held here recently, we had before the question of the Jews and the position in which they find themselves in so many parts of the world,. I was requested to write and assure you of our interest and prayer, as well as of our sorrow for the treatment you are receiving. We trust that some settlement will soon be arrived at in Palestine to the satisfaction of all parties. With every best wish for yourself and People...."

A few individual statesmen like General J.C. Smuts in South Africa, gave expression to their own sympathy, though they too were hamstrung through the need to placate lesser men. One emergency measure, however, had an indirect bearing on Rhodesia. This was a discovery at the Colonial Office, Downing Street that a small amount of immigration might be permitted to the High Commission Territories. Financed largely through the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg, several hundred refugees of the most diverse occupations were allowed into Swaziland and given temporary employment in the production of simple garments at a factory in the

capital, Mbane. On the other side of the country, in Bechuanaland, the late Max Sonnenberg, M.P., whose share in the early history of Rhodesia has already been touched on in these pages, attempted a settlement scheme on his ranch not far from Vryburg, until the tragic-comic unsuitability of the colonists, most of them business and professional men, put an early end to the effort.

This need for a complete re-orientation of careers remained a dominant feature of all schemes to help Hitler's victims.

Letters preserved from those days make pitiful reading, through their inherent dignity and the inability of writers to foresee their future. A typical one, dated from Hamburg on October 18, 1938, was addressed to H. B. Ellenbogen, at Bulawayo: "I herewith respectfully beg to apply to you for a position with your esteemed firm. I was Sales Manager with one of the leading German Asphalt Emulsion firms for more than 12 years and was dismissed, owing to my "non-Aryan" origin, a year ago. From the testimonial enclosed herewith you may see all particulars as to my character and abilities....I am willing to accept any position offered to me, be it even of minor importance. I was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1894, enjoyed a very good education, and served in the war as an Austrian Officer. In August 1918, I was wounded and taken prisoner by English troops in Italy.... Having left my firm last year, I passed through a course in Modern Photography.

"You will certainly know from the papers how matters stand in this country, and therefore understand that I would be happy beyond description to get out of these depressing conditions here and to be given a chance of a new start in life. I would be infinitely grateful to you if you could see a way to help me, or, if this should not be possible, if you would pass this letter on to friends who might be able to do something. I should particularly like to mention that I have a very good knowledge of the English language and it would therefore take me only a short time to get acquainted and accustomed to living and working in your country. As a matter of course, the passage to your country would be at my expense.... Hoping to hear from you soon,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Erwin Kraus".

Already there is a hint of the concentration camp in this letter from Isaak Kahn of Hamburg to Bulawayo. He writes on his brother's behalf as "unfortunately he is not to do so himself".

"By this letter", he explained, "you can see that my brother searches not so much for employment, but for a letter which promises him a post for six months, and whose signature is certified by a notary. With such a letter in hand, my brother can get the visa to enter Southern Rhodesia. From your letter I gather that perhaps you yourself

are unable furnish the letter asked, but, encouraged by the friendly tone, I venture to ask you whether it is perhaps possible for you to get such a document from one of your colleagues or from some other businessman.... I hope, dear Sir, that you will understand me, and that, if it is at all possible, you will do your best forthwith and without delay, for which I thank you urgently and from all my heart. You cannot imagine what a great favour and help the letter would be for my brother, and naturally for me too. Though I have not the slightest right to trouble you with this matter, I would hope that you will fulfill my request out of goodwill towards other human beings who are in despair".

The Reverend M.I. Cohen received a note from Cape Town, where a brother of one overseas victim had already been living for two years: "I had the luck to get permanent permit for my parents, who arrived two weeks ago from Germany. My sister and brother-in-law are still in Berlin, suffering and persecuted like thousands of other Jews. I do not need to say more, since you know all about it. Twice my sister and brother applied fruitlessly to Pretoria and each time they were rejected, as they were also in America and Australia. As my brother-in-law, a welder and electrician by profession, has about £300 at his disposal, I herewith ask you, dear Mr. Cohen to help them come to Rhodesia...."

Another letter to Cohen began: "I want to inform you that my father in Essen (Germany) has been arrested for the same reason as all the others. He is over 60 years of age and has done nothing wrong. Like all his ancestors, he was born on the Rhine at Emmerich, fought for four years in the Great War in France and was twice wounded. The only chance to get him quickly out of the Concentration Camp is for him and my mother who is 51 years of age, to secure a visa for Rhodesia. Hence I beg you very sincerely to do your utmost to persuade the authorities to wire the British Consul at Essen, at my expense, that a visa for Rhodesia is available for my parents..... I know I am not the only one, and yet...."

Young and old were involved in the catastrophe. A widow who had emigrated from Germany with her child in 1935 wrote: "This morning I received a telegram from Germany saying that my brother aged 66, had been put into a Concentration Camp and that I must do my utmost to obtain a permit for him and his family to leave, in order to save his life..... Under the present immigration laws, a permit for my brother will be unobtainable in the Union, so Mr. Friedlander, an attorney of Cape Town, has applied to the Immigration Officer at Bulawayo this morning and I have deposited 300 for him"....

Endlessly the stream of letters continued: "My little cousin, Erich Bieberfeld, of Berlin, who is 17years of age, is making great efforts to leave Germany as soon as possible..... Erich has been at High School in Berlin and since April last year has been apprenticed to a dressmaker... As his father is forbidden to practice at the Bar and has suffered considerable losses in both money and property. Since the recent critical developments in Germany, the case has become very urgent...."

Newly-landed at Cape Town, a woman had a temporary permit to spend a "holiday" there but was obliged to leave again within a matter of days. "I have a testimonial from the University of Berlin as a masseuse and a physical culture teacher. For many years I taught at the Macabbi Club in Berlin. Beside this I am a good typist and can work as a child's nurse...." After mentioning that her fiancé was also hoping to arrive soon the girl added: "I read in the newspaper that the government of Southern Rhodesia gives entry permission to farming families. We are all young, strong, practical and accustomed to work with our hands. You would help us all and you would shelter us from having to go from one country to another and from being homeless.... We would be very grateful to have the chance to go farming....."

There was also the case of an electrical engineer who reached Table Bay, but was forced to leave his wife and two grown-up children in Berlin as hostages. He had been given two months to look around Southern Africa before he plunged back into the unknown. With fifteen years experience as a successful dental surgeon in Hamburg and now banned from work. Another victim of Hitler wrote: "My greatest wish is to leave this country with my wife and my three children, aged 11, eight and six years, as rapidly as possible,,,,, I am president of the Mizrachi Organization in Hamburg and much concerned with Jewish matters"

CHAPTER 44.

DR. GOEBBELS AND RHODESIA.

As though all this distress were not sufficient, Rhodesian Jewry, in its attempt to give some kind of help to the sufferers across the sea, were confronted by systematic local revival of the Anti-Semitism. With a powerful and aggressive Germany, possessed of vast resources, willing to finance any anti-Jewish movement in and Continent, there was no difficulty in stirring up such latent antipathies. Within South Africa itself was born the Grey Shirt Movement, headed by Louis T. Weichardt, which even aped the uniforms of the Nazis, distributed poisonous literature and did its best to create trouble in all directions.

Although no specific organization reared its head north of the Limpopo some effulgence in the public press showed which way the wind was blowing. Thus, when in 1938 proposals were made to admit refugees, one of the journals which took upon itself to oppose the plan was the "New Rhodesia", issued in Salisbury and enjoying a certain circulation. In December of that year an article appeared under the heading, "Keep out the Foreigner",

This drew from the Reverend M.I. Cohen a withering reply, "My attention", he wrote, "has been drawn to your leader under the above heading. When Rhodes planned Rhodesia; did he ask his supporters for their birth certificates, or the Pioneers either? The Government of this country has always most carefully regulated the portion of British and foreign immigrants, and is still doing so. Sir Percy Finn has stated that there is no ground for anxiety on this score. As you have so wildly challenged his figures, perhaps you will be good enough to quote your authority. It is because your so-called "Spirit of Co-operation and Mutual Trust itself" is so painfully one-sided, so narrowly national in its scope that the World is on the verge of common ruin. Yet i doubt not that you will give another leader shortly, under the caption "Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards all Men".

The "Bulawayo Chronicle" followed with a leader "The Infiltration Danger", which declared,

Mr. Cohen replied; "The Minister of the Interior states that the ratio of foreign to British immigration is not unduly high, and that very careful control is exercised in the admission of immigrants to this country. You challenge his figures, and deny the reality of this control. Readers are entitled to ask you to quote your authorities. By asserting the Foreign Immigration is causing Anti-Semitism, you give the impression that Foreign Immigrants and Jews are synonymous. This is very far from being the case. An informed analysis of the Jewish content of the immigration was, and is called for. Then you attack the character of the immigrants, without offering a shred of proof of your assertions. You speak of people, "whose nationality dominates their religious beliefs", who are "imbued with ideas and ideals which are absolutely antithetical to our own". I know these Refugees and deny the correctness of your picture in toto. As these damaging statements are made by you on a necessarily inarticulate and helpless minority, you will no doubt give your readers proof of your contentions....."

Cohen then went on to deny all foundation for the rumour circulating that the Britishers were being displaced in jobs by Refugees who undercut wage rates. Once again he demanded the source of such a story. "I deny", he said, "that the refugees have caused unemployment. On the contrary I assert they are a contributing factor to the present prosperity of the country, and that they are a fine type of people, who should become an asset. A real analysis of the facts would probably show that, while the admission of trading types under present conditions has about reached its limits, there is room and need for farmers, skilled artisans, domestic servants and specially qualified individuals of all kinds, and that it would also be advisable to admit dependent of those able to maintain them You admit that the government policy of "selection, not exclusion, is a sound one". Why not seek a basis of agreed action in application rather than indiscriminately attacking the Refugees now entering this country, for whom indeed you have often expressed sympathy?"

Emphasizing that it was surely possible to do something to help the Refugees and yet serve Rhodesia at the same time, Mr. Cohen pointed out that, for a whole generation, an almost fixed ratio between British and foreign immigrants had been successfully maintained and that there was no need to expect any alteration.

He admitted that the leading article was not entirely negative, for it had agreed with the Imperial Colonial Secretary in approving the Umguza Scheme and giving support to well organized and controlled projects.

"I have before me", he said, "a letter from a responsible citizen of Northern Rhodesia, who tells of the fine territory in that country, 450 square miles in area, without a single inhabitant, Black or White. Would you agree that restricted infiltration there might well be supplemented by well-organized and controlled schemes of immigration? You will forgive me, sir, if I venture to express the opinion that your leader hardly gave expression to the sentiments of the majority of the kind and hospitable people of Rhodesia, to whom at this season, in the name of the Jewish community, and of the Refugees are given asylum and hope after unspeakable experiences, I offer most cordial and heartfelt greetings of Peace and Goodwill"

Very hesitantly the possibilities of an organized settlement project were investigated but as the months went on, it became clear that the best to be hoped for in Southern Rhodesia was the admission of individuals to work for their relations. The outlooks seemed slightly better, however, beyond the Zambezi, where the lack of White populations was coupled with the growing prosperity of the Copper Belt. Commissions of Enquiry were appointed in Lusaka and vigorous debates took place in the Legislative Council. As usual the Opposition was loud, and the sympathizers procrastinating. At this point a most ambitious project was submitted by Capt. R.N. Campbell in a special memorandum to the authorities.

"Hand over", he proposed, "the North-Western corner of Northern Rhodesia as a separate protectorate under the Crown, the Jewish organizations to finance it and the territory to be entirely colonized by Refugees". Campbell even suggested that it might be called the Rhobeit, in memory of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit, and function as an entirely separate state.

Rhobeit, he claimed, would form "an anti-Nazi block in Central Africa". Pointing out that in consequence of Arab raids in the previous century, a considerable area was very thinly populated, he proposed that the territory should "extend from the Barotseland border on the South, the Portuguese West Africa on the West, the Belgian Congo on the North and a line 25 miles west of Kansanshi Mine from the Congo border, to join the southern boundary 25 miles East of Kasempa, giving it an area approximately double that of Palestine.

"There is ample water for irrigation purposes", he continued. "Soil in the northern part is like sandy loam, the elevation is high and the climate healthy and suitable for European settlement. The Northern part is free from Fly, though not the Southern. As settlement advances the fly recedes and eventually disappears. Hence the Northern parts would have to be colonized first and settlements proceed southwards. A Railway would have to be constructed to connect the Protectorate with Lobito Bay route and thus give an outlet to the sea and shipping facilities to the European boundaries. Administration of the native populations would proceed on lines similar to that at present, with trust lands or reserves allotted to them. The Protectorate would be under the Colonial Office, but the whole responsibility for the scheme would rest upon the Jews themselves.

"The inhabitants would not be able to enter the adjoining territories, of Northern Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo or Angola unless they complied with their respective immigration laws! By this means any upsetting of the labour market would be avoided".

Though we may smile sadly at the optimism which prompted such a Utopian scheme, further encouragement arrived from another surprising quarter. The legendary "Chirupula" Stephenson, a pioneer who had been living in these parts since the end of the nineteenth century, wrote to Mr. Cohen on December 4, 1938:

"Dear Reverend Sir, I enclose a copy of a letter which has been sent to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, and which after perusal, I suggest you transmit to the Chief Rabbi, London, asking him to plead with His Majesty the King (who God preserve) to instruct that the land in question shall be made into a Jewish colony, so that some of those persecuted folk, wishing to get away from the Nazi group and Arab fanatics, may have an opportunity of doing so, and maintain themselves by honest manual labour, free from threats or fears.

"I believe you have recently been castigating our senior parliamentary member, Sir Leopold Moore, who, I am ashamed to say, repudiates the settlement in this vast country of 500 Jewish families. Sir Leopold's attitude is astounding". After paying some compliments to Lady Moore and expressing violent criticism of Sir Leopold, Stephenson continued: "None of the members of our Legislative Council have ever made a living by farming, and their recent summons to a conference on Jewish Immigration is another example of Government Jesuitry. They fear that, somehow or other, competition will arise for Native labour, with inevitable repercussions in the shape of increased costs. But under the scheme, which I have already submitted to the Right Honorable Malcolm MacDonald (and to the Chief Secretary at Lusaka), the sine qua non for all agricultural immigrants is that by their own hands they must cultivate the soil. I have seen pictures of Jewish girls hoeing and Jewish men performing manual labour. Everywhere in Europe it is done by Europeans and, from my 42 years experience in Africa, I am convinced the same can be done here - indeed it must be done if real success is to be achieved.

"I am not a Jew, but my earliest friends in Rhodesia have been Jews, which may account for my friendliness towards Jewry, And I try to practice Leviticus 19: 18.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J.E. Stephenson".

The letter to the Chief Secretary dealt with a variety of Chirupula's grievances, notably on official incompetence. "Perhaps the most regrettable instance is that Your Excellency did not keep part of the Trume area. Without harming non-Jews, a Jewish colony could be started there, and unique information acquired for transmission to the Right Honorable Malcolm MacDonald, who already is informed of some of the possibilities of the scheme. Weeks - months - have passed away, and except for calling

Elected Members (not one of whom is an agriculturist, making his living from the soil) to vote on imperfectly-explained matters, the Government of Northern Rhodesia, of which your Excellency is the head, has done nothing tangible in the matter of rescuing persecuted innocents from brutal Nazi torture....."

With considerable tact the Reverend Cohen wrote back: "In regard to your kind offer to take in some immigrants and give them an opportunity of learning farming on your estate, I should be glad to know whether you could accept a youth of 17 from Palestine. He is, I understand, a hand and well-developed young man, who has been in the Government service as a Special Constable for some time. Owing to the unsettled state of affairs, it seems almost impossible at the present moment to get the young fellow apprenticed to any trade of calling. He has sisters in the Union of South Africa, who are prepared to pay for his keep for some months and are anxious that he should learn thoroughly either farming or a trade. Can you be of any assistance in the matter?"

Goaded, both by the Jewish community in Britain and in Rhodesia, and with the backing of a few non-Jewish well-wishers, the Northern Rhodesian government appointed a new Commission of Enquiry early in 1939 on whom Chirupula Stephenson maintained his attack. "A few days ago", he complained, on April 14, 1939, "I wrote to the Secretary of this body in Lusaka. I diverted half a case of fruit from a customer and sent it to the Provincial Commissioner at Broken Hill so that the Commissioners could see something of what Northern Rhodesia produces. As soon as I return home I hope to send a fuller selection of fruits, unaccompanied by any letter, which I ask the Commissioners to accept with my compliments and friendly wishes for success in their endeavours. Should it be desired to introduce the agriculturists, who, with their own hands, will till the soil, build towns, and make the wilderness (not the desert) blossom as the rose..... I know of an excellent portion of this countryside to which I could direct attention... and would be willing to give fullest details of what in my opinion should be attempted". He suggested that the Commissioners should spend a few days at Kapiri Mposhi.

That however was not the way in which the British Colonial Office went to work, and such help as could be given to Jewish refugees north of the Zambezi passed through more orthodox channels. "Please accept my humblest apologies for troubling you", wrote a refugee at Port Elizabeth, "but I am in great anxiety on behalf of my brother who is still in Germany. I am informed that a limited number of Jews will be allowed to settle in Northern Rhodesia. My reason for writing to you is to appeal to you, with all my heart to give every possible assistance or advice.....My brother's profession is that of a sign-writer, but he is also a motor mechanic and a very good driver....."

A few openings were found, as shown in a surviving telegram on December 1, 1938: "Lusaka has vacancy for Refugee colony and sausage maker. Must also have blockman's experience. If you can recommend one try direct"

Hopes, however, were almost immediately dashed by a note from the Chief Immigration Officer: "Until such time as the Government announces a policy on the question of Alien Immigration I am unable to authorize the granting of further visas to any refugees".

A preliminary confidential survey pointed out two distant problems, a minor one concerning Jews already in Northern Rhodesia and a major one about those that might yet seek a home there. Experience in the settlement of Palestine indicated that the policy should be to place as many as possible on the land or wherever their practical trade experiences would be in the most demand.

The influence of the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer and the Rothschild Group might help to find employment for a certain number on the Copper Belt, yet even there the housing and technical positions were difficult and few could be absorbed. "All small schemes are to be deprecated. The idea suggested at Fort Jameson, that the 30 settlers should be put on farms and placed all over the district is radically wrong. New settlers must first be made to feel at home; they must come together and be able to build their own life and work out their own salvation. They must work in groups, according to a comprehensive plan written out by our Jewish organization which will be one large scheme on an autonomous basis from the start. The territory selected must be large and ultimately susceptible of big development. The proposed Rhobeit Scheme of Captain Campbell would be worthy of the most serious consideration, but if this were agreed to the Angola government could be asked to add simultaneously a further area adjoining the Lobito Bay Railway....."

Details followed about the best way of applying in Northern Rhodesia the principles of the Palestine "Kibbutz". After farming had been established there would be openings for other occupations including teachers and tradesmen. Black labour should be kept at a minimum. "From many Jewish points of view a successful Jewish settlement in Africa would be of enormous importance and value".

With these words the memorandum closed. Once again the response from the authorities' was discouraging. Few entry visas that were issued to newcomers represented a drop in the bucket compared with the staggering dimensions of the overseas emergency. The most effective help came from Lusaka where G.Glasser was Honorary Secretary of the "Refugee Assistance Committee of Northern Rhodesia". A comparatively cheerful picture was published by Louis Franklen of the Nkana Hotel, Kitwe on March 20, 1939. "Last week a meeting of the community was called, with Morry Gersch as convener. The Lusaka Community had asked the Copperbelt Community to elect delegates to discuss the immigration of Jewish refugees into Northern Rhodesia. We had a big turnout, with representatives from Luanshya, Mufulira and Nchanga. Delegates were elected and I was chosen secretary. I immediately contacted Lusaka, and we shall call a meeting of the Northern Rhodesian delegates in the near future to discuss the urgent problems of housing and employment, I was very pleased about one thing. In a list of prospective immigrants which the government sent was the name of a Minister of Religion....."

Less optimistic was the note from Mr. Gersch himself on April 17. "The immigration here", he said, "is becoming quite serious and I am afraid there may be repercussions. Up to now we have been able to absorb Refugees in our own community but saturation point has now been reached. Lately I have been getting about two persons by each mail. They all came up to the Copperbelt and it is becoming quite a problem. No accommodation is obtainable and the Mines will not employ Aliens. We have formed a local Refugee Committee, of which I am the Chairman, but I am finding this beyond our capacity". He asked for advice and possible financial help from the correct bodies in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, from Sie Ernest Oppenheimer in Johannesburg and from the powers in London. The mines discrimination was against newcomers, not as Jews but as Aliens, and until instructions were received from higher quarters this state of affairs would continue. He urged representations, The Survey Commission was still taking evidence, "We are not going to submit anything as a Jewish community, but, since our local Chamber of Commerce has taken up the matter we have put to them any schemes we have in view, be embodied in their memorandum.

"The Commission itself has been most helpful, sympathetic and constructive and anxious to do as much as possible, as this matter had today become one for the whole country, I think it better that it should be handled on a national basis. There is room for a large a group settlement of severe thousand, provided there is the finance, but it will only succeed if they can to some extent create their own economy. To scatter such a settlement over the whole country would not, bring any material help, for only limited numbers could be absorbed in such a way."

On April 25, 1935, the Refugee Assistance Community advised the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg that they were about to lease a farm of some 18,000 acres at a nominal rent of 50 per year. Dwelling houses, outhouses, stables, paddocks and above all a plentiful water supply were available and no less than 200 acres under irrigation. "The farm borders on railway line and is nine miles by road from Lusaka. It is well suited for mixed farming and it is proposed to settle permanently there two selected families, one well versed in agriculture and the other in dairying and allied branches. While these families work the ground in their own interests, they will at the same time provide shelter with accommodations and cheap board for newcomers arriving destitute and awaiting employment. These unemployed people must be kept out of the public eye, as a great deal of repercussion has resulted, detrimental to the further settlement of Refugees.

Mr. Glasser, the Honorary Secretary, concluded with warning that about 20 men, women, and children were stranded and destitute in towns of Northern Rhodesia and that more were underway, some of them even without visas. One drop of comfort was a notification that a limited number of foreign dentists would be admitted to the territory.

Ever on the watch for anything further to harass Jewry, the Nazi consulates at Bulawayo and Salisbury became active centers for the distribution of Anti-

Semitic literature furnished by the department of Dr. Goebbels. Not a little of this found its way into the local press and it was significant that a letter from Lusaka signed "Goy" on January 11, 1939, published in the "Bulawayo Chronicle"; "It is remarkable how people seem to know to what extent the Jews themselves are openly proclaiming themselves a menace throughout civilization. It is highly important that this should be known. It is not only important; it is only fair to both ourselves and to such non-aggressive Jews as there may be". A long series of distorted quotations followed from various allegedly Jewish sources, with the comment: "If there is no effective repudiation, can the Jews wonder that the rest of the world assumes that there is something against which they must defend themselves....."

Checking a "quotation made by "Goy" from the Johannesburg " Zionist Record", showed it to be the complete opposite of what had been printed and gave the Jewish community so effective a chance of an answer, that the Bulawayo Chronicle on January 23, made a handsome apology: "It is not always", said a leading article, "possible to verify every statement made in a communication to a newspaper. Because this is so statements sometimes appear to be well founded, which are not. There was an example of this in a letter published in our columns on Saturday. A correspondent in Northern Rhodesia wrote to show that Jews are a self-admitted menace to civilization as we know and appreciate it. Incidentally this is the second letter on the same subject that has emanated from Northern Rhodesia in the course of a couple of weeks. To prove his point he gave a quotation from a recent issue of the "Zionist Record", to signify that in this Jewish journal there had been an admission that the Jews were attempting to penetrate into England and win for themselves a key position in the mastery, not only of Europe, but of the entire World. A study of the article quoted in the "Zionist Record" showed that the letter-writer had given to a passage (differently paragraphed) the exact opposite construction to that of the original article. The impression which the original article gives was that the Fascist and Anti-Semitic forces had conquered practically the whole of Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and that, should England be won by those forces (not Jewish forces, as the writer of the column suggested) the way would be open to world domination....."

Almost immediately after came an even more striking example of Nazi methods. On the night of January 18, 1939, in the words of a newspaper report, " the establishments of certain businessmen, reputable citizens in Bulawayo, were found marked in large scale chalk drawings with a Nazi brand of the Swastika and in one place, with a filthy obscene expression written underneath. Of the establishments so branded, four were in Abercorn Street and two in Selborne Avenue".

Even the non-Jewish community had a sense of shock at this introduction to a peaceful community of methods hitherto reported from distant lands, a feeling to which J.A. Bailey gave expression in a letter to the press on January 20. "Although one realizes that depravity is a fundamental of human nature, I could not have believed that any human being to which Rhodesia was giving shelter would so outrage the hospitality of the town and its people. It is known by this time; of course that there is no barbarism to which Nazism will not speak in appreciation of the jungle law. I still had

no thought that it was here at our very door, skulking in the darkness of the night. However, here it is, and it remains to ask: what are we going to do about it?"

"Every citizen in this town is personally concerned. British ideals, British justice, British standards of toleration, British freedom and personal liberty - each alike has been up to contempt and derision before 60,000 Europeans, before well nigh 1,500,000 Natives and before our neighbours and the outside world. Where does Rhodesia Stand?"

For the whole World meanwhile the sands were running out. In the wake of Germany's occupation of Austria came that of Czechoslovakia. April 1939 brought the fateful pledge by Britain and France to help Poland should that country be attacked. Hitler was undeterred. Frenzied efforts and the sacrifice of all they possessed, made possible the departure of a relatively small number of additional Jews from the clutches of the Reich, of whom very few more made their way across the Limpopo and the Zambezi. Since 1937 an Association of Refugees had existed in Bulawayo and its membership had risen to about 250 including 100 men. As the shadows grew darker a wire was dispatched on their behalf to the Governor, Sir Herbert Stanley, "All Jewish immigrants from Germany living in Bulawayo offer their services to the Rhodesian Government in case of emergency".

The reply from the Private Secretary read: "I am desired by His Excellency to thank you for your telegram of August 27 and to say that he has communicated the offer to His Ministers....." In addition the British Empire Service League Club in the city opened a list of volunteers on which, even before hostilities began, a considerable number of German refugees put their names. A few days later the matter came before the Rhodesian Parliament, when Captain A. W. Whittington, Labour Member for Wankie, enquired from the Minister of Defense about the employment of Aliens in Government concerns. "In case of War", he said, "it might be possible that these would be retained while Britishers would have to leave. Does the Government have any power to deal with such a situation"? Mr. Tredgold replied, "the powers will enable the Government to discriminate if necessary, but I do not say that it will be necessary. This very day we have received a message from representatives of the Refugees in the country, putting the services of all of the unreservedly at our disposal", an announcement greeted with applause. Much mollified, Capt. Whittington said: "I am not thinking of Refugees in particular but also of Aliens who have been many years in this country".

CHAPTER 45

THE PASSING OF THE REV. M.I. COHEN

The man to whom, more than other, Rhodesia Jewry owed its progress and its status was now to join the Majority. On June 16, 1939, at the comparatively early age of 63, the Reverend Moses Isaac Cohen passed away. Not only his own people but a multitude of other citizens felt a sense of personal loss. Every newspaper in Southern Africa and many beyond its borders carried tributes of what he had done for his own flock and the mass of humanity. "His public life and family", wrote the "Bulawayo Chronicle", were interconnected. He disliked formal representation on committees and was ever anxious to be intimately acquainted with every aspect of the public work which he undertook....The doors of his home were open to every stranger, to the needy and to the destitute. In that haven of hospitality he moved about, ever cheerful, ever genial, ever soothing. His bright and happy disposition never displayed any signs of the bodily ailments from which he suffered. His piety was mingled with broad tolerance and understanding of the different and indifferent. In his younger days he was an active sportsman and old hands spoke of him as the "Sporting Parson". During the last few anxious days of his life, when his heart was wrung by the Refugee problem and the great troubles in Zion, he yet found time to enquire about the latest cricket score".

In the Synagogue, when addressing young people, he never failed to urge on them an active part in games. He was particularly proud of any Jewish boys who distinguished themselves in this field. Reference was also made to his versatility, and to his whimsical description of himself, on account of the infinite number of charities for which he worked, as "the King of Schnorrers". Attention was also drawn to his unfailing sense of humour in the gravest situations. "{Nevertheless", said the Chronicle, "his stately bearing could be described by his very name, which in Hebrew denotes the Priest.... Whether he was ascending the pulpit to deliver his passionate and brilliant sermons, or presiding at the dinner-table in his home, one was always reminded of the sentence in the Liturgy: "Such indeed was the sight of the High Priest when he entered the Sanctuary".

Every Jewish business in Bulawayo and in many other places closed on the occasion of Cohen's funeral. The Honourable H. Unwin Moffat, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, had come in especially from Tangani as a tribute to his old friend, while Mr. A.G. May represented the Members of the 1893 Column and other pioneer organizations. Endless were the numbers of outside bodies represented. As Chaplain of the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers, as a founder of the Child Welfare Society and of the Native Welfare Society, as the originator of the Clinic in the Bulawayo Location, Vice-President for many years of the Library Committee, as organizer of the Eisteddfod, member of the Bulawayo Unemployment Executive, worker for the Bulawayo Museum, the Boy Scouts, The Girl Guides, the Wolf Cubs, the Hospitals, the Prisons and the Mental Homes, his name was honoured and remembered. The Rev. A.T. Schrock of the United Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg had come to speak at the graveside. "We in South Africa", he said, "knew that in Moses Isaac Cohen the Jews in Southern Africa had a man of whom they might be proud. One thing that gave him satisfaction was the knowledge that the 40 years that he spent in this country had not been in vain. He lived to see the fruits of his work, and built up a community. We know him as a great Rhodesian and as a man whom the King had delighted to honour". The Rev. M. Konviser from Salisbury declared that Cohen, having never known the dividing line between duty and devotion, carried the hallmark of true sincerity. Great in his simplicity, nothing was too humble or too lowly to command his heart and hand to do good, to relieve distress or to help suffering. On behalf of the Bulawayo Ministers' Fraternal, the Rev. Percy Ibotson described Cohen's work as truly wonderful: "He gave himself and he has left his mark on the social life of this town". From the Governor of the Country, Sir Herbert Stanley downwards came the messages and it is more than a figure of speech to claim that today more than a quarter of a century later, the name of Moses Isaac Cohen is still remembered.

CHAPTER 46.

RHODESIAN JEWS IN WORLD WAR II.

With memories from 1914 to 1918 vivid in the minds of its older members, Rhodesian Jewry, like the rest of their countrymen, entered into the Second World War in a moment of sober realism. Gone were the glamorous dreams that ushered in the struggle with the Kaiser. No-one had any doubts as to the ruthlessness of Hitlerism, nor of its surpassing efficiency. Among the general increase in the populations of the country the Jewish group had trebled itself to about 3,000, bringing a corresponding rise in the number of enlistments.

Before final Allied victory was achieved just under 40 per cent (39.8 to be exact) of all male Rhodesian Jews in the age group between 18 and 35 years and 10.9 per cent of all Jewish women had seen Active Service. As early as October 31, 1939, Mr. J.W. Keller asked the Minister of Justice and Defense for a statement on - the number of Aliens who had volunteered for active service in Rhodesia, the number of Aliens who had enlisted for service, and the proportion to the rest of the population and their nationality.

In reply, Mr. Tredgold said: "The numbers who have volunteered for Active Service during the Recruiting campaign between the ages of 18 and 45 is 151. The number of male Aliens who volunteered for Active Service in the period of the Voluntary Registrations is 455",

According to the most accurate figures, the total number of Jews who served in the Rhodesian Forces represented 4.8 per cent of the entire enlistments. These included 290 in the Army, 2 in the Royal Navy, 78 in the Air Force, 65 in the Internment Camp Corps. (mostly Refugees of Foreign nationality) and 20 women in special units.

Of these 26 gave their lives, while 22 were decorated for bravery, including one Distinguished Flying Cross, one Distinguished Flying Medal, four Military Crosses, and two Military Medals - a portion well comparable to that of the rest of the

inhabitants. Almost every branch of the Services not only in Africa, but in Britain itself, received its quota of Rhodesian Jews, including the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy, and the Army.

The highest rank attained was that of Lieutenant Colonel G. Barron. There were also 14 Jewish Majors, 24 Captains, and corresponding numbers of Lieutenants, N.C. O.'s and Privates.

In the Air Force the senior officer was Wing-Commander H. Barron, besides five Flight Lieutenants and six Flying Officers.

The thousands of R.A.F. men arrived in Rhodesia for training under the Commonwealth Scheme, included many young Jews from the old Country, an opportunity was afforded the local Jewish Community to show hospitality and friendship to those in a strange land.

At the outset a strange sense of anti-climax beset those who for years had been screwing up their courage to withstand the horrors of the German onslaught, of which the leaders had spoken so often.

Where were the air raids, the gas attacks and the other horrors deemed inevitable on that September 3, 1939, when war was declared against Hitler? True the Nazi armies had swept through luckless Poland in the early weeks, overwhelming that country and dividing it up with the Russians, Leaving countless Jewish families in the agonized knowledge that their dear ones were now within the power of their most implacable foe. But then the period of the "Phony War" had started - with only occasional sinking of ships, dropping of pamphlets on enemy territory from skies and cursory patrol action along the borders of France. Where would the break-through occur, and when would Italy, still nominally neutral, show her hand? By April 1940 came the answer, as the steel fist of Hitler struck home - smashing Denmark and Norway, and following the blow with a sea of tanks that burst the Western defenses of the Reich into Holland, Belgium and finally France. Unsuccessful relief expeditions, capitulations of entire armies, the encirclement of British forces, the loss of stupendous quantities of material, and then -Dunkirk. Britain, save for her Commonwealth, stood alone against a Germany, now joined by Mussolini.

As the words of Winston Churchill heartened Rhodesia as it did every other land that loved Freedom, the Jewish community there faced problems unknown in the First World War In the gloom of the catastrophic news from France the British Empire Service League held its conference at Bulawayo on May 13, 1940. Some bitter remarks were made. M.H.Gibson, representative from Umtali, said: "We have come to understand that Foreigners coming into the country lately are not liable for Military Service. You realize it is going to be detrimental to Servicemen and the men in the Forces when they return. Some Foreigners can be classed as Refugees, but there are others who are nothing but dangerous Aliens. They have come to the Country, opened up

businesses, competed with our workers and are taking an increasing part in certain classes of industry. To add insult to injury we find that, when it comes to Conscription, they are not liable. I have made enquiries and, having been told that the government can in no circumstances conscript these men, feel that the B. E.S.L. should use its full power to convince them that something must be done about the foreign question and foreign labour in the country".

Here Captain A.G. Hendrie, as president of the National Council of the B.E.S.L., interposed: "When a National Defence Company was formed, a great number of the Refugees came forward and offered their services, which I understood were refused".

Captain A. Utterton of Shabani declared that even if international laws prevented compulsory service by Refugees, there was nothing to stop any of them being accepted for military service on a voluntary basis except the Rhodesian Defence Act itself.

As an ex-serviceman himself from World War 1, the Vice-President of the B.E.S.L., Mr. C.I. Jacobs put the case from the Jewish point of view. "The Aliens", he said "are for the most part Refugees. The majority of them - 99 per cent - are genuine. I find it difficult to understand what Mr. Gibson meant. Is the idea that they should not be allowed to do anything in civil life, but that they should be put into the Army? Mr. Jacobs went on to describe how, immediately hostilities began, almost every Jew in Rhodesia had offered his services to the authorities in any capacity. "For a reason that I myself do not follow," he said, "this had not been accepted. I can assure you that a great number of them would be only too happy to be in the Army to have something on which to live. If they can be absorbed into National Service as they are willing to be, that would be a good thing too, if they cannot be absorbed there is no reason to throw stones at them".

"I hope", he continued, "this Conference will agree to sympathize with the bulk of the Refugees and I move it asks the Government to accede to their request to do service of some description". The motion was seconded by Captain Utterton and carried.

Confronted with these complaints in Parliament, Mr. Tredgold explained that there were three kinds of Aliens - Neutral, Stateless and German. to apply compulsory service to the first-named was out of the question; others who were dangerous in their views, though they had offered to enlist in the Rhodesian Forces. "Where we are satisfied as their bona fides", he said, "we are willing to accept them".

Amendments to the Defence Act were then introduced and in the ensuing debate Colonel J.B. Brady proposed all Aliens of military age and suitable physical fitness be notified of their eligibility to volunteer, and be further informed that the names of those who came forward would be made public and that those who failed to do so would be penalized. The "Bulawayo Chronicle" observed: "It will be interesting to see what the response is to the Minister's action in reminding Aliens of their position and in a statement at the House yesterday that he would bear in mind the question of bringing

some pressure to bear on them to fulfill their obligations. Meanwhile too many people, impatient to see restrictions imposed without delay, have assumed that the authorities are not sufficiently informed as to the position.... There are no grounds for such a conclusion....."

Later in the month Tredgold revealed that of the 350 male German subjects in Rhodesia 40 had been interned or were under close restriction. "The great majority of the remainder ", he said, "are Jewish refugees, and each case has to be investigated individually. Our recent debate on Aliens has had a good effect and large numbers of applications for enlistment in the Armed Forces are coming forward from them". He added that a large group would shortly be going into camp and dispersed among the troops. Even so the invidious position of Jews who were nominal subjects of the Reich, though its victims, left them in an exposed position and very sensitive to press attacks. The "Sunday News". Bulawayo published a denial arising from the "Misgiving and Misunderstanding in the Minds of a section of the Jewish Population and the Loyal Refugee Population". Hurtful allegations in its leading article had not been intended. Rather was it aimed at "the Alien or disloyal people who constitute a potential source of danger which, if developed, would bear with equal gravity on the Jewish and Refugee loyalists as on other of the Rhodesian community. The loyalty of the established Jewish community was never questioned, for the way in which they had played their part in the Colony's War plans and in helping the general cause had been on a par with their loyalty to Rhodesia since the Occupation. Among the Refugees there is a large section which cannot hold anything but feelings of hatred and fear for the Nazi Regime. These people have already displayed their spirit and shown their intentions by the manner in which they have volunteered to serve with the armed forces or in any capacity the Government might see fit to make us of them....."

As every day brought news of fresh defeat, wild propositions were put forward, including the internment of all naturalized Germans in the Colony. This led a correspondent of the "Chronicle" to write: "The feeling lately apparent against Jewish refugees is a clear proof of Enemy propaganda. At a time when Britain needs every available source of money, man-power, and goodwill, when our Government is appealing for Refugees to sign on as recruits for military service, (the call to which hitherto the Jewish section has not responded ignobly), what is more likely to prevent their whole-hearted loyal support that the public agitation against them?"

Warning readers to remember that this was one of Hitler's favorite devices, the writer continued: "with his usual diabolical cunning, he utilizes every means of causing internal dissention. He has used this method with a certain amount of success to stir up racialism between Dutch and British, Indians, Moslems, Natives - indeed any of the many races and people finding shelter under the British flag. The more bound such a community is to Britain by bonds of gratitude, as the Jewish people must be, the more will be the efforts to stir up feelings against Britain, or, if that effort is as unsuccessful, as it has been among our Jewish populations, to stir up the British opinion against the minority in question. I am certain that if the authorities could lay hands upon that particular German agent, or set of agents, who are causing an outcry against Jewish

Aliens just as they are being called to flock to the colours, we should have reached the source of important enemy activities in our midst. Let none of us allow ourselves to become Hitler's dupes".

In a similar vein C.J. Oliver cautioned ordinary Rhodesians against "Anti-Alien" agitation through race hatred, impure and simple. "If we are to fight Fascism with brain as well as brawn (and we shall need both), let us not pus ourselves over that edge, or we should be merely saving Hitler the trouble of introducing Fascism - we should be Fascists ourselves before we knew it".

Other letters followed, and the situation was clarified. The first definite action on the part of the Military came in September 1940 when Mr. Tredgold made it known: "Many Enemy Aliens in the Colony are keen on joining up as combatant in the present conflict. Though this is not permitted, the Government has decided to examine their personal records with view to selecting suitable men. The Government does not yet know whether such a corps would be acceptable outside the Colony, as permission would have to be granted by the authorities concerned".

Almost immediately after, came the decision to approve Aliens in the existing Military Medical Services

CHAPTER 47

ON THE BATTLE FRONTS

Because of the manner in which the various Rhodesian Units were merged or attached to others under the South African or Middle East command, it is not easy to trace the actual theatres in which the men and women from Central; Africa played their part. Undoubtedly the most remarkable field combatant in the whole struggle was the celebrated Squadron Leader “{S.O.S.” Cohen, to whom reference has already been made and whose military record had begun in the Matabele Rebellion of 1896 and in World War 1

In his account of the Battle of Wadara, Italian East Africa, in the official war history of Southern Rhodesia, J.F. McDonald specially mentions that “Lieutenant E. Zacks received the Military Cross for very gallant conduct.....”

In the Long Range Desert Group was Captain G. Rezin, who was killed in action in.....while on one of their incredibly daring ventures behind the enemy lines. From West Africa to the Far East and from Abyssinia to the North Atlantic Jewish Rhodesians carried their full share

Others to win awards included

In common with numbers of other troops, those Jews who served in the Middle East found unique opportunities to get acquainted with the Land of Israel and preference was given to those who wished to spend their lives there. Some Jewish soldiers visited for the first time the appropriately named Island of Rhodes, the ancestral home of so many important pioneers of the Sephardic Community.

As the tragic casualty lists began to come through, Jewish names appeared again and again. The first Rhodesian Jew to lay down his life for his country was Lance-Corporal Basil Thal, on August 26, 1940 followed by Rifleman Clarence Ralstein on December 23 of the same year. While serving with the Imperial Forces, Flying Officer Joe Friend was killed on March 4, 1941, Sergeant Arnold Feigenbaum on April 21, 1941, and Sergeant Norman Price on May 25, 1941. Sergeant Pilot Joshua Goldman followed on June 19, 1941, Pilot Officer Louis Koletz on July 27 and Sergeant Pilot Douglas Baldachin on January 11, 1942, Sergeant Lionel Friend gave his life, on April 6, 1942, Rifleman David Epstein, and exactly a month later Sergeant Observer Ralph Hyman Lewin. May 9 brought the news that Sergeant Pilot Maurice Gruber had been killed, on June 5, Sergeant Gunner Abe Isidore Gottlieb and Corporal Robert Israel Liptz on June 26, 1942.

Sergeant S. Guttman fell on October 19, 1942, and Sergeant Pilot Rufus Gruber, a relative already mentioned on November 9. Before the year ended on December 4, another of the gallant Air Force Flyers, Pilot Officer Elias Bernstein was shot down. The Near Year brought no slackening off – Private Fred Goldstein on January 9, 1943, Pilot Officer Henry Boyer on February 13, Flight Schragger on June 6, Trooper Albert Stein, again with the Imperial Forces, on July 19, and Flight Sergeant Basil Hyman on July 30, 1943. The year 1944 opened with the death of Sergeant Air Gunner Percy Ellenbogen on February 8, and the report “Missing, believed Killed” on January 2 and September 17, of two other gallant Jews, Sergeant Louis Jack Lowenson and Flying Officer Frank Levy. In the closing stages of the War, on February 26, 1945 Lieutenant Marko Benatar was the last to qualify for the Roll of Honour.

The Military Cross and the M.B.E. were both awarded to Captain M. Greenspan of the Nigeria Regiment, and the M.C. to Captain J. Barron of the R.A.M.C., to Captain V. Zacks of the Gold Coast Regiment, and Major J. Rosin of the Dorsetshire Regiment. Lieutenant A. Ruda, while with the South African Forces, received the Military Medal, as did Captain D. Fleishman of the King’s African Rifles. Sergeant M.A. Blumberg won the Meritorious Service Medal. An M.B.E. went to Major A. Sarif of the Gold Coast Regiment. Among the airmen, Squadron Leader W. Creder was rewarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Flight Lieutenant G. Schulman with the Distinguished Flying Medal, and Flight Lieutenant H. Cowan with a “Commendation Award for Valuable Services in the Air” in His Majesty’s 1945 Honours List.

For what was described as “an exceptional act of gallantry, Sergeant S. Almeleh was publicly commended

Those mentioned in Despatches included Lieutenant Colonel P. Barron, S.R.M.C., Major R.W.S. Moss of the Nigeria Regiment, and Captain M. Mande of the Gold Coast Regiment, Leading Aircraftsman R. Salk, and Leading Aircraftsman C.B. Kahan, Leading Aircraftsman I. Kaplan, Sergeant A. Rubenstein and Corporal A. Hirsch

No wonder those on the Home Front felt the urge to do their utmost to support the National War effort. Hundreds of older men and those in key jobs joined the Volunteer Police Reserve, while their wives and daughters enlisted in the Women's Police section. Every public cause, including the Rhodesian National War Fund, The Rhodesian Red Cross, the various Victory Thanksgiving Funds, and the appeals for Air-Raid-Distress, Bundles for Britain, Medical Aid for Russia etc etc. received generous backing. Jewish women in Salisbury took a lead in making themselves responsible for giving to the Rhodesian Government a complete ambulance, besides organizing fetes, running knitting circles, and dispatching large quantities of comforts to those in the field.

CHAPTER 48.

ATTACK AND DEFENCE

All this, however, did not prevent periodic revivals of disguised or open Anti-Semitism, sometimes among people whose standing in the community justified something better. The usual excuse was still the ambiguous position of the Refugees and remarks uttered showed that the Nazis influence was not dead. Fortunately the prompt answers in the press and on the platform were amply supported by the leading men of the country, headed by the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins (now Lord Malvern).

Particularly short-sighted and superficial was a series of outbursts by G.W Young, then Mayor of Bulawayo, who complained "a Bulawayo businessman will normally perhaps hand over a business to his son - now away at the war. These licenses should not be transferred to an Alien. Licenses should be restricted to Rhodesians. Central European types should not be allowed into the trading centers. Any post-war scheme should embrace the prevention of Aliens from building a brick wall against sons of Rhodesians now away fighting for their country. The introduction of an Alien into business is the introduction of a new unit, which means the exclusion of a Rhodesian. Town Council in June 1940 passed a resolution prohibiting the granting of licenses to Aliens during the war and I have just had a notice of a resolution passed by the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce supporting this".

At a meeting of the Bulawayo Ratepayers Association, however, His Worship was confronted with such awkward questions as: "Are you aware that there are scores of closed shops in town? How are the owners of these buildings going to pay their rent if you do not grant licenses to Aliens?" To this the Mayor said: "It is a sore point, but I do not want Rhodesians to come back to no business".

Asked whether Aliens admitted into the country should be allowed to starve, the Mayor changed his position and expressed sympathy for "these unfortunate people who are turned out of their country. I would be willing to support any scheme for temporary assistance. After the War they must go back to their own countries".

When the meeting had endorsed the decision of the Town Council, the Jewish community waited for an opportunity to test the motives involved. It came in 1941, when Bensil Lib Posen was refused a General Dealers License and appealed to the Governor-in-Council. On his behalf Sir Godfrey Huggins informed the Town Council that it had no legal grounds for the ban and that, under Defence Regulations, the Minister of Finance had complete discretion.

The prohibition was set aside and Mr. Posen received his permit. For months controversy raged on the alleged high-handedness of the Government till the "Sunday News" on January 19, 1941 came out with some very plain words: "Remarks regarding Aliens in Rhodesia", said a leading article, "made by the Mayor of Bulawayo at a meeting last Tuesday are causing deep concern and uneasiness amongst people who have had long residence or been born in Rhodesia, and yet feel that they can be included in the term "Alien" as employed by the Mayor. His remarks, they consider, were so sweeping towards those who cannot claim British birth or parentage that many of them are wondering if he is unaware that the sons of men who must be classified as Aliens are fighting in the Rhodesian Forces and that men of Greek, Danish or Jewish parentage or birth, to mention only a few, are in the ranks of the Rhodesian Contingent in the active theatres of War or at the training camps".....

Thus challenged, Mr. Young issued an attempt at an apology: "I cannot understand ", he complained, "how any good Rhodesian, and by the word Rhodesian I mean every good citizen of whatever nationality or creed, who has been resident in the country for many years, can possibly include himself or herself under the heading of "Alien" in the generally understood meaning of the word. I tried to make it perfectly clear during the meeting that my Council desires to keep a strict control on licenses so as to ensure, as far as possible, that those foreigners who have recently come to Rhodesia and cannot be classed as Rhodesian citizens, do not get the opportunity to set up in business to the detriment of established businesses in these difficult times, and against the interest of those men on Active Service, both now and in the post-war period, when they return to civil life. We have in Rhodesia many good Rhodesians, who were not born in the British Empire. We are proud of them and proud of their sons and relations in the fighting forces. It is in their interests, as much as it is in the interests of anyone else, that we desire to have strict control of the licenses in wartime....."

At this A.E. Abrahamson, already prominent in local politics, came out with a strong attack on February 16, 1941. "I think", he said, "that the Jewish community of this town has borne for too long their insults and slights, hurled at them indirectly.....After all, until 1890, it was the Native who possessed the country. If the Native started discriminating today, I feel sure that your policy of "Rhodesia for Rhodesians" would be their slogan and you would have to make the exit you recommend for the so-called "Aliens". Your fate would happily be worse, for the Aliens know what suffering is. It was these Aliens who were the first people in Europe to taste the Nazi tyranny and ruthlessness".

After the Mayor had declared himself a member of the "Jew and Gentile Society" the editor of the "Sunday News" closed the correspondence, on the grounds of its having taken an undesirable racial aspect.

In March 1941. Mr. Young made a different appeal, for a "Rhodesia Resources and Development Committee" to plan the opening up of the country as soon as Peace was restored. "The Whole of Central Africa", he said. "Is waiting for the spark which will set it alight in the blaze of industrial progress. No country in the world after the War offers greater prospects than the Rhodesias and bordering territories".

To this appeal came a dry Jewish retort, listing the enterprises set up by very Central Europeans to which His Worship had manifested such objections: Rhodesian Plough & Machinery Company, established by G. Baecher from Czechoslovakia, Rhodesian Woolens by L. Zlattner, another Czech, the Rhodesian Tin and Steel Manufacturers, founded by M. Treger, the Rhodesian Sweet Factory by Messrs. Brenner and Sacks and the Biscuit Factory by another Mr. Sacks. Besides this there was a Soap Factory opened by Messrs. Chitrin & Treger, a plant for the production of Glycerin set up by a Bulgarian named Schachter, the Bulawayo Paper Industry by M. Ralstein, Furniture Factories by M. Ellenbogen, Benyishai and Miller and H. Hodes, Clothing Factories by Abrahamson, Herscovitz and Rabinowitz, Sugarman's Brick Factory, Turtledove's Concrete Works and many others still being planned.

Even more stinging was a letter published in February, 1942. "In today's Chronicle (February 10), in the Roll of Honour I read the report of Pilot Officer Louis Koletz. This man arrived in Rhodesia from Russia in 1938, 18 months later; he volunteered for service and was accepted. At that stage he could not even have been domiciled in the country. The result justified our Government's acceptance of his service; he paid the full penalty with Honours in doing his duty. Government today are asking women to register for service; they are taking children (in my opinion a boy of 18 is a mere child) for training, yet there are among us these foreigners, medically fit, who have demonstrated their willingness and desire to fight for the Allies. Why are these people refused service by our Government?"

A welcome breath of goodwill and tolerance was introduced into the controversy by Sir Godfrey Huggins, when in July 1942; he attended the Conference of the Rhodesian Chamber of Industries. "After the War", he said, "we will have to open the door of the Colony much wider to would-be migrants. Racialism to foreigners will have to go if we are to do business with other civilized people. In fact I think they will ignore us unless we do....."

As the tide of war spread and the truth about the Gas Chambers became known, a fresh wave of horror smote Mankind already hardened to unspeakable actions by the Nazis. Under this stimulus an inter-communal body took the initiative at Bulawayo, with a notice reading

"To Men and Women of Goodwill"

"Every Race and Creed,

The Society of Jews and Gentiles

Issues the following call to all its members, and to all those opposed to Cruelty, Outrages and Injustice – That all will put aside their Pleasures and Engagements and attend the United Protest Meeting

in the Town Hall

Tuesday, December 29th

at 8.50 p.m.,

Publicly to condemn Atrocities against Jewish people in the Occupied Territories of the Enemy.

His Worship the Mayor in the Chair,

J.H. Bailey, Honorary Secretary. ..."

Incredible as it may sound, there were yet people at this stage prepared to adopt an almost jocular tone in relation to the matter. One of these, signing himself "R.E.8", wrote on the day before the meeting " that the affair should be unanimously supported, not by any means because Jews in particular are apparently being "bumped off" wholesale, but because in general it is the right and decent thing to do, whether the victims are Jews, Armenians, Arabs, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, English or for that matter any people on this Globe who are being butchered".

"There is not the slightest intention to evince Anti-Semitism. This is not Jew phobia. As Douglas Reid says, inter alia, many people cannot believe that one cannot be pro-Christian or pro-Gentile without being anti-Jewish. They also could forget that the Christians and Gentiles have themselves been persecuted for ages....."

Fortunately the meeting in the City Hall on December 30, 1942, under the Chairmanship of a new Mayor, Councilor E.J.Davies, adopted a very different tone. On the platform were Civil Commissioner Mr. T.L.G. Wright, representing the Government, the Catholic Bishop, the Right Reverend I. Arnoz, Mr. T.A.E. Holdengarde, the well-known industrialist and President of the Society of Jews and Gentiles and other leaders of the community, A resolution was passed by a considerable crowd, expressing "unqualified condemnation of the unparalleled atrocities committed by the German Government in the occupied countries, along with horror at the deliberately inhuman policy of exterminating the Jews". Requests were made to the Government of Southern Rhodesia to associate itself with the British and United Nations Government in a declaration of sympathy for the Jews in their plight and to bring to notice the urgency of using all available means of rescuing them from the threatened areas.

For the first time since the Kishinev Massacres in 1904, a Jewish Day of Mourning was held in Salisbury, the Governor being represented at the Synagogue Service by Captain Goff. The congregation also included the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. H.H. Davies, the Anglican Bishop of Southern Rhodesia, the Right Reverend E.

Paget, the Mayor, Mrs. G. Maasdorp, City Councilors and other prominent personalities. Similar celebrations were recorded in Bulawayo and in all the smaller centers of the country.

When His Excellency Sir Evelyn Baring, accompanied by his wife, took the occasion on April 18, of personally addressing the Society of Jews and Gentiles, his remarks were considerably beyond the platitudes often voiced on such occasions. Dealing with the need for preventing a repetition of the current horrors, Sir Evelyn said, "Nazism has proved, much as we dislike to make such an admission, to be an exportable commodity. The proof and truth of this is the state of growth of Fifth Column activities in many countries. It has been well said that one of Hitler's most outstanding characteristics is his clear realization of the weaknesses of others and his ability to use these for his own ends. The technique of spreading to other countries the idea of National Socialism has been based on exploration of this talent. In almost every country the Nazi propagandists have tried to raise anti-Jewish feelings by representing Germany as the chief leader in the crusade against Jewry..... Those who listen to words of this nature and to attacks on the Jews, simply because they are Jews, are playing Germany's game. The spread of Anti-Semitic ideas gives rise to a disease in the body politic, a disease that comes on gradually, almost imperceptibly, through small points of friction, with the exaggeration and publication of each little incident. For such a disease, as for the illness of the physical body, prevention is better than cure; and prevention is the task of your Society, prevention of the spread of rumours, insistence on the true revelation of the facts when accusations are made against people of any race merely because they belong to that race".

In the knowledge that the Allies, though now assured of Victory, still faced a long fight, the people of Rhodesia were glad to think of happier days ahead and welcomed anything that strengthened the assurance of their approach. Such an instance was afforded when in 1943 Max Danziger, Ministers of Finance, took the opportunity, at the opening of the new Gatooma Spinning Mills, to stress as a patriotic action the fostering of Rhodesian manufactures - "The Textile Industry I believe", he said, "will be one of the most important in the Colony and there is no reason why we should not make - in addition to cotton cloths and clothing for Europeans - all the cotton blankets and, as long- range vision, all the woolen blankets too, as well as cotton clothing required in the Colony, in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland for the African populations".

The Minister added that the Government intended to make fullest possible use of Rhodesia's raw products for the benefit of its people and that where private enterprise hesitated they would, if necessary, take the initiative. "If, however, we are satisfied with the proposals for establishing factories. We will give all the assistance possible to ensure that they become a success - whether by way of low grants, Customs duty, or the restriction of imports".....

For some time proposals for a Rhodesian University had also been circulating and these were now carried a major step forward when J.F. Kapnek offered an outright gift of 20,000, as a thanksgiving for the improvement in the Wartime prospects

and with the hope that another 80 public spirited citizens in Rhodesia would follow his example with at least 1,000 apiece.

"His generous proposal to the Government", said an official announcement "has been accepted by the Prime Minister with gratitude and thanks." Realization of the new project took longer than foreseen and not until 1953 when the Queen Mother visited the Colony, could construction begin in Salisbury. By that time the plan had assumed a different complexion, and had received substantial backing from overseas, more particularly from the University of London. The Kapnek gift was, however, put to good use in the construction of a distinctive building named after him.

Despite the continuance of the War, Rhodesian Jewry was able to celebrate a major occasion - the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Bulawayo Congregation.

On October 16, 1944 when the Rev. Dr. I.H. Levine occupied the pulpit, his congregation included many non-Jewish citizens. Besides the Mayor Councilor D. Macintyre, there was the Civil Commissioner, Mr. A. L. Reynolds, the Clerk Mr.H.J. Cook, and several Councilors, the former Speaker of the Rhodesian Parliament, Sir Allan Welsh and Lady Welsh, the General Manager of Railways, Mr. W.J. Skillicorn, representatives of the Methodist Churches and Anglicans and many others.

"Against all who have fought to destroy the Jew we have the promise of God", said Dr. Levine. "No weapon formed against you shall prosper" and he took as his theme the manner in which Anti-Semitism was stalking the land disguised under the mantle of false patriotism. Reviewing the share of Jews in the up-building of Rhodesia, he proudly added: "Jewish casualties have numbered over 12 per cent of those on service outside the Colony. Well have we in this community observed the injunction stressed by Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylonia: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have exiled you, and pray unto the Lord, for in the peace thereof shall you have peace". Dr. Levine's closing words were a prayer for a "peace wherein the Jewish people shall live in a land of their own, in Justice, Security and Dignity".

In the daily press the event did not pass unnoticed: "A community had arrived, settled and done well in and for the country. Good wishes will be extended to them (the Jews) , coupled with the hope that in the years ahead they may continue to occupy a happy, contented and honourable place in Rhodesian life, living in amity with all their neighbours and helping create a bigger and better Rhodesia".

When, in 1945, Salisbury had its anniversary the Rev. Konviser prepared a special Jubilee Monograph, to which the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, contributed a foreword. He endorsed the comment of Rhodes': "If Jews come, my country is all right", with the words, "Sons and daughters of Israel have played a worthy part in the history of this country, and when we consider the part the Jews are playing in the Armed forces of the Crown in the present war, we realize that the spirit of the

prophets in the Land of Moses and the fanatic courage of the defenders of Jerusalem in the first century of the Christian era is not dead".

CHAPTER 49

SOME JEWISH GIFTS

In the midst of all the tragedy and sorrow of the world conflict, there still were occasional heart stirring incidents. One of these occurred in May 1941 when Isaac Pieters, one of the best-known Jewish pioneers, passed away at Cape Town, aged 74. He left generous bequests to Jewish charities; £1,500 to the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation for building purposes, £250 to the Chevra Kadisha for its Free Loan Fund, £500 to the Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, £250 to the Jewish Ladies Communal League, Bulawayo and £3,000 to the Ralstein Aged Men's Home. General charities benefited equally; £1,500 to the Aged Women's Home, £500 to the English Church, £500 to the Roman Catholic charities, £500 to the Lady Rodwell Maternity Home, £1,500 to the Bulawayo Memorial Hospital and £2,700 to the Matabeleland Rugby Football Board, of which Pieters was a life-member. Only a few weeks later John Ralstein of Filabusi gave £5,000 to set up "Clarence Ralstein Memorial Educational Fund" in memory of his 22 year old nephew, Clarence John Ralstein of Bulawayo, killed in action in the Western Desert on December 10, 1940 while with a famous British Regiment.

"I desire", said Mr. Ralstein, "to mark the sacrifice of my nephew in the cause of freedom and to create a memorial which will be a benefit to the young men of this Colony, to enable them to become useful citizens and to assist in the development of their country".

This was to be done by financial aid to a student in the Mining Department of the Bulawayo Technical School and to others. Trustees included Mr. Ralstein himself, Mr. Cecil I. Jacobs, along with the Honourable A.R. Hirsch, and Mr. Roland Starkey, one of the best-known Mining Engineers in the Colony.

A leader on the benefaction, headed "A Fitting Memorial" in the Bulawayo Chronicle, began: "Rhodesia has on previous occasions been indebted to Mr. John Ralstein for his generosity. In Bulawayo the Home for Aged Men bears his name,

where some of the older citizens are able to spend the evening of their lives in much greater comfort than would otherwise be possible”.

One unique feature of the gift was that “Mr. Ralstein has left it open to any who may receive help from the fund to augment and give to others similar opportunities...The idea is a splendid one, and there is every reason to think that Mr. Ralstein’s generosity will in the years to come prove of great value to many young Rhodesians. There is something fine in the idea of a man who owes his start to the generosity of another doing what he can to help somebody else along.”

Featuring the endowment under the heading of “A Splendid Memorial Scheme” the “Sunday News” added, “Mr. Ralstein has set an example to those who wish to help play their part in creating a “Brave New World”, where no one will be denied the chance to develop in born talents, yet where none, except the halt and maimed and aged, will expect to receive free and unconditional assistance. For this lead and for his further benefaction to the country of his adoption, Rhodesians owe Mr. Ralstein a deep debt of gratitude, while no finer memorial to a young man who has given his life for his country could have been devised....”

The death in 1941 of Michael Pevsner, one of the most important pioneers of the Rhodesian Tobacco Industry, likewise brought substantial benefactions. “In death and in life”, wrote the “Sunday News”, Mr. Pevsner remembered Rhodesia and the Rhodesians among whom he lived and worked, and in his will he left more money to be utilized for public charity in Bulawayo and Salisbury, and a further sum of £1,000 for the proposed Rhodesian Seaside Home at the Cape. In the past Mr. Pevsner had shown his willingness to help the establishment of such a home and his bequest will be of great assistance. His name deserves to be placed with those of other public spirited men”.

Fresh benefactions by prominent Rhodesian Jews were in the news in 1943 when Mrs. Sarah Fox of Bulawayo died, leaving considerable sums to Jewish and other charities in that city and elsewhere, among them St. Gabriel’s Home, the British Empire Service League, the Relief Fund, the Guild of Loyal Women, the Coloured Community Service League, and the Native Welfare Society. Still larger sums were forthcoming on the death of David Landau, Managing Director of the well-known firm of Landau Brothers. He too gave generously to all the Jewish charities in Rhodesia, to many others in South Africa, to various hospitals and to other leading bodies in the Colony, not forgetting the Pioneer and Early Settlers Association and the British Empire Service League.

One further result of Mr. Landau’s death was that his firm gave up business in Bulawayo and transferred its activities to Salisbury. Under the heading of “To Be Regretted” the “Sunday News” wrote:- “Bulawayo is sad at the passing of the firm and the business that must be lost with its departure. It is remembered with gratitude the many gifts and benefactions made by the family to Bulawayo and Rhodesian Organizations and charities”.

CHAPTER 50

SIR ROY WELENSKY'S STORY

During the years just dealt with a man was coming into prominence that ranks as one of the great Rhodesians of all time. Sir Roy Welensky, although his mother was a Dutch South African, has always considered himself a Jew and publicly acknowledged the fact.

Earlier in this history reference was made to his father Michael Welensky, who came from Lithuania to Rhodesia in 1895, struggles along but never achieved prosperity. Beneath the Salisbury Koppie, in the humble setting of Pioneer Street, Roy (or Raphael as he was originally known) was born on January 20, 1907, a thirteenth child and the ninth to survive. "My boyhood", he said in later years, "was a period of the direst poverty", much of it spent in Johannesburg where his parent in 1910 tried for better luck of their earlier days

Whatever hopes they entertained were dashed by the 1913 strike of the Gold Mines on the Rand, and to crown the disaster, one of Roy's brothers, Dave was fined £25 for his alleged share in smashing the windows of Anstey's Department Store. The Welensky's furniture was sold to pay the money. Another brother, Abe died of Black Water fever near Umtali and they moved back to Rhodesia in 1914, just before World War I began. During his rough and ready schooling in one of the poorer parts of Salisbury, Roy picked up that ability to use his fists which for a while took him into the professional boxing ring.

"By the time I was 13", he said, "I was known as "King of the Kids", in that part of town round Pioneer Street, and it was accepted that I would fight any youngster from any other part of town who dared to challenge my position. I often fought kinds I had never seen before, merely because some boy has said to one of my gang that he could lick me. Fights usually took place behind the Synagogue or the Wesleyan Chapel, on rough pieces of unoccupied land that became my recognized battle ground"....

Another memory was his patronage of Mrs. Rubenstein's General Store, favourably known for its home-made ginger beer, paid for by the sale of empty bottles at ½ d each. One strange coincidence of Roy's youth was the fact that, when his mother fell ill, she was attended by none other than Dr. Godfrey Huggins, later Sir Roy's Chief and predecessor as Prim Minister of the Federation. Despite Aletta Ferreira's Afrikaans origin, she passed away on March 13, 1918, as a devoted Jewess, under the name of Leah, and as such she was not buried in the Salisbury Jewish Cemetery. To this day her son regularly visits her last resting place. In due course Roy like his brothers celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and, despite the breakup of his home through his mother's death, its Jewish associations persisted, as did his friendship with Jewish boys and girls, among them Barney Joelson, now a well-known figure in the commercial world of the Colony. It was in 1920, with an auctioneer with the unmistakable name of Ikey Cohen, that 13-year old Roy Welensky found his first job. This was followed by another with Sam Gruber, manager of the famous old firm of Charelick Solomon & Co. merchants, Rumanian born Jews and leading member of the Salisbury congregation.

Mr. Gruber described Welensky as he first met him "a husky young chap, with broad shoulders and a unusually big stomach. Without a jacket, he did not look very presentable, and in his father's footwear he looked anything but a Puss in Boots. I told him to sit down and, as it was my tea-time, to have a cup. He told me it was very different kind of reception to what he had received elsewhere. I asked him what work he wanted and he quickly said: "Anything, so long as I can earn a living". I gave him a start and he got along very well, but in those days he did not seem able to settle down anywhere long and after a time he left me."

Old Michael Welensky, though he had in his day qualified as a pioneer for a six thousand-acre farm from the Chartered Company, lost virtually everything, and was entirely dependent on his children. Among the most violent and consistent critics of the old regime before the Responsible Government was the disillusioned and pathetic veteran. Futile though these protests and arguments might appear on the surface, they helped indirectly to change the history of the country, for they awoke in young Roy that interest in Politics which ultimately dominated all his work.

In the meantime he still struggled hard to survive, and, about the time of the 1923 Referendum, which resulted in Rhodesia's decision to "paddle her own canoe", rather than to accept the offer of becoming a fifth province of the Union of South Africa, he gave up his post with C. Salomon & Co. in quest of something more profitable. This he found, largely by chance, while working on a small mine out in the Bundu. Isaac Benatar, member of the Sephardic group already mentioned was three years older and had only arrived in the country in 1922. "Roy", he said, "was about 16 at the time. Not long before I had come to Salisbury from my native island of Rhodes to work for a cousin of mine in a trading store in Glendale. I persuaded my cousin to take Roy to assist me, because there was far too much for one to do. The store was a small tin shack that could be shifted to another site if trade went sour on us, and there we sold everything from a needle to a side of sheep. Most of our customers were Africans, with whom Roy

got on very well-they admired his huge frame and his gentle, considerate way. For this reason I gave him the counter job, while I delivered goods. Both of us slept in a little outhouse tacked on to the back of the store, and I could not help noticing how limited was Roy's personal wardrobe. He had two well-worn shirts, three pairs of stained and tattered shorts and no pyjamas- he never in fact, owned a pair of Pyjamas or slept between sheets until he got married! He just used to strip and pull the blanket over him- and he turned 20 before he wore a jacket".

It soon became plain that Roy was growing restless and he took on the post of a barman at the nearby Tafuna Hotel, where the main clientele were minors from the Shamva Goldfield. "Every month they used to get 36 hours leave, 30 of which they spent at the hotel blowing their pay on a binge. But Roy had no throwing-out to do: his presence was enough. They just drank and horsed about until they collapsed over a table in a drunken sleep. Roy then slung them one by one over his shoulders, carried them to a rondavel and left them to sleep it off. Most of his on £7 a month went back to his old father in Salisbury.

In his spare time Roy went into town with his brother, Isaac, finding plenty of opportunities to use his fists. Michael Welensky had meanwhile secured a humble post there as "Wacher" or Watcher over the Dead for the Jewish Congregation, who paid him enough, combined with his son's remittances, to keep going. Eventually he found a haven in the Jewish Aged Home, Johannesburg, where he died and where a friend found his only belongings, an old tin box containing "good fors" representing loans of £14,000 which he had made during the course of a long life, in his generous moods, and which he had never been paid!

Roy himself had by this time found a post at Bulawayo, as a locomotive fireman on the Rhodesia Railways, where he shed-so he says-70 lbs of surplus weight! His wages on the footplate £23 a month for a working week of 100 hours-were still supplemented by boxing purses, taken in the tougher parts of Bulawayo and Salisbury. The Labour movement had by this time come his way and he began to have political leanings.

At this moment fate brought him in touch with someone who completely changed his career-a young girl named Elisabeth Henderson, who became his wife. Roy Welensky's subsequent rise to fame is only indirectly connected with the story of Rhodesian Jewry, although with his own family and with his Jewish Friends his contacts remained as close as ever and he was always ready with his fists to deal with any attempts at Anti-Semitism. This ugly creature reappeared during the World Depression when the slump in coppers and other metals fell heavily upon Northern Rhodesia, now Welensky's home. At Broken Hill, where he had been stationed by the Railway, and where he was known as a Trade Union Leader and a politician, the British Union of Fascists, fathered by Sir Oswald Mosley, found fertile breeding ground in the local workshops. So serious had the attack become that a boycott forced one storekeeper into insolvency, while a Masonic Lodge stopped operation because of its Jewish office bearers.

Many years later Sir Roy observed: "One has to realize that the Depression period was an ideal time to sow the seeds of Fascism, and I think it fair to say that in a number of minds, it appeared to be the solution for quite a few of our problems".

Personal attacks he could- and did-deal with in a personal way not to be forgotten. On the wider issues, Isaac Benatar testified that "Fascism gave Welensky his first political consciousness and he himself confirmed the statement: "It was to some extent in order to combat the advance of Fascism in our little locality that I intensified my Trade Union activities..... and decided to give the Fascists a real go for their money. There was, first, their struggle for control of the Union, and I won that by an overwhelming majority. Opposition inside the Union from the Fascist element then began to fade away".....

To the honor of the people of Rhodesia, both North and South, the Jewish background of Welensky never proved a handicap. Like other men he made his mistakes but there was no denying his stature and with the passing of the years, his influence became ever greater. By 1933, at the age of 26, Sir Roy was Chairman of the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union and five years later was elected to the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia. Already his outspokenness had brought him into close touch with the Prime Minister at Salisbury, Sir Godfrey Huggins, but not until after the Second World War did he attain a seat in the Executive Council at Lusaka. Then came the move and the counter-moves resulting in the establishment in 1953 of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland formed amidst such seemingly happy auspices.

From a Jewish point of view it is worth noting that, although the Chairman of the Committee which discussed relations between the Northern Rhodesian authorities and the Chartered Company in 1949 was A.B. Cohen of the Colonial Office, there was no modification in the British opposition to the official standpoint expressed by Welensky. During the visit by British Royal Family to Southern and Central Africa, the former office-boy and fireman moved in circles of which neither he nor his parents had ever dreamt, but this eminence never changed his fundamental humanity, or his simple pride in his own beginnings. Inevitably he was chosen by Huggins in 1954 as a member of the first Cabinet, appropriately as Minister of the Transport, and when the Prime Minister retired he was regarded as his inevitable successor, first for Southern Rhodesia, and in 1956 for the Federation. The tragic struggle against intrigues and vested interests, both in Africa and in Britain, maintained so bravely and so long by Sir Roy Welensky is a matter of history which falls outside the scope of this book. Even in his retirement he remains one of those few Rhodesians worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as the founder of that great country.

CHAPTER 51.

FEDERATION AND AFTER

With Hitler an evil memory, with men and women now on their way home from Active Service, with Germany in the dust and Soviet Russia and the United States confronting each other was the two new World powers, with Roosevelt dead and Churchill out of office, Rhodesia too entered upon a new age. As an integral and important part of her population, Jewry too wrestled with problems, toward the solution of which the past offered little guidance.

Despite losses of men and treasure, the War had greatly helped the country. Its productiveness, both on the Agricultural and Industrial side, has vastly increased, to meet the demand, and the population was rising fast, under a new Government policy to encourage immigration. Here again the Jewish citizens did more than their share in the establishment of new farms and factories- particularly the latter. In Bulawayo, in Salisbury and in other towns thousands found employment in enterprises started by them since 1939.

The community itself had grown substantially, through the arrival of newcomers, both from South Africa and from the Old Country, many of the latter originally sent out during hostilities under the Commonwealth Air training Scheme, having now returned to Rhodesia. The total Jewish population of the Colony, which stood at about 3,000 in 1939, was now well over 4,000 and, although Salisbury passed Bulawayo, the latter still remained the larger Jewish centre. One major reason for the country's general advance was the spectacular growth of the Copper Belt where former mining camps were becoming cities. Thousands of weary Britons, a fair number of Jews among them, leaving the depressing post-war conditions, chose Rhodesia as their future home. When in 1948 the unexpected defeat of General Smuts in the South African Election put into power the Nationalist Government under Dr. D.F. Malan, an unjustified scare about the likelihood of renewed Anti-Semitism stimulated the Northward flow. With millions of pounds streaming into the Colony, and the White population almost

doubling itself, a building boom set in, which vainly sought to keep pace with the demand for housing.

Visible proof of the prevailing confidence was the decision of the Salisbury congregation in 1946 to construct as its War Memorial a new Synagogue and a Hebrew School and Communal Hall. The site chosen was in Second Street and before long the architect's plans could be given effective shape.

Zionism was experiencing a strong revival, by the work of the Rhodesian Zionist Council, established in 1941 at the worst period of the War, to undertake the systematic raising of funds. It also sponsored the tours of a number of leading overseas personalities, including Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Dr. Nahum Goldman, Professor Ernst Simon, the Honourable Edwin Samuel, Dr A. Cohen, Mr. Berl Locker, and Mr. Moshe Sharett.

Still more important, from the practical point of view, was the setting up in 1943 of the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies, of which every congregation in both Colonies became a member and which was soon accepted by the Government as the official spokesman for the community. During the first few years conferences took place at 12 monthly intervals but from 1952 they were held at two-yearly intervals. From its headquarters in Bulawayo, the affairs of the Board were largely handled through a chain of Regional Committees: in Salisbury for Mashonaland and the Eastern districts of Southern Rhodesia and at Lusaka for the Southern part of Northern Rhodesia and for the Copper Belt itself. Profiting by the experience of a similar body in South Africa, the Rhodesian Board of Deputies proved a valuable organization, particularly after the appointment of Mr. Maurice Wagner, as full-time secretary in 1950. Mr. Wagner came from London, had previously been an educationalist

From the beginning the Chairman of the Rhodesian Board has been Mr. Cecil Jacobs. The son of a leading Rhodesian pioneer and himself born in the country, his extensive experiences of public affairs as a leading solicitor, amply vindicated the wisdom of the community's choice.

In 1950 the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, the Very Reverend Israel Brodie, toured Rhodesia and apart from the spiritual value of his presence, was able to take part in many fruitful public and private exchanges on the problems of his people.

On every side the ramifications of Rhodesian Jewry advances in these years- in the realm of education, with the establishment of the new religious and other schools; among Women's and other cultural organizations, and in the formation of several successful social and sports institutions, including the Weizman Country Club and Park View Sports Club at Bulawayo and the Wingate Park Club at Salisbury.

Generous gifts were made toward the rehabilitation of war victims in European Displaced Person's Camps, and in assisting immigration to what was soon the independent State of Israel. Here the pro rata contribution of Rhodesian Jewry well bore comparison by most other overseas communities of the British Commonwealth. Incidentally, Rhodesian Jewry was responsible, on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953, for a memorial plantation of 3,000 trees in the Holy Land.

Although Jews had been active in public affairs since the earliest days of Rhodesia, the establishment of the Central African Federation in 1953 provided new opportunities. Apart from the unique role of Sir Roy Welensky, the first Federal Assembly included Benjamin Disraeli Goldberg, as Member for Border. Mr. Goldberg, born in Dublin, on May 12, 1902, had come to Rhodesia as a boy, won a Beit Scholarship at the Boys' High School, Salisbury, studied at the University of Cape Town and qualified as a Solicitor. Settling at Umtali, he became active in local Politics and was for ten years also a leader of the Rhodesian Party until it amalgamated on Federation with the United Party, was a founder of the Regional Development Movement and in 1951 its President. In 1956 Goldberg became Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and in 1958 entered the Cabinet as Minister of Education and Minister of Public Health.

The unique distinction of being the only woman member in the Federal Parliament was that of Mrs. Muriel Ena Rosin, born in London as Educated in England and in Switzerland, she came to Rhodesia upon her marriage to Dr. I. R. Rosin in 1932 and was soon active in public affairs, both Jewish and other. Among her appointments was membership of the University College of Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, of the Dairy Control Board and of the Rhodesian Children's Home. Mrs. Rosen was elected to the Rhodesian Board of Deputies and was the first Chairman of the Rhodesian Union of Jewish Women. Her work during World War II brought her an M.B. E. and in 1958 she was elected to the Federal Assembly as Member for Salisbury West.

Appropriately enough, the Member for Salisbury East was Mr. Saul Udwin, born in Swaziland on February 6, 1922, and educated at the University of Witwatersrand, where he qualified as a civil engineer. Coming to Rhodesia in 1947, he soon gained prominence and in 1958 was elected into the Federal Assembly.

Unique in certain respects was the election of Peter Staub as Member for Eastlea, as the only refugee from Hitler known to acquire a seat in Parliament anywhere

in the world! Staub was born in Germany, came to South Africa in the 1930's and spent some years in Johannesburg in the mining department of the Rand Daily Mail. Thereafter he was associated with the Stock Exchange before moving North.

Jews were also well represented in the Legislative Assembly of Southern Rhodesia where three sat in the original House set up under the Federal Constitution. Abraham Eliezer Abrahamson, born in Bulawayo on October 13, 1922, He was educated at Milton High School and at the University of Cape Town before going on war service. After his return he became increasingly prominent in public affairs, particularly in the Chamber of Industries, the Chamber of Commerce, the Native Labour Board and Coloured Development Fund. To say nothing of the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies, of which he was Vice-President. Now as Member for Bulawayo East, Mr. Abrahamson put to practical effect the eloquence which as a University student had won his distinction in the "Best Speakers' Debate". Later in the Territorial Cabinet he became Minister of Labour, Social Welfare and Housing.

Another member of the Southern Rhodesian Legislative Assembly was Benjamin Barron. He too was born in Bulawayo (October 16, 1904) and educated at Milton High School and at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. As a prominent solicitor he was specially fitted for the position of Member for Bulawayo district.

Benny Goldstein, Member for Bulawayo South, came from Rumania, where he was born on March 13, 1901, but ever since he reached Rhodesia, as a child in 1907 all his interest were concentrated there. Well-known as a merchant, Mr. Goldstein had been President of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce and the Associated Chambers for Rhodesia, Dr. Morris Isaac Hirsch hailed from Johannesburg, where he was born on October 13, 1915, and where he had qualified in medicine at Wits University. With five-and-half years of war service behind him he settled at Que Que, where he became Mayor and where in 1958 he was elected to the Territorial Parliament. Another legislator with a medical background was Dr. Ahrn Palley, Member for Greendale, who, having emigrated from South Africa, adopted a policy of very close association with the African cause, which gained him considerable unpopularity among many Whites. Harry Pichanick, born at Liverpool on February 13, 1906, first saw Rhodesia as a baby. Another old Miltonian, he was prominent in the business world of Salisbury and a Mayor of the city. No less important in the minds of the multitude was his Secretaryship of the Rhodesia Cricket and Boxing Associations and his Vice-Presidency of the Empire and the Olympic Games Associations of Rhodesia. Few were surprised when in 19 Harry Pichanick was elected Member for Highlands.

Northern Rhodesia also had its Jewish members, including Morris Gerald Rabb, born at Johannesburg on October 31, 1910, and educated at Wits University. Having completed his War service he settled in Livingstone, where he was in the timber industry and where he was elected to the Legislative Council.

Appointments made by the Federal Government included that of L.A. Levy as a member of the Rhodesian Cold Storage Commission, and of H. Herman Aaron Krikler as a member of the Agricultural Marketing Council. Mr. Krikler incidentally a

very old settler, born in Russia on February 1 1896, had arrived in Rhodesia in 1914, served with the British South Africa Police in South West Africa and East Africa and again, with the rank of Major, in the Gold Coast Regiment during the Second World War. Both a manufacturer and a merchant, he had been elected President of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce and of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, while the Government nominated him a member of the Federal Tourist Development Board.

Two important appointments fell to Heiman Joseph Hoffman as President, first in 1949 of the Water Court of Rhodesia, and then in the following year of the Natural Resources and Town Planning Board. Judge Hoffman was born in Johannesburg on March 4, 1904, but had grown up in Rhodesia. During World War II he had been an Active Service in the North. In 1958 he was appointed to the Appeal Court for Native Civil Cases.

From May 1961 until 1963 one of the best-known Jewish South African Queen's Counsels was also a member of the Rhodesian Bench. Israel Aaron Maisels, born at Johannesburg on November 19, 1905 studied at the University of Witwatersrand. After commencing practice in 1930 he took silk in 1948, and was for a number of years Chairman of the Johannesburg Bar Council as well as of the General Council of the Bar of South Africa. He had also been President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and of the Johannesburg United Hebrew Congregation. During World War II, Advocate Maisels had attained the rank of Major in the South African Air Force and had been decorated. His resignation as a member of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia was greatly regretted.

Among the staff of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the name of Professor Michael Gelfand deserves to be specially singled out. Having studied Medicine both at the University of Cape Town and overseas, he worked many years in Northern Rhodesia, and won a distinguished name for himself as the author of several books on the medical problems of Northern Rhodesia. One work, "Tropical Victory", describes the gradual suppression of disease and epidemics in that part of the world. Professor Gelfand's sphere at the University College was that of medicine with special references to Africa.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is a thing of the past, but not the countries which constituted that political unity, living between the Limpopo and the Frontier of the Congo are more than 5,000 Jews, part of a White community, which still, despite emigration losses, hovers the quarter million mark. Most of them remain in what was recently called Southern Rhodesia and is no plain Rhodesia, but there are also several hundreds in Zambia and a handful in Malawi.

What the future holds no man can say, yet having regard to the role which this people played there since the time of Lobengula, the patriotism and optimism, the enterprise and ingenuity which they have shown down the generations and their

unshakeable confidence in the country, there need be little doubt that, like Rhodesia itself, its Jewry will survive.