



Bulawayo Jewish Guild Committee 1928/29. (Back from left): Mrs N Rabinovitch, Miss E Rothstein, H Charles, Miss B Rabinovitch, C Whiteson, Mrs P Rabinson. (Middle): Ben Baron (Hon sec), Mrs A Kaplan, C I Jacobs (pres), Miss J Ellenbogen, Rev M I Cohen (Hon chaplain). (Front): Miss C Harris, T Zacks, Miss E Rabinovitz.

Max Gordon was present when the new hall was officially opened by Mr H Ellenbogen who was Bulawayo mayor at the time. He recalls how Mr Ellenbogen used a "golden" key which was subsequently displayed on the wall in a wooden case.

The Guild was looked upon as a school in which communal workers received their elementary training for public service. Mr Rabinovitz felt that almost every communal leader in Bulawayo started his career in the Guild, graduated to the Chovevei Zion and then to the committee of the congregation.

Glib Guild

At the 1952 AGM of the Jewish Guild, Mr N Jacobson said that the Dramatic Section should put on more serious plays with more body to them. To this Mr H Eliasov, the chairman, retorted that he hoped they would be able to provide more "body" with the help of the Chevra Kadisha!

Keen contests took place for the top posts of Guild president and Chovevei president, both positions being regarded as key ones in communal politics which determined the trend of congregational affairs.

During the 1930s, Sonny Moss was the Guild Hon secretary. He recalls that he had more than 1,000 members on his books, most of whom were very enthusiastic and participated in all Guild activities. Usually on the first Saturday of every month there was a dance, a play or a stage show. Mr Moss remembers Harry Charles, a fine actor who produced and took the lead in the "The Monkey's Paw". Gertie Lassman produced several plays while Max and Phina Rosen, Maurice Volkyn, and Gertie Baron were singers and dancers.

Mr Moss has fond memories of how Zelda Baron, who had just arrived in Bulawayo and spoke no English, had her first dance

with him on one of their Saturday Night "do's".

During the week, the Guild had discussions, lectures, speakers — never a dull moment. Issy Sarif conducted a gym where there were high and parallel bars, weights and other equipment, all of which were kept under the stage. In addition, Mr Moss ran a "free-for-all" boxing class. Hymie and Dave Baron, he remembers, were both boxing then and boxing well. "There was always something going on," says Mr Moss, "and no *ferubles*". The Jewish Guild, he says, was a "home from home for all and a play-ground for the younger members. There was no excuse to be bored and not participate."

The Guild, realising the pressing need to expand the sporting side of its activities, was responsible for the original negotiation in 1936 for the acquisition of land for what was then known as the Parkview Tennis Club.

Charles Whiteson, Guild chairman for more than 12 years during which time he bade farewell to the Jewish members of the



In the minor hall of the Guild, upstairs. A Yiddish Society (?) party, 1937.

forces in World War Two and gladly welcomed back those who returned, in his memoirs recalled that both these functions took place at the Guild Hall and were attended by practically all the community and were very moving and unforgettable. It was also here that Bulawayo's community came to grips with the horrors of the Holocaust. Ms Keet recalls: "I caught my first frightened glimpses into the Holocaust in the Guild Hall and remember as yesterday the unease and vague fear when certain meetings were held and we children were not allowed to attend. No-one would tell us what it was all about ..."

"And then the survivors began to come to the community and we picked up little bits and pieces. I remember sitting on the staircase inside the Guild and one of the children told us a probably garbled story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, perhaps overheard from parents. I remember those times when my parents would dress silently and somberly in black and go off to a Guild meeting. Those early memories branded me for life."

She also attended the 1948 celebrations to mark the first *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, which took place naturally at the Guild, and also the many films, JNF newsreels and flickering black-and-white documentaries graphically depicting the birth and growth of Israel.

During the 1950s, the Guild continued all its activities with renewed enthusiasm. Claire Boyer, Barbara Sher, David Barne and the great Mark Markov all produced noteworthy plays and entertainments. The first American musical seen in Bulawayo, *Anything Goes*, was produced by the Guild and performed at the City Hall for a 'sold out' run.

Inter-cultural quizzes with Herbie Bayer and Laurie Isaac as quiz masters were extremely popular and pitted Jewish teams against teams from other Bulawayo clubs.

On Wednesday afternoons the ladies play cards — a serious business. An annual Klaberjas championship was held and ping-pong and snooker matches were fiercely contested. The library and educational lectures were not as well



The Yiddish Society (?), 1942. (Seated from left): M Binah, Sadie Kaplan, Schmuel Gotz, —, Bernard Sonnabend. (Standing): Natie Kagan, Maurice Meyers, Boris Mirbach.

attended but continued to function as they were felt to be an integral part of the Guild's aims. The Golden Jubilee of the Jewish Guild was celebrated at a gala banquet in the hall on December 6 1956 — an event which became significant in the lives of Jews nationwide.

At that gala the Hon R S Garfield Todd, Prime Minister of Rhodesia, was guest of honour, the first time a Prime Minister of the country had fulfilled this role at a Jewish function. Mr Todd used this for a major policy speech on the franchise commission and Abe Abrahamson, MP, supported him. It was perhaps this event which "heralded the acceptance of the Jewish population into the ruling establishment," wrote B A Kosmin in his book *Majuta* in 1980. Also, it was in the Guild Hall that Mr Todd had been elected

leader of the United Party, which office brought him the premiership. In his speech, Mr Todd remarked that Jews were needed for the qualities of "vision, sympathy and hard work. It would be a sad day for the country if these qualities were ever lost."

A beautifully compiled commemorative brochure, *50 Golden Years*, was produced and copies immediately became collector's items. It is from this that many of the details for this article have been taken.



A banquet held for the Guild's Golden Jubilee, December 6 1956. (From left): Rhebe Tatz, Garfield Todd (Prime Minister), Dr Bernie Tatz (chair), Ralph Berwold (MC — at back), Mrs Todd, Abe Abrahamson.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the impetus was lost and sadly the Guild began its decline. Freddy Reiff, chairman at that time, deplored the general lack of interest in Guild affairs. Functions were further curtailed due to protracted negotiations with the Hebrew Congregation regarding proposed renovations as the building needed structural alterations. Parkview Weizmann took over many of the Guild's functions when the community decreased. In 1960, Dr Tatz the next Guild chairman, called a meeting where he proposed the disbanding of the Guild owing to lack of support. The board disagreed and the Guild continued for a little longer, but the snooker table was sold to the Que Que Hotel, owned by Cecil Fines. The writing was on the wall.

Further meetings were called of Guild members at which it was recommended that it be liquidated and that the accumulated funds totalling some £1,500 be handed over to the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies as trustees to invest at its discretion and to administer the income in ways it considered most suitable.

The Jewish Guild Journal

We have been unable to source the *Journal*. The last known copies belonged to Anna Cohen but have since disappeared. According to the memoirs of Cecil Jacobs, its first editor: It first appeared in 1919 and was a double-column magazine of quarto size, running to 40 pages of adverts, communal news and reports, and original articles. "We used to receive a lot of original copy. Most of the contributors were young and the literary merit (was) not of a very high order..."

The first edition carried a *Rosh Hashanah* message over the initials MIC. A short but sincere obituary recorded the death of South Africa's first Prime Minister, General Louis Botha, and special references were made to his support of Jewish national rights in Palestine.

There was a report of the Guild's AGM, attended by some 70 members. There were 16 nominations for eight positions of office. Sam Rabinovitz was elected chairman, L E Banet and Archie Landau were joint secretaries and Sam Grossberg, treasurer.

A humorous article by Greta Bloomberg dealt with the difficulties of teaching the "native" boy the elementary principles of *kashrut*, and there was a report of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the congregation.

Archie Landau contributed a poem called "Weather Drama" which Mr Jacobs said, "If it fails to reach the standards of a Poet Laureate, it is nonetheless amusing."

A place of honour was given to a list of Rhodesian Jews who had served in the Great War and an item "Salisbury Snapshots" dealt with the difficulties being encountered by the Guild in that city. We learnt that manufacturing was taking off and the paper featured Mark Harris, proprietor of Atlas Flour Mills, Mr Braude and Mr Shalovsky of Rhodesian Fertilizers, and Mr Kapnek who was making cattle dip.

The *Journal* said Livingstone had eight Jewish family but no *shool* yet. Adverts by major companies such as Meikles and Haddons appeared. One announced that a Grand Ball was to be held in the Guild on October 22 1919 at ten shillings double with proceeds going towards a piano. The ball was described as the "event of the season" and it announced "Splendid Sitting Out Corners!" ☆

So the Jewish Guild, after 62 glorious years of service, was finally disbanded in 1963. The remaining funds were distributed to Carmel School and to the synagogue. The Guild Hall continued to be used for weddings, *Bar Mitzvahs* and other functions until the late 1970s, when the stage and other parts of the building were condemned as unsafe. The old hall has been sold now and will be a warehouse. But if, like Ms Keet, one stands outside on the pavement, the "teeming memories of its splendid past" are almost tangible reminders of a golden era in our history.

Again in Ms Keet's words, "The Jewish community will never die but will live on through its sons and daughters who caught the flame of Judaism here."

The enormous role played by the Jewish Guild in the lives of the Bulawayo Jewish community cannot be estimated. The Guild provided a neutral ground that combined sporting activities with social and cultural needs. The present community is the richer for its endeavours and so much the poorer for its loss. ☆

Zionism put to the test

*The longest journey begins with the first step.
Chinese proverb*

A very important meeting took place on September 18 1898 (5659). A few men, inspired by Dr Theodor Herzl at the first World Zionist Congress in 1897, gathered to consider what practical steps could be taken to promote their vision of Zionism.

Morris Marks Landau chaired the meeting. After much discussion it was decided to form a branch which would give practical assistance to the growing Jewish colonisation of Palestine. It was in this spirit that four days later on September 22 1898 a "Tent" (branch) of the London Chovevei Zion Society was formed.

This was the first Zionist society north of the Limpopo and one of the pioneer Jewish organisations established in Rhodesia.

It can be regarded as the beginning of the Rhodesian Zionist movement and it served Bulawayo, and later, the several small Jewish communities in the rest of the undeveloped territories of the Rhodesias and Barotseland.

It is interesting to note that Bulawayo had Zionism as far back as when Dr Herzl was



The founders of the Chovevei Zion Society, 1900. (Front from left): M Clark, I Epstein, M Hurwitz, J Joseph, J Falk, Rev M I Cohen, L Natkin. (Back): Joseph Beemer, J Smollen, S Favish, - Sankstein, I W Baron.

trying to get a charter for Zionist development from the Sultan of Turkey in Palestine; and that synchronised with the Charter of development that was in

operation under the direction of Cecil John Rhodes, the "founder" of Rhodesia. Dr Herzl, in fact, tried to make contact with Rhodes to discuss the details of what might



Bulawayo Chovevei Zion Society, 1933/34. (Top from left): Abe Bernstein, Mrs E Zacks, Miss A D Liptz, Mrs I W Baron, Ben Baron, Mrs Jack Cohen, L A Rubestein (Pioneer sec), Mrs J Blumenthal, Max Gordon (pres YIS), Mrs H Radowsky, C I Jacobs. (Sitting): H Liptz (Hon sec), H L Rubenstein, J Joseph (Pioneer), S Rabinovitz (pres), Rev M I Cohen (Hon chaplain), Mrs Archadie Kaplan (Hon treasurer), H B Ellenbogen (vice pres). (Insets): O Kaufman (vice pres), B Goldstein (vice pres 1932-3), Miss B Rabinovitch, Mrs M I Cohen, I Rabinovitz, Miss R Rabinovitz, C Gershater, J Katz, P L Sale.

have become a charter of Zionist development in Palestine.

There was no Jewish minister in the town then, so a group of local Jewish laymen from such diverse areas as Russia, Rumania, Germany, England and Australia got the society off the ground. Morris Landau, one of a large family of brothers who made their mark in southern Africa, was the first president. With him were Joseph Joseph, Isaac Epstein, Oscar Kaufman, Moshe Weiner and in 1902 Rev M I Cohen. Mr J Saber became vice president, treasurer Isaac Epstein, Hon secretaries F N Joseph and A B Diamond, committee I Woolf, H Dechow, F Freedman, B Horwitz, Veitelsohn, Immergluck, M Budlander, Schulman and N Mandelson.

In that year, 1899, the Jewish population of Bulawayo had not yet reached 200. Living conditions were crude. Houses were tin and wood shanties, roads were merely sandy paths. Yet the tiny community met in a hut, which served as a synagogue, to consider the start of a Zionist society. It is doubtful whether it will ever be possible to assess fully the debt owed by Rhodesian Jewry to this small band of ardent Zionist pioneers who laboured ceaselessly. Samuel Rabinovitz recalled in 1969 on the 70th birthday of the CZ that he could not decide whether the society was inspired by the Zionist activities in the Transvaal at the time or by the World Zionist Organisation in Basle. Which ever it was, he said, he still preferred to assess the role of the CZ in the context of what it did for the Jewish community in Bulawayo.

The following year, 1900, Mr Landau as president visited London where he was received by the heads of Chovevei Zion. The Bulawayo society was formally constituted as a *tent*, with its aims defined in identical terms as the parent society,

namely: to foster the national idea of Israel; to promote the colonisation of Palestine and neighbouring territories by settling Jewish agriculturalists and artisans thereon and assisting those already established; to foster the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language; and to further the moral, intellectual and material status of Israel. The initial committee were Mr Landau (commander); Norman Mandelson, (vice commander); committee Fred Joseph, Isaac Epstein (treasurer), M D Lowenstark and C Friedman (Hon secretaries), Louis Landau, J Wolffe, Lazaras Hart, A B Diamond, Joseph Joseph and Joseph Beemer.

The CZ has played a historic part in the development of the Zionist movement in southern Africa and has made a great contribution to the Jewish life of Bulawayo. This branch, unlike other Zionist societies formed at the same time, did not encounter any opposition. In 1901, out of the 200 Bulawayo Jewish souls, 170 were CZ members. Its founders were of mixed extraction but harmonious relations existed. Mr Landau, a man of great energy and business capacity, was of English origin, as was Mr Joseph, who succeeded him as president and who maintained an active interest in the society until he left for Europe in 1920.

Isaac Epstein was Russian, a man of noble character and a Hebrew scholar who had served the Zionist cause even before he arrived in Africa. Another connected early on with the society was Moshe Weiner — founder of the Johannesburg Chovevei Zion.

Mr Rabinovitz also recalled, "I have a personal recollection of all of them from 1902 onwards. I know of no group of men embracing more varied backgrounds of thinking on matters Jewish i.e. English, Irish, eastern European and central



Facsimile of the "Warrant" issued on September 20 1900 approving the Bulawayo Chovevei Zion Society as a formally constituted "Tent" of the Chovevei Zion in England.

European, coupled with profound Hebrew scholarship, theology, religious piety and Jewish nationalist yearning. These men, especially Isaac Epstein and Rev Cohen, were mentors to the others who joined the society and they imbued them with the concept of Jewish totality and a Jewish future. They instilled a firm Jewish consciousness and pride in their heritage. No wonder the Chovevei Zion became the spring-board which provided leadership for the many facets of communal development which took place in later years. In Bulawayo no aspirant for leadership in the community dared claim public support unless he had a commendable record of service in the CZ."

The smallness of the community, its isolation from the world and the rough and ready conditions accounted for the spirit of unity by which Bulawayo Jewish life was marked. It had one of the strongest senses of solidarity to be found anywhere in southern Africa. Our CZ flourished because it not only carried out Zionist activities but it moved into education, charities and performed social services.

Once the CZ as an organised body was set on its course, its progress and influence on our local Jewry was rapid and permanent. One significant factor that helped it greatly was its close association with the local *shul*. For instance, in 1898-99, F N Joseph, the CZ Hon secretary, was also vice president of the Hebrew Congregation, and J Saber, a CZ vice president, was the first president of the *shul*.

Because of this link between the CZ and the congregation, the society was permitted to hold annually two special Zionist services in the *shul* — one on *Shabbat*



Diamond Jubilee banquet for the Chovevei Zion Society, 1959. A section of the large gathering looking towards the top table. The Hon Mr Abrahamson is addressing them.

Nachamu and the other during *Chanukah*. The society became responsible for the erection of the first *Succah* in Rhodesia. This is how *The Chronicle* of September 23 1899 reported it:

"The tabernacle exhibited a very beautiful appearance with its hanging of light blue and white profusely decorated with various texts and legends worked thereon in white, blue, gold and silver. The roof was a thick network of green boughs and twigs decorated with clusters of choice fruits, lanterns and other beautiful objects."

In those days the committee would turn up at public affairs dressed in smart suits and long satin purple sashes draped from shoulder to hip. The sashes were inscribed with gold lettering and the group would make a very impressive appearance. Other than the social functions, the Society's semi-annual discussion about the disposal of funds was usually a big crowd-drawer and attracted heated, hearty debate.

Then too the CZ would sponsor public lectures to propagate Zionism and the women would lay on a sumptuous tea. *The Chronicle* of August 26 1899 reported on F N Joseph's talk, "The National Idea of Judaism", saying:

"The meeting (was) attended by over 100 people, including a good proportion of ladies... the lecturer in the course of a frequently applauded address said that he wished as an every day, matter-of-fact man to state why he was an upholder of the CZ and... (that) a Jew should be as proud of his race as of his religion and just as an English Howard could boast that his forebears came over with the Conqueror, so to the humblest Jew could assert that his forefathers were with Moses at the passing of the Red Sea. The race enthusiasm of the Jews need abate nothing of their patriotism towards the countries of their adoption."

The CZ pursued those ends and had only the previous week remitted a large sum of money to Col Goldsmid (the British Deputy Adjutant-General) to be devoted to the agricultural colony of Machanayim and to the Great School at Jaffa..."

The CZ stretched its horizons, taking in not only Zionism and raising funds, but concerning itself with world matters such as the notorious Dreyfus affair in France. Prompted by the CZ, Bulawayo Jewry sent a telegram to Madame Dreyfus: "Sincerest sympathy. Your husband's innocence is accepted by the civilised world."

Monies raised by our tiny group of idealists also went a long way to Jewish settlement in Palestine. The society proved to be extremely energetic. By those early standards, large funds were raised for the colonisation of Palestine. In 1901 "several hundred" pounds were sent. One colony which the Bulawayo CZ supported was Bnei Yehouda.

Time passed and in 1902 the CZ bonds with its South African partner grew stronger while those with the UK became

weaker but it was some time before those connections were severed.

Although established as a Bulawayo society, the CZ functioned as a co-ordinating body for all of the Rhodesias. By dedication and loyalty to Zionist aims and to the ideal of Jewish people, it galvanised other groups into a fraternity and to common purpose.

The years that followed saw commendable progress. By 1905, after nearly seven years of activity during which the Rhodesian Jewish population never exceeded 300, the CZ, which now boasted a ladies' sub-committee, had raised more than £2,000 for Zionist purposes. Its influence permeated not only all Jewish institutions in the town, but also the many distant outposts in Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Belgium Congo. It became the nerve centre of Zionism throughout the territory. Mr Rabinovitz joined the CZ in 1910 and said he considered it "quite an achievement to have got the job as assistant to the assistant secretary, Mr L A Rubenstein".



It was at the initiative of the Bulawayo CZ Society that the Rhodesian Zionist Council (RZC — forerunner of Cazo) was created at the first Rhodesian Zionist Conference held in 1943, and the society was responsible for making all the arrangements. Many years later women members were induced to establish a women's section, the Bulawayo Women's Zionist Society.

In 1958 Chovevei Zion inaugurated the Zionist Forum, devoted to discussions on Zionism. In 1959 the CZ Diamond Jubilee was held with a banquet in the Grand Hotel. Hundreds attended and greetings were read from Federal Premier Sir Roy Welensky and Sir Edgar Whitehead, Southern Rhodesia's Prime Minister.

By 1968 the CZ was undertaking numerous functions including lectures, *Yom Ha' Atzmaut* celebrations, showing Israeli films, Rev M I Cohen Memorial lectures, symposiums, quizzes and *Succot* parties. By this time Rabbi Zwebner was Hon Chaplain. Activities spread to other parts of the Rhodesias. Barney Katz, whose association with the society went back to 1940, retired as chairman in 1970 after serving for 13 years. Incoming chairman was Harry Orkin. A lull followed, but in 1973 the CZ was resuscitated after being inactive for a year by Alan Mandelstam as interim chairman. From 1974 to 1981, the CZ strove ahead with its annual "Living Gazette", an evening of live newspaper reports. Adela Kamionsky usually stood in as editor and various people presented different aspects of a newspaper from sport to columns.

The Chovevei Zion Society of Bulawayo still exists but today it has taken a back seat to other communal affairs. Most of its functions are now overseen by Cazo, yet its glorious past will never be undone. ☆

M I Cohen ... the driving force



Rev Moses Isaac Cohen

EVERY community needs a driving force to get things going. Such a force was the Rev Moses Isaac Cohen (1876-1939), fondly called 'Mick' for his initials. His youthful zeal and infectious enthusiasm gave the fledgling Jewish community a "kick start" as he involved himself in all Jewish affairs, and in the Chovevei Zion Society in particular.

Getting Rev Cohen proved to be no easy matter. Early in 1897, community members had no minister and they began to complain about the standard of the Hebrew school. Letters went to and fro between the congregation and Chief Rabbi Dr Adler as well as Rabbi Bender in Cape Town. One candidate emerged, the Rev Francis L Cohen, who was offered £500 a year with a rent-free suitable house to be built plus £100 for his travelling expenses to Rhodesia, no small amount in those years. However, this Mr Cohen ultimately chose an illustrious career in Sydney.

So we got another Cohen, much to our future benefit. Rev Cohen left England in October 1899 but his arrival was delayed in Cape Town because of the outbreak of war. The 23-year-old eventually reached Bulawayo, after a circuitous route via Beira to avoid the fighting.

With his arrival, proper Hebrew classes started and he attended schools to give scripture lessons to Jewish pupils. He was Hon chaplain of the Chovevei Zion and Idler's Club from the start and had a deep influence in every sphere of the community's activities. Extracts from his files read:

"Early in the year 1898 the Jewish Social Debating Society and the Chovevei Zion

were formed. The former did not last long, but the latter had played an important part in our communal life ... It co-operated with the shool in the erection of a succah. ... This harmonious co-operation has been invaluable

"I arrived in Bulawayo on Sunday 25th March 1900. Among the visitors who came to see me on the first morning was the late Isaac Epstein, one of the heroes of SA Zionism, who made me a true Zionist. He and I read modern Hebrew literature together and he was a great formative influence in my life.

"I joined the Zionist society and have hardly missed a meeting in 35 years. At an early date (1902) I induced the society to affiliate to the SA Zionist Federation. It established a class for Hebrew teaching towards which it made grants and was the first society to hold regular social functions and so the whole community joined the institution.

"It combined with the shool in fostering education, co-operated in many communal matters, founded and maintained a library, carried out a most extensive propaganda throughout Rhodesia, maintained its activity uninterrupted through the most difficult times of the movement, and has played a large part in the development of Zionism in southern Africa.

"The Zionist Society, by means of its meetings, lectures, library and extensive propaganda was largely responsive for an intensive Jewish spirit. It was not easy in a small community, isolated from the outside world, to maintain an active Zionist Society through the many lean years preceding the Great War, but we succeeded in doing so. Large sums were raised for various colonies in Palestine and for the Jewish Colonial Trust and for all other Zionist funds.

"The activities of this society was such that (I) was invited to Johannesburg to help organise the first SA Zionist Conference (1905). For this purpose my congregation was requested by the Federation to allow me to proceed ... six weeks before the conference. I went through all the minute books of the Federation and drew up its first report".

Rev Cohen's energies and time were given freely to all good causes in the community. He established a Jewish library and was responsible for recording the early history of the Jews in Zimbabwe. Many today still remember him with great affection. A tall, good-looking man sporting a neatly trimmed and waxed moustache, most recall his short temper when provoked on subjects of injustice. But he also had a keen sense of humour and one congregant recalls how in later years, the reverend's false teeth would "wobble" while he was giving a sermon and how some in the congregation would snigger at this. Unabashed he would lean over the pulpit and tell them, "Just wait till you're my age."

But it was not all smooth sailing for the minister. There was a group which strongly opposed him in the beginning. They regarded his outlook as being too modern and there were pro- and anti-Cohen cliques. However, his opponents grew to love and respect him, even those who could not "accept his modernity". Kosmin called

Mordechai Bina

Born in Kovno, went to Palestine in 1920, arrived in Bulawayo in 1928. He took great interest in local communal, Zionist and cultural insitutions playing a vital part in Histadrut Ivrit, the Yiddish Society, Chovevei Zion and Educational Council. He was a man passionately interested in humanitarian endeavours.

Leib Frank

Appointed as the SA Zionist's General Secretary in Tel Aviv in 1962. Prior to this he had been the organising secretary of the RZC for 12 years. Went on *aliyah* in 1961.

Willie Kaplan

Veteran Zionist and prominent community personality. Associated with Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation (Hon sec and Hon treasurer), Rhodesian Zionist Council (Hon treasurer), Israel United Appeal (Hon treasurer), Bulawayo Jewish Guild (chairman), Chovevei Zion (Hon sec and vice chairman), Parkview Sports Club (chairman), Board of Deputies, JNF Department and United General Zionist Group. Served the community for more than 40 years.

Max Weinberg

Arrived 1944, joined Zionist Youth exec, active Chovevei Zion, chairman of literary society of the Guild, Poalei Zion. Exec and president of Cazo; 1974 vice president of Southern Region, Cazo and Cazo chairman for two sessions; member of Board and Carmel Board, chairman of MDA.

him a "more anglicised version of Chaim Weizmann" for his fervent love of the British Empire. He took this a step further when he tried to inculcate British norms into local youth, especially in the sphere of sports. He became known as "Mick, the sporting parson," for his passion for cricket and outdoor zeal.

An emancipated, British patriot he helped allay anti-Jewish feeling and did much to pressure the Government concerning the question of citizenship rights and immigration. He was active in most welfare and educational institutions, many of which he helped to establish, including the setting up of a system and standard of public education in Rhodesia and was for a time chairman of the Bulawayo School Board. The reverend also played a leading part in establishing the African Welfare Services.

A convinced and ardent Zionist he travelled the length and breadth of the Rhodesias and very often further afield to bring the message of Zionism to distant communities.

Mick Cohen was admired "by reason of his religious tolerance and intellectual

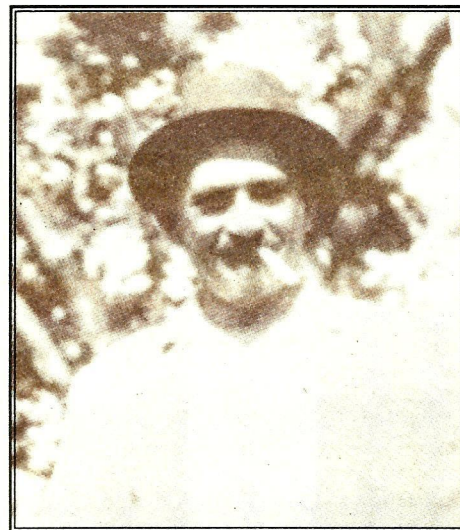
attainments" and in 1935 was awarded the MBE for his great public services including those rendered to the Public Library, the Native Welfare Society and the Children's Welfare Society. After his death, *The Sunday News* paid tribute to him:

"Perhaps the greatest asset possessed by (him) was his ability to effect a working arrangement and understanding with people of all types, colours and creeds. It was his essential humanity, breadth of vision and tolerance of the other man's point of view that won him such great recognition not only among members of his own congregation but among those people who were labouring for a cause that was far removed from that usually entered by a rabbi."

The Chronicle also paid tribute and made a specific reference to his work for the settlement of the Railway strike in 1920 when he acted as a mediator between the strike leaders and the government, which endeared him to the man-in-the-street. Max King recalled in his memoirs, "Rev Cohen was a tower of strength. He was an outstanding figure in Bulawayo life, equally so among the Gentile community."

But perhaps the power behind the pastoral throne was his second wife, "Birdie", (he had divorced his first wife causing much scandal in those days as it was unseemly for a minister to do so.) It was Birdie who would keep her husband steadfast when his short-temper got the better of him. "Oddly enough," recalls one congregant, "he was more of a humanitarian and Zionist, than a religious man, and it was Birdie, who had deep beliefs, that would bring him back to his religious duties, which he would then fulfil with great fervour."

Each year after the death of Rev Cohen in June 1939, the CZ organise the M I Cohen Memorial Lecture in his honour. Birdie Cohen and her two children went on *aliyah* to Israel soon after the founding of the state. ✪



In 1931 Dr Chaim Weizmann and his wife visited Rhodesia. He spoke of his dreams for Palestine. All who heard him were mesmerised by his charisma. Little did they realise he was destined to become Israel's first President.

Cazo brings form and purpose



The first Rhodesian Zionist Council 1947/49. (Front from left): Rev W Yesorsky, Rachel Baron (Wizo), Samuel Rabinovitz (chair), Paul Sale (Hon treasurer), Sammy Rabinowitz (vice chair). (Back): E Solomon (Youth), A Kaplan, S Gotz, Abe Abrahamson, David Melmed.

FIFTY-one years is not a long time in Jewish history, but in the life of a small community situated in a remote part of the world, it is an epoch when measured in terms of endeavour, achieved by the Rhodesian Zionist Council (RZC) in 1943.

The first all-Rhodesian Zionist Conference was held in Bulawayo's Jewish Guild Hall that July and lasted for three days. It was attended by some 50 delegates and many guests. Zionists and other Jewish institutions from various centres of the Rhodesias were present. Samuel Rabinovitz, president of the Chovevei Zion Society, took the chair.

From small beginnings the Council grew to an institution which encompassed and directed every facet of Zionist and Jewish life. From about 1943 Cazo was housed in Mimosa House but in 1952 it moved to the second floor of Colray House in 9th Avenue, while the building was still under construction. Up until then staff worked in difficult crowded conditions, with only two offices filled with files, documents, books, equipment and a constant flow of clothing parcels from all over the country.

The Council brought in form, system and organisation; it gathered together members of local and national Zionist societies and organisations which existed prior to 1943 and which had sprung up since. It became the hub from which spokes radiated covering our whole communal life in the field of Zionism. Particularly worthy of note was the Council's reciprocal liaisons with the Jewish Board of Deputies which began the same year. This co-operation between the two major Jewish bodies in the Federation made possible the achievements of both in their respective spheres of activity and it laid the foundation of a well-integrated homogeneous community.

Zionism existed in the Rhodesias long before the State of Israel was created and, after its establishment, the Council had to change its Zionist direction and endeavour. It focused on the Israeli United Appeal, the Jewish National Fund and the Emergency Appeal, Jewish education and *aliyah*.

To spread Zionism, the RZC imported a "mobile film unit" (picture right) in 1952, consisting of a van and a projector, to take films to the smallest centres. It also carried Jewish books and gramophone records. This venture was short lived because the vehicle

had an accident while on its rounds. But altogether it spent 10 weeks touring the Rhodesias going as far north as the Congo to Elizabethville.

More than 6,000 people saw the films at 36 public viewings. The largest single audience was in Bulawayo where 600 people including 200 non-Jewish guests turned out at the McMurray Hall.

The Council had a busy year in 1959. It celebrated the diamond jubilee of the Bulawayo Chovevei Zion Society with a large banquet and later hosted the eighth biennial Rhodesian Zionist Conference and the seventh biennial Rhodesian Women's Zionist Conference in Bulawayo. These were attended by delegates from all over central and southern Africa.

Quite a notable event was the visit of the World Zionist president, Dr N Goldmann, who launched the IUA, which was generously supported by local Jews. Bulawayo saw much of the Israeli Consular General Mr G Doron and trade was established with Israel.

Bulawayo Jewry was made aware of the Rumanian Immigration Crisis and Col M Pearlman, director of the Israeli Government Information Services, visited.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebrations were held in the city hall each year and a pictorial exhibition of Israel's progress in the first 10 years of statehood was officially opened by the mayor of Bulawayo.

The RZC also established its first bursary award when two young Bulawayans, Miriam Bina and John Orkin, were awarded free holidays to Israel for winning the Education Committee's contest. There was great activity in public relations when many Jewish speakers attended non-Jewish

gatherings. *Aliyah* work intensified and tourism to Israel was made a high priority.

Under the RZC, there were two branches: the Women's Zionist Committee (WZC) and the Rhodesian Zionist Youth executive.

At the 10th biennial Rhodesian Zionist Conference in Bulawayo in 1964, there was unanimous approval that the RZC disaffiliate as a constituent of the SA Zionist Federation and establish itself as an independent body to be known as the Central African Zionist Organisation to be affiliated directly to the World Zionist Organisation. A new constitution giving effect to this resolution was adopted. Dave J Melmed was elected as the first Cazo chairman and this designation was changed to president.



Delegates at that conference were made up from the United Zionist Association, the Zionist Revisionist Organisation, the United General Zionist Group and Poalei Zion, the Rhodesian Women's Zionist Organisation, the Rhodesian Zionist Youth Executive, Habonim and Betar. Also present were Clrs Solly Jossel, president of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation and Abe Menashe, vice president of the Bulawayo Progressive Jewish Congregation, and Eli Eliasov, vice president of the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies. Dr Morris Golden was outgoing president of the RZC.

Other resolutions called for a more intensive drive to spread Jewish culture by establishing groups for the study of Hebrew literature and language and to bring a teacher from Israel. Another called for a tightening of the bond between Israel and the Rhodesias and a Rhodesian Zionist Executive was formed. The women



Rhodesian delegation to the SA Zionist conference 1945. (At the table, from left): Rose Rabinovitz, Rachel Baron, Muriel Rosin, Abe Lessem. (Back): Paul Sale, Leslie Thal, Sonny Reiff, Dave Kahn, Sam Rabinovitz, Harry Mathieson, Uri Illion, Julius Mohrer, Mrs Khan, Sam Lasovsky, —, Dr I H Levine, Ivan Kaufman.

appealed for children to be given the opportunity to know their Jewish heritage.

During the 1967 Six Day War, the Jewish community of central Africa responded and special meetings were called to plan a programme of action. The Board threw its weight into active support of the effort as did Cazo. A Special Actions' Committee was set up in Bulawayo. It was decided to launch an Israeli Emergency Appeal. Suitable young people were called upon for voluntary non-combat duties in Israel and the Campaign and Manpower committees got rolling. Sam Rabinovitz was elected national president of the emergency campaign. On the day of the outbreak of hostilities, Cazo reacted strongly: "In this fateful hour, the Jews of Rhodesia stand totally and unreservedly with their brethren in the Holy Land."

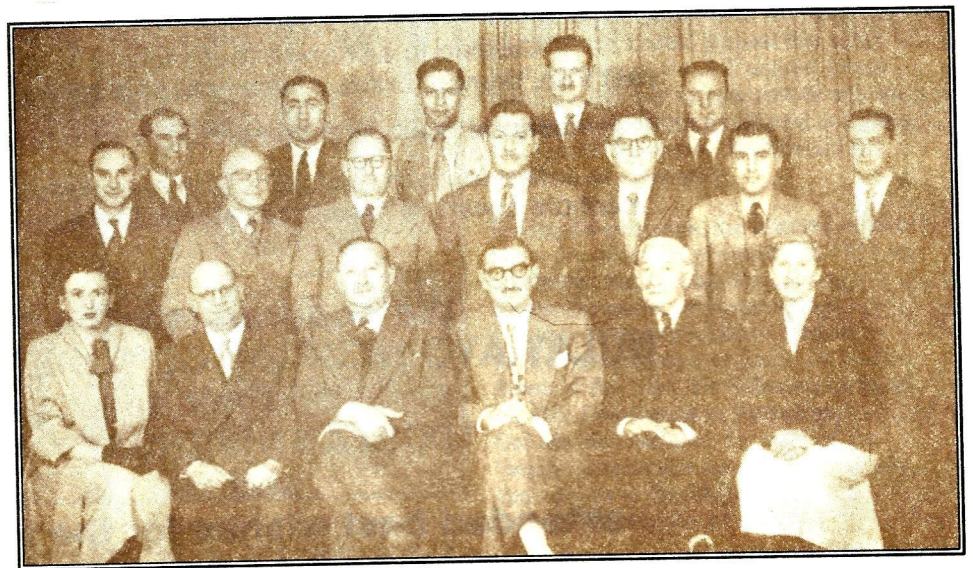
That night, two large workers' meetings were held in both cities and many offered their service in all spheres. A delegation called on the Prime Minister of Rhodesia to fill him in on the activities and intentions of local Jewish communities. A most encouraging feature during the crisis was the spontaneous expression of sympathy and practical support received from the public at large and from the authorities, the Press, Radio and TV. The response by the youthful volunteers was overwhelming as was the appeal for funds.

Cazo thrived in the 1970s. Not only were there the main offices but there was the Zionist Youth Office. There were weekly Hebrew lessons, and two typists were needed to keep up with the work. The *Jerusalem Post* was available on a weekly basis; tours and holidays were organised to Israel and regular *aliyah* sessions were held.

In the late 1970s Cazo reported that there was an increase in *aliyah* and this activity

became an important factor in its work. JNF traditional work continued unabated but there were problems getting canvassers for the IUA campaign. Due to the initiative of the WZC, the children of Rhodesia participated in the 30th anniversary of the JNF project and planted trees in a special children's forest.

Cazo's aims were to launch, organise and co-ordinate campaigns for Israel and to furnish information on *aliyah*, study in Israel and processing these arrangements. It publishes the *CA Zionist Digest* and distributes it free to every Jewish household in central Africa. It invites and arranges visits of lecturers and other personalities. Among distinguished personalities have been Israeli General Chaim Herzog, Dr Israel Goldstein, chairman of the world *Keren Hayesod*



Rhodesian Zionist Council 1952. (Back from left): L Frank, H C Greenblatt, S Haimowitz, C Segal, S Pines. (Middle): L Strauss, A Kaplan, I Lieberman, A Sarif, M Keet, B Katz, A Abrahamson. (Seated): Mrs G Dyzenhaus, Sammy Rabinovitz, Samuel Rabinovitz, D Melmed, P L Sale, Mrs L Fredman.

Jerusalem. Many of these guests have been on TV and Radio. Cazo also prepares and distributes education/information folders to women Zionist societies, youth movements, Hebrew schools, congregations, and other Jewish bodies and individuals. It guides the tourist to Israel; organises and co-ordinates Yom Ha'Atzmaut functions, screens Israeli films, distributes educational material prepared by the JNF, attends to the various JNF inscriptions, co-ordinates the Tree Drives, Blue Box clearances and distributes the annual JNF pocket calendars and desk diary refills.

It co-ordinates and attends to travel arrangements for the various youth courses, such as machon hachoreff and hadracha, maintains an interest in Jewish day schools and makes an annual financial grant, and supplies suitable material to assist in the educational programme. It co-ordinated the arrangements for the Agricultural Awards made annually to Israel (inaugurated by Mr Louis Buffenstein), maintains close liaison with women's councils; is affiliated with the CA Zionist Youth Council which receives Cazo financial assistance; and assists sister organisations in Zambia.

In 1974 Cazo and the Board were again the community's voice when they issued statements condemning the Ma'alot and Kiryat Shmona massacres. "Rhodesian Jewry," the telegram said, "are numbed with shock and outrage at the horrifying murder and maiming of innocent school children and other victims at Ma'alot." Special prayers were organised in the city.

1979 was unusual as it saw two presidents resign while in office to go on *aliyah*. Harry Orkin succeeded as chairman of the Southern Regional Committee and Barney Katz completed 18-Hai-years as Cazo general secretary.

The IUA campaign was not completed due to the lack of canvassers and Cazo resorted to appealing to the community to respond by letter and phone. Interest in *aliyah*