

MAJUTA
A History of the Jewish
Community in Zimbabwe

B.A. Kosmin

ZAMBEZIANA: Vol X

A NEW SERIES ON CULTURE AND
SOCIETY IN CENTRAL AFRICA

General Editor: Professor R.S. Roberts

This series of books on the culture and society of Central Africa arose out of my experience as a research supervisor that there was a considerable amount of significant research work being done on Central Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, for which there was no adequate means of publication. This has been due not only to a recession in British and American academic publishing, but also to something of a preoccupation with the modern political problems of Central Africa that militated against the publication of work on economic and social history and other aspects of cultural development.

Mambo Press is therefore to be congratulated on its decision to publish such works. This, the tenth volume in the series, arose out of Dr Kosmin's doctoral dissertation, which was a study of racial minorities in Zimbabwe with special reference to wholesale and retail trade. It became clear that the materials existed for a more detailed study of the Jewish role in the history of this country; and so with the encouragement of the Board of Deputies and the generosity of numerous donors further research was undertaken. The result is this book which has a particular value to students not only of Jewish history but also of colonialism; for the interest of the Jewish community in Zimbabwe is that it grew up alongside and at the same time as the British 'host' community, but in an intermediary position between the rulers and the ruled African majority. This unusual situation of being both pioneer and yet still a minority vulnerable to discrimination has given a particular twist to the position of Jews that Dr Kosmin explores with subtlety and sympathy.

The delay in the appearance of this volume is due to the troubled conditions in the country over the last two years, notably the bombing of Mambo Press in February 1980.

R.S. Roberts

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A History of the Jewish Community
of Zimbabwe

BY
B.A. KOSMIN

with a Foreword by
M. GELFAND

MAMBO PRESS

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TO THE READER

The text for *Majuta* was ready for printing before Zimbabwe became independent, but the book was not printed at that time because of circumstances beyond the control of Mambo Press. The name 'Rhodesia' will, therefore, be found in the text. Where it has been possible the name has been replaced by Zimbabwe.

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Foreword

For most of its existence, Southern Rhodesia can be described as a very British Colony. But it would be a mistake to attribute all advances since its occupation only to the British, as other ethnic groups have played a part, albeit a lesser one perhaps. And so in the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Roberts, as supervisor of post-graduate students, has wisely encouraged historical research along broader lines such as those taken by Dr Kosmin.

Jews are known to have found their way into the territory, now Zimbabwe, before 1890. But they were very few in number, mostly single individuals, visiting the country in quest of ivory or seeking a concession from Lobengula. After the Occupation they came in a steady but small stream, carefully regulated by the Administration, which was reluctant to allow their entry, although at times when Jews were escaping from a repressive Government, pressure on the Administration for permission to enter was great.

With exceptions, the economic lot of Zimbabwean Jewry was hard, up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Most were immigrants from Eastern Europe or hailed from Mediterranean shores: they were practically all unskilled or unprepared for commercial or professional life. Many could not speak or write English. These were handicaps in a country run and administered by Britons. As related by Dr Kosmin, these settlers encountered other obstacles, especially in the form of prejudice, but fortunately in Southern Rhodesia, these were not sufficiently serious to hold them back; and within a couple of decades a goodly number had risen in the economic world and established solid businesses in the main centres, although many were still eeking out a living as small storekeepers in the rural areas.

But Jews in Southern Rhodesia were fortunate in that not only were they free to participate in the economic life of the country but their children were required to attend school and enjoy the same educational facilities as other European children. What emerges so well from Dr Kosmin's study is that as the Jews were establishing themselves in the economic life of the country, they were busy erecting their houses of worship and establishing cultural centres to care for their spiritual needs. This should not be taken to imply that all Jews were religious, as a number left the fold and became absorbed into Gentile society, but the larger proportion preferred to retain its identity. Their presence in the country was accompanied by a certain degree of antipathy from some sections of the Rhode-

sian public and Dr Kosmin shows this attitude was present in branches of the Administration, where the virus of anti-Semitism seemed to have found a niche. On the whole, this feeling never reached significant proportions, although, with the advent of Nazism, a few vociferous elements made their presence felt in the country.

Then came the Second World War when contrary to predictions, the response of Jews to the call to the colours was not only overwhelming but embarrassing to those who, long before, claimed that Jews would be lacking in such an emergency. By this time, a new section of Jews, many born in the country, were beginning to find their way into professions hardly accessible to their parents. In fact a number could be found amongst the leaders in the professions. A significant number were coming to the fore in the economic life of the country and many of the commercial enterprises and industries were in their hands. Even more surprising was the fact that a few were among the best farmers and ranchers in the country. They were also entering Parliament; some reached Cabinet status and one became Prime Minister of the Federation. But Jews are like other human beings: as Dr Kosmin indicates, not all are angels. The role of the Jew in the life and development of Zimbabwe must not be measured by the acts of only one individual, but by the contribution of all of them as a whole.

Most of the Jews who came to this country in the earlier years arrived with fresh memories of their existence as an oppressed, underprivileged group. Yet in Zimbabwe they readily accepted the status of a privileged society and, like other White immigrants, did little to associate themselves with the less fortunate indigenous peoples of this country. One might have expected Zimbabwean Jewry to have done more for the African. But it should be remembered that they were not alone in their attitude towards this underprivileged population and that it was only in very recent years that thinking people in the Western world began to realize that Africans have similar feelings and aspirations to their own. There was also a serious language barrier and therefore a lack of knowledge of the culture of these people that separated them from those who came to this country. Thus the Jews tended to accept at face value the colonial attitudes of the other European people around them.

This study shows how readily Jews, often poverty stricken when they arrived, have adapted themselves to a new culture and a new way of life to become worthy citizens of Zimbabwe, as in other countries where they have settled. Wherever they planted themselves they took root and came to life in a creative way. They seem to be an eternal people with an indestructible vitality.

M. Gelfand

Preface

From my first contact with Zimbabwe, as a result of being awarded a Fairbridge Scholarship to the then University College in Salisbury, I was intrigued by the origins of the well organized and vibrant Jewish community in the country. This book is the result of that interest but its appearance is due to the encouragement and enthusiasm of my former teacher, Professor Ray Roberts, who first suggested I take an academic interest in the subject, and of that very distinguished Zimbabwean, Professor Michael Gelfand. Both of these men in their own way have tried to maintain the tradition and values of Western liberal scholarship through their work at the multiracial University of Zimbabwe during difficult times, and I trust this book will go some little way to justify their steadfastness.

I should also like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the National Archives of Zimbabwe who provided over the years — perhaps surprisingly to some outsiders — the freest access and finest conditions available to a researcher in contemporary Africa.

My thanks are also due to those organizations and individuals who provided the tangible support for this venture. I am therefore grateful to the Research Committee of the University of Zimbabwe and the Memorial Council for Jewish Culture of New York, who provided me with the opportunity of travelling within Zimbabwe and in Europe to gather material. I owe a particular debt for their moral as much as their financial support to those Zimbabwean Jews listed below who entrusted me with writing the history of their own community:

LIST OF DONORS TO HISTORY OF ZIMBABWEAN JEWRY

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*B. A. Kosmin
Harrow Weald, England
October 1978*

CHAPTER 1

Pioneering Days

My country is all right if the Jews come.
Cecil John Rhodes¹

Most Jewish communities throughout the world are acknowledged to have their own character and individuality. These arise from the composition and origins of the population and the geographical, cultural and historical environment in which they evolved. In the case of Zimbabwe, Jewish contacts with the country occurred as a result of the expansion of the South African frontier by the British of the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century. There is no mention of any Jews or Marranos among the Portuguese expeditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; nor were there any Jews at the Cape at this time, for although the Dutch East India Company had three Jewish shareholders when it was founded in 1602, and had Jewish directors in the eighteenth century, it employed persons only of the Reformed Church at the Cape. The first Jews known to have arrived in South Africa came after the British occupation of the Cape: they were the Solomon family from St Helena in 1806. In 1820 there were four Jewish families among the settlers at Algoa Bay, but it was only in 1841 that the first Jewish religious service was held, at Cape Town, and in 1849 that a synagogue and a Jewish minister were established in South Africa. From then on progress was rapid and in the next two decades Jewish congregations were established at Graaff Reinet, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth.

The half century that followed the Great Trek saw British rule extended from the coast right up to the present boundaries of Zimbabwe. The pattern was for traders, hunters, missionaries and prospectors to blaze the trail and the Union Jack to follow close behind. The movement to the north, along the so-called Missionary Road followed by Moffat and Livingstone, was quickened by the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1867. The establishment of the diamond mines there was to have momentous consequences for the land of the Ndebele and Shona lying to the north of the Limpopo in what was largely unexplored territory as far as White

men were concerned. It was at Kimberley that Cecil Rhodes found the means to turn his imperial dreams into reality. It was on the Diamond Fields also that for the first time Jews had the opportunity to be in at the start of a settlement, and they had an important impact there. Most of the Jewish immigrants were drawn from Germany and Britain and they included such famous future directors of De Beers as Barnett Isaacs from the East End of London, better known as Barney Barnato, and Hamburg-born Alfred Beit and his brother Otto.

However, even before a Jewish congregation was formed at Kimberley in 1871, a Jewish adventurer was already living at Bulawayo. He was Daniel Montague Kisch born in England in 1840. As a young boy he had gone out to the Cape to join his uncle, De Pass, a Cape Town merchant, but early on he had got into trouble and was a fugitive bankrupt when in 1861 he accompanied Anderson's expedition to Hereroland, in present-day Namibia. In 1869 Kisch surfaced as storekeeper and manager of the first significant gold-mining operation on the northern frontier. This was the London & Limpopo Company's workings at the Tati Concession on the western border of Matabeleland. The Chairman of the Company was Sir John Swinburne, later a Westminster M.P. and High Sheriff of Northumberland. Unfortunately Sir John was unused to the rough ways of the frontier, and, when he tried to assert his authority over Kisch, he received the latter's resignation delivered in the form of a broken nose for the Chairman.

Rather than return to the south, Kisch took his stores and moved on into Matabeleland, the infamous 'Black Sparta', which was undergoing a succession dispute and was more dangerous than usual at this particular time. After much bloodshed Lobengula was installed as king in place of his dead father Mzilikazi. Kisch was an attractive man and quickly ingratiated himself with the new ruler. He also became a close friend of another White visitor to the kingdom at this time, the famous explorer and artist Thomas Baines. They often dined together out on the veld; the attraction for Baines was that Kisch had managed to employ the only French chef in the far interior, a man by the name of Beaulieu. Baines recorded in his journals that Kisch was so well established at the royal kraal of Gibixhegu, later renamed Gubuluwayo, that he received the contract to import Lobengula's famous wagon and a double-breech loader. In addition 'the King appears to have regularly employed Mr Kisch as secretary . . . and latterly he has written all letters on state affairs for Lo Bengula.'² It also appears that Kisch received a retainer as the agent in the royal kraal of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs of Natal Colony, whose Government was interested in developments in the interior. After

making what we can be assured was a comfortable sum out of his adventures on the frontier, Kisch returned south and was a merchant in Pretoria in 1875. In 1877 he visited London and in 1878 the former bankrupt was appointed Auditor-General of the Transvaal during the first British Administration. He was the first but not the last Jewish adventurer to make his name and fortune in the unknown interior.

Over the next decade the White settlement was extended further north and the Missionary Road, which later became the route of the railway line from the Cape to the Victoria Falls, via Kimberley, Vryburg, Mafeking, and through present Botswana to Shoshong, Palapye and Bulawayo, became ever more frequented by explorers, big-game hunters, missionaries and traders. Among the traders who now trod the well-beaten path to Lobengula's capital was Augustus Greite, a German Jew who first visited Bulawayo accompanied by his wife in 1875. He gained permission to trade at Bulawayo and erected two stone houses, an iron store-house and a stable to aid his operations. Like so many European residents he could not refrain from involving himself in the local politics and in 1879 he opposed the Jesuits who were trying to establish a mission in the country. The next year he changed his mind and ceased his opposition as he had decided to leave Bulawayo and on 19 and 20 February 1880 he auctioned off his property, surplus goods, and equipment. The Jesuits paid him £500 for his property alone, a very considerable sum in those days. He too left Matabeleland a richer man than he had entered, for his wagons contained 5 tons of ivory and 400 pounds of ostrich feathers, a considerable fortune which helped compensate for the dangers and privations that life beyond the frontier of White settlement involved. Greite returned to the Transvaal where he was last heard of operating a business in Zeerust in 1884.

Every year Western civilization advanced further into the interior as British and other European settlers, including many Jews, began to move into the lands of the African tribes and the Boer pastoralists. The discovery of gold at Barberton in the Eastern Transvaal was quickly followed by the establishment of a Jewish congregation there in 1883, and in 1885 the major discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand led to the foundation of Johannesburg. A gold rush occurred with large numbers of fortune seekers from all over the world flooding into the backward South African Republic of President Kruger. Among the traders, adventurers and capitalists of the new *witlander* population of the Rand, the Jews, now including large numbers from Tsarist Russia, formed about ten per cent of the total. In 1887, the same year that Johannesburg was proclaimed a town, the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation was formed, and Johannesburg began to

replace Cape Town and Kimberley as the financial capital of South Africa and the main centre of Jewish settlement.

The discovery of the largest gold mines in the world sounded the death knell for the old traditional societies of Southern Africa whether Boer or African, but it was to take wars before pre-existing societies succumbed to the rising power of capitalism, industry, and modernization, represented in this case by Rhodes and the British flag. The imperialists confident in themselves as harbingers of a superior way of life made no secret of their aims. Grey, a director of the British South Africa Company and an early Administrator of Rhodesia, clearly stated that the Chartered Company had been formed, 'To bring under the rule of justice, law and civilization, a vast territory, which in spite of its salubrity of climate, and wealth of its resources was submerged under the black waters of a savage barbarism.'³

Thus when the Chartered Company was formed in 1889, time was fast running out for Lobengula, especially since his country was reputed to be rich in gold and other minerals. In the 1880s the King was increasingly bothered by White supplicants seeking concessions and treaties and the White population resident at Bulawayo increased. Among the constantly growing group of White traders, adventurers, and fugitives from justice that assembled in Bulawayo was Moss Cohen, commonly known as 'Paddy' because of some supposed Irish connections. He first visited Matabeleland in 1882 and spent thirteen months there trading. In 1888 he was back again and engaged like many of the other small fry, and Lobengula himself, in vainly trying to hold back the tide of Western civilization represented by Rhodes and his associates. He fought hard against the designs of Rhodes's agents, Maguire and Rudd, and in April 1889 along with other like-minded traders, Phillips and Fairbairn, he witnessed Lobengula's famous elephant seal complaint whereby the King tried to revoke the Rudd Concession upon which the Charter of the British South Africa Company was based. The bid was unsuccessful and in October 1889 Cohen, realizing that Rhodes was the winner, began to pester Dr L.S. Jameson for compensation for damages done to his trade and 'rights' by Rhodes's schemes. In the early years of White occupation Cohen fought on to obtain damages and was eventually 'squared' with the payment of £1,000 cash and £1,000 worth of shares in a sub-concession. Cohen never settled down under the new regime and like many old adventurers chased rainbows, travelled around and lost all his money. His unhappy career came to an end when he committed suicide at his bush camp outside Bulawayo in 1913.

With the entry of Rhodes on the scene, the modern period of Rhodesian history begins. The ways in which the Charter was gained and the

means used to outwit Lobengula and the Imperial Government are well known historical facts, as is the importance of Rhodes's principal accomplices, Dr L.S. Jameson and Alfred Beit. Like Rhodes, Beit made his fortune at Kimberley and was even more successful on the Rand than 'the Colossus'. The Charter and the concessions brought in their train the involvement of all the large financiers of South Africa and many in Europe. Many of Rhodes's partners such as Barnato and Beit were of Jewish origin, as was Lippert of the famous Lippert Concession, which the Chartered Company claimed gave it land rights in Mashonaland. Beit, who was descended from a Sephardi merchant family, and his cousin Lippert were both Jews by ethnic rather than religious criteria since they died Christians. In this connection it is interesting to note that Beit's biographer, Seymour Fort, wrote a hagiography in glowing terms without mentioning the word Jew once.⁴ However, Beit's critics and enemies were quick to attribute his supposed misdeeds and those of other 'Rand lords' to Jewish origins. An example of this trend was the vitriolic anti-Semitic attack on South African capitalists, 'chiefly German in origin and Jewish in race',⁵ by the British socialist Hobson, particularly in the infamous chapter 'For whom are we fighting?' in his *The War in South Africa*, published in 1900.

Major A.L. Leonard of the British South Africa Police was a more sympathetic gentleman and to his surprise was unimpressed on meeting Beit at Tuli in 1891. He wrote that the millionaire was 'very ordinary and meagre in his ideas, and very commonplace in his conversation . . . is there some special grasp of opportunity and power of retention in the Jewish character that succeeds where all else fails?'⁶ Thus both enemies and neutrals recognized Beit as a Jew; only his best friends ignored his origins. For the purpose of this study, and with the example of the Nuremburg Laws in Beit's homeland in mind, we shall use the ethnic or 'racial' criterion for the recognition of Jews in Rhodesia. This was the method of categorization that was adopted in Rhodesian society. A recent commentator has written that, 'status depended more on origin than class . . . where a man's father came from mattered more than anything else'.⁷ It is therefore appropriate to attribute Beit's benevolence and charity, as well as his capitalist acquisitiveness, to Jewish hereditary influences and to claim the Beit Trust's educational and communications work as a Jewish legacy to Rhodesia.

However one judges the morality of Rhodes's actions and policies — and there is no doubt that his brand of blatant capitalist imperialism is out of favour in most circles today — one has to admit that he was a shrewd, resourceful and imaginative character. He liked to surround himself with

men of the same type, constructive and persistent individuals, with the result that many of his business and social acquaintances were Jews. There is no doubt that Rhodes was a Judeophile and the Jewish population of Southern Africa responded to his feelings with a loyalty and affection matched only by that which they showed General Smuts as co-author of the Balfour Declaration. In 1895 Rhodes was able to persuade Lord Rothschild to invest £250,000 in the Beira and Mashonaland Railway, although the banker thought that it was 'chucking money into the sea'.⁸ Whether or not Rhodes actually did promise 'equal rights for all civilized men', there is no doubt that in the Cape Colony and Rhodesia he offered to the oppressed Jews of Europe who chose to emigrate there full civil rights which were denied them in Russia, Rumania and other countries, including Kruger's Republic under the *Grondwet*. There is no doubt that the B.S.A. Company's motto of 'Justice, Freedom and Commerce' served to attract Jewish immigrants; in early 1893 when the Chartered Company received little favourable publicity in the overseas press, it was praised in the London *Jewish Chronicle* and an appeal was made by a Salisbury resident 'to any Jewish brethren who want to better themselves by coming to a new country'. The call was especially directed to any 'capitalists, mechanics and tradesmen [who were] willing to work hard'.⁹

Rhodes was a businessman who aimed to take the country north of the Limpopo by means of a commercial company, for commercial profit. The new 'colony' could fulfil its founder's wider political aims only if it was a commercial success, so that the support of the ordinary trader and speculator was as important as that of the Rothschilds. As Col. Frank Johnson wrote: 'he knew that the presence of Jews meant that they had faith in the commercial prospects of the new country'.¹⁰ Yet in addition to this practical consideration there is no doubt that Rhodes and Johnson, the leader of the Pioneer Column, both held unprejudiced, or rather favourable, views of Jews as settlers and pioneers. Rhodes stated: 'In building up this country, we must have a leaven of Jews; they are constructive, far-seeing and persistent.'¹¹

In theory the Pioneer Column, which crossed the Shashi River in July 1890 with the aim of occupying Mashonaland, was a selected immigration scheme whereby the members were chosen for their suitability to undertake a potentially dangerous expedition to occupy and survive in a new country. The Pioneer Corps included 5 Jews among its 187 men. These were Conductor Hyman Alfred Solomon of Kimberley, Troopers Freddy Langerman of Cape Town, Leonard Kronstein, C.F. Mosenthal, and Leo Neumeyer who was killed by the Boers in the Orange Free State in 1900. The largest part in supplying the expedition fell to Weil Bros, established

at Mafeking in 1884 by the London-born brothers Julius, Ben and Samuel. Among early members of the Company's Police during 1890-1 were several Jews including the following: Corporal Maurice Henry, Troopers W. Fredman, S. Marcus, A. Abrams, F. Promnitz, C. Zigenbein, W. Block, N. Davis and A. Myers.¹² H. Marshall Hole, the Secretary to the Administrator in the early years, admitted that, 'the "chosen race" . . . was well represented from the start. Most of those who came up in the pioneer days stuck to the country and did well in it.'¹³

The general attitude towards a Jewish presence in early Rhodesia among Rhodes and his associates is shown in the following letter of introduction to Rhodes from Sir John Sivewright, the Commissioner of Public Works in the Cape Colony:

Abner Cohen, who carries this, is a friend of mine. He is leaving the Transvaal and going to Rhodesia; he was a pioneer of Krugersdorp, and I can certify to his being a straight, honourable little chap. You will be greatly interested in having a chat with him, and I know no-one who, in my opinion, would be a more desirable acquisition to the population of a new country than Mr Cohen.¹⁴

This attitude was all the more welcome since it contrasted with the harsh atmosphere of the period in Europe which saw pogroms in Russia and Rumania and the Dreyfus case in France. Cohen himself was typical of the foot-loose and adventurous pioneer who was willing to chance his luck in a new country. He was born in London in 1860 and had sailed round the world, and settled in New Zealand in 1877. He arrived in South Africa in 1881, and in 1887 established a hotel in Krugersdorp. He stayed only two years in Rhodesia but during that time took a prominent part in Jewish community affairs, before returning to the Transvaal.

This was the type of man who formed the bulk of the Jewish and Gentile pioneer population. The Column had entered Mashonaland with a promise of 3,000 acres of land and 10 gold claims each, and when the gold failed to materialize most were persuaded to aid Jameson in his invasion of Matabeleland in 1893. Under the Victoria Agreement the settler-soldiers received an even larger incentive of 6,000 acres of land and 20 gold claims. Such promises of booty, or primitive capital accumulation, served to attract most of the existing Mashonaland Pioneers to the new venture which involved overcoming, with the aid of maxim guns, the 20,000 warriors of the much feared Ndebele impis. The invading force of 592 White men was split into a number of columns from Salisbury, Victoria and Tuli backed up by the Bechuanaland Border Police and supplied with 360,000 rations by Weil Bros. In the columns which marched on Bulawayo, were two of the 1890 Column, Leonard Kronstein and C.F. Mosenthal. On this occa-

sion their Jewish comrades included J. Behrmann, Alf Cohen, Jacob Cohen, Jacob Palca in the Salisbury Column; in the Tuli Column Lt. Henry Bernstein and Troopers Paul Weinthal, Max Cossell, Leon Gabriel, William Henry, John Henry, Samuel Lipschitz with Isaac Sonnenberg as Transport Officer. The Bechuanaland Border Police contingent included Troopers Jacob Rabi, Leon Ranson, Lewis Heilman, Edward Abraham, John Aaron and Lance-Corporal Maurice Trenchmer. One famous member of the Salisbury Column was Lionel 'S.O.S.' Cohen, who undertook operations during the Second World War at seventy years of age and ended his career as a Wing Commander with D.S.O., M.C. and D.F.C. In November 1945 he was given the freedom of Bulawayo, the town that he had left in 1894 after selling his farming rights for £50. Jewish casualties in the Matabele War were Frank Mack of the Salisbury Column who was wounded at the Battle of Bembesi and Trooper Abe Levy of the Victoria Rangers who was killed at the Battle of Shangani. Another fatality was Frank Leon Vogel who was a member of Allan Wilson's ill-fated patrol which was wiped out to a man among the thick *mopani* bush of the lower Shangani while chasing Lobengula after the fall of Bulawayo.

Vogel was the second son of Sir Julius Vogel, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, and had been educated at Charterhouse School. He was a practising Anglican, regularly attending the services taken by Bishop Knight Bruce. In 1890 he had joined the Chartered Company as a clerk but had transferred to the police. On his arrival at Tuli in 1891 the perspicacious Major Leonard, his Commanding Officer, had recognized the new recruit's ethnic origins on account of 'his keen, hawk-like proboscis'.¹⁵

The capture of Bulawayo in November 1893 was not the end of the fighting for the early settlers. Many were involved in another, and less successful, filibustering invasion led by Dr Jameson when he launched his famous raid from Bechuanaland into the Transvaal in 1895. Jewish raiders included Weinthal, Lewis Simon, H.G. Bernstein, C. Goldsmid Graves, Webber Marks, Percy Solomon and Harry Myers, the last being killed by the Boers in the ignominious engagement at Doornkop.

The failure of the Jameson Raid gave the recently subdued Ndebele, and the Shona, the opportunity to launch sudden and bloody rebellions against their new masters in which ten per cent of the White population, including many women and children, were murdered. Several Jews were among the 280 White fatalities. Most were isolated prospectors like Mathews, 'a Jew from Melbourne', who was murdered in Matabeleland in March 1896 or Reuben Shapiro, a jeweller, killed near Shamva in Mashonaland in June.¹⁶ During the rebellions all the White inhabitants of the territory were involved in the operations since all the main centres had

to go into laager. Brave rescue attempts were launched to try and bring the outlying settlers into safety and as a result of one of these, the epic Mazoe Patrol, Captain Nesbitt received the Victoria Cross. One of the members of the patrol was Godfrey Jacobs, a Salisbury hotel manager. Bulawayo's first doctor and the Medical Officer to the Bulawayo Field Force, Goodman Levy, was wounded while with a patrol to Gwanda. During the siege of Bulawayo the fire brigade there was trained and led by Sam Tayfield, another well-known Jewish pioneer. Jews were involved in the infamous as well as the heroic episodes of this exciting period. One of the more unsavoury characters was the scout 'Darkie' Morris who had had a most adventurous career; he was a 'hard case' and prominent in the settler revenge and atrocities which marked the quashing of the uprisings in some areas.

Whatever the morality of Jameson's schemes to seize other people's countries by force, there is no doubt that he did offer significant incentives to fellow freebooters and the Jewish pioneers responded along with others. The degree of military valour and the number of Jewish participants in these early wars was unusual at the time in so far as it was widely believed in many quarters that Jews could not fight and were physical cowards — a type of thinking that has, of course, been destroyed since the establishment of the State of Israel. Jews did of course try to evade military service in countries where they were oppressed and where they had no interest in the national cause. This was particularly true with regard to their enforced twenty years' conscription into the Tsarist armies. Yet when offered something worth fighting for by Rhodes and Jameson, they responded positively and fought enthusiastically. A typical example was the case of Michael Welensky, the father of Sir Roy. He was a typical adventurer who had lived in Sweden, Germany, America, the Cape and the Transvaal before going to Rhodesia. His travels had started after he cut off a finger to escape Russian military conscription in his native Lithuania, but this handicap did not deter his military career in Rhodesia and he was active on patrols through Matabeleland during 1896.

Lack of military experience did not worry this type of man. John Meikle recalled that in Fort Victoria in 1893 there were men who 'had never fired a gun before. They were taken down to the range for rifle practice. One, a Jew kaffir-storekeeper, made a bull at 500 yards. On inspecting the sight of his gun, it was found to stand at 100 yards.'¹⁷

On the whole, however, the Jews tended to be a little more circumspect than some of the young upper-class English 'bloods' who went to Rhodesia in the 1890s, often solely for the adventure of fighting Africans and hunt-

ing game. The following story was told of the celebrated trader and wit, Ikey Sonnenberg, who was known throughout the interior:

He was at Victoria [in 1892], and lions had been doing damage to stock at some farms close to the commonage, so a party of two or three sportsmen started very early on Sunday morning to try and round them up. As they walked down the street with their dogs and rifles they passed Ikey, who, clad in his pyjamas, was sniffing the morning air at the door of his store. 'Where are you boys off to?', he inquired. 'We're going to look for the lions,' they replied. 'Will you come along with us?' 'No thank ye,' said Ikey, 'I ain't lost no lions.'¹⁸

The high proportion of Jews among Rhodesia's pioneer White population can be gauged from early census returns. In both Bulawayo in 1895 and Salisbury in 1897, Jews comprised 6 per cent of the European population. In the 1899 voters' rolls they formed 3.5 per cent of the total in both Mashonaland and Matabeleland. This should be compared with the 1.0 per cent of the White population that Jews formed in the Cape Colony in 1894, the 1.5 per cent in the U.S.A. in 1890, and the 0.1 per cent in the U.K. in 1880. Only the Salisbury census of 1897 provides any details of the origins, age and occupations of the persons who went to early Rhodesia. Before that we have only indirect evidence such as travellers' accounts or enquiries about missing persons. In 1894 a father, John Aaron of Darlington, England, approached the Company to try and find his run-away son; another enquiry was received from Rachel Weinberg of Mile End, London, whose cigarette-maker husband had deserted her and her two children. The Chartered Company officials bedevilled by aliases and a transient population were unable to trace Aaron but they traced Weinberg first to Salisbury, then to Bulawayo and finally located him in 1895 running a bar in Johannesburg with the aid of his new mistress.¹⁹

The Salisbury Jewish population in November 1897 numbered 46 persons of whom 35 were men between twenty and forty years of age. This is the type of person one would expect to find in a dangerous and rough frontier territory. Although there were 10 married men, there were only 3 families but already there were 2 Rhodesian-born children. The birth-places of these settlers reflected the varied backgrounds of the people. Adventurers hearing tales of South African gold, had come from as far away as Jamaica, Russia and Australia. There was even a thirty-five year old widower born in Kansas City who described himself as a 'backer' of mining ventures. Twenty-one persons were born in the United Kingdom, and 28 or well over half were born in the British Empire, which suggests that the early Salisbury Jewish community had a distinctly Anglicized complexion. Russia provided 8 men, Poland 2, America 1, Germany 6 men and 1 woman.

The data on occupations confirms the impression drawn from early literature on Rhodesia, that the Jews were concentrated in the commercial field. There were 14 storekeepers, 2 merchants, 2 tobacconists. The speculative financial influence was shown in the presence of 3 auctioneers, 2 brokers, 2 speculators and 3 company secretaries. Other Jewish occupations were 2 jewellers, 1 dispenser, 1 tailor, 1 barman, 1 barber and 4 hotel-keepers and managers. Some of the returns suggest the rather amorphous nature of many occupations at this time since many men had more than one job or interest. These adventurers would flit from job to job and area to area in their endeavours to make their fortunes. Marshall Hole remarked on the *luftmensch* characteristic of the Jewish pioneers:

An outstanding quality of the Jews was their adaptability. There was one who, having first tried auctioneering, and then editing a newspaper without making good, started on the strength of a half-completed course at some American institution, as a dentist.²⁰

The 1899 voters' rolls do not completely reflect the total Jewish population because the franchise was qualified and many East European immigrants did not register owing to inexperience and ignorance of electoral procedures; nevertheless the rolls do reflect the commercial bias within the Jewish male population. There were 89 men who classed themselves as traders, dealers, storekeepers or merchants. Of course much of the trading at this time was not the sedentary occupation it became later. It often involved bartering calico, old uniforms, beads, salt and brass wire for mealies, grain and cattle at remote African kraals whose residents had never before seen a White man. In the 1890s the trader was regarded as an important civilizing agent since he created demand and so encouraged African consumers to enter the cash economy and labour force. Percy Hone, an early analyst of the Rhodesian scene, wrote:

The trader with his wagon full of cloth, ornaments and European food, barter his wares for the grain and meal of the natives; he encourages their vanity and their tastes for luxury, and the Mashona who a few years before thought it sufficient clothing to have two or three jackals' tails hung from his loins, today requires a tall hat or a second-hand frock coat, and will add now and again to his daily supply of meal a tin of salmon or sardines. Vanity and desire for luxury increase every year; the children who are growing into young men take their parents' luxuries as necessities and require to gratify their tastes still further.²¹

Other Jewish commercial men catered to the tastes of the settlers and these included 4 jewellers and watch-makers, 8 tailors, 2 cleaners and dyers, 2 barbers, and 5 butchers. The traditional Jewish occupation of bar and hotel-keeping in Eastern Europe was reproduced in Africa: 11 men fell into this category along with 4 barmen and waiters. There were others in

less traditional roles, such as 6 miners, 3 prospectors, 4 builders and contractors as well as 5 carpenters, 4 auctioneers, 10 brokers and speculators, 2 cab-owners, accountants and a variety of professional men. The local dentist in Bulawayo was Leon Gabriel, and Reuben Levi Hoey was a Municipal Constable. Of the original Pioneer Column and Police contingents some were still in Rhodesia; C.F. Mosenthal was a prospector, Leonard Kronstein was a miner at the Morven Mine near Inyati, and William Fredman was a telegraphist in Bulawayo.

Some of the auctioneers, brokers and speculators were well-off as were mining company managers like Harry Gumpertz of Salisbury and Myer Tobias who ran the Lone Star at Hartley for De Beers; but on the whole the Jewish population was poorer than the average settlers. An index of this situation can be found in the Bulawayo Hospital returns for welfare cases by religion for 1898: 69 per cent of Jews admitted were welfare cases compared with 54 per cent of Roman Catholics, 36 per cent of Church of England adherents and 31 per cent of the mainly German Lutherans. Only the Afrikaners of the Reformed Churches had a higher proportion of poor people.

In view of the poverty of many of these people, who had often left Russia penniless, and the rough living conditions, aggravated by the fact that the majority were single men, it is not surprising that they were often involved in drunkenness and brawling. Common offences were gambling and being drunk and disorderly. Such occurrences were specially common in the rural areas. An amusing newspaper report of one such incident described how:

A certain number of Hebrew brethren in Gwanda tendered to each other the seasons's good wishes, but in place of the usual slip of decorated paste-board, they impressed their sincerity with a 'knobkerrie' and to such good effect that one is now enjoying the hospitality of His Majesty 'The King', while another is enjoying a well-earned rest in Anterior Hospital.²²

The Jewish contribution to early Rhodesia was not solely in terms of soldiers, traders and brawlers; individuals played an important part in establishing modern civilized life in Salisbury and other centres in what was merely open veld in 1890. Among the first druggists in Rhodesia was Lowenstein whose partner Strachan opened the business in Salisbury in 1891. In 1892 Louis Susman opened the Masonic Hotel which was the first building in Rhodesia to have wall-papering, and in the same year the hotel manager, Godfrey Jacobs, was the first man to ride a bicycle in Salisbury. As mentioned earlier, hotel and bar businesses were popular and lucrative; licences included J. Rosen and S. Goldberg early in 1892 and H. Am Ende

in 1893. I. Susman kept a billiard parlour and Frank Mack ran a hotel. Mack and Am Ende were the local representatives of the Paris-based French South Africa Company. In 1892 Mrs Am Ende was sufficiently well-to-do to have a German governess, Mrs Schmidt, for her daughter. An early property speculator was Sam Hyman, an auctioneer, who drained a swamp along Broadway and splashed a sale of stands in *The Rhodesia Herald*, of which he bought 1,000 copies to distribute in the Cape and Transvaal. He was the first sworn appraiser and valuator to the B.S.A. Company; but his close links with the Administration did not make him popular, for when he stood as a candidate in the Salisbury Sanitary Board elections of 1894 he came bottom of the poll.

It was Hyman, however, who offered 'constant attention and moral aid' to the first White man hanged in Rhodesia.²³ He was Louis Andries, a thirty-two year old Dutch Jewish sailor, who was convicted on circumstantial evidence of murdering Thomas Beeley with a revolver while out in the bush. Andries did not know English and gave his confused and contradictory evidence in High Dutch before the Administrator, Dr Jameson, acting as magistrate, and two assessors. His sentence was confirmed by the High Commissioner in Cape Town and he was hanged publicly in the middle of the disused fort in Salisbury on 10 April 1893 after a Hebrew service.

Following the conquest of Matabeleland many of the early settlers moved there from Salisbury and only a quarter of the Salisbury Column returned. Salisbury remained the smaller settlement for many years and in 1897 had only 719 White inhabitants. Some of the most prominent of these were Joseph van Praagh and Louis Susman who had mining interests and were executive members of the Chamber of Mines. Van Praagh was a tobacconist and Salisbury manager of the famous pioneer firm, the Manica Trading Company, the oldest limited company in Central Africa, which was founded in Beira in 1892 by a Yorkshire-born Jew, Julius Altson. Van Praagh was President of the local Chamber of Commerce in 1898. Mack and Susman were members of the original Salisbury Board of Executors in 1896. Alfred Rosenthal, the owner of the Commercial Hotel, performed an important public service in 1898 when he established Salisbury's first brewery at the cost of £12,000 with a brewer specially imported from Berlin.

Jews have always been more prominent in the life of Bulawayo than Salisbury and this was true from the earliest days. The first White child to be born in the town was Lily Tempofsky in April 1894. The first newspaper, established in 1894, *The Matabeleland Times and Mining Journal*, had as its proprietor and editor William Wallenstein. In 1893 Dr A.G. Levy from London was District Surgeon and in charge of the

hospital. When the first sales of stands were held in July 1894, Jews showed their confidence in the new country by buying 123 stands for a total of £17,100. The largest buyers with six stands each were Joseph Bros, Jacob Bros, J. Boam and C. Glass. Other buyers included R. Rosenthal, V. Wolff, Julius Weil, I. Hirschler and Ikey Sonnenberg. There were always a large number of Jewish businessmen in Bulawayo and in 1895 the executive of the Chamber of Commerce included J.W. Tobias, and J. Boam, local agent of Israel Bros of Johannesburg, wholesale merchant and printer and publisher of the *Bulawayo Sketch*. The Jewish tendency towards changing occupations and constant search for profitable business ventures is well illustrated by the case of one early Bulawayo resident, Captain H. Mortimer Zeffert. During 1895 he was an auctioneer on his own account, a few weeks later a partner in Zeffert & Wilkins, Land and Estate Agents, and then established Styles & Zeffert, Brokers and Mining Agents.

Although in later years Umtali had very few Jewish residents, in the early 1890s they were among its most prominent residents. Maurice Henry, a Scottish Jew, who had been a member of the Warren Expedition and the Bechuanaland Border Police before joining the Pioneer B.S.A. Company Police in 1890, settled in Umtali in 1892 as an auctioneer. He organized the first syndicate which established the local mineral-water works and in 1893 founded the *Umtali Advertiser*, which he sold the following year. In 1895 Henry established the Manica Labour Bureau as well as acting as an estate agent and local agent for overseas firms. Another early Umtali inhabitant was Alfred Lazarus, nicknamed 'Mafuta', a partner in the Albion Mine. He was a prospector and auctioneer, and he owned Mar, Selous' old hunting horse. His brother 'Kaduka' Lazarus was also an auctioneer in the town. Mafuta eventually left Umtali and founded a general cartage agency in Salisbury but left Rhodesia for the Rand in 1904, finally ending his days in 1911 as owner of the Grand Hotel in Pretoria.

Gwelo was slower to get off the ground as an important centre but at the first sale of stands Jews were again prominent. Apart from outside investors like Julius Weil and Joseph Bros, local residents in the first sales were P. Falk, Isidore Kempinsky, S. Jacoby, William Sonnenberg and Leo Lehman, who was one of the first traders in the town and in 1894 ran the Gwelo Hotel.

Jewish settlers also took an early interest in local politics. One of the most prominent was Viennese-born I. Hirschler, who had been active in the early days on the Rand as a stockbroker and company director. He visited Mashonaland in 1891 and returned to settle in Bulawayo in 1894. He had a large number of investments in Rhodesia, including the Queens Reef and Lovemore Mines, directorships in the Bulawayo Ice and Cold

Storage Company, Bulawayo Stock Exchange, Criterion Development Co., Matabele Timber Trust Ltd, and the Nellie Reef Development Co. His political views were typical of local capitalists of the time. He spoke contemptuously of 'niggers', wanted flotation of companies to be in Rhodesia and not London, encouraged the Chamber of Mines to 'root out labour in the Victoria District',²⁴ and congratulated Jameson on the Raid.

When a public meeting was called to support greater settler self-government in early 1897, Hirschler was prominent and the movement also enjoyed the support of Samuel Nathan, a general dealer, Israel Cara, F. Strauss, a turf accountant, S. Rabinovitz, and I. Lazarus, a speculator. With this type of background it was no surprise in Bulawayo's first municipal election in November 1897 that Hirschler topped the poll in Ward I with a large majority (506 votes to 208 for the next candidate) and became the town's first mayor. Joseph Saber was also a member of the first Town Council but his candidature was linked to his leadership of the Jewish community. In a leader article *The Bulawayo Chronicle* on 1 August 1898 supported him on the ground that, 'Mr Saber represents a powerful sect in Bulawayo, a sect which always works for the advancement of the country, and it is but fair that they should have a representative.'

The Jews were also able to get a representative on the first Salisbury Town Council when M.A. Freeman was elected. He was the only candidate to canvass the electorate and *The Rhodesia Herald* on 8 December 1897 described him as an 'old settler and pushing hotel-keeper and a vigorous if not discriminating man'. Joseph van Praagh was a member of the Council in the late 1890s and mayor of Salisbury 1900 - 1.

The early Jewish settlers did not neglect their religious traditions. The need for burial facilities and High Holyday services was the impetus behind the formation of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation in August 1894. The inaugural meeting was held in the tent of Messrs Moss & Rosenblatt with the following men attending: J. Boam, F. Cinammon, S. Goldring, D. Goldman, E. Granger, S. Heyman, R.D. Hanson, J. Jacobson, S. Jacobs, I. Levi, J. Moss, M.S. Levin, S. Nathan, I. Rosenblatt, S. Rabinowitz, J. Saber, E. Saber, E. Tertis, V. Wolf, J. Wolffe and H.M. Zeffert. The new congregation's first service was held in the dining room of the Charter Hotel. The leading supporters outside Bulawayo were Coleman Joseph of C. Joseph & Co. of London, Joseph Jacobson of Johannesburg and S. Hyman of Salisbury. Joseph interviewed Dr Jameson and obtained free from the Chartered Company two freehold stands for a synagogue and a large plot for a cemetery. Joseph paid the stand registration fee as a donation to the new congregation. In November 1895 Joseph Saber, the Congregation's President, was gazetted as Jewish Marriage Officer for

Bulawayo and in the December the first Jewish marriage ceremony took place. The couple were Welsh-born Aaron Jacobs and Rose Frank, whose brother was Jacob's business partner in the local steam, saw and mealie mills. *The Bulawayo Chronicle* on 7 December 1895 commented: 'One could not help being impressed by the fact that the service centuries old, was being used in a town not two years old . . . the presents [were] expensive and handsome items, which were difficult to believe could have been procured in Bulawayo'.

Even before the Rebellions there were plans to convert a school-house into a synagogue and C. Friedlander was appointed the first *Mohel*. In September 1896 the Bulawayo Congregation obtained a set of by-laws from Johannesburg and prayer books and religious essentials from Cape Town. A building fund was established and one of the first donors was a Gentile, Sidney Redrup. In April 1897 a 25 guineas' prize was offered for an architectural design for the new synagogue which had to seat 250 men and 75 women and cost £2,000. It was stipulated that the orthodox principle had to be maintained: 'The men's and women's seating accommodation must be kept entirely separate.' The congregation then wrote to the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire in London requesting him to appoint a suitable minister at a salary of £500 a year. Also in April, the Bulawayo Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society was founded with 120 members and A. Jacobs as Chairman. In the first year it lent over £127 to less fortunate co-religionists; one of the first grants in August 1897 was £20 given 'for the purpose of assisting to place Welensky in business' at Gwelo.²⁴

In June 1897 the foundation stone of the new synagogue was laid with much ceremony by the Administrator of Matabeleland, Captain the Hon. Arthur Lawley. A hundred freemasons of the Zambesia and Allan Wilson Lodges attended in full regalia, as did Bishop Gaul of the Anglican Church. The ecumenical spirit of the occasion was completed by the Catholic Bro. Thompson on the organ.

However, problems began to arise which undermined this swift progress. At a meeting of 40 members in July 1897 Saber explained that, because of high prices, a synagogue of the type specified could not be built for under £3,800, and the matter was therefore held over. To raise the needed funds the membership fee was increased from two guineas to six guineas a year. Much more relevant to the situation was the fact that there had been a split in the congregation from December 1896, and a break-away congregation had been formed. The break was supposed to have taken the form of a split between the British and foreign-born groups whose conceptions about the regularity of services, religious rites and

education differed. Further investigation shows that it is not possible to find a clear 'ethnic' division. The problem was an example of the fissiparous tendencies which rend Jewish communities from time to time; and like many others, the real cause of the argument was personality clashes and objections to the dominance of Saber by the break-away group led by Frank Cinammon. In April 1897 Abner Cohen was asked to mediate between the two factions; but he failed to heal the split and ended up as President of the new congregation, the executive of which consisted of Cinammon, A. Frank, I. Pieters, F.N. Joseph, Dribbin Mandelson, and Freilich. The controversy was eventually laid before the general public over the use of the Jewish cemetery. This occasioned Lionel Goldsmith, the Jewish editor of *The Owl*, to comment on 17 December 1897:

The Bulawayo Jews are a wonderful and curious people. For four years united, they have not yet been able to erect, or even obtain for temporary purposes, a suitable building for the holding of regular Divine services. And now 'mirabile dictu' they consider that what, united they were unable to attend to, they will as two antagonistic sections of one community, be able to accomplish . . . We would urge upon both parties the desirability of sinking their differences, fusing their members with a view to the creation of a Community which shall be a glory to the Jews themselves and an object of respect to the non-Jewish section of the population.

The first act of reconciliation was a *Chanukah* service on 24 December 1897, which 120 people attended. In February the unity of the congregations was achieved with the resignation of Saber. A new organization was formed called the Bulawayo Hebrew United Congregation, but it dropped the 'United' from its title within a week. Cinammon became Vice-President and Mandelson Treasurer, and the rebels brought over an iron building.

In 1898 the first Hebrew teacher was appointed, a Miss Lowenstark at a salary of £17 a month, and Napoleon Boaz baked the first Rhodesian *matzot* (unleavened bread) for the Passover. When in March 1900 the Revd M.I. Cohen, B.A. arrived from London to minister to the congregation it can be asserted that Jewish religious and communal life was firmly established in Bulawayo.

The Salisbury Jewish community had a much less eventful early history. The Salisbury Hebrew Congregation was formed at a meeting at the Masonic Hotel in June 1895. Two women and the following men attended, S. Hyman, L. Susman, M.R. Morris, an auctioneer, D.B. Aria, H. Harris, E. Friedman, L.H. Gabriel, H. Edwards, L.A. Hyman, J. Kirschbaum, a jeweller, Hugo Pollack, a merchant, A. Phillips, B. Simon, B. Salomon, A. Cohen, M.A. Freeman, J. van Praagh, F. Mack and D.M. Jacobs. Susman,

Mack and Jacobs each donated 50 guineas to a building fund. Stands for a synagogue were obtained from the B.S.A. Company and a £50 donation was received from Rhodes. Little development took place because of the small numbers of the congregation and it was not until 1901 that the foundation stone of the synagogue was laid. The mainly Anglo-German congregation was content to meet at a private house for the High Holydays and no minister was obtained until 1909.

The sense of Jewish identity and pride in their origins was surprisingly high among the Pioneers in Rhodesia. It might have been expected that they should have established religious congregations for services and attempted to educate their children, but the early and unchallenged establishment of Zionism is probably unique. On 24 September 1898, only a year after the publication of *Der Judenstaat* by Theodore Herzl, *The Bulawayo Chronicle* reported 'A meeting of gentlemen interested in the Zionist movement . . . the sense of the meeting was expressed contrary to the so-called "national" or political Zionist movement, and it was resolved to form a local branch of the Chovevi Zion . . . Society, with a view to assisting in the settlement of Palestine'. Given their own situation it was perhaps natural that they rejected Herzl's Basle Programme and decided to 'adopt the practical brand of Zionism' which promoted 'the colonisation of palestine and neighbouring territories by settling Jewish agriculturalists and artisans thereon and assisting those already established'. Another significant principle was 'to foster the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language'.²⁶

The Bulawayo Society was the second Zionist organization in Africa. It was unique since it met no opposition from the more assimilated or Anglicized elements of the local community, in contrast to the experience of similar organizations in Britain, Australia and the U.S.A. From the start Zionism served to unite the community without regard to place of origin and was not beset by the problems which we have noted in the religious sphere. The first Commander of the Chovevi Zion (Lovers of Zion) was an English Jew, Morris Landau, and Isaac Epstein, a Russian-born Hebrew scholar, was Treasurer. The Secretary was Australian-born Norman L. Mandelson, Reuter's Bulawayo agent. At an early meeting another English Jew, Fred Joseph, scotched any opposition on political grounds by asserting that a Zionist affiliation did not affect a British Jew's patriotism and could be equated with membership of a Caledonian Society. It merely demonstrated pride in one's origins and history.

The local Society rejected ties with Eastern Europe, the home of the movement, and instead became a 'tent' of the English Chovevi Zion. Initially the society had 40 members but by the following year it had more

than 100 and was able to send £60 to aid the agricultural settlement at Machanayim and the Jaffa School. Much of the attraction perhaps was the pomp and ceremony that the meetings engendered with the help of gold embroidered sashes for the office bearers. In October 1899 the Society created much local curiosity when it established a *succah* (tabernacle) during the harvest festival of *Succot* (Tabernacles). Zionist feeling was such that in 1899 the Jewish Colonial Trust, the European bankers for Zionism, considered it worthwhile to advertise their prospectus in the local press and invite applications from Rhodesian investors.

The group solidarity and unity of the Bulawayo community was shown in 1899 when the leaders of all the local organizations, M. Immerman, President of the Hebrew Congregation, F.N. Joseph, the Vice-President, N.L. Mandelson, President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, D.S. Cohen, Chairman of the Jewish School Board, and Landau all appeared as signatories to a letter to the editor in *The Bulawayo Chronicle* of 10 September 1899 expressing their 'warm appreciation of your eloquent leader yesterday in vindication of the martyr, Dreyfus'.

Given Rhodes's influence and the personal and group self-confidence and assertiveness of the Jewish pioneers in Rhodesia, it is not surprising that there was little anti-Semitism during this period. The enlightened attitude of the ruling establishment undoubtedly helped. Major Leonard, in his book published in 1896, exhibited the views of the best type of tolerant Victorian gentleman. Though quick to identify the ethnic origin of a person, he rejected narrow prejudice:

I, for one, have always admired the chosen people . . . I have always failed to understand why they should be looked down upon all around and treated with such undisguised contempt and contumely. That this is the result, partly of an old-time and narrow prejudice, intensified by religious fanaticism, and partly an outcome of iron circumstance, that has scattered them, as a nation, far and wide over the whole world, without crushing their individuality as a race, and that it is not simply due to any singular racial characteristics, is, I think, admissible.²⁷

What anti-Semitism there was appears to have been related either to left-wing Hobsonian political opinions or what Leonard termed 'religious fanaticism'. The Hobson-like attack on 'The South African Capitalist' in an editorial in the *Bulawayo Sketch* on 15 September 1894 by Alexander Davis, its editor, was surprising because Joseph Boam, a prominent member of the Jewish community, was a part-owner of the paper:

The religion of the common or garden Capitalist (C. Africanus) is nondescript. Some are Jews by birth, and as they prosper they generally assimilate all the vices of the Gentiles, without retaining the

Orthodox Jew's virtues. Others are born Christians, but gradually become adept in all the vices and customs of low type Judaism.

An unfortunate feature of early Rhodesia was the hostility and anti-Semitism of some members of the local Anglican clergy. This might have been due to their missionary aims in Africa or their unusually high Church views. Two priggish nursing sisters, Blennerhasset and Sleeman, who were members of an Anglican Order, were sent to Umtali in 1891 by Bishop Knight Bruce. They were quick to complain of the drunkenness and roughness of the Pioneer population, but blamed this on the fact that 'drinking bars abounded — the Jew traders took care of that'. They were exceedingly critical of the unclerical manners and dress of a clergyman, Sewell, who was friendly with the Jews and eventually 'chucked his orders and went into partnership with a Jew tavern-keeper'.²⁸

Douglas Pelley, an upper-class English lay preacher at Umtali in 1892, was typical of the stand-offish tenderfoot who did not appreciate the hospitality and camaraderie of the frontier:

Strange to say since I have been here I have received far the most kindness and courtesy from Jews!! Grauman (travelled up with him from Barberton) was always more than kind, and his man here Lazarus, who is a most horrid, fat, obnoxious little Jew is always going out of his way to do all sorts of little things to make bearable life here. Such as asking me in to meals in the evening etc.²⁹

The worst case of anti-Semitism in the Pioneer period was an article by the Anglican minister, the Revd Ernest Hammick of St John's Church, Bulawayo, in April 1897. Writing in a Cape newspaper, he described Bulawayo life and claimed:

White slavery is carried on with great profit to the slaves and their owners. This is, I think, in a measure owing to a large percentage of Jews. In any experience where there are Jews found, Morality is low. They are Jews only in name. The South African Jew is a class apart.³⁰

It says much that one of the first to reply was a non-Jew, F. Byrnes, who claimed that the minister's, 'Remarks about the Jews are as absurd as they are wickedly untrue, and they show the narrowness of the man. Personally I should prefer an immoral Jew to a moral, self-satisfied bigot.'³¹ He went on to criticize the internal contradictions in Hammick's argument where he claimed that most of the British pioneers were 'men of the best schools', but admitted that he had few attendants at his services and said the town was unsafe for women. Byrnes ended by suggesting that Hammick leave the country since he was patently unsuitable for pioneering.

The Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation had a special meeting to consider a reply to the press. Edgar Granger replied officially but other Jewish

correspondents joined in. Aaron Jacobs wrote cuttingly: 'It may be remembered that, on the occasion of the Bazaar in aid of the English Church, to which Mr. Hammick belongs, the Jews were among the principal contributors.'³² 'Chorister' asked how Hammick 'reconciles his remarks concerning the Jews with the fact that he willingly accepted valuable assistance at an organ recital in the church . . . from one of our best lady vocalists, who herself belongs to the much-maligned race.'³³

It is interesting that the tough pioneers had fewer prejudices than one might have expected. Men were judged as individuals not stereotypes. In adverse circumstances surrounded by tropical disease, wild animals and hostile Africans, there was no room for prejudice; one relied on one's neighbours too much and perhaps more importantly had the opportunity to judge them at close quarters.

The identification of the Jews with British Imperialism was an added factor in reducing prejudice. In 1897 the Jewish congregations of Southern Africa sent Queen Victoria an illuminated address in a casket, which was signed among others by S. Hyman and D. M. Jacobs of Salisbury. This prompted the editor of *The Rhodesia Herald* to write on 25 August 1897 that 'to us this spontaneous and splendid tribute [shows that] whereas Jews in other countries remain Jews, the Jews of the British Empire become true Englishmen'. The spirit of early Rhodesia was probably summed up in the memorial service for 'the Great White Queen' at Bulawayo in February 1901. Ministers of seven religious denominations attended. 'What potentialities for good were there . . . while waves of anti-Semitism have been waging almost throughout the civilised world, here the Jewish pastor joined in the ceremony side by side with his Christian brethren.'³⁴

CHAPTER 2

Under Chartered Company Rule

Despite the failures and disappointments of the pioneering years, which to some extent were the result of the Company's and the settlers' own actions, a fair degree of political stability had been imposed on the territory by 1900 and the hold of the Chartered Company and the British settlers was firmly established for the foreseeable future. Yet to the astute observer it was already obvious that the 'new Rand' had failed to materialize and that slow but steady economic progress rather than a gold rush was all that could be expected in Rhodesia. This meant that the growth of the settler population would also be slow because the country lacked opportunities for large numbers of immigrants since all unskilled work was done by cheap African labour.

At the turn of the century conditions in a sub-tropical country in an inland situation with bad transport facilities, away from the line of rail, were far from attractive without the incentive of gold and hopes of instant wealth. The country was unhealthy for humans and animals. Mosquitoes were found throughout the territory and they bred particularly easily in the primitive wattle and daub huts, which was all that the early settlers often were able to build. Health conditions deteriorated outside the centres of permanent settlement and as one went east or down from the highveld. There was a very high incidence of malaria and blackwater fever which was due in part to poor living conditions. Fever was an accepted feature of the rainy season for many years even after Ross discovered the cause of malaria in 1898. Even in 1907, when conditions had vastly improved since the 1890s, 42.3 per cent of admissions to hospital were malaria cases. Gelfand has stated that, 'it is probable that at this time there were more cases of blackwater fever occurring in the two Rhodesias than in any other part of the world'.¹ In addition to the bilharzia which affected surface water, there were epidemics of dysentery in the rural areas in drought years and smallpox outbreaks in Bulawayo in 1904 and 1905, and in Salisbury in 1919. Typhoid was also common in towns due to poor municipal sanitation. There were also misgivings about the effects on Europeans of living at high altitudes within the tropics.

Colonization was made even more difficult by diseases such as trypanosomiasis, African Coast Fever, redwater and horse sickness which affected draught animals. Transport problems were the reason that the African continent was opened up so late and they were the major problem to overcome in the development of Rhodesia. There were no navigable rivers and there were problems of thick bush, sand veld, and vlei which impeded most forms of transport throughout the year. To these were added a restricted but intense rainy season which produced impassable rivers, almost overnight, and the diseases which played havoc with draught animals. For many years only salted horses and donkeys could be used as pack animals or to draw wagons because of cattle disease.

Yet despite these problems, the fighting, and the economic failure of the pioneer period, the Chartered Company had laid the foundations for further progress and development by 1900. The new territory possessed a reasonable infrastructure by the standards of Africa, an efficient police force, a Legislative Council, two municipal bodies, and a telegraph system. The Company Administration's most important contribution, in view of the environmental and transport problems, was the railway system as the essential first step for the development of the new territory; as Rhodes put it: 'the railway is my right hand and the telegraph my voice'.² Rhodes's far-sighted leadership meant that railways construction was an early priority and a good network was quickly established. By 1902 Bulawayo and Salisbury were linked by a system which ran 2,035 miles from Cape Town to Beira, and in 1904 the projected Cape to Cairo line had reached the Victoria Falls and pushed on into present-day Zambia. Even after the railway lines were completed, however, the old transport problems remained beyond the railhead; and it was not until the introduction of the internal combustion engine in the years after the First World War that the effects of endemic animal diseases were negated and transport in the rural areas revolutionized.

The failure of the country to provide the hoped-for mineral wealth, and the environmental difficulties already described, served to repel many potential immigrants and to cause many others whose early dreams were unfulfilled to leave. This was particularly true of the depression that occurred after the Boer War. It was of this period that a disappointed Englishman, Stanley Hyatt, wrote that the rotting wagons which littered the veld were 'perfect emblems of Rhodesia, of the land of High Hopes and Unfulfilled Promises'.³ During this time many of the older residents left the country to return to the Cape and Transvaal and those immigrants who replaced them were often poorer and less experienced settlers. Among the Jewish population there was a tendency for many of the original Anglo-

German settlers with a long history of residence in Africa to leave the territory and for them to be replaced by newcomers direct from Eastern Europe. Some of the older residents such as Jack Moss, a young English Jew writing in a local Bulawayo Jewish paper *The Idlers' Gazette* for November 1901, bemoaned these changes:

The Depression hits us particularly hard, in that it deprives the community of invaluable workers, like Mr Goldring, who cannot be replaced. Good men leave us, while such newcomers as may arrive are as a rule far from desirable additions to our ranks. We stand and fall with the general population of the country. Our interests are common. . . .

The 1904 census of the whole territory shows that 585 persons gave their religion as Jewish. Cross-tabulation of returns reveals that the composition of the Jewish population was changed from that of pioneer days and that 360 persons were born in Russia, Poland and Rumania. The new migrants were mostly single adult males and among the Eastern European groups men outnumbered females more than four to one. Among Jews from elsewhere, the sex ratio was less than two to one. The largest proportion of Jewish immigrants, before immigration from Europe was suspended in 1914, was from the Baltic Provinces of the Tsarist Empire. This was part of the general trend of immigration into South Africa. The Jews from these areas, known as 'Litvaks', took ship to German ports where they caught ocean-going vessels to South Africa. The arrival of large numbers from a certain district was frequently reported in the press; *The Rhodesia Herald* of 2 September 1910, for example, reported that the *Gascon* arrived at Cape Town with eighty Jewish immigrants 'mainly from Grodno'.

Evidence from the naturalization returns can also be utilized to provide information on these settlers. Naturalization could be taken out after five years' residence in Rhodesia by persons who wished to remain in the country. These returns thus yield information on the nature of permanent settlers of foreign origin. The vast majority of applicants for naturalization in Rhodesia were Russian Jews and a Litvak bias was clearly apparent. Of 164 Jews naturalized before 1909 and therefore resident in Rhodesia before 1904, 28 were born in Courland (present-day Latvian S.S.R.), 44 in Kovno Province (Lithuanian S.S.R.; Poland 1919-40). Minsk Province (Byelo-Russian S.S.R.) provided 14 successful applicants and Warsaw and Poland proper 25. There were only 7 German and 3 Austro-Hungarian born persons. Of 170 Jews naturalized in the years 1910 to 1923, and therefore resident before 1918, 34 came from Courland, 38 from Kovno, 11 from Vilna, 22 from Minsk, and 18 from Poland. The proportion from the Baltic area does not seem to have varied from the earlier period but there were two

small but significant increases after 1904. Before 1909 only 10 Rumanians were naturalized but in the years 1910 to 1923 as many as 28 took this step. Sephardi Jews from Rhodes in the Aegean Sea provided only 2 naturalized citizens before 1909 but 6 after that date. These returns also reveal the decrease in German-Jewish settlement, for in the latter period only 2 German or Austrian citizens were naturalized.

The naturalization data also give information on the residence patterns of the applicants. Lithuanians tended to settle in Bulawayo or Gwanda, Latvians were more evenly spread about the territory, Rumanians went mainly to Bulawayo, but the Sephardim preferred Mashonaland, settling mainly in Salisbury or Umtali Districts. The Litvak Jews came from the old medieval Duchy of Lithuania, an essentially rural and backward part of the sprawling Tsarist Empire. The Jewish population there was not as large as that of central Poland, Galicia or the Ukraine which sent emigrants to the U.S.A., Britain and Argentina in large numbers. Litvaks had little experience of modern or industrialized society and unlike the Polish Jews they were not residents of large cities or factory workers. In their homeland they were prevented from owning land and engaged mainly in artisan and middleman roles providing services to the illiterate Slav peasants. They were carpenters, milkmen, tailors, tavern-keepers, cattle-dealers, tinkers and hawkers. They lived in *shtetl* (small village communities). In the case of Courland they came from Schloss Samsten, Grubin, Zagger, Coldingen, Talen; those from Kovno Province came from Shadow, Taurage, Wilkomir, Rosiani, and Plungya. Others came from the small towns around Vilna such as Havodock, Ershinsky, Supran and Manat. They were brought up in a strongly Jewish environment which is best known to the general world public through the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. There was a large degree of Jewish autonomy and solidarity, and a great deal of family feeling.

The Litvak immigrants and those from Rhodes and Rumania were involved in a patron-client form of chain migration. One member of a family would go ahead and become established in the new land and he would then send for younger relatives and advance money for their fares, put up a guarantee if necessary, and often offer the newcomer a job. In return the immigrant normally agreed to pay off his debt by working for his patron over a certain number of years. During his indentureship the newcomer hoped to learn the ways and language of the new country and build up the contacts and capital so that he could eventually establish himself as an independent businessman, perhaps to become a patron himself. Most of the men were single and they would send home for a wife whereas a married man tried to establish himself so that he could bring out his wife and family.

Chains of migrants from particular villages are easily identifiable. Goldingen sent the Hepker and Blumenthal families who settled in Matabeleland. Closer investigation of Rumanian immigrants reveals that they all come from an area in Northern Moldavia, around the towns of Jassy, Roman, Peatr Neamt and Vaslui. The patron of this movement was Charelick Salomon from Negresti near Vaslui. He arrived in Bulawayo in 1894 and opened a store near the Location. He rose rapidly to become a successful wholesaler in the years before 1914 and was patron to a number of settlers most of whom he employed at one time or another. They all came from Vaslui district, settled in Bulawayo, and engaged in the same line of work — retailing to the African market, the so-called 'kaffir truck' trade. They included Oscar Kaufman, H.L. Kaufman, A.C. Kaufman, D. Schwartz, M. Rappaport, Sigismund and Sam Gruber, S. Salomon, H. Salomon, L. Segal, Samuel Rabinovitz and Benny Goldstein. Among the Rhodesies (as Jews from Rhodes are known), Moussa Benatar performed the same services and he was succeeded by others such as B.S. Leon, Mario Alhadeff, and Isaac Beneveniste. In 1904 there were only 4 Sephardi Jews in the country but by 1911 there were 30 including 1 female.

The immigration laws favoured such a pattern because guarantee of a job or evidence of support were necessary to gain entry and group migration as such was discouraged. Another factor which favoured Ashkenazi (Northern European) Jewish immigrants was the fact that Rhodesia followed Cape precedent and considered Yiddish to be a European language for the purposes of the literacy test in a European language which was compulsory under the Immigration Ordinance of 1904. The Sephardi Jews whose home language was Ladino, a mixture of medieval Spanish and Hebrew, had more difficulty since they had to qualify in Spanish or Italian. The result was that Sephardim had a higher proportion of prohibited immigrants than other Jewish groups and many went on to the Belgian Congo where entry requirements were easier.

Considering the tremendous adaptation these people had to make from Europe to a British territory in Africa, most did surprisingly well economically and acculturated quickly to their new environment. There were, however, signs of strain among some individuals who could not make the necessary personal adjustment. This is common among most immigrant groups in any country and takes the form of crime, drunkenness and suicide. A certain Caplan was 'practically expelled from Salisbury owing to his cantankerous and quarrelsome habits, which rendered him a public nuisance'. He moved to Umtali and was involved in further 'hysterical behaviour', attacking a Polish Jew named Kanerek. The local magistrate decided that he was a 'most undesirable immigrant, and it would be kind of

his friends to advise him to return to his own country, for he will assuredly get into trouble here sooner or later.'⁴ Suicides were common in Rhodesia among all classes of settlers. G. Rosenberg, a Bulawayo boot-maker, used cyanide because according to the coroner he was depressed about business difficulties. H. Lipschitz of Gatooma shot himself while his family were away in Europe and twenty-three year old Barney Solomon of Bulawayo returned from Katanga with a fever and then killed himself.

Because most of the immigrants were absorbed on arrival into a primary group of friends and relatives, most of their anti-social behaviour was directed at other members of their group. Isidore Herman charged Marcus Grill with slashing him with a razor as a result of an argument when Grill had asked to be paid the rent. According to Herman, Grill used 'such language as only a dirty Peruvian would make use of'.⁵ The magistrate decided it was six of one and half a dozen of the other and dismissed the case.

Confidence tricksters have long been a feature of the Rhodesian scene. In 1903 'Benedicto Jacob alias Jacob Isay Souritzer' was sought by the police for 'theft by false pretences'. He was described as 'very fluent in conversation, well informed on Public topics, speaks French, German, Russian and English with a foreign accent'. His dress was a 'dark blue flannel suit with thin white stripe, brown soft felt hat, also khaki riding breeches, brown leather leggings, boots . . . Jacob represents to be a Journalist obtaining literary information of Native Life and Customs for publication in book form. Also a great pedestrian and will walk a great deal through the country.'⁶

Some Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe acculturated to British Protestant values and frontier justice surprisingly quickly. Max Mande, a Que Que storekeeper, disapproved of the behaviour of a Greek boot-maker who was a lodger on his property. Mande accused the man of not paying his rent and begging for food but, when he had money, of taking 'kaffir girls and get drunk with them'. Mande told Karandinos 'to shift' but the lodger followed Mande into the store, 'insulted the Jewish religion' and 'drew a stilleto', whereupon Mande reached under the counter, seized a revolver and shot Karandinos in the arm.⁷ The inevitable result of this Wild-West type affray was a court case in which Mande pleaded self-defence and was found not guilty.

The Jewish population grew rapidly in the years after 1904 when prosperity began to spread as a result of the boom in smallworking of gold claims and the development of European agriculture. By 1911 the Jewish population had doubled to 1,283 persons, of whom 580 were born in the Russian Empire. The Jewish proportion of the White population was then

5.5 per cent — the highest figure it ever reached. At the next census in 1921 the Jewish population was almost unchanged at 1,289 persons, but this disguises a large turnover of population. In this decade there had been a loss of 91 males and a gain of 97 females. It would appear that many single males who had not made good had departed and that they had been replaced by the dependants of those who had decided to settle permanently. These figures also reflect the effects of the depression which affected the country after 1912 and the War during which Jewish immigration from Europe was practically halted.

The personal problems caused by the upheavals in Eastern and Central Europe are illustrated by the case of the Schur family. Harry Schur, a hide and skin dealer, had arrived in Rhodesia in 1914 and his brother Louis, the manager of Meikles Bros at Wankie, in 1913. By 1919 they claimed that between them they had over £2,300 in assets and on the strength of this they wanted to bring their fifty-year old father, a twenty-year old brother, and an eighteen-year old sister to Rhodesia from Latvia. They agreed to support these relatives until they themselves could earn a living. Their father was a storekeeper in Libau and had £200 of his own. The Administrator agreed to the entry of these people and the following year the Schur brothers applied to bring out a cousin and his wife whom they offered employment in the hide firm. By 1922 only Isaac, their younger brother, had arrived. The others were uprooted by the wars and revolution and the women were unsuccessful in trying to get the other men released from the Bolshevik Army.

In another case Charles Levien, a British-naturalized resident of Salisbury, found that his wife and child were caught at Taurage in German-occupied Lithuania in 1915 during a visit home. The B.S.A. Company contacted the American, British and Russian Foreign Offices on behalf of Levien who wanted to bring his wife back to Rhodesia. There was an argument over the legal position of these unfortunate people. The Resident Commissioner, the Imperial Government's representative in Rhodesia, wrote: 'I have not much hope that any effective action will be practicable, but as I feel sorry for these unfortunate people, I have done what little I could to give a helping hand'.⁸ At the time of the Revolution in Russia in 1917 Mrs Levien still remained in Russia. This type of incident provided heartache and anguish for the local Jewish community in both World Wars.

In addition to these political complications in Europe, there was another reason for the fall-off in Jewish immigration after 1911; this was the rise of anti-Semitism in Rhodesia. We noted that in the pioneer period anti-Semitism was conspicuously absent among both the authorities and

the bulk of the settler population. With the arrival, however, of large numbers of 'foreign' Jews who did not know English and were less acculturated to colonial life, a resentment built up among the majority of settlers of British origin. The growing normalization of settler life, with larger numbers of women and neat suburbs in the towns, also tended to facilitate the growth of ethnocentric English airs and snobbish attitudes while the settlement policy of the Company encouraged well-heeled landowners to establish plantations in an attempt to compete with Kenya. The entry of numbers of British artisans, clerks and civil servants, who had witnessed the agitation over the Aliens Act of 1905 in Britain, younger sons of the gentry and ex-Indian Army officers, all tended to change the local attitude towards Jews.

By the First World War prejudiced views had begun to replace the old tolerance even among the higher authorities of the Company. These men began to reflect popular prejudice which had adopted such views during the Boer War and the depression after 1912. Anti-alien feeling and measures during the War were much more severe in Rhodesia than in South Africa. All German settlers, including Ernest Bluhm, a Gwelo barber, were sent to internment camps in South Africa. This did not silence the popular clamour and in 1916 there were more victims. One was the brother of the Cantor at the Bulawayo Synagogue, who was born in Galicia (Austrian Poland) but had left at the age of six. He had spent nineteen years in South Africa, had fought for the British in the Boer War, and ran a business in Bulawayo. Despite this he, too, was interned for a time.

An even more serious case was that of I. Cohen, who was born in Austrian Poland and had become a British subject in 1906, and now worked in the railway repair shops in Umtali as a mechanic: 'Cohen's name was submitted by representatives of the employees to the Locomotive Superintendent at Umtali, as one of the men of enemy origin whom the majority refused to work with, he was thereupon discharged by the management.'⁹ Suddenly finding himself without a job, Cohen was forced to seek independent employment and he opened a store at Odzi and in the 1920s established the Balfour Hotel at Rusape. Two points are significant here; one is the willingness to submit to blackmail and intimidation among the railway management and the other the forcing of a Jew back into traditional Jewish spheres of employment in service industries. Such pressures are important factors to bear in mind when Jewish concentration in certain forms of employment is discussed, since, as we can see, chances of promotion for a Jew were unlikely in organizations or trades where they did not have a controlling interest or influence.

The year 1916 saw many British defeats and was marked in Rhodesia

by a spate of anti-alien letters to the newspapers criticizing the immigration policy of the country and the numbers of foreigners in certain fields of employment. This xenophobia often adopted an anti-Jewish tone. The Communist success in Russia helped bolster this type of thinking. In 1920 the Attorney General adopted a mild economic approach: 'I do not think we should encourage the immigration of Russians. There are so many in this territory at the present time, that, if facilities are given to bring out their relatives we shall be flooded with persons who are practically refugees.'¹⁰ On the other hand a Company director, Sir Lewis Michell, took a more political and anti-Semitic view. He was opposed to any idea 'to dump down on these shores some thousands of Yiddish children . . . we are already over-run with Polish Jews of a low type many of whom are of Bolshevik proclivities'.¹¹

The changed attitude towards Jews in the disappointment that followed the War was present even in Coghlan's case. In 1916 he was in a legal partnership with J.J. Sonnenberg, and Cecil Jacobs was his articled clerk until Jacobs volunteered for service. Yet in 1920 Coghlan wrote to his sister that he did not wish to holiday at the Cape, for there 'one is rubbing shoulders with Jewish profiteers and parvenues all the time'.¹²

During the War there was no conscription in Rhodesia but all manner of social pressures were brought upon men to get them to join the colours. As was to be expected the question of Jewish participation was raised in a concerted campaign by anti-Semites. In 1917 George Stewart, the mayor of Bulawayo and elected member of the Legislative Council, accused 'aliens' of joining the local volunteers to avoid military service in war zones. The Jewish community was greatly disturbed by what they regarded as an attack on them. The settlers' political leader, Coghlan, gave figures in the Council which showed that Stewart was inaccurate in his claims, who thereupon withdrew his remarks but charged that the Jews were 'over-sensitive' and that he had never mentioned the word 'Jew'. Moreover Stewart claimed to be opposed only to the 'alien class', not 'Jews of British nationality'.¹³

In the following year feelings on recruitment still ran high and there was much talk about the position of married men, 'slackers', 'Dutchmen' and aliens. Most of the patriotic agitators were women and older men, both members of groups which did not have to face life in the Flanders mud. A typical case was Miss Jessie Anderson who wrote to *The Bulawayo Chronicle* on 3 May 1918 asking why there were no jobs for returned soldiers and 'why so many aliens should be employed who are strong, and able to be in the fighting line has long been a puzzle and a scandal'. These slackers were undoubtedly all 'pro-German' and should be sacked and replaced by returned soldiers without, of course, any regard for their

replacements' experience or training for such jobs. In 1918 Coghlan was again forced to provide the Legislative Council with a breakdown of recruitment by 'nationality' including Jews and 'Dutch', although, of course, in practice such nationalities did not exist since the men were either British subjects or nationals of their birthplaces. The Revd M.I. Cohen did much work preparing his own figures in order to counter the mounting wave of unsubstantiated accusations against Jews.

Undoubtedly there was considerably less enthusiasm among local Jews to go to France to fight than there had been to engage in the wars of the pioneer period, or even the Boer War. This was understandable from their point of view, since many had gone to Rhodesia to escape the problems of Europe and had no desire to fight alongside their former Russian oppressors. Yet in 1914 a wholly Jewish company of volunteers was raised among members of the Jewish Guild in Bulawayo, who wanted to fight in South West Africa under their own elected officers. Their demands were turned down by the authorities but some went, nevertheless, and the first Rhodesian fatality of the war was Ben Rabinson, a Matabeleland Rugby player. The Revd C.E. Greenfield gave a pulpit tribute to Rabinson: 'To me it is a matter of pride that one of that ancient and distinguished race should be found side by side with us in upholding the ideals our Empire stands for, fighting and dying for them'.¹⁴ As he had done during the South African War, Cohen also preached patriotic British sermons concentrating on the liberty that the British authorities allowed Jews and calling on the local community to participate fully in the struggle.

The more established and anglicized Jews fully demonstrated their loyalty. Cecil Aserman, a son of Litvak immigrant who had made good in mining and sent him to public school in England, received a commission and gained the Military Cross. J. Cohen, a Bulawayo municipal employee, was Honorary Secretary of the Matabeleland Central War Fund. George Joseph and Louis Landau were on the Bulawayo Recruiting Committee, and H.L. Lezard and R. Bernstein were members of the Salisbury Committee. In 1914 Jack Goldberg of the Commercial Hotel in Salisbury was the first to organize comforts for the troops in South West Africa. Bertha Basch of Bulawayo was secretary of the Red Cross and received an M.B.E. for her services. Yet despite these contributions, there is no doubt that the war undermined the position and status of Rhodesian Jewry as a result of the chauvinism it created and the political, economic and psychological changes it brought.

The Jewish contribution to the development of the country during the years up to 1923 was quite substantial. The development of goldmining was the most important feature of the economy in the period before 1914.

Louis Susman was Managing Director of the Salisbury Reef Gold Mining Co., the first successful proposition in Mashonaland, and he was later lucky with the Dwarf Mine. Julius Weil was Chairman of the Cam and Motor Mine near Gatooma and also of Lonrho when it was first established. His brother Sam constantly travelled around the country visiting properties with a view to investing. Jewish interest in mining ventures was aroused most when Robert Aserman and Jack Palca discovered the Lonely Mine north of Bulawayo. This was one of Rhodesia's most successful mines and they made a fortune selling shares in it to a group which included the Johannesburg firm of Lewis & Marks and the Rothschilds. Palca, who had fought in the 1893 war, held on to his money and retired to St John's Wood, London, after thirty years in Africa. Aserman remained in Rhodesia and speculated on anything and everything, including mines, cotton production, and trading ventures such as the Matabeleland Trading Association. Most of his gambles were unsuccessful and he received a pauper's burial when he died in Bulawayo in 1931.

After the success of Palca and Aserman in 1907 practically every country trader was affected by the 'gold bug' and invested in smallworkings. In fact most of the business insolvencies of the period were due to bad investments in mines or the backing of indigent and unsuccessful smallworkers by equally undercapitalized traders. Trader-smallworkers included Basch, H. Rubinstein, T. Berwitz, A.L. Shapiro, J. Lewis, S. Levine, G.B. Havnar, W.H. Cohen, I. Lasovsky, A. Blumenthal, Charellick Salomon and E. Granger. Professional or full-time mining men included Hyman Benjamin who helped open up Mashaba Asbestos Mine in 1915, M. van Praagh, a mining engineer, J.B. Aarons, a metallurgist at Sabiwa Mine in 1903, and A. Goldman, a consultant mining engineer. Famous prospectors who began their careers at this period were G.B. Epstein who discovered the Shashi Mine on the asbestos fields and J.F. Kapnek, one of Rhodesia's most successful smallworkers.

One of the country's most attractive personalities at this period was also involved in mining. He was Nattie Arnold, born Nathaniel Arnold Aaron in London, in 1878. He was a 'child of the Ghetto' and was educated at the famous Jews' Free School in Bell Lane, Spitalfields, where his English master was the popular author of the day, Israel Zangwill. Arnold's father was a wood-carver but the boy was apprenticed to a shoe-maker in 1894. Nattie found this boring and went to the Rand in 1896 where he worked as a waiter. Hearing about the rinderpest epidemic in Rhodesia and the shortage of draught animals, he journeyed up to Umtali with some donkeys in 1897, and, although he did not make the 'killing' that he had expected, he stayed and became a clerk to Lazarus, the auctioneer. Later he moved

to Salisbury where he went into partnership with Bob Bernstein, again as an auctioneer but specializing in mining properties, claims and machinery. In 1900 Bernstein withdrew from the firm which was then named N.A. Arnold & Co. In the course of the next few years Arnold found his way onto the committee of the local Hebrew Congregation and the Town Council, but his first interest remained mining.

In 1909 during an African Coast Fever outbreak Arnold repeated his venture of importing donkeys and successfully sold 60 donkeys and 80 mules to the B.S.A. Company. He invested the profits from this *coup* in the Colossus Mine, Mazoe District. The result was the 'Colossus Case' which was a nine-day wonder in Rhodesia at the time.¹⁵ Arnold bought the mine for £24,000 from two Greeks, Coutlos and Dracopoulos, who, Arnold claimed, salted it. The case was complicated and the experts disagreed; an added difficulty were Greek interpreters and supposed vital messages in Greek. Arnold eventually settled out of court for expenses and £500. This setback did not dishearten Arnold who bought more properties around Gatooma during the next two years. He now had an agency business and was local agent for Lloyds and Five Roses Flour, and he established a branch office at London Wall. In 1913 his Cheshire Cat Mine produced over £12,000 of gold. In 1918 he sold his claims at Gatooma for £20,000 and seemed well set for a successful career, which, it was hinted, might include politics. But after concluding his deal he contracted ptomaine poisoning at a hotel in Gatooma and died. His funeral was attended by a large gathering including Salisbury's mayor, Col. Raleigh Grey, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce. In deference to Arnold's religious beliefs and Jewish custom, there were no flowers or wreaths. The poor boy from Stepney had gone a long way. *The Rhodesia Herald* reported that the 'deceased was highly respected as was evidenced by the large number of sympathizers present'.¹⁶

Another successful individual who met a less dramatic end was Mendel Pevsner who was a partner in an auctioneer's business in Bulawayo. He then decided to invest in the hitherto neglected sphere of agriculture and in 1904 he acquired 11,000 acres of land adjoining Bulawayo Commonage. In 1906 he became one of the first tobacco planters when he decided to introduce Turkish tobacco production on sixteen experimental acres. By 1907 he had 4 European and 55 African workers at his Glenville Estate and produced over 20,000 lb of leaf. That year he exhibited his cigarettes at the Salisbury Agricultural Show and won second prize. In 1908 he placed his new all-Rhodesian 'Sceptre' cigarettes on the market. They were sold at most local stores in packets of ten and were reported to

be 'a credit not only to the manufacturer but to Rhodesia generally'.¹⁷ Pevsner eventually left the country and opened a cigarette factory at Cape Town but he retained his estate. On 3 March 1922 there was a long article on Glenville in *The Rhodesia Herald* under the heading 'A Model Estate', where its prosperity and stability were lauded. Pevsner was reported to have the most successful Turkish tobacco plantation in Southern Africa and had won twenty-four gold medals in competitions. He claimed the secret of his success was good organization, good facilities, and treating his employees well. His operation was considerable for its time, for of his 4,300 acres, 400 were under tobacco containing 16 million plants.

Hermann Hepker left Goldingen in 1887 for Luderitz, German South West Africa, where he was a hawker and cattle trader. He went to Kimberley in 1891, then to Bechuanaland, and finally to Bulawayo in 1896. At first he was involved in the cattle trade and produce dealing but eventually he became owner of the Chartered Butchery. After 1903 he became interested in mining ventures and this in turn led him to appreciate the possibilities of mining timber. Hermann's economic success brought the usual chain of relatives, brothers William in 1896, Julius in 1898 and Adolph in 1906. Hermann founded a timber business sixty miles north of Bulawayo at a siding named Sawmills. He was responsible for opening up the Matabeleland native hardwoods timber industry and for many years Hepker Bros had a sole concession in the Nyamandhlovu District. In 1918 their concession was extended for ten years as they had £8,000 invested in the venture. At this time they employed 15 Europeans and 300 Africans and exported timber for the Johannesburg mines. They even managed to gain the respect of Sir Lewis Michell, who 'was satisfied that the Hepkers are enterprising and energetic people and considers they are well worthy of support'.¹⁸ In 1919 the firm became Rhodesian Native Timber Concessions with branches in Rhodesia and South Africa. The social mobility which resulted from such success was demonstrated in the 1920s when Hermann moved to the 'plush' Johannesburg suburb of Houghton while his son, a former Oxford Blue, became a barrister in London and acted as manager of the company branch there.

After 1908 when the Chartered Company began to encourage land settlement, land ownership and farming became greater marks of prestige in Rhodesian society. Farms were large, normally 3,000 acres, and might perhaps be better described as plantations, for they employed large numbers of unskilled African employees. The economic and political benefits of land ownership were numerous and farmers dominated the politics of the country, with its colonial-feudal political economy, for many years. Jewish landowners were few since most immigrants did not have the

capital to buy the large acreages involved, nor for the expensive equipment and large wage bill. Any Jewish interest in land normally followed success in other fields. Abraham Blumenthal was a transport-rider for the mines around the turn of the century. He then invested in trading stores in the Gwanda District, bought the Grand Hotel in Bulawayo and only after success in this field did he emerge as a rancher.

Harry Jacobson, a British Jew, had originally started as a storekeeper in Selukwe. He then opened a store and hotel at Banket Junction when the railways reached there. In 1912 he applied for land when he had acquired £1,000 savings. He sold his hotel and by 1920 owned 10,000 acres at Banket for which he paid 5s. an acre and a further 30,000 acres at Gutu. Abraham Lassman was another former storekeeper who had made money at the Marvel and Fred Mines in the early years of the century; he went into ranching in 1916 and still owned 6,000 acres when he sold up and retired to Bulawayo in 1937.

Morris Singer was a very astute businessman who made money from stores and hotels in Mazoe District. He discovered the Shamva Mine which he sold to the Goldfields Company of Johannesburg. He diversified his operations further by acquiring farms in the Mazoe Valley, a prime maize area. His application for land was successful 'in view of the very considerable part which Singer has taken in the past in assisting to develop the country'.¹⁹

Sam Lewis of Marandellas was a unique character with a penchant for litigation, especially against railway companies. He was the first to organize an open-air Jewish wedding on a Rhodesian farm when his daughter married E. Blank, an Enkeldoorn trader, in 1917. Lewis was an astute businessman and worked as a farmer, trader, speculator and timber merchant. He was responsible for starting the local timber industry around Marandellas based on gum-poles and the lumber firm he founded still exists. His local influence was such that during the 1914 Legislative Council elections, Col. Heyman advised Napier, the mining companies' nominee, to contact Lewis: 'If you can get hold of him it will be very important as from what I can gather a good many people in the district owe him money'.²⁰ This policy did not pay off for although Napier won the election by four votes he was unseated by a petition for malpractice.

The cattle trade to Barotseland in the years before 1914 was Jewish dominated. The trade was important because it provided the means whereby both Africans and settlers replaced the losses sustained by the rinderpest epidemic. The trip down from the upper Zambezi was a hazardous undertaking as the cattle had to be taken across the river in the face of a strong current, crocodiles, and hippopotami. The crossing was done

by floating sixteen or eighteen cattle across by roping them to a long dug-out canoe. The main participants in the trade were 'Zambesi' Gordon, Julius Stern, Max Kominsky, Isidore Pieters, and A.B. Diamond who found a tsetse-free route to the Congo in 1909. The Susman brothers, Elie and Harris, were also prominent in the trade. They owned volunteer farms from the 1893 war but worked mainly in Northern Rhodesia from their base in Livingstone. Yet in the southern territory they owned 50,000 acres in the Bulalima-Mangwe District in 1918.

A Rhodesian cattle export trade was developed when the Johannesburg market was opened up in 1915 and when the Imperial forces in Tanganyika required supplies. Many Jewish storekeepers who had experience of this trade in the Beltic region then turned to cattle-dealing in the southern districts of Matabeleland. In 1918 at the height of the trade local cattle dealers included A. Blumenthal, M. Rosen, B. Marks, Levin & Cohen, J. and S. Sacks, Henry Rosen, I. Kollenberg, W. Sussman, B. Jaffrey and Adolph Nathanson. They collected cattle mainly from Africans and floated them across the Limpopo at Liebig's Drift near the present-day Beit Bridge. The cattle were railed from Messina to Johannesburg. A gold rush atmosphere predominated and the manager of the Leibig's Extract of Meat Co., which had recently bought a million acres in the area in 1910, complained in 1916 that, 'For some time past the country round us has been infested with Jewish traders and poor whites financed by Jews, with the result that stock thefts and illicit movement of cattle have increased considerably'.²¹

The low opinion the Establishment held of Jewish traders was reflected in their attitude towards such men as landowners. Land-owning was involved in a whole matrix of factors such as social position, political and economic privilege and matters of White prestige, since it conferred powers over not only large numbers of workers but also tenants. We have noted that only well-established and successful Jewish residents were granted land. When Sam and Ben Shemer, who had been cattle traders since the late 1890s, were offered a farm in the Gwelo District in 1909, the Chief Native Commissioner, Herbert Taylor, wrote to Hole, the Secretary to the Administrator, complaining:

I have always been under the impression that the object of the B.S.A. Company in obtaining settlers was with a view to turning to good account the soil of the country, i.e. to dispose of the land to bona fide farmers.

Messrs. Shemer Bros. are Jewish traders, pure and simple, they certainly have acquired a number of cattle through this means, but they are not the class of Europeans to command the respect of natives, nor to improve the land.²²

The hypocrisy of such statements, in view of the many large grants of land to absentee English aristocrats, Rhodesian townsmen and speculative companies, is obvious; but the consequences of such prejudices were important since they prevented the creation of a wider spectrum of occupations among Jewish settlers and slowed occupational and social mobility.

The Jewish concentration in the hotel and bar trade remained throughout this period. Hotel-keeping was regarded as a convivial and lucrative way of investing funds made in trading. A number of Pioneers gravitated to this after some years trading in the bush. One was Robert Spiro who bought the Imperial Hotel in Bulawayo in 1903; by 1916, fifteen of the thirty-four liquor licences in the Bulawayo District were held by Jews. A succession of Jewish proprietors was common at many country hotels. These establishments were more imposing in name than in looks, for they consisted in the main of ramshackle buildings, often with pole and dagga outbuildings. The main fare at these places consisted of game birds, and vegetables were scarce but this inadequacy was compensated by the lack of restrictions on bar hours. Morris Singer established the King's Hotel at Mazoe in 1907 to serve the local peripatetic mining community. In 1911 Myer Bernstein was the owner and in 1912 David Shulman bought the business. A similar chain operated at the Banket Hotel which was established by Jacob Shapiro, sold to Henry Jacobson and in 1914 was bought by John and J.A. Bernstein. Most hotels were only marginally profitable and something of a gamble since they depended on the unstable mining populations and the travelling salesmen who served them. However, one hotel-keeper who started in this period and remained in the business, although he later diversified his operations to include produce-trading, stores and mining, was Barney Kaplan. He opened the Mtoko Hotel in 1912 and for many years it was the only licensed premises on the road between Salisbury and Blantyre. He ran the establishment for fifty years and became an institution in the area eventually receiving the O.B.E. for his services in developing this remote area. In 1970 a bridge over the Nyadiri River was named in his honour. His was one of the last hotels to operate the old Rhodesian custom whereby when a whisky was ordered the bottle was put on the bar for the customer to pour.

The persons described so far have been the few successful ones who made money, but most Jewish immigrants remained country traders or storekeepers in the African section of towns, catering for a declining African market. The concentration of Jews in poor living conditions and unhealthy outside districts such as the Mazoe Valley and Gwanda is reflected by their higher incidence of blackwater fever. In 1923 Dr Thompson calculated blackwater cases per thousand and found that the

rate for the British ethnic group was 1, for Dutch or Afrikaners 3, and for Jews 4. He explained this in economic and social terms. 'The British looked after themselves better and lived generally speaking in good houses';²⁵ poor Jewish bachelors obviously did not.

The commercial bias among Jews was noticeable to all observers and in fact reached its height in 1912 when thirty-four per cent of all retail outlets were owned by them. After this the proportion fell to twenty-three per cent during the inter-war years. We have seen how prejudice contributed towards this tendency with the result that of 334 Jews naturalized before 1923, 243 were engaged in the commercial sector. Additional factors were lack of training in other trades in Europe and the immigration pattern which involved cheap indentured labour to work in the marginally profitable and unattractive conditions in the rural areas. The existence of the patron-client network was very clear in the case of the many stores on or near mines, about fifty per cent of which were controlled by Jews in the period 1907 to the late 1940s. A good example of this feature is the Lonely Mine discovered by Aserman and Palca.

In 1908 Charellick Salomon was given trading rights near the Lonely Mine and paid £50 rental to the B.S.A. Company which owned the adjacent land. Salomon put in a recent immigrant, Joseph Schattil, as his manager. By 1911 the mine and local contractors had expanded to employ 50 Europeans and 1,000 Africans; thus I. Pieters & Co., another Bulawayo Jewish wholesale house, established a store at a rental of £240 a year and put in a manager. Salomon now sublet his store to Salis Bros. In 1912 another Bulawayo wholesale firm, Fredman & Grossberg, leased a butchery, bakery and store for £300 which was managed by their nominees, Treger & Chitrin. The smaller fry were all tied-houses of the original lessees and had to deal solely with their patrons who thus had a captive market. Only the large wholesale house could afford to pay the high rentals demanded, which reached £600 p.a. at the Lonely Mine in 1920. The mining companies put the store rights out to tender to recoup their expenditure; the wholesalers exploited the African workforce and the immigrant storekeepers and managers.

One case where abuses of this system and the ticket system of credit used with African workers led to trouble was at Shamva Mine in 1920. When Singer had sold the mine he had retained the lucrative sole trading rights. The separate European store was run by Shamva Stores Ltd, a partnership between Singer and Harry Lasovsky. The store in the African compound which served the 3,500 man labour force was ceded to the Abercorn Trading Co. owned by Lasovsky and Louis Braude. The compound store had credit privileges which were granted by the mine management and the

store undoubtedly took advantage of these to profiteer. Shirts at this store sold for 17s. 6d. as against 10s. in stores without these privileges at the village a mile and a half away. The Africans organized a boycott for four days of the Abercorn Co. store, and pickets armed with sticks prevented customers entering. This show of force resulted in a fall in prices at the store. Bread went down from 1s. 6d. to 1s. a loaf and some blankets were halved in price. The Africans were ordered by their leaders to buy at the village stores of Graham Bros, Lithuanian Jews, and the Shamva Trading Co., run by Rhodesians, Leon Ferera and Jacob Benatar. Notices were nailed up by the leaders: 'Dear Brothers and friends . . . Don't get credit. All people must not buy from the Jews. It is good at Grahams there are some cheap things there.'²⁴

The reference to Jews was due in part to European influence and the ubiquitousness of Jewish storekeepers on the mines, but the Africans' negative stereotype of the *Majuta* is important, since Percy Graham too was Jewish. In this incident we see the political problems created by the concentration in the distributive sector, with its element of exploitation, since it invited African hostility and criticism from European settlers who blamed the Jewish traders for upsetting the local work force. Jack Moss, a nephew and employee of E. Basch, had realized this in 1904 when he wrote that 'it cannot be expected that a community composed entirely of shopkeepers will gain much dignity in the eyes of the authorities'.²⁵ The real culprits were not the ordinary storekeepers, because it was inflation that had raised the African cost of living from 100 in 1914 to 165 in 1919 while wages had risen by only 18 per cent. The African worker found that the purchasing power of his pound was worth 7s. 6d. in 1919 compared with 1914. This provoked an inevitable reaction and the workers with an unsophisticated knowledge of economics took out their anger on the controllers of distribution rather than the real culprits, in the London-based mining companies. However, it says little for the perception of Lasovsky, Singer and Braude that they claimed the whole affair was a plot engineered by their local commercial rivals.

The importance of the wholesaler-patron has been mentioned and the fortunes that they made were undoubtedly due mostly to astute business operations but there was also an element of exploitation especially regarding indentured compatriots and poor African labourers. This of course was not the monopoly of distributive trades, since the atmosphere of exploitation pervaded the whole of the country. In the inter-war years Charelick Salomon could afford to spend six months of the year in Europe. Isaac Pieters who arrived in Rhodesia in 1892 ran a general store in Fort Victoria with his brother Marcus but eventually moved to Bulawayo where he ran

the bonded liquor warehouse and a wholesale kaffir truck business. He expanded and had branches in German South West Africa and Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo, before he retired to Cape Town in 1915 where he died in 1941. Other wholesale merchants who made a success in this period, when the African market was most lucrative owing to the comparatively high rates of real income, were Landau Bros, Soref Bros of Salisbury and Julius Frankel. All were able to send members of the controlling families to private schools in England for their education.

Despite these exceptions the average Jewish storekeeper lived a hand-to-mouth existence. He worked long hours for small returns, competition was intense and there were numerous insolvencies. Jews were concentrated in the African market where they ran general stores. Few owned the specialist retail outlets which served the European population, since they lacked not only the capital to stock them and pay high rents in the centre of towns, but also the linguistic skills necessary. On the other hand, African consumers could be addressed in a crude 'kitchen kaffir' and served in very rudimentary premises. Whereas in 1912 Jews owned 362 or 34 per cent of retail outlets, they held only 20 of the 95 importers' licences — which shows their low proportion of wholesalers and the larger specialist stores.

We have already noted that the common pattern was first indentureship at rural store, then an independent business in a remote area, and only if this were successful would the trader move to a larger settlement; and in rare cases this was followed by entering the wholesale field in Salisbury or Bulawayo. In African Reserves, on unalienated land and at mines, the trader could only rent premises and had to build a temporary store which was normally a collapsible wood and iron building. A move to a centre of permanent European settlement was a big step since the authorities normally insisted on the erection of a permanent building of a certain value, usually £250, before they would lease or sell a store site. It is possible to identify chains, for when successful traders sold their stores and graduated to town businesses they were announced in the press. For instance in 1920 it was reported that Blank Bros of Enkeldoorn had sold their business to Lewen & Gordon 'and gone to reside in Salisbury'.²⁶

In the rural areas most traders were basically peripatetic and moved around the country to wherever there was a market, either a mining development or a certain agricultural crop or commodity that was in demand. Stores were always being opened and closed. Percy Hone described the commercial practices of the day in 1909:

Besides the store at which the trader lives, he also has temporary trading stations at villages some 15 to 20 miles distant and there he

carries on business with the native inhabitants. When he has got together a large consignment of native produce, he sends it by wagon to towns or mines, where he sells it and brings back fresh trading goods. The life is a lonely one for a single man, and often two join in partnership. If they have a small capital behind them, they do their own transport work, and with one or two wagons and spans of oxen, they take it in turns to trade at the store or to ride the grain to the distant mine or town.²⁸

The attitude of officials to these traders changed after the death of Rhodes in 1902. Traders were no longer considered useful agents of change and the whole social view of 'foreigners' and commercial 'money grubbers' changed to that found in the typical British colony in the tropics. In 1907 the police licence inspector for Matabeleland reported:

The number of licences held by foreigners in the Kaffir storekeeping business is very large. These people are mostly low class Jews, and live in such a despicable manner that it is impossible for a respectable white man to obtain a living in opposition to them, consequently, most of the Kaffir stores in the country are held by these people. They are a discredit to the country, and it is largely owing to the manner in which these people treat the natives that the latter is losing his respect for the white man.²⁸

It is perhaps necessary to point out that the Native Commissioners and Police required Africans to remove their hats and shoes and squat on the floor before them in their offices; and so it is quite possible that, because the traders simply treated the indigenous inhabitants like ordinary customers, they acquired this reputation for lowering 'white prestige'.

Business operations are revealed in insolvency reports. Barnett Myers was in partnership with Lipschitz for a number of years prior to 1909 when he broke the partnership and took over the stores of two insolvents, Rubin and Frangos. Myers borrowed money from his brother Abraham for these purchases as well as £50 from John Bernstein and £75 from M.J. Shapiro. Myers had his father run one of the stores for him in return for a salary of £5 a month and lodging for him and his wife. Eventually Myers over-extended himself and was taken to court for culpable insolvency and was found guilty of treating his family preferentially by paying them off when he was contemplating insolvency, and by selling a store to his father. The two counts against Myers were undue preference and unlawfully transferring property, for which he received four months' hard labour. The interesting features here are the petty nature of the sums involved and the complicated business arrangements resorted to because of an obvious lack of capital which in turn led to deceit and skulduggery.

The undercapitalized small traders were particularly vulnerable to short-term economic changes. In the post-war depression after 1920 the price of goods fell drastically and many who had bought stock at the high war-time prices had severe losses. This was also true of commodity dealers. In 1921 Lezar Hoffman of Gatooma went bankrupt for £20,000 after he had extended himself and borrowed money to buy hides and skins to send to the London market. Unfortunately by the time the hides reached London the bottom had dropped out of the market and the consignment was suddenly totally unsaleable. The same course of events happened to the 1914 and 1928 Rhodesian tobacco crops. However, most Jewish insolvents were of a more petty nature. A typical example was Moses Faivel of Umvuma; in 1923 he had liabilities of £1,400 and assets of £521 with a business which had a turnover of £100 a month.

We thus find that in general the Jewish businessmen in Rhodesia performed the same type of services that they had done in Europe. The sums involved were slightly larger, the chances for success slightly greater, the discrimination much attenuated, but perhaps most importantly the physical security was infinitely greater. Though the first-generation immigrant did not have much hope of improving his social position because of his restricted contacts with British settlers and his lack of fluency in English, which was the result of mixing only with rural Africans or fellow compatriots, he had great hopes for his children who were offered the benefits of British standards of education and possibilities of much wider choices of careers.

In these trying times the importance of ambassadors to the wider settler community was realized. It was a feature of the Rhodesian scene that most Jews who have distinguished themselves in public life served an apprenticeship in Jewish community affairs and were first leaders of their own ethno-religious community. An important asset in halting the growing anti-Jewish feeling in the territory was the Revd M.I. Cohen who was a young, emancipated, anglicized, British patriot, as well as a Zionist, who was only twenty-three years of age when he arrived in Bulawayo. His statements reflected the views of the well-established communal leaders. On Mafeking Day in 1900 he told his congregants that 'the British Empire is the greatest institution for the civilising of the earth that exists today'.²⁹ He repeated this British patriotic call on every suitable public occasion, stressing both the Jewish contribution to the Empire and the Empire's mantle of freedom and liberty. Cohen represented the Jewish community on such organizations as the Education Committee of 1906 where he sat alongside other clerics, missionaries like Hadfield, and politicians like Coghlan and Mennell. Cohen was attuned to the super-British patriotism

of the territory but he also carefully contrived to see that Jewish interests were not overlooked in official circles in what was nominally a secular state without an established religion.

The more established English Jews who had no language problems were freely accepted into a number of social organizations like the Freemasons. In 1907 M. Budlender, a Bulawayo storekeeper, was on the committee of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association, and in 1908 Plymouth-born Emmanuel Basch succeeded Marshall Hole as President of the Devonian Society. Nevertheless certain societies like the All Protestant Sons of England would not accept Jews, or, for that matter, Catholics or Agnostics. There were hardly ever any Jews at the Hunt Club Ball, Salisbury's premier social event at this period.

The Jewish representation on the Chambers of Commerce and Mines continued and participation in local government was maintained. H. Landau, N. Arnold, and I. Kirschbaum were elected to Salisbury Town Council, J. Beemer and M. Budlender to the Bulawayo Council, M. Jacobson and M. Danziger to Gwelo Council. N. Wolffe was elected to the Management Board at Umvuma, H. Blumenthal and H. Liptz to the one at Que Que, and E. Blank was appointed to the Enkeldoorn Village Management Board. Herbert Lezard was mayor of Salisbury 1913-14 and 1915-16 and Basch was mayor of Bulawayo 1907-11. Lezard was born in London in 1874 and had attended the Royal School of Mines. He followed three older brothers to South Africa in 1892 and he established in 1898 the Salisbury branch of the family auctioneering business which was represented in all the main centres of South Africa. Lezard resided permanently in Salisbury only from 1910 but he joined the Town Council in 1911. As mayor during the War he was involved in the war-time organizations and received the M.B.E. in 1920. He was also Treasurer of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation. Like many other successful Rhodesian residents he moved on to South Africa where he established a carpet factory and was elected a member of Johannesburg City Council in 1929.

Basch arrived in Bulawayo in 1897 and took over the jeweller's business of M. Basch & Co. from his brother. He was President of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation for the years 1903-8, and a member of the local Chambers of Commerce and Mines. On the Council he represented the Ratepayers' Association and was mayor three times, an appointment which, it was reported, gave 'great satisfaction to the Jewish community, but it is also popular throughout the town'.³⁰

At a public meeting in 1909 Basch felt it necessary to comment on the growing prejudice against Jews in the country:

He was extremely gratified as a member of the Jewish faith to be

associated with such a worthy and broad-minded set of men as were members of Bulawayo Town Council. They did not possess that unfortunate prejudice which existed in this country against members of his faith. The feeling was often but thinly-veiled. . . . He was sorry to have sounded a discordant note on such an occasion, but he felt the time had arrived when some public utterance should be made, he hoped the few words he had spoken that afternoon would have some effect in the direction he had been aiming.³¹

Coghlan, the settlers' political leader and the future first Premier, assured Basch 'that the prejudice referred to was the misfortune of an exceedingly small number of people in the country; and he believed it was fast dying out'.³²

Coghlan was wrong; it was an angry A. Rosenthal, writing to the editor of *The Bulawayo Chronicle* in 1909, who pointed out the practice of using the term Jew when reporting criminal cases whereas other groups were referred to by their country of birth. The tendency to mention the Jewish origins of a person only in negative situations was well brought out in the case of Lezard's farewell dinner attended by eighty persons, including the Acting Administrator, in 1923. *The Rhodesia Herald* devoted two full columns to Lezard's achievements and public work but somehow avoided mentioning his Jewish origins or connection with the Hebrew Congregation.

Economic and political factors as well as the immigration pattern had produced a situation where the term Jew now acquired the image of an 'alien trader' and the origins of individuals who did not fit this stereotype were ignored. R.G. Garvin M.L.C. expressed the prevailing attitude of British settlers towards the majority of the Jewish population in 1917:

It is not in the best interests of this country that the alien should control our trade or comprise over 70 per cent of the traders of the country . . . we know that traders do not produce wealth; they are profit seekers. They are not absolutely necessary, although essential. We know that among the many aliens in this country there are few producers, i.e. farmers and miners.³³

CHAPTER 3

Responsible Government and the Inter-War Years

The main political controversies of the years of Chartered Company rule centred around the clash between farmers and miners over use of the land, the settlers and Company over political supremacy and land ownership, and efforts to end Asian immigration. From 1908 the settlers had a working majority in the Legislative Council, the members of which were elected by voters comprising any resident who could meet the non-racial franchise qualifications and would swear an oath of allegiance. In practice the settlers of British origin dominated the voters' rolls and politics. Jewish involvement in politics at this period was minimal, since most Jewish settlers were too busy trying to earn a living and had little time or interest in the controversies of the day which hardly affected them. A large proportion of the Jewish population came from Eastern Europe and therefore had no experience of parliamentary democracy and they were slow to establish their rights in Rhodesia. In 1910 only twenty-seven per cent of Jewish males compared with forty-two per cent of the general European male population were voters. In 1922 there was greater interest in politics and this was reflected in higher voter registration. Fifty-six per cent of the European and fifty per cent of the Jewish population had the franchise which was now extended to women. However, of nearly 19,000 voters only some 500 were Jewish. The Jewish vote was therefore of little significance and had little influence with politicians.

Nevertheless during the first Legislative Council elections in 1899 there were claims that there was a Jewish vote. Fred Joseph and Max Sonnenberg, later M.P. in South Africa, wrote to the press denying:

The rumour which has been circulated freely in Bulawayo and we are afraid has gained some credence with those who are not in a position to judge that the Jewish vote was controlled by one gentleman, who would direct it in favour of the candidate he is known to be working for as an agent. . . . This rumour we consider a slur upon our people, and it was with the object of publicly testifying our determination as a sect not to be led, or allow our weaker brethren to be led, that we desired to publicly repudiate the rumour, and to prove

that at the forthcoming election the vote of the majority of Jews in Bulawayo will be given, not as someone may presume to direct them but as their conscience may direct.¹

Nothing more was heard of the 'Jewish vote' thereafter.

The only piece of legislation which affected Jews and caused them any concern was the Licensing Ordinance of 1903, which was eventually vetoed by the Imperial Government because of its bias against Asians. O. Steimann, a partner of C. Salomon, led the complaints against the provision in the legislation which required business books to be kept in English. He wanted any European language to be used. The other Jewish concern was the power of the proposed Local Licensing Boards, drawn from municipal councillors, to refuse licence applications without the provision of appeal to a higher authority. Jewish concern was such that William Dempster, the President of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce, wrote to the press assuring them that the ordinance was 'in no way directed against the Jewish community'.² *The Bulawayo Chronicle* even had a leader on the subject of 'The Jews and the Licensing Bill', in which it was denied that any action against Jews was contemplated and all were assured that only 'undesirable Asiatics' were the target:

We feel confident that any Licensing Board in Bulawayo would never dream of refusing a licence to a Jew simply because he belonged to one of the most ancient races, and if it did it would speedily lose the confidence of the public. The idea appears to be assiduously cultivated but it is wrong.³

In the event there was no test of this assurance. The licensing legislation that was adopted allowed books in any European language until 1927 when English was insisted upon and the local boards which were established in 1908 were always subject to the final decision of the Administrator and later the Governor in Council.

The growing antipathy to Jews that was mentioned in the previous chapter also affected political attitudes. We noted that after 1917 immigration from Eastern Europe was opposed in part on political grounds. However, correspondence on the franchise question between 1906 and 1912 reveals the earlier presence of this attitude. Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner for South Africa, had no objection to manipulating the franchise for the benefit of the British settlers. He endorsed any measure against Africans 'which would have the additional advantage of keeping poor Afrikaners and semi-destitute European foreigners with British naturalisation certificates out of politics'.⁴ In the 1912 franchise changes, the qualifications were raised and a literacy test in English was added. According to Lord Gladstone, the British High Commissioner of the day, the British South Africa Company directors would not agree on a Euro-

pean language but only English since 'they fear Russian Jews and other foreign undesirables'.⁵ For many years politics in Rhodesia was regarded as the preserve of English gentlemen with the result that despite a theoretically non-racial franchise no practising Jew was elected to the Southern Rhodesian legislature until 1954 and no non-White until 1962.

Those few Jews who were involved in politics supported the interest of the economic groups to which they belonged. The prominent signed the requisitions which the candidates in early elections usually organized in order to assess and advertise their support. In 1904 Basch was on the committee of the Matabeleland Political Association which was formed to gain reform of the Charter. The Rhodesia Political Association was formed in 1912 in order to agitate for further settler rights and ultimate Responsible Government. H.J. Sonnenberg and the Revd M.I. Cohen were members of the original committee which became the Rhodesian League in May 1912. This political involvement by a cleric was unusual in those days but it demonstrates Cohen's character and outlook. However, the League suffered from personality conflicts and factionalism and finally did not fight the 1914 elections which had been its main object.

In the years between the end of the war and the referendum of 1922 politics was dominated by the question of whether Rhodesia should enter the Union of South Africa as a fifth province or should remain outside and obtain full internal self-government as an independent colony with an Imperial veto on 'Native policy' — a constitutional position which was known as Responsible Government. In general terms the arguments for Union were economic while the arguments for going it alone were political. The British settlers feared entry into a State where Afrikaners were the political majority and where there were two official languages which all public servants were expected to know. Because of their economic and political position most Jews tended to favour Union. They wanted faster economic development of the country and feared the effects of customs tariffs on trade. As a minority their political position would be unchanged since they had no pre-eminent position to lose and because of their linguistic talents bilingualism did not pose great problems.

It is not surprising, then, that in the 1920 elections Barney Levin of Gwanda was local agent for the Unionist Party candidate, Sir Bouchier Wrey. The local Jewish traders had good reason to fear tariffs and the loss of the Johannesburg cattle market, which eventually occurred. In 1920 Julius Hepker of the timber company and James Kapnek, a prospector and businessman, were both on the council of the Rhodesian Union Association. During the campaign of 1922 other businessmen with close contacts with South Africa such as H.L. Lezard also joined the Unionists. Another

factor which swayed Jewish voters was the appeal of General J.C. Smuts, the South African Prime Minister, who was anxious for Southern Rhodesia to join the Union. As a member of the Imperial War Cabinet he had been a co-author of the Balfour Declaration offering a Jewish National Home and many Rhodesian Zionists felt that a debt was owed him. During Smuts's tour of Rhodesia in August 1922 he visited the flourishing settlement of Umvuma where the Falcon Mine was situated. In an address of welcome N. Wolffe, a local businessman, Sanitary Board Member and President of the local Hebrew Congregation, mentioned Smuts's support for Zionism and continued: 'we understand and appreciate your task, sir, and to the best of our ability shall be happy to co-operate, and thus in some small measure thank you for what you have done on our behalf'.⁶

Lyttleton Gell and other B.S.A. Company directors were convinced that Jews were 'all pro-Union' like themselves, but there were some exceptions. Harry Sonnenberg, a Bulawayo lawyer, was active in the Rhodesia Responsible Government Party, and in Salisbury two other lawyers, A. and B.I. Hoffman, also supported this party. Bernard Hoffman was President of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, a member of the Town Council and a committee member of the Responsible Government Association branch in Salisbury South constituency. In the event the Rhodesian electorate voted 8,774 to 5,589 in favour of Responsible Government, and, as we have noted, the 500 Jewish votes had little bearing on the result.

In the next two decades the Jewish involvement in national politics was again slight. No practising Jew was elected, although some did stand as candidates. Losing candidates included H.J. Sonnenberg, an Independent Progressive, at Bulawayo Central in 1924, Hyman Schwartz, an industrial chemist, for the Rhodesia Party at Salisbury South in 1933, and at the 1939 General Election Alec Pelham for the Rhodesia Labour Party and Heiman J. Hoffman for the United Party, both in Salisbury constituencies. Douglas Abrahamson, a prospector and smallworker, whose father Louis had been a member of the old Cape Parliament, was active in the Greater Central African League and supported amalgamation with both Northern Rhodesia and later South Africa during the 1930s; he stood unsuccessfully in 1938 and 1939. It is perhaps worthwhile to add that the religion or origin of these candidates was not an issue in the campaigns and did not seem to affect their votes.

Max Danziger was the only elected member of Jewish origin in these years. He was born the son of a jeweller in Worcester, Cape Province, qualified as a solicitor and arrived in Rhodesia in 1910. He entered territorial politics in 1924 after a successful career in local politics at Gwelo where he was a member of the Town Council. He had nothing to do with

the Jewish community and was married to an influential Gentile woman. Yet many Jews and most Gentiles regarded him as Jewish since, as we noted in Chapter 1, one's father was the most important criterion in such matters in Rhodesia, and at the end of his days he was buried as a Jew in a Jewish cemetery. Danziger had a stormy career and was a very quarrelsome type. Elected on the Rhodesia Party ticket in 1924 he resigned from the party in 1927, rejoined in 1928 and resigned again in 1931. In 1932 he joined the Reform Party and would probably have been a member of Huggins's Government in 1933 but for his involvement in a sordid divorce case. He did not stand in the 1933 election but was returned for Huggins's United Party in 1935 at Selukwe, a seat he held until 1946. Danziger was chairman of two very important inquiries, into the position of the agricultural industry in 1934 and the question of land in 1949. The 1934 committee report recommended support of European farmers to maintain them on the land as a basic requirement for preserving Rhodesia as 'a white man's country'. The 1949 report recommended an increase of twelve million acres in the area of the African Reserves to cope with the large-scale evictions of African tenants from land in the European area.

The war years enabled Danziger to use his undoubted abilities in a key ministry. Between 1942 and 1946 he was Minister of Finance and he did much to bring a more modern approach to economic matters in the Colony and aided the establishment of secondary industry. According to Gann and Gelfand, Danziger was 'a sharp-witted Jewish legal man' under whose guidance the country had largely succeeded in 'paying for the war out of income'.⁷

Danziger's early politics were of a populist variety and suited the mining districts he represented. He opposed the influence of the large international cartels, advocated land settlement schemes for small men, and was a firm supporter of territorial segregation. However, on racial matters he was realistic enough to admit in 1929 that, 'what was known as the native problem was the European problem and an economic one at that'.⁸ He advocated protection of Europeans and opposed the 1930 Land Apportionment Act since he wished for a compact separate African area in Matabeleland of the Bantustan type. He felt such a solution 'would remove the competition menace and allow us to treat him [the African] with more consideration'.⁹ Danziger was one of the few Whites at the time to complain about the myriad of pass laws affecting Africans and the large numbers imprisoned for minor offences. His 'leftward movement' was such that in the 1946 General Election campaign, in which he was defeated, he accused the right-wing Liberal Party opposition of being 'a capitalist, selfish lot who would repress the natives'.¹⁰ A fair assessment of the man

would admit that he was 'widely disliked for his caustic speech and past political waywardness', but that he made up for this with 'a keen intellect, and plenty of courage as well as sense of social responsibility'¹¹ — qualities which were unfortunately rare among Rhodesian politicians.

Most Jewish support in these years was given to the governing and establishment Rhodesia Party of Sir Charles Coghlan and H.U. Moffat or the United Party of Godfrey Huggins. The commercial community was alarmed at the more bizarre political and economic ideas of the opposition groups and an investigation of Jewish membership of party branches confirms Jewish support for the ruling party. On only one occasion was there a meeting of Jewish voters as such, and this took place at Gatooma in 1924. There was

a large gathering of Jewish voters . . . at Galante's store . . . where certain grievances of this section of the electorate were aired by its leaders for the edification of Mr B.I. Colling one of the official Rhodesia Party candidates. Various anomalies in existing legislation were discussed.¹²

The most serious anomaly affecting mainly the Jewish population was the position of children born to alien parents prior to 1923. It was only with the grant of Responsible Government in October 1923 that the country was formally annexed by the British Crown, with the result that such children born before that date were not British subjects. This anomaly was overcome in part in 1934 by legislation which offered naturalization to these people.

The type of problem that this citizenship tangle led to is revealed by the case of Samuel Stark of Selukwe who successfully appealed against a conviction for not registering for military service under the Defence Act. Stark successfully denied he was a citizen. He was born in Russia and when he was a minor his father had been naturalized under the Union Act of 1918. But there was no system of Imperial citizenship at this period; Stark was a British subject only in South Africa and was an alien in other British territories. All those naturalized in Southern Rhodesia prior to 1923 had a similar position and held only local naturalization certificates. Even after all persons born in the Colony before 1923 were naturalized in 1934, many fell victim to the deliberately anti-Jewish South African Aliens Acts of 1930 and 1937 and the Aliens Control and Registration Act of 1939. South Africa would not recognize these people as natural-born British subjects and would not relax the legal requirements even for Rhodesian holiday-makers. Only in 1949 when a separate Rhodesian citizenship was introduced were all locally-born persons recognized as citizens by birth.

The anti-Semitism and enactments of the Nationalist Party in South

Africa changed the attitude of Rhodesian Jewry towards links with that country after 1923. In a secret memorandum prepared for the British Government by J.C. Brundell, Rhodesia's Chief Immigration Officer in 1932, he argued against Union with South Africa because:

There is a rooted objection by the British, Hebrew, Indian and native communities of Southern Rhodesia to the 'Sovereign Independence' or Republican policy of South Africa, as well as application of the **British Nationality and Status Act, 1924/22**, by which the rights of British subjects are abrogated in terms of the **Immigration Quota Act, 1930**.

Persons of foreign origin and nationalities including the Hebrews, an influential community in Southern Rhodesia, whose numbers rapidly increase and who are restricted from entry into the Union of South Africa, in terms of the **Immigration Quota Act, 1930**, do not possess the full rights enjoyed by British subjects in other parts of the Empire, including Southern Rhodesia.¹³

The Revd M.I. Cohen continued to be a major force in public affairs in these years and did much to pressure the Government over the question of citizenship rights and immigration. His local standing led to his being asked in 1929 to lead a team of independents to negotiate with the Railway Workers' Union at the Unity Club in Bulawayo and he successfully ended a serious strike by White labour. In 1935 Cohen received the M.B.E. for public service.

Another unusual local character with a political bent was Moses Jacob Shapiro of Salisbury. He was born in Taurage in 1870 and had attended a Gymnasium and Moscow University where he studied law. Growing oppression in Russia meant that there was little future for him there and he left for South Africa in 1894. His qualifications were not recognized there and lacking capital he worked as a trader in the country districts before moving to Salisbury in 1900. He was a small wholesaler and urban storekeeper dealing in 'kaffir truck' and associated with Messrs Shapiro & Robinson and later Torf, Shapiro & Co. For many years Shapiro was a member of the executive committee of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce and he often advised them on legal matters.

Despite the business background Shapiro was a convinced socialist and one of the few outspoken radicals to emerge in Rhodesia during these years. In 1908 he was one of the first to attack the jury system which led to questionable verdicts on Africans at the hands of all-White juries. Quite courageously he wrote to the press and berated such occurrences and the mistreatment of Africans by settlers

with an inborn — or quickly acquired in this country — antagonism to blacks. . . . Humanity strives and wants for that ideal time when

the sense of justice and fairplay will be so imbued in the human heart that all differences between man and man, man and community, race and race, nation and nation, could be safely left for settlement in the hands of juries.¹⁴

Shapiro was taken to task for his 'enigmatic socialistic panegyric'¹⁵ but when the settlers almost unanimously supported the rise in the franchise qualifications in 1912 so as to prevent Africans getting the vote, he again attacked the action. He regarded this development as contrary to the trend in Britain and called for 'equal rights for all British subjects'.¹⁶ In 1913 Shapiro defended the rights of the propertyless for a voice in local government and was subjected to innuendoes in the press about 'kaffir stores' from Councillor Strachan.¹⁷ During the 1914 elections the settlers' 'Common Platform' used Shapiro's pamphlet, *The Burning Question of Rhodesia*, in which he analysed the legal position on the land question and the land policy of the Chartered Company. He extended his interest in land questions to the African sphere and in 1914 opposed the cuts in the area of the African Reserves and later the Land Apportionment Act concept of communal land and separate purchase areas for Africans who, he said, should have freedom to acquire property anywhere in the country.

On a number of occasions Shapiro addressed the Jewish Guild on the subject of socialism and he defended the Bolshevik Government on a number of occasions in the press between 1917 and 1921. During the 1929 Railway Strike he submitted a resolution to the Chamber of Commerce which opposed the Government's action in enrolling special constables but he received no support from the other members. In 1924 Shapiro advocated cotton manufacture in Rhodesia so that 'in 10 - 15 years Rhodesia's export of produce and manufactured goods will drown the gold export'.¹⁸ His idea ran into a surprising amount of criticism from racist Whites. 'Pioneer' asked: 'can anybody suggest that a Rhodesian native could bring such intelligence into this work. The Mashona will never be of any use in the manufacture of cotton goods.'¹⁹ The clothing factories of the 1970s bear witness to Shapiro's insight and the fact that they are manned almost entirely by Africans gives the lie to the racist argument. Shapiro counter-attacked against the idea of 'the shifting alien native and the lazy Mashona'; he reminded the settlers that even in 1924 this 'non-existent labour force . . . produces under white supervision a million bags of maize, £3 millions worth of gold, soap, candles, oil, leather, flour, biscuits, clothing etc. for local consumption and export'.²⁰ It illustrates the tragedy of East European Jewry that a man of such education, principle and courage, spent most of his life in the back streets of Salisbury selling blankets until his death in 1932.

The activities of Shapiro may have had some slight influence on the Electoral Act of 1928. This piece of legislation restricted the franchise to British subjects whereas, before, all that was necessary was an oath of allegiance. Legislative Assembly Members Col. D.C. Munro and A.R. Welsh made it quite clear that they supported this because it would 'prevent Russians coming . . . and influencing our politics by their voting'.²¹ The general attitude towards the Jewish presence was outlined by Sir John Chancellor, Rhodesia's first Governor, in 1924. The Governor was adamantly opposed to competitive examinations for entry into the civil service and particularly the Native Department since Jews were not imperious enough for such posts. His objection was made:

In view of the presence among the white population of a considerable number of Jews and Greeks of an inferior class . . . they are regarded by the natives as racially inferior to people of British descent.

Many of the children of these Jews and Greeks receive a good education at the Government schools: and in view of the prestige associated with it, some of them would no doubt be attracted to the Government Service if admission could be gained by competitive examination. It would not enhance the prestige of the Government if its officials in control of the native population were drawn from these races.²²

Elected office-holders had a similar viewpoint. When in 1925 H.U. Moffat as Minister of Mines and Public Works was faced with a complaint from the Revd M.I. Cohen that a Jewish matriculant had not had his application to the civil service dealt with, Moffat denied that Jews were barred from it. But he told Leggate, the Colonial Secretary, 'I was informed by a friend of mine that young Levine is of the "aggressively Jewish" type, and it is perhaps a bit difficult to place that type. At the same time we cannot very well bar any section of the community.'²³ Leggate replied that inability to offer strict observance of Jewish religious festivals would be a good excuse for refusal. He stated that a Jew had been appointed to the Education Department but it was 'pointed out they were not able to grant holidays'.²⁴ Advancement on merit was obviously not an important concept in the Rhodesian vocabulary in those days and so we find yet another field of employment, and a well-paid and secure one at that, which in practice was closed to Jews.

Though considered unsuitable for the civil service, Jews were acceptable to the Government when their knowledge and experience was useful; thus Oscar Kaufman of Salomon & Kaufman, the wholesale merchants of Bulawayo, and Maurice Jacobson, the Gwelo auctioneer, were both members of the Customs and Excise Tariff Commission of 1935. Kaufman also served as a member of the Economic Development Committee of

1938-9. Jews were also encouraged to take part in the mundane and unpaid field of local government. Prominent local traders were often appointed to Village Management Boards, although in such cases there was little real choice since the White inhabitants of these settlements were either Government officials, police, or local traders. The first two groups were barred from serving and the African majority was totally unacceptable. In the 1920s H. Krikler was appointed to the first Board at Shabani and Albert Leon to the first Board at Bindura.

Jews continued to serve on elected local government bodies. Jacobson continued his mayoral career at Gwelo and S.E. Aronowitz was Que Que's mayor in 1939. In Bulawayo H.B. Ellenbogen, a kaffir-truck wholesaler, was a member of the Town Council for many years between 1918 and 1938, and was mayor for the years 1927-9. He was President of the Hebrew Congregation, a Justice of the Peace, and a member of executive of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Licensing Board. Bulawayo's other Jewish mayor in this period was Cessy M. Harris. He had arrived in Rhodesia in 1907 and established himself as a miller and produce merchant. He was one of the few Jews at this period to interest himself in the British settlers' passion for sport and became President of the Matabeleland Cricket Board. Harris was also the first Chairman of the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries and mayor 1934-6.

Louis Braude was a self-made man who was prominent in Jewish and public life in Salisbury. He was born in Panevezys in Lithuania in 1878 and arrived in South Africa in 1896. He followed the by now familiar path, of working in Francistown, and then in the Barotseland cattle trade before finally settling in Southern Rhodesia in 1905. He had stores in Bulawayo and Gwanda and, as we have noted, also later in Shamva. He moved to Salisbury in 1916 where he became a partner in the furniture-retailing firm of Bloom, Braude & Co., but he retained some of his country stores. He was President of the local Hebrew Congregation and the Zionist Society before he was elected to the Town Council in 1926 and became deputy mayor for three years in the early 1930s. We can see again that economic success and financial status was the lever to communal leadership and social mobility.

In Rhodesia, as in most countries of the world, the inter-war years are most remembered for the economic problems they brought. We have already mentioned that economic depression was not a new feature in Rhodesia and the careers of many men parallel 'the boom and bust' history of the country. One archetypal case was Jacob 'Jack' Goldberg. Jack was born in London and attended the Jews' Free School there. Attracted by the exciting events of the Jameson Raid he left for Rhodesia in 1897. He arrived

in Bulawayo that year and traded the goods he had brought up with him and then left to join the Barotseland cattle trade. Having been successful in this he returned to Bulawayo and became involved in the establishment of the Matabeleland Trading Association, the first Jewish kaffir-truck wholesaling organization, and also Managing Director of the Manchester Trading Co. After a few years he sold out some of his interests and vacationed in Europe for a while. He returned to Rhodesia and with his elder brother, Isidore, ran stores at Colleen Bawn and various mines in the Gwanda District. In 1910 they bought the Gatooma Hotel and in the following year the Commercial Hotel in Salisbury for which they paid £31,000, nearly half of it in cash. Four brothers followed Jack to Rhodesia to share in his success and despite some financial problems on the death of Isidore in 1912 and the depression of 1912-15, Jack retained his hotels. During his years in Salisbury he was very prominent in the Jewish community and was President of the Congregation for three years as well as President of the local Licensed Victuallers Association and the Smallworkers Association.

In 1922 he decided to enter full-time mining and gave up the Salisbury hotel. Goldberg invested in chrome mines at Umvukwes and mica deposits at Miami. There was a boom in mica and for a time as one of the 'mica kings' he earned £2,000 a month. He even won two medals for mica at the Wembley Empire Exhibition. Jack now began to invest in land and bought farms in the Lomagundi and Umtali Districts. In 1927 he decided to enter the flourishing tobacco industry and bought a farm near Marandellas and during 1928 he employed three Europeans there. This move was his undoing since Rhodesia's 1928 tobacco crop was unsaleable. His over-enthusiasm had been his downfall. According to the Agricultural Inspector: 'Like many who had capital at their command . . . he leapt wildly into the field of tobacco growing, and had he conducted his experiments on a smaller scale, all, no doubt would have been well.'²⁵

At the same time the mica price began to drop and by 1931 all Goldberg's mines and farms had ceased to provide revenue. Despite assets of £55,000 he was insolvent. His Grand Hotel at Gatooma, his mines and farms were all assigned and he was suddenly penniless. He tried to start again and opened a store outside Salisbury but he never achieved economic success again before he retired to Cape Town in 1951 where he ended his days in a Jewish Old Age Home.

One of the results of the economic depressions was an increase in crime. Proportionally Jews were not more criminally inclined than other sections of the population and usually provided about five per cent of those convicted in magistrates' courts and only very few in serious cases. As the Jews

were mainly concerned in commercial operations their offences mainly took the form of economic crimes of which the most spectacular was the store fire. This is characteristic of petty traders in many countries but, of course, in order to benefit, the storekeeper must be of sufficient standing to have insurance coverage. Because the smaller fry in rural stores and most Asians were unable to obtain coverage, arson remained a feature of European-owned stores in the villages and towns. Sir Robert Tredgold, a former Chief Justice, has written: 'In those impecunious days, it was common to have cases of arson committed for the sake of the insurance money. So frequently did this happen that the police regarded all fires in shops or similar undertakings with the darkest suspicion.'²⁶

Of course the wood and iron buildings and the inflammable stocks, like paraffin and soft goods, aided this type of crime but not all fires were deliberate. In Bulawayo in 1906 there was fire which burnt down seven buildings most of which belonged to either Basch or Ellenbogen and were not insured. However, in a few cases a fire occurred deliberately even when insurance was not held, but by some coincidence this usually happened to businesses in liquidation and normally the books were destroyed. Fires were especially common at mining centres for the storekeepers there were especially prone to involving themselves in mining speculation.

One of the first arson cases to be successfully prosecuted was in 1912 when the proprietor, manager, and store assistant of the Suri Suri Trading Co. of Chakari were found guilty of false pretences in connection with a £3,000 claim. The books of the business were found to have been 'fiddled' but the man who had performed this service, S. Block, the manager of an Eiffel Flats store, panicked and 'spilt the beans'. In court he rationalized his action as star prosecution witness by saying that 'for a little Jewish community such as is here at present, it is a shame that between Jewish people there should be so many fires and bankruptcies'.²⁷

In another big arson case the key Crown witness was an African employee who was broken down by African detectives. This case had more than twenty witnesses and reached the High Court and Chief Justice. It concerned a fire at Sher's store in Fort Street, Bulawayo in October 1931. The owner M. Sher, had started the store in 1927 on rented premises but he was a gambler and at the time of the fire owed £90 'to bookies'. In addition times were bad, for his store relied solely on a cash business with African workers in the town, most of whom had recently been sacked or had their wages reduced. Sher and his assistant, J. Glick, met an unemployed Greek, J.J. Stambolie, at a poker game and he suggested that they could extricate themselves from their difficulties by a convenient fire which he was willing to supervise. Sher then obtained a lot of goods on

credit which he insured for £2,000. He then arranged to take his wife and four children to visit the Zimbabwe Ruins along with his brother and his family who lived in Shabani. On the day he left Sher ordered a considerable number of petrol cans, not all of which he needed for the trip, and the remainder he had put in his store. That night while he was safely ensconced in Fort Victoria, Stambolie broke into the premises poured some petrol over the floor and dropped a match. The store was completely destroyed but the police questioned an African assistant who lived behind the premises and had been very shaken by the course of events. He admitted placing petrol tins around the store on Glick's orders and overhearing Sher and Stambolie discussing their plans. The result was that Stambolie received four years hard labour for arson and Sher six months for attempted fraud.²⁸

Another opportunity for misguided ingenuity occurred in the years 1931-2 when Rhodesia followed Britain and left the gold standard but South Africa remained on it for two more years. The effect was that, if silver of South African or British denomination which circulated freely in Rhodesia and South Africa until the British was demonetized there in 1933, were smuggled across the border to the Union or Bechuanaland, it was worth at least one-third more than when remitted through orthodox banking channels. In the straightened circumstances of the time this was a temptation few persons could resist and, as only £2 could legally be taken out of the country in silver, a great deal of smuggling occurred. The main offenders were railway passengers and one favourite method was to send unaccompanied luggage and parcels to the Rand. The result was large numbers of individuals being fined in court.

Apart from individual cases there were a number of organized rings of smugglers. One was an Afrikaner syndicate run by the staff of the South African Railways but by far the most interesting and successful was a Jewish one run by storekeepers and cattle-dealers in the Gwanda district. The ring had two methods of getting the specie across the border. One was to use Africans employed by colleagues in the Marula - Plumtree district to cross the Bechuanaland border fence in remote bush country with bags of coin, which were then used to buy South African Postal Orders at Francistown Post Office. The other method was to cross Beit Bridge to Messina where storekeepers had the opportunity to collect large amounts of silver from home-going African mine-workers returning from the Rand.

Rumours of organized silver collection and smuggling activities reached C.I.D. headquarters in Bulawayo and in October 1932 a detective was despatched to Gwanda to investigate. His visit caused some consternation amongst the local Jewish community some of whom took great pains to discover where he was going to stay that night. He was convinced that the

majority of storekeepers in Gwanda were concerned in the illegal export of coin. There was nearly a tragic sequel to this investigation for when the detective was seen driving towards West Nicholson he became involved in a high speed chase along dirt roads during which one Jewish storekeeper crashed his car in his haste to get to a certain store and remove the silver before the police arrived. However, by this stage the operation was so big that the Magistrate of Gwanda, the Postmaster at Francistown and the Union Customs officials at Beit Bridge were all alleged to have been involved. Another detective informed his superiors that some Government officials in Gwanda were involved in the continual and systematic export of coinage via Beit Bridge. In the end there was no prosecution of the ring, because of the sudden death of Adolph Nathanson, one of the storekeepers who was a key witness. The only result was a number of transfers of personnel by the Governments concerned, an increased income for a number of otherwise indigent country traders, and the successful prosecution of some of the less guilty like H.M. Greenspan, Max Haimowitz, Simon Marcus and Harry Schur.²⁹

Legitimate Jewish economic activity in the inter-war years followed the pattern which had been established between the South African and the First World Wars. The cattle and hide trade was still Jewish dominated, from the itinerant cattle buyers in the Reserves like the Greenspan brothers up to the exporters and processors. The major hide exporter was Harry Schur who ran a successful and well-organized operation which reached into all the rural areas. The most powerful figure in the industry was Barnett 'Bongola' Smith who had acquired his nickname through his early dealings in mules. According to Governor Rodwell he

was the 'King' of the Rhodesia-Congo cattle trade. Mr Smith is an astute and successful Jewish trader, who has built up a large business from small beginnings and is probably a very wealthy man. He has the *Compagnie d'Elevage et d'Alimentation du Katanga* of which the Rhodesia-Congo Ranching Company is a subsidiary operating in Matabeleland on 400,000 acres.³⁰

Barnett also had a controlling interest in the Union Cold Storage Works at Durban. For many years there was a running feud between Smith's supporters, who included the Salisbury auctioneer and town councillor, H. Shapiro, and the faction of the Imperial Cold Storage Co. of Johannesburg whose local buyer was Leo Levy. In the mid-1920s the privileges extended to the Imperial Cold Storage by the Rhodesian Government annoyed Smith and his influence was such that he was regarded as responsible for persuading the Belgian Government to place an embargo on Rhodesian cattle in 1930 in revenge.

The cattle trade was very speculative because of the unstable market situation and the outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. Violent fluctuations in price occurred. Max and Louis Greenspan bought cattle for 7s. 6d. a head in the Filabusi area in 1923 but could not find a buyer in Bulawayo even at this price. Yet in 1919 African cattle from Plumtree had averaged £9 a head. The same weight and grade of animal, a 500 lb four-year old ox was worth £6. 2s. 3d. in 1929, £2. 17s. in 1932, and £4. 0s. 9d. in 1935. We can therefore appreciate the economic insecurity of the times and this to some extent explains the rather dubious activities that went on in the cattle-raising areas like Gwanda. Expertise of Jews in the cattle industry was widely recognized and when a statutory authority, the Cold Storage Commission, was established in 1937 its first manager was Abe Gelman who had learnt the trade in Elizabethville from his father-in-law, Bongola Smith.

The Mashonaland country traders also faced economic difficulties at this time. They were mostly involved in the trade in maize, which they bought from the Africans in the Reserves, and in distributing consumer goods. Competition was intense and on occasion this could lead to local feuds. A well-known and long-standing one was between the Kaplan family and M. Lewis at Mtoko where the total White population at this period was only twenty-five persons. Lewis dogged the footsteps of the Kaplans' Mtoko Trading Co. in the Reserves and the village. He would wait until the Kaplans opened a store and then place his store between them and the market they wished to tap. Lewis established a store at the 110-mile peg on the Salisbury road to divert traffic from the Kaplans' Sassa store. In return M. Kaplan went ten miles beyond and opened a store on the Tete road. In 1932 there were five stores in the Mtoko Reserve. Two belonged to Lewis, one to Barney Kaplan and two to M.E. Kaplan. The two sides wrote continuously to the Native Commissioner and officials in Salisbury complaining about the actions of the other. Lewis always stressed that the Kaplans ran a bigger operation and were importers and invariably ended with an appeal for protection 'of the small man'.³¹

This type of behaviour did nothing to raise the status of the traders in the eyes of the Administration who regarded them with suspicion and blamed them for the deteriorating condition of the Reserves and falling prices paid for African crops. However, there was little exploitation because of the competition and the situation was rather the result of the discriminatory Government policies over the years. In a desire to protect the European farmers the Government introduced differential prices for crops to the detriment of African tribesmen under the Maize Control Act. Another problem was constant population movements into the Reserves as

tenants were evicted from European land. Nevertheless in these years the traders were blamed for the low prices by the Africans and they became particularly unpopular in the Reserves. At a Native Board Meeting in the Chiweshe Reserve the Africans blamed their deteriorating economic position on 'the exorbitant profits' of the 'Jew traders' and 'all expressed their hatred of these people'.³² Referring to Lewis and the Kaplans, the Native Commission Mtoko wrote in 1936: 'unfortunately the Jew traders in the district are averse to buying for cash . . . the price paid is low and it is hoped that one day the Native in Rhodesia will not have to rely on Foreign Jews for the purchase of his surplus crop'.³³

In the Chiweshe Reserve and throughout the Mazoe District at this period most of the traders were Sephardim known locally as 'Rhode Island Reds', a phrase used even by Government servants in official correspondence. They had a network of stores in the Reserves, on farms and in the settlements of the area, Shamva, Bindura, Glendale and Concession. The Leon, Amato, Franco, Navarro, Piha, Benatar, Mayo, Almeleh, Halfon, Galante, Touriel, Alhadeff, and Tarica families were all represented at one time or another. There were constant changes of ownership, partnerships were formed and broken in quick succession, and there was a series of managers appointed to the branch stores. The Native Commissioner, Mazoe, disliked this unstable situation and wrote to the Chief Native Commissioner: 'I do not consider this trading in store sites by the traders is in the best interests of the natives'.³⁴ There is no doubt that the temporary nature of the businesses and short-term outlook of the owners led to some reprehensible practices regarding enforced barter and credit.

Another group of Rhodesies including A. and M. Amato, J.E. Merdjan, Raphael and Sam Hasson, H. Galante and G. Pilosoff were settled in the Gatooma and Hartley Districts. These were more integrated into the general European community of this mining area and, particularly in business matters, with the Ashkenazi Jews of Gatooma like A.B. Joffe and L. Wigoder, and with the Greeks of Gadzema, Plagis, Passaportis and Captain.

Almost to a man the Rhodesies were storekeepers. They lacked the capital or training for any other sort of occupation and few knew English before they arrived. Moreover they entered as indentured immigrants to relatives and were immediately set to work in rural stores where they had no opportunity to learn English or discover other job opportunities. As a group they appeared to cling to their home language of Ladino much more than the Litvak settlers clung to Yiddish, and overall they appeared less adaptable and opportunistic. The probable reason for this was that in their homeland, first under the Turks and, after 1912, under the Italians,

they were a tolerated and comparatively well-treated community. They were certainly more favoured than the Greek majority of the Dodecanese. This changed only in 1938 when Italy fell under Nazi influence and introduced racial laws. Until this time their reason for emigrating was primarily economic due to the lack of job opportunities in the islands. Thus the average Sephardi immigrant was a target-worker who aimed to make as much money as possible in a few years and retire to his home island or elsewhere in the Levant. They therefore had less incentive to adapt and make preparations for long-term success than the Litvaks, who had no desire to return home to Eastern Europe and saw their own and their children's future in Africa.

The second smallworking boom which occurred after 1932 when a gold premium was introduced led to a repetition of the events of the years before 1914. The number of working mines increased from 180 in 1929 to 1,650 in 1935 and many of these new ventures were backed in one way or another by Jewish storekeepers. The Midlands area saw much of this mining activity and prominent local traders like the Sloman brothers had an interest in several mines including the successful Duiker. Another trader-smallworker was S. Baldachin, a storekeeper in Que Que where he was also a councillor for a period. He had begun smallworking in 1922 but expanded his interests in the 1930s. He and others in the area ran stores at their own mines and many other small ones, usually with a recent immigrant in charge. They often encouraged resort to credit at their stores and although this practice was not illegal it could lead to abuse and profiteering and so caused the Compound Inspectors some concern, particularly as the stores often appeared to be more profitable than the mining itself. There were a handful of Jews who were professionally qualified mining men and usually they were educated in Africa. The most prominent because of the size of the mines they ran were Harris Freedman, the manager of the Fred Mine near Filabusi in the years 1931-7, and N. Landau, the manager of the Rezende Mine at Penhalonga.

A composite picture of the Jewish population of this period can be obtained from the data of Jews in the censuses taken every five years. The most detailed information comes from in the 1931 census, for the far-sighted and progressive Revd M.I. Cohen had data specially prepared for the use of the community by the Director of Census. We noted that in 1921 the Jewish population had been 1,289 persons or 3.8 per cent of the White population; by 1926, largely through immigration, the total had reached 1,546 and the proportion of the settler population had risen to 4 per cent where it remained for the rest of the period. The total was 2,011 in 1931,

2,220 in 1936 and 3,215 in 1941. We can see that immigration slowed down during the depression years and increased rapidly in the late 1930s as a result of political factors in Europe which will be looked at in detail in the next chapter.

A number of features are evident from the census data. One was the Matabeleland bias of the Jewish population where sixty per cent resided in marked distinction to the settlement pattern of the White or even the African population. The data on the country of birth for 1931 is revealing: 620 Jews were born in the former provinces of the Russian Empire, 77 in Rumania, and 119 in Rhodes Island. The British Isles provided 228 persons, South Africa 293, and Rhodesia itself 502. In all, 53 per cent of the Jewish population, the majority consisting of children, were British subjects by birth.

We should expect the occupational roles of the rising generation of Rhodesian-educated youngsters to change the dominant trend towards commercial activity but their numbers in employment were still few and as we have seen many avenues were still closed even to them. Of a total of 896 economically active Jewish males, 18 were engaged in agriculture, 16 in mining, 114 in industrial activities, only 4 in the public service, 30 in the professions, but 642, or 71 per cent, in commerce. The reason for this bias and the fact that 56 per cent of Jews were employers or self-employed was of course the discrimination and prejudice they suffered or feared in other fields of employment. The majority were still storekeepers: 369 Jewish men were managers or proprietors of wholesale or retail businesses and 175 were salesmen or shop assistants. The indentureship system was still in full operation, for in spite of the low figures for mining and agriculture there were 115 Jews resident at mines in 1931, and 282 in rural areas, that is outside of towns, villages, or permanent White settlements.

However, among the younger generation whom Cohen had described in 1911 as 'detest[ing] the kaffir business',³⁶ the trend towards occupational mobility was beginning to be shown. There were already 8 Jewish medical doctors, 9 lawyers, 4 nurses, 1 veterinary surgeon, 1 dentist, and 3 teachers. The preference for the liberal professions, where qualifications assured some security and protection from discrimination, is evident. Among the Bulawayo lawyers was Cecil Jacobs, whose parents had been the first Jewish couple married in the country in 1895. There were also Abe Kaplan, Henry Lazarus, Ben Baron, and Harry Sonnenberg. The tendency for the children to reject the storekeeping activities of the parents was shown in the case of the Goldberg family of Penhalonga. Of seven children, four sons; Mick, Hymie, Jack and Maurice established a most successful and exemplary ranching and tobacco operation at Odzi,

another son Bennie, became a lawyer in Umtali and eventually a Federal cabinet minister, while the two daughters, Sarah and Rachel became nursing sisters.

The young generation of Jews took full advantage of the good education system offered to European children and also of the Rhodes, Beit, and Charelick Salomon scholarships to attend universities. In an average year a quarter of the Beit scholarships were won by Jewish scholars and Rhodes scholars included N. Jacobson, the son of the Gwelo mayor in 1930, and Norman Sarif, son of Isaac Sarif, founder of the first mineral-water factory in Bulawayo in 1901. Among the Beit Fellowships awarded in 1933 was an award to study surgery in London to Dr P. Baron, son of Max Baron, a secondhand goods dealer, one to study economic geology at Harvard to D. Kransdorf, son of L. Kransdorf, a shoe repairer, and one to B. Shapiro to read an M.A. in Psychology.

Jewish parents encouraged these aspirations and few forced their children to remain in the family business. Moses Keet of Bulawayo addressing the members of a Government Commission on trade in 1944 expressed the attitude and problems of many Jews of the immigrant generation. He admitted that he had no real liking for storekeeping: 'but what can a man do? And you know the Jews are handicapped in many respects. I think I am intelligent. I think I could learn any sort of thing; but many openings would not be open to me.' Like many others Keet had been apprenticed in a store at a young age and had little alternative choice of career or opportunity to change his occupation but he did not seem to mind the replacement of small traders like himself by African co-operative stores: 'I might be undermining my own position, but I am not worried about it. By that time my children will be grown up, in a few years time, and will have education.'³⁷

CHAPTER 4

Refugees and Fascists

In the late 1930s when one should have expected the economic and social status of Rhodesia Jewry to begin to improve and for it to begin to re-establish the position it held in the pioneer period, the opposite occurred. There was, in fact, a crisis of severe proportions which affected each individual Jew. For the first time a 'Jewish question' was raised and the incorporation of Jews within the European settler population was questioned in some quarters. This situation was a direct offshoot of the crisis in Central Europe whereby the evil doctrines of Fascism and Nazism began to reach out to Africa and poison minds among the ruling oligarchy.

We have already noted the early political and social objections to the entry of Eastern European immigrants and during the 1920s these objections and fears deepened. White Rhodesians observed the situation in South Africa where in 1925 a quarter of all immigrants were Jews and 16 per cent were Lithuanians. In the later 1920s the Jewish proportion rose to one-third of all immigrants and the number of Lithuanian, Polish and Latvian citizens rose markedly to reach over 2,300 in 1929. W. Addison, the editor of *The Rhodesia Herald*, emphasized on 8 February 1927 the dangers in this trend:

In the main the South-east European is not the type of man to whom one looks to build up a country. It cannot be claimed that the South-east European possesses anything like the same degree of stability or colonising ability as does the man from North or West Europe.

In 1930 the Afrikaner-dominated South African Government moved against mainly Jewish immigration, to which they objected on political, social and religious grounds, by introducing the Immigration Quota Act. This discriminated against citizens of Southern and Eastern European States. S.H. Veats the editor of *The Bulawayo Chronicle* supported this move and in an editorial of 8 February 1930 quoted Kipling's adage:

Let the corn be all one sheaf
And the grapes be all one vine
That would probably be styled a narrow nationalism today, but it

contains a thought on which the bulk of the white people of Southern Africa might well ponder.

The manner in which many Rhodesian Jews were affected by this piece of legislation has already been discussed. Oscar Kaufman, who was Rumanian-born himself, interviewed Danziger over this question in 1930 and as a result a delegation of Bulawayo Jewish leaders met Premier Moffat. Moffat pledged to take up the matter of British naturalized subjects particularly with the Pretoria authorities but obtained an unsatisfactory reply. This led to a new plea to Major Brundell, Rhodesia's Chief Immigration Officer. Brundell's motives in taking up the case were not only humanitarian, for, as we have seen, he opposed the Union Government on political grounds and he had a personal stake because of the position he held in frustrating moves for Rhodesia to enter the Union. Nevertheless, Brundell was more insistent and forceful than Moffat and during a visit to Pretoria was able to obtain a certificate allowing twelve months' temporary residence in South Africa for naturalized British subjects who were residents of Rhodesia. As a result Brundell received a formal letter of thanks from the Bulawayo Congregation which mentioned his 'kind assistance to all members of our fraternity on all matters relating to immigration'.¹

The political and economic pre-eminence of the British settlers in Rhodesia depended on control of the political process and to retain this they, too, acted against alien immigration, since this was the most obvious way to stop non-African challenges. Stopping the entry of Asians, for instance, made sure that no challenge would have to be faced. Despite the fact that unofficial but highly successful regulators worked to maintain the proportion of British immigrants at over 90 per cent, the South African precedent heightened feeling on the question in Rhodesia. Politicians issued a number of statements reassuring the electorate during the period of unemployment and economic dislocation in the early 1930s. The subject of immigration fell under the portfolio of the Colonial Secretary, the precursor of the Minister of Internal Affairs, which at this period was held by W.M. Leggate. In April 1931 he assured members of the Municipal Conference that legislation along South African lines was unnecessary since, 'Government had power to restrict the entry of undesirables, and if they looked up recent immigration returns, they would see a remarkable improvement in figures in regard to aliens and others.'² In May Leggate informed the Legislative Assembly that the Government was adopting a 'policy of restricting the immigration of persons coming in as employees in stores, that particularly applies to aliens generally'.³ This of course was aimed at Jews and the indenture system. However, with increased competi-

tion for declining markets and no real desire on the part of the traders to increase their staff at this time, there was little reaction from the Jewish community.

The accession to power of Hitler changed the situation completely. In 1933 Rhodesian Jewish leaders sent representations to the Imperial Government through the Southern Rhodesia Government and its High Commission in London appealing for protests to be made against the treatment of Jews in Germany and for the doors of Palestine to be opened to German refugees. Increasing concern in Jewish circles all over the world prompted Rabbi Jonah B. Wise in New York to appeal to Rhodesian Jewry for help in solving the problem of displaced Jews. As a result a committee was formed in Bulawayo, composed of Oscar Kaufman, Samuel Rabinovitz, C.I. Jacobs and H.B. Ellenbogen, to deal with all matters relating to German refugees. A boycott of German goods was attempted and discussions took place with the Immigration Department. In 1934 there were visits concerning refugees to Bulawayo by Dr Nahum Sokolow, the Zionist leader, and Sir Edmund Davis, the Australian-born mining magnate and B.S.A. Company director who was of Jewish descent and had large interests in Rhodesia including the Wankie Colliery Co. Both men discussed the position with the local committee and ascertained the local position. The Bulawayo committee acted in collaboration with the South African Fund for the Relief of German Jewry and it was encouraged by an announcement by the Minister of Internal Affairs that where possible restrictions on naturalization might be eased for newcomers. This led to the formation of a legal committee whose members were C.I. Jacobs, Ben Baron, and H.E. Lazarus.

Meanwhile the situation of the more than half a million Jews in Germany continued to deteriorate. In 1933 there had been officially inspired acts of violence and boycotts of Jews but in September 1935 the Nuremberg Laws were introduced. These gave legal force to racial discrimination and deprived Jews of citizenship, dismissed them from all official posts, forbade their employment of Aryans and introduced laws relating to marriages. Whereas only 31 German Jews had emigrated to South Africa in the four years 1929-32, 2,549 entered during 1936. This rise was the result of restrictions on entry in other countries and because the 1930 Quota Act did not apply to Germany. Agitation against this immigration in the Union rose to a crescendo which culminated in the Aliens Act being raced through the Parliament in Cape Town in February 1937; this halted this process entirely.

Before the sealing of the South African outlet there was little pressure on Rhodesia, since the Colony was not as attractive as the more urbanized

and developed Union. However, the Aliens Act led to pressure on Rhodesia and other British territories in Africa to provide a refuge. It must be admitted that as a group the refined and cultured German Jews were unsuited to their new status as the world's unwanted flotsam. Most were of the middle class, commercial men, industrialists and professionals and the openings for penniless people of this type in a world just recovering from a depression were soon filled. As Frieda Sichel, herself a refugee admitted: 'Accustomed to comfort, refinement and economic stability, the German Jews on the whole, were ill-prepared for emigration, for adaptation to changes in climate and environment.

In Rhodesia especially there were few openings for such people for the White population was only 60,000 among 1,500,000 Africans, the economy was undeveloped and dependent on primary production. The Jewish community could offer the Berliner or Frankfurter little in the way of employment besides the commercial employment hitherto reserved for the comparatively unsophisticated ex-denizens of the villages of the Baltic States. But in 1936 Roland Kaufman organized special efforts to persuade country storekeepers to create posts for refugees. The number of immigrant refugees from Nazi-controlled territories rose from 56 in 1936, to 78 in 1937, to 164 in 1938, and to 180 in 1939. In terms of a solution to the problem the Rhodesian contribution was minimal but it did help alleviate some human suffering. Of course it must be remembered that as Nazi power and influence spread the problem began to affect all European Jewry and even the isolated source communities for Rhodesian Jewry were affected. In March 1939 Lithuania fell victim to Nazi aggression when the port of Memel was seized and in August 1938 the Italians had expelled all foreign-born Jews from Rhodes and imposed their own version of the Nuremberg Laws. Fears for the future of their relatives in Europe and the deteriorating situation there led to increased Jewish immigration into Rhodesia from these sources and of the one thousand Jewish immigrants between 1936 and 1940 under half came from the Third Reich.

The political debate that this immigration occasioned in Rhodesia has more than a local significance, for it provides a useful insight into general attitudes throughout the British Empire, of which Rhodesia, at this period, was a most loyal part. Of course this subject cannot be divorced from the wider political and strategic context. In a colonial society such as Rhodesia, which considered social and economic discrimination against the majority of the population quite legitimate and which was accustomed to thinking in terms of racial or ethnic classification, Nazi ideas were not as alien as in more homogeneous and democratic societies. So, to a certain extent, the settler communities of the British colonies in the tropics were a

fertile breeding ground for the ideas of racial and authoritarian political ideologies especially when this was sustained by written propaganda and broadcasts by the German Zeesen Radio Station. On the other hand the attempts of Italy and Germany to increase their power in Africa and secure colonial empires were opposed as they could only succeed at the expense of the British Imperial interests with which the majority of Rhodesian settlers closely identified. Thus even those who were attracted by Fascist ideas were repelled by their foreign origin and found patriotic reasons to oppose them when they were espoused by the former enemy. Thus the total identification with Nazi aims and strategy which occurred among many Afrikaner nationalists in South Africa was not likely among the ruling elite in Rhodesia. A good example of this feature was the right-wing journal *East Africa and Rhodesia* which was an implacable opponent of German colonial claims and in 1938 called upon 'British Africa to raise its voice in defence of itself and the Empire as a whole'.⁵

During the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia the White Rhodesian public showed no particular interest in the affair; the only revealing comment came from an editorial in *The Rhodesia Herald* on 26 November which hoped that there would be 'no loss of European prestige in Africa in the event of an Italian failure'. The Spanish Civil War and the German claims on South West Africa and Tanganyika elicited more interest, especially as Rhodesians had helped to conquer these African territories in the First World War. Fascist sympathizers were hampered by their identification with 'non-British methods' and foreign interests, and what appeared pacifist or at best appeasement policies. As one jingoistic correspondent wrote in 1937, such men were merely 'Germanophile propagandists' who showed 'common funk prompting an effort to placate the implacable'.⁶

The main proponents of Fascism in Rhodesia were Major L.M. Hastings M.C., a tobacco planter and President of the Rhodesia Tobacco Association, executive member of the Rhodesia Agricultural Union, and United Party backbencher, representing Marandellas, and H.H. Beamish, a footloose and anti-Semitic propagandist with good social connections, who was M.P. for Hartley from September 1938 until March 1939. Hastings was a Germanophile who grew less enthusiastic over the Nazis over the years but spent much time trying to persuade them to buy Rhodesian tobacco. Beamish, however, was an experienced 'Jew baiter' and was interned during the War. Apart from a few individuals who wore coloured shirts during the years 1934-6, Fascist activity centred around a few pro-German and anti-war meetings in 1936 and the dissemination of propaganda. The latter method was effective and anti-Semitism became

open and almost respectable. A correspondent in *The Rhodesia Herald* of 16 December 1938 signed himself 'Uneasy' because 'certain literature emanating from Berne, Switzerland, of the most blantly Nazi type, can be found in the homes of some citizens who unfortunately consider this stuff as the acme of truth'.

The Jews acted defensively and many were undoubtedly scared. The Bulawayo leadership concentrated on working quietly behind the scenes and supporting highly patriotic organizations like the Africa Defence Association and the Tanganyika League. The favourable link between the strategic and anti-Semitic debates was shown at a Bulawayo meeting in November 1938 attended by over a thousand people. This was organized to protest against the return of the mandate territories to Germany and when the question was asked whether 'Germany's persecution of the jews [was] a recommendation for her having colonies back there were vociferous cries of "No, No!"' Individual Jews replied to calumnies and insults in the press and there were bitter and acrimonious debates in the letter columns during these years.

In the Rhodesian political context immigration had always been a major issue. Since the death of Rhodes in 1902 immigration questions had been approached from a conservative standpoint. Group settlement of non-British was discouraged and proposals for Danes in 1922, French in 1904, Poles also in 1904, and Maltese in 1927 had all been rejected. The Rhodesian settlers' image of themselves corresponded to that of the *Boys' Own Paper* heroes, sunburnt empire-builders from the right schools. Even large-scale settlement of poor Britons as advocated by General Booth of the Salvation Army in 1908 was opposed. Rhodesia was a select club with restricted membership. The Company and later settler Governments preferred wealthy immigrants of social standing and they did much to attract Indian Army officers and others of similar background under the Empire Settlement Scheme. In later years Huggins also wanted public school men. Occupationally the demand was for farmers, or, more accurately, plantation owners. Other European settlers were not directly encouraged until after 1938 because it was assumed that they would follow naturally as the economy developed. Given the large African population and pool of unskilled labour, the overall attitude was that Europeans were an occupational aristocracy whose numbers would be carefully regulated to preserve the high economic and social standards of the settler population. There was to be no mass immigration on the North American or Australian pattern. Furthermore, 'The prevailing belief [was] that the Colony should concentrate on men of British stock whose numbers should be no more than supplemented by a "carefully regulated flow" of "assimable aliens".'⁸

These attitudes were apparent in the debate on immigration in the Assembly on 22 October 1937. Prime Minister Huggins supported 'infiltration' but opposed plans for immigration 'in bulk' of aliens because of the problems it posed. They 'had to consider the character of their population and whether it would be desirable to alter the whole character of the population just because they were in a hurry'. He saw the basic problem as economic, since he considered that there was no hope of large-scale industry in the Colony and that the best plan, therefore, was for 'permanent farm settlers'.⁹ Robert Tredgold, at this time Minister of Justice, admitted to the Gwelo Caledonian Society in November 1937 that they could easily get as many immigrants as they wanted 'but not the type of people who would be an asset to the country'.¹⁰ Thus 89 per cent of immigrants were British subjects in 1939 and only 300 were aliens.

Rhodesian politics in 1938 were dominated by the immigration question. The improvement in the economic picture and the growing realization that the long-term prospects for the Whites were not aided by their being outnumbered nearly 25 to 1 by Africans led to increased interest in building up the White population. In March 1938 a Committee of Enquiry into the Economic Development of the Colony was appointed with Oscar Kaufman as one of the three members. Among its terms of reference was investigation of 'the conditions under which expert or other European immigrants who are required for employment in (a) primary and (b) secondary industries, should be encouraged to enter the Colony'.¹¹ In the same month the Government made an arrangement with the 1820 Settlers Association to act as agents for British immigrants and introduced assisted passages for United Kingdom residents who would, however, only fill employment vacancies. A Government memorandum issued at this time stated that, 'It is the definite policy of the Government to maintain a British population in the Colony and it is with this object in mind that the new scheme has been started.'¹²

In April and again in October 1937 Major Hastings had supported a scheme of G. Olsen of Bulawayo for Danish agricultural settlers. Captain Harris, the Minister of Agriculture, found objections to the scheme for which the Danish Government had even offered to pay some of the costs. Harris suggested that the plan be shelved until they had first tried 'the right type of British and improved the proportion of Britishers in a British Colony. If that proved a failure, they could try immigrants from Northern Europe'.¹³ Another opponent was Charles Olley, a xenophobic Ulsterman of extreme anti-African opinions, who was active in Salisbury politics. A popular argument against such schemes was the danger that they posed to the security of the country in the event of war, especially in a geographic-

ally compact area where they could stir up the 'natives'. If the mild-mannered, fair-haired Danes were unacceptable, it is not surprising that unwanted Central European Jews with all the prejudices that attached to them were rejected.

The antagonism towards Jews was articulated by a correspondent under the pseudonym 'Rhodesia not Judesia', who advocated restrictions on the potentially saturating Jewish immigration:

In the lifetime of our children it will be found all other races have been submerged numerically and economically, and we, too, shall require not a Huggins but a Hitler to remedy (if possible) a state of affairs allowed to grow through our own apathy and the lack of vision in those in authority to see 'the writing on the wall'.¹⁴

It might be thought that this type of deliberately provocative language was used only by anonymous letter writers but worse was to follow. A vague statement by Earl Winterton at the Evian Conference on Jewish refugees, regarding the possibilities of their settlement in East Africa and Northern Rhodesia, led to a vituperative outburst by Sir Leopold Moore when he opened the Mazoe Valley Agricultural Show at Bindura in August 1938. Moore had left Bulawayo in 1903, after his chemist's business had become insolvent and paid only 2s. 2d. in the pound, for Livingstone where he founded a newspaper and became leader of the elected European members of the Northern Rhodesia legislature. Moore strongly objected to Northern Rhodesia becoming 'an annexe of Palestine' and warned Southern Rhodesians of the dangers such a scheme posed for them:

Even if the refugees were put in a reserve they would not stay there. They would cross the Chirundu Bridge into Southern Rhodesia and before long would be owning farms and running businesses and banks. They would demand political rights. . . . They do not speak our language; they would have the same political rights as we have, they would send members to the Assembly — and the debates would be carried on in Yiddish.¹⁵

Bulawayo Jewry did its best to support this settlement plan in a territory where there were few White settlers. The plan was to establish a group settlement in 'Rhobeit', an uninhabited area in the north-west of the Protectorate on the Angolan border. One prominent local supporter of the scheme was 'Chirapula' Stephenson, a famous pioneer of Northern Rhodesia who had a number of African wives and was a constant opponent of Moore's extreme racism. Stephenson offered to train the settlers on his vast estate and he attacked the delay of the Northern Rhodesian authorities in implementing the plan set out by Captain Campbell and his commission of enquiry for settling 500 Jewish families. Optimism about the scheme was such that Captain Cazalet, a British M.P., suggested that one

million Jews could be settled in Northern Rhodesia. Huggins, however, supported Moore's objections and agreed that it would change the composition of the Northern Rhodesian population too drastically. He also feared that the scheme would frustrate his plans for the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias. Huggins suggested that Tanganyika as an ex-German colony and a mandated territory was a more suitable site for such schemes. Jewish pressure in Britain and Rhodesia led to a new commission of enquiry in 1939 and *kibbutzim* were planned. However, deliberate delaying tactics forestalled any action before the outbreak of war and the potential beneficiaries of the plan went to the incinerators in Nazi death camps instead of the Upper Zambezi. Northern Rhodesia accepted only 197 refugees; and these went as employees among the small Jewish community there, because the copper mining companies refused to employ aliens.

The desire of all countries to pass the problem of these unfortunate people on to others was obvious. The British Government had a responsibility since it had closed the door to entry to the Jewish National Home in Palestine where most of the refugees wanted to go and where the Jewish population of the *Yishuv* were willing to welcome them. Political and strategic considerations surrounding oil and Middle East politics precluded the obvious Zionist solution. Instead, less obvious ameliorative experiments like Northern Rhodesia were considered, but these provoked colonial critics; an editorial in *East Africa and Rhodesia* of 20 July 1939, for example, condemned:

Facile optimism in Great Britain sees in our East African Dependencies and the Rhodesias ample room for a flood of refugees, and ill informed criticism blames the local authorities for not opening wide the gates. What is needed at Home is a better understanding of the complicated problems and the determination of these authorities to avoid at all costs the dangers [of poor whites] of which they are so poignantly aware.

In May 1938 the local magazine *The New Rhodesia* had supported the Northern Rhodesia scheme and the Danish plan, but by 16 December it had changed its opinion completely and headed its editorial 'Keep Out The Foreigner'. It argued against settlement schemes on economic and political grounds. On 17 February 1939 it made much of a letter from L. Kessler to the *London Jewish Chronicle* in which the writer had gone into the practicalities and problems associated with such a scheme. Kessler had asserted that 'Black Africa is no place for white colonisation' because of the large African population and the fact that the best land had already been taken and there was already African pressure on land resources. Kessler also denied the possibility of 'segregated settlements of whites over a long

period'. Undoubtedly Kessler was correct; the only real possibility was Palestine where there was both the will and the ability to solve the problem, as was shown when the new State of Israel more than doubled its population during its first few years of independence after 1948.

After the debate on Northern Rhodesia and the Munich Crisis, the discussion returned to Southern Rhodesia again. In November and December 1938 there was a stream of letters to the press questioning the patriotism and usefulness of Jews to any country especially Rhodesia; and these elicited spirited replies from Lionel Rabinowitz of Gwelo and Alec Forman of Bulawayo, while the Zionist solution was forcefully advocated by Conrad Nathan of Salisbury. The Kristallnacht Pogrom in Germany in November 1938, which followed the assassination attempt on the Nazi diplomat, Von Rath, led to further moves in Rhodesia. At another Caledonian Society banquet in Gwelo, Huggins agreed Rhodesia should 'do something for the refugees . . . but only as a gesture. This is all we can do.' He then went on to voice rumours which had been circulating for some time:

The position is becoming extremely anxious. I understand employers in some cases have turned out British people with families and have taken on refugees at £10 a month. If that is going to happen we must tighten up our immigration laws considerably. The number of aliens we can admit into this Colony is limited.¹⁶

Some days later Sir Percy Fynn, the Minister of Internal Affairs, issued a statement to clarify the situation. He claimed that 300 applications for entry from foreigners had been received in October but only 25 were admitted. Many applications were received directly from Germany:

Yesterday I had to deal with thirty. Many were of the trading class, and we already have sufficient number of that class in the country; indeed, the question of the number of trading licences is under consideration by the Government. We have no desire to endeavour to solve one problem and create another.¹⁷

Non-Jewish support for refugee settlement came mainly from clerics who argued on humanitarian grounds. These included the Revd F.B. Rea and the Marandellas Toc H, the Revd H. Carter of the Methodist Church, and H.E. Paget, the Anglican Bishop of Southern Rhodesia, who claimed that the Colony owed a debt to German-Jewish refugees because of the help given Rhodesia by the German-Jewish Beit family. Clara Abrahamson penned a bitter letter also advocating that a portion of the Beit Trust funds be allocated to assist Beit's fellow countrymen, since Rhodesia should 'forego the benefits to which it can no longer consider itself morally entitled'. In addition she called on the Government to repay the money already spent

and give it to a Jewish national home 'as Beit himself would have done, or Rhodes had they lived today'.¹⁸ In reply 'British' suggested that Jewish women 'devote their trinkets to a fund' as the Italian women had done during the Abyssinian War.¹⁹

As a result of the Marandellas group's support for the refugees, I.R. Rosin, the Salisbury surgeon, addressed a public meeting there in December 1938. Despite the protests of Major Hastings a resolution was passed urging the Government to give immediate assistance to refugees and to show willingness to share in their settlement. Hastings had concentrated on the plight of the British unemployed and Captain W.M. Nash R.N. supported him, suggesting that it was 'strange that we had not absorbed more of our unfortunate unemployed' in Britain.²⁰ Muriel Rosin replied, suggesting that there was no comparison between the plight of the refugees and the British unemployed. The debate went on and in the rainy months of December and January it appeared as if half the White population of Rhodesia was engaged in an acrimonious argument on the refugee question. The press appeared willing to publish anything and everything, and insults were traded daily in the letter columns.

On 19 December, Veats, the editor of *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, headed his leader 'The Infiltration Danger' and proceeded to castigate persons 'whose nationality dominates their religious beliefs' and who were 'imbued with ideas and ideals which are absolutely antithetical to our own'. A spirited retort from the Revd M.I. Cohen merely led to another editorial on 'The Danger of Infiltration' which referred to growing anti-Semitism in Bulawayo and justified its presence.

During January and February 1939 *The Bulawayo Chronicle* continued to publish letters from all manner of eccentrics who accused Jewish settlers of causing a shortage of 'native labour' or appealed to them to go to their own country. Some of these letters could have come directly from the Munich press: one from 'Goy' of Lusaka spoke of a Jewish world plot and of Jews 'openly proclaiming themselves a menace throughout civilisation'.²¹ It misquoted the Johannesburg *Zionist Record* and this led to an apology from Veats who was forced to admit that the letter writer 'had given to a passage the exact opposite construction to that of the original article'.²² Standards of journalism have never been high in Rhodesia but in this period they reached their nadir. There appeared to be no attempt to try and raise the level of debate, to act responsibly, or to consider the susceptibilities of some of the readers. Unsubstantiated claims and most vicious slanders were cheerfully allowed public display. Yet the extent to which the press was part of the ruling establishment was shown in 1940 when Col. N.S. Ferris, the editor of *The Rhodesia Herald*, became head of the

Rhodesian Army, W. Addison, the General Manager and a director of the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co., became Chief Recruiting Officer, and W.D. Gale, chief reporter on *The Rhodesia Herald* was appointed Government Information Officer. Probably many Jews in Rhodesia were echoing the poet Heine's thoughts: '*Denk ich an Deutschland in der Nacht, so bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht*'.

In these same months *The New Rhodesia* began its 'Keep Out The Foreigner' campaign and suggested that aliens made up close to half of all immigrants. Cohen was again forced to reply and he was ably supported by a bitter Samuel Rabinovitz. Unexpected support came from George S. Murray, a pioneer, who enquired of the editor, S.H. Rylett, how long he had been resident in the Colony: 'I have recollections of many an old pal of Jewish or foreign extraction who worked shoulder to shoulder with me, dying of fever, dysentery, hardship, whilst you were probably drawing the pleasant milk of your Alma Mater in good old England.'²³

This publication also gave prominence to an argument with which a later generation of Rhodesians became familiar, when Major Hastings attacked Churchmen for their left-wing bias. He accused them of concentrating too much on Germany: 'Bishops habitually forget Russia. It is for some obscure reason thought more pious and rewarding to hurl the ecclesiastical thunder at Berlin.'²⁴

Apart from the battle of words, Rhodesian Jews were involved in a number of schemes for refugee settlement within the country. In June 1936 the General Secretary of the Hilfsverein, M. Wischnitzer, visited Rhodesia to investigate the possibility of a settlement in the Umgusa Valley near Bulawayo. Experts were sent out but difficulties were met in raising finance and the right type of farmers. Government doubts also served to deter the scheme but in October 1937 Huggins mentioned it again and suggested that a small-scale experiment in European smallholding would be of some interest and that there 'should not be the slightest difficulty'.²⁵ However, many Matabeleland residents and *The Rhodesia Herald* on 26 October 1937 opposed such a scheme because 'it would tend to arouse suspicions and antipathies which today are happily not in evidence'. Another opponent was J.S. Brown, manager of the Farmers' Co-op, who claimed that Rhodesia would never have a large White population and that 'white peasant' agriculture was doomed to disaster.²⁶ Nevertheless the plans went ahead and Professor Norman Bentwich visited the site and discussed a mixed-farming project for ten or fifteen families which was considered by the Council for German Jewry in London. In December 1938 Oscar Kaufman and I. Kollenberg, a Matabeleland rancher, met the Minister of Agriculture and after lengthy discussion persuaded him to

agree to allow them to bring not more than twenty families to Rhodesia for the scheme, the responsibility for whom would lie with the Bulawayo committee. The committee had to provide the land and the implements because these people had no capital. They would establish themselves on irrigated land near the Umgusa dam and engage in mixed farming for export. The Bulawayo committee was to prepare a detailed plan and the Government was to give the land and facilities on the same terms and conditions as to all farm settlers. Things moved slowly in the days before jet travel and it was only in August 1939 that Dr Zenachs, an agricultural expert attached to the Jewish Agency in Palestine, visited the site of the scheme and conferred with the Agricultural Department. He formulated an acceptable scheme but it never came to fruition because war broke out the following month.

One small scheme which did get underway was organized by Sir Edmund Davis. He settled twelve 'non-Aryan Germans'²⁷ who were experienced agriculturalists on a 5,000-acre farm outside Selukwe which belonged to his Bechuanaland Exploration Company. He had four houses built for the group which was led by a personal friend, H.A. Haendler, a former German cavalry officer with nine decorations.

In early 1939, as the political situation in Europe worsened, more appeals for refuge reached Rhodesia. In February a group of 1,000 Austrian, German, Hungarian and Czech Jews with £200,000 capital were rejected by the Rhodesian authorities and in May 1939 two groups of 5,000 Hungarian Jews were also barred. In Czechoslovakia official interest in Rhodesia was aroused after Neville Chamberlain had given away a third of the country as a result of the Munich agreement. The link-man between the Czech and Rhodesian Governments was Robert Gilchrist who, through Samuel Rabinovitz of the Union Agencies, had made contact with the Bata Company in 1937. Gilchrist was a farmer, a former leader of the opposition, and the Minister of Transport and Public Works who in 1933-4 had originated the strip roads scheme. In 1938 he was the Rhodesian representative on the Railway Commission. Through Gilchrist the Czechs offered displaced farmers, miners, mechanics, physicians and engineers from the annexed territories. The farmers were willing to bring implements instead of cash and the only expense for Rhodesia would have been the land. The democratic and progressive Czechs were even anxious to transfer whole industries out of their country; but in February 1939 Fynn informed Gilchrist that 'mass immigration is out of the question'. He reminded him that in Rhodesia 'a high standard of citizenship is essential in view of the pre-ponderating proportion of natives'.²⁸ In early March just before the Nazis seized the rump of Czechoslovakia, Fynn informed Gilchrist that Rhodesia would only allow 40 aliens in a month but he did agree to the entry of 50 trained farmers and 20 skilled mechanics from Czechoslovakia.

One positive result of Gilchrist's work was the Bata Shoe factory at Gwelo which brought fifteen skilled Czech staff into the Colony under its manager, Mr O. Kasperlick. On this matter there was stiff competition between the Bulawayo and Gwelo Councils to attract the factory before the decision was made in February 1939. Even so *The Gwelo Times* on 17 March 1939 stated that there had been an 'edifice of fearsome fiction' constructed, the newspaper had to defend the import of trained staff and deny that 'the employment of foreign capital and . . . the introduction of a considerable number of aliens . . . is a subterfuge for opening the gate of Rhodesia to an influx of refugees from Europe'.

Even after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, Gilchrist visited the country to try and help the people both Jewish and Gentile. He told reporters in London that 'all they ask is freedom and peace and the chance to help in developing the natural resources of our country'. He suggested that Rhodesia could become another United States by accepting the persecuted of Europe and suggested, correctly, that this was the last chance 'to tread the same path and achieve the same glory . . . never likely to rear again'.²⁹ *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, predictably, criticized Gilchrist and stated that the days of state-aided immigration were over. It rejected any moves to change the character and composition of the population because with a 'small European population it is not difficult to visualize the creation in this country of a minority problem which would be very difficult to handle'.³⁰ At a meeting in Umtali, Huggins stated that Rhodesia did not accept the peasant farming class from Britain and if there was an argument for admitting and subsidizing such people 'charity should begin at home'.³¹

Gilchrist's final move was to try and persuade individual farmers to accept Czechs as assistants. This idea was supported by A.W. Redfern, who had been in Rhodesia since 1896. He had become Master of the High Court, Chairman and Manager of the Southern Rhodesia Land and Agricultural Bank from 1924 to 1939 and then an M.P. and first Chairman of the Natural Resources Board. In June 1939, Redfern wrote to the Rhodesian press from London suggesting that the Colony would gain from the immigration of Czech experts and he wrote to Huggins personally appealing for him to change his mind regarding Central European immigration, although he admitted that it was difficult 'for a party government to act in the right direction against even uninformed public opinion'.³²

Instead of heeding men of the calibre of Gilchrist and Redfern, Rhodesian settlers preferred the ideas of a confessed friend of Adolf Hitler, Hamilton Beamish. Beamish was a foot-loose trouble-maker whose career had taken him to Alaska, Canada, Ceylon, South Africa, Tanganyika and

the Seychelles, as well as Rhodesia for a few years in the 1920s. In 1936 he returned to Rhodesia and ran a small working proposition outside Hartley. He had had to leave England in 1919 after slandering Sir Alfred Mond, the Jewish Commissioner of Public Works in the war-time Government, because he was unable to pay the damages awarded by the courts. In Rhodesia Beamish campaigned on the immigration question using the journal *The New Rhodesia*, in which, on 26 May 1939, he complained:

Recently a letter relative to the settlement of people who are called Germans and Czechs into this country has come into my hands, and I feel that it is in the public interest that its contents should be known. . . .

I am arranging for the immigration of experienced farmers mainly Czechs and Germans ex Sudetenland. These are essentially intensive agriculturalists and should be able to increase our yields per acre. . . . If you would care to have one for a period of training prior to settling on their own land (say, 12 months at a small salary) please send me details — c/o G. Bata A.S., Export Dept. 115, Zlin, Czechoslovakia, and I will try and send you a good man.

The signatory of this communication (one of several of a similar nature) is Mr R.D. Gilchrist. . . . It seems to me the public are entitled to ask whether aliens of this type . . . will make suitable settlers and whether this country can absorb them.

Furthermore in spite of vague contradictions from the United Party platform prior to the General Election that Mr Gilchrist had no specific authority from the Government to invite so-called Czechs and Germans to this country, I am of the opinion that his opening phrase of 'I am arranging' calls for more definite denial from the Government.

Beamish, of course, was concerned at the Jewish content of any such immigration. The final result was that only 6 Czechs entered in 1938 and only 27 in 1939. However, these included two Jewish industrialists who made an important contribution to the growth of secondary industry in the Colony. They were L. Zlattner, who settled in Bulawayo and established Rhodesian Woollens and pioneered the knitting industry, and G. Baecher who founded the Rhodesian Plough & Machinery Co., the first local makers of agricultural implements. The ironic result of the xenophobia and selfishness of the British settlers against Jews, Danes, and Czechs, was of course, that the real long-term gain went to the African population, for it meant that the settler population was bound to remain a small and insecure White island in a sea of Black.

The 1939 General Election campaign for the thirty seats in the Legislative Assembly had immigration as its major theme. The contest was

between Huggins's United Party, the small Rhodesia Party, the main opposition, the Rhodesia Labour Party, and a few independent Fascist candidates organised by Beamish. H.H. Davies, the leader of the populist Labour Party, which represented the minority of White artisans, called for a conference of all 'people south of the Sudan', that is European settlers, to discuss a solution to the refugee question.³³ However as the campaign continued during April 1939 the Labour Party took a stand more in keeping with supposed popular feeling. At the end of March Davies called for an end to 'further uncontrolled Jewish immigration . . . they had an obligation to their own people and it was necessary to maintain the standard of living which had been worked for in the past'.³⁴ In the Rhodesia Labour Party organ, *Rhodesian Truth*, it was clearly stated on 11 April that, 'The Labour Party refuses to allow the economic security of the people of this country to be sacrificed in a futile attempt to solve the problem of Jewish persecution'.

The 'people' referred to were of course the wealthy White community who comprised 4 per cent of the population, not the 1,500,000 Africans whose average wage, if in employment, was £1 a month. It is a noticeable and continuing feature of the Rhodesian scene that such debates occurred without any reference to African views or aspirations and as if they did not even exist. The Bulawayo Labour Party members feared that foreign immigrants would undercut their high wages and Donald McIntyre M.P. deliberately exaggerated the White unemployment problem in *Rhodesian Truth*. However, investigations by Fynn's ministry found only 28 unemployed Whites in the town in May 1939.³⁵ The Labour Party organ also made peculiar use of the immigration and census returns in order to show that aliens made up close to half of all entrants. One reason which they gave was that more than half of all British immigrants later left the Colony so that the alien figures should really be doubled up and were twice as dangerous as they appeared. It did not occur to the leaders of the working classes that perhaps permanent immigrants were more valuable to the country than transients whatever their nationality.

The Rhodesia Party spokesman was James Cowden, a Bulawayo building contractor. He expressed sympathy with the plight of the refugees but said they were entering the country 'through a violation of the immigration law' in that they were given the necessary capital by a society. He wanted a limit 'to a certain class of immigrant . . . who will be definitely detrimental to Southern Rhodesia'. Like many other thinkers on the subject he expressed the opinion that it could only lead to trouble 'for those foreigners who have settled happily among us'.³⁶

It was at this juncture that the *Argus Press* joined in the debate and voiced the popular feeling that there were greater numbers of aliens 'than

stated in official returns'.³⁷ Thus Huggins and Fynn had to deny the wilder claims of opposition spokesmen that they were 'cooking the books' and reassure their electorate that refugee immigration would be controlled and that any costs involved would not fall on the public. Huggins admitted that the Government had imposed an unofficial quota of 40 aliens a month or roughly 10 per cent of immigrants. Huggins worked on the British patriotism of the settlers and the possibility of war in what came to be known as the 'Khaki Election'. This in turn led to further questioning of the refugee position. One Selukwe voter asked Danziger and Sir Lucas Guest, the Minister of Mines: 'Will foreigners be settling down reaping the benefit while we go and do the job? They must either come and help us, go to a concentration camp, or clear out (loud applause)'.³⁸

Within the United Party, Hastings worked towards a policy of 'supplementing the Nordic population' and bringing in 'those more used to the soil than to commerce'.³⁹ The United Party position was put by Manfred Hodson, who was widely regarded as a 'liberal' in the post-war period, in an article in *East Africa and Rhodesia* on 16 February 1939 which is illustrative of the British colonial mind at work. Among his arguments was one against the entry of Jewish doctors because the White population was healthy and the Black population, which had few medical services, was, he said, uninterested in such services. One refugee doctor was admitted but Hodson was concerned that more would spoil the prospects for young Rhodesians:

Immigrants must be carefully selected, both because of the inevitable contact of white and black, and because the economic balance can be so readily upset . . . it is not easy to deal with a sudden wave of foreigners who are not sorted out into occupational categories, who have no knowledge of our conditions and who must try to understand both the British and the Native. This of course is superimposed on the question of so many applicants being without adequate financial means . . . and untrained in the peculiar responsibilities of being among African natives and of voluntarily undertaking . . . non advertising tasks e.g. service in the territorials to acting as policemen . . . the refugees themselves must feel that they are causing inconvenience to generous hosts.

According to Hodson the refugees should get their own territory and in any case were so deficient in democratic practice that they needed a course of study in this which would take twenty years. In this respect the refugees were, no doubt, privileged, for the possibility of Africans imbibing democracy within two hundred years were considered optimistic and they were to be enclosed within Huggins's 'two pyramid' *apartheid* plan.

In the first parliamentary session following the United Party's victory in

the April election, Davies asked for an assurance that the Government gave no sanction to Gilchrist's scheme. Nevertheless there were a number of hostile editorials when the 1938 immigration figures were released and showed 15.5 per cent of aliens. The press then began to complain about the number of time-limit entries or temporary residents allowed in who were not included in these figures. A new batch of correspondence started with an unemployed 'Pioneer' claiming that during a walk along one block of Abercorn Street, Bulawayo, he passed eighteen people not one of whom was speaking English. 'Ex-serviceman' claimed that the alien influx had caused a 25 per cent rise in the cost of living in Bulawayo and rents had soared. Further ill-feeling was generated on 12 May 1939 by a letter in *The Rhodesia Herald* from Werner Stein in Beira. He headed a group of forty German-Jewish families held there who had visas from Britain consulates for entry into the two Rhodesias. However, they were refused entry as some of the visas were allegedly forged by German consulates. Eventually ten families from this group were allowed into Northern Rhodesia.

A number of interested groups worked against refugee absorption. One was the Government Immigration Committee which aided British immigrants. It wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs in March 1939 complaining that 'any considerable increase in aliens must inevitably affect adversely the Committee's operation', and in July it directed his attention to 'reported entries of aliens by road via Macequece'.⁴⁰ As soon as war broke out the Dominions Office issued a ban against the entry of aliens from enemy-controlled territory and this ended the problem for all practical purposes. Yet the agitation against Jewish refugees continued into the war years.

At the time it was difficult to ascertain the facts about refugee immigration beneath all the rhetoric and, as it has been seen, official returns were called into question. According to the Immigration Department the proportion of British to alien immigrants fell from 9 to 1 in 1936 and 1937 to 6 to 1 in 1938 and 1939, which does not suggest an overwhelming flood of foreigners. In 1938 400 aliens of all nationalities were admitted and 451 in 1939. In addition 100 temporary permit holders entered in 1938 and 170 in 1939, all of whom were Jewish refugees. Between 1936 and 1941 the Jewish population of Rhodesia rose by 995 persons or 8.9 per cent a year compared to a rise of 4.9 per cent a year for all Europeans. The largest increase in the Jewish population occurred in Bulawayo where numbers rose from 819 to 1,400 — which suggests that more than half of the immigrants settled there.

Natural increase accounted for only about 80 persons among the Jewish population. Many of the new entries were relatives of Rhodesian residents,



1

Early trading in Zimbabwe: Typical of many Jewish traders in the villages



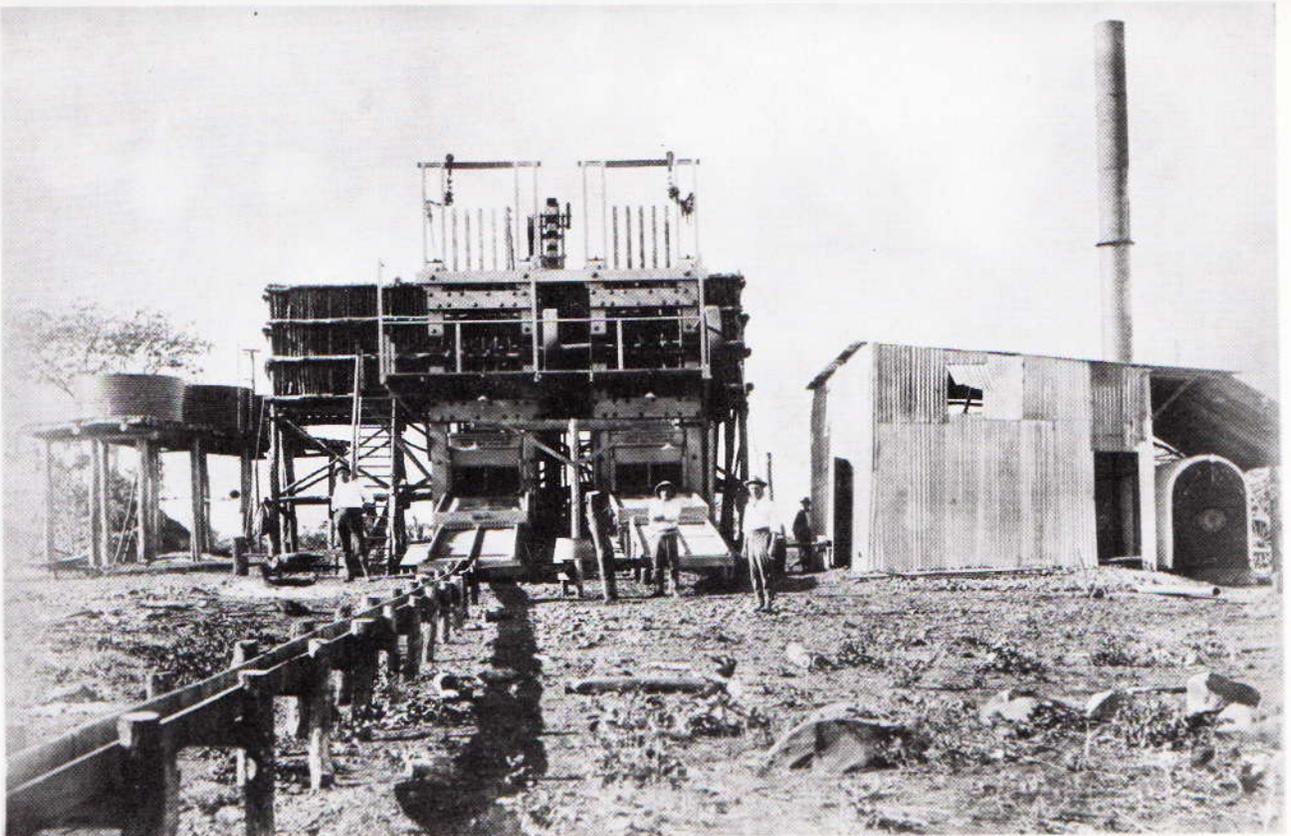
2

Typical general dealer's store: Gwelo, 1894



3

The Grand Hotel, Salisbury, 1905 under its earlier name, run by Jacob (Jack) Goldberg



4

Typical mine of a smallworker: The Trixie, Lower Gwelo, operated by Solly Levin who mined continuously from 1910 to 1914.



5

Michael Welensky: First President of the Gwelo Hebrew Congregation c. 1897–8; father of Sir Roy



6

Joe Van Praagh, Mayor of Salisbury, 1900–01



7

I. Hirschler, Mayor of Bulawayo with the City Council, 1897



8

E. Basch and other members of the Devonian Society, Bulawayo, 1914; Basch was also Mayor of Bulawayo four times



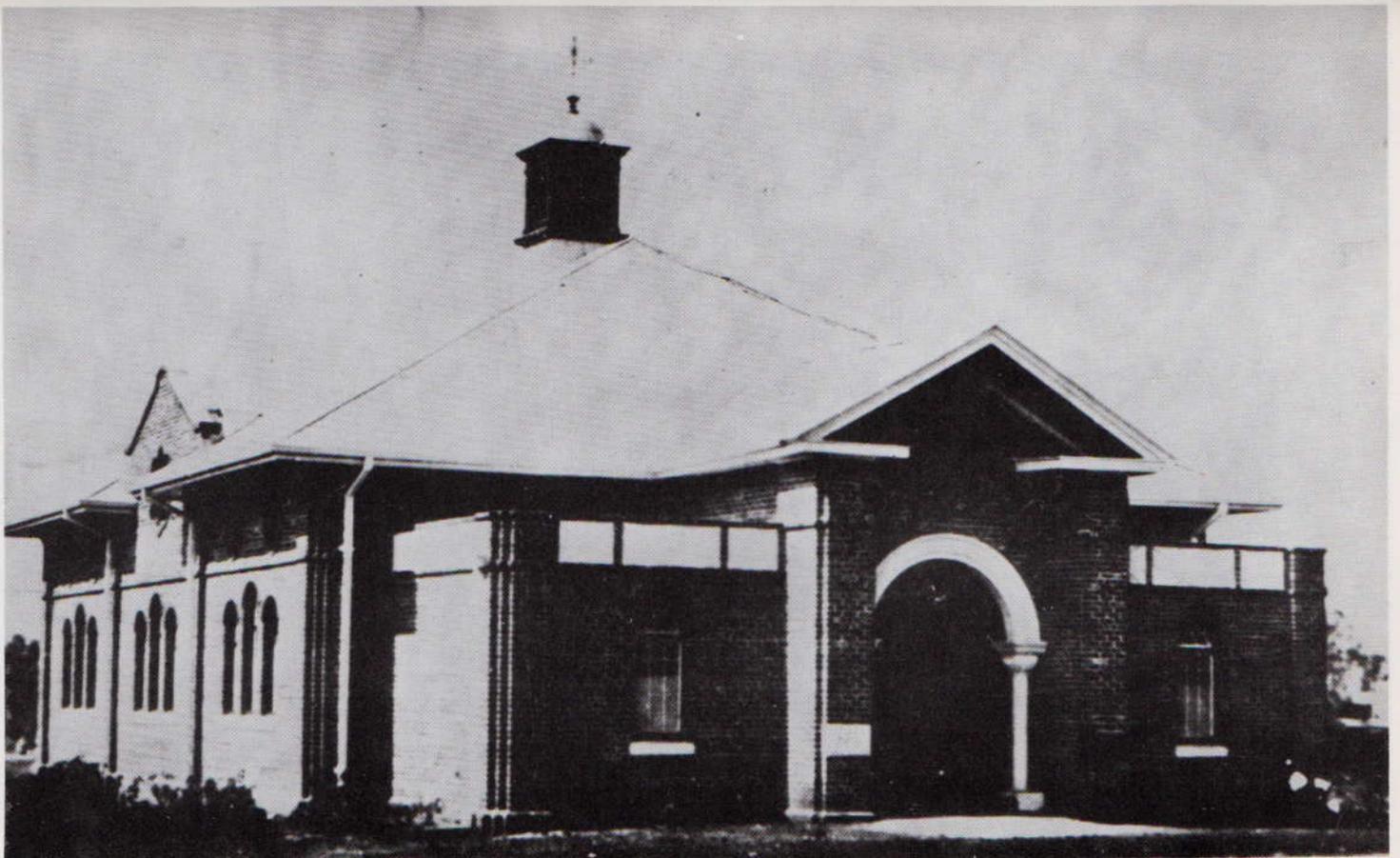
9

H. Lezard, Mayor of Salisbury with the City Council, 1916



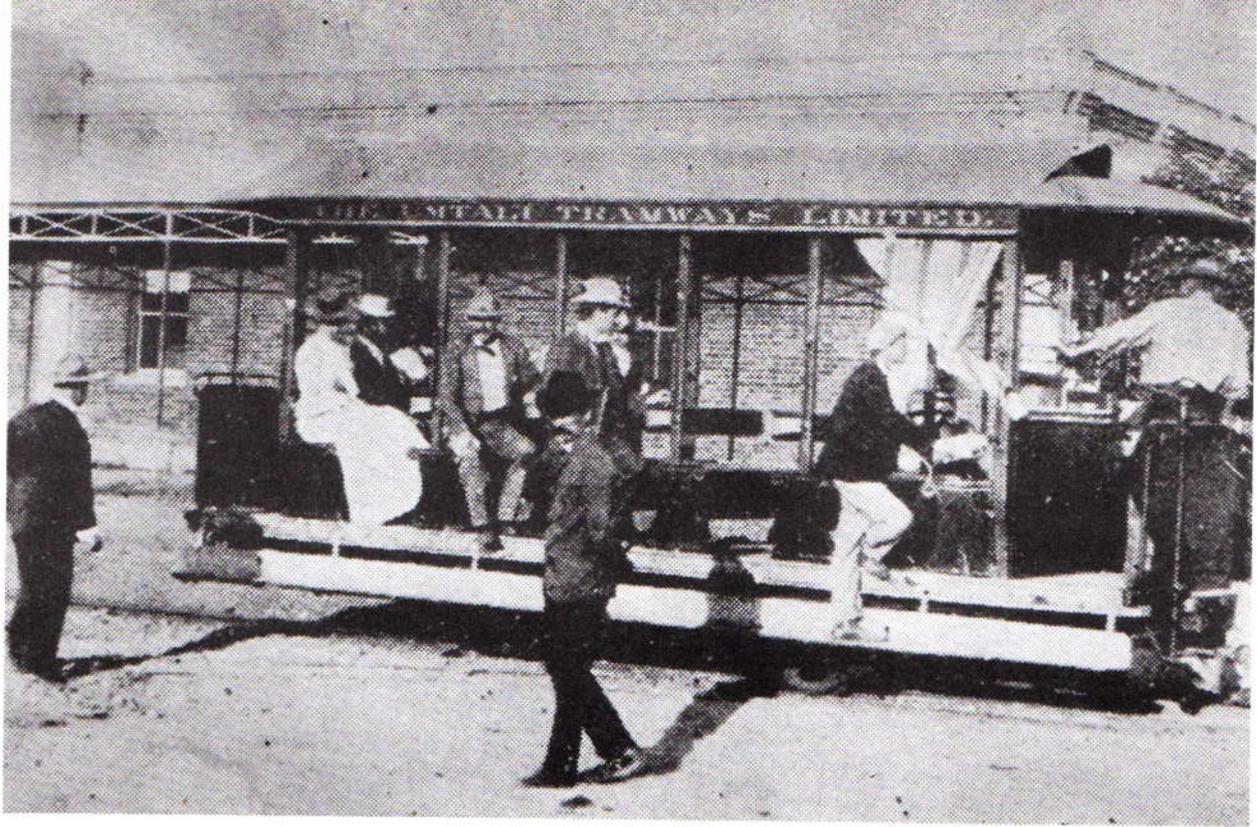
10

The first Hebrew School in Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1901



11

The Synagogue, Salisbury, 1918



12

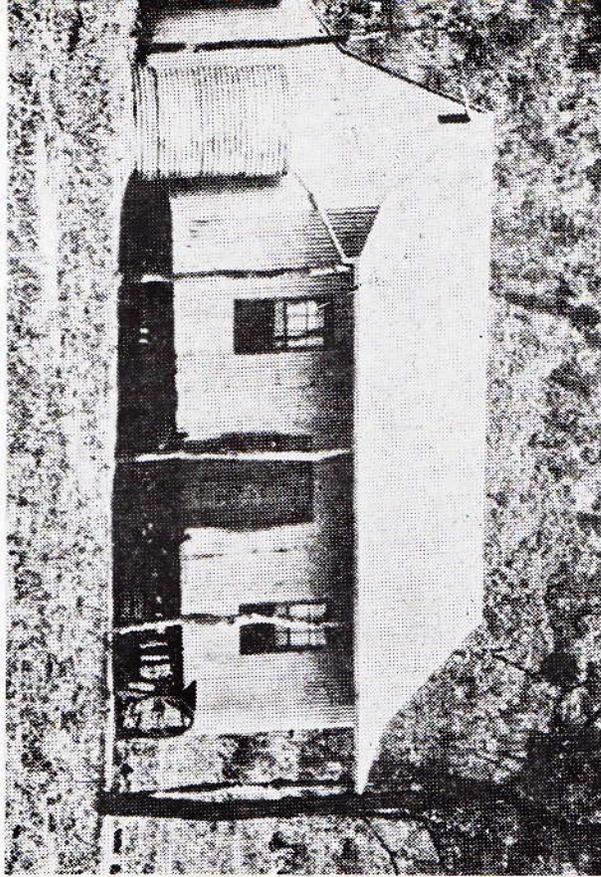
The first tramway in Zimbabwe: Umtali, founded by A.L. Lazarus



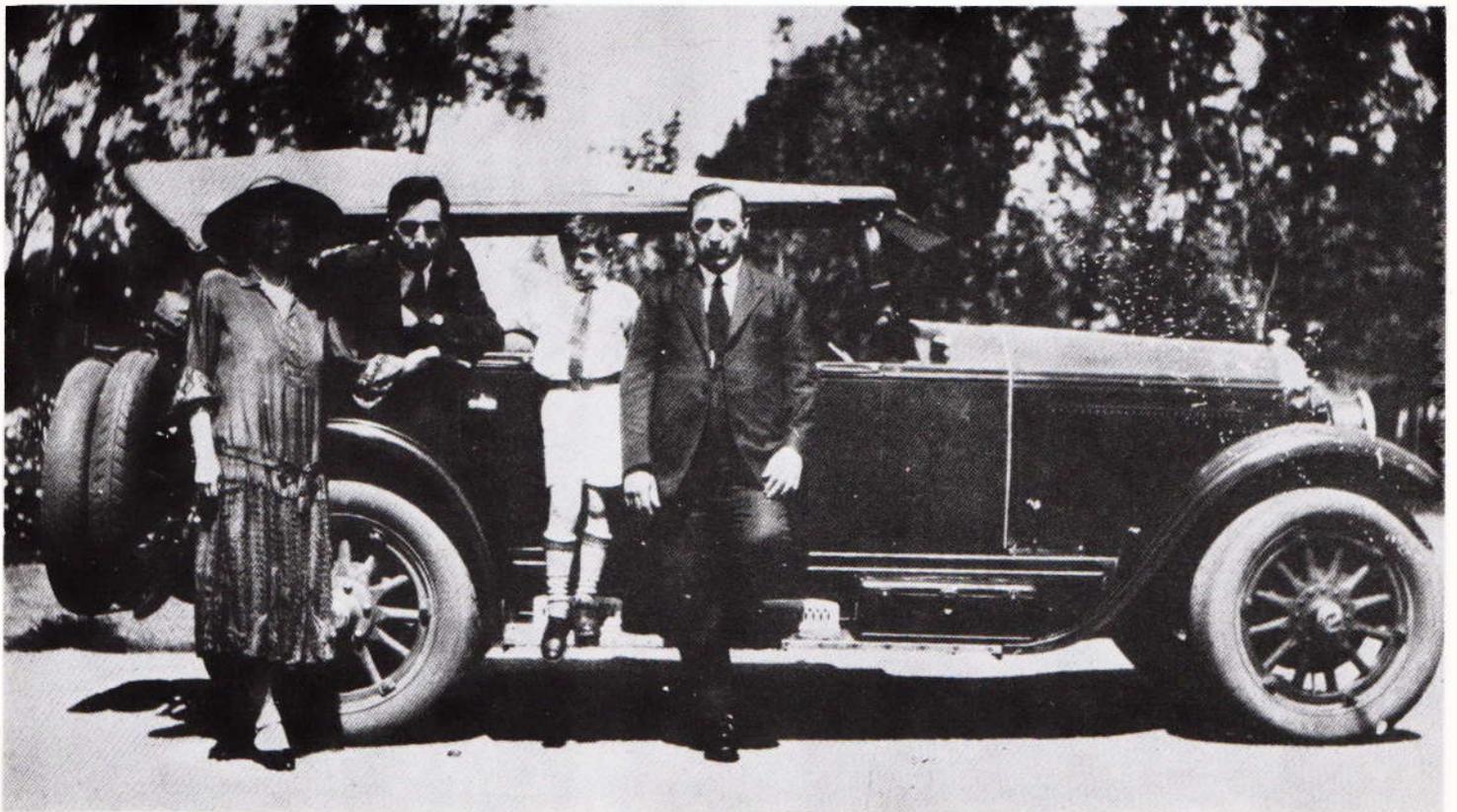
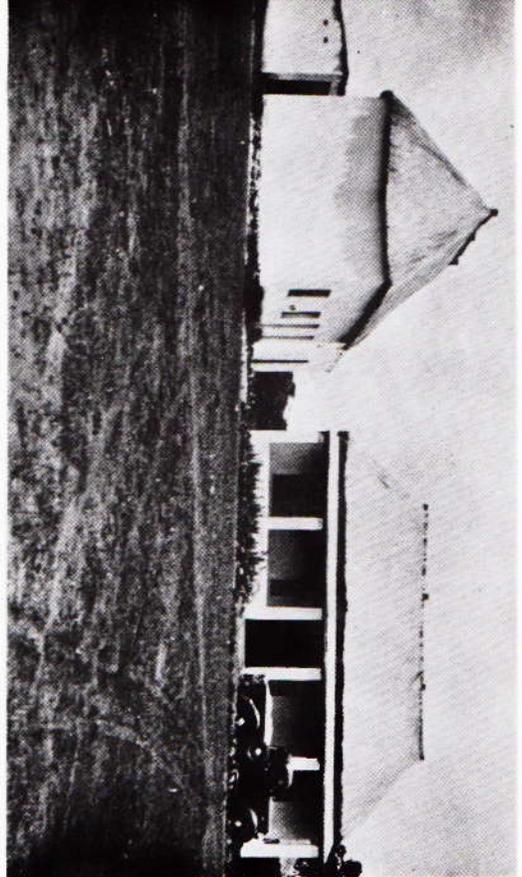
13

Southern Rhodesia Volunteers, training camp, Bulawayo, 1915: Revd Captain M.I. Cohen

The wood and galvanized iron store at Shamva mining camp where the firm of Jacob S. Benatar was established in 1915



Harry Margolis's store in the Makoni district: The humble beginnings of Zimbabwean Industries



Maurice Jacobson, Mayor of Gwelo, with his wife Tilly and family



17

Marriage of Joseph M. Barnett to Minnie Rotstein, Salisbury, 1923, with the Revd J.J. Rosin and his wife (front right)



18

Picnic party of young Jews from Salisbury, at Mermaid's Pool, 1920s



19

Opening of Colleen Bawn Cement Factory, 1947: Leo Levy and Isidore Kollenberg with Sir Godfrey Huggins



20

L. Levy and I. Kollenberg at a cattle sale in Gwelo



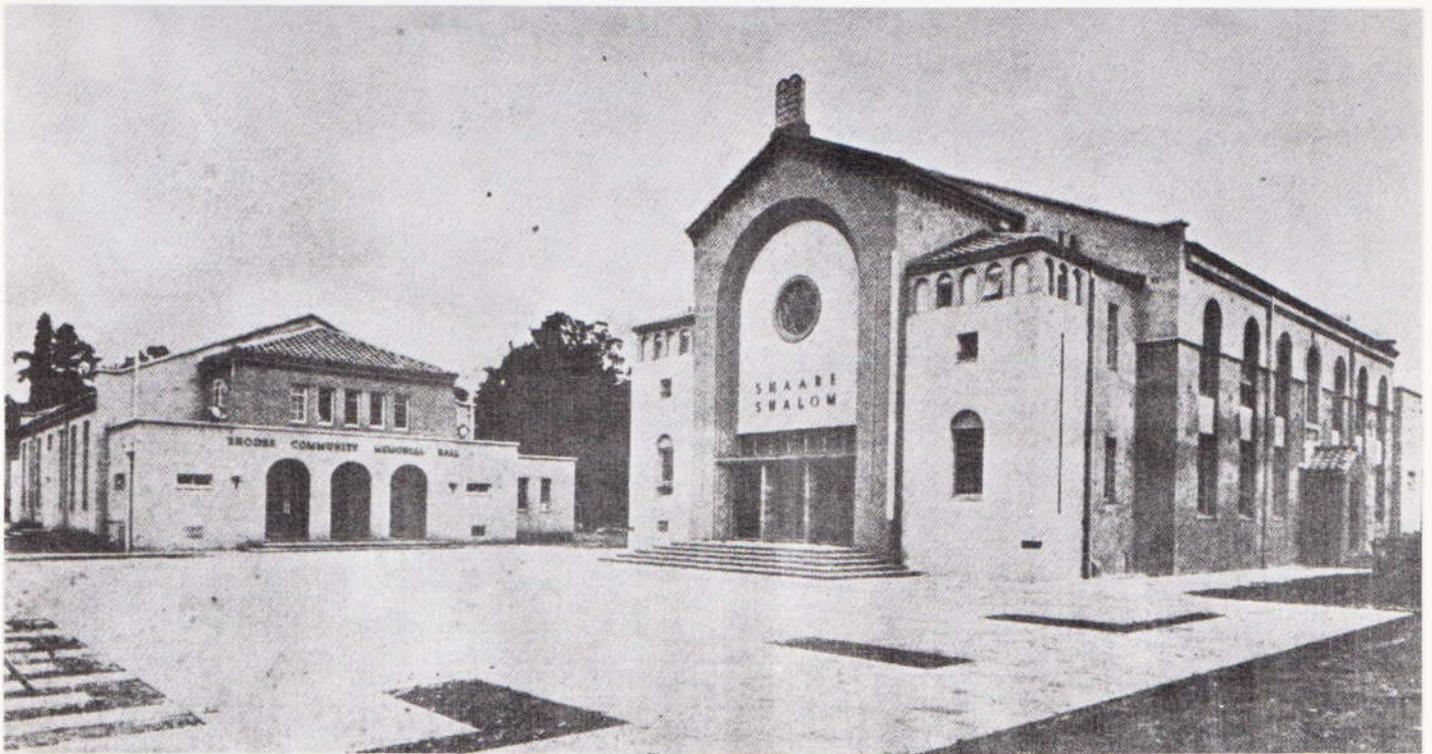
24

Behor David Almeleh, first President and Doyen of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation



25

J.C. Benatar, co-founder of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation



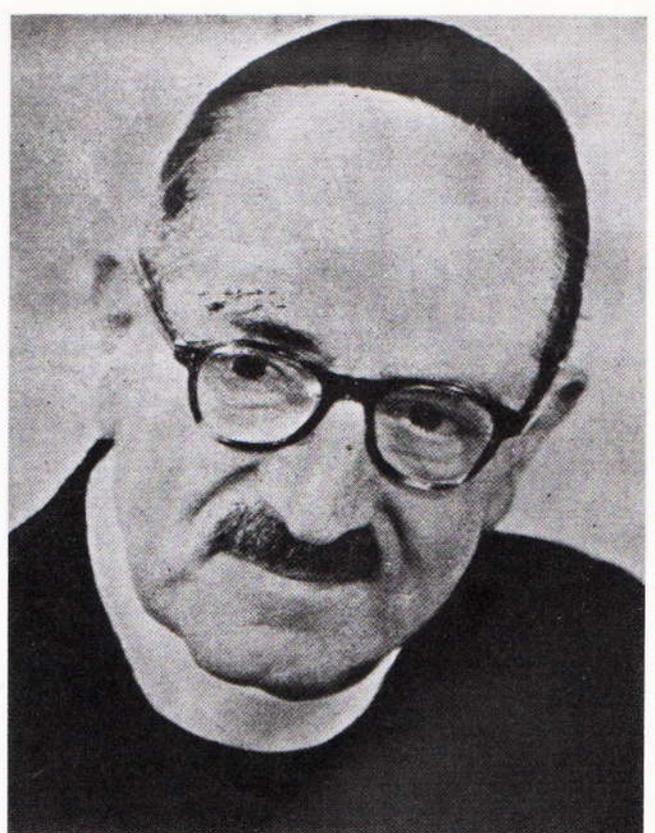
26

The Synagogue and Rhodes Community Memorial Hall of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation, Salisbury



27

Marco Alhadeff, a founder and first Gabbai of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation



28

Rabbi Dr Manfred Papo, outstanding religious leader of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation



29

Cessy Harris, Mayor of Bulawayo, 1934



30

Ralph Harris, Mayor of Bulawayo, 1973



31

Harry Margolis at the opening of the bridge on Macheke, 1945



33

Relatives at the opening of the Barney Kaplan Bridge on the Nyadiri



32

Solomon Slioman Bridge on the Kwe Kwe



35

Behor Samuel Leon, great undenominational benefactor



34

The Hon. Max Danziger



36

Captain H.M. Greenspan on active service near Addis Ababa



37

Sam Levy with one of his prize-winning fatstock entries



38

Abraham Isaac Menashe, leading member of the Sephardi Hebrew Community and Treasurer of the Revisionist Movement



39

Samuel Rabinovitz, leading Zionist



40

I.R. Rosin, well-known surgeon and leader of the Sephardi Community



41

Muriel Rosin, leading social worker and M.P.



42

The Hon. A. E. Abrahamson, Minister of Labour, addressing strikers at Gatooma, 1960



43

The Hon. Mr. Justice B. Goldin



44

W. Margolis, Chairman of the Agricultural Marketing Authority, presenting the Margolis Trophy to a member of staff



46

Maurice and Hymie Goldberg inspecting tobacco in a barn



45

Professor Michael Gelfand

that is to say citizens of the Baltic states and Italy. According to a survey carried out by Chaim Gershatler, the Headmaster of the Louis Landau Hebrew School, an afternoon school run by the Bulawayo Congregation, the Jewish population of Bulawayo in November 1939 was 1,420. Gershatler, who became editor of the Johannesburg *Zionist Record* in 1943, spent a good deal of time and trouble on this exercise. He found that 281 of the 1,420 Jews were refugees from Nazi territories; 219 were Germans, 19 Austrian, 17 stateless, 18 Memelanders, and 8 Czechs. Among the Germans, 49 were children, 13 retired persons, and 18 unemployed. The tendency towards commercial employment was evident: there were 9 salesmen, 8 book-keepers, and 11 commercial agents, but the women at least made some attempt to adapt and 26 were in domestic service mostly as house-keepers and children's nurses.⁴¹

The Revd M.I. Cohen's papers show that between 28 December 1938 and 10 March 1939 the Bulawayo community organized the entry of 51 refugees of whom only 2 were children. These were made up of 47 Germans, 2 Austrians and 2 Hungarians. The men consisted of 1 engineer, 1 doctor, 3 electricians, 2 farmers, and 27 in commercial pursuits.⁴² Cohen was fully engaged in this work. He backed the Northern Rhodesia scheme and was in touch with the British Jewish leader, Professor Brodetsky of Leeds, through whom he tried to get some refugees enlisted in Commonwealth air forces without success. The necessity for a committee to coordinate this work and provide for penniless refugees is revealed when one examines the immigration regulations of the Colony. In September 1938 Magistrates and Civil Commissioners, the administrative officials in charge of the European population, were informed at their annual conference that German and Austrian passport holders needed a British visa issued for Rhodesia to gain entry. Alien immigrants who were educated and physically sound were permitted if they had offers of employment at a wage of not less than £15 a month with an extra £5 for each dependent. To enter as an employer or partner, £250 capital was required with an additional £50 for each dependent. Skilled artisans who arrived without definite offers of employment needed £100 capital and £50 for each dependent. Unskilled persons needed the above and were required to be literate in English.⁴³

Investigation shows that the Rhodesian Government did a little more for the refugees than it would admit publicly, but it was only as a result of pressure by the local Jewish community that this was done. Without the local community practically no attempt would have been made even on humanitarian grounds and the fate which met the stillborn Czech and Danish schemes would have been repeated. It must, however, be admitted

that Rhodesia had a better record on the refugee question than many other countries, particularly South Africa. An indication of the intense anti-Semitism in the Union, and the difference between the two States, was shown in February 1939 when the South African Broadcasting Corporation banned a speech by Lord Marley on behalf of the Joint Emergency Appeal for Jewish refugees.⁴⁴ In May Lord and Lady Marley visited Rhodesia and spoke in the State Lotteries Hall in Salisbury under the auspices of the Salisbury Jewish Refugees Committee headed by Advocate H.J. Hoffman. As a titled gentleman, a former Lord in Waiting to King George V, Deputy Chairman of the House of Lords, and Chairman of the Labour Party in the Lords, he received a more sympathetic and respectful hearing in Rhodesia than South Africa, for Rhodesians were always more impressed by titles and position than South Africans. *The Bulawayo Chronicle* and even *The New Rhodesia* wrote favourably of his address especially since his lordship claimed that he wanted funds and had no intention of establishing a large settlement in the Colony.

How affected were Rhodesian Jewry in these years by the world-wide *Judenhetze*? Undoubtedly they suffered the anguish and pessimism that affected Jews all over the world. From 1937 the *Bulawayo Jewish Guild Journal* was full of articles on the chaotic and tragic situation in the world and 'stricken Israel' faced by troubles in Germany, Rumania, Poland, and Palestine. Personal insecurity did not affect Rhodesian Jews very much because the Colony was still well-administered and law-abiding, but there were a number of incidents which caused sleepless nights. In February 1937, A.J. Muller was fined £15 for contravening the Liquor Act and assaulting Aaron Joffe, the proprietor of the Eiffel Flats Hotel. Joffe had refused to serve four drunks in his hotel whereupon Muller intervened and threatened him:

If you push my friend out, you pushed me out. I'm a German and representing Hitler, Heil Hitler; you . . . Jews; you have no right to be here. I'll do the same to you as Hitler did to the Jews in Germany.

Blatant incidents of this type were rare but in January 1939:

The establishments of certain businessmen, reputable citizens in Bulawayo, were found marked in large scale chalk drawings with a Nazi brand of swastika and in one place, with a filthy obscene expression written underneath.⁴⁶

This action against four premises in Abercorn Street and two in Selborne Avenue further served to undermine the confidence of some Jews, particularly newcomers from Europe. The action was condemned by the press but more because of the detrimental effect it might have on African respect for White men than on moral grounds.

The tendency towards ignoring the positive actions of Jews was again evident in these years. When the Otto Beit Bridge over the Zambezi at Chirundu, costing £180,000 and paid for by the Beit Trust, was opened in May 1939 all the newspapers in the country had editorials on the communications and transport question but ignored the Beits' origins in their comments. They failed to point out the irony of the contemporary opposition to the settlement of men like the Beits, who had they been alive then would have been refugees from the Reich.

British Imperial patriotism led White Rhodesians to make a number of political moves which to the casual observer may have appeared anti-Nazi. However, the settlers saw the rise of Nazi power, and later the war, in the same light as earlier struggles between the European powers, and had little ideological commitment: 'My country [or, better, my Empire] right or wrong,' was their slogan. It was for this reason that in April 1937 Salisbury City Council voted by 7 to 4 against accepting German tenders for electrical equipment for a new power station. H. Shapiro, the only Jewish member, did not speak in the debate which was carried by the anti-German faction because they were opposed to 'strengthening the sinews of aggression'.⁴⁷ It was only in June 1939 that Maurice Jacobson put through a unanimous resolution in the Gwelo Council against accepting tenders of German and Italian goods.

In May 1939 Britain introduced conscription and this led to further attacks on foreigners in Rhodesia and calls for their registration for military service. In June the Rhodesian Defence Act was amended so that it was open to non-British residents and recent arrivals to volunteer their services. In the event as enemy aliens none of the refugees could do this. Even though a system of registration and military tribunals was established on the outbreak of war, white feathers began to appear as in 1914. Major Wane the Native Commissioner, Mazoe, and later commander of the Rhodesian African Rifles, suggested to the Information Officer that 'public opinion' should be heeded and demanded conscription for all Whites:

More particularly is this considered necessary in order that Jews or other aliens or naturalised storekeepers and traders should do their proper share, and not as in the last war be allowed to remain at home and make fortunes, whilst their betters, Britishers, go to the War and on their return apart from physical injuries find themselves much worse off than these aliens and Jews for whom they risked all.

Their negative stereotype of the Jews suggested to the British settlers that the Jews were cowards and would not fight. Of course many British people forgot that they had greeted earlier Jewish calls for opposition to

Hitler by accusing them of war-mongering. Cohen and Gershatzer kept careful records of the Jewish war contribution so as to meet any attacks. By November 1939, 62 per cent of male British subjects of Jewish origin aged 18-45 years had volunteered for active service as had 40 per cent of aliens in this category. Already some Jews were in West Africa, 10 with the Nigeria Regiment and 11 with the Gold Coast Regiment, mainly as officers for these 'Native units'.⁴⁹ When Rhodesian forces took ship for East Africa in May 1940 the Jewish element at a Passover service, in which the Anglican chaplain gave a sermon, numbered 40.⁵⁰

Generally Rhodesian settlers were very keen 'to do their bit' and the Minister of Internal Affairs had to limit the numbers of volunteers in order to preserve essential services. Of course some prejudiced people were not satisfied: 'Observer' wrote in *The Gatooma Mail* on 30 April 1940 complaining that Jews were getting undue preference for military service and that the authorities were 'accepting an undue proportion, and so refusing others of our young folk who themselves are anxious to serve'.

Jewish enthusiasm for the war against Hitler was understandably greater than for that against the Kaiser. According to *East Africa and Rhodesia* on 16 November 1939:

The most generous of all East African and Rhodesian war offers of a personal character so far reported is that of Mr Maurice Kantor, well known in the Wankie district of Southern Rhodesia, who has offered the Government of that Colony the whole of his assets for administration for war purposes. They include a producing tin mine, a refrigeration plant, three motor lorries and other business interests.

As a professional man with impeccable pioneer credentials, Cecil Jacobs was an important figure in these years. He had gained the Military Medal in the First World War, and after the war he took an active part in the British Empire Service League and became Bulawayo Chairman from 1931 and 1938 and a national Vice-President during the war. He was therefore in a position to answer uninformed criticism and give the Jewish point of view to this powerful pressure group. In May 1940 he had to explain to members that refugees from enemy territories were unable to serve in the colours but nevertheless did not deserve incarceration. According to the Minister of Defence and Justice, Tredgold, there were 350 German males in the Colony at the outbreak of the War of whom 40 were interned. The remainder were mainly Jewish refugees who were allowed parole. Nevertheless wild propositions to intern these men along with naturalized Germans were made at the time of the British defeats in 1940. The ambiguous position of the refugees helped anti-Semitism during the war years and the calls for these men to serve and not get financial advant-

ages, along the lines Wane had foreseen, mounted. They were not halted until the formation of the Internment Camp Corps which allowed enemy aliens, which included many Rhodesians after Italy entered the war in June 1940, to put on uniform and guard internees and prisoners of war.

In August 1940 *The Rhodesian Monthly Review*, edited by Charles Olley, began a campaign on the issue of trading licences to foreigners. At that date call-ups had led to twenty-seven vacant stores in Salisbury alone and refugees were applying to take them over. Olley argued that they must preserve 'British trade for Britishers [in order to] retain Rhodesia for pukka British subjects', and that no licences should be given to aliens. The issue had come to a head in Bulawayo in June 1940 when the Town Council decided, by 6 votes to 2, to refuse the application of M. Kopenhagen, a resident on a temporary permit, to take over an established business. Kopenhagen's supporters argued that the idea of a temporary permit was to enable a person to establish himself in the Colony and Kopenhagen, who had studied law in Latvia and was engaged to be married, was a deserving case. The Council had earlier refused the appointment of a German refugee, W. Schay, as manager of African Sales Co. because the man was a 'German alien on parole'.⁵¹ Action in the courts by the Jewish community got this verdict removed, for they found that it was not the prerogative of the Council to refuse a man the ability to earn a living. In Kopenhagen's case he received a licence only after seven prominent Jews in Bulawayo, who could not very well be refused a licence, had formed a company with Kopenhagen as a director.

G.W. Young, the mayor, had the support of the Chamber of Commerce and the Ratepayers Association for his policy of reserving licences 'for Rhodesians'. In 1941 the Council again refused a licence to a refugee, this time to Bensil Posen. The Jewish leaders appealed to the Governor in Council against the decision and Huggins informed the Bulawayo Council that it had no legal grounds for interfering, since under the Defence Regulations the Minister of Finance had complete discretion in the matter.

The Prime Minister's statement led to an anti-alien outburst by mayor Young at a public meeting which was so extreme that the Bulawayo *Sunday News* of 19 January 1941 recorded that it was:

Causing deep concern and uneasiness amongst people who have had long residence or been born in Rhodesia. . . . 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 might be classified as Aliens are fighting in the Rhodesian forces. . . . men of Greek, Danish and Jewish parentage or birth to mention only a few.

It was then that one of the younger generation of Rhodesian-born Jews,

A.E. Abrahamson, let fly with an obvious but at this time original retort:

I think that the Jewish community of this town has borne too long the 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'.⁵²

At this point the mayor declared himself a member of the Jews and Gentiles Society, and the *Sunday News* closed the correspondence on the grounds that it had 'taken an undesirable racial aspect'.

The level of anti-Semitism did not decline during the war despite the fact that it was so obviously associated with enemy propaganda and was an obsession of the Nazi leadership. The Bulawayo Society of Jews and Gentiles under the Presidency of T.A.E. Holdengarde, an industrialist, with J.H. Bailey as Secretary, did some work to try and stop anti-Semitism; and it was supported by the Catholic Bishop and the Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, when the news of the terrible slaughter in Europe became known towards the end of 1942. However, anti-Semites ran an active campaign and were still given free rein in the press. On 4 April 1941 *The New Rhodesia* brought up the question of *Schechita* (Jewish ritual slaughtering of animals), which it called an 'extraordinarily primitive method'. The Revd J.H. Levine, Cohen's successor as Bulawayo minister, replied on 18 April that 'in these days it is the sport of many to make up-founded attacks on Jews' and expressed the hope that this publication 'would pay at least equal regard to the cruelties which are being perpetrated against human beings'.

The internment of Beamish led to an outcry and a high-powered Salisbury delegation waited on the Minister of Justice, Tredgold. This consisted of Olley, Captain Bertin, a United Party M.P. and Tredgold's eventual successor, and H. St Quinton, President of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce. Olley reported the interview in the October 1940 issue of his magazine, *Rhodesian Monthly Review*, and complained about the:

Throwing into the gaol of a perfect Englishman named 'Beamish' . . . for many years he has been telling people about the unfavourable influence of the Jews. . . . A committee of influential Salisbury men interviewed the Minister of Defence and asked for the release of 'Beamish', but the request was refused for the time being. . . . During the course of the discussion with the Minister the committee were told about these letters. The writer was present and frankly does not see anything wrong with them. Some have philosophical statements. . . . 'He would rather see South Africa a Republic than under the influence of the Jews'. Granted it is not very

complimentary to the Jews, but what is wrong with such a philosophical statement? . . . That is not decrying pukka Britishers or causing England to lose the war. Today 'Beamish' is in effect rotting in a gaol. An Englishman is an actively minded man because he said something about Jews. Metaphorically speaking; 'Has he not been thrown to the mob?' This man has never been charged with a crime, that is peculiar, isn't it? He has been put away; that's all, because he has been fighting a hard battle for Christians. But where is Mr Huggins? The Defender of the Faith?

Another example of the official latitude allowed to anti-Semitic opinions occurred when a Dr Blumenthal from South Africa, whose father was an old resident of Gwanda, wanted to join the Government Service. The Medical Director informed the Minister of Internal Affairs that he had no vacancies:

Nor, had we any, would I be anxious to employ any more practitioners of Jewish race. I personally have no particular animosity in regard to Jews, but as Head of the Medical Service I have to consider their usefulness to the Government and the reactions of the various communities whom they will be expected to serve.

As the Minister is aware, the bulk of the communities of this Colony will not accept a Government M.O. of Jewish race . . . Dr Liptz . . . was a most excellent Government M.O. . . . [but when] it was proposed to promote him to Fort Victoria, the Fort Victoria people protested vigorously, and as a result of their action Dr Liptz was not promoted and eventually left the service very disgruntled. . . . The public — particularly the women — have a definite innate dislike of Jewish medical practitioners which limits the usefulness of such men . . . Further unless Dr Blumenthal is coming up to act as a locum . . . his application is not likely to be received with approbation by the Medical Council.⁵³

Anti-Semitism survived the war and in June 1945 there was a further controversy about refugee and alien traders and licences. Despite all that these people had been through, G.H. Hackwill continued to pursue them and called for them to be returned to Germany. Olley, mayor of Salisbury from 1942 to 1944, supported this because these 'people did not fight for their own country nor for ours. They are what I call "run-aways" '; therefore they should be prohibited from acquiring property licences in post-war Rhodesia.⁵⁴ The result of this thinking was the Aliens Act of 1946 which was modelled on the South African Acts of 1937 and 1939. It stressed the importance of immigrants able to be 'readily assimilated with the European inhabitants'. It provided for the registration of aliens but allowed prohibited immigrants on temporary permits to use time spent in the forces or Internment Camp Corps towards gaining domicile. This Act also established a quota system for immigrants because of the fear that displaced persons from Europe might again flood the country. The post-war

immigration policy which lasted until the late 1950s was a logical culmination of the anti-Jewish agitation of the late 1930s. British citizens were to make up 90 per cent of all immigrants with an alien quota of 10 per cent. Moreover, in order that no single minority became powerfully established, citizens of one country could comprise no more than 10 per cent of the foreign quota or 1 per cent of all entries.

Rhodesian Jewry emerged from the war shocked but more united than ever before. The Holocaust in Europe had struck down communities as varied as Lithuania and Rhodes and now a sense of common destiny united Ashkenazi and Sephardi in their grief. The war also intensified the local Zionist commitment, for it brought home as nothing else could the need for an independent Jewish State. Among the young generation and those who had returned from the war there was a determination to take a more active role in national affairs and throw off their passive pre-war outlook, to take an active hand in determining their own destiny and the future of the Colony.

The wartime tragedy had etched a message that would live forever with the Jewish people and it will help to put this chapter into some perspective to chronicle the eclipse of one small community from which many Rhodesian Jews had come, that of Rhodes, as an example of the logical end of unbridled prejudice and hatred.

The Jewish community of Rhodes, lying off the coast of Anatolia, was the most ancient of these destroyed by the Nazis. It had first been mentioned in the Book of Maccabees around the year 140 B.C. When Benjamin of Tudela visited the island in 1166 he found 500 Jews there living under the rule of the Venetian Republic. The community survived the rule of the crusader Knights Hospitallers of St John who ruled the island from 1309 to 1522 after which date it fell under Turkish rule until 1912. In the sixteenth century the local community was enlarged by the immigration of several hundred Jews expelled from Burgos in Spain who were invited to settle on the island by the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. When Italian rule came in 1912 the Jewish community numbered around 4,000 persons. At first the Italian authorities were tolerant and aided the Jewish school and the establishment in 1927 of a Rabbinical College, serving much of the Levant. But, as has been seen, this policy changed drastically in 1938 when persecution started and 480 Jews of foreign birth were expelled. The remainder survived the war until the Italian surrender in 1943 after which the Germans occupied the island.

On 20 July 1944, S.S. troops rounded up and arrested the entire Jewish population of Rhodes numbering 1,700 persons. Only 42 Turkish subjects were saved by the Turkish consul. On the next day the Germans placed all

these defenceless people in the hold of a ship bound for Piraeus. On the journey a further 120 Jews were picked up from the small neighbouring island of Cos. During the six-day voyage 10 elderly people died. On arrival at Piraeus the community was transferred to the S.S. Prison in Athens during which time another 5 persons died from injuries received in beatings. On 3 August 1,660 persons were despatched in cattle trucks to a camp in Czechoslovakia. From there most went to the Auschwitz death-camp in Silesia where they arrived on 16 August, while the remainder went to Zitomir in the Ukraine. On arrival at Auschwitz, 255 young women and 370 young men were separated and sent to the *Arbeitslager*, the remaining elderly people and children went to the crematorium. During the rest of 1944 and 1945 the 625 slave labourers were diminished by death and scattered to other camps. By July 1945 a total of 150 survivors from the Rhodes Community had been found alive.⁵⁵ They alone had survived from the deliberate and well documented eradication plan devised by the Nazis.

This ancient community and those murdered are today remembered by the Rhodes Community Memorial Hall adjoining the Sephardi Synagogue in Salisbury.

CHAPTER 5

Into the Corridors of Power

The sense of isolation and vulnerability which had afflicted Rhodesian Jewry during the war years found expression in attempts to gain greater communal unity and to establish formal representative organizations. Thus in 1943 the Rhodesian Zionist Council and the Council of Rhodesian Jewry (later renamed The Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies) were established to represent the communities of both Rhodesias but with links with parent organizations in South Africa. As was shown in the previous chapter, the War did not serve to quell all anti-Semitic feeling, for it engendered a greater and more exclusive British patriotism. The Palestine imbroglio also heightened anti-Jewish feeling in the years before 1948 and this was reflected in the press when Irgun terrorists fought the British Forces in the mandated territory. As a result of this and Rhodesian Jewry's keen advocacy of Zionism there was an attempted arson attack on the Bulawayo Synagogue in 1947 and two local Zionist leaders, Samuel Rabinovitz and S. Gotz, were declared prohibited immigrants by the South African authorities. There was also a round-robin petition against Cecil Jacobs to try and force his resignation as President of the British Empire Service League since he was also President of the Council for Rhodesian Jewry and had presided at a Zionist protest meeting over the *Exodus* incident. Hugh Beadle, the Minister of Justice, called Jewish leaders to a secret meeting to warn of the dangers of supporting terrorism as a political weapon but came out of it 'quite satisfied Zionism was not linked with terrorism' in Rhodesia.¹ It would appear that such matters were soon forgotten by politicians as both Beadle and Colin Steyn, the South African Minister who had imposed the Prohibited Immigrant decrees, attended the first anniversary celebrations of the State of Israel in Bulawayo in 1949. This meeting was chaired by A.E. Abrahamson, with Samuel Rabinovitz and Cecil Jacobs on the platform, in the Jewish Guild Hall; there was an overflow of 600 people standing in the streets who followed the proceedings through loudspeakers. This was the biggest gathering of Jews ever to take place in Rhodesia and almost every member of the Bulawayo community

attended: it was a happy ending to a period of difficulties and marked a new phase of Jewish self-confidence.

Unlike most Western countries, Rhodesia did not take a leftward step in politics after the War. In direct contrast to Britain, the Labour Party in Rhodesia lost ground at the 1946 General Election, as did the ruling United Party which formed a minority Government until 1948. The new powerful right-wing force was the Liberal Party which wanted to end controls over the economy and introduce more free enterprise. It advocated lower taxation, segregation and a stricter Native policy, and opposed further nationalization and amalgamation with Northern Rhodesia. In the mid-1930s the call had gone out for more Rhodesian Jews to involve themselves in public life and so be able to influence people and policies. In the 1935 and 1939 elections Jewish involvement at branch level in the United Party became noticeable and S.S. Grossberg, a Bulawayo wholesaler, became a member of the National Executive of the ruling party. However, the only Jewish candidates in the 1946 General Election were Max Danziger and Mrs Muriel Rosin who were both unsuccessful U.P. candidates. At the 1948 election, which saw another triumph for Huggins, there were no Jewish candidates for any party. One interesting feature that contrasts with the position in Australia and Britain is the fact that few Jews joined the local Labour Party. This is explained partly by the dearth of local intellectuals, due to Rhodesian Jewry's much more overwhelming involvement in commercial pursuits, and partly by the nature of the Rhodesia Labour Party which was narrowly concerned with defending the position of the White artisan. Thus it was that Governor Tait reported to London in February 1946 that the Liberal Party had 'more head than tail and was being handicapped by too many Jews joining it'.²

The 1946 Aliens Act did not finally end the alien question since in 1948 Olley again raised it with regard to local elections. He objected to the eighteen aliens, German Jews, Italians and Greeks, on the municipal voters' roll in Salisbury. Olley wished them to prove that they were British subjects but the Council took a legal opinion and found there was 'no justification for expunging names of aliens from the voters' roll'.³ Olley objected to Mrs Maasdorp, a leader of the liberal wing of the local Labour Party, helping such people. According to the former mayor in 'my submission it is not only illegal but incorrect to encourage Aliens to take part in telling Britishers how to run this city'.⁴ With such attitudes prevalent and the killing of British soldiers by Jews in Palestine it is not surprising that Jews kept a low profile in the 1948 election.

Yet there were forces at work which were drastically to change this situation and launch the Jewish community into the ruling establishment

within a decade. The prime factor was economics. The War had isolated Rhodesia from Britain and broken the colonial pattern of its economy. It began to develop a manufacturing capacity and supply itself with many of the goods and services which it had previously imported. Meanwhile Rhodesia's primary products such as tobacco, beef, asbestos, and chrome which had been badly affected by the low commodity prices of the inter-war years suddenly became important dollar-savers for the Sterling Area. For the first time in its history the Colony had assured markets and high prices for its produce.

In 1946 Rhodesia's exports were worth £18 million and in 1952 £54 million, when tobacco production alone was valued at £20 million. The War also brought about the development of the internal market with the entry of thousands of air force personnel under the Imperial Air Training Scheme, as well as of prisoners of war, enemy internees, and displaced persons. Using 1938 as a base year the indices of the volume of production in agriculture had reached 268 and in manufacturing 476 by 1952. At the same time the permanent European population increased substantially, from 69,000 in 1941 to 135,000 in 1951. The more liberal post-war immigration policy allowed 17,000 newcomers to enter in 1948 and the flow had to be restricted so that the backlog in housing and facilities could be made up. The result was a much stimulated economy and greater urbanization. Prosperity was such that in 1948, in sharp contrast to austerity-ridden Britain, only butter and petrol were rationed in Rhodesia.

The number of Africans in employment and their real wages also began to rise and for the first time a substantial domestic market for consumer goods arose. The Jewish traders were in a favourable position to exploit this situation since they were well-established in the country, had a good knowledge of African tastes and demands, and already possessed the necessary personal qualities for entrepreneurship. In Bulawayo they quickly became prominent in the textile and furniture manufacturing industries. Others established factories for the manufacture of confectionery, paper and metals (the last-mentioned saw the very successful Treger enterprise). A typical example of the move from trading to industry is provided by H. Margolis & Co. of Inyazura. Harry Margolis, an immigrant from Lithuania, had established a very successful trading concern in the Makoni District from his base at Inyazura which was merely a railway siding when he first settled there. His business developed rapidly in these years, from the collection of crops into manufacturing them under the name of Rhodesian Industries. With Maurice Horowitz and Boris Anolick he began to produce vegetable oils, candles, soap and margarine, in which field his main rivals were the Express Nut Oil and Soap Co. founded in the 1930s by

the Pichanick family of Salisbury, and the Levins' United Soap and Chemical Works in Bulawayo.

In trade itself new opportunities arose and in place of static markets and intense competition, the new situation was one of expanding demand and a seller's market with customers chasing goods in short supply. The close personal and family links between the new breed of local entrepreneurs and the traders worked for the benefit of producer and distributor, and ultimately consumer, since those goods which were produced were more likely to suit local conditions and tastes than the imported articles. Local Jews were inevitably more favourably placed than the new immigrants or potential non-White competitors. In general Jews moved out of small-scale distribution in the rural areas and this was reflected in census data.

We noted that in 1931 the Jewish population outside the two main centres was 43 per cent of the total but in the following years this proportion fell rapidly so that it was only 15 per cent in 1951 and a mere 7 per cent in 1969. With the old source communities in the Baltic States and Rhodes annihilated as a result of the War, the indentureship system of immigration ended. Post-war Jewish immigration then began to follow the general European pattern of drawing immigrants from Britain and South Africa for the most part. The Jewish populations of these countries were similar to the well-educated and acculturated second generation of Rhodesian Jews and so were easily absorbed into the local community, helping to accelerate the tendency towards occupational and social mobility among Rhodesian Jewry.

Among the post-war European immigrants before Federation in 1953 those from South Africa were the majority. Many British South Africans saw a better future for themselves in Central Africa than in an Afrikaner Nationalist-dominated Union after 1948; and young South African Jewish businessmen and professionals had even more reason to emigrate than other English-speakers, since the National Party had spoken of a 'Jewish problem' and toyed with the idea of ethnic quotas in occupations. Economic factors were also important, because it was necessary to have capital of £1,500 to enter Rhodesia, or an assured job worth £500 a year, both of which conditions were likely to be easier for South Africans than others except those selected for assisted passages from Britain. Most of the Jewish immigrants thus consisted of professionals, entrepreneurs and employees of expanding South African firms. As a result of this movement the Jewish population rose from 3,418 in 1946 to 4,760 in 1951 — an average annual increase of 7.4 per cent. This rate of increase, however, was insufficient to maintain the Jewish proportion in what was now a fast

growing European population, and the Jewish percentage thus fell from 4 to 3.5 per cent during these five years.

The War had affected the social mobility of Rhodesian Jews because after it the community could boast a crop of Captains, Majors, Squadron Leaders and a fine array of military decorations sufficient to evoke the respect, if not warm the heart, of the British colonial elite. In addition, the Jewish community now consisted of what were regarded as 'old Rhodesian families' which were favourably contrasted with the post-war settlers. The transformation which occurred is typified by the case of Max Greenspan. Despite serving with Murray's Column in German East Africa during the First World War, he and his brother Louis were regarded as troublesome 'Foreign Jew traders'⁵ by the authorities in Matabeleland, where they traded cattle in the inter-war period. After the Second World War, Max was transformed into Captain Greenspan, M.B.E., a respected old Rhodesian and local character who was treated with some regard by Government officials.

In the light of the Jewish involvement in commerce and industry and the community's bias towards settlement in Bulawayo, it is not surprising that Jews were prominent in moves to effect closer relations with Northern Rhodesia. The Jewish population gave disproportionate support to the United Central Africa Association and later the Federal Party, since commerce and industry, and the Bulawayo entrepot, had much to gain from closer links with Northern Rhodesia with its flourishing copper mines. The arguments for Federation centred around the economic opportunities it offered both Africans and Europeans. Poor and undeveloped Nyasaland, the other northern partner of the Colony, was a much less attractive catch than Northern Rhodesia whose Copperbelt resources could be harnessed for the expansion of the Southern Rhodesian economy; but the British Government refused to consider any links between the two Rhodesias unless the poor relation that she was anxious to dispose of was also included.

In the political sphere the benefits for the peoples of the Colony also appeared desirable. Federation suggested security for the settlers and a barrier to Afrikaner penetration while the oppressed Africans of Southern Rhodesia had everything to gain from the avowed aim of partnership between the races and gradual evolution to an integrated state. The Africans in the two northern protectorates had greater reason to suspect the extension of White settler power and Southern Rhodesian segregationist influences to their countries, and feared any alteration in their status as Protected Persons. This suspicion and fear was never overcome and was to be the undoing of the federal experiment. From the Jewish viewpoint, however, the Federation offered the ideal *via media* for Central Africa. It offered gradual political and social evolution along with rapid economic

growth. The social and cultural autonomy promised to ethnic groups appealed to Jews especially, since this went hand in hand with equal access to the political and economic spheres. A modernizing reformist state which adopted a *laissez-faire* approach to the economy and rejected the two extremes of apartheid and Africanization was the Federal model. The Jewish population of Central Africa gave much support and effort to the ideal of partnership and the 'fancy franchises' which formed the basis of the Federal experiment during the decade 1953–63, and it was probably it more than any other group that was most shocked and disappointed by the failure of multiracialism.

The early years of Federation justified all the hopes that had been placed in it and the new State had the highest growth rate in the world. After the immigration lull of the early 1950s a new inflow began and reached a peak in 1956 when there were over 18,000 immigrants into the Colony. Immigration was such that by 1961 only 14.5 per cent of the resident European population was born in the country. The enlarged markets which resulted yielded the expected economic dividends and the average standard of living of members of the Jewish community quickly became one of the highest in the world. Apart from commerce and industry considerable profits were made from property investments since land and urban property which had been bought very cheaply before the War now realized unthought-of returns to established families.

The investment during Federation tended to be on a larger scale than that of the 1940s and the greater part was provided by the large international firms which brought, among other industries, cigarette manufacturing, steel works, motor car assembly and light engineering. Salisbury was now capital of an incipient Dominion and attracted the African headquarters and supply depots of many British-based concerns. Both Salisbury and Bulawayo took on the appearance of slick American cities and lost all affinity with pioneer bush settlements. This architectural change merely reflected the growing outwardness, sophistication and cosmopolitanism which began to affect Rhodesia's White population. The 1950s saw the entry of many professional men, such as doctors, architects, engineers, as well as technicians and managers of international corporations. On the whole they were a better educated and older group than the immediate post-war immigrants. This period was marked by an economic optimism of Victorian intensity which produced imaginative new development projects like the Kariba Dam, which harnessed the mighty Zambezi River in 1959, and the Sabi-Limpopo Development Scheme whose large-scale irrigation works allowed the utilization of a remote but potentially rich agricultural area for sugar and citrus production.

Demographic indices show a marked acculturation by the Jewish population to the general European norms in this period. By the 1950s the Jewish sex ratio had equalized and the birth rate had risen markedly so that the natural increase of the Jewish population was 1.4 per cent a year. In Southern Rhodesia the number of Jews rose from 5,718 in 1956 to 7,055 in 1961 when there were another 1,000 Jews in the two northern territories of the Federation. Thus in the fifteen years following the War the Jewish population of Rhodesia had doubled — a fact which suggests that the general social climate was favourable to its development and aspirations.

The key to post-war Rhodesian economic expansion was the virginia tobacco crop of Mashonaland and the 3,000 European flue-growers. Gone was the pre-war old Rhodesian way of life of 'a paternalistic complacent and rural aristocracy, with little more than a subsistence economy'.⁶ An indirect but important part in the expansion of the tobacco industry was played by Maurice Goldberg of Odzi. He was among that group of Rhodesian servicemen who were seriously concerned about post-war planning and considered that they could act as an important pressure group especially on land and farming problems. As Chairman of the Southern Rhodesia Armoured Car Regiment Farmers' Association and later of the Southern Rhodesia Forces Farmers' Association, Maurice worked in the field in the Middle East and Italy to aid the settlement and rehabilitation of soldiers after the War. The Southern Rhodesia representative of the organization from 1944 was Bennie Goldberg. The 300 members of the Association were brought into the 'earn and learn' scheme by which trainees worked on Crown land under skilled farm managers. A correspondent in *Vuka*, the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union magazine, wrote in November 1944 that the Government should consult Maurice because:

The knowledge which Goldberg possesses of practically every one of the 300 members of the association is most valuable, and the fact that he is a practical and successful farmer himself who requires no rehabilitation and who is going to take several learner-farmers on to his land for their training period, should add to his usefulness.

The result of this work was the highly successful soldier-settler scheme, one of the main monuments of which was the flourishing European farming area of Karoi. The success of post-war White farming was due to men like Maurice Goldberg who had the foresight to recognize that tobacco would be the secret to farming success in post-war Rhodesia.

Another Jewish contribution to the tobacco industry during these years was the Rhodesia Tobacco Science Institute built and endowed in 1963 by Elia Susman. Susman was one of the leading leaf merchants in the world and played a great part in developing the marketing side of the industry.

He also endowed a tobacco research fellowship at the University College in Salisbury

Probably the largest privately run tobacco farm in the Colony was the 25,000 acre Goldberg Brothers estate at Odzi. This estate grew 700 acres of tobacco in 1952 and by 1958 had eleven European section managers and assistants and produced over a million pounds of leaf. Eldest brother Mick started tobacco production there in 1926 and for twenty-four years one or other of the family was on the Council of the Rhodesia Tobacco Association.

Economic success stories in this period are legion. One of the most spectacular was that of the Greenspan Brothers. They had struggled as itinerant cattle dealers for many years and had run country stores. Due to war service and other problems they had gone bankrupt during the War, but within a short period they managed to rehabilitate themselves, mostly through astute work in the timber-cutting industry. They then successfully tendered for Northern Rhodesia Government meat contracts and by the 1960s their Anglo-Rhodesian ranches owned over 600,000 acres of land and were second only to Liebig's as suppliers of cattle to the Cold Storage Commission. Mick Goldberg of Odzi was another successful cattleman and a member of the National Cattle Committee. He built up a fine herd of Afrikaners on Leigh Ranch. Other established ranchers like D.A. Blumberg and I. Kollenberg also improved their position at this time. Leo Levy, who had arrived from Lithuania in 1925, improved his marginal position as a rancher and cattle buyer of the 1930s. In 1956 he became a member of the Cold Storage Commission, and in 1959 received a C.B.E. for his services to the cattle industry. Levy built up a considerable business empire in the post-war period and had a number of directorships in important companies in addition to being Chairman of United Portland Cement and Managing Director of Gwelo Land Minerals.

The rapid change in the Jewish occupational and economic position was marked by a movement out of service industry and back into the more socially acceptable and lucrative sphere of primary production. This change was remarked upon by Bennie Goldstein, a Territorial M.P. in 1958: 'Jews have gone out of trade, particularly of the country type, and are now prominent in industry. There is also a tendency for Jews to interest themselves in farming, particularly ranching.'⁷ This attempt to diversify their operations was especially noticeable among Bulawayo businessmen who bought land and acquired ranching interests on a significant scale.

Economic development brought a boom in the building industry which gave a fillip to local architects and engineers. The building business of Louis and Barney Joelson from Johannesburg, which had been established

in a small way in 1931, is one example. In the post-war years this rapidly expanded into all fields of construction and demonstrates the type of opportunity that established local firms enjoyed.

In the urban areas the Jewish involvement in commerce remained paramount but the ranks of the professionals were filled every year as young Rhodesian Jews graduated from South Africa and British universities. Jews also had a large representation in the flourishing insurance and commercial agencies. Samuel Rabinovitz, the Zionist leader, of Union Agencies in Bulawayo, was the leader in this field. Other favourite Jewish occupations were electrical retailing, cycle shops and garages. Philip Taub, who had left Eastern Europe in 1920 and after some years in the Congo and Northern Rhodesia settled in Bulawayo in 1935, now became prominent in the Bulawayo motor industry and the Motor Traders' Association as well as in Jewish communal life.

This transformation which overtook Rhodesian Jewry was not confined to the economic and demographic spheres. The community acculturated to the European norm socially and politically. We have noted that the Federal establishment's respectable middle-class liberalism, economic optimism and confident expansionism in all fields was well attuned to the aspirations of the increasingly professional and managerial Jewish population; and nowhere was this more evident than in politics.

The political scene in Rhodesia always reflected the economic and social power structure of the country. The most obvious example of this was the maintenance of power by the White minority and the total exclusion of Africans from political power and a meaningful parliamentary role. In terms of parliamentary representation White Rhodesia was a '*herrenvolk* democracy' with a legislature keenly reflecting the interests and ideas of the electorate. In the pre-war years the rural aristocracy of Matabeleland cattle ranchers, Mazoe Valley maize farmers and Midlands miners tended to dominate the political process, but this changed in the post-war period when power shifted to the urban centres of Salisbury and Bulawayo and to industrialists, professionals and Mashonaland tobacco planters.

At the 1952 Congress of the Rhodesian Board of Deputies in his executive report the President, H.E. Lazarus, had suggested that:

Certain political trends were dangerous to them as Jews, and he would urge the communities very strongly to take an intelligent and active interest in public affairs, not as Jews, but as individuals. He urged them to ensure that they were on the voters' registers and to become naturalised if they were not citizens.⁸

This call and the obvious growth in Jewish influence resulted in the first

practising Jews being returned for the Federal and Territorial Assemblies in the 1953 elections. It was perhaps no coincidence that they were all actively identified with the community and had experience in Jewish organizations.

A.E. Abrahamson was returned unopposed for the United Rhodesia Party led by the new Prime Minister, Garfield Todd, who had succeeded the long-serving Sir Godfrey Huggins on his move into the Federal sphere. Todd was anxious to bring young men into Parliament; and Abrahamson seemed an excellent example of the desired new type of politician, in that he was Rhodesian-born and university educated, had served in the Rhodesian Forces and was prominent in the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries and the Federation of Rhodesian Industries, as well as in the Jewish community, and still only 31 years old. Abrahamson was chosen for the wealthy suburban constituency of Bulawayo East which included the residential districts of Kumalo and Suburbs. In fact he obtained the U.R.P. nomination over twelve other potential candidates including Col. Newman and Veats, the former editor of *The Bulawayo Chronicle*.

Another successful U.R.P. candidate was Mrs Muriel Rosin. She was the only woman member of the Southern Rhodesia Assembly at this time and had the same distinction later in the Federal house. In the patriarchal and male-dominated Rhodesian White society women politicians have been few and seldom popular but Mrs Rosin appeared to have the right qualifications for success. She was born in London, had attended finishing school in Switzerland, and was the wife of a prominent surgeon, and had played a major role in the local women's and service organizations, gaining an M.B.E. for wartime services. She had the necessary social respectability that Rhodesian electors demanded and narrowly defeated a male opponent who stood as an Independent in the Marimba seat; she thus became the second woman elected to the Rhodesian legislature.

The other successful Jewish candidate was Ben Baron, a local solicitor, who also had the necessary social qualifications for candidature, since he was Bulawayo-born and educated at Milton School and Rhodes University. He easily won the Bulawayo District seat for the U.R.P., trouncing a Confederate Party opponent.

The only anti-Semitic incidents in this campaign were an article in the December issue of the Confederate Party organ *The Citizen*, which claimed that Mrs Rosin 'was a woman who is identified with a particular section of the community', and the defacement of some of her election posters with the word 'Zionist'. This is not so unexpected, for in November 1953 the former Irgun leader, Menachem Begin, visited the Colony and this had obviously opened old wounds.

At this time it appeared as though the Federal field would be the most important political arena and Territorial politics only a junior adjunct. The only Jewish candidate for the Federal Assembly was B.D. Goldberg of Odzi whose initials stood for the politically evocative names of Benjamin Disraeli. Apart from this asset he had the requisite qualifications for acceptance. He was born in Dublin and arrived in Rhodesia as a child where he attended the Salisbury Boys' High School. After winning a Beit Scholarship to the University of Cape Town where he read Law, Goldberg returned to practise as a solicitor in Umtali. For ten years from 1936 he was Chairman of the Umtali Civic Association. He went on to serve in the Eastern Districts Development and Publicity Association and the Federation of Regional Development Associations. His other interests included Rotary, the Territorials, the Turf Club and cricket.

One important factor in Bennie's adoption was a Federal Party candidate was his work as Rotary President for the Fairbridge memorial which was opened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at Umtali in July 1953. Goldberg was a member of an important local farming family which, at the request of the Cecil family who owned the Transau Estate, acted as directors of their property. With all these advantages it was no surprise that he convincingly beat his Confederate Party opponent, Brigadier Andrew Skeen (who later became a Rhodesian Front M.P. and won a small place in history as Rhodesia's High Commissioner in London at the time of U.D.I.). It is apparent that all these Jewish M.P.s were respectable public-spirited people in the British mould and very different from the typical Jewish resident of Rhodesia twenty years earlier.

The early success of Federation under Huggins's guidance was apparent in economic terms. Between 1954 and 1957 the gross domestic product of Southern Rhodesia rose from £168 to £241 millions and G.N.P. per head from £70 to £90. European immigration into the Federal State in 1956 was 26,000.

In 1956, however, political interest began to centre on a number of issues connected with the racial question and particularly on the constitutional review promised after seven years. From 1957 the Federal and Territorial franchise question began to dominate politics and from that date the vote and constitution-making became a Rhodesian obsession, as first the Federation and later the Colony tried to gain independence from a British Government which sought to guarantee future political evolution for the African majority.

In November 1956 Sir Roy Welensky, the Northern Rhodesian settlers' leader, became Prime Minister of the Federation in succession to Huggins who retired and received a peerage as Viscount Malvern. In the next six

years Welensky became a Rhodesian folk hero in succession to Rhodes, Jameson, Coghlan and Huggins. His popularity and charisma was due to the same mixture of bluntness, bluster, appeal to loyalty and traditional values, and calls for independence that were Ian Smith's attraction later. It appears to have been a characteristic of White Rhodesians that they need to create and identify with a 'hero-leader', preferably a man who suited their self-image and exploited their love-hate relationship with Britain.

The Welensky real-life fairy tale is well known: from bare-foot (or rather 'bare-arsed' in the Makabusi⁹) to Her Majesty's Privy Council. Roy's father, Michael, appeared as the archetypal drifter in Chapter 1. After rudimentary schooling in Salisbury, where his father ran an hotel and in hard times worked for the Hebrew Congregation, Roy began his working career at Jewish-owned stores first in Salisbury and then at Glendale. Welensky eventually joined Rhodesia Railways and became an engine driver. For a time he pursued a boxing career finally settling in Broken Hill. Welensky immersed himself in the work of the railway union and then the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party whose leader he became during the Second World War. After the War he agitated for some kind of association between the two Rhodesias in order to strengthen the position of the Whites in the northern protectorate. Self-educated, a good orator, intensely loyal to the Crown, this radical son of a Lithuanian Jew was the unusual choice of Huggins, the public-school educated English surgeon, as his successor to lead the British Imperial cause in Central Africa.

Welensky's Jewish origins have been questioned on occasion, but although his mother was Afrikaans there is no doubt that she was converted to Judaism. His links with the Jewish community as such, and with Judaism, were at certain times tenuous but on 5 December 1958 he was happy to tell the London *Jewish Chronicle*: 'I am one of those people who never deny their Jewish origin; it has certainly not prevented me from becoming Prime Minister'. There is no doubt that Welensky's assumption of office added further to the confidence of Rhodesian Jewry and their sense of identification with the country and the Federal cause. Just after Welensky's assumption of office the Suez Crisis broke out and in contrast to the situation a decade before, Zionist and British interests appeared to coincide in their opposition to the Egyptian dictator. It was of some significance that of the Commonwealth leaders only Sir Robert Menzies and Welensky gave unqualified support to Anthony Eden and the Anglo-French action. Moshe Dayan's military triumphs in the Sinai Campaign also served to swell the pride of local Jews, particularly when the General visited Rhodesia during September 1957 to address some of the largest Jewish meetings ever seen in the country.

When Sir Roy Welensky formed his first Government in November 1956, Bennie Goldberg was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Home Affairs with special responsibility for immigration. Goldberg had some imaginative ideas on the subject of European immigration and concentrated on 'axed' British servicemen and persons from small towns who, he considered, would not find the lack of amenities in Africa as trying as would people from large cities. He continued the traditional immigration policy which regarded European settlers as an important input of skills and capital and he also maintained the national quotas with the bias towards White British Commonwealth settlers. Under his guidance White immigration rose rapidly and he spent over £375,000 a year on immigration services. The general consensus was that he was a success and the newspapers agreed, describing him as 'energetic and capable' in the work of his portfolio.¹⁰

At the Federal General Election of November 1958 Goldberg was nominated for Umfali Town and easily beat a Dominion Party opponent in a seat which, like his former one, contained only a handful of Jewish voters. In the new Government following upon the U.F.P. success, he was given the important cabinet post of Minister of Health and Education. Since African education was a Territorial concern under the constitution, the Education Ministry dealt only with the 70,000 White children. On the other hand, Health was the only major ministry with direct contact with the African population and given the cultural outlook and political suspicions of the majority group it was a very sensitive sphere.

Happily Goldberg was more than capable of handling these delicate matters which included the segregation issue. His two sisters, Rachel and Sarah, had been among Rhodesia's first locally-trained State Registered Nurses, and Sarah was for many years a Sister Tutor and local examiner for the nurses' and attendants' examinations. Thus within his family he could call on professional and local expertise in health education in a multiracial society where at this time a majority of the inhabitants first turned to their local *nganga* and resorted to 'White man's medicine' only if traditional methods were unable to effect a cure.

The Federal Health Ministry concentrated on the fight against tuberculosis by establishing new African hospitals and an advisory committee. Other prime objectives were the control of malaria and bilharzia. In May 1960 Goldberg addressed the World Health Organization in Geneva on his aims and the health situation in the Federation. In 1960 he formulated plans for a multiracial teaching hospital on the university site in Salisbury and to do this stopped the planned extension of the European hospital. This action was acclaimed in a letter to *The Times* on 15 July 1960 by A.P.

Thomson and Lord Cohen of Birkenhead who called it a 'calculated decision' for racial partnership. This decision had to be defended at the U.F.P. Party Congress in 1961 where Goldberg outlined his dream for Salisbury to become the greatest medical-training centre in Africa. It was an issue which struck at the core of the settler racial thinking, since theoretically it involved the treatment of White women by Black doctors. In pursuit of his ideal in November 1961 Goldberg went to New York where he was successful in obtaining the support of the Rockefeller Foundation for the medical school.

By 1960 Goldberg's department had become the biggest spender in the Government, expanding over £18 million a year in revenue and capital funds. But it was at this stage that politics began to further invade the health field; for in 1961 the Monckton Commission Report recommended that in the suggested constitutional changes health and European education should become Territorial responsibilities, and this in turn led to uncertainty and difficulties in recruitment. In Nyasaland African Nationalist agitators launched a short-sighted and callous, but nevertheless politically astute, campaign against the Federal Health Ministry's vaccination programme, as part of their overall political strategy, and this led Goldberg to clash with the Nyasaland nationalist leader, Hastings Banda, who was himself a qualified doctor.

Faced by recruitment problems because of the political disturbances and uncertainty after 1959, Goldberg decided to import foreign doctors and dentists for the Health Service. This went in the face of the tradition of recognition solely of British Commonwealth qualifications in the medical field, a policy which had been steadfastly maintained in order to exclude Central European Jews in the 1930s. By August 1961, despite serious opposition from local Boards, Goldberg had pushed through an Act recognizing Scandinavian, Benelux, German, Italian and Swiss dental and medical qualifications.

Other successes included the graduation in 1962 of the first African State Registered Nurses to be trained in the Federation, the entry of African students to the Salisbury Polytechnic, and the unanimous U.F.P. Congress decision of 1962 for multiracial private schools. In September 1961 the decision was made to introduce the Associated Examining Board Certificate of Education into the Federation from November 1963 to replace the old Cambridge Certificate. Undoubtedly, as the *Northern News* claimed on 14 August 1961, Goldberg was the 'hardest worked man in the government'; but according to John Gaunt, the future Rhodesian Front official, then living in Northern Rhodesia, Goldberg's ministries were a 'constant source of trouble. Hardly a week went by . . . without patients, or teachers, or parents being in an uproar.'¹¹

The troubles of the U.F.P. Government increased in the early 1960s and they became the whipping boys for both Northern and Southern Rhodesian Europeans, the Africans, the British media, and eventually Macmillan's Conservative Government. Well-meaning men like Welensky and Goldberg were too conservative for the Africans, the metropolitan politicians and the press, but too liberal for a growing number of White settlers. In the general election of April 1962 the U.F.P. was unopposed in 38 of the 59 elected seats in the Federal House and what had been planned as a show of strength for the Federalists became a farce. Following this election Welensky reformed his cabinet and Goldberg lost the education portfolio but remained Minister of Health. It was obvious that time was running out for the Federation and Goldberg, unlike some others, realized that this was so and that Southern Rhodesia Territorial politics would now be the crucial sphere. He did much to aid his old friend and former client, Sir Edgar Whitehead, the U.F.P. Prime Minister of the colony, in trying to hold the tide against the twin threats of African nationalism and a revitalized and determined right-wing European opposition. In October 1962 Goldberg went on a 'Tell the People' campaign through the African Reserves of Mashonaland as part of Whitehead's 'Build a Nation' campaign and in December he helped in Umtali at the election. Nevertheless time had also run out for the Territorial U.F.P. and its ideas, for it was unexpectedly beaten by the new Rhodesian Front Party led by Winston Field. This occurred despite a 'fancy franchise' involving two electoral rolls which guaranteed Africans parliamentary representation for the first time, because the White electoral majority had lost confidence in Whitehead and the U.F.P. and preferred the White supremacist policies and arguments of the R.F.

The Federation was finally dissolved at the end of 1963 but before then Goldberg was able to push on with plans for the new university medical school (later renamed the Godfrey Huggins School of Medicine) and his friend Lord Salisbury laid the foundation stone in April 1963. This work came to fruition in November 1968 when the first group of doctors, who included persons of all races, graduated with University of Birmingham degrees. Another surprising monument of Goldberg's enthusiasm and idealism was the concept of a multiracial teaching hospital which, despite all the R.F. attempts to sabotage it, emerged as part of the new Andrew Fleming Hospital in Salisbury in 1974. It is probable that among the Federal politicians Goldberg was the one whose work had the most lasting effect on the peoples of Central Africa. As politicians the Federal M.P.s were outdated in their paternalist ideas and methods and can be regarded as failures, yet it has been said of Bennie Goldberg that 'he is known as an

essentially good man with more than a touch of human kindness in him'.¹² It is perhaps the most flattering remark which could be applied to any person, particularly a politician.

The other Jew to obtain ministerial office in the federal decade was A.E. Abrahamson. He was a much more modern politician than the paternalistic and easy-going Goldberg. His sharp wits and manner reflected the younger generation of Rhodesian Jews and the industrial and business attitudes of Bulawayo as much as Goldberg reflected the stability and conservatism of the country solicitor and landowner. Abrahamson had reached important communal offices at a very young age and in 1960 at the Board of Deputies Congress he remarked that he had had a 'good apprenticeship in Jewish organisations for which he was duly grateful'.¹³ His political interests were also humanitarian and social like Goldberg's and he was considered a local expert on industrial relations. In January 1958 he was appointed Minister of the Treasury and Local Government in the caretaker Government at the time of the cabinet rebellion when senior ministers ousted Garfield Todd for supposedly being too liberal with Africans and too autocratic with colleagues. Abrahamson supported Todd in the crisis but did not follow him into the political wilderness, as Ben Baron did, or join Todd's newly-reconstituted United Rhodesia Party.

In the general Election of June 1958 the new U.F.P. leader Sir Edgar Whitehead won only a narrow victory over the Dominion Party but Abrahamson won the Bulawayo East seat, beating Dominion Party's candidate, Solly Jossel, a fellow Jew, and the U.R.P. candidate, with the largest majority in the country. He was then appointed the Southern Rhodesia Minister of Labour, Social Welfare and Housing, a post he held until the end of 1962.

The rapid industrialization and urbanization which had taken place since the War had led to serious social and housing problems for the new African population of town dwellers and Abrahamson's Ministry was closely involved in attempting to solve these. To deal with these problems Abrahamson considered it essential to establish the greatest possible contact with African opinion. He was the first Cabinet Minister (and the only one, so far) to successfully address public meetings in the African townships and with his officials received African delegations who wished to air grievances. He was in the forefront of moves to alter and repeal the Land Apportionment Act which institutionalized racial segregation and made urban Africans temporary residents in the towns and prevented them from bringing in their families or acquiring freehold property. His biggest concerns were with African and Coloured welfare, African homeownership and the labour laws. It was these allied problems of social

reform and adaptation that Abrahamson regarded as 'the biggest problem' facing Rhodesia. In a newspaper interview in 1969 he admitted during these years his primary concern had been that

of adapting the urban African modern society. . . . The African is the same as any other worker and has the same aspirations such as security of employment, a home, education for his children. But the first attempt to approach his problem of adaptation was made during my ministry and formed the whole basis of my policy.¹

Low-cost housing for Africans was a major priority and some 16,000 houses were built in the years 1958 - 62. Abrahamson's greatest success, however, was the reform of industrial relations in the country which were especially important since they were bound up with the racial question. During his period of office Africans first became eligible to undergo apprenticeships for skilled trades. Combinations of African workers were now permitted and so strikes also became legal. This led to the first multi-racial trade unions being established; and, as a consequence of his labour policy, jobs on the Rhodesia Railways hitherto reserved for Whites were opened to all races on merit and the Public Services Act was amended so that Africans became eligible for admission to the Civil Service. Thus it is not surprising to learn that Abrahamson in 1962 was the first Rhodesian Minister of Labour invited to address the I.L.O. in Geneva. So thorough were the reforms in this sphere that succeeding Rhodesian Front governments were unable to turn the clock back on many key issues. Abe Abrahamson's youth (he was only forty in 1962), competence and vision were such that it appeared that he might have reached the highest political office if the U.F.P. had returned to power in 1962, since for a time he was deputy leader to Whitehead and had played an important part in the Federal Review Conference of 1960 and the framing of the Southern Rhodesian Constitution of 1961.

The Southern Rhodesia legislature of 1958 - 62 was the high point in Jewish political representation. Jewish support for the U.F.P. maximized the community's representation in much the same way as the Jewish communities of the U.S.A. and Britain maximized their political representation in these years through support for the Democratic and Labour Parties respectively. At the 1958 Territorial election there were eight self-confessed Jewish candidates and interestingly only J.H. Krikler, a Shabani businessman, stood, in Bulawayo Central, for Todd's liberal U.R.P., while three Jews, Solly Jossel, Louis Gelman and Ahrn Palley, stood for the right-wing and reactionary Dominion Party. In addition, for a time the small but most reactionary party of all, the Confederate, whose slogan was 'no vote for the native' was led by Stanley Gurland from Cape Town, and for a

period had, as its Chairman, A.I. Menashe from Rhodes. Though the centrist U.F.P. was thought to collect about 80 per cent of the Jewish vote it is obvious that there was no corporate political position as such. However, what is clear is that in Rhodesia there was no trend towards support of left-wing or revolutionary politics among the Jewish community: the contrast with South Africa was very clear. The lack of any number of local Jewish radicals could be ascribed perhaps to the lack of a university for many years and the assimilation of superordinate group ideology during schooling.

In 1958 the successful Jewish U.F.P. candidates were Abrahamson, Dr Morris Hirsch, a South African physician and former mayor of Que Que, who won his home town, Bennie Goldstein, the Bulawayo businessman, who won Bulawayo South, and Harry Pichanick M.B.E., a businessman, keen sportsman, and former mayor of Salisbury, who won the wealthy suburban seat of Highlands. The only Jewish Dominion Party success was another physician, Ahrn Palley, who won the Salisbury suburban seat of Greendale and of whose erratic political career more will be heard in the next chapter. Thus five of the thirty members of the legislative were Jews — a complete turnabout from the under-representation of the community in the 1940s. In two contests, at Bulawayo East and Bulawayo south, there were contests between Jewish candidates of rival parties: Abrahamson versus Jossel, and Goldstein versus Gelman.

At the 1958 Federal General Election a further 4 Jews were elected, all for the U.F.P. which won the election convincingly with 48 seats to the Dominion Party's 8. These members were Goldberg, Mrs Rosin, Saul Udwin, a Swaziland-born civil engineer, and Peter Staub, a financial consultant who had arrived in South Africa in the 1930s as a refugee from Germany. He was one of the very few refugees from Nazism to become a Commonwealth legislator. This sudden increase in representation and 'Jewish power' through the U.F.P. was quickly noted in the face-to-face society of Rhodesia which knew the origins and background of nearly all its members. It was no surprise that the governing party began to be referred to as 'the Jew F.P.' by its anti-Semitic opponents, nor that this slogan was scrawled across some posters in a Salisbury suburb during the Southern Rhodesia Constitutional Referendum campaign of 1961.¹⁵ In 1961 Albert Robinson, a former M.P. for Smuts's United Party in South Africa, was appointed to the important post of Federal High Commissioner in London. Robinson was a typical example of that genre of South Africans with minimal Jewish connections, who were identified with the Smuts era and the Cape-Katanga 'financial nexus' and found life inhospitable in the new Nationalist-dominated apartheid state and so moved into the Federa-

tion. The 'Anglo American crowd', as they were called, tended to dominate the Federation during these years and the result was that the Jewish community came to be associated in many minds with the 'cosmopolitan foreign capitalists'. This attitude affected both Black and White nationalists who castigated, from different ends of the political spectrum, what they regarded as the capitalists' insidious influence on the local scene.

It was only in 1956 when Todd had attended the Golden Jubilee banquet of the Bulawayo Jewish Guild that a Rhodesian Prime Minister first attended a Jewish social function other than a public meeting. Todd utilized this occasion for a major policy speech on the franchise commission and Abrahamson was there at his side to support him and declare his own belief in 'British principles and the Commonwealth'.¹⁶ It was perhaps this event which heralded the acceptance of the Jewish population into the ruling establishment. In the following years the community's involvement in public life was reflected in the number of persons who received honours and gained important positions. In the legal sphere H.J. Hoffman became President of the Water Court and Natural Resources and Town Planning Board, both key posts in a developing country, and in 1958 he joined the Appeal Court for Native Civil Cases. Jews also began to appear on Federal statutory bodies. H.A. Krikler was a member of the Agricultural Marketing Council and the Federal Tourist Board, L.A. Levy of the Cold Storage Commission, W. Margolis of the Grain Marketing Board and Tobacco Export Promotion Council, and C.I. Jacobs of the Electricity Supply Commission. Salisbury's Rabbi Maurice Konviser received an O.B.E. for public services as a result of his interest and work for numerous local committees and charities as well as service on the Councils of the Rhodes National Gallery and the University. The move into the national field was somewhat at the expense of participation in local government in these years. The only Jewish mayors were Ivor Pitch, 1961-2, and his brother, Harry Pichanick, 1955-7, in Salisbury and Robert Stensberg at Gatooma 1956-7 and 1961-2. Sternberg was another successful refugee who had arrived from Germany in 1939 and worked as an accountant in the small Midlands centre.

One of the most interesting insights into Jewish life in Rhodesia at this period can be gained from examination of the data in Dr Allie Dobb's pilot survey of 1962 of a representative sample of 44 Bulawayo and Salisbury Jews.¹⁷ In terms of political preferences, 5 of the 28 persons who answered the question were fee-paying members of the U.F.P. and 1 of Todd's Central Africa Party; 26 out of 31 persons had incomes of over £1,800 and only 2 earned under £900 a year. This was a high average even by the inflated

standards of White incomes in Rhodesia at this time which averaged around £1,200 a year.

The general integration of the community into the White elite was illustrated by the responses to the questions on group relations: 31 persons denied that there was any significant anti-Semitism in Rhodesia, apart from slight social prejudice as far as exclusive clubs were concerned, and only 6 thought that there was significant anti-Semitism; 30 persons denied that being Jewish was any disadvantage in Rhodesia, 1 thought it an advantage especially in business, and 7 considered that it was a disadvantage. Most of the respondents, however, admitted a bias in their social relationships towards more contacts with Jews than with Gentiles. This was obviously more of a social than a religious dietary-based bias since only 25 per cent kept strictly kosher homes.

The political troubles, which had begun with the Emergency of 1959 and had been followed by security and detention legislation, were beginning to undermine the confidence and optimism of Rhodesian Jewry by 1962 as the Federation came increasingly under assault from African nationalists. The general world climate of opinion and the British Government's attitude were beginning to undermine their confidence in any secure future in Africa, and this feeling was heightened by the Congo Crisis of 1960 – 1. At the height of the crisis over the Rhodes and Founders Holiday weekend, there were 500 Jewish refugees from the Congo in Salisbury. Most of these people were of Rhodesian origin and had friends and relatives among the local Sephardi community. The stories that the refugees told of the trials and discomforts served to worry and polarize the Jewish community as it did the general White population. Many, especially the women, turned to support more right-wing politicians who promised to guarantee security and maintain the 'Rhodesian way of life', no matter what threatened it, while others considered that the answer lay in swifter reforms and concessions to what they saw as the inexorable African tide.

The basic insecurity was added to by a wave of swastika daubings on Jewish communal property in the Federation which was part of a worldwide phenomenon and international vogue which had begun in Cologne. In the December 1962 election, the announcement to the crowd in Bulawayo of Abrahamson's re-election was greeted by some shouts of 'Jew and Kaffir lover'. At the very same time the community began to learn that the increasingly active and confident African nationalist movements were inclining towards Cairo and Moscow, a development that worried a community that was strongly Zionist and inclined to free enterprise. As a result Arab propaganda in Africa increasingly took on a rabidly anti-Semitic

tone and began to dwell on Welensky's Jewish origins and the Zionist ties with 'Western imperialism and capitalism'.¹⁸

That such pincer-like forces created insecurity and, in many, a desire to leave the continent and its problems, can be seen in answers to the survey. Dubb asked if respondents were considering moving to another country and if so which they would choose. The most significant to emerge was that only one of the sample had not considered the possibility of emigration. Out of 32 who answered, 23 intended to remain in Rhodesia if they could, and 2 said that they were determined to remain even under an African Government. If they had to leave, *aliyah* to Israel was preferred as first choice by 19, the United Kingdom by 9, and Canada or Australia by 4. The Zionist bias is very significant as is the fact that nobody mentioned South Africa. That more than a quarter thought that they would be happiest in Britain says much for the acculturation and identification with the British Imperial interest of these children of East European immigrants, particularly as they invariably gave 'the cultural link' as their main reason for choosing the 'Mother country'.

CHAPTER 6

The Declining Years: U.D.I. and after

Just prior to the collapse of the ill-fated Central African Federation a political party had come to power in Southern Rhodesia which was determined, despite all the outside pressures and proffered advice, to stem the tide of African nationalism. During the next two years the Rhodesian Front Government was able to convince the White electorate that the reassertion of White power was not only desirable but practicable. Between January 1963 and November 1965, the Rhodesian Front was able to offer Europeans a cause and hope for the future. In so doing it succeeded in welding the vast majority of the White population of Rhodesia into a cohesive and self-conscious 'proto-nationality' of its own which ceased to be British in name and, in many ways, outlook. This outcome was the result of a forceful programme of propaganda and politicization aimed at the White electorate. The R.F. pictured the Europeans in Rhodesia as a sophisticated minority surrounded by primitive and unprogressive majority, so that if Whites weakened their hold it could only lead to the loss of political, economic and social power and ultimately the right of domicile in the country itself. The R.F. considered that it had learnt the lessons of the Federation and the politics of contemporary Black Africa; equality led to weakness which in turn led to troubles such as revolts, genocide and dictatorships. The party leaders were thus determined to reverse the policy of indecision and deference towards Britain and the associated constitutional niceties that this attitude involved. They were aided in their task by the over-confidence of their liberal White Rhodesian, African nationalist and British opponents who all underestimated the resolution and political sophistication of the new Rhodesian Government.

The years 1963-4 were marked by the continued violence and sabotage by the African nationalist parties. This was the by now traditional African formula for independence, whereby Black unity was built on extra-parliamentary activity through protest demonstrations which aimed at provoking the civil power to use force. The inevitable Government reaction in turn proved the extreme discontent in the country and

allowed the nationalists to allege that the people were being brutally suppressed.

The African political parties concentrated on creating instability by violence and intimidation. This was the logical outcome of their extra-parliamentary approach after they had rejected participation in the 1961 Constitution; and even before the advent of Rhodesian Front rule ZAPU had started to send supporters abroad for training in sabotage. In turn this challenge was met by a new civil power unprepared to appease or compromise with Africans and which itself was more united than, and just as ruthless as, its opponents. In addition it had full control of the coercive powers of the State including a well disciplined Police Force and relatively powerful armed forces. The Africans were therefore not dealing with the typical colonial situation where an irresolute metropolitan power was half-heartedly trying to maintain itself in an outpost of a ramshackle Empire against both resentment in the Colony and opposition at home. Instead Africans were faced by compatriots of a local elite, whose livelihood, homes and families were in the balance. In retrospect the mistaken theoretical assessment of the African nationalist leaders and their advisers can easily be criticized, but at the time matters appeared very different. The Rhodesian Front played a very sophisticated but hazardous gamble. Mob law in the townships had to be used to frighten the Europeans and middle-class Africans and to divide the African masses; yet at the same time this had to be geographically controlled so that a full scale revolution did not occur.

With Ian Smith's accession to power in 1964, following a Cabinet revolt, the R.F. policy became even more decisive. He had clear objectives in mind. The most important was to secure law and order and this was surprisingly easily achieved through detentions of nationalist leaders. The next and larger problem was to gain independence from Britain without concessions from the ruling minority and to unite and consolidate White Rhodesians behind their Government; to this end the first move was to discredit and destroy the political reputation of the former Federalists.

The scene was thus set for the intrusion of racial politics into all spheres of social action. In June 1964, Ivor Benson a 'far right-wing political theorist'¹ was imported from Natal as Government Information Adviser. Up until that time there had been no coherent R.F. ideology but merely an updated amalgam of the thinking of those groups and factions which had opposed Huggins in the past. At the 1962 election the R.F. had fought on the type of programme which would have been advocated among the more enthusiastic Tories of the English shires. Law and order was advocated, rapid change opposed and the war service of their candidates was well

featured. Benson, however, offered the new Government a coherent radical right-wing policy which would suit both their internal and external problems. Rhodesia began to be presented 'as the last bastion of Christianity and Western traditions against the attack of sinister forces directed from joint headquarters in New York and Moscow'.² This type of insidious propaganda began to infiltrate the Government-controlled media of radio and television with attacks on the ever ubiquitous communists and international financiers. This, of course, was the Europeans' answer to the Third World Revolutionary ideology of the African nationalists. Thus both extremes began to preach a narrow chauvinism with much emphasis on race.

The Jewish community which had been in the forefront of the 'liberal' multiracial camp felt very vulnerable in this heightened political atmosphere. Anti-Semitism was a natural corollary of their propaganda with both sets of nationalists. Disappointment at the failure of the Federation led to the emigration of many Jewish residents during the great exodus of Whites in 1962-3. Those Jews that remained appeared to be in the forefront of that shrinking group that held the middle ground in Rhodesian politics. At the 1964 proceedings of the Board of Deputies Congress, I.R. Rosin spoke optimistically about the Jewish community 'helping the emerging African. I pay tribute to Northern Rhodesia for their attitude in accepting the changed political situation in their country.'³ Unwilling or unable to picture the great divide which the Zambezi River was soon to become, this Conference made arrangements for Zambian Jews to continue within the Board after the independence of the new Republic by means of an arrangement brought about through the efforts of S.W. Magnus, Q.C., the leading light of Northern Rhodesian Jewry and an opposition M.P. at that time. To allow these changes the constitution of the Board was amended and the name changed from 'Rhodesian' to 'Central African'. However, the unfavourable climate was already beginning to affect Jews. In 1963 a number of anti-Semitic letters on local political themes began to appear in the local press. H.R. Hart of Bulawayo wrote in *The Chronicle* on 25 June 1963 that, 'when I heard that a particular industrialist was making overtures to our party (just before the elections) I knew that the Rhodesian Front would get the power'. In early 1964 there was an unexplained terror campaign against some prominent Bulawayo Jews. Leo Baron, a Bulawayo attorney who was defending the nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo, in the courts had his offices painted with swastikas and slogans, such as 'Judens raus' and 'traitor you will die', and his wife was attacked in the garden of her home.⁴ Baron was himself eventually placed in detention and expelled. The previous month Rabbi Konviser of

Salisbury had received a typewritten letter from an 'Afro-Asian' who threatened that when African rule was achieved 'not one Jew will be spared' because the indigenous people had been robbed of their minerals by Oppenheimer and other Jewish capitalists. This letter also contained attacks on Israel over the Palestinian question.⁵ The insecurity and uncomfortable situation of the Jewish community was therefore already apparent before the Arundel by-election of October 1964.

This by-election and another in the neighbouring prosperous suburban Salisbury seat of Avondale were meant to herald the return to active politics of two Federal leaders, Sir Roy Welensky and Sidney Sawyer. This followed the formation of a new political party called the Rhodesia Party with Sir Roy as its leader and Sir Edgar Whitehead as his deputy. It was meant to be the occasion for the resuscitation of the former governing party which chose to fight these elections over the issue of U.D.I. The new party was badly timed and was quickly out-manoeuvred by the new Government which put up one of its senior members to fight Sir Roy. This candidate was Mr Clifford Dupont, a post-war British immigrant, who was to become the first President of the Republic but at that time was a senior Cabinet Minister.

The election was marked by the presence at public meetings of a thug element of R.F. supporters. At these the ex-champion of the European electorate was called a 'bloody Jew', a 'communist', 'traitor' and 'coward'.⁶ Sir Roy when asked his religion replied forcefully 'I am a Jew and I am not ashamed of it'.⁷ This outburst of anti-Semitism was deplored by the Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who promised an enquiry but it is possible that this outburst was connected with A.E. Abrahamson's criticism of Ivor Benson in Parliament, when he had called him 'a known befriender of the Mosleyites'.⁸ The dirty election tactics included the Rhodesian Party's publication of a letter sent by the R.F. to Jews in the Arundel constituency inviting them to attend a meeting at which Mr Benson was to speak. This meeting was intended to reassure Jews, after the attacks made upon Sir Roy Welensky as a Jew. The actual result of the election was a disaster for Welensky; he was soundly beaten by 1,079 votes to 633 and in December 1964 he retired from active politics.

In February 1965 the Rhodesian Party chose a new leader, Mr David Butler, a young Olympic yachtsman of upper middle-class British origin, with the right social credentials but very little political experience. The most logical choice for the party leadership, after Sir Edgar Whitehead had been passed over, was his former deputy, A.E. Abrahamson, a youthful, experienced and articulate former Cabinet Minister; but with the contemporary undercurrent of anti-Semitism this was regarded as

electorally inadvisable. The result was that in May 1965 an unprepared and naive Rhodesia Party fought only half the fifty 'A' roll seats and could persuade only five sitting M.P.s to become candidates. One notable retirement from politics was that of Abrahamson, who, it must be remembered, had the largest U.F.P. majority at the 1962 election. This general election was a great triumph for Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who won all fifty 'A' roll seats — a feat he was to repeat again in 1970, 1974 and 1977. The parliamentary opposition now consisted of a small group of inexperienced and unrepresentative Africans. The Rhodesia Party — U.F.P. grouping had been transformed from the accepted ruling party into a small extra-parliamentary pressure group — the Rhodesian Constitutional Association — in a mere two and half years. The scene was thus set for a confrontation between the triumphant Rhodesian Front and the shaky British Governments of Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Harold Wilson.

In many ways the defeat of the old political establishment can be seen as a defeat for the Jewish community and there is no doubt that in some circles this view was taken. Most commercial and industrial interests as represented by ACCOR and ARNI had long opposed Rhodesian Front policy particularly over any unilateral declaration of independence which, they considered, would spell swift economic doom for the country. These economic interests were also opposed to the barriers re-imposed on African advancement in the economy, such as restrictions in apprenticeships and the stiffening of proprietary segregation. From the economic point of view the Jews were undoubtedly among the most vulnerable sections of the White population because of their over-representation in commerce. They thus feared on the one hand the effects of import controls and severe economic depression and on the other hand African competition and boycotts on racial lines if the outcome of the Government's gamble was an African victory. Both economically and emotionally it appeared that they had much to lose in the forthcoming racial confrontation and political polarization. It was for these very reasons that they had previously supported the Federation and become recognized for their 'more liberal' attitudes.

After the Arundel by-election the R.F. undertook a policy aimed at wooing the Jewish community in order to enhance European unity and convince some ditherers who respected Jewish opinions on economic questions. In the 1962 election they had not fielded any Jewish candidates but in 1965 they put forward three successful ones: Mr Joel Pincus who was their candidate in the 'traditionally' Jewish seat of Bulawayo East; Mr Bernard Ponter who was surprisingly successful in the constituency of Willowvale with its large proportion of Coloured voters; and Mr Theo Ellison, who won Salisbury, Greenwood.

A prominent R.F. publicist among the Jewish community was a Salisbury journalist, Mr Victor Michaelson. During the 1960s he published a number of issues of the *Central African Rosh Hashanah Annual* and the *Rhodesian Jewish Chronicle*. In the 1965 *Annual* he suggested that the election of three Jewish M.P.s had 'satisfactorily disposed the smear stories that the R.F. was anti-Semitic. There was not and never had been the slightest truth in such allegations.'⁹ He admitted that some of the more enthusiastic supporters of the R.F. in the Candour League made reference to the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion, but he suggested they were an over-zealous and unrepresentative minority. In return he cited instances of African anti-Semitism in the new Parliament. In one case an African member wanted Jews discriminated against in the Land Apportionment Act on the grounds that they were not Europeans; in another case an African member had made slighting reference to 'Jew Boys' and was rebuked by the Chair. The publication also included an article by T.M. Ellison, M.P., attacking the roots of Jewish liberalism and the misplaced fellow-feeling for the African who, he said, 'is a man who is at least 4,000 years behind the Jew in the evolutionary process'.¹⁰ Despite such reassurances the Jewish community as a whole was never as enthusiastically attached to the R.F. as it had been to the U.F.P. and was probably the least ideologically penetrated of any White sub-groups. In 1969 Pat Bashford, the leader of the opposition Centre Party, suggested:

There was a strong undercurrent of antisemitism in the right-wing racialism that was gaining control in Rhodesia. Already it had been put about that the Centre Party is run by the Jews who these evil people tell you, are part of a world-wide conspiracy to destroy Christendom.¹¹

One of the reasons for the continued anti-Semitism in ultra right-wing circles was the fact that the only European opponent of the R.F. in Parliament during the period 1963-70, was Dr Ahrn Palley. The South African-born Palley, who became the *bête noir* of most Whites, had started his career as a member of the right-wing Dominion Party and had at one time spoken of the dangers of African nationalism to the White man in Rhodesia. However, in 1959 he broke with his former party and by 1961 he had joined Garfield Todd. In 1962 he was elected by the African 'B' roll voters of Highfield as an Independent over a number of African candidates. He now emerged as a defender of the African nationalism that he had opposed in 1959, and as the only experienced opposition parliamentarian fought a one-man running battle against the Government. For his courage alone he was admired by most Africans, overseas observers and even many sophisticated Whites. Yet his characteristic ambivalence con-

tinued; for, although he was resolutely opposed to U.D.I. and condemned the proceedings of Parliament under an illegal regime, he nevertheless continued to attend the Chamber and thus contributed to its recognition and validity.

The issue of U.D.I. and the break with Britain provides a very interesting insight in the way in which Rhodesian Jewish attitudes had developed. The Jewish community for both economic and emotional reasons had placed much stress on the British Commonwealth connection. It was this connection of which their passports were a symbol which guaranteed their freedom and opportunities. Gann and Gelfand have recorded the origins of this psychological phenomenon:

Many of the African pioneers from Tsarist tyranny to Southern Africa acquired a deep and sometimes unrealistic affection for the British 'mother country' they had never seen . . . when people of that sort stepped down from the boat at Cape Town they heaved a sigh of relief, praised their new won liberty and soon thanked the far away Queen in London who allowed them to make a new start. Welensky at heart shared this point and throughout his life retained a deep loyalty to the Imperial Crown.¹²

Surprisingly it was persons of British origin, including some of the most recent immigrants to the country, who were most bitter in their denunciation of Britain — its contemporary society, its politicians, and, later, even its Royal Family. On the other hand Rhodesian Jewry had a very sentimental and favourable opinion of Britain which was linked to respect for its ordered way of life, its liberalism, traditions and humanitarianism. This feeling is best illustrated by the famous statement of Sir Roy Welensky's that, 'I have not a drop of British blood in my veins but if there is one thing I stand for in this world it is a belief in the British Commonwealth as one of the greatest forces for good in the world.'¹³

Thus for economic and political reasons U.D.I. was greeted by Rhodesian Jewry with greater feelings of trepidation than by most. The President of the Board of Deputies, A.E. Abrahamson, warned the community at this time that the Government's action would create special problems for the Jew and his image as the result of his important contribution to industry and commerce. He predicted that if things went wrong the Jews would be blamed, and if things went well it would be said that the Jews have made a good thing out of it. Thus, within a few years of their almost complete integration and identification with the Rhodesian political elite, the Jewish community now regarded itself as being in the classic situation of the diaspora Jews.

In this unique constitutional conflict political strains were placed upon communal organizations. In the post-U.D.I. period the Board of Deputies

found itself unable to advise its member congregations or individuals on which Visitor's Book to sign, that in Bulawayo of Mr Dupont, the Officer Administering the Government, or that in Government House, Salisbury, of Sir Humphrey Gibbs, the legal Governor. The Board was even unable to advise on the wording in the prayer for the Queen and the Royal Family which follows the Reading of the Law at Sabbath morning services, for fear of involving itself in intracomunal and possibly intercommunal conflicts. In the public relations field the Board could only agree to react in order to 'safeguard the religious and civil rights and status and welfare of the Jews of Central Africa'.¹⁴

The classic example of the Jewish moral dilemma as well as an excellent illustration of the intrusion of politics and race into nearly every sphere of life in the 1960s is given by the controversy over the admissions policy of the Jewish Day Schools. These primary schools were one of Rhodesian Jewry's proudest and most significant achievements. In January 1963 the Sharon School in Salisbury admitted two African pupils under the Federal Government's new dispensation allowing multiracial private schooling. The Governors of the two Day Schools, the Board and the Zionist Council had jointly agreed to the policy of admitting non-Jewish pupils irrespective of race, colour and creed. This policy was reaffirmed at the Board's Regional Conference at Gwelo in September 1965, and token numbers of Non-Whites continued to be admitted without any trouble.

In Bulawayo, however, the situation was very different. At the end of 1964 Carmel School was faced with applications for entry and by January the non-Jewish headmistress had agreed to twelve African entrants and approached the Government for approval; but in the terms of the Land Apportionment Act this request was referred to the local authority, Bulawayo City Council. Approval was delayed until after the term started and the Africans had to be turned away and re-imbursed for the school uniforms they had purchased. Behind the scenes there was intense conflict between the Governors, led by the Chairman, Arthur Sarif, M.B.E., and a group of politically motivated right-wingers who according to Abrahamson had, in the past, shown little or no interest in the school and Jewish affairs generally. Sarif was a Bulawayo-born lawyer, a former Matabeleland rugby player, a former President of the Rhodesian Zionist Council, and Board Executive member, and a founder member and National Vice-President of the Centre Party; but he appeared unable to control the opposition.

The headmistress's action had led to a storm of protests by some parents and it was threatened that to continue with the African entries would lead to a loss of more than half the existing pupils. This threat was

achieved by a well-organized campaign, by canvassing parents and actions which included a City Councillor taking the matter to an M.P. and the Minister concerned. The furore was such that the Governors decided not to proceed with the application since the loss of substantial numbers of pupils would make the school financially non-viable. It was also known that the Municipality would never have agreed to the proposal and the whole matter would have become a public issue to the detriment of the school and the Jewish community. There were also educational problems involved in assessing how many Africans to accept and how they should be spread through the school.

To a certain extent the liberal Jew's dilemma was typified here. The idea of a Jewish school with a parochial character is at variance with liberal ideas. The right-wing argument was more logical; if the school separated Jewish children from other White children in the interests of a certain form of cultural autonomy, it was illogical to then import token numbers of Africans in order to give it a pluralist image. They claimed that the idea of a Jewish school was to combine Jewish and secular education and this 'must not be used as an instrument to educate the Jewish people of this country to a different approach from that held by the majority of the voting population'.¹⁵

Councillor Abe Menashe of Bulawayo, Rhodesia's first Sephardi mayor, suggested that pious talks about principles and Jewish ethics were irrelevant since the issue would be defeated in the Council anyway and if one Jewish child was lost by this action the school would have failed in its basic purpose. According to this line of thought it had to be admitted there had been a major change in public Jewish feeling on racial matters since January 1963 and that to continue the open-admission policy was useless.

The liberal counter-attack was led by A.E. Abrahamson, as President of the Board. In February 1966 the Board's Executive met the School Governors, led by Sarif, who again reaffirmed their decision not to make application to the local authority, in contrast to the Church Schools in Rhodesia. The 1966 Board Congress was the scene of the final show-down; there Abrahamson argued that such weakness was dangerous 'and those responsible for the long-term policy in the interests of the community as a whole cannot but be gravely concerned'. The long-term considerations were of course the inevitability of African rule. According to Abrahamson, the arguments were neither financial nor political but 'one of the good faith and honour of the Jewish community as a whole'.¹⁶ To this end they had to keep to the agreed policy and reject expediency. If the Municipality rejected the application this was all right, as that would put the responsibility for the decision where it belonged. Abrahamson's arguments were

forcefully supported by the religious element led by Rabbi Rosen, Bulawayo's visiting Minister from Britain, and Mr H.H. Gollop of Salisbury, who both saw the matter as a moral issue of discrimination which could not be left in doubt. Abrahamson's domination of communal politics was revealed when the Congress agreed to the following resolution of a special sub-committee on the matter:

Congress reaffirms the Board's policy in regard to admission to Jewish Day Schools in Rhodesia which is that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed, subject to the preservation of the Jewish character of the schools.¹⁷

The continuing liberal domination of Jewish communal affairs during these years can be explained only in political terms. The right-wing elements were often those most Rhodesian-centred and were often those least Zionist and most critical of Israeli foreign policy. Therefore in 1966 they opposed the United Israel Appeal and the sending of funds to Israel on political grounds. The liberal Zionist grouping consisted of persons who looked beyond the country's borders for their inspiration and were all therefore opposed to prolongation of Rhodesia's cultural and political isolation.

From 1966 onwards the Board and the Central African Zionist Organization (CAZO) had the most harmonious relations. They survived the acid test of the Six Day War in 1967 when Abrahamson and his Vice-President, Ben Baron, joined CAZO's Executive and Action Committee in issuing joint press statements. Abrahamson and Gollop joined D.J. Melmed and Mervyn Lasovsky of CAZO in a delegation to the Prime Minister to inform him of their planned manpower and financial assistance for Israel and this communal unanimity achieved the desired results. When Abrahamson was elected a Vice-President of CAZO in 1968 the two organizations were so closely interwoven in personnel and sentiment that they were really one in policy; and the terms of 'Jew' and 'Zionist' were now almost interchangeable.

The intracommunal 'Liberal-Zionist' unity was further cemented in these years by the fact that the ultra-right propagandists on the fringe of the Government party, centred around the 'Candour League' founded by A.K. Chesterton, such as Dr Ian Anderson, took an openly anti-Zionist line. They often linked Zionism along with Wall Street and Communism as part of the three-pronged attack on Western Christendom. The foreign advocates of this particular conspiracy theory were influential because, in the absence of any official recognition, open support for Rhodesia's independence was mainly confined to such groupings in the Western democracies. As a result, from 1965 onwards Rhodesia was visited by

extreme right-wing propagandists and known anti-Semites such as Eric Butler of the Australian League of Rights and Major Bundy of the U.S.A. In their local public pronouncements such people studiously refrained from open anti-Semitism but dwelt instead on more obvious racial themes. However, when Col. Curtis B. Dall and the American Liberty Lobby visited Bulawayo they made anti-Jewish remarks in front of Jewish Councillors at a civic reception. It became known in 1966 that arrangements were being made for visits to Rhodesia by Sir Oswald Mosley, the pre-war British fascist leader, and by the wife of Colin Jordan, the self-proclaimed British *Fuhrer*, who wished to establish an anti-Jewish movement; but prompt representations by the Board persuaded Mr Jack Howman, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and one of the most respected of the R.F. Ministers, to refuse them entry.

The confidence of Rhodesian Jewry was restored in 1967, the year which saw the Israeli triumphs in the Middle East and the departure from Rhodesia of the much loathed Ivor Benson. The enthusiastic White Rhodesian response to Israeli success and the emphatic identification by the self-portrayed 'Israelis of Africa', surrounded by hostile but less distinguished neighbours, helped to raise Jewish morale. Israel's refusal to play Rhodesia in the Davis Cup in 1969 and her \$2,000 donation to the O.A.U. Liberation Fund in 1971 only temporarily dampened such feelings. In the latter matter, the Rhodesia Government played the situation much more coolly than the South African which had issued a statement on the donation; but even so it gave the chance for some newspaper letter writers to vent their anti-Semitic spleen. When Rhodesia began to suffer guerilla incursions after 1971, Israeli retaliatory raids were much admired by the Whites and the political weakness of their own Government in failing to act in like manner helped further respect for the Jewish State.

At the same time during these years there was more movement towards a political settlement between Rhodesia and Britain. This arose when it came to be seen that despite U.N. sanctions U.D.I. was not the irrevocable or final act that it had appeared in November 1965. Talks or 'talks about talks', *Tiger*, *Fearless*, Pearce and detente were to keep the Rhodesian imbroglio before the attention of the world well into the 1970s. Settlement held out the promise of economic boom, the end to travel restrictions and passport problems, as well as easy access to foreign currency and political stability and security for a foreseeable future or for a known number of years. Thus while Ian Smith juggled the hardline and pro-settlement factions within his Cabinet and tried to prevent the emergence of any significant White political opposition on his left or right, the leaders of the Jewish community began to assert themselves a little more. For a long time the

community had studiously avoided official contacts with the Government and there were no invitations to communal functions for politicians. This was not due to personal hostility on either side, for most of the people involved had gone to school together and knew each other socially; Ian Smith even had a Jewish godmother, Mrs Tilly Jacobson of Gwelo. In January 1967, however, Deputy Prime Minister, John Wrathall, a former Bulawayo accountant who was known for his competence and relative moderation, was the Guest of Honour at the seventy-fifth Anniversary Dinner of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation.

The communal leadership made no specific stand on the constitutional referendum of 1969 which led to a Republic, but in 1970 Rabbi I. Zwebner of Bulawayo issued a statement supporting the various Churches in their stand against the new segregationist Land Tenure Act which replaced the Land Apportionment Act:

To reiterate Judaism's attitude to the crucial human problem: Judaism stands eternally committed to the teachings of our Divine Torah which has, in no uncertain terms, affirmed for all time, that man, without regard to his colour or creed was created in the image of God and has to be accorded his elementary human rights and dignity. It cannot countenance any law enacted by man against the will of God.¹⁵

With this dictum in mind in 1971, the Board as the Jewish representative body submitted a memorandum to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, opposing the proposed Property Owners' Protection Bill aimed at undermining the residential rights of the Asian and Coloured populations, and another to the British Government's Pearce Commission in which it supported the 1971 Anglo-Rhodesian settlement proposals agreed between Smith and Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

The new communal unanimity which these actions reflect was due to a very hurtful and revealing incident during 1970 which brought even the most conservative of Jewish voters down to earth with a mighty bump. This resulted from an application by the Salisbury Jewish Community to establish a memorial to the wartime Jewish martyrs in Europe similar to one erected some years earlier in Bulawayo. The City Council's Health, Housing and African Administration Committee objected to the wording of the memorial which referred to 'The Victims of the Nazi Terror'. This committee included many extreme right-wingers whom the R.F. was unwilling to support as parliamentary candidates but who had entered local government politics which was not organized on party lines. One such Councillor was Isaline James, the wife of the Old Etonian and former M.P. sacked by the Front for his extreme opinions. She claimed that the words were offensive to Germans and compared them with using the term

'settlers murdered by Mashona Savages' on an 1896 Rebellion memorial.¹⁹ In the resulting press correspondence some opponents suggested memorials on Communism were more appropriate and others raised the issue of the actual numbers of Jews murdered during the War. Eventually at a full meeting of the Council the Committee's recommendation was rejected and the memorial allowed with the original wording, but only after Abrahamson had made a statement claiming the affair was an affront to the entire Jewish community. He suggested that the words would only give offence to the perpetrators and those who sympathized with Nazism as 'well as those with Nazi mentalities'. He threatened that if the words were not agreed to the community would abandon the memorial and the City of Salisbury would then have 'the doubtful honour of being the only city in the Western world which denied its Jewish community the right to commemorate the Nazi holocaust'.²⁰

It was at this time that the Central African Jewish board of Deputies sent a delegation and a memorandum to Mr Lardner-Burke, the Minister of Justice, Law and Order, in order to communicate the community's concern over growing manifestations of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist propaganda which they suggested might have their roots in Arab activities and funds. In reply the Minister said that, in the reports that he had received, it was suggested that the incidence of anti-Jewish propaganda and activities was rare in Rhodesia and that there had been no increase in cases of organized attempts to promote hostility. He suggested that no action was needed nor any amendments to the laws. Nevertheless, in view of the world-wide terrorist activities, the community took steps to ensure the protection of their property in collaboration with the Police.

Under the provisions of the 1969 Constitution separate African and non-African representation was entrenched with the result that in the 1970 General Election Palley was unable to continue representing African voters. The Jewish presence in Parliament was maintained by three Rhodesia Front M.P.s, Elly Broomberg, Ponter and Ellison; the last named, however, was expelled during this Parliament for technical offences concerning the sales-tax returns of his Salisbury electrical business. Broomberg replaced Joel Pincus, the South African-born Bulawayo lawyer and brother of Louis Pincus, Chairman of the Jewish Agency and a Labour Party leader in Israel, who was appointed a member of the newly established Senate.

At the 1974 general election Ponter retired but was joined by two other Jewish R.F. members who easily beat their Rhodesia Party opponents in the Government's clean sweep. These men were J.M. Lowenthal, a rancher, returned for Selukwe, Ian Smith's home-town and Danziger's old

seat, and John Landau, a member of an old Rhodesian family who was prominent in the Boy Scouts' Movement, returned for Milton Park, Salisbury. The Jewish community thus continued to be over-represented politically even within the White population.

To a certain extent the relative Jewish movement out of national politics after 1962 was compensated for by a revival of involvement in local politics and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, particularly in Bulawayo. In Salisbury, Bernard Ponter a local businessman and a director of Air Rhodesia was mayor in 1964 and Ivor Pitch held that office in 1967. In Bulawayo there was a succession of Jewish mayors following A. Menashe's term of office in 1966. The mayor in 1968 was Jurick Goldwasser, a textile and footwear manufacturer and Broomberg's unsuccessful Rhodesia Party opponent at the 1974 election. The mayor in 1972 was H. Coronel who was succeeded in 1973 by Ralph Harris, himself the son of a former mayor, who was in turn succeeded by Dr Eugene Gordon. This heavy Jewish representation in Bulawayo municipal politics contributed to what was often regarded as one of the most liberal and far-sighted social and housing policies of any cities in Southern Africa. This was in contrast with the extreme right-wing domination of politics in Salisbury local government. The result was that Bulawayo was unique in its avoidance of rioting during the Pearce Commission of 1971, whereas the Salisbury African townships have been a powder keg and the scene of serious bloodshed during the 1970s.

Despite its declining numbers and overall importance within the country, the Jewish community was able to maintain its status through these difficult times because of its key economic position. Many of those aspects of its economic activities which had most angered the extreme right wing, such as contacts with foreign businessmen and involvement with overseas interests, were now to prove of vital importance to the country in overcoming international economic sanctions and frustrating Harold Wilson's prophecy that the economic collapse of Rhodesia would be a matter of 'weeks rather than months'. Jewish businessmen made use of their friends and relations and their linguistic skills in order to evade the restrictions placed upon their activities by the United Nations. Convinced that to overseas politicians they were expendable and believing that their own survival and their families' livelihoods depended on frustrating the efforts of the British Civil Servants, they launched into a wholehearted campaign of sanctions-breaking. The result of this contest was easily predictable, for on the one side there were committed imaginative persons with a stake in what they were doing, and on the other, impractical faceless bureaucrats with no stake in the contest, who were much less willing to put the necessary time and effort into the economic war.

Apart from the private importers and exporters the Jewish community provided a key public figure in Rhodesia's struggle in the presence of William Margolis. Margolis was a former lecturer in economic history at Cape Town University and had been the economic consultant of various Rhodesian Governments since the time of the Second World War and had represented the country at a number of international conferences, for which services he had received an M.B.E. in 1950. During the next decade and a half he was the senior partner in the family's agricultural produce and manufacturing business, Rhodesian Industries, which had grown out of a small store at Inyazura. Because of his experience in both the practical and theoretical fields, Margolis in 1966 was made Chairman of the Grain Marketing Board of which he had been a member for some years. In 1967 he was appointed the first Chairman of the Agricultural Marketing Board. In this key position it was his efforts which saved the Rhodesian tobacco industry after 1965 and he oversaw foreign sales of most other products including the twenty million dollar maize deal with Zambia in 1971. In 1969 he was presented with a 'Farming Oscar' by the Rhodesian National Farmers' Union in recognition of his services in the marketing field.

Another important figure in the fight against sanctions was Mr Elly Broomberg; he had emigrated to Rhodesia from South Africa in 1956 and he was a director of various important financial companies. He was for a time President of the Central Africa Textile Manufacturers Association and had succeeded to Joel Pincus's Bulawayo East Seat in 1970, and was re-elected in 1974 when he was appointed Minister of Commerce and Industry in Smith's new cabinet, thereby taking over the key-role in sanctions-busting.

The effects of economic sanctions and import controls were overcome by a well co-ordinated programme of import substitution. The furniture industry in Bulawayo was particularly important to the country because of its export potential, as were some parts of the clothing industry. In both these industries the majority of factories were Jewish-owned. Key figures in Bulawayo's industrial life were the Harris brothers, Ralph and Standish, of the Harris Group of Companies. An important conglomerate which was built up in these years was Freecor, originally a construction and property company which began its diversification by acquiring the electrical company, Everglo, founded by Mr Werner Kaim of Salisbury. Another success in these years was CAPS a pharmaceutical manufacturing and retailing organization run by G. Graham and J. Schwartz of Salisbury. These firms came to the fore through the promotion of local industry in the drive for import substitution in order to save foreign currency after U.D.I., since they were able to obtain Government assistance and protection which they

had been unable to acquire in earlier years. In these years Rhodesia made major industrial progress because of the ingenuity of her manufacturers, able to draw on the freely available cheap labour.

In the commercial field the unexpected economic boom in the late 1960s aided a number of enterprising entrepreneurs. An outstanding example was Mr Sam Levy, who was born in Que Que and had started his career as a commercial traveller. After some time he opened a local supermarket in Salisbury in 1960 which grew to become the Maceys Organization and the first public company floated by a Sephardi in Rhodesia. By 1970 his organization owned 11 supermarkets, a fruit-farming and canning factory, 3 filling stations and some property interests. Another success in these years was the Tedco Trading company, floated as a public company in 1973. This had grown out of Zimbabwe Furnishers, a Salisbury firm of Teddy Cohen's, which catered almost solely for the African market on a credit basis. Mr Cohen was born in South Africa and had left school at fifteen to work as a salesman in a furniture shop. He arrived in Rhodesia in 1954 and founded his furnishing business the following year. His business which was concerned with serving the needs and aspirations of the urban African working population made an important contribution to the expansion of the African consumer market.

The population census of 1969, which like the previous censuses collected information on the White population by religion, provides a detailed overview of the situation of the Jewish community in these years and its development since the end of Federation. The Census revealed that Rhodesian Jewry numbered 5,194 souls, or 2.3 per cent of the European population. Whereas the White population as a whole had remained static since 1961, there had been a loss of nearly 2,000 Jewish residents, an average annual decrease of 2.2 per cent. The community had become even more concentrated in Salisbury and Bulawayo and only 361 persons remained outside these two cities. Salisbury had now clearly overtaken Bulawayo as the major centre of Jewish settlement: 2,700 Jewish residents compared to Bulawayo's 2,110. The end of Federation and the political problems of the 1960s had led to the emigration of many young persons; whereas in 1961 under 9 per cent of the Jewish population were aged over sixty, by 1969 nearly 17 per cent were in this age group, compared to under 10 per cent for all Europeans. The most striking loss was in persons in their twenties: whereas there were 561 Jews aged between ten and fifteen years, there were only 227 between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. Abrahamson noted this trend in a speech in 1973: 'We see the elimination of almost an entire generation of our young men and women who leave us to study in South Africa and overseas and save for a few, do not return. We

miss them, not only as parents and family, but as a community.'²¹ The vast majority of Rhodesian Jewry was now African-born with over 2,200 born in Rhodesia. After South Africa with 1,000, the next biggest birthplace groups were the British Isles with 434 persons and of Rhodes with 252. Along with this localization and the inevitable accompanying aculturation through schooling, there had occurred a remarkable degree of social mobility when compared with the pre-war Jewish population of small traders. In terms of industrial sectors of the economy the largest Jewish sector remained commerce with 41 per cent of employed males; manufacturing now employed 19 per cent, professional and technical occupations 17 per cent, and finance and insurance 15 per cent. Only 3 per cent of Jews were engaged in agriculture as compared with 11 per cent of European males.

In terms of actual occupations for both males and females, the largest category of employment was 725 persons in sales work. The next largest category was professional and technical work with 363 persons. There were 313 administrative and managerial workers, and 208 persons in production. Jews were still unattracted to Governmental occupations; less than 1 per cent was found in the Public Services compared to 13 per cent of all Europeans. The total number of Jews in the Police was 3 and in the permanent establishment of the Armed Forces only 7. Among the younger age-groups the proportion in professional and managerial occupations was considerably above average. Jews, we have noted, formed only 2.2 per cent of the country's European population and an infinitesimal proportion of Rhodesia's total population; yet in 1969 they provided 8 per cent of the country's medical practitioners, 10 per cent of its dentists and 13 per cent of its pharmacists.

The 1969 census thus reveals a community which in socio-economic terms had changed out of all recognition compared with that of the previous two generations. Successful in commerce and industry and well qualified educationally, it formed a wealthy and important section of the country's elite. Nevertheless, in spite of high communal morale and a pleasant life-style, there were notable signs of attrition: 'It is the picture of a community, standing still, if not actually slipping back not through its own fault, but because it has been caught up in a situation over which it has no control.'²²

CHAPTER 7

Religious and Communal Organization

In Chapter 1 it was seen that from the foundation of European rule in the country the Jewish religion was openly and freely practised. Rhodesia, like many other colonial societies, developed a system of structural and cultural pluralism which disfavoured — and, as far as Non-Whites were concerned, proscribed — a single institutional setting for all population groups. The separate existence of a Jewish community with its own sub-culture was never questioned, and indeed, the overall social climate favoured it. The maintenance of group identity and group life encouraged few obstacles in a society in which the ruling establishment set its face against the 'melting pot' ideal. There was therefore little pressure on individual Jews to lose their identity; it was actually, quite the reverse, for it has been shown that many were not allowed to forget it. However, perhaps most important of all, and in the best traditions of British Imperial rule, the freedom of religious worship was never questioned.

The general ecumenical atmosphere was noticeable from pioneer days and under Cecil Rhodes's influence the territory escaped the anti-Catholic prejudice which was present in contemporary Australia, Canada, and South Africa. Roman Catholic clergy accompanied the Pioneer Column and their church was equally and generously treated, with regard to land grants for mission stations, along with the Nonconformist and Anglican denominations. In later years the fact that Sir Charles Coghlan was a practising Catholic was of no political importance whatsoever. This atmosphere of religious tolerance was perhaps the more favourable reverse side of the racial discrimination and prejudice which pervaded the country. Yet its importance for the Jewish people cannot be underestimated. The tradition of toleration and mutual respect which was established in the early years, when the local newspapers contained articles explaining the Jewish Festivals,¹ has continued in the media to the present. The Federal and Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporations have both made time available for broadcasts on Jewish Holydays and Festivals such as the New Year, Passover and *Chanuka*.

Of course there was always some differentiation between Christian and non-Christian religious organizations, but the fact that the Jews were a non-missionizing White group allayed some of the authorities' potential qualms. A lingering reserve, however, was manifested in a differential of £25 between Christians and Jews as regards the Government grant to religious bodies in Bulawayo in 1902. Mr Lowenstark of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation wrote to the Chartered Company's Chief Secretary asking him:

Kindly to increase the grant of £75 to £100 for the ensuing year. My committee are of the opinion that they are not being fairly treated in comparison with other denominations who are receiving the £100 grant. Our congregation is a very poor one, and our expenditure greatly exceeds our revenue.²

Another slight of this minor order, in a more modern period, was the refusal of the Ministers' Fraternal in Bulawayo to accept Jewish clergy to membership in 1962.

Judaism was seen as a rather exotic growth on the local religious scene which had the potential to cause minor irritation because of its unique Holidays and the special facilities its adherents demanded from the State. This challenge to uniformity in public life was regarded in much the same way as the presence of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Concerning this denomination and their new mission at Rusape in 1921, the local Native Commissioner's sole remark was that 'their system of Sabbath Observance will not fit in with the economic scheme of this territory'.³ In those days Rhodesian settlers upheld the Protestant Sunday and especially the Sunday closing laws.

Religious affiliation, and synagogue membership which involves paying dues, has always been at a high level among Rhodesian Jewry. Since 1894 and the beginning of Jewish religious life in the country nearly all the Jewish residents, except the most transient or assimilated, have been members of one of the Hebrew congregations, with the result that synagogue membership has accurately reflected the rise and fall of the Jewish population as revealed in the various censuses. The comparison of the census data and synagogue membership statistics for 1969 reveals that fewer than 150 adult Jewish males, or less than ten per cent of the total were not affiliated with a synagogue. However, as will be shown, this high degree of affiliation does not signify any high level of observance or attendance at services.

Jewish communal life, perhaps more than that of any other group in Rhodesia, has been a 'tale of two cities', since it was only in Salisbury and Bulawayo that there were at any time sufficient numbers to provide the

whole range of Jewish religious and social activities. The most obvious and visible symbol of Jewish life has been the synagogue and apart from Bulawayo and Salisbury only the Midland towns of Gwelo, Que Que, and Gatooma have managed to acquire permanent synagogue premises. The story of Bulawayo's early attempts to construct a synagogue was related in Chapter 1. However, after 1907 the revival of trade and the entry of new immigrants encouraged the congregation to consider plans for a new permanent religious centre in 1909. These plans envisaged a synagogue with places for 500 men and 200 women costing £5,000. By April 1910 they had collected £2,200 in the town including donations from Gentile well-wishers and South African Jewish business houses, as well as their own members. The foundation stone of the new building was laid by E. Basch in May 1910 and the building was finally consecrated in April 1911. The congregation was proud of its achievement particularly in the fact that there was no skimping on details such as oak pews. In later years this building was used as a school room. Much time and effort was invested over the next sixty years in trying to improve and acquire new facilities and buildings with the result that by the 1970s an impressive complex of Jewish communal buildings had arisen at the north end of Abercorn Street. These included a new and enlarged synagogue, the Jewish Guild hall, modern communal buildings and offices, and the Louis Landau Hebrew School.

The Salisbury Hebrew Congregation sold its first synagogue building in Rhodes Avenue which had been erected in 1901, in order to build a larger one. This new building at the corner of Salisbury Street and Baker Avenue had its foundation stone laid in December 1916 before a large audience which included the Resident Commissioner and the famous pioneer figure, Col. Grey. This ceremony was followed two days later by a Building Fund Ball for 200 persons under the patronage of the Administrator and those who supported the function included members of the British, Afrikaner, and Greek communities. The new synagogue opened its doors for worship in 1917 but it was consecrated by the Revd J.J. Rosin only in February 1920. This synagogue continued to be used by the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation until December 1973 when, the by now weather-beaten, red-brick building was sold. By that time Salisbury Street was no longer a salubrious part of town and few of the Jewish community lived close by. Nevertheless the congregation had done its best to try and maintain the area's social status. In 1921 the Jewish community launched a petition against a Greek shopkeeper's being granted a general dealer's licence to trade in Salisbury Street within fifty yards of the synagogue. The Revd J.J. Rosin spelled out the objections quite clearly. He was opposed to the possibility of a 'crowd of niggers' near his *shul*: 'would you have natives of

the lower class type hanging about the place jeering and playing games while a body of men and women are celebrating the most solemn festivals of the year'.⁴ Though this was not quite the type of language or argument which religious leaders would use today, it was the kind that appealed to the Salisbury Town Council and they refused the shopkeeper's application on the grounds that it was in a residential area and would prove a nuisance.

The Salisbury Hebrew Congregation eventually acquired probably the most impressive Jewish communal centre in Africa when the Milton Park complex was opened in 1965. It houses the Sharon Primary School as well as offices, a library, and a number of halls, including the large Harry Margolis Hall. This hall has provided a useful amenity for all the citizens of Salisbury and a source of income for the congregation from the social occasions, shows, political party congresses and balls, which have taken place on its premises. Since it can accommodate all the members and their families it has been adapted for use as a synagogue on the High Holydays so precluding the necessity for overflow services. However, there are plans to erect a purpose-built synagogue on the Milton Park site (now completed).

Most Jewish communities feel that they require a synagogue not only for *barmitzvah*, weddings and ordinary worship, but also for burial services which are sought by a surprisingly high proportion of even unobservant Jews. A Jewish community requires its own, or a separate section of a cemetery, and burial provisions are usually the first facilities acquired by any congregation. The congregation then forms a *Chevra kadisha* (holy society) of volunteers, who among other things take upon themselves the duty of performing the last rites in accordance with the time-honoured ritual of the faith. In Bulawayo in 1894 it was the death of a Jewish jockey in a horse race which first necessitated Jewish services of this kind.

In the smaller centres religious life has been tenuous. It has often depended on the presence of keen, religious well-educated men who can lead services and have time to devote to this. Yet as in so many other small communities elsewhere in the world, the average individual in the small centre has probably been more involved in synagogue affairs than he would have been in a larger community. The presence of ten adult males, known as a *minyan*, is required for Jewish communal worship and in the small settlements many a half-hearted straggler has been brought into services as a result of social pressure in order to make up the requisite numbers. In such places services are intermittent, occurring only on the three High Holydays of *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) and *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) which lasts two days. If Sabbath services are held they infrequently take place on Friday night rather than Saturday mornings.

The Gwelo Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1901 when the town had a total population of only fifteen Jews. Its first service coincided with the visit of the Revd M.I. Cohen of Bulawayo. In those early days New Year services took place at the Masonic Temple until a synagogue was erected in 1928 on a site given by the Government. The High Holydays were an important social as well as political occasion and Jews from the outside villages and the rural area flocked to the towns. In Gwelo in 1913 the services were conducted by Isidore Price of Greta Green Mine and people attended from as far away as Umvuma.

The Que Que congregation had its first service in 1905 when it was conducted by a local trader, Mr H. Liptz. It was loaned the required books and scrolls by the Bulawayo congregation which also assisted groups as far afield as Hartley and Elizabethville at this period. It was only in 1952 that Que Que acquired a permanent synagogue – communal hall building.

The Jewish community in Gatooma was formed almost as soon as the town was founded in 1911. Here too the High Holyday services attracted participants from far afield; for instance in 1922 they were conducted by Messrs Michelowitz of Sinoia and Isaacson of Golden Valley. Attempts were made to acquire a synagogue and even a minister at the height of the area's mining boom around 1914, but in 1925 the Gatooma and District Hebrew Congregation shelved this idea and gave the money they had collected to charity. For many years services then took place at Joe Burke's cinema or the Dutch Reformed Church hall until a small synagogue – communal hall was built in 1954.

In other centres Jewish congregations did not survive the economic trials that afflicted the area. At the time that the Falcon Mine was at its height there was a substantial community at Umvuma led by N. Wolffe who owned the nearby farm 'Judesia'. In 1920 the congregation was donated a plot for the erection of a synagogue by the Willoughby's Consolidated Company, who were the owners of the mine, and there were plans to erect a building costing £500. The closure of the mine in the early 1920s led to an exodus of most of the Jewish and other residents of the town, and the handful of Jews who remained rejoined the Gwelo congregation.

A congregation was formed at Gwanda by twenty men in 1903 and they used the Court House for their services. However, the building of the railway to Bulawayo in 1905 allowed easier access to the major centre and most people gravitated there for the festivals so that the congregation gradually withered away.

In terms of their religious orientation, the small centres showed a good deal of adaptation and toleration. The tendency was to try and accommodate the different tunes and variations of ritual which the local

members remembered from their places of origin. However, at root the overall atmosphere and outlook was Litvak with Anglo-Jewish overtones. The differences among the Ashkenazim belonging to the German, English, Lithuanian, and Polish sub-groups were marginal, but there were larger differences on the cultural level between them and the Rhodes Sephardim. In the small communities the Jews realized that they had to co-operate and in Gatooma, where the congregation was always mixed, Ashkenazim and Sephardim served together on the executive quite amicably.

However, in Gwelo, and above all in Salisbury, Jewish intra-group relations were a real social problem and they quickly overflowed into the religious sphere. The causes of this Ashkenazi – Sephardi division are easy to explain if not to condone. Undoubtedly there was a feeling of superiority among the European Jews when confronted by their Levantine brethren. The English-born Revd M.I. Cohen wrote of the Sephardim: 'These stand on an altogether different plane to the rest of the Jewish population, and unless they are going to adopt our standards their influence may be unfortunate.'⁵ The Rhodesies were a tight-knit and intellectually unsophisticated group whose religion and folklore were deeply intertwined. Over the centuries of their isolation, they had become superstitious in some matters rather than religious. On the other hand the Ashkenazim, even those from the Baltic littoral, came from a much more modern environment than the Ottoman Empire. Lithuania in the late-nineteenth and early part of this century was an area of great ferment as far as its Jewish population was concerned. It was the home of great religious scholarship, as well as the cradle of Socialist and Zionist revolutionaries. To the Eastern European Jew, Judaism was an ethnocentric form of *Yiddishkeit*. Thus the Sephardi fitted into none of the Ashkenazi's popular stereotypes of his own people. To him the Sephardi appeared closer both in appearance and outlook to the despised Indian than to himself. This mixture of imported and local prejudice led the majority to a situation whereby on occasions they used the term 'black Jew' or 'coolie Jew'.

In the face of this suspicion and incomprehension the Sephardim reacted rather unwisely. They tended to cling to Ladino and forego English and so widened the gulf by excluding the Ashkenazim from their social gatherings. Cohen was correct in that they were somewhat less careful in some of their business transactions; knowing they could return home when they liked, they were less concerned about the impression they made on the authorities, other settlers or the African population, whereas the Ashkenazi leaders with much greater experience and fear of anti-Semitism resented the undermining of the local Jewish reputation.

In Salisbury where larger numbers were involved it was much more dif-

ficult to reconcile these differences and relations reached a head in 1931 when the Sephardim broke away from the Hebrew Congregation to form their own group, claiming they were treated as second-class Jewish citizens. An important factor was that they were now numerous enough to form their own congregation and a hundred men attended the first Sephardi service at the Duthie Hall on the High Holydays. Their Gabbai (lay religious leader) at this stage was B.D. Almeleh. In 1932 they bought two stands in Jameson Avenue and established a formal congregation, the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation of Rhodesia. In 1935 I.R. Rosin, the surgeon son of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation's former minister, joined the Sephardi congregation on his return from study in Britain. From then on he tended to dominate the proceedings of the new synagogue. Rosin insisted that they establish a formal administrative unit and obtain proper premises. In 1939 the Sephardim bought a building in Jameson Avenue for £1,500 to use as a communal hall, which they later sold during the 1950s for £120,000, a sum which helped pay for their new synagogue. In 1943 they had grown to the extent where they brought over Rabbi M. Papo from England to be their spiritual leader.

As more and more of their members moved into Salisbury from the outlying districts when they succeeded economically, the Sephardim began to acquire a parallel infrastructure with that of the Salisbury Ashkenazi congregation. In 1953 they founded their own nursery school and in 1954 their own Ladies Society. They opened their own fine synagogue in 1958 at an impressive ceremony before a collection of dignitaries which included the Governor General of the Federation and the Haham, and by the 1960s they had a communal set-up which would be the envy of many larger communities. They had their own communal centre in the Avenues, the central residential area of the city, which consisted of a synagogue, a communal hall, classrooms, a rabbi's house, and a *mikvah* (women's ritual bath).

Ninety per cent of the membership of the Sephardi congregation was of Rhodesie descent and this was reflected in the outlook of the community. Their hall is known as the Rhodes Community Memorial Hall and their Synagogue is called the Shaare Shalom (Gates of Peace) after a synagogue built at Rhodes in 1731.

A more ideological division led to the formation of the Progressive Hebrew Congregation in Bulawayo in 1957. Many of the original members were German refugees who had a tradition of Reform Judaism and they were joined by others who found this more modern form attractive. Within a year the new congregation had acquired its own Minister and rented a hall for its synagogue. The Reform and Orthodox movements in Rhodesia

did not have the bad relations that they have in other countries, and Orthodox leaders attended Reform functions. In addition some persons held dual membership of the two Bulawayo congregations. The tolerance in Rhodesia was perhaps due to a somewhat more liberal attitude with regard to intermarriage, since it has been the matter of conversion, which is much easier in Reform Judaism, that has been the main cause of Orthodox hostility elsewhere. In 1969 the Bulawayo Progressives built a new synagogue — communal hall complex which was opened by Sir Roy Welensky. In Salisbury there was much less room for the Progressives since they would compose a third congregation there. Even so they managed to form a small congregation in the 1960s but they were unable to acquire their own permanent premises.

The complicated ritual and religious practices of traditional Judaism affect all aspects of daily life and demand an involved infrastructure of ancillary services for their maintenance. Small groups in isolated areas cannot normally maintain or support all the plethora of dietary laws known as *Kashrut*, which require special butchers and supervision, or for instance, *Mikvaot*. In fact the type of person who moved from Europe to a more secular and less Jewish environment such as Rhodesia was less likely to require or believe in these practices. Such people are more likely to adopt a more liberal approach to religion along ethical rather than ritual lines, and this is what happened in Africa as in North America. Because of this and the problems involved in maintaining traditional Jewish life the reaction of persons outside Africa to the existence and successful growth of a large, if only nominally, Orthodox Jewish community in Rhodesia is one of surprise, since Central Africa is not regarded by the casual observer as fertile ground for the practice of traditional Judaism.

In view of the fact that it was the religiously less committed who would be more likely to emigrate to a country like Rhodesia which lacked a tradition of Jewish life and institutions and presented many obstacles to their establishment, one can only be surprised that such a flourishing and well organized community evolved. As one might expect Rhodesia produced and attracted few religious scholars, although some fine Talmudists came;⁶ intellectually and culturally it was undistinguished but it more than compensated for this in terms of charity and Jewish sentiment: this was a Jewry perhaps less of the head than of the heart.

In terms of traditional Orthodoxy the local Jews were and are *link* (unobservant). Most of the worshippers at even the Orthodox services travel there by car from the distant suburbs. In the early days especially, few observed *Kashrut*, and in general there was much ignorance. Many of the early Jewish burials, as reported in the press in Salisbury, had wreaths

from both family and friends, yet it was against Orthodox Jewish custom to place flowers on the coffin or even the grave. The synagogue observed the prayers and ritual as laid down by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire in London, and accepted his authority, although this was at a time when Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy was regarded as dangerously liberal and 'left-wing' by most Jews in Europe (and this is not surprising if one recognizes that in fact the British Chief Rabbinate in 1900 was further to the 'left' than it is today).

It was only after the turn of the century that Salisbury and Bulawayo residents began to become interested in kosher meat and to employ *Shochetim* (traditional slaughterers). Bulawayo established its own Shechita Board in 1903 but it had many teething problems before it became firmly established and it needed to be reformed in 1926. There were times and districts where no kosher meat was available. Even today when facilities are available, only a minority of Orthodox Synagogue members keep kosher homes.

Only with difficulty was it ever possible to persuade all the Jewish businesses to close on the High Holydays in keeping with religious laws, but Sabbath observance or Saturday closing was never obtained. In Bulawayo, the Revd M.I. Cohen who was known locally as the 'sporting parson' took a view of his duties that was rather untraditional by the standard of an East European rabbi. He tended to shy away from scholarship and making judgements on Jewish legal and ritual questions and concentrated on social and ethical leadership of the community, Zionism, and the integration of Jews and Jewish values into Rhodesia's public life. As a result a few of the more traditionally-minded East Europeans attempted to secede in 1908 when Cohen was reappointed. A local newspaper's comment at the time was that 'Mr Cohen is generally admired in town by reason of his religious tolerance and intellectual attainments'.⁷

In 1913 a mixed choir of both men and women was organized by some of the younger and more progressive members of the Bulawayo congregation led by J.J. Sonnenberg, D. Landau and H.B. Ellenbogen, but a number of the traditionalists led by A. Moses and L. Rabinowitz refused duties on the Festivals as a protest against it. The question was then referred to the Chief Rabbi in London, who gave the following tactful reply: 'It is permissible that a mixed choir take part in religious service, but if an overwhelming majority objects to this procedure then it would be desirable to discontinue it.'⁸ Most of the Bulawayo congregation favoured the retention of the mixed choir and the Sephardim followed this tradition when they formed their own mixed choir for services in 1946.

Despite the mixed choirs, the ladies gallery and strict segregation of the

sexes during worship continued in all the synagogues until the advent of the Progressive congregations. When the Chief Rabbi, Dr J.H. Hertz, visited Bulawayo in 1920 he was again drawn into the mixed choir question. However, by that time the question of proselytes was worrying the community more.

Intermarriage was always present in Rhodesia and there were often cases of Jewish men and Afrikaner women partners in pioneer days. In most cases the Gentile spouse was brought into the Jewish community and sought conversion. The religious leaders and the community generally were more liberal in this regard than elsewhere, although, technically, the final decision lay with the Beth Din (religious court) in South Africa or Britain. In the 1950s the intermarriage rate was calculated to be around twelve per cent and it has retained roughly this level since then. At an annual meeting in the 1960s the Bulawayo Hebrew congregation considered a resolution against accepting candidates for conversion; this exclusive policy was defeated but it appears that in recent years the former local initiative, in favour of a liberal attitude, has been yielded more to the Beth Din.

In their Services the Ashkenazi congregations began to follow the *minhag* (ritual) of the English United Synagogue and use the Singer's Prayer Book. The Sephardim when they established themselves followed the tradition of looking to London for guidance and placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Haham, the religious Head of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogues in Britain. The local Sephardim adopted the De Sola Prayer Book and most of the London Sephardi *minhag*, although they retained some of their own regional variations as regards tunes and minor matters. In both cases the Services are conducted in Hebrew while the sermons are in English — only the Progressives use English in their prayers.

The lack of a religiously knowledgeable lay leadership, with some notable exceptions such as I.R. Rosin and H.H. Gollop, son of Dayan M. Gollop (Judge of the Chief Rabbi's Court) of London, has meant that the Ministers themselves have had to undertake much of the organization and ritual in the services and have become especially responsible for the education of the community's children.

Thus, although the synagogues have lay control, the rabbi is not merely *primus inter pares* — the teacher and scholar among scholars — as he was in Eastern Europe. At the same time in Rhodesia, as in much of the English-speaking world in recent years, the Jewish Minister has taken on a more institutionalized role similar to that of the Nonconformist Christian Minister. Therefore the attitudes of the Ministers, particularly the early

ones, had a great deal of influence on the outlook of Rhodesian Jewry. This influence was heightened by the fact that the clergy who went to Rhodesia were strong-willed and adaptable men who served their congregations for unusually long periods.

Apart from Gwelo in the 1930s and the shared ministry of Revd A. Ehrman for all three Midlands centres in the years 1959–63, only Salisbury and Bulawayo have had Jewish clergy. The Salisbury Hebrew Congregation's list of Ministers is quite short: the Revd L. Rubin (1909–12), Revd Mark Harris (1913–15), Revd J.J. Rosin, J.P. (1918–35), Rabbi Maurice Konviser, O.B.E. (1935–67), Revd D.L. Landy (1967–70), Rabbi Y.Z. Shalpid (1972–6). The Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation has had even fewer incumbents: the Revd M.I. Cohen, M.B.E. (1901–37), Dr I.H. Levine (1941–7), Revd W. Yesorsky (1947–65), Rabbi I. Zwebner (1967–75). The Sephardi Hebrew Congregation has been served by Dr Manfred Papo (1944–63), Revd S.R. Ichay (1960–8), Rabbi I. Benzaquen (1968–77). The Bulawayo Progressive Hebrew Congregation had only one Minister, Rabbi Curtis Cassell, from its establishment in 1957 until it was merged with the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation in 1977; its sister congregation in Salisbury has only been able to obtain the part-time services of Revd I. Silvera during the years 1967–9.

It is perhaps of some interest to examine the backgrounds of some of those religious leaders who had the most impact on the community in order to obtain some idea of the lines of development of Rhodesian Judaism. The first and most influential Jewish clergyman, and the one who figured largely in the previous chapters was the Revd Moses Isaac Cohen. Born in London in 1876 he was educated at Jews' and University Colleges of the University of London. He arrived at his first post, in what was to be his only 'parish', during the South African War. Cohen was an unusual mixture — a more anglicized version of Chaim Weizmann. He was a great believer in the British Empire and all that it stood for, and believed in acculturating Jewish youth to British norms, especially in the sporting sphere; yet he was also a passionate and life-long Zionist and encouraged his own family to settle in Eretz Israel. His policy in the former sphere was consistent throughout his career and in 1902 he wrote to the Administration stating:

I have myself taken over the work of naturalising many of the members of our community. Owing almost entirely to the influence of our congregation these newcomers are rapidly Anglicised. Their children, in particular, in a year or two become indistinguishable from British or Colonial children.⁹

Along with his wife 'Birdie', Cohen threw himself into public life in the territory and they set the norms for all who came after them. It was for his public work in Matabeleland, for the Public Library, the Native Welfare Society, Children's Welfare Society, and many other deserving causes that Cohen won his Imperial honour.

Salisbury's Joseph Julius Rosin who had been born in Courland in 1879 and educated at a *Yeshiva* (Talmudic college), was closer to the Litvak background of many of his congregants. He had come to Salisbury after relinquishing a post at Wolverhampton, England. He also involved himself with public service to the general community and was prominent in Freemasonry, the Salisbury Unemployed Society, The Rhodesian Children's Home, and after 1922 as a magistrate.

Rhodesian's second longest serving Jewish clergyman was Maurice Konviser, O.B.E., who was born in Bilaystok, Poland in 1902. His family moved to Paris and then London when he was still a child, and like Cohen he was educated at Jews' and University Colleges but with some additional study at the Sorbonne. After a short period as a Minister in London, he served the Kimberley Congregation from 1927 until he moved to Salisbury in 1935. As has already been mentioned, he was much involved in public life particularly during the Federal decade when he hovered on the fringe of politics and received State recognition for his services to the country.

The biggest influence on the Sephardim, Dr Papo, had an unusual background before arriving in Salisbury. He was born in Vienna in 1898, the son of a Rabbi to the Sephardi minority among the Austro-Hungarian Jewry. Papo received his doctorate from the University of Vienna in 1922, ministered to a congregation in Salzburg and was ordained as a Rabbi by the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia in 1938. This was an eventful year for him for he spent three months in Dachau Concentration Camp after the Nazi invasion of Austria and on his release he moved to England to serve the Manchester Sephardi Congregation. Probably the finest scholar among Rhodesian Jewish clergy, he did much to improve the outlook and education of the Sephardi Congregation but, like most of his congregants, he had less to do with the country's public life than the Ashkenazi Ministers and their flock.

Rabbi Curtis Cassell was the representative of another important strand in Judaism. Born into a Reform family in Germany in 1912, after six years at University he attended a *Yeshiva* at Montreux. He served the Reform Congregation in Berlin and Frankfurt-on-Oder before moving to Britain in 1939. Cassell spent the war years in the British Army and followed this with a religious post in Glasgow and at the West London Synagogue, the premier Anglo-Jewish Reform Congregation. His Reform Judaism is of

a very liberal variety and he had acquired the image of an American Reform Rabbi. Politically active, he has been radical in the Rhodesian context, involved in educational questions and the Rhodesian version of the Civil Rights Movement, Todd's parties and the Centre Party. This political involvement, and his unwillingness to accept the Cohen inheritance of passionate Zionism, made him unpopular with many sections of the community.

One of the biggest and most constant concerns of the religious leaders, and the Jewish population generally, has been the religious education of the community's children. It is thus interesting to trace the development of Jewish education in the country. The official attitude towards religious education was initially dictated by Rhodes, who

had strongly advocated that religious instruction should form part of the curriculum of schools but wished that all denominations should be placed on an equal footing. He therefore pressed for the introduction into the educational system of a provision that half-an-hour should be set aside daily in all schools during which time the clergy of every denomination should be allowed access to the boys and girls of their particular creed — the Wesleyan Minister to the Wesleyan pupils, the Rabbi to the Jewish pupils, the Jesuit priest to the Catholics and so on.¹⁰

This enlightened policy eventually proved impracticable because of insufficient numbers of clergy and the distribution of children of all denominations in schools all over the country.

However, over the years Rhodesian Jewry has always forcefully defended the right of entry of clergy into the schools and, wherever possible, has made use of this legislation. The existence of the 'Rhodes Clause' allowed the Jewish community, led by the Revd M.I. Cohen, to support the advocates of non-denominational State education during the debate on undenominational versus denominational schools in Bulawayo in 1902–3, particularly since at this period most Jewish children attended Anglican or Catholic schools such as St George's, St John's or the Convent.

Cohen regarded himself primarily as an educationalist and took great interest in general education; for a time he was Chairman of the Bulawayo School Board. His concern was for the education of the mass of the children more than the clever minority, and he advocated practical or vocational education for European children, especially for farming careers. Yet he never allowed the specifically Jewish interest to go unrepresented. In 1925 he managed to get Hebrew recognized and taught at Government schools as one of the classical languages, and he persuaded Louis Landau and Charelick Salomon to offer scholarships of £20 to pupils who passed the Junior Certificate in Hebrew. Cohen pressured the 1929

Education Committee about school hours and, unsuccessfully, against Saturday morning school.

The problems associated with religious classes in the day-schools led the community to return to the traditional educative medium, the *cheder*, the largest of which became the Louis Landau Hebrew School in Bulawayo. These classes met at the Synagogue for a few hours on weekday afternoons and on Sunday mornings, when they were taught the Hebrew language and religion by the Minister, a trained teacher, or sometimes a knowledgeable layman. The main concern of the parents was the preparation of their sons for the *barmitzvah* ceremony.

Obtaining and retaining teaching staff, who often doubled as cantors and were usually brought out from England, always proved difficult and the system was constantly criticized. The general dissatisfaction with regard to Jewish education came to a head in the 1950s, when for instance in 1957 only 60 per cent of Jewish children were enrolled at these *chadarim*.¹¹ This situation and the heightened group-feeling caused by Zionist activity, led the community towards the idea of establishing its own full-time primary schools which would provide a general as well as a Jewish education. It was to implement resolutions advocating day-schools by the Rhodesian Zionist Council and the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies that the Carmel School was established in Bulawayo in January 1958. The school started with a kindergarten class of eight on the premises of the Louis Landau School. Every year it added a new class and eventually it obtained its own premises in Bulawayo, thus becoming the first community of its size (c. 2,800 in 1958) in the English-speaking world, to venture into the field of Jewish day schools; and within two years Salisbury had followed with its own Sharon School.

Both of the Jewish day-schools were financed and administered by the Board of Deputies until independent Governors were appointed. The overall aim was a harmonious synthesis of Jewish and secular education catering for children from KG1 to Standard V, along with the sporting and extra-curricular activities required by the Government Education Department. There was little disagreement over the emphasis which should be given to the schools (that is whether they should be religious or national) but there were practical problems in obtaining suitable teachers to provide the ideal education with the requisite Jewish content. The outlook adopted was that Hebrew should be taught as a living language and religious instruction be along Orthodox lines. Priority for entrance was given to children of the Jewish faith but as soon as integrated private schools became legal in 1963 African children entered as pupils.

The success of the Jewish day schools in establishing fine academic

reputations, in utilizing modern Hebrew methods, erecting modern buildings and attracting pupils and staff was particularly impressive since it occurred during years of severe crisis and uncertainty in the country generally. The political situation led to an acute crisis as regards the recruitment of professional workers and even the prestigious Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation was without a Minister for two years. Thus the burden of organization fell on to a group of young lay leaders who were fortunately more than capable of meeting the challenge. It was found impossible to obtain suitably qualified Jewish headmasters for the two schools, and only for Hebrew and Religion was it possible to obtain Jewish staff. Nevertheless by good use of existing talent the goal was achieved and it became possible to offer a relatively high standard of Jewish education to the vast majority of Jewish youngsters who lived in Salisbury and Bulawayo.

The success of the schools owed much to their active Parents' Associations who organized bazaars and other events to raise money for the premises at the communal centres. The measure of the schools' success can be found in their enrolment figures. In 1966 Carmel School had 160 and Sharon School 110 pupils, and in 1969 the figures were 152 for Carmel and 154 for Sharon. Of the Jewish children of primary school age in 1971, 70 per cent in Bulawayo, and 47 per cent in Salisbury, attended the Jewish day schools. These further undermined the *chadarim*, but whereas 68 per cent of Jewish primary schoolchildren were enrolled for some form of formal Jewish education in 1966, the proportion had risen to 87 per cent by 1971. However, the post-primary situation deteriorated and the corresponding figures for high-school pupils who relied on the afternoon classes attached to the various Synagogues fell from 17 per cent in 1966 to 9 per cent in 1971. At the same time there were no permanent institutional facilities for the Jewish education of the thirty-seven school children who lived away from the two main centres, although the Board of Deputies has always done its best to arrange for visits of Ministers from Salisbury and right-of-entry visits by local laymen.

Rhodesians were so conditioned to racially segregated schools for Europeans, Asians, Coloureds and Africans that the concept of Jewish parochial schools did not receive the amount of opposition that it has occasioned in other countries. Obviously the arguments against groups 'cutting themselves off' were less powerful in a society where the ruling elite enforced such a policy on the different population groups. In fact the advocates of Jewish day-schools could point to the fact that in such schools children could at least mix on equal terms with African children — something that was impossible in the State system.

Many of the achievements of the period after 1960 took place at an inauspicious time. They were owed to the influence of a younger and more enlightened leadership who brought modern business techniques into communal work to try and rationalize the system. There was no doubt that for its size Rhodesian Jewry was always over-developed organizationally. This problem had been realized as early as 1902 when, during the economic depression following the South African War, there were moves to amalgamate the three Jewish bodies engaged in welfare work, the Bulawayo Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, the Chevra Kadisha and the Chovevi Zion Society, which provided overlapping services. However, no agreement was forthcoming mainly because no office holder was willing to step down in favour of any other, and amalgamation meant fewer office bearers.

In 1961 the community was well provided for in every way, although it was over-developed organizationally. In Bulawayo in that year the following communal organizations operated. The city was the headquarters of the two umbrella bodies, the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and the Rhodesian Zionist Council. There was also the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation of about 560 families which employed a Minister and a cantor, and supervised an exclusively kosher butcher's shop. The Progressive Congregation had about 120 families and its own rabbi. The Chevra Kadisha and the Free Loan Society still operated, and there was also the new (Reform) Hevrah Kaddishah. The educational establishment consisted of the Orthodox Louis Landau Hebrew School with 160 pupils, 5 teachers and a new building, and a Progressive school with 70 pupils and 3 teachers. There was also the Carmel School which at this time had 80 pupils and 5 teachers in its own new building alongside a Hebrew-English Nursery School with 70 pupils and 3 teachers. Adult education was catered for by a Hebrew-speaking circle, *Chug Ivri*, with 40 members, and a Yiddish cultural society with 70 members.

Local Jewish and general welfare work was undertaken by the Jewish Women's Communal League and the Union of Jewish Women, both of which had around 400 members. In the Zionist sphere there was the Chovevi Zion Zionist Society with 300 members, the Women's Zionist Society (WIZO) with 550 members, and the Habonim and Betar Youth organizations. The social and sporting sphere was provided for by the Weizmann Country Club (494 members), the Parkview Sports Club (600 members) and the Jewish Guild (400 members) which provided a more cultural programme and a Jewish library. When one realizes that the membership of these organizations overlapped and they had to be supported by fees and donations from about 900 families; that they were

duplicated in Salisbury, with the added complication of division into three religious sections instead of Bulawayo's two, one can appreciate the rather bald phrase 'over-developed organizationally'.

In the 1960s, unlike in 1902, the problems were not due to lack of finance or even enthusiasm, but because of this they were perhaps more intractable since their solution lay outside the ability of the local community. One problem was the declining numbers due to emigration, and the other was an acute shortage of trained personnel in all spheres of community work. Except in the pioneer years, Rhodesia had never really had to face the latter problem before 1960. The high status, good conditions and high pay offered locally had always enabled it to secure the officials it needed. However the insecurity and bad publicity in the media, which Rhodesia suffered after the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1959, seriously affected recruitment from outside Africa. The situation worsened so that between 1967 and 1973 there was only ever one qualified Orthodox rabbi in the country.

At first the local community went ahead with new buildings and plans for expansion and it was able to obtain a Minister for the Midlands communities, an Israeli resident in Kenya. However, in November 1961, at a regional conference organized by the Board of Deputies in Que Que, it was recommended that communities should reconsider all their building and planning programmes in the light of the deteriorating political and economic position in the Federation. Yet two important projects went ahead. These were the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation's Milton Park Centre and the Savyon Lodge Old People's Home in Bulawayo.

Despite the shortage of Ministers, cantors, teachers and youth leaders, the community continued to operate all its services and programmes. The reason for this success was the co-ordination and direction achieved by the astute leadership of the Board and Zionist organization and also the fact, noted in Chapter 6, that the economic collapse predicted after U.D.I. did not occur, with the result that the community had larger sums to dispense than anticipated and was thus able to import key personnel for short periods.

One positive by-product of the crisis situation, which affected all sections of Rhodesia's European population, was a greater feeling of unity and practical co-operation. The emergence of younger leaders would probably have brought about a lessening of the distance between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi, Progressive and Orthodox, anyway, but during the 1960s important headway was made towards communal unity. Some examples of this were the opening of a new Jewish cemetery in Salisbury in 1969 to serve all three congregations; the Progressives had a separate sec-

tion of this plot but the two Orthodox congregations combined to erect a hall there. Also in 1969 the children of the Salisbury Progressive Congregation began to attend the Sephardi Samuel Leon School, which had had its own premises since 1962. In 1970 the two Orthodox Synagogues adopted a resolution to share one rabbi when temporarily necessary; they also amalgamated their nursery schools.

As has already been mentioned, a key factor in the development and progress of Rhodesian Jewry in the 1960s and 1970s has been the work of the Board of Deputies. This is the community's representative body on which are represented all the religious, cultural, Zionist, and youth organizations. However, until the late 1960s the price of this unity consisted of a provision for separate Ashkenazi and Sephardi representation in Mashonaland, using two equal lists. This type of unified body is very much an Anglo-Jewish phenomenon and does not occur much outside the countries of the former British Empire. Such bodies are based on the Board of Deputies of British Jews founded in 1760 which aimed at presenting a coherent and unified voice to the wider society and especially to the authorities. In the case of Rhodesia the model was the South African Jewish Board of Deputies which had its origin in a joint Transvaal - Natal Board founded in 1903.

The originators of the Rhodesian Board were Samuel Rabinovitz and C.I. Jacobs, the men who dominated its work for the first fifteen years or so. At the annual general meeting of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation in 1943 a resolution was passed calling for the formation of a Council for Rhodesian Jewry to represent the communities of both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The historical background to this decision has already been discussed. The aim was to establish a body which would be accepted by Governments as the spokesman of the Jewish community and with which other bodies or the authorities could negotiate. The Council, and later the Board, had its headquarters in Bulawayo but maintained regional committees and offices in Salisbury and Lusaka, and in the Copperbelt later. It worked through annual conferences until 1952, after which biennial conferences were held. At the fifth congress in 1948 the Council changed its name for political reasons to the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies, so that it would not become confused with the Zionist Council. Another change of name for political reasons occurred in 1962 when the title Central African Jewish Board of Deputies was adopted, in the hope that this would allow the Board to continue operating on both sides of the Zambezi after the dissolution of the Federation.

The work of the Board in its early years from 1943 to 1948 is an indication of the reasons for its formation. It devoted itself to organizing a post-

war Reconstruction Fund, aiding war victims, helping on citizenship questions and fighting the disabilities of non-British Jews who served in the armed forces. It was also involved in combating anti-Semitism at all levels including bullying at schools. In 1947 an anti-*Shechita* campaign was launched which led to S.P.C.A. intervention and a Board of Enquiry led by Dr A.P. Martin. Much of the credit for the manner in which the community presented its case and justified the humaneness of its slaughtering methods was owed to Messrs I.R. Rosin and A. Landau.

In 1948 the Board was concerned with naturalization applications and the poor treatment that Rhodesian residents were receiving from the British Government. The situation improved when Rhodesian citizenship was introduced and the Board was able to get the Ministry of Internal Affairs to agree to amendments of the Citizenship Bill regarding residents of long standing and the appeals procedure.

The 1950s was a happier period and the Board's work was less vital locally. For a time it was concerned with trying to get the community to boycott German goods and passed resolutions to this effect. In 1956 it managed to have Hebrew added to Yiddish for the purposes of the literacy clause in the Federal Immigration Act, a feature which was unique in the Commonwealth. At this time it also approached the authorities with a view to obtaining admission for Hungarian and Egyptian Jewish refugees, a handful of whom were admitted.

The moral authority and standing of the Board was growing all the time and when the Federation suffered an economic recession in 1958-9, it was approached for assistance by many Jewish residents. In co-operation with Jewish-owned firms and the Jewish Women's organizations it attempted to aid hardship cases. The Congo crisis of 1961 led to more appeals for assistance and immigration guarantees, which were gladly provided.

The Board's administrative structure was built up after 1951 by Maurice Wagner, its General Secretary, working out of his office in Bulawayo. He was assisted by the Secretaries of the Salisbury regional offices, D. Salkind (1955 - 62), J.J. Veriano (1962 - 6), and Gerald Rosin (1966 - 79). The last named, who was the son of the Revd J.J. Rosin, was also Secretary of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, Chairman of the Mashonaland Regional committee and past Vice-President of the Board and had the advantage of having been in the Civil Service before his retirement and his move into the communal service. Wagner was a great asset to Rhodesian Jewry both administratively and culturally. He was born in Poland but brought up in London from 1920. There he attended the University and Jews' College and obtained a Masters degree. Prior to his appointment in Rhodesia he was a teacher in English. His religious and

general knowledge were particularly useful to a community lacking intellectuals, especially when the shortage of ministers and teachers occurred. It was he who usually gave the Jewish religious broadcasts on the Festivals.

Under the Presidency of the Hon. A.E. Abrahamson, from 1956 to 1958 and ever since 1964, the Board's prestige and moral authority increased considerably. Increasingly the community turned to it in the expectation that it could meet its needs as they arose. Its major role was in communal co-ordination and public relations. The lack of national organizations for Jewish education, welfare and ecclesiastical life meant that the Board gradually ceased being a mere clearing-house and became directly and practically involved in education and welfare.

Probably the Board's most delicate and taxing work was in the field of public and group relations. The President of the Board had attended the National Indaba in 1962 as a representative of the Jewish community but the Board always maintained that it could not operate in the general or party political field; yet it did encourage individual Jews to take an active part in political life in the country and it applauded the action of the Revd W. Yesorsky and Rabbi Cassel in issuing a statement in 1961 on the Law and Order Maintenance Bill. However, its own policy was clearly enunciated in 1962:

The Board of Deputies is entitled to speak for the Jewish community only when the Jewish community is affected. The Board cannot speak for the community on general political issues because members of the community and members of the Board itself differ in their approach as much as any other group of citizens.¹²

Rhodesian Jewry like all other Western communities thus eschewed any involvement in party politics and denied the existence of a Jewish vote. It was a similar argument to that taken in 1926 when the Sons of England Society in Bulawayo had requested the Jewish community to participate in their Trafalgar Day celebrations. The President of the Hebrew Congregation had replied that, 'As a religious body the congregation could not do so but our members as individual citizens are welcome to go'.¹³

Undoubtedly the sympathies of the leadership, especially Abrahamson, were basically liberal and left-inclined in the local context; and as politics began to take on a more basic and moral tone during the 1960s, the Board's neutral position began to alter slightly. An example of this was its memorandum against the Rhodesian Front's proposed Property Owners' Protection Bill, which would have brought segregation to non-African areas. Thirty of the thirty-four members of the Board signed the document which was sent to the Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government and Housing: it opposed such legislation in the light of Jewish ethical

teaching and the Jewish historical experience, since it was thought likely to increase disharmony, injustice and resentment among the different population groups. On this occasion the Rhodesian Government had invited comment, as did Lord Pearce in 1971 when he undertook to assess the degree of acceptance of the 1971 Anglo-Rhodesian Settlement Proposals. Then the Board again sent a memorandum wholeheartedly endorsing the proposals on behalf of the Jewish community.

In part, the new confidence of the community was due to the standing and experience of its leaders and, perhaps, the relative inexperience of the Rhodesian Front Government. In its negotiations with this Government the Board was much involved with obtaining import allocations for religious items and visas for visits by guests and religious officials. The Board's policy was always to deal with Ministers and never officials except in matters of detail. When to make representations to authorities, and the form that these should take, was increasingly left to the judgement of the leadership who normally used a personal call rather than a publicizing formal approach. In this way the Board was able to obtain the exclusion from Rhodesia of the more outrageously anti-Semitic of the Front's overseas supporters and get facilities for aid to be sent to Israel during the 1967 and 1973 wars, without embarrassing the authorities.

In part this approach was facilitated by the dissolution in 1969 of official ties with the Jewish community in Zambia, where a completely autonomous body was established. Problems over the transfer of funds and travel restrictions made it inevitable that there should be this break, which however regrettable did simplify matters for the Board, because the Zambian community was very dispersed and had had no Jewish clergy since 1967.

Rhodesian Jewry has always regarded itself as part and parcel of *Klal Israel* (the unity of Israel) and has always maintained official links with other Jewish communities around the world. The ties of family and friendship, as well as in practical matters, with the South African community are legion. In the past, in most cases Rhodesian concern with fellow Jews has been in the form of money and parcels sent to the persecuted communities of Europe. The Sephardi congregation, however, sent S.N. Alhadeff to Rhodes to investigate conditions there after the Second World War and it provided funds and practical assistance in order to try and restore and maintain a Jewish presence there. It also helped to get a joint Israeli-Greek Commission appointed to arrange compensation for Jewish losses. Permanent international links took the form of placing the religious side of the community's existence under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities in South Africa; and, more importantly, in Britain. Thus it was

that the Chief Rabbis, Dr Hertz in 1920 and Dr Brodie in 1950, both made pastoral tours to the Colony, and the Haham made pastoral visits in 1951 and in 1958 when he consecrated the Shaare Shalom Synagogue; further visits by Dr S. Gaon during the 1960s and in 1974 were much appreciated because of the boost to local morale that they provided by mitigating the community's sense of geographical and political isolation.

The first official international contacts outside the purely religious sphere were the Conference of the Jewish Communities of the British Commonwealth. In 1950 the Rhodesians were part of the South African delegation but in 1954 they had their own representative in C.I. Jacobs who pressed their own problems. The Rhodesian Board of Deputies joined the World Jewish Congress as a national participant in 1953 and the community has been represented at all the plenary sessions including that in 1975. These contacts have been especially useful both practically and in terms of morale, and the fact that A.E. Abrahamson has been a member of the Executive of the World Jewish Congress, along with persons from communist countries such as Rumania, has meant that the Rhodesian community has not suffered the extreme isolation from its co-religionists that one might have expected in the highly politicized modern world.

CHAPTER 8

Zionism

The early commitment to the Jewish national ideal among Rhodesian Jewry, mentioned in Chapter 1, was such that opposition to the cause from inside the community was always insignificant. In the 1930s, the per capita monetary contribution of Rhodesian Jewry to the Zionist cause was the highest in the world and this became a tradition which was maintained into the 1970s. The result of this generosity was that the country became an integral part of the South African Zionist circuit and a common stepping-off point for fund-raising and publicity tours by Zionist leaders. Thus, somewhat surprisingly, most of the major Zionist figures of this century have visited Rhodesia. These visitors have included Dr Chaim Weizmann, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Nahum Sokolow, Professor Selig Brodetsky, David Wolffsohn, Dr Alexander Goldstein, Professor Ernest Simon, Col. F.H. Kisch, Moshe Sharett, the Hon. Edwin Samuel, Dr Nahum Goldman, Berl Locker, Dr Abba Silver, Norman Bentwich, Harry Levin, Dr and Mrs Granovsky, Cecil Roth, Dr Olswanger, Dr Shmarayhu Levin, Dr Soleveitchik, Dr Yehuda Kaufmann and in more recent years Israel's military heroes, such as Generals Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon, Chaim Herzog and Ezer Weizman.

Common links between Rhodesia and Palestine during the period when both their destinies were associated through the British Empire meant that some of the most famous Gentile statesmen involved in Zionism, such as Jan Christiaan Smuts, Jan Hofmeyr, Lord Allenby and Leopold Amery have been seen and heard by Rhodesian Jews. The mutual imperial link even led to an overlap of administrative personnel. Lord Plumer, who led the Rhodesians to Mafeking, succeeded the famous Anglo-Jewish statesman, Herbert Samuel, to become Palestine's second High Commissioner for the years 1925 - 8. He in turn was succeeded in this sensitive post by Rhodesia's first Governor, Sir John Chancellor, who had complained that he was frustrated by the restrictions placed on his freedom of action by the constitution of a colony with Responsible Government. Unfortunately, as we saw in Chapter 2, his rather hostile attitude towards Jews was

apparent even before he entered the Middle East; and his handling of the 1929 Palestine riots and the massacre of the Jewish community of Hebron has been much criticized by Zionist commentators. A Central African personality with a Palestinian background was Sir Ronald Storrs, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia in the 1930s, who previously had been the first British Governor of Jerusalem.

The links between Herzl and Rhodes, which many of the present-day critics of imperialism point to, were in reality minimal. However, there is no doubt that in 1901 Herzl attempted to meet Rhodes through W.T. Stead, because the 'Colossus' was the only founder of a State then living. Rhodes never met Herzl, but his advice was supposed to be that money was the first essential for any State-building ventures. Zionist links with Southern Africa are undoubtedly a weapon in the hands of its modern critics but placed in historical perspective a different complexion can be put on events. In an editorial on 'The Fall of Jerusalem and Zionism' on 14 October 1917, *The Bulawayo Chronicle* asked:

May Armageddon lead to one more restoration of a small oppressed people to its old centre. Is Britain to be the Cyrus of the twentieth century?

The words of Prophecy derive daily a new significance.

Zionism is a political movement of national liberation composed of a fabric woven of a variety of contrasting but nevertheless compatible strands, religious, historical, political, social and economic. Therefore it can appeal to diverse interests and attract the support of people in widely different circumstances. There is no doubt that the elderly Jewish country-trader, with his picture of one-eyed Moshe Dayan on his shop wall, walked a little taller in his later days and was treated with greater respect, particularly by the rural Afrikaners, after the 1950s compared with the 1930s. In Rhodesia the image of 'the new Jew', the back-to-the-land pioneer and soldier-farmer, was the image which Rhodesian Jews sought to foster because it appealed to their own reference group, the British settlers. A basically successful movement, Zionism undoubtedly changed the image of the Jew and enhanced his prestige in the eyes of his Gentile neighbours all over the world.

The colonizing strand was an obvious appeal and it was eagerly seized upon by visiting Zionist publicists like Nahum Sokolow speaking in Bulawayo in 1926:

I expect the cause I represent to be far better understood here than in any other country of the world because in this country you are also pioneering a country — you are the bearers of the light of civilisation into the wilderness.

The vicissitudes in the White Rhodesian attitude towards Zionism over the last three quarters of a century provide an interesting insight into the general British Imperial viewpoint and also into the changing relationship between Rhodesians and metropolitan British interests as well as between White groupings within the settler community. It is therefore worthwhile to study this question in some detail.

The Victorians tended to associate Jews with the Bible and regarded them an exotic but potentially powerful people. Major Leonard philosophized in his diary at Fort Tuli in 1891:

It is sad to draw a comparison between their past greatness and present condition of weakness, and yet there are not wanting many palpable and visible indications of a growth of power that is flourishing slowly, yet sure and steadily, in our midst . . . they are an element that some day in the not very distant future, will have to be taken into serious consideration and consulted.²

Around the turn of the century the Rhodesian press followed a similar approach to Zionist questions. Zionist activities in Rhodesia, South Africa and Europe were surprisingly well reported as were other matters of Jewish concern like the Dreyfus case. In its lengthy report of the 1902 Basle Conference, *The Rhodesia Herald* of 3 January referred to the 'solid foundations being laid in Palestine' and the great minds which were involved in the movement; it quickly took up the strands of the new, or perhaps newly resurrected, Jewish image:

The weakly tailor, slipper stitcher, and cap maker sweated in the Ghettos of Europe has been transformed into a stout, healthy agriculturist. Eight millions of eleven million Jews are still in Bondage and Zionism is working to emancipate these and make them worthy descendants of the men who went up against the Canaanites and Amorites in Mosaic days. The conception is magnificently great in an age when projects are big, and the progress of the rehabilitation of Israel as a nation will be watched by the rest of the world with the deepest interest.

The editor of *The Rhodesia Herald* on 21 October 1902 greeted the formation of a Zionist Society in Salisbury in 1902 with a message on a now familiar theme:

Zionism claims among its disciples some of the most prominent figures in the world, while its leaders number eminent men of letters, finance, art and science. The handful of our citizens who decided Sunday to advance the cause in this part of the world join a throng which only the overbold, or the unthoughtful, may cavil.

The 'pros and cons' of the British Government's offer of land in Uganda, which were debated at the sixth Zionist Congress in Basle in 1903, were of

course of much interest to the settlers, both Jewish and Gentile, in Central Africa. The proposed site was in the then Uganda Protectorate but it eventually composed Kenya's White Highlands. One of the scheme's most prominent supporters was Sir Harry Johnston, the man who had defeated the Arab slave-traders and established British rule first in Nyasaland (now Malawi) and then in Uganda. Johnston had become a keen Zionist through his friendship with Israel Zangwill, the Anglo-Jewish writer and Zionist leader, and firmly supported the idea of a Jewish State in the Middle East as well. On the whole the majority opinion, as in the 1930s over the Northern Rhodesian Settlement Plan, came down on the side of the opposition to large-scale mass settlement of Whites in the middle of Africa; and when the final report by Major Gibbons on the Uganda scheme was released in 1905 it came as no surprise that Uganda was discounted as anything but a partial solution to the Jewish problem.

The pogroms and expulsions of the years 1903 – 5 in the Tsarist Empire further encouraged support for Zionism among Jews in the West. Like Herzl, the fortunate Jews of Eastern European origin who had left Russia and settled in Central Africa, saw the only solution to the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe as being the creation of a State with a Jewish majority. British Imperial opinion did not oppose such ideas at this time. In a speech on the inaugural meeting of the Board of Deputies of the Transvaal and Natal in 1903, Sir Alfred (later Lord) Milner, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, recognized that in free countries there was no problem of dual loyalties. Of Zionism, he said that, 'There is nothing incompatible in this with the most thorough British patriotism. It is oppression which had denationalised the Jews.'³

Local sympathy for Zionism was linked to the general horror at the suffering of the Jews in Russia. When a Relief Fund was established in Rhodesia for Russian Jewry in 1905 there were many contributions from Gentile individuals and businesses. The local newspapers continued to give space to Zionist politics and the re-introduction of the Shekel in 1905, which cost one shilling Sterling at this time, and the Territorialist secession, led by Israel Zangwill, from the 1905 Conference received much local publicity.

Between 1905 and 1913 there was a decline in the attention devoted by the local press to Zionism which mirrored the general world-wide decline in interest which affected the movement at this stage. The visit to Bulawayo of a touring orator, Dr Kretschmar Israeli, was the occasion of an editorial in *The Bulawayo Chronicle* in 1914 and from then on Zionism was never out of the news for very long. There was general support for the Palestine Emergency Fund in June 1917 but surprisingly little comment on the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. Only the fall of Jerusalem elicited editorial comment, and

the editors advocated British Imperial interests by hoping that Britain's generosity over a National Home would influence Jewish revolutionaries in Russia to continue the war against the Central Powers.

The next couple of years saw many educational and cultural meetings concerned with Zionism. In 1918 F.L. Hadfield, the Minister of Bulawayo's Presbyterian Church, spoke at the Jewish Guild Hall on 'The Restoration of the Jews from the Christian Standpoint' and in 1920 Captain E.M. Wilson, an Intelligence Officer with Allenby's forces, presented a paper to a packed meeting of the Chovevi Zion Society. In 1919 Lord Allenby himself visited Rhodesia and received a local Zionist delegation. In answer to their questions on the future of Zionism he suggested that only 'hard work and increased immigration' would produce a Jewish National Home.⁴

Local support for Zionism was such that during the fund-raising visit of Dr Alexander Goldstein, a special Zionist envoy in 1924, he was joined on the platform at a public meeting in Salisbury by the Premier, Sir Charles Coghlan, Archdeacon Webster, Councillor Smith, the mayor of Salisbury, the Speaker and several members of the Legislative Assembly. The local press reported 'not only manifestations of goodwill but of brotherliness by Gentile and Jew alike. It was an exalted evening devoted to things ideal and spiritual.' Coghlan assured Goldstein of 'the uttermost respect which they all had for the Jews in this part of the world' and went on to state that Zionism 'was a good and noble cause and he hoped the Jews of Southern Rhodesia would not be behind their brothers in assisting'.⁵

British patronage of the Jewish National Movement continued to inspire Rhodesian support for it. In an editorial on the opening by Lord Balfour of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1925, the statesman was pictured as only the latest, in a series stretching back to Oliver Cromwell, of great Englishmen who have urged Britain to further the restoration of the Jews in their ancient land'.⁶ Visits in 1926 by Nahum Sokolow, the President of the World Zionist Organization, and in 1928 by Col. F.H. Kisch, the Head of the Zionist Executive in Palestine, were the scenes of further expressions of support in the press and more mass meetings, attended by the Rhodesian political establishment, which were characterized by mutual flattery from all the participants.

In Bulawayo in September 1929 there was a mass meeting at the synagogue to protest against the treatment of the *Yishuv* and resolutions were forwarded to London which were highly critical of the British authorities. The editorials of the time reflected growing discord between British and Jewish interests in the Middle East and for the first time there were criticisms of Zionism, Jewish behaviour in Palestine, and the capacity

of the Zionists to carry out their plans. The influence of A.K. Chesterton could now be observed in the local press which now began to publicize his views. In 1930 there were further critical editorials of the Zionist reaction to the British statement of policy on Palestine and Jewish threats of boycott.

This change is only explicable in the context of Rhodesian strategic interests which were bound up with the safety and control of the Suez Canal, as the usual route to its main port of Beira was through the Canal and down the east coast of Africa. It was only during the mid-1920s that the British Chiefs of Staff accepted the military importance of Palestine as an air-base and protection for the canal. Rhodesian opinion therefore followed official British thinking on such matters and the Prime Minister, Huggins, was especially allied to the main trend of Conservative Party feeling on the Middle East problems. In turn the *Argus Press* reflected the thinking of the ruling Rhodesian establishment on this as on other questions.

Thus along with the worsening political situation in Palestine and Europe during the 1930s, the idealism and zeal which had accompanied the support for Zionism in the post-Balfour Declaration years began to ebb as the interests of British Imperial policy and the local Arab population began to be promoted as alternatives to the creation of a Jewish National Home. A more pessimistic spirit and sometimes even hostility began to enter references to the Zionist Movement. Only the occasional pronouncement of General Smuts dispelled the general gloom among the movement's advocates in the country; yet even Smuts suggested that Zionism was merely a solution for the problems of the oppressed Jews of Central and Eastern Europe and not a general movement of national regeneration.

The visit of important international personalities was always capable of winning press attention in Rhodesia and the desire to promote the image of the Colony invariably led to expressions of friendship and favour towards prominent visitors. Thus the visit of Dr Chaim Weizmann in April 1932, even though he held no official post at this time, was particularly well publicized and he was described in the local press 'an outstanding international figure'.⁷ There were the usual mass meetings patronized by prominent politicians and Government ministers. One intriguing aspect to arise from the visit was Weizmann's informal meeting with the Southern Rhodesian Cabinet to discuss the possible production of power alcohol from vegetable matter as an alternative to petroleum. Weizmann, who was a very distinguished chemist and former Reader in Biochemistry at the University of Manchester and Director of Admiralty Laboratories 1916-19, promised to prepare a memorandum for the Premier, Moffat, on the viability of making alcohol from maize, of which the Colony had a

substantial unsaleable surplus crop at that time. Weizmann and the Rhodesians were, however, unable to evoke the interest of the Imperial or Dominion Governments and persuade them to provide the necessary capital for major investigations in this field.

The increasing anti-Semitism which was characteristic of the local and international scene in the late 1930s was matched by growing anti-Zionist feelings. Jewish protests against the 1937 Peel Commission Report on Palestine were greeted with increasing irritation by British Rhodesians, even when Mr C.E. Nathan of Salisbury explained that under the Partition Plan the Jews of Palestine and the potential millions of oppressed immigrants from Europe would only receive an area the size of a large Rhodesian farm — in fact, one-and-a-quarter million acres, less than the Nuanetsi Ranch.⁸ The Minute Books of the Chovevi Zion Society show that in the years after 1938 the members were increasingly worried about biased press reports concerning Zionism and unfavourable reporting of local meetings such as those organized against the 1939 British White Paper on Palestine which severely restricted Jewish immigration. Eventually Zionism, anti-Semitism and the refugee question all meshed and the result was an increasingly hostile attitude towards anything Jewish.

The War did little to change local attitudes towards Zionism. The intensity of British patriotic feeling created by the War and the increasing conflict between the Zionists and the British Imperial authorities tended to worsen the situation right through to 1948. The Jewish community, which became increasingly Zionist the more it learnt about the tragedy in Europe, adopted a defensive pose. In July 1944 the recently-established Rhodesian Zionist Council decided not to enter into correspondence with a particularly virulent anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist letter-writer to *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, who wrote under the pseudonym 'Umgusa Valley', because their opponents always managed to get the last word and the local newspaper was thought to be reluctant to give Jews 'a fair deal'.⁹ The Council decided, however, to establish a pro-Palestine Committee to try and redress the anti-Zionist bias by making direct contact with two key groups: servicemen and journalists.

The post-war campaign by the Irgun against the British occupying forces in Palestine produced a severe conflict of loyalties among the previously patriotic Rhodesian Jews. In 1946 the Rhodesian leadership attempted to use the local hostility for productive ends; they attempted to get a statement from the Rhodesian and Belgian Congo Governments that there was no scope for the settlement in Central Africa of displaced Jews and former inmates of concentration camps and to place this 'invaluable evidence before the Anglo-American Committee on this problem'.¹⁰ An

indication of the general hostility can be discerned in the different policies adopted by Zionists in South Africa and Rhodesia during 1946–7. South Africa with its large anti-British Afrikaner population was the scene of protest demonstrations, business strikes, and services, but in Rhodesia it was decided that 'local circumstances precluded such an activist policy'.¹¹ As has already been mentioned, a Zionist delegation met with the Minister of Internal Affairs to discuss the local position and the Palestine question. In September 1947, Mr (later Sir Hugh) Beadle felt quite satisfied that Zionism was not linked to terrorism and gave the assurance that his Government did not plan to prevent the transmission of Zionist funds to Palestine. However, he warned the Zionists against too activist a policy and was unwilling to publish the fact that the meeting had actually taken place, lest Zionism become an issue during the Rhodesian General Election which was then pending. The large flood of White immigrants that was then entering the Colony included socially influential persons with a service background in British India or Palestine and many of them espoused very pro-Moslem, and anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist opinions. In early 1948, after the hanging of the British sergeants, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism merged and Rhodesian Jewry was forced to mount a security campaign to safeguard its communal property, but the only incident was an unsuccessful arson attack on the Bulawayo Synagogue.

The British decision to evacuate Palestine in May 1948 lessened local tensions. The diversion of the Zionist struggle towards resisting the invasion by the armies of the surrounding Arab States helped by changing the Zionist image; and there were even some Rhodesian Gentiles who volunteered to fight in defence of the new State of Israel. Israel's valiant military effort against superior forces and the lessening of direct British involvement in the Middle East conflict led to the defusing of the Zionist controversy within Rhodesia. Thus in the following years, as Israel began to be accepted as an integral part of the international community, the debate over the rights and wrongs of Zionism disappeared. Funds raised in Rhodesia continued to be transferred without hindrance as they had done under the Mandate, when the area which became Israeli had been part of the Sterling Area. There was very little local comment on the internal policies of the new State and its creation of a socialist society; and despite general White Rhodesian opposition to left-wing ideologies, the *kibbutz* system received a good deal of praise.

At an international level there was a gradual merging between the Zionist and Rhodesian-British Imperial viewpoints. In part this was the result of the overthrow of the feudal Arab regimes, which the British traditionally supported, and their replacement by ideologically left-wing, often

Moscow-oriented, anti-colonialist republics. The most obvious case was that of Egypt, and in 1956 British and Zionist interests coincided in their opposition to the new Egyptian dictator, Colonel Nasser; this resulted in British and Israeli troops being engaged on the same side in the Suez-Sinai campaign. The Rhodesians were vociferous in support of Eden's policy of intervention and Welensky was one of the few Commonwealth leaders to give moral and practical support, which took the form of sending Federal Air Force planes to Aden to replace British squadrons transferred to the Mediterranean. The eventual outcome, which saw the Israelis victorious but the British and French thwarted both militarily and politically, served to enhance general White Rhodesian admiration of Israel.

In the years after 1956, the Egyptian leadership of Afro-Asians at the United Nations served to further consolidate pro-Israeli opinion among White Rhodesians. Nasser's support for decolonization and the liberation movements and his threats against Israel were regarded as part and parcel of the same scheme. Yet during the Federation Israel and Rhodesia had few tangible links and trade was at a minimum until the Bilateral Trade Agreement between the two countries in 1958; and it was only in 1960 that Israel was persuaded to exhibit for the first time at the Central Africa Trade Fair. Israel's efforts to penetrate Black Africa and frustrate the Arab efforts to isolate her in the Third World inevitably led to policies which were seen by the increasingly right-wing Rhodesians as hostile to them. Israel's participation in schemes to train African trade unionists and the armies of the Congo (Zaire) and Tanzania, along with its provision of technical advice in agriculture and in the establishment of agricultural communes for newly independent African States, was resented by some but not in Government circles. There had never been a formal Israeli diplomatic presence in Rhodesia and Israeli affairs in the country had been looked after by the Consul-General in Johannesburg; thus at the time of U.D.I. Israel had no dramatic gestures to make with regard to withdrawal. At the United Nations Israel supported the majority line on the Anglo-Rhodesian dispute, and in contrast to its neglect of Salisbury it quickly established embassies in Lusaka and Zomba.

Nevertheless, when the 1967 Middle East crisis arose White Rhodesians were seen to be wholeheartedly pro-Israel. In the media the Arabs were pictured as pawns of the U.S.S.R. and the closure of the Suez Canal no longer worried a country undergoing United Nations economic sanctions. The 1967 June War was regarded by most White Rhodesians as a key event in the world struggle between the West and the Communists. They readily identified with the Israeli citizen army, composed like their own forces of reservists, which was pitted against a numerically superior enemy, backed

by the power and sophisticated armaments of the Eastern Bloc. During the first few days of June, Jewish and Zionist offices in Bulawayo and Salisbury were besieged by small contributors offering donations. Official sanction for such action was given when, despite Rhodesia's economic and foreign-exchange problems, arrangements were made by the Rhodesian Government for Israel to receive the benefits of the relatively large amounts of money donated to her by Rhodesians. The cynical attitude of the United Nations and its Secretary General, U. Thant, in allowing the Egyptians to unilaterally expel the U.N. Peace-Keeping Force in Sinai, helped to turn Rhodesian Zionists against the world organization and its apparent double standards. Rhodesians were thus further convinced that the organization only acted at the behest of its built-in majority of Third World and Communist States — an attitude which was reconfirmed in 1973. The accusation of dual loyalties among Zionists surprisingly did not occur except among a handful of extreme right-wingers, such as the members of the Candour League, whose anti-Semitism got the better of their anti-communism. This was despite the fact that Jewish university students, who had been granted deferments from National Service by the Rhodesian authorities, discontinued their studies in order to go to Israel as volunteers.

The incredible Israeli military victory served to raise Jewish and Zionist prestige throughout the world and nowhere more so than in Southern Africa. White Rhodesians took heart from events in the Middle East and drew their own moral. They saw that a small group of united and determined people, valiantly holding forth the banner of Western civilization, had been able to destroy seemingly unlimited numbers of enemies. Quality appeared to have outmatched quantity. The historical inevitability of the victory of the masses over an elite which was preached by liberals in the Western world appeared to be challenged. In the eyes of right-wing Whites the Afro-Asian Communist grouping appeared to be a 'paper tiger' easily swept away in its first real clash with a resolute and resourceful opponent. Yet despite its victory Israel still appeared to Rhodesians to pander to the African States and it made itself unpopular in Salisbury by its refusal to play Rhodesia in the sporting field or to recognize the regime. The Israeli contribution of blankets and medical supplies to African liberation movements in 1971 was particularly badly received, even though the donation was eventually refused by the potential recipients. In the years before 1973 Israel was loath to identify itself with the White Governments of Southern Africa, and no Israeli in an official position ever set foot in the country. The unofficial visit by Chaim Herzog, the former Head of Israel's Intelligence and Governor of the Occupied West Bank, received a great deal of local press coverage during May 1969. Herzog returned to Israel

determined to consolidate the links between Rhodesian Jews and the Jewish State which had suffered as part of the Israeli policy of diplomatic isolation of the Government of Rhodesia. The result was the re-introduction of Salisbury and Bulawayo into the itinerary of all Zionist speakers on the South African Circuit, except official Government representatives.

The general lack of visiting international personalities and the feeling of isolation which followed U.D.I. led to a situation whereby nearly every Jewish visitor of substance was well-featured in the local media and usually interviewed on television. A notable visitor in August 1972 was General Ezer Weizman, a former Air Force commander and Transport Minister of decidedly right-wing views. Although a Sabra, his links with Rhodesia went back to 1942, when he was taught to fly at Gwelo under the Imperial Air Training Scheme. Films provided by the Central African Zionist Organization (CAZO) were a popular form of entertainment in the rural areas and were shown to Rhodesian servicemen as part of their introductory courses. This policy paid dividends in the short run for when the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 broke out Rhodesians were just as pro-Israel as in 1967. This of course contrasts with the attitude of most of the Western countries who had adopted a neutral or even antagonistic approach towards the Jewish State by this time. Rhodesia did not of course import oil openly from the Arab States but obtained her supplies mainly through South Africa's links with Iran. Israel's diplomatic defeat in Africa and the closure of her embassies was treated with wry amusement by White Rhodesians who saw this as a typical example of African ingratitude.

Rhodesian support was expressed in the form of money raised locally for the Israeli cause, and the Baptist Church in Salisbury even went so far as to organize services of prayer for the Jewish State. The break with Israel by the African States, and the assistance provided by the Portuguese to the American air-lift of arms via the Azores and by Rhodesian and South African Jews, tended to bring Israel closer towards the Southern African Governments. Two indicators of this were the extension of the Arab oil boycott to Southern Africa and in 1974 the raising of Israel's diplomatic mission in South Africa to embassy level. For a decade at least Israel had been bracketed with South Africa by her enemies and, in her hour of disappointment at her betrayal by many of her old friends — with the exception of America and Holland — as a result of Arab oil blackmail, there was a tendency within Israel to adopt a defiant posture and accept the role others made for her.

One point which emerges clearly from this survey of the external relations of Zionism in Rhodesia is its complete neglect of the African majority. The leading Rhodesian Zionists saw their job as creating good rela-

tions with the ruling authorities in pursuit of tangible short-term benefits such as currency transfers to Israel and, of course, avoidance of anti-Semitism. Little effort was made to counter Arab and left-wing penetration of the African nationalist movements and, in more recent times, Idi Amin's appeal. Of course, given the polarized Rhodesian political situation, support or good relations with one side invariably precluded relations with the other. As a result the colonizing and military aspects of the Zionist cause were always highlighted and the revolutionary, egalitarian, development and socio-economic realities were underplayed.

However, some attempt to influence the African movements was made during the late 1950s. In 1959 Michael Mawema, an African Trade Unionist, spent five and half months in Israel at a seminar on co-operatives organized by *Histradut* (General Federation of Labour, Israel's equivalent of the British T.U.C.). On his return he spoke to packed meetings of women's youth and other Zionist groups. However, the deterioration in the Rhodesian political situation and Mawema's move into African nationalist politics ended such experiments. Thus Zimbabwe nationalists did not receive educational scholarships to Israel as they did to Cairo, Moscow and London. The 'Majuta' were known locally as 'rich Whites' and to this image was added negative information gleaned from the New Testament and Radio Peking. This is a situation in which local Zionists will have to act quickly if they are to avoid yet another voice and vote being added towards those opposed to 'Zionist Imperialism' at the United Nations, after the legal independence of Zimbabwe.

This general support in Rhodesia for Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel was almost undisputed as there were few local representatives of the traditional opponents of the movement, such as the extreme Orthodox, the overly anglicized, or Bundist Socialists. The general cultural and political climate emphasized a separate identity but under the special local circumstances Jewish nationalism took the place of weakened religious faith and observance. It would appear that the old religious fervour of the Litvaks was sublimated into Jewish nationalism. The Jews who went to Rhodesia were definitely determined to throw off the image of the weak Ghetto Jew. In 1903 the Chovevi Zion Society sent a letter of congratulation to Sir Marcus Samuel, the Jewish Lord Mayor of London, for his refusal to invite the Rumanian Ambassador to his installation banquet because of that country's rabidly anti-Semitic policy. The Bulawayo Society warmed to:

the stand you have made on behalf of the Jewish cause and therefore, of Zionism. We believe that half of our Jewish evils are due to timidity and cowardice, to which your Lordship's own courageous action offers so brilliant a contrast.¹²

The man who inspired the cause of Zionism and its spirit of unity and pride in the small and isolated Rhodesian community was, of course, the Revd M.I. Cohen. Characteristically Cohen's first lecture on taking up his post in Bulawayo in December 1900 was devoted to the Maccabean War of Independence against the Seleucid Syrians in which he stressed Jewish nationalism and its religious base at the historical level. One of his first actions was to lay the foundations of cultural Zionism by establishing a Jewish library and Hebrew class under the auspices of the Chovevi Zion. The library which opened on Sunday afternoons subscribed to eight Jewish newspapers from South Africa, Britain, America and Russia. In 1902 Cohen assured the affiliation of the Chovevi Zion Society to the South African Zionist Federation (S.A.Z.F.) and in July 1904 he organized the memorial Service for Theodore Herzl which the whole community attended. On this occasion the Bulawayo Jewish youth wrote in their paper that 'we are overwhelmed by our national misfortune'.¹³ It would thus appear that Cohen, who had devoted himself to inspiring devotion to Zionism among the first generation of Rhodesian Jewish youth, was succeeding. Later events were a testament to this success as were his pupils such as Samuel Rabinovitz and Cecil Jacobs. The solid foundation laid in this early period in Rhodesia enabled Cohen to devote more time in later years to Zionist activities in the rest of Central and Southern Africa.

In early 1917 Cohen was a member of a deputation to F.S. Malan, the South African Minister of Education, asking for his Government's support for Zionism, and in December 1917 he was asked by the S.A.Z.F. to go on a fund-raising tour of the Union for the Jewish National Fund which proved a great success.

The Balfour Declaration itself was greeted with wonderment and disbelief among Rhodesian Jews and there was much talk of the coming of a 'Messianic Age'. The Rhodesians tended to be overly optimistic. At the Seventh South African Zionist Conference at Cape Town in 1919, Bulawayo was seen to be most zealous in its support for a Jewish State. The Bulawayo Tent submitted resolutions on the administration of the Homeland which covered politics, schools, the civil service and economic system; it was only after Morris Alexander, a Union M.P., explained that such questions were the prerogative of the first Jewish parliament that the Rhodesians were persuaded to withdraw their proposals.

There were great scenes of rejoicing throughout Rhodesia in April 1920 in appreciation of the 'wonderful news of the restoration of Palestine',¹⁴ when the Balfour Declaration and Mandate were confirmed by the Treaty of San Remo. In many centres Jewish businesses were closed on the Saturday morning — a unique gesture. In Salisbury all but one of the Jewish

firms closed and there was a great thanksgiving service at the Synagogue. In Gatooma there were great rejoicings, all the businesses were closed and a thanksgiving service was held at the Royalty Theatre. At a function afterwards, £656 was raised for the National Fund. Umvuma was another patriotic centre which had a special service and managed to get all the Jewish businesses to close. In addition all Jewish homes flew the National flag. In Gwelo the houses were decorated in the national colours of blue and white and all the children wore rosettes but not all the Jewish firms complied with the request to close. Que Que was a sad exception to this pattern; there were no special celebrations, no business holiday and no attempt to raise funds to meet the £150,000 target agreed for the Rhodesias and the Belgian Congo for 1920.

In terms of tangible support for Zionism, fund-raising through bazaars and social functions, and outright donations of money were the only means available to most people except for moral support and hospitality for visitors. In 1905 the small Rhodesian community of around 500 persons had raised £2,000 for the cause and in later years its generosity became legend. In the 1920s this money began to be given for specific projects such as the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1924, £1,000 raised by Zionist women led to the acquisition of the 6,000 volume library of Professor Ignaz Goldziher by the University's School of Oriental Studies. Rhodesian and Natal Zionists jointly patronized the Jewish National Fund's (J.N.F.) agricultural colony in the Valley of Jezreel, Kfar Yeladim (children's village) for 140 orphans. The Rhodesians were responsible for the support of 35 children. Bulawayo merchant, Charelick Salomon, donated £25,000 to the Palestine Benevolent Institution Fund in 1931 and wise investment of this money provided Tel Aviv with a small hospital, a soldiers' hostel, a high school, and in 1972 an absorption centre and hostel for new immigrants at Netanya.

Cohen tried unsuccessfully to get trade links between Rhodesia and the *Yishuv*, first by encouraging Weizmann's power alcohol scheme and in 1934 by introducing Sokolow to 'Bongola' Smith and the Rhodesian Government in the hope of establishing an export scheme for Rhodesian cattle. Cohen demanded that Smith advance the expenses of the Zionist agents and give ten per cent of the profits to Zionist funds. It must be remembered that in the inter-war years problems over immigration and the dire needs of the oppressed Jews of Central and Eastern Europe discouraged Jews from free countries from emigrating to Palestine, or going on *aliyah*, for they were merely taking the places of more deserving persons. This was particularly so in the late 1930s when a strict quota system for Jewish immigrants was introduced. One exception, however,

was Harry Levin, the Middle East correspondent of *The Daily Herald* and *The Chicago Tribune*. He went on *aliyah* in 1925 and returned on a sponsored visit in 1933 to explain the *kibbutz* system.

It has been shown that the Rhodesian Zionists regarded their primary duties as lying in the creation of a conducive environment in which to carry out their work and in trying to influence Rhodesian political opinion. In these ways they hoped to keep their freedom to operate and raise much needed funds, and to act as an indirect pressure group on the Imperial Government in London by harnessing British settler opinion to their side. For these reasons good relations and constant contact with the Rhodesian Government of the day were called for, but without detriment to their basic principles. The most difficult period for this policy was the decade 1938 - 48. The first Rhodesian Zionist Conference was attended by the mayor of Bulawayo, E.J. Davies, and Captain H. Bertin, the Minister of Justice, neither of whom were great philo-Semites. Yet it was beholden on the leadership to be pleasant to them and yet also mount an unqualified protest against the policy of the British White Paper while voicing support for the Biltmore Programme. The divergence between the Zionists and British policy under Ernest Bevin led to much bitterness and a serious crisis of loyalties for some people. In September 1947 the Secretary of the Council for Rhodesian Jewry sent a circular letter to all affiliated organizations asking them to see that the *Hatikvah* (the Jewish national anthem) was followed by the playing of 'God Save the King' at all their functions since in recent months the latter had sometimes been dispensed with and this had led to complaints and fears of bad publicity.

At the time of the 1948 War of Independence, Rhodesians raised £100,000 for the Emergency Campaign and an unofficial body, the League of Hagana, recruited volunteers for active service. An attempt to 'build bridges' for Israel was made in 1951 when the Indian High Commissioner for East Africa and Rhodesia was entertained by the Zionist Council at a sundowner. However, the subsequent policy of the Indian Government precluded further efforts in this direction. Local relations between Jews and Asians were nonetheless often affected by Middle Eastern events. The Hindus tended to be sympathetic towards Israel out of anti-Moslem sentiment, while on the other hand the Moslems were invariably antagonistic to Zionism. However, their business ties with the Jewish community and their desire to avoid controversies, bad publicity, and White resentment prevented their public expression of anti-Zionist or anti-Jewish feelings. This policy produced an unusual occurrence in June 1967 when Imam Bahadur, the Islamic religious leader, attended an inter-denominational

service for peace in the Middle East arranged by the Bulawayo Ministers' Fraternal at the instigation of the city's Jewish mayor, A. Menashe.

The Rhodesian Zionist Council and local branches of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) aided the Israeli pavilions at the Central African Trade Fairs between 1960 and 1965. In 1961 the Zionist Council aided some of the Congo refugees to emigrate to Israel and the Board of Deputies provided £100 for each family's expenses. However, most Zionist work remained the fund-raising campaigns. The Israel United Appeal (I.U.A.) succeeded the former J.N.F. Appeal. It took place every two years and received contributions from two thirds of all the Jewish families in the country — a very high proportion by international standards. In 1967 the equivalent of nearly £300,000 was raised by the I.U.A. There were a few large individual contributions but most was raised through monthly stop-orders. In addition most homes contained the J.N.F.'s blue collecting box; there were donations from inscriptions in books and tree-planting certificates and the J.N.F. sponsored concerts which were a feature after 1953.

When British policy conflicted with Zionist aims, Rhodesian Jews took the Zionist side, but in 1966 there was strong feeling among politically conservative Jews against Israeli foreign policy on Rhodesia and a subsequent conflict of loyalties. There was a lively debate within CAZO between the liberals and right-wingers on this issue and some stop orders were cancelled, but most were hastily restored the following year. Mrs Rachel Baron of WIZO explained to some of those disillusioned by Israeli actions that this policy line was morally justified in conformity with Bible teachings and that 'the change in outlook' had taken place in Rhodesia, and not in Israel, and she managed to convince a majority of the executive to her side.¹⁵

Rhodesian Jews attempted to increase trade ties in the late 1950s and as in the 1930s cattle were seen as the most promising field. Israel gave a contract for 1,000 tons of beef to the Cold Storage Commission in 1958 but this decision led to a debate over the merits of *Shechita*. There was a press campaign against the order, which featured nine letters and four news items, by some anti-Semitic protesters, but the deal went through nevertheless. The large ranchers, Greenspan Brothers, visited Israel at this time and agreed to supply 5,000 heifers for breeding which were sent from Beira to Eilat. Two other Rhodesian Jewish farmers, Louis Buffenstein of Inyazura and Jack Goldberg of Odzi, visited Israel in 1959 as representatives of the Rhodesian farmers to the International Farmers Convention. This visit led to the donation of nine agricultural awards for competition by Israel farmers.

The coming of the jet age in the early 1960s allowed increasing numbers of Rhodesian Zionists the opportunity of visiting Israel and

cementing closer ties with its people. The majority of Rhodesian Jews who went abroad now added Tel Aviv to their itineraries on their way to Europe, and their undoubtedly affluent average status allowed a higher proportion of them to be more mobile than Jews in most other communities around the world. Increased contact with Israel undoubtedly led to increased feelings of involvement and this was shown during 1967 when the whole community was involved, sending help to Israel. There was a solidarity meeting in Salisbury attended by 1,000 people. This followed an emergency meeting of communal leaders in Que Que on 4 June at which were established an Action Committee for funds and supplies and a Manpower Selection Committee for volunteers. Of course, the general climate favoured such action. W. Margolis, a key figure in Rhodesia's economic defence as head of the Agricultural Marketing Board, was one of the three National Vice-Presidents of the Israel Emergency Appeal. He informed the solidarity meeting that it had the sympathy of the Prime Minister and that they could send all they could raise as long as it did not damage Rhodesia. The support for Israel in 1973 was if anything greater than in 1967. The sense of solidarity was the result of the profound sense of shock at the unexpectedness of the Egyptian and Syrian attack and the deep psychological impact that an attack on the Day of Atonement had on Jews everywhere. In Salisbury 2,000 out of the 2,500 Jewish men, women and children in the city attended a synagogue service for peace.

Part of the *raison d'être* for a Jewish State as argued by Zionists from Herzl onwards was the belief that anti-Semitism was endemic in most societies and that there was a constant physical threat against Jews and so a concomitant need for a secure Jewish homeland. This attitude was a reflection of the facts, in that Zionism before the Nazi era was strongest in Central and Eastern Europe where the Jews were most insecure and threatened, and weakest in Western Europe, North Africa and Asia. The rise of local nationalisms in the Third World countries and the Holocaust in Europe had an enormous impact on the uncommitted Jews of the latter group of countries. Rhodesian Jewry which was already Zionist before the Second World War was further politicized by these two events. The murder of relatives in Lithuania and Rhodes during the war years deepened the Zionist sentiment which was confirmed by the rise of the local rival White and Black nationalisms in Rhodesia in the 1950s. The comfortable existence of most Rhodesian Jews appeared threatened by the political events in Africa and the reaction was often to look to Israel as a place of refuge. Thus with the Congo crisis and the plight of the French Algerians and the Ugandan Asians before them, many Rhodesian Jews undoubtedly regarded Zionism as an insurance policy or escape channel in the event of serious problems in

Rhodesia. Evidence for this type of thinking can be found in the popularity of Modern Hebrew Language Classes and the desire to get the youth to identify with Israel by visits and even study there; CAZO specifically made loans available to finance further education or attendance at universities in Israel.

Aliyah figures in the 1960s averaged about 20 persons a year, although 1962 saw 63 persons leave the former Federation for Israel. Of course, many young people left for temporary stays in Israel which were later prolonged into permanent ones. However, in 1968 at the Board of Deputies Que Que Conference an important decision was made when it was decided that the 'Board would encourage and defend *Aliyah* from all aspects of public relations'. The Board's President, A.E. Abrahamson, went further than most other Jewish representative organizations when he declared that in his view 'anti-Zionism was anti-Semitism — there was no distinction — and every self-respecting Jew would react accordingly'.¹⁶ This spelled out most clearly what most Zionists had preached for years — the centrality of Israel in Jewish life throughout the world.

Rhodesian Zionism was slow to develop organizationally. For many years it depended on individual enthusiasms, as the Revd M.I. Cohen and many other personalities later were willing to undertake administrative tasks in a voluntary capacity. This was a feature that was an important contributing factor to the success of the movement. Immigrants such as S. Lasovsky, a resident of Salisbury, had been involved before taking up residence of the colony, as had Rabbi Konviser, who was a founder of the Zionist Youth Society in London and then Secretary of London University Zionist Society during the 1920s. Until the formation of the Rhodesian Zionist council in 1943, the Bulawayo Chovevi Zion undertook what national co-ordination was necessary. The leading spirit in the formation of the national body was Samuel Rabinovitz, a man who considered the term Jew and Zionist synonymous and who was made the Rhodesian Zionist Council's Honorary Life-President in 1957. The Zionist Council became autonomous only in 1964 and even then the links with the South African Zionist Federation remained strong, and Rhodesians made much use of that organization's Tel Aviv Office.

In April 1968 the Council began publishing its own monthly journal, the *Zionist Digest*, which is sent free to every Jewish home, as is the J.N.F.'s Jewish Calendar. The success of this publication has been due to Barney Katz, who immigrated from Latvia in 1936. Katz was an enthusiastic voluntary worker in many aspects of the Zionist Movement, before becoming employed in 1961 as General Secretary.

It was at this time that he assumed the position of Editor of the *Digest*.

During the 1960s the Zionist Rhodesians were able to extend and complete their administrative structure with the establishment of a Salisbury office and the appointment of a full-time Secretary, Gaby Haimowitz, an ardent Zionist who had spent some time in Israel; but it was only in 1970 that the CAZO Executive moved to Salisbury.

The local Women's Zionist Organization, a branch of WIZO, was formed after the Weizmann visit of 1932, at the instigation of Mrs Vera Weizmann; originally it had 135 members, but by 1965 there were 880 in the Colony. One of the most enterprising methods of raising funds was their catering organization which serviced many non-Jewish functions, especially at the Harry Margolis Hall. WIZO was one of the first organizations to actively try to attract participation from the Sephardi element. There were two Sephardi women on its first Committee and in 1934 there was an attempt to import Zionist literature in Spanish for them. The Sephardim, in the absence of a history of active persecution before 1938, were not particularly strong Zionists. In their island home they imbibed a messianic tradition and a rabbinical atmosphere and before the 1930s very few political tracts or newspapers reached them. They did, however, have a long tradition of retirement to the Holy Land among the elderly Orthodox. In more recent years in Rhodesia the Sephardim have provided few *Olim*, and have been particularly noticeable in their reluctance to support the traditionally dominant left-wing Zionist parties.

Zionism has always had — or, perhaps more correctly, been burdened with — a party structure. In theory all contributors, or Shekel-payers over the age of eighteen, have been entitled to vote for delegates to local, national and World Zionist Conferences. In essence, the different Zionist parties represented various political ideologies — either socialist, liberal, right-wing or religious — which eventually became the main political parties in Israel. In the earlier elections in Rhodesia before 1952, there was usually a 70 per cent poll for the Zionist Council election. Bulawayo was something of a stronghold of the Zionist Socialist Party, which became the Israel Labour Party, while Salisbury was something of a Revisionist stronghold, but overall the avowedly non-political General Zionists were the largest group. The party divisions still exist in essence, but in 1964 only 20 per cent of Rhodesia's 3,000 Shekel-holders bothered to vote.

One recent trend which has been of some importance both in Rhodesia and, perhaps more so, in South Africa has been the rise of the right-wing Revisionist Party, the Herut, the main faction within Israel's present Likud. The Revisionist Party was formed in 1925 to agitate for the return to Herzl's original conception of a Jewish National State with a Jewish majority on both sides of the River Jordan. Revisionists, or members of the

New Zionist Movement as they were known in the 1930s, have particularly concentrated in their overseas work on Southern Africa. In 1937 Vladimir Jabotinsky visited Rhodesia and in the 1950s there were two visits by Menachem Begin. On the occasion of the 1953 visit Samuel Rabinovitz, a General Zionist, was reluctant to meet the former nationalist terrorist on the platform and felt forced to remind him that Rhodesia was a British Colony. This attitude reflected the inter-party feuds between the left and centre and Revisionists, the intensity of which was such, that between 1935 and 1946 the Revisionists were outside the World Zionist Organization.

Undoubtedly the political situation in Southern Africa in the 1960s favoured the emergence of the Revisionists, who were able to picture South Africa as Israel's friend and Israel as a bastion against the Afro-Asian block. Like the local White politicians, the Revisionists regarded communism as anathema and were quick to equate the position of Israel and Africa's White regimes. Yet some of the credit of their strength must go to their keen activists; one particular driving force in the local movement was David J. Melmed, who came to Rhodesia in 1946, and became the first President of the autonomous CAZO.

The Mizrahi (the Orthodox wing of Zionism) Party, which aimed at the realization of Zionism on the basis of Jewish religious law and tradition and later became Israel's National Religious Party, was always miniscule in Rhodesia and received under two per cent of the support at elections. The real strength of the Revisionists and Socialists can be measured in their Youth Movements. These Youth Movements which were uniformed had 650 members, or 70 per cent of those of eligible age by 1967. The oldest Movement was Habonim, founded in London in 1929, and introduced to South Africa by Norman Lourie in 1931. By 1933, Mrs S.G. Kaplan had founded a Bulawayo *Gedud* (branch). The Movement was basically Jewish scouting, a mixture of Baden Powell and Zionism. It used Hebrew terms and its ideals and work centred on the pioneer colonies of the Yishuv. There were weekly activities on Sundays, three educational seminars a year, a Rhodesian National camp and a summer camp by the sea in South Africa. The *Gedud* was theoretically led from within by the *madrichim* (older youth in their late teens), but from the 1950s *Schlichim* (Youth Workers) were brought over from Israel at CAZO's expense to organize the Youth Movements. Habonim was not a socialist movement in Rhodesia and tended to play down its ideology and adopt a general Zionist middle-of-the-road approach. It did, however, succeed in tapping the idealism of some left-wing orientated youth, who were attracted to the *kibbutz* life and saw Israel as a country possessing a more egalitarian and moral society and better prospects than White Africa. The Movement's problem in the 1960s

was to try and tap this enthusiasm and direct it towards *Aliyah*, while at the same time not allowing this to frighten off conservative parents or worry the Rhodesian authorities.

The Revisionist Youth Movement, known as Betar, was founded in Riga in the 1920s and introduced into Rhodesia in 1937 after Jabotinsky's visit. Betar had a much more disciplined organization with strict drill and ranks for its members. During the 1960s it tended to increase the political content in its programme in an attempt to win away support from Habonim. One interesting point was its almost complete hold over the Sephardi youth of Salisbury. This, of course, merely reflected the more conservative political outlook of this element among the Jewish population.

Before the emergence of the Zionist Youth Movements there were Zionist Youth organizations in Rhodesia; all of them were mixed groups of teenagers, the earliest of which was the Bulawayo Zionist Youth Society, established in 1918. Israel's centrality in Jewish youth activities in Rhodesia was thus evident from the earliest days. Rhodesia sent a contingent as part of the British party to the first Maccabiah in 1932, and after 1953 it was represented at every world Maccabi Games by a separate national team. This situation can be contrasted with the situation in Britain where the Association for Jewish Youth, which represented the majority of Jewish Youth Clubs, was unwilling until recent years to enter the Maccabiah because this was seen as having Zionist political overtones. As we have noticed before, Rhodesia had no equivalent of Britain's anti-Zionists who saw their local community simply as just another religious group. Rhodesian Jews were willing to adopt the predominantly diaspora pose of 'squinting citizens', with one eye on Israel and the other on Central Africa, until the 1950s; but the success of the Zionist Movement and the penetration of its ideology meant that by the 1960s there was a conspicuous unself-consciousness about Jewish national feeling and the eyes of most Rhodesian Jews became focused unequivocally on the State of Israel. The majority of parents and the older generation generally — from a mixture of motives, it must be admitted — were by then quite happy to regard the local Jewish youth as young Israeli citizens of the future.

CHAPTER 9

Group Relations

The relationship between Jews and other racial or ethnic groups cannot be divorced from the overall situation in the country. From 1890, the essentially colonial situation of Rhodesia led it to develop a typical colonial or plural society, as defined by the Dutch scholar Furnivall, 'with different sections of the population community living side-by-side but separately within the same political unity. Even in the economic sphere, there is a division of labour along racial lines.'¹

Even within the dominant White elite there was a policy of cultural pluralism. Far from initially disadvantaging Jews and other immigrants from Europe, however, this policy in many ways helped them to accommodate to the changes that they faced in Africa. The newly-arrived immigrant who stepped off the train in Bulawayo found a ready-made community to receive him which was focused around a synagogue; a community which practised the old folk-ways and contained people who could speak, or at least understand, his own language. Moreover, the Jewish 'national-church' was by no means completely unique since the Afrikaner's social life was centred around the Dutch Reformed Church, the Greek's around the Greek Orthodox, and perhaps to a lesser extent the Scot's around the Presbyterian, and the Englishman's around the Anglican Church. Thus, in the creation of such readily accessible primary group relationships, religion was a potent force; consequently the Whites had a high rate of church attendance.

In later years these sub-cultures within the European population of Rhodesia were preserved for the same reason for which they were originally encouraged, because White immigration had been necessitated by political insecurity. In this situation cultural heterogeneity was acceptable as long as there was political homogeneity. The ability of the different European groups to live together and accommodate their differences was essentially due to a feeling of personal insecurity and to their hostility to a common out-group, the Africans.

It has been seen that in addition to the classical colonial hierarchy of

occupations based on colour, there existed within the European population an occupational stratification related to the country of origin. In general, Afrikaners tended towards the land, the British dominated the Civil Service, and Jews and Greeks concentrated in commerce. Though each of these preferences was due to historic and cultural factors, these trends were reinforced by the immigration policies of the Rhodesian authorities which perpetuated the situation by encouraging people to immigrate, whose families and friends were already established and employed in the Colony.

The Jew from Eastern Europe moved from being a member of an oppressed pariah group to membership of a 'privileged' elite from the very moment he set foot in Rhodesia. That he was not completely accepted at the apex of the pyramid by upper-class Englishmen did not particularly worry him. He was more grateful for what he had gained than resentful at what was still denied. Frank Clements, a former mayor of Salisbury, has written that in pre-war Rhodesia:

Antisemitism was as much part of the Rhodesian mental background as corrugated iron was of the physical. Whatever else a man might be, if he were a Jew, that was the most meaningful thing about him, and the quality of which the 'British' Rhodesians would be most aware.²

There was no doubt that this was so, but the anti-Semitism in Rhodesia was manifested in forms which were more significant to the discriminators than to the discriminated. When prominent Jewish lawyers were 'black-balled' from the Bulawayo Club, there is no doubt that they were most hurt; but it is unlikely that the majority of country traders really cared about this or felt deprived by the inability to join such a body. They probably felt more discriminated against if the police broke up a well-known poker school.

Since most anti-Semitism took a mild and subtle form of social distancing operated by the British settlers, the only situation, probably, in which the majority of Jews were really resentful of the existing prejudice against them was when these attitudes began to spill over to the non-White populations. Indeed it has already been shown that the Africans were quick to understand the nuances of White society's own prejudice and to exploit this wherever possible.

The end of significant Jewish immigration from Europe after 1940 halted the perpetuation of the existing socio-economic status and allowed the locally-born and educated to assert their own norms over the Jewish community. One important factor was the end of the stereotype of the Jew speaking broken English. Perhaps as a result, in more recent years the

social situation for the individual Jew *vis-à-vis* the British has improved and there are hardly any doors closed to him. A local observer, Dr Krikler, has noted this phenomenon and suggested a link between the social and economic mobility: 'They have obtained directorships in publicly owned insurance companies and building societies and this is no doubt due to the successful integration of the community into the fabric of the country, or at least its white elite.'³

It is significant that this 'integration' has not been paid for at the price of assimilation. The fact that the Rhodesian White population never grew much beyond 250,000 meant that it remained essentially a face-to-face society, where it was rather difficult to deny one's Jewishness. It was generally known who was a Jew, both by Jew and Gentile, even though the individual might not associate with the community. Moreover, as we have seen, the European population was quite heterogeneous, although there was a British core, so that Jewishness was not the handicap that it might be considered in other Western countries. Thus it was both more difficult to disassociate from the community and less advantageous to do so, with the result that there was the high degree of voluntary affiliation. The history of Rhodesia shows that the larger and more pressing grew the 'native problem', the smaller appeared the differences amongst the European sub-groups. When General Booth had suggested Rhodesia as a refuge for the London poor in 1904, there was a tremendous outcry; a leader in *The Rhodesia Herald* on 14 April asserted:

We know full well, despite all assertions to the contrary, that London's poor, particularly those residents in the East End, consist of an alien, illiterate, unintelligent, bogus club-running class of men, it is they who daily occupy the attention of the magistrates, owing to their thieving and stabbing propensities. And this being the case, one pauses to consider how the scum of London can benefit the colonies. We fancy the law-abiding Chinaman would be a far more acceptable industrious workman on the land than Polish Jews and German ne'er-do-wells.

Closer contact with these 'Polish Jews' led to a change of opinion. On 29 April 1952 a leader in *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, referring to the tributes paid to the Anglo-Jewish community on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Jewish resettlement in Britain, suggested that these;

might well find an echo in Rhodesia — in the whole of Africa in fact — for they had done as much as, or more than other people to open up the Dark continent. They shared the hardships and perils with the hunters and prospectors and inculcated in the African a fancy for gewgaws that went far to soothe a savage breast and ease the task of the administrator of the law when the flag caught up with the trader . . . it is impossible to go for any long motor ride without crossing a

bridge built from Beit funds and many Rhodesians owe much of their education to scholarships from the same source.

The Jews have an honoured place in the pioneers role in Africa and there are few other people who would have gone where they went when they went. The land would have been poorer without them.

This change in British-Rhodesian sentiment was at the very core of the improved position of the Jewish community. It was necessary for Jews to relate positively to the dominant elite, because they needed their goodwill and tolerance in order to operate and exist within a self-governing British colony. The high standard of living and the readily available servants created a leisure-oriented White society; and so, as far as most Europeans were concerned, it was a country of 'joiners' who created numerous social organizations. This, as we have seen, led to the emphasis on social boundaries. On the one hand British Rhodesians wanted to maintain their own social distance from Jews but on the other side they resented what they saw as Jewish exclusivity because this was a challenge to their own hierarchial view of society. Thus paradoxically Jewish 'cliquiness' was resented by the British as much as their 'pushiness'. This attitude is evident in the following quotations from an article written by a newly-immigrant Scots accountant in the mid-1930s:

Socially, however, they do not mix with the other colonists and it is averred that the Jews gather together in one of their neighbour's houses each Friday evening and plan how to 'do down the Christians' in the following week. I do not vouch for the truth of this statement. . . . However, numerically the Scots are not so strong as the English, and so on occasion some Jews have been known to play in the Scottish team. The precedent for this took place in Gwelo some years ago when a prominent Jew was allowed to play for Scotland on the ground that he was a Gordon Highlander.⁴

The Jews themselves were also unsure as to what form of social integration within White society they wanted. Full political and economic equality was always sought but in social matters there was a desire to retain certain limits to social mixing, especially among young people where intermarriage was seen as a consequence. In periods when prejudice was high there was no real problem in the social sphere because there was no real choice. However, in more relaxed times when barriers were lowered the community found it necessary to reinforce its own social institutions.

The Jewish population had brought to the country a tradition of separation in social organization and quickly reproduced this locally. The Bulawayo Jewish Guild of 1906 grew out of the efforts of the Idlers' Club formed by a group of bachelors in 1901. It developed as a social centre which provided lectures, dramatics and other amenities, and from 1931 it

had a library which was devised as a neutral meeting place for all Jews in the town, but was primarily used by the young people. In the inter-war years it had its own monthly journal, *The Jewish Guild Journal*, run by a group in their late teens. Salisbury also had a Jewish Guild from 1913; it erected its own £3,000 building in 1920. The new purpose-built Bulawayo Jewish Guild Hall was opened in 1923 as a Memorial Hall for the Jewish dead in the South African and the First World War. For many years it was the largest auditorium in the town and much in demand for public activities.

In the idealism of the aftermath of the First World War, the young generation of the Jewish youth began to integrate more fully into the general White society with the result that at the 1920 Annual Meeting, 'It was pointed out that the Guild was not primarily a society for promoting amusement as such, but was intended to promote Jewish intermarriage and to discourage assimilation and intermarriage.⁵ In 1924, it was found necessary to have a full discussion over the problem of Gentile visitors and a decision was made that 'guests' should be allowed once a week. Nevertheless, there was an obvious attempt by the elders to promote more selective activities such as a Hebrew-speaking circle. The 1920s also saw the establishment of other social organizations, such as the Young Israel Society in Bulawayo in 1920 and the Young Judeans Group in 1928, which were founded exclusively for young people. It is significant that this fear of assimilation appears to have declined with the renewed anti-Semitism of the 1930s.

Sport has also been the primary leisure-time activity for Whites in Rhodesia. The country's splendid climate and bright skies combined with the British sporting passion produced a society in which sport, particularly rugby football, was an essential part of many people's lives. In Bulawayo, as in London's East End, the British-born Jews saw sport, particularly team games, as an important means by which to anglicize their foreign co-religionists. Jewish sporting activities in Bulawayo, the Wanderers Football and Cricket Club, were an early off-shoot of the Jewish Guild. The Club was actively encouraged by the Revd M.I. Cohen who was known locally as 'the sporting parson' because of his cricketering abilities as a batsman. Jewish sporting activities developed to the stage where, during the inter-war years, there was an annual charity soccer match in Bulawayo between the local Scots and Jews, with the latter winning on more than one occasion.

The formation of the all-Jewish Nomads Cricket Club in 1933 led to some debate. Many people within the community were prejudiced against such a team and the Bulawayo Jewish Guild rejected its attempts at affiliation: 'It was brought home at the time that this action would be likely to cause racial hostility, and that the Jewish players should join Gentile Clubs.'⁶

Its supporters suggested that, on the contrary, it provided a good image for the Jews who were regarded as a cohesive ethnic unit in any case. However, by this time the Jews were already finding it difficult to join tennis clubs, probably because this sport was very socially oriented and catered for both sexes. As a result, in 1936 the Bulawayo Guild bought land for the Jewish Parkview Tennis Club.

The post-war years in Rhodesia saw the establishment of country clubs on the American and South African patterns, which were primarily centred around golf courses, but included tennis courts and swimming pools. The political problems associated with Zionism in the 1940s appear to have increased social discrimination against Jews. The Weizmann Country Club was founded in 1949 and purchased 230 acres, twelve miles out of Bulawayo. By 1952 it had 350 members. In Salisbury a similar process of exclusion took place as new British immigrants flooded into the country. In 1951 three Jews were blackballed from one club in a year, and this was one which had previously been open to Jews. As a result in 1949 the Wingate Park Club was founded in Salisbury; to become a foundation member cost £55, but it grew from 37 members in 1951 to 800 in 1957. The choice of Zionist-associated names for the new clubs suggests a defiant attitude towards the discriminators. The move towards ethnic solidification was reinforced in 1953 when the Zionist-oriented sporting organization, the Rhodesian Maccabi, was founded by the noted Bulawayo sportsman and lawyer, Arthur Sarif, to field Jewish teams for local international competition.

In the 1960s anti-Jewish discrimination decreased substantially and as a result social relations improved. Thus when the Jewish population began to decline after 1963 the Jewish clubs found it financially necessary, and socially acceptable, to begin admitting Gentile members; but the Clubs still retained constitutional provisions to ensure Jewish control. It was also found necessary to amalgamate the Parkview and Weizmann Clubs in Bulawayo.

The other side of the coin from discrimination was the danger of assimilation. In 1954 the Board of Deputies initiated an investigation into the problem of intermarriage in the outlying centres, where Jews were more easily integrated into the small White communities. Among 263 couples in 9 small centres they found 39, or nearly 15 per cent, were mixed marriages. Also the lack of numbers led the Jewish communities to involve couples of mixed marriages in communal activities more than would have been the case in the large centres. Thus, in a somewhat guarded fashion, there was a call for a more liberal approach to conversion since religious instruction was difficult in such centres.

With the easier social conditions of the 1960s and 1970s there is no doubt that the rate of intermarriage began to increase in Salisbury and Bulawayo. There are no statistics but what evidence there is suggests that it is the Gentile partner who is most often absorbed. Yet in 1958 the Executive of the Board of Deputies made the following resolution:

In view of the increasing evidence of inter-marriage this Board notes with grave concern the practice of some of its affiliated bodies to admit to membership by constitutional and other means non-Jewish spouses and children of their members. It strongly urges such organizations to discontinue such practice.⁷

Like any other form of exclusivity, this attitude on intermarriage was resented by other groups who did not comprehend or empathize with the Jewish viewpoint. As early as 8 November 1905 *The Rhodesia Herald* had a leader on 'Race and Religion', in which it produced a Darwinian-based criticism of a statement by Rabbi J.H. Hertz of Johannesburg, the future British Chief Rabbi:

Dr. Hertz appears to regret that the major portion of the pioneer Jews have been absorbed in the new national life of the country which they adopted . . . we would be disposed to doubt the grounds of Dr. Hertz's rejoicing over the diminution of intermarriages which have been 'alarmingly prevalent'. History shows that the nation survives which has the greatest capacity for race absorption. . . . We doubt if any religion will remain a living influence that offers an obstacle to natural selection in these latter days. The race or the religion must compromise.

The dilemma of survival in a free country was thus a major problem for Rhodesian Jewry. However, even within its own ranks, it took some time to break down social barriers regarding marriage. It was only during the 1940s that mixed Sephardi - Ashkenazi marriages became unexceptional. Among the immigrant generation marriages had often been arranged through relatives and business associates. The bride was often brought out from the 'old country'. Thus there was a tendency for marriages between partners originating from different countries to be rare. The Rhodesian Sephardim were involved in marriage network which stretched back to Rhodes via the Belgian Congo. In many ways the Sephardim betrayed all the supposed attributes of remote islanders. They tended to be withdrawn, self-centred and highly individualistic. One of the barriers between Sephardim and Ashkenazim was of course language. Their native tongues of Ladino and Yiddish are as mutually unintelligible as their base languages of Spanish and German, and therefore it was necessary to use English as a common medium. Moreover, each group was fiercely proud of its own culture and civilization and regarded the other as a divergent group within the Jewish world.

The Sephardim were particularly reluctant to abandon their 'Spanish' culture which they had preserved for nearly half a millenium in the Levant.

Yiddish-speakers throughout the English-speaking world, however, have shown a surprising willingness to throw off their old ways and adopt the new language of their children as the language of the home; and this has no doubt aided the remarkably fast social mobility of the Jews in such countries. The Sephardim were slower to acculturate to British culture and a corollary of this was that they were slower to take up the educational opportunities offered in Rhodesia. In turn this led to a lower representation in the professions until recent years. The resulting class and status differences between the two groups perpetuated the existing divisions and undoubtedly affected marriage attitudes. However, by the 1960s this situation had improved and there was considerable social intermingling as well as amicable co-operation in wider communal and Zionist work. There remained a few old die-hards, especially among the Sephardim, who were still suspicious of the Ashkenazi majority, but they carried less and less weight over the years and were over-ruled by their younger members.

If there was some ambivalence in relations between the two Jewish groups in Rhodesia, there was even more ambivalence between the Jews and the two other main White sub-groups, the Afrikaners and the Greeks. The situation of the three main White minorities was, of course, very similar in respect of their relationship with the British elite. In many ways the Jews had much in common with the Afrikaners; both groups centred their lives round their religion and the Old Testament. Thus Afrikaners tended to respect the Jewish religion, and in matters of language there was also some affinity. Yiddish-speaking Jews were very quick to learn Afrikaans, which like Yiddish is basically a Low German dialect. In this respect, of course, the Jews stood in complete contrast with the British who tended to despise the 'taal'.

In the early days Afrikaner - Jewish contacts were very close and there was considerable intermarriage in the pioneer period. In more recent years as the Jews have left the rural areas for the two main centres, contacts between the two groups have declined. In part this divergence was due to the rise of Fascism in the 1930s. Rhodesian Afrikaners tended to be more like the Nationalists of the Northern Transvaal than those of the Cape, and so were very susceptible to Nazi-type propaganda. The Afrikaners then regarded the Jews as a cosmopolitan and sophisticated group who were a danger to their own civilization. Tensions were also present on the economic level between the poor Afrikaner farmers and small Jewish traders. Although both groups suffered the same type of social discrimination, there appeared to be some rivalry for British-Rhodesian favours. The reaction was often one of trying to put the other group down rather than uniting against the overwhelming British domination.

Jewish - Greek relations in Rhodesia were also affected by historic forces.

Rather than being rivals, the Greeks were very much junior partners in the commercial world. In business the two groups appeared to get along amicably, and many newly-immigrant Greeks were initially trained in Jewish-owned country stores. However, the Sephardim already knew the Greeks from Rhodes where relations were by no means cordial. It was dangerous for Jews to enter the Greek Quarter there and the Easter-Passover period often saw stone-throwing gangs on the streets. The Greek anti-Semite was very much religiously-motivated and has often been considered the most intolerant of all Christians. Undoubtedly Greek antipathy towards the Jews on Rhodes can be seen as a form of sublimated aggression for the Greek majority on the island was unable to vent its frustration on its powerful Turkish and Italian rulers, who prevented *enosís* with Greece. In Rhodesia, the Greeks have in recent years regarded the Rhodesians as compatriots and most Sephardim willingly accept that the Greeks from Cyprus or Athens are much less prejudiced. In recent years the Hellenic Community has also very much tended to model itself on Jewish communal organizational structure and take its cue on State-community relations from the Jewish leadership.

The relationship between the Jewish and Asian populations was complicated by the colour question and social pressures on the Jews to maintain the colour line. In the business sphere relations were always quite close. The Asians had a client or junior relationship as regards the big Jewish wholesale firms, and, later, manufacturers and finance houses. Jews obviously had much more understanding and sympathy than most people for the social and economic position of the Asian minority in its invidious intermediary situation between White and Black Rhodesians. In many respects the Asian in Africa replicated the situation of the Jew in Central and Eastern Europe, both in his occupational role and in the hostile passions that he engendered. Perceptive Jews with a social conscience offered the hand of friendship and mutual respect from pioneer days; thus there was a sizeable contingent of Hindu and Moslem Indians at the funeral of M.J. Shapiro in 1932.

Rhodesia's Moslem Asians have always been more Indian than pan-Islamic in their outlook and as a result the Middle East question has never been a real problem in Jewish - Asian relations and no anti-Zionist organization was ever formed. Hindus have always been neutral and indifferent on the Zionist question. Local issues only have affected these relations and then they have been prominent on a public level only for a few years in the late 1950s.

In September 1958, *Lotus*, the magazine of the Indian community, published an article by a youthful 'Rhod-Asian' which was highly critical of the Jewish community in the Federation and South Africa in regard to their attitude towards racial discrimination. It accused Jews of supporting extreme

right-wing political parties and practising colour bars against Indians in their cinemas and restaurants:

On many occasions members of the Jewish community have been invited to private wedding parties, but they have never reciprocated. The Jews in this country do not want to cooperate with non-Europeans. They even feel they are Europeans. . . .

Perhaps the Jews have not yet learnt a lesson. Or perhaps in prosperity the unprivileged do not merit consideration. Or that in order to preserve their whiteness principles may be sacrificed — even if those that suffer are those that feed us, on whom our livelihood is dependent.

It was the generally crude and baiting tone rather than the inaccurate content which affronted. Although they were exceedingly angry at this totally uncalled-for outburst, the Jewish leaders reacted responsibly. They refrained completely from returning the attack, from a quarter which was itself very vulnerable to accusations of double standards and criticism over its own treatment of 'those that suffer'. The President of the Board of Deputies, E. Eliasov, and Councillor M. Harris instead met the embarrassed leadership of the Indian community, who were very contrite and apologetic and agreed to publish a reply. As it turned out, the December issue of *Lotus* contained an answer from Mr Ivor Williams, a White Gentle, which was regarded as a more than adequate reply. Williams attacked the generalizations and 'Streicher type', 'racialist tone' of the article. He pointed out that in the September issue all the twenty non-Asian advertisements in the magazine had come from Jewish sources. Moreover, the record of the Jewish community over discrimination was second to none. The Bulawayo Jewish Guildhall was always available for all races. There were no restrictions over the use of the toilet facilities by non-Europeans, as was universal custom elsewhere at that date. He also listed the Jewish contribution to African welfare which in itself was an unstated challenge to the Asians who were a long way behind in such work.

The unfairness of this attack was further illustrated during 1959, when the three Jewish M.P.s from Bulawayo spoke in glowing terms of the Indian community in the Southern Rhodesia Assembly debate on the Inter-Territorial Movement Amendment Bill. Bennie Goldstein clearly stated his abhorrence of restrictions on Asians: 'I believe in the rights of man, I believe in upholding the dignity of man both in theory and practice.'⁸ There was also Jewish support for sporting integration when Asian cricket teams applied to join the Bulawayo League. Finally in December 1959 the Gordon family of the North End suburb of Bulawayo was subjected to threats of arson and anti-Semitic attacks, both in the press and

personally, when it quite legally proposed to sell its home to an Indian family against the wishes of its White neighbours.

Since those days the revolutionary Third World ardour of the younger Asians has been moderated by the cold logic of events in East Africa. As a result the tension of the late 1950s has disappeared and there now exists what an Asian leader has privately described as 'a relaxed relationship' between Jews and Indians and each year sees increasing social contacts throughout the country. There is no doubt that the Asians have been treated more equally by Jews than by any other element within the European population. In some ways this is because of the similarity of their group goals; political, economic and social equality, cultural and religious autonomy, and maintenance of endogamy.

The problems which affected the Jews in their new home were similar to those which faced the rest of the European population. One of those that most impinged on their lives was how to accept, live with, and maintain their new privileged status — a problem which they referred to as the 'Native question'. Governor Campbell Tait summed up the problem of European-African relations when he remarked of the Europeans: 'It reminds me of people used to travelling third class, now finding itself travelling first class, and not knowing how to behave towards porters.'⁹ If one accepts that the economic motivation was uppermost in bringing people to Rhodesia, his analogy would appear correct, since very few of the new settlers had much experience of a leisured life or servants in Europe. However, the problems were not merely ones of inexperienced employers, for the racial question was overlain by factors such as racism and ethnocentricity. The British especially saw their situation as a ruling elite as a natural condition, and they regarded Africans as primitive inferiors in a hierarchy of racial and national development. Most Jews were, of course, initially ignorant of the Imperial concepts of racial superiority and the cultural and pseudo-scientific arguments to justify White political dominance.

One interesting difference between the Jews and the British was in their different attitudes towards African languages. The Jews had, of course, much more of an economic motivation to learn these but there is no doubt that they were much more willing to commence the process. Many country traders learnt Chilapalapa or 'kitchen Kaffir' before they learnt English, since they spent more time with Africans than with English-speaking Europeans. The Police Intelligence Reports which were kept on Europeans, living or working in the Reserves, provide evidence of this phenomenon, often referring to traders as 'Russian Jew — fair linguist [but] little knowledge of English'.¹⁰ Other evidence on this score comes from African

sources; the Southern Rhodesian Native Association sent a complaint to the authorities concerning a certain Israel Cohen, an auctioneer in Salisbury, who, they stated, 'started swearing at the natives, with a very bad language indeed, this being said in pure Chiswina, we were all ashamed . . . although we thought that the man was provoked, but went on as a joke.'¹¹ Irrespective of the rights and wrongs of the case, very few Whites could have used an African language in this manner.

Of course, to the Africans the Jews were at first indistinguishable from any other Europeans. Just as the Europeans tended to gloss over the differences of tribe and education among Africans, so the African did not differentiate between White groups. However, it has already been pointed out that the Africans were quick to notice the divisions within White society and even to exploit these to their own benefit if they could. The British gave them this opportunity because it suited their purpose to divert some of the well-deserved antagonism and frustration of the African masses that the Government brought upon itself on to intermediate groups such as Jews, Greeks, Asians or Coloureds. Much of the anti-Jewish remarks and actions of Africans should only be seen in this light; they were inherent in the structure of society and were a reflection of the dominant group ideology.

If it was known that an individual Native Commissioner was anti-Semitic, this could be exploited. The Africans were quick to learn this fact and so were the official's superiors in this department. For instance, in 1912, the Native Commissioner at Belingwe wrote in his annual report:

It has long been contended by traders that the Mashona are direct descendants from the Jews. Solomon, a man of credibility and wide experience alleged affirmation that an abnormal amount of intelligence was necessary in the identification of the paternal relative, would go far to prove the two races akin.¹²

In 1898 the Native Commissioner in Umtali emphasized his low view of African customs and laws and stated that 'the laws and customs of the natives seem to be more or less based on the Jewish code'.¹³ During 1918 the two Jackson brothers, who were both Native Commissioners, sent letters to the newspapers complaining about the brutality of native divorce law towards women and stated yet again 'native law is broadly Jewish law'.¹⁴ Such statements, of course, led to Jewish replies which pointed out the administrator's ignorance of the development of Jewish law since Biblical times. It might be said that these attitudes were linked to a certain view of the Jewish religion and there is no doubt that missionaries also tended to reinforce the negative view of the Jew in the eyes of Africans.

If anti-Jewish remarks by Africans reported in press reports of court

cases are analysed, they appear to come preponderantly from Nyasaland Africans. It is interesting to note that the Nyasaland Protectorate never had an organized Jewish community or more than a handful of Jewish settlers. These negative sentiments can only really be explained if one allows for the fact that this territory in all of Central Africa was the earliest and most fully penetrated by British missionary societies.

The November 1938 issue of the *Mashonaland Quarterly Paper* (the magazine of the local Anglican Church) reprinted some letters of an early Minister, the Revd E.J. Parker. At a time when there was increasing anti-Semitism, the ecclesiastical authorities did not consider it wrong to allow publication of an article which referred to 'Jew boys' and 'Jew traders' and said that, 'The natives in town are a bad lot, some of them, but some of the Greeks and Jews swindle them terribly.' Sheila MacDonald wrote in 1910 of an incident which had happened to a young English Jew in Salisbury. One day his 'cook-boy' suddenly decided that he want to leave his service; when asked for what reason, the African replied:

Sir, are you a Majuta (a Jew)? I cannot work for a Majuta, boss. Why? Because me Klistian boy, boss and you go kill my Klist.

In vain did Mr Cohen point out that he wouldn't dream of doing such a thing. . . . But why teach natives of such things, say I?¹⁵

The negative economic reputation of the Jews travelled with them from Europe and was also spread among Africans. P. Glickman, a trader in the Gwaai Reserve, complained of a young Assistant Native Commissioner to the Chief Native Commissioner: 'If he is displeased by a native he calls Juta-wena, what can I expect of the native after that?'¹⁶ Glickman was forced to admit that the expression, meaning 'you Jew', was often used in conversation over money transactions to denote a keen businessman. Nevertheless in a society which placed so much emphasis on respect and dignity from Blacks towards Whites, one could only sympathize with the trader's loss of face. On occasion Native Commissioners would refer to a Jew 'who is always anxious to get his pound of flesh';¹⁷ another, who would quite happily evict tribespeople from their traditional lands in the interests of foreign land companies, could also hope: 'that one day the Native in Rhodesia will not have to rely solely on Foreign Jews for the purchase of his surplus crop'.¹⁸

It was not surprising that these attitudes spilled over into African thinking so that in 1931 the Assistant Native Commissioner at Shabani had cause to write about the 'half-witted [chief Masunda, who] strongly refused to consider an application from a Jewish trader' to establish himself in the Reserve, even though the man in question, Isaac Ouahnon, was known to be 'very reasonable with natives'.¹⁹

Another potential cause of friction was miscegenation. It was a commonly held opinion that country traders were the main cause of Rhodesia's growing Coloured [mixed race] population. In pioneer days the practice of taking African concubines or even wives was very common, particularly among Company officials. With the entry of significant numbers of White women inter-racial liaisons began to be frowned upon and the consequences regarded as 'anti-social in effects'. Statistical analysis of the incidence of miscegenation shows that traders were no more likely than other European men to be involved. Some of their reputation was part of their generally unfavourable image among most Europeans; another aspect was their invariably single condition and close geographical proximity to large numbers of Africans.

The African attitude on this question remains largely unknown. In the later period after they had imbibed missionary and official views, they were of course angry at the exploitation of their womenfolk; in earlier times, however, they appear to have regarded such relationships as advantageous political and economic ties which could be usefully exploited by their clan or tribe. Be that as it may, there exists a section of the Coloured population which claims Jewish parentage, and uses common Jewish surnames such as Cohen, and in the various censuses there have always been a few Coloureds, never more than six, who have claimed Judaism as their faith.

Miscegenation is just the extreme form of the early Jewish tendency towards closer social relations with Africans. Although most Jews adopted the prevailing European stereotypes of Africans, there were always a few who adopted their own individual life-style. Percy Clark, an extremely racist and violently inclined 'old drifter', was particularly scathing about a 'Jewish trader' whom he met going up country 'eating with his native boys, a thing which whites regarded as pretty low down'. Hearing that the Jew had had some troubles with Africans, Clark replied: 'What do you expect when you treat them as equals. It serves you damn well right!'²⁰ The case of a 'Russian Jew' who in 1915 went with his White wife to live with an African chief led to European complaints. The local police officer reported that 'in my opinion his mode of living hardly does credit to his colour'.²¹ Eventually the couple were removed after pressure was put on the expatriate landowners to evict them. There was evidently little allowance given to individual Europeans to adopt their own life-style and deviant behaviour was stifled by social pressures or official action.

Jews, who were naturally more questioning of the accepted norms of White society because of their own history, developed social conscience or

intellectual tradition, came within one or two generations to fully internalize the *status quo*. In 1912 the Revd M.I. Cohen could state:

Nothing, therefore, could stop the process of education. . . . Prejudice against the educated native was not well founded. . . . The whites had such advantages that they ought not to fear competition. . . . A repressive regime can only destroy white prosperity, unite the coloured populations and so dislocate the labour supply.²²

In 1925 there was a rousing debate at the Bulawayo Jewish Guild on the subject of 'Native education and the white man' in which one young Jewish radical defined a 'white man's country . . . as that in which the natives did the hardest and most unpleasant work'.²³ Yet Rogers and Frantz, two academics, who investigated 'conservatism' among Rhodesian Whites in 1956 reported that: 'The skimpy data suggest that Jews in Southern Rhodesia, in contrast to South Africa and U.S.A., are not as tolerant of discontinuing racially differentiating laws and practises.'²⁴ In fact they appeared less liberal than Roman Catholics on such issues.

In recent years Jewish - African relations have mainly taken place on the employer - employee level. In most cases the only Africans to enter the home have been servants. Jews appear to be able to keep their servants longer than most White Rhodesians, since in both home and business they are intelligent enough to understand the value of a contented labour force. Nevertheless, only in the realm of social welfare, where Jewish women's organizations are particularly prominent, do ordinary individuals have the opportunity to meet the rising generation of articulate, well-educated Africans who challenge the racial hierarchy of the old Rhodesia. Of course Jewish medical staff contribute to the African's well-being daily, and many are known to have spent a lifetime in the service of better medical assistance for the Africans. Yet it has to be admitted that Jewish - Coloured relations reflect a similar situation which is only highlighted by the voluntary activities of persons like Mrs 'Chummie' Pitch in the Coloureds' Salisbury suburb of Arcadia.

Inevitably many middle-class and younger Africans do expect more of Jews than of ordinary Europeans on a personal level in the social sphere, and there is a somewhat understandable resentment at the lack of divergence from general White behaviour. They, of course, cannot understand either the pressures on individual Europeans to conform or the real extent of Jewish integration within the White population. They probably seek the warmth and affection typified by old Samuel Shemer, a pioneer who died at the age of 100 years in 1975. Sam, who had extensive trading and farming interests, 'lived in Gwelo, surrounded always by Africans whose language he spoke better than English'. In his will he left to

his 'foster-son', 'my loyal and faithful African servant Rogers Matambani' a smallholding in Gwelo. He directed his 1,620 hectare estate to be available for the use of his African employees, 'to live in peace and comfort', and at the death of the last surviving employee that the property be transferred to Mr Matambani or his heirs. This paternalistic relationship appears outdated at first sight, but on reflection his gesture can be seen as a symbolic move towards inter-racial conciliation, a personal effort at voluntary land redistribution by the last surviving member of the generation who had known Cecil Rhodes. However it is interpreted, there is no doubt that this gesture was appreciated by those to whom it was directed and Rogers's son, Luke, has stated, 'we looked on Mr Shemer as a grandfather. He was one of us.'²⁵

The outsider inevitably expands the range of identity of a specific group but there is still the psychological need for the group to see itself as useful to society as a whole. This feeling which particularly affects ethnic minorities may be regarded as a measure of their insecurity and part of the perceived need to 'sell' themselves to the majority of their fellow citizens in order to justify their presence. Nevertheless if a group of any kind feels it is an independent entity, in some way it is a healthy sign if it seeks a positive function and wishes to assess its role. The Jewish contribution to Rhodesia has been manifold in the form of individual endeavours in many spheres of life. Sometimes in outstanding cases, such as that of Professor Michael Gelfand, C.B.E., who has distinguished himself in tropical medicine and Government service, as a teacher and head of the Department of Medicine of the University, as a writer on history and Shona culture who has reassessed the value of traditional African medicine, one person can in himself justify a whole cultural milieu.

As a group the Jews have made their major contribution in the economic sphere where they have been prominent in the inevitable process of modernization and development both in the commercial and industrial sectors. The only groups who would question the usefulness of the benefits of trade and a consumer society are the extreme romantics on both political extremes who, for their own reasons, regret the end of tribalism, the old crafts and the traditional social system. One common claim of the Jews so important in the homogeneous national states of Europe is, however, irrelevant in the Rhodesian situation. This is the supposed Jewish potential for challenging the suffocating dominant culture with an opposing creative cultural nonconformity. In Rhodesia the right to be different was never questioned: only the right to equality of treatment was at issue. In such a situation the Jewish contribution in trying to ameliorate the disadvantages caused by gross differences in access to resources can be seen

as a testing ground. As a social group, outside the political sphere, there is no doubt that the community was an example to others in meeting its obligations and facing the economic inequities which surrounded it so that the old Jewish virtue of *tsedaka* (charity) was always very evident.

Whether it was the Ladies Benevolent Society, the African Welfare Federation, the Red Cross, school fetes, sports, the Eisteddfod, or any other form of charitable or public endeavour, the Jewish community as a group and on an individual basis was always prominent in providing finance and manpower. In gifts to educational institutions and funds Jewish donors such as the Beits, Charelick Salomon, James Kapnek, Julius Robinson and B.R. Cohen were among the largest. The Ralstein Home for Aged Men in Bulawayo and the B.S. Leon Home in Salisbury are further evidence of concern for the unfortunate and philanthropy on a notable scale by individual businessmen. In the sphere of social service Jewish women have been generous of their time and efforts, and some like Tilly Jacobson, Muriel Rosin, Mrs E. Basch, Sophie Shearer and Sadie Kaplan have received the M.B.E. for their work in voluntary organizations, while many others have laboured without formal recognition. It is invidious but perhaps necessary to give just one example of just how well-deserved this recognition for public service really was.

Sadie Kaplan, who has a street in the Bulawayo suburb of Parkview named in her honour, was born at Malmesbury in the Cape in 1897 and died in Israel in 1974 but in between she lived in Rhodesia for half a century, from 1916 until 1966. In the Jewish sphere she was a founder member and active worker for WIZO, Mogen David Adom and Habonim; in the wider community she was a City Councillor in the years 1950-65, a member of the Loyal Women's Guild, Child Welfare Society, Red Cross, two school committees, and for twenty-five years a Girl Guide leader. Secure in her own faith and a staunch Zionist, she used this cultural and social security as a base from which to reach out into the wider world and contribute to humanity in general.

We can see in this and other cases from among Rhodesian Jewry that group loyalties can be a source of identity and pride and need not detract from a wider contribution to society. It is part of a belief stated many years ago by Moses Isaac Cohen, the archetypal Rhodesian Jew:

The true Jewish vote is the vote of the true Jew, and this will ever be cast in the scales of toleration, enlightenment and harmonious co-operation of free and independent men.²⁶

Notes

All manuscript references are to documents in the collections in the National Archives of Zimbabwe, Salisbury, unless otherwise indicated; these, and all other references, are fully described in the Bibliography.

Abbreviations

A.N.C.	Assistant Native Commissioner
B.S.A. Co.	British South Africa Company
B.S.A.P.	British South Africa Police
<i>Bul. Chron.</i>	<i>The Bulawayo Chronicle</i>
Cent. Afr. Jew. Board of Deputies Arch.	Central African Jewish Board of Deputies Archives, Bulawayo
C.O.	Colonial Office, London
C.N.C.	Chief Native Commissioner
<i>Debates</i>	Southern Rhodesia, <i>Debates in the Legislative Council</i> (1890–1923) and <i>Debates in the Legislative Assembly</i> (1924 onwards)
Dep.	Department of
D.O.	Dominions Office, London
N.C.	Native Commissioner
Public Rec. Off.	Public Record Office, London
<i>Rhod. Her.</i>	<i>The Rhodesia Herald</i>

CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 2

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Chovevi Zion, 1899,

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

GENTLEMEN,

The Committee have pleasure in reporting to the members of the Bulawayo Tent of the Chovevi Zion, that the great work which they entered upon a year ago, has in the intervening period advanced apace. The members of the Society have increased from 40 to over 100, and the subscriptions collected monthly have grown proportionately.

The Society has been able to grant a subscription of £50 to the Colony Machwayin, in Palestine, and of £10 10 0 to the School in Jaffe, and they have a sum of money in hand which justifies them in hoping that they will shortly be able to make a further substantial remittance, for the purpose of assisting the settlement in the Holy Land.

In addition to the financial aid given to the good cause, the Society has likewise on many occasions upheld the Jewish National Idea, as for example, by the celebration of Chanuga, Shabbath Nachmu and Succaths, and by holding a lecture and other social gatherings. We trust that our activity in this direction will increase during the coming year.

In the course of this year the Commander of the Society, Mr. M. LANDAU visited London, where he was well received by the heads of the "London Chovevi Zion," and as the outcome of the interviews with them, the Committee have resolved to apply for affiliation to the London Society which has been granted.

With a view to enhance the position of the officers of the Society, a Commanders Gold Badge has been presented to the Society by public subscription and councillors sashes by F. N. JOSEPH, Esq., these emblems will be the property of the Society and will pass from the outgoing to the incoming officers and councillors of the society.

An agreeable Element in the history of the Society during the past year has been the support received from the Ladies' of the Community. We trust that that support will continue in the future.

In conclusion we desire to address a fervent appeal to every Jew and Jewess in Bulawayo to support the grand undertaking, which we are seeking to accomplish, it is an undertaking which aims at the restoration of Israel to its ancient home so full of historic memories and splendid associations.

It is an undertaking which tends to secure a home and a livelihood for our much suffering Brothers in less fortunate lands than this.

MARKS LANDAU, Commander.	
NORMAN L. MANDELSON,	} Vice Commanders.
JOSEPH SABER.	
L. EPSTEIN, Treasurer.	
F. N. JOSEPH,	} Hon. Secretaries.
A. B. DIAMOND.	
I. WOLFFE,	
J. JOSEPH	
SAUL JACOBS,	
M. BUDLENDER,	
S. FRIEDMAN,	
H. DISHER.	