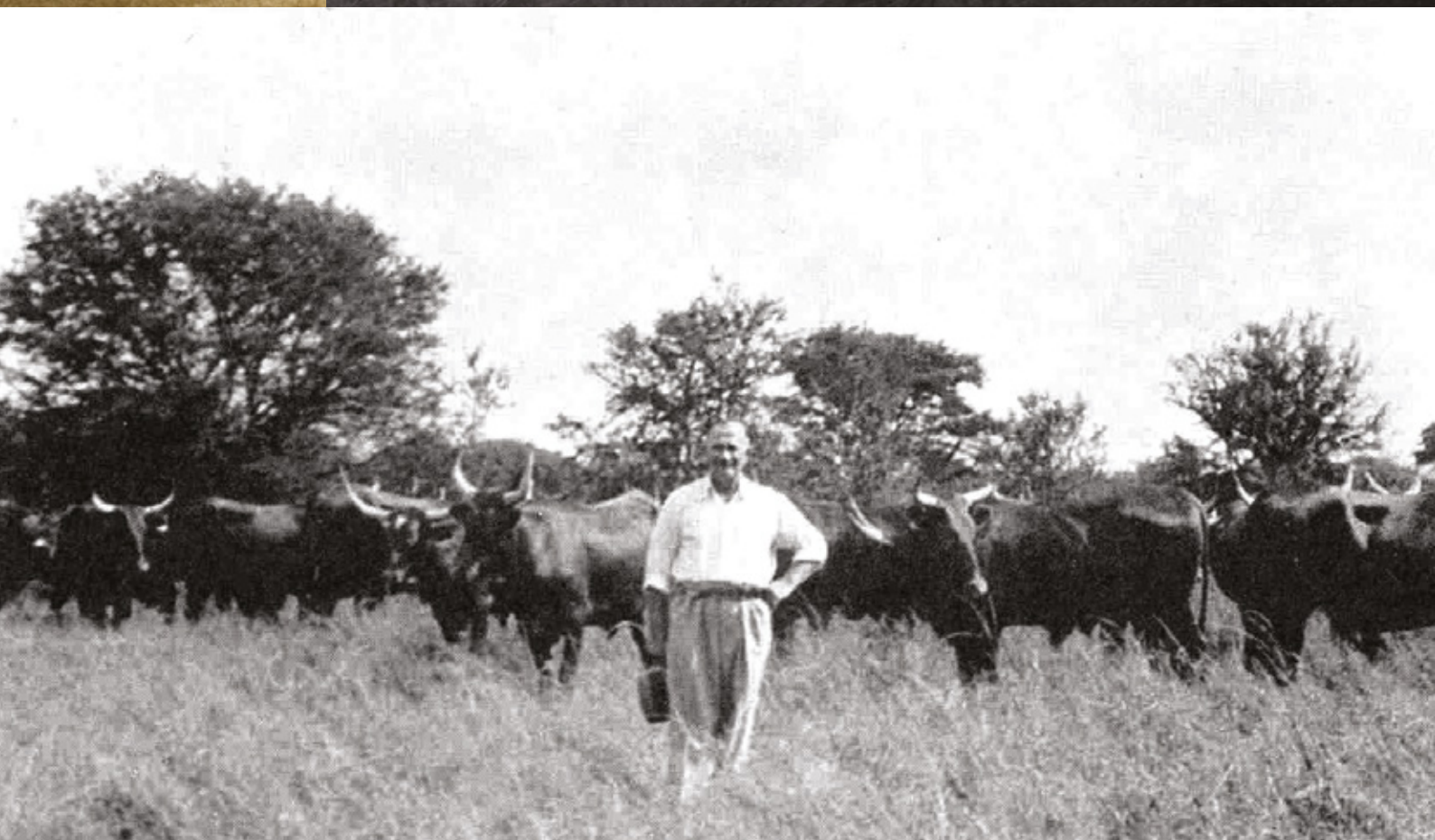


Cattle and Commerce

EARLY JEWISH SETTLERS AND THE REGIONAL CATTLE TRADE

In the 'Wild West' conditions of cattle trading in Northern Rhodesia in the early Twentieth Century, Jewish traders set up long-distance cattle trails, at first going south to Bulawayo, and then from 1907 north to the emerging markets around recently opened copper mines in the Katanga (now Shaba) province of the Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). For fifty years, from 1906, cattle were trekked across the Kalahari from Ngamiland and swum across the Zambezi at Kazungula. Cattle drivers also trekked cattle to the Angola diamond fields and even to the mines in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Elie and Harry Susman realised that they could profitably drive cattle from Barotseland over 600 miles southwards to markets in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia and Francistown in Bechuanaland (now Botswana). They received financial backing from Jewish wholesalers in Bulawayo and Port Elizabeth, who in turn were funded by banks and merchants in London.



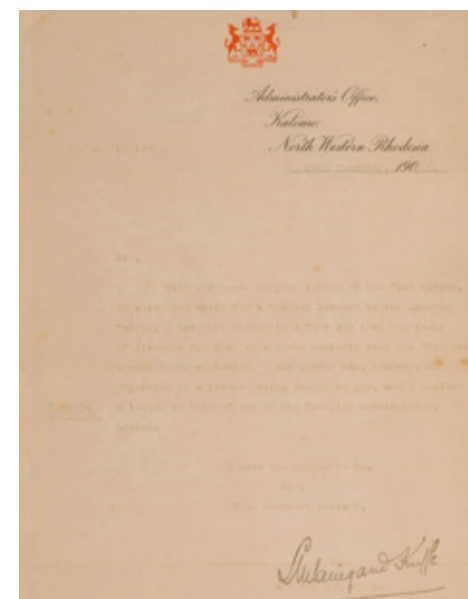
Harry Susman. The Zambezi Ranching Corporation eventually owned 25,000 head of cattle on 220,000 hectares of land

From left: Harry Wulfsohn, Imwiko - Paramount Chief of Barotseland and Harry Susman outside the palace of the chief in 1944.

The purpose of the audience with the Paramount Chief was to obtain his approval for the transfer of nine trading licences to the newly-formed partnership between the Susman Brothers and Harry Wulfsohn. Harry Susman accompanied Harry Wulfsohn to use his personal influence with the chief, who replied that "If the bull of Barotseland (as Harry Susman was called) wants to return, no-one can refuse him." The trading licences were issued.



Letter of recommendation written by Landau Brothers on behalf of Elie Susman, and dated 1903



Letter dated 20 December 1905, stating that the District Commissioner in Lealui, Barotseland would not object to Elie Susman being granted a trading licence.

THE BAROTSELAND TRADING EXPEDITION

'In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.'

Albert Einstein

The Susman brothers embarked on the first of what became known as the Barotseland Trading Expeditions in April 1901. Their destination was Lealui on the Zambezi flood plain and their objective was to meet with King Lewanika of Barotseland in order to seek his permission to trade in the area. The venture was a success enabling a second trade expedition to follow.

The brothers became farmers and ranchers and also expanded into the butchery business. Their first farms and ranches held cattle stocks in Southern Rhodesia and later in Northern Rhodesia, raising cattle for the Congo market. The Susmans also bought farms and ranches around Mazabuka and other districts in Kalomo and Zimba in Zambia's southern province.



Central African Cattle Trails, 1900-1960