

African community. At the time of independence, he invited the top leaders of the government to the synagogue, where they joined in a special thanksgiving service to mark the event.

On another occasion, he asked a group of Black Anglican seminarians to attend Sabbath eve prayers. The student clerics were deeply impressed by the service, but Prins was taken aback a few days later when one young seminarian stopped him in the street to remark, "I want to compliment you on the excellent way you conducted mass last Friday night."

Today, Maurits Prins lives in South Africa, where he writes and lectures on Jewish themes. He calls the 20 years he spent in Zambia the happiest years of his life.

"The average African does not know what a Jew is," says Prins. "Anti-Semitism, as such, does not exist among Africans. Feelings against whites, perhaps, but Jews were never singled out."

IN THE elegantly-furnished living room of Abe and Vera Galaun, longtime residents of Lusaka, I heard a different view of Africans toward Jews. Abe, one of Zambia's leading citizens, and his charming South African-born wife, were replaying a video cassette for my benefit. The tape was part of a Zambian Broadcasting Service series, *They Came to Stay*, depicting the lives of successful immigrants.

This particular programme was a tribute to Galaun - cattle rancher, owner of vast farms and prosperous businessman. He had come from Lithuania 45 years earlier, virtually penniless, and had worked his way



Golda Meir, then Israeli foreign minister, on Lusaka visit in 1964.

up to become a millionaire.

The interviewer, toward the end of the programme asked Abe if it was true that the Jews are inclined only to look after their own, and that they tend to be an uncharitable people. Abe quickly retorted that, on the contrary, the humanitarian traditions of philanthropy and generosity were much more characteristic. Jews contributed liberally to all sorts of worthy causes, in Zambia or wherever else they lived in the world, and, of course, they looked after their own, too. The interviewer seemed sorry he had asked the question.

Galaun himself is a fine example of openheartedness. Most of his relatives had perished in the Holocaust. But he liked people, and it is to his and Vera's welcoming house that the entire Lusaka Jewish community comes to celebrate the festivals.

Abe's proudest moment occurred on July 4, 1976, at the United States Embassy in Lusaka, where a reception was being held for America's bicentennial. That same morning, the Israelis had pulled off their daring rescue mission of releasing the Air France planeload of hijacked

passengers held hostage in Entebbe.

At the embassy, the assembled diplomats and local dignitaries were buzzing with excitement over the incredible rescue operation. When Abe and Vera strolled into the reception room, the crowd burst into enthusiastic applause. Glasses were raised and spontaneous toasts were offered to the Galauns. With no Israeli representatives present because Zambia had broken off relations during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Abe, as a prominent Zambian Jew, was the delighted stand-in *naches*-gatherer for the occasion.

THE ZAMBIAN Jews' role has been that of intermediaries between two separate societies: the élite Anglo-Saxon colonialist rulers and the African Bantu masses. With no capital and little knowledge of English, the Jewish traders who ventured to the remote areas of the African reserves and migrated to the Copperbelt played an important part in creating new markets and supplying the demands for western goods, such as farm machinery and manufactured clothing. This entrepreneurial effort was instrumental in merging the African and European economies, and helped the Jews become a vital and respected community in this corner of Africa.

In politics, the Jews played a remarkably active part in proportion to their number. Jewish mayors held office at one time or another in almost all the Northern Rhodesian towns. Sir Roy Welensky, son of a Polish-Jewish father and an Afrikaans mother, was the dominant political figure in the country for 25 years. One of 13 children, Welensky laboured as a railwayman in his

teens, and later became a heavyweight boxing champion. Blunt and charismatic, Welensky rose from railway union organizer to become prime minister of the short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in which position he strove to achieve a working partnership between whites and blacks. Never one to deny his Jewish origins, the tough-minded and tough-fisted Welensky was known to have flattened more than one bigot for anti-Semitic remarks.

Aaron Milner, whose father was a Jewish immigrant and mother a native African, started out as a bookkeeper in a general store in Chingola, and ended up holding several important cabinet posts, including minister of home affairs.

An "official" view of the Jews and their role in Zambian life was expressed a few years ago by the country's leader, President Kenneth Kaunda. Dr. Kaunda, the first and only president Zambia has had, was recently re-elected for his fifth term. In reply to a request by Israel's then chief rabbi, Shlomo Goren, to allow Tora scrolls to be sent to Israel from closed synagogues in the Copperbelt, Kaunda said that he was surprised and sorry that the Jewish community had dwindled. "The Jews of Zambia had contributed to the welfare and well-being of the country," he wrote to Goren.

As one of the Third World leaders who has gone on record against some of Israel's policies, President Kaunda added, "Sometimes our position versus the Jews and Israel is not properly understood. We regard them as sons of God, and as such we were always only too happy to cooperate with them." □