

No haven

ANNA CHARIN

HAVEN IN AFRICA

Frank Shapiro

TANDEM PRESS, £9.95 (plus
£1.95 p&p from 121 Balfron
Tower, London E14 0QT)

In his account of the little-known story of the closing of an option for saving thousands of Jewish refugees in the 1930s by settling them in Rhodesia, Frank Shapiro presents a gloomy picture of an appalling failure on the part of the authorities in Britain and Northern Rhodesia and of leading Anglo-Jews.

While there were many Zionist Jews in Britain, there were also large numbers whose priority was to maintain their status as loyal British subjects and who failed even to support emigration to Palestine. They therefore, claims Shapiro, hushed up negotiations on such a settlement in Africa.

Maps of the region and photographs of Jews who reached Rhodesia illustrate the book, and there is an interesting page of snippets from Rhodesian newspapers and Foreign Office memos — all expressing support for the emigration of Jews to the area.

Shapiro also mentions some anti-Semitism among the authorities in Northern Rhodesia as a possible element leading to the plan's failure. He quotes Sir Leopold Moore, owner of the Livingstone Mail, who wrote that "500 families... would turn Northern Rhodesia into an annexe of Palestine."

But Shapiro emphasises that Northern Rhodesia "never closed its gates to the arriving Jews" in contrast to a "conspiracy of silence" on the part of Anglo-Jewish leaders.

Anna Charin is the JC's librarian.