

One of George Wasserman's friends was a certain Dr Kind, a refugee from Hungary, who had brought to England a profound knowledge of lubricating oils and how, by the Edleanu process, to produce them of highest quality. The Process extracted impurities from the raw distillation cuts by washing them with liquid sulphur dioxide, a highly poisonous chemical. Dr Kind had raised in the City of London, perhaps with George's help, the necessary finance to construct a large plant at Old Trafford, an industrial estate to the south-west of the City of Manchester. His plant was situated on the Manchester—Liverpool Shipping canal and the green drums of high purity lubricating oil could thus be easily transported to customers, mostly the Fighting Services during World War II. He called his plant the Manchester Oil Refinery; MOR, for short.

It was there that I obtained my first job. I had several interviews with Dr Kind and a Dr Ernst Bergmann who was most interested in my Ph D thesis which had used catalytic dehydrogenation. I knew that this operation had nothing to do with the Edleanu process, but during the interviews I was not told the precise research work which I was to perform. The only clue I was given was that it was a new idea of the famous Dr Chaim Weizmann. So I was left guessing when I moved to Manchester and found good lodgings in Altrincham, a pleasant suburb in the south of Manchester. I could easily commute by bus each day to M O R.

Chaim Weizmann, born in Western Russia in 1874 into an orthodox Jewish family, studied chemistry in Germany and Switzerland and finally settled in Manchester, where at the University he did organic chemical research and taught his subject with pleasure and success in the first decades of the 20th century. It was his discovery of *Clostridium acetobutylicum* which changed world history and brought fame to Weizmann. A world shortage of acetone had developed during World War I as it was an essential ingredient in the industrial production of cordite, the smokeless explosive used for big guns at sea and on land. With his newly discovered micro-organism Weizmann could ferment many starches, to produce large quantities of acetone.

When at the conclusion of the War in 1919 he was asked by Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, what reward he wished to receive his answer was clear. As an ardent Zionist he wanted to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. Brought into direct contact with Mr Balfour, the then Foreign Secretary, and after lengthy examination and discussion, the famous Balfour Declaration was issued, the Charter of Zionism. When after World War II the State of Israel came into existence, Weizmann was in 1949 elected its first President. He died in 1952. I was commissioned in 1974 to write a small booklet *Chaim Weizmann* about him and the Institute in Israel bearing his name, to commemorate the centenary of his birth.