

Southern Alberta's Jews; it is the visual portrayal of how these individuals contributed to and helped shape the larger Albertan and Canadian Jewish community in which they lived.

Land of Promise is an excellent addition to the small but growing number of popular histories on Canadian Jewry. The photographs are impressive and the accompanying captions are very well done. Although there are brief introductions to the photograph sections, the reader may wish they were more detailed. In addition, a cross-referencing between the family histories at the back and the photographs throughout would have made matching faces to family histories somewhat easier. Nonetheless, *Land of Promise* is a delightful book, and the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta should be commended for fulfilling its own promise of chronicling the story of a vibrant Jewish community in Southern Alberta.

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Levy, Daniel, *Two-Gun Cohen: A Biography*: New York: St. Martins Press, 1997. 379pp.

This is a fascinating and complex biography of a colourful and charismatic individual. The family originated in Rodzanes, fifty-five miles from Warsaw. The father of Morris Cohen left with his family in the late 1880s for London, England to escape the pogroms.

In East London, Morris was a baby who lived with his family in a world of poverty. At the age of nine, Morris started a 'boxing career,' and also became a thief, pickpocket, and juvenile delinquent. He ended up in the first Jewish reform school, where he remained for four years (1901-1905). He had f i v e siblings. Through the intervention of 'Bernardo's Homes' he was shipped to Western Canada in 1905, with 1300 other

'Bernardo Boys.' He landed up in Wapella, Saskatchewan, where fifty Jewish families resided, in 1905. A non-Jewish farmer took him in, and while in residence he learned how to play cards and how to shoot a pistol. Morris moved to Winnipeg, where he became a con man, and a pimp. He was jailed for six months for 'gambling activities'.

Morris headed back to Saskatchewan, and there began his contact with the Chinese community. He became friends with many of the Chinese immigrants, who operated gaming places. He defended the Chinese against some of the racist attacks. Sun Yat Sen emerged as a Chinese leader, and the Chinese National League was established. In the meantime, the First World War erupted, and Morris joined the Edmonton Irish Guards as a sergeant. The Regiment built railway tracks in Belgium. During the war, Morris worked with Chinese workers as Canadian Railway troops. He came home to Edmonton as a 'war hero'.

In 1922, he went to China and was introduced to Sun and his wife, Soong Qingling. Morris took the title of 'General' and acted as a bodyguard to Sun Yat Sen. The author continues a detailed story of life in China, the local struggles, and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Morris was involved in diverse 'arms dealing' during the 1929-1936 period. He became an ardent Zionist and later helped to persuade China to vote for the establishment of the state of Israel.

He moved to Shanghai in the late 1930s and "lived and ate well." He worked for the Shanghai mayor. The Japanese invaded Hong Kong in mid February of 1939, and Morris became a prisoner, and was not treated very well. He and thousands of others were living in a camp in Stanley, a suburb of Hong Kong. He lost a lot of weight, but he was always kind to women and children. He was part of a Red Cross prisoner exchange in 1943 and sailed on the Swedish ship *Gripsholm* from Goa to New York. A special train took the Canadian exchange persons to Montreal.

We pick up the Canadian story upon his return as a

'hero'. He was feted by the Montreal Jewish community, including the Bronfman family. He married Ida Judith Clark, a thirty-eight-year-old divorcée, who owned a 'swank dress shop.' He was fifty-six. The family wedding took place in Temple Beth-El. Morris did a lot of travelling by himself to and from China. His marriage disintegrated and he moved back to England in the early 1950s. He was broke at the time, and his first biography hit the bookstores, written by Charles Drage. Daniel Levy, the author of this volume describes this biography as inaccurate and that it includes many untrue events. Morris obtained his divorce in 1956 and returned to China.

Chairman Mao treated Morris well 'paying all his expenses' during his stay in Beijing. Morris lounged around the lobby of the hotel, smoked cigars, told Jewish jokes, and was hungry for company. He was described as a *Luftmensch*.

When asked why he spent so much time in China, Morris replied (p. 255) "I wanted the Chinese to know what a Jew looked like." In 1959, he became a consultant to Rolls-Royce in England, in the sale of engines to China. In 1961, he finally received his Canadian Citizenship. In 1962, he met Golda Meir in Hong Kong to discuss Chinese-Israel Relations. He died in England in September 1970. At his Jewish funeral both the Communist Chinese and the Taiwanese delegation appeared together in public. On his black granite tombstone are English and Hebrew as well as a Chinese inscription sent by Soong, the wife of Sun Yat Sen.

Daniel Levy has done a superb job at recreating a complex and fascinating personality. His extensive research notes (pp. 297-341), indicate his great effort at getting at the facts of the life of 'Two-Gun Cohen.' Canada plays a big part in the saga of this Jewish adventurer.

This book makes a good read, and allows us to understand the many aspects of Morris Cohen's life and his true place in Chinese history.

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