

FILE

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HONG KONG AND CHINA

A peninsula, Kowloon is attached to the main land and is about 4 square miles; across the water lies the island of Hong Kong, which is about 40 square miles. In this tiny area there live and work 6 million people. Is probably the most dense area in the world. Because it cannot grow horizontally, it grows vertically: enormous apartment blocks, some 30 to 40 or more stories high, but hardly any breathing space between them, clogs the entire island, even Kowloon and the New Territories. So crowded is it, that the average family is allotted no more than 500 square feet for their living space; in this entire area we did not notice a single pet, and hardly a tree -- there is no room for such things. It is populated by people who are in perpetual motion and passionate and palpable pursuit of profit, and an almost sensual lust for money and for making it. Religiously, the most popular religion is Buddhism, then Cristianity and Islam -- but the overwhelming majority are atheistic.

The Jewish community contains from 1500 to 2000 souls. It is in many ways a microcosm of the world Jewish community: The establishment is on the style of England's United Synagogue -- the president of the community is [REDACTED], a 93 year old patriacian, who knows very little about Yiddishkeit. Lubavitch is an upcoming force, and founded the Carmel School, which is still a kindergarden but beginning to flourish. The established synagogue is on Robinson Road, and they have a transient Rabbi, Rabbi Lapin from England, and they serve the peninsula. In Hong Kong, the Lubavitch have their synagogue in the Hilton Hotel. There is a third synagogue which engaged a rabbi, because for them neither of the other two are good enough... The Lubavitch rabbi, a young man by the name of Rabbi [REDACTED], is all caught up in the Lubavitch Messiah craze. Some super-frum pepole, influenced by Rabbi Shach, will have nothing to do with Lubavitch, not even joining them in a Talmud class...

The Saturday that we were there we noticed that a thoroughfare was closed off and it and its adjoining parks were filled with hundreds and hundreds of Philipino women. It turned out that it was a special Chinesse holiday where they go to the graves of their ancestors and express their reverence for them. And that day by legal statute is a day when all the Philipino workers in Hong Kong must be given a day off. So they all gather there for a picnic and take pictures with their friends -- we saw hundreds and hundreds of them.

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We were received by the Deputy Vice Premier of China, Wu, in his ornate and palatial offices in Beijing -- a compound once occupied by the emperors of the Qing Dynasty, and now by himself and the Central Committee of the communist party of the People's Republic of China. Our main interest is cultural but, even more, political -- neutralizing the previously anti-Israel stance of China and getting them to be more pro-Israel. The Chinese interest is economic -- getting Jewry world-wide to invest in China. Wu even mentioned specifically his request that we invest in a brand new project in Shanghai. Apparently, the Chinese -- like the rest of the world -- are convinced that Jews exert a disproportionate influence on the world's economy. This is one of the less tragic results of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion...

Interesting side light: When the guest list was given to one of Wu's assistance, there appeared the name of Israel Singer (Director General of the World Jewish Congress). His response was, "Oh how nice! I am glad you are bringing a singer from Israel!"

Embarrassing incident! Whereas Isi Leibler did magnificently every time he spoke, and did so as well in introducing the delegation to the Deputy Prime Minister, we were accompanied by [REDACTED]. His comments made us all cringe with embarrassment. It was unfortunate, but not fatal.

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