



Rabbi Moshe Cahana, Hillel director, studies torah with Dr. Irving N. Rothman as interested spectator. Photo courtesy of W. David Paperman and the Jewish Herald-Voice.

## UH gaining historic torah

A historic Czechoslovakian torah will become a valued part of the M.D. Anderson Memorial Library's permanent collections following its Sunday, Sept. 19 dedication by the Hillel Association.

The torah, a parchment manuscript of the Five Books of Moses in Hebrew, was rescued and restored following World War II by the Czech Memorial Scrolls committee of the Westminster Synagogue in London.

It was formerly owned by the Pinkas Synagogue of Prague, Czechoslovakia, now a Jewish museum commemorating the 600-year-old Jewish community of Prague destroyed by the Nazis during World War II.

Jews were recorded in Prague as early as 1348 but there are indications of Jewish habitation of

the site, related to the history of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, in the Ninth and Tenth centuries.

The Pinkas Synagogue was built sometime before 1352 upon the site of an early ford for traveling caravans traveling from France to Russia. Services in the Synagogue were terminated in 1932, by the Nazis who banned worship in the building and annihilated its officers and members.

Rabbi Moshe Cahana, Hillel director, has identified the persons to whom the torah was originally dedicated from Yiddish words delicately carved in its handles. The inscription reads: "Rabbi Yudah, son of our teacher Aaron Fouer of blessed memory, and his wife Mrs. Fay Arika, daughter of Rabbi Yudah of blessed memory." The scribe is

recorded on the right handle as Abraham Segal.

The torah not only provides a valuable manuscript for study but also provides Hillel with a historical document of the 20th century holocaust and restores the memory of the Prague victims each time it is placed in use.

Funds with which the torah was obtained were raised by volunteer efforts of UH faculty members in a recent lecture series and through the support of B'nai B'rith.

Donations are currently being accepted from University Alumni to dress the torah appropriately and to provide a modest scholarship offering instruction in reading the torah to on campus students.

Donations for the mantle, silver handles, pointer, restoration costs or the scholarship fund may be sent to Dr. Irving N. Rothman, faculty chairman, C/O Department of English, University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun, Houston, Tex. 77004. Checks should be made payable to B'nai B'rith.