



CSJO NEWSLETTER

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

Winter 2004-2005

CSJO expands across the ocean! London Red Herring Club joins North American Secularists

The Red Herring Club of London, England, has recently voted to affiliate with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations.

The Red Herring Club is a growing association in London that concentrates on Jewish education for children based on history and culture, rather than religious doctrine and ritual.

Jeremy Green, Red Herring Club secretary, has been in touch with Rifke Feinstein, executive director of CSJO and with CSJO board members. "Whatever the practical benefits, the biggest thrill is having proof that we're not alone any more. Most British Jews are secularists at heart but join synagogues because they don't want to turn their backs on the community. We hope that this will encourage more to try another way.

"Our affiliation with CSJO provides our club with valuable educational materials for both adults and children, as well as useful contacts with communities and schools that share our approach to Jewish identity.

"At the same time, as the first affiliate outside North America, we hope to broaden the global outlook of present CSJO affiliates and, perhaps, to encourage similar secular groups in Jewish communities around the world to join this 35-year old expression of Cultural Jewishness."

The following information is taken from the group's Web site, www.redherringclub.com.

A secular Jewish community

The Red Herring Club is a secular Jewish Community based in London, oriented towards activities for children and families. We run activities and celebrate Jewish festivals and occasions in a

non-religious way. We have a small "cheder" and run a bar/bat mitzvah programme. We run a Klezmer band, the Rockin' Rollmops, for children and parents. If you can play an instrument and want to join, get in touch!

For details of forthcoming events please contact us.

Aims

The objective of the Red Herring Club is to form an inter-generational community to foster and preserve Jewish identity in a secular context and to foster the development and application of progressive and humanistic values.

Objectives

To introduce Jewish culture in its widest sense. This includes the history and geography of the Jewish world, legends, folk tales, music, food, visual art, languages, clothes, traditions. It also includes some of the ideas of Jewish religious culture in a sympathetic manner but wholly from a secular perspective.

To attempt to present material in an interesting and fun way, so that the activities of the Red Herring Club are age-appropriate and relevant to the children's lives.

To present Jewish culture in a progressive, pluralist, inclusive framework. For example, using the history of Jews all over the world to help to foster multiculturalism and anti-racism and ensuring that material does not have a gender bias.

To help children to relate to Jewishness in a way which ensures that they recognise that Jews are a unique people among many unique peoples.

The Red Herring Club is affiliated to and supported by the Jewish Socialists' Group.

**2005 CSJO conference set for May 27-30
Humber College - Toronto, Canada**

Theme: "Voices of Our Past, Visions of the Future"

Keynote Speakers: Jerry Bain, Toronto, CN

Judy Seid, Baltimore, MD

Denora Knecht, Corona, CA

Judaism, the Jewish Jesus and the Politics of Judea

Presented by Jeff Zolitor at CSJO Conference in Philadelphia in 2002



Jeff Zolitor

In 168 BCE the family of Matthias Hasmon, known as the Hasmoneans, or the Maccabees, had enough of the liberal accommodations that the religious administration had made towards Antiochus IV, and killed a Jewish man as he was making a burnt offering in accordance with the decrees of the Greek Syrian king. The action spawned a fundamentalist revolt in Judea. It was short-lived.

There was also a struggle taking place that had its roots in the repatriation after the Babylonian exile. It was around that time that the dynasty of the office of High Priest was shifting between two priestly families - that of the descendants of Aaron, and those of Zadok, a High Priest during the rule of David.

The Maccabees were successful on the battlefield, but their success was due, in part, to their ability to fan the flames of anti-Greek sentiment in order to gain more Jewish supporters for their cause, a doctrine they were soon to abandon. But those sentiments didn't just fade away. Around the beginning of the Roman period, they evolved into a political group called the Pharisees.

In their battle with Greek education, the hasidim, or pious ones, began to develop a national system of Jewish education. Local schools, where all Jewish boys could learn Torah, began springing up around the city, and then around the country. This development became the forerunner of the synagogue. The Pharisaic movement, was rooted in popular education.

After the Maccabean revolt, the Temple cult was controlled by the Zadokites. While all of the political movements of the day could count members of the priestly families in their midst, descendants of Aaron or Zadok, the High Priests of the Temple at this time were Zadokites.

The collection of tithes and taxes came under the jurisdiction of the Temple, and the High Priest was appointed by the political ruler of Judea. In 152 BCE, that ruler was Antiochus V, the son of Antiochus IV. Within 10 years, local political control would be conveyed to the current leader of the dynasty of Matthias Hasmon, Simon, the last of the brothers Maccabee. He came to

power, first as High Priest, and was then appointed Ethnarch - political ruler of Judea, by Antiochus V. This was the first time in Jewish history that the office of High Priest, and political ruler, were held by one person.

The Maccabees, far from being anti-Greek, held political sway over the region because of their close association with Antiochus V.

Simon now controlled taxes, tithes and the treasury of government from his dual position as High Priest and Ethnarch, giving the Temple cult, and the Zadokites, incredible power. They comprised the wealthy and political elite of Judea, and their continued success was tied to the Temple. The rule of the

The Zadokites, later called the Sadducees, were strict constructionists. The Pharisees were populists.

Hasmoneans and the Zadokites would continue until the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

The Zadokites, later during the Roman period called the Sadducees, were religious reformers to an extent, but also strict constructionists. They were not opposed to offering sacrifices in honor of the foreign rulers, or other compromises with Hellenism, but when it came to the Temple cult, there was no room for moderation. The temple had become the center of a "church-state" compromise in which the Greeks, and then the Romans, treated the temple with exceptional respect. History had taught them that anything less could lead to public chaos or worse. Any tampering with the Temple cult was met with mobs of religious extremists, and those mobs were now part of the Jerusalem scene, making the city and Judea as a whole, difficult to govern.

Tampering with the Temple cult is how they saw the movement to incorporate the Oral and Prophetic Traditions into Jewish doctrine. They believed in the written tradition of the Torah only! Themes like resurrection, angels and demons, and eschatological thought were rejected as heresy.

The Pharisees were populists. They were teachers and preachers, as well as healers. They comprised the middle classes of Judean politics. Their roots in popular education brought them in line with the Oral and Prophetic Traditions, and their religious beliefs included a form of Transcendental Monotheism. Since they were followers of the Prophetic Traditions, it was not unusual for them to adopt a belief in angels and demons, as well as eschatology, a theme that was abundant in Prophetic literature. While they still followed the Temple cult, they began to see it as polluted. They were uncompromising with outside influences, and were sometimes hostile to foreign rule.

Two other political groups of the time, and there were many, were the Essenes, aesthetic hasidim who were separatist and monastic, who saw the future of Judea in apocalyptic terms, and the Zealots, political revolutionaries who shared the theology of the Pharisees, but were hostile to all foreign influence.

All of these political groups were vying for power and influ-

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CONGRESS OF SECULAR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

A non-profit organization

An affiliate of the North American Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews, a Constituent Organization of the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews

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From Cleveland with Love

This poem was written by Jim Mayer of Cleveland in honor of the marriage of his daughter.

Our Family Values Amy and Beth

Preamble with the help of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Here in the land of Paul Revere
Sit back and have another beer...or ale.
Sit back relax and listen
To a father tell his daughter's tale.
While on this summer morn they wait
Patiently pondering their fate.
And dreamily before their half closed sight
Float visions of their delight.

What does a father feel for his daughter
When her shining knight turns out to be a princess?
What does a father feel as he ponders the lot she has drawn?
When the road chosen by his daughter is not the road of *his*
dreams?

A sadness and a gladness is in our hearts today.
A sadness for the road behind strewn with thoughts and doubt.
A gladness for the times ahead
That spreads happiness and joy about.

A gladness for friendship and love
Below the aurora high above.
What does a father feel as he ponders the lot she has drawn?
When the road chosen by his daughter is not the road of *his*
dreams?

He can not control and he can not demand
But with his love he can by her side stand.
And he hopes her choice is the fulfillment of all of *her*
dreams.
Questions wondered questions asked
As one looks upon the past.

We used to say does she or doesn't she.
Now we no longer say is she or isn't she.
Oh how the world has changed we say
While we see our daughters stand there gay.

The wondering is over the doubts are past.
Let's all wish them a love to last.
And so to Amy and to Beth
Let's wish you both the very best.....

Health and happiness to both of you for many years to come.

Super Animus –
L'Chaim

Jim Mayer writes:

We joined the Cleveland Jewish Secular Community in late 1978 shortly after our move to Cleveland. Both kids, Amy and Wayne, went through the Sunday School and were B'nai Mitzva. The poem was prompted by Amy's "marriage" to Beth in Alaska and their legal marriage in Massachusetts this August.

A word about the preamble: When I graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass., my uncle took us for dinner to the Wayside Inn. Years later we held a luncheon there for Amy when she graduated from Wellesley. "Tales of the Wayside Inn," made famous in Longfellow's poem, was on display at Beth's parents home and served as inspiration.

Kathe served as chair and treasurer and I served two terms as president. Wayne and Amy participated in the youth group and assisted with the conventions in Cleveland.

CSJO Social Action statement

The CSJO, through its social action committee, has endorsed the unity statement and call to action of the Save Darfur Coalition., a broadly diverse group of faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations responding to the massive humanitarian and human rights crisis in Darfur, Sudan. The purpose of the Coalition is to raise public awareness and to mobilize North Americans and members of the international community to respond to and help end the atrocities that threaten the lives of two million people in the region. The following is an excerpt from the statement:

The emergency in Sudan's western region of Darfur presents the starkest challenge to the world since the Rwanda genocide in 1994. A government-backed Arab militia known as Janjaweed has been engaging in campaigns to displace and wipe out communities of African tribal farmers.

We commend the efforts of the U.S. government in brokering a peace deal to end the gruesome 21-year Civil War in the South and its generous pledge of \$300 million in U.S. humanitarian aid. We also applaud the recent visits of Secretary of State Colin Powell and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to the region of Darfur to assess the atrocities human rights organizations are calling the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. And we congratulate Congress for taking decisive legislative action. But we must not wait for a legal determination of "genocide" to ensure a massive worldwide humanitarian response and call to end the violence and investigate crimes against humanity.

We therefore call on people of conscience everywhere to take any and all actions permitted by each individual's or organization's abilities and constraints to:

- * encourage worldwide efforts to stop the displacement and end the crimes against humanity
- * demand massive worldwide governmental humanitarian support and access to match the need
- * help in the relief efforts by supporting organizations giving aid
- * promote efforts to rebuild villages and return the displaced
- * call for a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

EDUCATIONAL MUSINGS

By Hershl Hartman, Educational Director, Sholem Community Organization and School, Los Angeles

Following are excerpts from Hershl's remarks accepting the Workmen's Circle Yiddishkayt Award. He also received congratulatory proclamations from Assemblymember Paul Koretz, State Sen. Sheila Kuehl and Rep. Brad Sherman. Sen. Barbara Boxer wrote: "I applaud your tireless work...in the Secular Jewish movement... (and)...your commitment to social justice." Hershl read the first paragraph of these remarks in both Yiddish and English.



Hershl Hartman

My approach to mameloshn, the mother tongue, is both simple and clear. For me, Yiddish is the language that embodies the very soul of Secular Jewishness. Yiddish is the treasure or, more accurately, the treasure chest that contains the values, the thoughts and the history of Secular Jewishness.

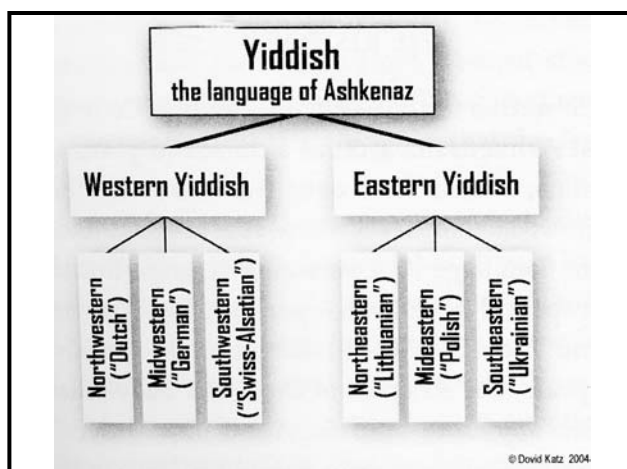
The very foundation of Secular Jewishness is the Yiddish language and its culture. Therefore, my main responsibility in regard to Yiddish is and has been to bring the riches of its culture to the English-speaking world. Certainly it is important that

Yiddish be studied and learned as a language.

But I lack the talent and skill to be a language teacher. I am a translator. And there are thousands of books, hundreds of thousands of Yiddish poems and songs, many, many hundreds of thousands of Yiddish articles and essays that wait, that implore us to translate them into the current universal language - into English. So that's what I do. Sometimes, I translate from a Yiddish text. More often, however, I translate into English the thoughts and the concepts, the thoughtprocesses that are my inheritance from my parents, my teachers, and from the pages with the little square letters that I peruse from time to time.

Yiddish did not die - it was murdered

It is said by many nowadays that Yiddish is dead, and that may be essentially true, but they are wrong when they say that Yiddish died. It was, in large part, murdered and, to an extent, it



The dialects of Yiddish as presented by Dovid Katz in his recent book, *Words on Fire*.

committed suicide. The most brutal murder, of course, took place in the ghettos and gas chambers of Nazism, which virtually wiped out the Yiddish-speaking, Yiddish-living population of Europe.

A second act of murder was committed by Josef Stalin and his cohorts, who exterminated Yiddish writers and teachers in the cellars of the Lyubyanka prison and in the gulag. A more subtle form of extermination took place in the West and, sorrowfully, in the Middle East. In the 19th century, the Czarist regime banned Yiddish theatre in its empire. In the 20th century, the public use of Yiddish in any form was banned in the yishuv - the Jewish settlement - in Palestine.

And, on these sun-kissed shores, both the Anglo-Saxon Establishment and the Jewish Establishment declared that using Yiddish was an insurmountable bar to the achievement of the American Dream. And it appears that they were right. Can anyone imagine a thirdgeneration, Yiddish-speaking American Jew as a member of the cabal we now know as the "neocons"?

The conventional wisdom among the most devoted supporters and creators of Yiddish culture in this country was that Yiddish literature cannot and must not be translated into English.

But, sadly, Yiddish also committed suicide, in a sense. The conventional wisdom among the most devoted supporters and creators of Yiddish culture in this country was that Yiddish literature cannot and must not be translated into English. The reasoning was that, if Yiddish literature were available in English, there would be no need nor desire to learn and use Yiddish. What they failed to realize, of course, was that if the literature of Yiddish were exposed to that first generation of Yiddish-understanding young people, they would discover that it was not merely a language for the kitchen - or for keeping parental secrets - but something that could help to feed their hunger for modern ideas and values, and that they would then actually answer their parents in the same language in which they were being spoken to, and read the books and newspapers lying about the house. The brighter and more ambitious among them might have included their parents' language and their cultural riches in the satchels and briefcases they carried away from the Lower East Side, from Brownsville, from Boyle Heights.

It is said by many nowadays that Yiddish is dead, and that may be essentially true, but they are wrong when they say that Yiddish died. It was, in large part, murdered and, to an extent, it committed suicide.

All that said, what do I see as the future of Yiddish? Just this past week I heard a lecture by Dovid Katz, the son of one of my teachers. Professor Katz has just published a very useful book on the history of Yiddish that will enlighten many people. He also ends his book with a look forward into the 21st century, and concludes that the future of Yiddish will endure in the daily speech and publications of the khsidische yidn, the Hasidic Jews.

After all, in Israel the Satmar khsidim (Hasidim) speak only

Yiddish. Here and in Europe, they and their children speak mostly Yiddish. What's more, he quotes the extremely dubious population projection that, at an average increase of five percent per year - due to their amazing birthrate - the 250,000 Hasidic Jews in the United States today will grow to between eight and ten million by 2075!

It's a dubious projection because it fails to consider the uncounted but potentially large defection from Hasidism of many in those huge broods of children. Prof. Katz sees hope in the fact that the Secular Yiddish writers of the past two centuries came out of homes and a milieu of Orthodoxy and khsides (Hasidism). He guesses that some 21st century Hasidim will similarly turn to Secular Yiddish.

I'm afraid he overlooks the fact that, when the founders of modern secular Yiddish literature and their descendants rejected Orthodoxy, they were unable to turn to the surrounding, inhospitable world if they wanted to retain their Jewishness. But now, the ghetto walls of the 19th and early 20th centuries are gone. Young Hasidim who opt for modernity know well enough that it is available to them - and to a new concept of Jewish identity - in the larger society and in the English language. Turning to Yiddish to express their Secular ideas would only isolate them still more.

So then, whither Yiddish? Prof. Katz - and we - need look no farther than his own surroundings: in the universities, in academe. Hebrew as a spoken language did not exist for 2,000 years. It was preserved, however, in the orin koydish - the Holy Ark, from which it was taken one day a week and spoken aloud. It was the Holy Tongue, *loshn koydish*.

Yiddish and Hebrew change places

For all other purposes of life, Jews in various parts of the world created other languages; in Central and Eastern Europe, that was Yiddish. Now, the language of modern Israel is ivrit (Hebrew). It is the language of daily life. It is the language in which a pickpocket distracts his mark, in which the cop arrests the miscreant, in which the judge sentences him and in which the jailer harasses him. In Israel, and to a somewhat growing extent in this country, Yiddish has become not *loshn koydish* - the Holy Tongue - but *loshn ha'kidoyshim* - the Martyrs Tongue. It is being preserved, not in the holy ark, but in universities from Vilnius to Melbourne, not forgetting Harvard, Yale, New Mexico and a campus near us.

How long will Yiddish endure in that new ark of academe? I can't attempt to predict, but I can dream that when our great-grandchildren will come to live in a truly multicultural society, they will begin to search for their own roots. They will get a clue from translated Yiddish literature - and when they search a little farther, they will discover the treasure trove in the university, waiting for them.

And, like the true *mameloshn* that it is, Yiddish will embrace them lovingly and declare: "I have waited for you for so long, but it was worth the wait!" - *azoy lang gevert, ober dos vartn hot zikh gelyoynt*.

International Federation Meets

by Rifke Feinstein

The International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews (IFSHJ) held its tenth biennial conference in San Francisco December 3-5, 2004.. CSJO members attending were Karen Knecht, Sharon Kobrinsky, Bob Sims, Jack and Bernice Stein, Jerry and Leslie Zwick and I.

**The Sholem Community of Los Angeles
invites you to A Special Celebration**

honoring

Hershl Hartman

**Sholem Education Director/vegwayzer
Yiddish Translator, Writer and Scholar**

and

Mark Rosenbaum

**Sholem member, legal director of ACLU of
Southern California**

Sunday May 1st 5 p.m.

at the Highlands, Highland Park (Los Angeles)

Tickets \$75

A special tribute book will allow well-wishers to send congratulatory messages to Hershl and Mark.

Inside cover (front or back)	\$500
Full page	\$300
½ page	\$150
1/4 page	\$ 75
Business card	\$ 50
Name listing	\$ 25

The title of the conference was "The 'Bible' of Secular Humanistic Judaism: A Journey from Ancient through Modern Jewish Literature." Keynote speaker Robert Alter, literary critic, author and professor, set the tone for the conference by speaking about the literary aspects of the Bible. (

The other speakers were Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi (Jerusalem), Ruth Kartun-Blum (Jerusalem), Naomi Seidman (Berkeley, CA), Azzan Yadin (Rutgers University, NJ) and a special guest appearance by Amos Oz (Israel).

The questions raised were many: Since Biblical literature is part of Judaism, how can we make it part of our Secular Humanistic Jewish lives? Is there a challenge for finding a common ground between Secular Humanistic Judaism and the divine in the literature? Can we embrace religious literature, and its richness, as it is? Is it an error to abandon ancient thinkers because of their religiosity? T

I had the pleasure of introducing Naomi Seidman who spoke about Yiddish literature, both in the past and in the present. After she spoke, two of the other speakers on the stage commented that there is a much greater interest in Yiddish as a language in Israel today than there had been in the past.

Amos Oz declared himself a chauvinist of the Hebrew language although not a chauvinist of Israel. He referred to Hebrew as an ancient language as well as a modern language.

The ideas put forth were intelligent and, certainly, thought provoking. The speakers were knowledgeable and presented well. For me, I left with the thought that there is much interesting literature in the Torah and it would be in my, and our, best interest, as Jews, to become acquainted with that literature.

Karen, Bernice, Sharon, Bob and I also were delegates to the IFSHJ Council where we had the wonderful opportunity to meet other delegates from Europe, Israel, Latin America and other

North American cities. Listening to the work that is being done by other Secular Humanistic groups in the world, brought a real sense of community to the Secular Humanistic Jewish movement.

Jews in the time of Jesus

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ence, and undermined the structure of the Sadducees. While the Pharisees, Essenes and the Zealots challenged the religious authority of the Sadducees, the Zealots also challenged the political authority of the entire theocracy, a movement that was to have a good number of followers in Galilee.

In the Pharisaic tradition of a Transcendental Monotheism, various teachers and preachers sought to bring God closer to the lives of the people, bypassing the Temple. John the Baptist was one of those itinerant preachers, in the Pharisaic tradition. Jesus was another. Baptism was a path to Transcendental Monotheism whereby the individual was purified or cleansed of sin and thereby forgiven – without the need of sin offerings or sacrifices at the Temple

If the Temple was the only place one could be absolved of sin; if the Temple were the only way to make sacrifices to God, the Temple would be, and was, the very center of Jewish monotheism. But if the Temple cult had become corrupt with money and power, it seems quite logical that preachers would attempt to teach a theology that would bypass that corruption, and would, in turn, incur the wrath of the Sadducees. And if the status quo of the Sadducees was challenged, so was the rule of Rome.

Details of Roman rule

Rome had gone to great lengths in its areas of influence to allow the local populations autonomy of religious thought and practice. Augustus even went so far as to grant Jews full citizenship. It was Rome who allowed the Jews of Alexandria to build their own Temple, for sacrifice to their God. This policy was allowed only so long as the status quo was upheld, which to Rome meant the orderly collection of taxes and pursuit of trade. If that were jeopardized, Rome would not hesitate to use the full force of its military to regain control.

Rome allowed the Jews to govern themselves to a large extent, and allowed Jewish courts to enforce Jewish law and to adjudicate most disputes.

Rome allowed the Jews to govern themselves to a large extent, and allowed Jewish courts to enforce Jewish law and to adjudicate most disputes. When those disputes would threaten the status quo that Rome required, the Roman governor would become involved. But for the most part, Jews were allowed legal autonomy.

While the ultimate legal authority was Rome, the High Priest / Ethnarch had all of the trappings of legal authority, having been appointed or sanctioned directly by Rome. His religious and legal duties were performed by a committee of elders, called the Sanhedrin.

It is most likely that the Sanhedrin consisted of men from both the Sadducee and Pharisee traditions. The Sanhedrin had to walk the line between service to Rome and Jewish autonomy.

The emergence of Jesus

This is the religious and political world into which Jesus stepped. Tradition has Jesus being born in the Galilee, a hotbed of

political activity and radicalism. It could be assumed that those who followed Jesus out of Galilee were also familiar with the political activism and radicalism of the region.

He became educated in Jewish law and tradition, and as part of his education process, he became familiar with the many parties and sects of Judea at the time, and took great pains to understand their differing philosophies. He was also acutely aware of the social and political concerns of the time, Temple corruption being just one.

Christian tradition also shows Jesus as a charismatic leader, as one might find at the head of any political movement. He was a populist, in political terms, and he and his followers developed strategy that would allow his message to have its greatest impact.

While Christian tradition shows Jesus at odds with the Pharisees, his methods, philosophy, and traditions are most definitely Pharisaic in nature. He preached in the Prophetic Tradition, stressed ethics as a political and social tool, believed in a Transcendental Monotheism, and saw his world in eschatological terms. He was most likely a product of the local schools started by the Pharisees.

His political activism was manifested in his work as an itinerant preacher, and as a preacher, was expected to perform healings, as was the tradition. If he saw, as many did, the corruption of the Temple and its administration, he sought to make Judaism more accessible to the people by circumventing the Temple. Isaiah tells of God's contempt for Temple ritual if not performed in conjunction with fair and just treatment of His people.

Jesus took this a step further by claiming that the Temple was corrupt and had lost its moral authority as an intermediary to God. Jesus preached that one could interact with God directly without the Temple as intermediary, by self-atonement, prayer and ethical behavior. His message hit home with the people of the countryside, perhaps even with many Pharisees.

The Sadducees protect their position

As an itinerant preacher in the countryside, his influence on the political structure was minimal. The strategy of taking his message to Jerusalem directly challenged the Sadducees and their administration. Given the power that the Sadducees exercised, and the challenge to their rule, it was certain that they would eventually attempt to stifle the dissent. And stifle they did.

There were two ways the Sadducees could address the leader of a subversive movement; they could have brought him up on charges on religious grounds, or on grounds of sedition. If, as indicated, there were Pharisees on the Sanhedrin, and therefore possibly supporters of Jesus in that body, justice of the sort that the Sadducees required may not be served. If, however, the charge was sedition, the Roman governor could step in and weigh the threat against Rome's interests.

Tradition holds that Caiaphas, High Priest and head of the Sanhedrin, asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah?" The question was not a theological one. The Jews believed the Messiah would be a political leader, one that would lead the tiny state to political independence from foreign rule and bring about a fair and just society.

The tradition of the Messiah is a Pharisaic one, and Prophetic in nature. Jesus, or some of his followers, may have wished to imply that theirs was a Messianic movement, and certainly attempted to identify with several of the prophetic imperatives that would signal the coming of the Messiah. By answering "yes" to the question, Jesus could have been brought directly to the Roman governor on grounds of sedition. If the answer was "no,"

the Sanhedrin might well have simply labeled Jesus as a false teacher, the punishment for which could have been public stoning. Christian tradition has Jesus giving no direct answer to the question, and being brought to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, for adjudication.

Brutal execution was the sentence passed, but it would take another few decades for his dream to be realized. The Temple was eventually destroyed, and both Jewish and Christian theology eventually canonized a Transcendental Monotheism. It was the idea that Jesus had died for, and one that the Pharisees and their Rabbinic descendants follow to this day.

Call for Conference Presenters

Conference Chair Turns To Members

Hi there CSJO friends!

It is once again time to start planning our next CSJO Conference. Here are the details so far:

Dates: May 27 - 30, 2005

Theme: Voices of the Past, Visions of the Future

Location: Humber College, Toronto, Canada

Keynote Speakers: Jerry Bain (Toronto), Judy Seid (Maryland) and Denora Knecht (California)

We need people who are willing to either present or lead a workshop, or some people who are willing to recruit other people for workshops.

Please contact me with either a name and presenter of a workshop, the names and emails of people who have expressed an interests in presenting a workshop.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Karen Knecht, Conference Program Chair
knechtfour@aol.com

Letter to the CSJO community

This letter was originally addressed to Joan Kurtz, membership chair.

Hi, I am Marty Annenberg, and I am an active member of Pacific Community Of Secular Humanistic Jews, in northern Orange County, California, near Los Angeles. We are affiliated with both SHJ and CSJO.

We received your letter dated November 10, 2004, and I thought I would write you a short e-mail. We have about 45 family members in Pacific Community, and we would like to grow. We put publicity releases (unpaid and published at the pleasure of the newspaper), and some paid ads in the newspapers for major programs such as Passover, Rosh Hashanah, etc. But, we have gotten very few new members as a result.

I would like to know if you have any ideas regarding how to get more members, especially younger families with children, so we can grow in the future. We have a very active group, and we all enjoy our activities, but it would be nice to have more members to help with the work of running our group, and to have more people at our meetings. Do you have any suggestions?

Thank you. *Marty Annenberg*

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In honor of Marty Katz' 90th birthday:

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Guaranteed your spot with a \$300 deposit per person and \$135 for travel insurance.

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For information, contact Myrna Baron, IFSHJ Executive Director

tel: 212-564-6711 x301

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fax: 212-564-6721

Society Director Wanted

The Jewish Cultural Society, a secular humanist Jewish organization in Ann Arbor, is searching for a director, 20-30 hours weekly. Responsibilities include: coordinating member activities; representing JCS in the community; membership development; staff supervision; working with the JCS Board on fundraising; and coordinating holiday and life cycle events in a secular humanistic tradition.

Necessary qualifications include experience with: staff supervision, budgeting, membership development, leadership, and community outreach.

Salary range \$20-30,000/year, plus health benefits. Additional information at www.jewishculturalsociety.org. Inquiries should be addressed to JCS@JCCFED.org. Qualified applicants should send cover letter and resume to:

Director Search, Jewish Cultural Society, 2935 Birch Hollow Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48108. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2005.

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Pushcarts and Dreamers. Stories of Jewish Life in America. Translated by Max Rosenfeld.

Festivals, Folklore, and Philosophy. A Secularist Revisits Jewish Traditions. Essays by Max Rosenfeld.

Contact Bess Katz at besk@comcast.net [note the correct spelling of the address] or 215-636-0736 or Larry Schofer at lawrence.schofer@verizon.net or 215-248-3762.



CSJO NEWSLETTER
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