



# JEWISH FIGURES

## GERMAN JEWISH FIGURES

### **Leo Baeck (1873-1956)**

Born in Poland, Baeck was a Rabbi, scholar and leader of Progressive Judaism. When the Nazis came to power in 1933 he defended the Jewish community as the president of Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden. He refused to abandon his community and in 1943 Baeck was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp where he was appointed the honorary head of the Judenrat and was therefore protected from transports to Auschwitz. After the war he moved to London and later became chairman of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

### **Albert Einstein (1879-1955)**

Einstein received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. While visiting the United States in 1933 he decided to stay there and became an American citizen. During WWII he wrote a letter to President Roosevelt encouraging the developing of "an extremely powerful bomb" which led to the Manhattan Project. The word Einstein became synonymous with genius.

### **Abraham Geiger (1810-1874)**

Geiger was a German Rabbi who believed all nationalistic elements should be removed from Judaism, and was responsible for the founding of Reform Judaism.

### **Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)**

Born a Jew, he converted to Christianity in 1825. He was a poet, journalist, essayist and literary critic who possessed radical political views, causing the German authorities to ban many of his works. He lived as an expatriate for the last 25 years of his life.

### **Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888)**

Hirsch was a Rabbi and the founder of the Torah im Derech Eretz School of Contemporary Orthodox Judaism. He strongly opposed both Reform and Conservative Judaism. His philosophy, outlined in number of books and in a monthly journal Jeschurun, had a profound impact on Orthodox Judaism.

### **Kurt Lewin (1890-1947)**

Born in Prussia, he moved with his family to Berlin in 1905 where he became the founder of social psychology. He was one of the first to study group dynamics and organizational development. In 1933 Lewin immigrated to the US.



# jewish figures



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### **Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786)**

Mendelssohn was a major philosopher who was accepted by many of his Christian colleagues because of his brilliant analyses. He is regarded as the founder of the Haskalah movement while remaining Orthodox all his life.

### **Walter Rathenau (1867-1922)**

Rathenau was an industrialist, writer and politician who during the Weimar Republic served as the Foreign Minister of Germany. In 1922, two months after he signed the Treaty of Rapallo with Russia in which each country renounced all territorial and financial claims against the other following WWI, he was assassinated by members of a violent anti-Semitic group.