



JEWISH FIGURES

HUNGARIAN JEWISH FIGURES

Aaron Chorin (1766-1844)

Chorin was a Hungarian rabbi, the leader of a new Judaism which included many creative concepts but which came into harsh conflicts with the Jewish establishment. He also worked for Jewish emancipation with the state authorities.

Ignaz Einhorn (1825-1875)

He was a rabbi, journalist, political economist and politician who made it to the rank of State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Commerce in the late 1860's. As a rabbi, Ignaz promoted Reform as an alternative Judaism, permitting mixed marriages (he himself was married to a Catholic), ending circumcision, shifting Shabbat worship to Sunday etc. Ignaz was also the founder of the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

Imre Kertész (1929-)

This award-winning author is a Holocaust survivor who was deported at the age of 14 to Auschwitz and later sent to Buchenwald. Kertész won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2002 and though he resides in Berlin he continues to write in Hungarian.

Bela Kun (1866-1938)

Born to a Jewish father and a formerly Protestant mother, Kun grew up to become a revolutionary who led the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. Kun immigrated to the Soviet Union after the fall of the Hungarian revolution where he was arrested and executed during the great terror of the late 1930's. His name was exonerated after the death of Stalin.

Matyas Rakosi (1892-1971)

Although he was born a Jew, he repudiated his religion. After World War I he joined the Communists and fled to the Soviet Union, returning in 1924 to Hungary where he was imprisoned until 1940. From 1945 to 1956 he was the leader of the Communist Party in Hungary but was then

forced to retire in the Kirgiz Soviet Socialist Republic. After his death in 1971 his ashes were secretly brought back for burial in Budapest.

Hatam Sofer (1762-1839)

Born as Moses Schreiber, he is known as Moshe Sofer or Hatam Sofer, meaning Seal of the Scribe. Sofer was a leading European Orthodox rabbi and as the rabbi of Pressburg (Bratislava) he established what became the most influential yeshiva in Central Europe, which following the end of World War II was relocated to Jerusalem.

Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1887-1979)

Teitelbaum is the founder and first Grand Rebbe of the Satmar Dynasty and a major figure in the postwar renaissance of Hasidism, which rejected modernity and opposed Zionism. During the Second World War Teitelbaum provided shelter and forged documents for Jewish refugees who arrived illegally from German-occupied territories. In 1944 the Germans entered Hungary and the Jews of Satmar were herded into a ghetto. The rabbi and his family tried to escape to Romania but were caught and put in the ghetto in Kolozsvár. He eventually received a visa, making his way to Jerusalem in 1945 and then immigrated to the United States, resettling in Brooklyn where he lived for the rest of his life.

Hanna Szenes (1921-1944)

Born in Hungary, Szenes joined the Zionist Student Organization and emigrated to Mandatory Palestine, where she joined the Haganah. In 1943 she enlisted in the British Army and was one of the parachutists participating in the mission to rescue the Hungarian Jews before their deportation to Auschwitz by the Nazis. She was captured at the Hungarian border and tortured, but refused to speak. She was later executed by a firing squad. Considered a heroine in Israel, her poetry is widely known and recited.