

## Stern, Samu

(1874--1947), Jewish community leader in Hungary. Born in Janoshaza, Stern was a very successful banker. In addition, he held the title of advisor to the Hungarian royal court. He served for many years as the president of the Jewish community in Pest, which was the largest Jewish community in Hungary, and as the head of the National Bureau of the Jews of Hungary, which was the chief umbrella organization of Hungary's Neolog (Conservative) congregations. As a rich, upper-class Jewish Hungarian, Stern had very good dealings with the Hungarian aristocracy, including the noble and ruling class. He considered himself to be a "Magyar (Hungarian) of the Israelite faith," putting his Hungarian identity before his Jewish one; thus, he was very patriotic to his country and did not support the Zionist idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

After Germany occupied Hungary in March 1944, Stern was appointed the head of the country's central *Judenrat* (in Hungarian, *Kozponti Zsido Tanacs*). He held this post until late October 1944, at which time he went into hiding.

Although Stern was clearly a supporter of Jewish causes, when the Germans invaded Hungary, he was not up to the challenge. He dealt with them and with their Hungarian collaborators in an unimaginative and compliant manner. After the war he wrote his memoirs.