Teleki Tér
Shtiebel

Teleki'44 Research

THE HISTORY OF THE TELEKI TÉR SHTIEBEL AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

Jakab Gláser
memorial foundation

We envision a more visible, valued, and interactive Judaism.

Jakab Gláser Memorial Foundation, located in the 8th District of Budapest, Hungary, was established in 2010 as a non-profit organisation of the **Teleki Tér Shtiebel** community.

Teleki Tér Shtiebel is a unique synagogue in the Hungarian Jewish scene that has served its community for over 100 years. Teleki Tér is **the last remaining *shtiebel*** (small prayer house) following the Hassidic/Sfard pray liturgy. Although it is an Orthodox synagogue, it represents far more, attracting a wide spectrum of people from Chassidic, non-Chassidic, Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Neolog, non-affiliated and post-denominational backgrounds.

The foundation is named after the late **Jakab Gláser** (1912-2006), without whom the shtiebel would have closed down decades ago. Jakab Gláser was the heart of the Teleki Tér Shtiebel for decades and his memory continues to inspire the new generation today.

Our activities and aims:

Focus	Mission	Related Activity
Jewish religion and traditions	• raising cultural awareness and community programs; • practicing and understanding religious Yiddishkeit; • editing and publishing texts related to cultural education and Jewish religion and heritage	• Weekly Shabbat services • Regular Jewish holidays • Guided tours • Lectures, conferences
The rehabilitation and operation of Teleki Tér Shtiebel	• make original devotional objects (Torah, Torah, jewelry, candle holders, wall plaques, etc.), furnishings (benches, cabinets, etc.) and other equipment (prayer books, *tefillim*, etc.) suitable for prayer and community activities; • developing logistical needs (heating, kitchenware etc.)	• New bathroom • New kitchen • Rehabilitated prayer room
Organizing community life of the Shtiebel	• financial & material support from community members; • creating communal space and operating it; • organizing religious ceremonies; • initiating community development and cultural programs.	• Learning club • Cooking classes • Home-made *palkina*
Collecting, archiving, publishing, and exhibiting	• documenting and understanding local traditions and the area's vibrant pre-war cultural and Jewish community life; • reviewing, summarizing and documenting the life and community activities of Jakab Gláser; • summarizing the results of research and publication of the outcome;	• Documentary film trilogy • Personal interviews • Research Project • Essay book • Photo Album • Short story book • Museum • Buda Buried Synagogue
Raising funds and grants	• support from members, grants, government, Jewish organizations • 1% end of the eligibility period of collection (Hungary) • organizing volunteer work for the community	• Merchandise • Judaica online store • Stylish traditional Jewish clothing manufacturing
Connecting international shtiebelach	• innovating an international network of small shtiebelach • encouraging dialogue for mutual advising and technique sharing • initiating a communal fundraising and fund-sharing platform	• Detroit screening and introduction

Teleki'44 research

The history of the Teleki Tér Shtiebel and its neighborhood

Project description

One of our most resource dependent projects is **the research and documentation of the Jewish history of Teleki Square and its neighborhood which are in 8th district of Budapest**. This square and the neighborhood with its unique background and history – compared to other Jewish neighborhoods in Budapest – has been **under-documented by historians, anthropologists and sociologists**, therefore research and documentation has a vital importance. We began this research work in a voluntary system some years ago. When we began our work at the Teleki Tér Shtiebel our main motivation was to understand our identity and tradition, our religion and culture. Our place keeps its own traditions, customs and melodies, as well as – uniquely in Hungary – a Sephardic liturgy since its establishment before WWI. The work of maintaining the community was passed on from an aging man, Jakab Glaser to a young, enthusiastic group. Jewish culture and tradition has its renaissance in Hungary. We believe that the Teleki Tér Shtiebel is a very important color in the map of Hungarian Jewry and is worth saving. It represents a now lost, once thriving world that is almost unknown even to most Jews of Budapest. The Teleki Square market used to be an important centre for Jewish merchants, vendors and peddlers and the neighborhood was one of the 3 Jewish centres of Budapest Yiddishkeit (Jewry). The neighborhood had at least 22 little shtibelach (plural of shtiebel) serving the numerous small Jewish communities. By today only this one survived, maintained through the decades always by a very few engaged persons. **Our aims: collecting, archiving, publishing informations**. Saving and passing on the traditions of the shtiebel.

We organized a great partnership with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations for the project. We managed a voluntary system for the project, with University students and other citizens. We hade a plan, how to be able to continue the project and make some **special results** as a **complete documentary film**, a **photo book**, an **essay book** written by sociologists and a **short stories book** written by contemporary writers and an **interactive website** – with the help of financial supports.

Methodology of research

Oral history (life history interviews, narrative interviews)	- finding those old people who can talk their memories about time before during WWII, interviews them, then archive and process the datas - 61 completed interviews: 0 from Budapest, 7 from Israel, 1 from Florida and 3 from New York
Collect family photos and documents	- e.g. certificates, passes, licenses etc.
Field research	- visiting those places and houses where were shtiebels, kosher store, kosher slaughterhouses and others which were important in Jewish lifestlye and infrastructure in the past - searching for traces in today's buildings
Library and archival research	- knowing specialized literature - searching for archived photos of Teleki Square and its neighborhood - searching for documents about shtiebels in Hungarian Jewish Archives and old Jewish newspapers - searching for statistical datas about Jewish population of 8th district of Budapest

Representation of research

We joined some Hungarian cultural and scientific program to present our research and partial results. The collaboration of ***Budapest100*** and ***Yellow-Star Houses*** (initiated by Open Society Archives) and **Conference of Jewish resistance** (orgaized by Hashomer Hacair) allowed to reach hundreds of people. Budapest100 is a unique organic program which have mobilized the entire city since 2011. The program is a civil urban festival has an outstanding community buildings effect by bringing people of different social background and generations closer. The basic idea of the program is all one-hundred-year old houses celebrate own birthday on the 10th day of the year, but many alternative programs and organizations can join the program. Since 2011, every year a new set of anniversary buildings open their doors, inspiring new joiners and offering colorful programs. The

Yellow-Star Houses is a year-long series of public programs in 2014 focusing on Budapest 1944. The initiator, the Open Society Archives dedicated a yellow-star houses website and held a memorial event in front of the remaining 1,600 former yellow-star houses. The Open Society Archives and Jakab Gláser Memorial Foundation held a press event of program jointly. During those programs, we organized **local history walks** where we shared a lot of personal stories and facts about events of 1940s and Holocaust focusing 8th district of Budapest. The urban walks were very successful.

Local history walks // Photo © Hajnal Fekete

In October 2013, the Teleki'44 research team was invited to ***50 years of Sociology in Hungary conference*** of ***Hungarian Academy of Sciences***. The conference opened the door of connecting to Hungarian scientific area.

50 years of Sociology in Hungary conference // Photo © András Mayer

In September 2014, we organized an own conference where were presented the partial results of research. The conference name was ***Meeting of young and younger people — Conference about the forgotten Jews of Teleki Square***. The conference was composed of various presentations, workshops and other exciting programs.

Conference about the forgotten Jews of Teleki Square // Photo © András Mayer, Mirka Sarkadi, Hajnal Fekete

Special results

Essay book:

With the help of sociologist we make an essay book **based on interviews, archive documents and data**. The planned main topics are:

- ***Changes in Jewish population of Budapest's 8th district between 1870 and 1941*** (based on Hungarian official censuses)
- ***Jewish religious lifestyle and infrastructure of Teleki Square and its neighborhood*** (addresses, names and stories of shtiebels, cheders, mikvehs, kosher stores, kosher slaughterhouses and Teleki Square market)
- ***Gender perspective*** (position and role of Jewish women and men and the difference between them)
- ***Events of the WWII and Holocaust*** (pogroms in 8th district of Budapest, living in yellow-star houses, acts of rescuing Jewish lives, Jewish resistance in 8th district of Budapest)

Short stories book:

We connect culture and history. With the help of invited contemporary Hungarian writers (cca. 6-8 people) we make a short stories book about the Jewish history of Teleki Square. The book will reflect on the truth stories with the help and imagination of invited artists.

Photo book:

We are also planning to publish a book about ***the stories and photographs and show life in this typical urban neighborhood***. Hungarian architecture is beautiful between 1920s and 1940s when Jewish communities could live their live in a coherent way with architecture and religion. From this time we have a lot of photographs and old stories. We began to team up with young sociologists, historians who are interested in these times. We began to find the stories about the survival of the shtiebel. We plan to publish the results. The editor and special expert will be Tamás Féner who is a Kossuth Prize-winning photographer, one of the Hungarian masters of reality-based photography and photojournalism.

Documentary film:

We are also working with a documentary film team making a documentary about the people and the place. Shootings begin as early as 2003. We began to make interviews with some old people about the story of the shtiebel and their life from a Jewish aspect. We had cooperation with a French documentary filmmaker, Barbara Spitzer. (***See more details in Tales of Teleki tér brochure***.)

Interactive website and mobile app:

We would like to create an **interactive website** similar to a **guidebook**. There will be a map of the Teleki Square and its neighborhood on the website and when the visitors click a house or a part of a street they could get acquainted with story of that (for example history of building, shtiebels, old stores; life of Jewish residents of house; events of the street; personal stories of residents etc). The visitors would be able to comment and send additional informations to us. The website will be informative and youthful with trendy graphics.
Using Pocket Guide Mobile App we wish to create a virtual tour. The app provides a virtual guided tour using GPS data where the smartphone user can learn about the buildings and areas in their immediate physical surroundings.

Partners

Art Sector Foundation

Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation

Beyond Budapest Sightseeing

Centropa Hungary

Israeli Cultural Institute

Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Voices of the 20th Century

Bet Elijahu (Páva Street) Synagogue

Sochnut Jewish Agency – MiNYanim