

# Kehillah In U.S. Joins With EU To Preserve Liska Shul In Hungary

One would imagine that after 70-plus years in the post-Holocaust era, there would be little left to restore or preserve of Jewish remains in Europe. However, that is not so. A project that has been in the process for several years is about to

Fast-forward to 2012 when the Wallenberg Commission, established by Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group and son of the Liska Rebbe, spearheaded an effort to commemorate the heroism of Swedish diplomat Raoul

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be completed. The last remaining wall of the shul in Liska was preserved and reinforced, complemented by the construction of a corresponding wall on the site where the entrance stood, also delineating the exact of the footprint of the original shul.

Nestled in the picturesque Tokay wine region of Hungary is a small town called Liska (Olaszliszka) that barely merits a mention on the current Hungarian map but looms large when the history of Chassidic life in Hungary is studied.

Liska was a focal point where *chassidus* was disseminated by Rav Tzvi Hersh of Liska in the 100 years preceding World War II.

As was customary in pre-war Europe, most towns that boasted a Chassidic Rebbe had a shul under the auspices of the *kehillah* and a *beis midrash* where the Rebbe traditionally *davened*. What is unique about this particular shul in Liska is that it was personally built by Rav Tzvi Hersh of Liska for the *kehillah* in the last years of his life and it successively graced multiple generations of Liska Rebbes.

Unfortunately, the shul has ceased to be utilized. Hungarian Jews were deported in June 1944; when Jews actually returned to Liska at the end of the war, it again functioned somewhat as a *kehillah* until after 1956, when the majority of Hungarian Jews immigrated abroad. This chapter lasted until the mid-1960s when Reb Oizer Dov Roth write to the previous Liska Rebbe, Rav Yoizef Friedlander, *zt'l*, that due to his declining health he is leaving Liska and moving into an old-age home in Budapest, regretfully informing him that he would be unable to maintain the shul.

Sadly, those years were the height of communist control, and due to a combination of reasons including local hoodlums and government indifference, the shul was systematically destroyed. By the late 1970s only the “mizrach vant” was left standing where it remained forlorn.



Liska Rebbe at the site of the last remaining wall of the shul in Liska in its state of disrepair

sional liaison, Ms. Anna Stumpf Smith-Lacey, and raised the issue of the status of the shul in Liska, stressing the importance of preserving it.

“The sad state of the shul in Liska was always on my mind, but my father, the

Liska Rebbe, adamantly instructed me not to engage in a project that would require Jewish communal funds for the preservation of the shul in Liska. He


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