**Title:** Ladislav Hacker at a Purim Party, 1936

**Year (Hebrew):** 5696

**Year:** 1936

**Location:** Europe – Eastern

**Short description**

A 1936 photograph of Ladislav Ivan Hacker at a Purim party in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia (present-day Serbia).

**Detailed description**

​This is a photograph of Ladislav Ivan Hacker and a group of other children at a Purim party in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia (present-day Serbia). Ivan and his family were born in Novi Sad and were involved in Jewish life and observed Jewish traditions. The photograph was taken in 1936 when Ivan was 11 years old at a party organised by the Jewish community. The photograph shows a group of five children dressed in Purim costume, all wearing fake beards (it is not known which one is Ivan). The boy seated in the front is dressed as a king and wearing a crown. The other four children are wearing cone-shaped hats and are standing around the king. Some of the children have large Stars of David sewn on their costumes, and two are carrying sceptres topped with Stars of David. When young, Ivan was very active within synagogue and Jewish youth activities.

Ivan studied painting and violin in high school. While in high school, he joined a secret communist youth group, which led to his arrest for causing trouble with the Hungarian Occupation Forces. While in prison, the Hungarians allowed the boys to celebrate Jewish holidays, resulting in their mothers coming to the prison and bringing them special holiday foods. Ironically, being in prison is what saved Ivan’s life during the Holocaust. He was in prison throughout most of the war, but he escaped with friends in 1944 and fought with the partisans. Many members of his family were deported and. His father died when working in a work battalion. His mother and sister survived camps in Hungary, Austria, and finally in Theresienstadt. After the war, Ivan finished school and worked as a teacher. He became disillusioned with the Communist Party and left it; as a result, he could not advance in his career. Ivan died in 1983 at the age of 59.

**Would You Like to Know More?**

**Jewish Community of Novi Sad**– Novi Sad is located on the banks of the Danube River in what is now Serbia. Jews settled in Novi Sad as early as the sixteenth century but were expelled in 1699 and not allowed to return until the eighteenth century. Institutions such as synagogues and schools were built in the early 1800s, and by 1940, the community had grown to 4,000. The Jews of Novi Sad suffered greatly first at the hands of the Hungarians and then the Germans during the Holocaust. About a quarter of Novi Sad’s Jews survived the Holocaust, and many moved to Israel after liberation. Currently it is estimated that fewer than 500 Jews live in Novi Sad.

**Purim**- Purim is celebrated on the 14 Adar as the day the Jewish people were saved from destruction during the fourth century BCE. The heroine of the Purim story, Queen Esther, worked together with her uncle, Mordechai, to reverse the decree of genocide issued against the Jewish people by Haman, the vizier of Persia. It is the tradition on Purim to dress up in costumes, distribute small food packages known as *mishloach manot*, give charity, and listen to the reading of the *Megilla*– the Book of Esther.

**Teaching Suggestions**

​**Jewish Studies**teachers can use the photograph when teaching about the holiday of Purim and customs associated with the holiday.

**Jewish History**and **Holocaust Studies**teachers can use the photograph and the story of Ladislav Ivan Hacker’s life to teach about the history of the Jews of Novi Sad before, during, and after the Holocaust.

**Discussion Points**

**Observation**

* What is your first impression when looking at the photograph?
* What type of photograph is this? (portrait, landscape, family portrait, group photo, etc.)
* Describe what the people are wearing.
* Describe what the people are doing.

**Reading Between the Lines**

* What Jewish holiday are the children celebrating?  
  How do you know?
  + Why are the children dressed up?
  + What does Purim commemorate?
  + How is it celebrated?
  + The photograph was taken in 1936 in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia.
  + Find Novi Sad on a map.
  + What is the country called today?
  + What was Jewish life like in Novi Sad in 1936?
* Ladislav Ivan Hacker is one of the boys in the photograph.  
  [Read](http://www.centropa.org/biography/suzana-petrovic) about his life in his sister's oral history.  
  Describe Ivan's childhood.  
  What activities did he participate in?  
  How did he celebrate Jewish holidays?
* What were Ivan's experiences during World War II?
* What was life like for Ivan after the war?

**Connections**

* Have you ever attended a Purim party?  
  Did you dress up?  
  What did you do at the party?
* Interview a grandparent or older family member or friend about their memories of celebrating Purim.  
  How did they celebrate?  
  Did they dress up?  
  Did they attend parties?  
  Do they have pictures from Purim celebrations?
* Does your family have stories from during World War II?  
  Ask your grandparents or parents about their family's experiences and survival during the Holocaust.

**Creative Ideas**

* Write a short story or newspaper article to accompany the photograph.
* Create a display of children in Purim costumes.
* Include photographs from the National Library of Israel and Centropa websites, photographs belonging to the students' families, and photographs that the students have taken at their school or synagogue celebrations.

**Target audience:** Primary School, Junior High, High School, Informal Education, Higher Education

**NLI Links**

[Ladislav Hacker, Suzana Petrovic's Brother, at Purim Party, Centropa](http://www.centropa.org/photo/ladislav-hacker-suzana-petrovics-brother-purim-party)

[Suzana Petrovic, Centropa](http://www.centropa.org/biography/suzana-petrovic)  
[Family History Project](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/en/education/Pages/Family-History-Project.aspx)