

## Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Tarnów

### Activity Report for 2023

The Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Tarnów was founded in 1988. The goal of the Committee is to look after Jewish heritage sites in former Galicia. The Committee also promotes knowledge about the history and culture of Polish Jews, seeks to bring Poles/Christians and Jews closer together, supports and organizes research and scientific projects related to Jewish culture and heritage in former Galicia, as well as the history and culture of other minorities living in this region.

Since January 1, 2019, the Committee has had its new premises - Committee's Office - at Plac Rybny No. 5, with windows overlooking the Old Synagogue Square, where there is a historic bimah, a remnant of the Old Synagogue destroyed by the Germans.

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**In 2023 we filed applications for projects/grants for the total**

**sum of 587 000 zł.(ca 145 000 USD)**

We did not receive funds for all projects. However, further grants were obtained during the year.

As a result, the following externally financed projects were implemented in 2023:

<b>* Galicjaner Sztetl + Reunion II - project financed by the Norwegian Fund</b>	<b>52 000</b>
PLN	
<u>and the City of Tarnów</u>	<u><b>15 000</b></u>
<u>PLN</u>	
<b>total:</b>	<b>67 000</b>
PLN	

**Within the above project the following events were organized**

**between: Aug 30 - Oct. 1 2023**





- Celebrations in Zbylitowska Góra (place of murder of approximately 6,000 Jews),
- Laying wreaths at the Monument of Remembrance at the Jewish cemetery in Tarnów.
- Shabbat Supper in the former Jewish Mikveh,

**Accompanying events:**

- “Zimnym Okiem” [“With Cold Eye”] exhibition - Art Exhibition Office in Tarnów (ul. Słowackiego 1)
- "Szancer - wyobraź sobie" [“Szancer - imagine”] exhibition - presentation of the artistic achievements of one of the most famous book illustrators, Jan Marcin Szancer (1902-1973), from a famous family of Tarnów Jews (organized on the 50th anniversary of his death);
- “Powroty” [“Returns”] exhibition - video profiles of people who "discover" their Jewish origins,
- Exhibition “Chasydzkim szlakiem” [“On the Hasidic Trail”], photos by Joanna Sidorowicz
- „Goldhammera 5. Tarnowskie opowieści” [“Goldhammer No. 5. Tarnowskie Stories”]



performance, Latający Teatr Kantorowi,

- Poetry competition for young people „Pod gwiazdą Dawida” [“Under the Star of David”],
- Author's meeting with prof. Dan Oren - „Historia pewnego nagrobka” [“The Story of a Tombstone”],
- Promotion of the book "The Life and Death of a Polish-Jewish Town. Tarnów 1918-1956" by Agnieszka Wiercholska,
- Night tour of the Jewish Cemetery with a guide.

**Jewish Street Festival**, concerts and performances:

- Concert dedicated to the memory of the Tarnów Jews by Jaroslav Rač (Slovakia),
- Jewish songs and more, "Fermata" Tarnów Seniors' Choir,
- Concert under the Bimah:– (Belarus)
- Concert under the Bimah:– (Moshe Band, Czech Republic)
- Theater performance under the Bimah:– Shabbat Supper, Warsztat Terapii Zajęciowej [Occupational Therapy Workshop]
- Wielokulturowy Wieczór Galicyjski [Multicultural Galician Evening]: Romani band Romano Ilo and Baruch Band & Shomer International Musicians.

**\*Concept of development of the Jewish district** – proj. financed by the Norwegian Found  
**124 443 PLN**

**\*Grove of the Righteous** - first stage, construction of the Tree of the Righteous, proj.  
financed by the Norwegian Found **33 000 PLN**

**\*XXIV International Roma Memorial Caravan and V Caravan Conference** -  
Scientific conference devoted to the current problems of romology in Poland - project  
financed by the Ministry of the Interior **50,000 PLN**



**\*Studia Romologica**, volume 15 of a scientific yearly journal devoted to the Romani Culture – proj. financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration **30 000 PLN**

**\*Maintenance of the Committee's office** - Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration **21 000 PLN**

**\*Preparation of the scientific legacy of A. Bartosz** **21 420 PLN**

**\*Żydzi w Tarnowie [Jews in Tarnów] – board exhibition.** Permanent exhibition on the wall near the Bimah, new version, the previous one had been on display since 2014 - project financed by the City of Tarnów **2 995 PLN**

**\*Inventory of tombstones/matzevas** - during the renovation of the cemetery, over 6,500 names of buried people were inventoried, which are now made available in the nationwide database <http://cmmentarze-zydowskie.pl/tarnow.htm>. After the renovation and cleaning of the cemetery, it turned out that there were still many tombstones left, not yet discovered under the layer of greenery and earth. It is estimated that there may be as many as a thousand of them. For this purpose we received **35 000 PLN** from **Friends of Jewish Heritage in Poland**. In 2023, two people sentenced to community service were hired to uncover matzevot. They discovered 220 matzevot in the summer, of which the names of 182 people were deciphered. In autumn, approximately 400 additional matzevot were discovered. They are going to be inventoried in spring. From the above sum of money the following amount was spent in 2023 **17 500 PLN**

<b>In total, to implement the aforementioned projects, we acquired the amount of (ca 91 000 USD) 367 358 PLN</b>
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Moreover, we have implemented several projects with a small share of our own funds

**\*Poetry Mural** - we joined a project aimed at using damaged surfaces of public buildings to place fragments of poems by local poets on them. The mural was created on the northern section of the cemetery, in a place where local garage users had been dumping various large-sized garbage into the cemetery for years. The idea turned out to be effective, the mural prevents littering the cemetery. The cost of the paints ( 550 PLN) was financed by the Jewish Community in Krakow









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**\*Tymon Picheta, *Kiedy Steve był w moim wieku. Opowieść o Sacherze Israelerze / When Steve was my age. Sacher Israel's story***, publication of a bilingual book by an 8-year-old boy (500 copies). The cost of the publication (13,000 PLN ; printed by the Krakow publishing house Austeria at self cost price) was covered from contributions of our supporters and of the supporters of the informal Shtetl Mielec group.

**\*Ghetto border** - as part of the Galicianer Shtetl project, a permanent line was painted on the pavement marking the borders of the ghetto in June 1942 with the inscription: TU BYŁO GETTO [HERE WAS THE GHETTO]. The painted line is approximately 2,8 km long.





**\*Jewish holidays** – our foldable sukkah was set up for the holiday of **Sukkot** and we held an occasional meeting with those who expressed their interest in it. On the fifth day of **Hanukkah**, we held a meeting under the bimah with the participation of Rabbi Icchak Eliezer Yakov (employed in the Kosher branch of the Sokołów meat factory in Tarnów) and the Mayor of Tarnów, Roman Ciepiela. We usually light one candle officially with the participation of guests. This year, after the scandalous act of one of the ultra-right MP in the



Sejm (he used a fire extinguisher to extinguish the Hanukkah candle lit by Jewish children participating in the official ceremony in the Polish parliament), we decided, as a sign of unity with the celebrating Jews, to celebrate lighting the lights with the Tarnow Mayor until the last candle was lit.



**\*Aunt Sara Alley** – on the initiative of the Committee, the City Council decided that a part of the Kręta street, where the Roma Cultural Center is located, would be named **Bibi** (Aunt) **Sara Andraszowa Alley**, a very famous Roma woman who died in 2019, a senior citizen of the local Roma community. This year the local Roma celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Cultural and Social Association of Roma people. Our committee has been working closely with this Association for years.







Three tasks planned for 2023 which have not been completed include:

**\*Memorial Zone I** – unveiling of the outlines of mass graves in the northern part of the cemetery - failure to complete this task was due to the lack of consent from the Jewish Community in Krakow.

**\*Inventory of greenery** (trees) in order to tidy up alleys, cutting down dry trees, etc., - our application was rejected.

**\*Scientific editing** of the *Tarnow Book of Remembrance* from 1954, - we did not submit the application.

### Works on the cemetery

**\*Geniza** – at the request of Rabbi Yitzhak Eliezer Yakov, a pit was dug in the Jewish cemetery to serve as a geniza. Due to weather conditions, the relevant documents were not submitted in 2023, this act will be completed in 2024.

**\*Cleaning works.** Regular cleaning work and the retrieval of matzevot from the ground was carried out at the cemetery. The latter work was performed from August to September by the convict sentenced to community service (very effectively), who later - until November - worked part-time, formally as a volunteer, and was practically paid (PLN 15/hour) from a private subsidy. Until August 2023, a fugitive from Ukraine (Evgeni Shuljak) worked full-time at the cemetery performing manual labor. He was paid partly by a special fund for refugees and partly by a private donation. From August to the end of the year, another refugee delegated by the Labor Office (Andrij Zub - a researcher, archaeologist) worked, he performed cleaning work, but mainly he was employed in the office, preparing archives intended for deposit in the Tarnów museum. The grant intended for organizing the archive



also allowed us to employ an unemployed part-time archivist who performed numerous office and organizational tasks.

**\*Moreover, at the request of families from the US**, we cleaned the cemetery in Rzepiennik Strzyżewski, Tarnowski district (a few years ago we built a new fence in that place).

Similarly, at the request of families from the US, we are preparing a design for fencing the cemetery in Ołpiny (Tarnowski district).

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The campaign to raise funds from donors from the Diaspora is very actively led by our friends from the US - Dan Oren, Jill Leibman and Elizabeth Szancer. The highest support we received from an individual this year was again from Artur Süskind from Berlin.

### **Donation income (in PLN):**

1. Bank transfer donations (PLN)	12 698, 00 PLN- FJHP
2. Bank transfer donations (EUR)	46 785, 50 PLN - Artur Süskind
3. Donations from individual donors	3 842, 00 PLN
4. Donations from moneyboxes*	2 243, 35 PLN

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**TOTAL donation income 65 568.85 PLN**

\*Donations left in money boxes in the Committee's office and at the cemetery came from tourists visiting our city and from the campaign of selling used books and various small items brought from our homes and obtained from friends, conducted in front of our office in the summer season.

### **Human Resources**

There are 22 people on the list of Committee members. In practice, only a few people are directly involved.

From the beginning of 2021, the Management Board has consisted of:

Adam Bartosz – president of the Management Board

Natalia Gancarz – vice-president



Bogdan Lada – member of the Management Board

The Committee's Management Board met once at a recorded meeting, and meetings are held on an ongoing basis as needed.

Members of the Management Board work for free. Only Natalia Gancarz is employed on a half-time basis (27 940 PLN per year), which allows us to recruit temporary workers (interns) delegated by the Labor Office and various foundations cooperating with the Committee (the condition for delegating an employee paid by the Labor Office to us is that at least one person is employed full-time). An additional condition for employing an intern is that they be employed for at least 1 month after the end of the internship on a 1/2-time basis (the cost incurred by the Committee in this respect is 5 630 PLN).

People working for the Committee respond to hundreds of inquiries and requests sent by e-mail or via Facebook, the vast majority of which concern the genealogy of Jewish families in Tarnów, property or family histories. This is one of the biggest challenges, but unfortunately also a burden for our office, which urgently requires strengthening our small team.

### Plans for 2024

By the end of 2023, we have submitted the following grant applications to the Ministry of Interior and Administration as part of *the Roma Social and Civic Integration* program

<b>*XXIV International Roma Memorial Caravan and VI Caravan Conference - project devoted to the Roma minority in Europe</b>	<b>55 000 PLN</b>
<b>*Studia Romologica (17/2024) - scientific yearly journal</b>	<b>36 000 PLN</b>
<b>*Galicianer Shtetl – yearly Jewish culture festival</b>	<b>20 000 PLN</b>
<b>*Activities of the Committee's office (including part of the accountant's remuneration, rent fees, Internet, electricity)</b>	<b>24 000 PLN</b>
<b>*Preparation and protection of Adam Bartosz's scientific legacy (part II),</b>	<b>39 000 PLN</b>





**\*Staęły wozy kolorowe [Colorful wagons stopped] (working title)** an album of photographs by Jerzy Dorożyński from 1963. The edition is planned to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the action banning the Roma from travelling **28 000 PLN**

**\*Na bisteren / Nie zapomnijcie [Don't forget] (working title), board exhibition** illustrating over 250 places related to the martyrdom of the Roma in Europe during Nazism. It refers to the 80th anniversary of the liquidation of the Zigeunerfamilienlager (Gypsy Family Camp) in Auschwitz Birkenau (August 2, 1944) **18 000 PLN**

<b>The total amount of grants already approved</b>	<b>227 000 PLN</b>
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**Further applications will be submitted** throughout 2024 as recruitment announcements are made in various programs, foundations and ministries.

#### NOTE!

We have decided to suspend planned or prepared applications for grants for tasks related to work at the Tarnów Jewish cemetery due to **the demand by the Jewish Community in Kraków** (letter dated November 11, 2023) to **sever the 2016 Agreement with the Committee**, which was signed for the duration of the cemetery renovation and the durability period of the project, which expires in February 2026. The Commune ordered us (letter dated November 11, 2023) to "leave the cemetery within 7 days." We treat the matter as scandalous and we do not intend to comply with these demands due to the financial obligations related to maintaining the condition of the cemetery after renovation.

Adam Bartosz – *President of the Board*

Natalia Gancarz – *Vice-President of the Board*

Tarnów, December 31, 2023.

