

Report of Activities

The Committee for the Protection of Jewish Heritage in Tarnów

For the year 2017

The Committee for the Protection of Monuments of Jewish Culture In Tarnów was founded in 1988, with its headquarters at Regional Museum in Tarnów, Rynek 3. The goal of the Committee is the protection of the monuments of Jewish culture located in the former Galicia region. Moreover, the Committee engages in popularizing the knowledge about the culture of Polish Jews, strives for friendly relations between Poles/Christians and Jews, supports and organizes research and academic undertakings related to Jewish culture and monuments in the former Galicia region. The work of the members of the Committee is community service and they do not receive any remuneration for their efforts.

Since March 2017, the Committee has been in its own location - The Committee Office – at Plac Rybny 9, next door to the Old Synagogue Square where one can find the remnants of the Bima, resulting from the destruction by the Germans of the Old Synagogue.

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The Committee's most important project of 2017 was the award received of the grant for the renovation of the historical Jewish cemetery in Tarnow, financed and funded by the EU (RPMP.06.01-12-00152/16). According to the cost estimate, **the total value of the Project is 2,992,685.06 PLN (ca. 880,000 USD)**. The subsidy covers 75% of the cost – 2,244,513.76 PLN (2,094,879.50 PLN – provided by the EU; 49,634.26 PLN subsidized by the government). The remaining 25% of the project's costs – 748,171.30 PLN – the Committee must provide this in the form of its own contribution. The Committee will incur additional costs during the implementation of the tasks, which are not included in the project (ca. 35,000 PLN – the cost of preparing the application by a specialist, part of the cost of maintaining the premises, small tasks: execution of an information plaque, consultations with specialists, other unexpected expenses) **the amount necessary for the full implementation of the Project, or what we must collect is about 800,000 PLN (235,000 USD)**.

The agreement with the Grantor was executed in March, and with the contractor, selected by tender, in August. The deadline for completing the project is December 31, 2018.

As you can see, achieving the amount of our own contribution is a great challenge for the board of directors.

In the process of raising funds, very actively participating are our friends, especially, Jill Leibman, Elizabeth Szancer, Gerry Vineberg and Dan Oren. As a result of their activity, primarily on FaceBook, the Committee received an amount of **about 164,000 PLN** (10,296 PLN; 31,653 USD = 104,454,000 PLN; 11,845 Euros = 49,156 PLN). **From the Minister of Culture and**

National Heritage, we received the commitment of 271,000 PLN (200,000 PLN in 2017 and 71,000 PLN in 2018 – **totaling about 80,000 USD**). **The city of Tarnow committed 50,000 PLN (ca. 15,000 USD)**. From the initiative of the owner of the new “Jewish” restaurant, Krzysztof Chuderski, in the building of the former Jewish baths, there was a celebratory Chanukah evening (December 14, 2017). From this event, and after expenses, we raised about 10,000 PLN. In total, the 2017 amount is already about 410,000 PLN, or about 51% of the sum required to realize the costs of the Project. Amongst these, the largest sum – 200,000 PLN was from the Ministry of Culture.

Information about the donors and the amounts donated can be seen on the site, **kirkut-tarnow.pl**. There, you will also find updates regarding the work being done at the cemetery. By the end of 2017, the fenced wall was made along the length of the cemetery ok. 155 m. Renovation (conservation) is planned for 100 gravesites, the first order being the renovation of 26 gravesites of the soldiers of the first World War.

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Independent of the priority project, the renovation of the cemetery, the Committee conducted traditional activities, of which were the following:

1. Galicjaner Sztetl, the annual Remembrance Days of Galician Jews. As part of the project, the following events took place.
 - Prayer meeting in the Buczyna Forest of Zbylitowska Gora, the place of execution of Tarnów Jews.
 - March of Remembrance – from the former Plac Magdeburgski (the place where the Jews were gathered and taken to their slaughter) to the Cemetery.
 - Opening of the Mina Nath exhibition at the Galeria Szt Tyler.
 - Opening of the exhibition at square near the Bima – *Żydzi w Tarnowie*.
 - Opening of the photographic exhibition of Tomas Łabuza – *Tarnowski kirkut*.
 - Open Gate – guiding on the Jewish Cemetery.
 - Concerts under the Bima – *Olga Avigail & Zespol Tango Attack*, June 17, *Kapela. Brody*, June 18; *Chatskele, Chatskele*, Krakow Opera Kameralna, June 19.
 - Concert of Jewish music in Ciężkowice, Dębno and Dąbrowa Tarnowska.

2. Work done in other cemeteries.

In 2017, completion of the new fence that was built in Rzepiennik Strzyzewski (the cost was about 200,000 PLN covered by the Avoceynu Foundation in New York and by the Gemeinnutzige Gessellschaft zur Erhaltung (Non-Profit Organization for Preservation) and by the Schutz Judischer Friedhofe (Protection of Jewish Cemeteries) in Europe.

3. In 2017, the Committee mediated in the next repairs of gravesites, ordered by the families of those buried in our cemetery.

4. While employed by the Cemetery Renovation project, we responded to hundreds of questions posed via email, on FaceBook, etc. and additional genealogical questions from Jewish families about properties, family histories, etc. This is one of the largest problems in our office – excessive correspondence, inquiries, visits, all which would require an additional person for our small team. We make these efforts, among others, within our work organization. Many of the answers to questions were provided by Kamila Jasiak and Kinga Smółka, to whom we continue to forward a number of emails for response.

5. **Chanuka** – Participating in the celebration of the lighting of the Chanuka candles on December 14 at the Stara Łaznia Restaurant, were the President of Tarnow, Roman Ciepiela, Poland's chief rabbi, Michael Schudrich, as well as the Orthodox people from Israel who are working in Tarnow in ritual slaughter. The earnings from the fees collected from this event (200 PLN per ticket) were designated as donations to the cemetery renovation.

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Plans for 2018

- Continuation and completion of the cemetery renovation.
- Galicjaner Sztetl. June 14-17.

We am offering sincere thanks to all and we are counting on the continued support for our activities.

President of the organization - Adam Bartosz

Vice President - Jerry Bergman,

Vice President - Janusz Bogacz

Renovation of the Jewish Cemetery in Tarnów

Donation Levels

