

CENTER FOR MENNONITE BRETHERN STUDIES

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REPORT TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS MENNONITE-POLISH FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

News Update (June, 1991)

First of all, welcome to all who have joined, or who have expressed their interest in the goals of our association. It is my intention to send you periodic reports until we develop regular communication channels, and we become more formally structured.

Developments in Poland:

(1) Historical Marker in Gdansk

On June 25, a plaque will be unveiled in the former Mennonite Church in Danzig (Gdansk). Inscriptions will be in Polish, Dutch, German and English. The text reads as follows:

WITH THANKS TO GOD AND IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS IN THIS AREA

For providing a homeland for Mennonites for more than four centuries.
For granting religious toleration when religious persecution was common.
For restoring this church, built in 1819, but badly damaged in World War II.
For seeking to overcome the tragedies of war, flight, and expulsion with love and reconciliation.

The Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association

There will be participants from Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States. Should you be in Gdansk at that time, please join us.

For your information, the Association is paying for the marker.

(2) Heubuden Cemetery

This is the largest, best preserved Mennonite cemetery in Poland. The local historical preservation agency has approved plans to preserve this cemetery. Dr. Arkadiusz Rybak, of Stare Pole, and a strong supporter of closer Mennonite-Polish ties, is working with officials in Elblag. The Association has received designated funds (up to \$1000) to build a fence around

the grounds. Dr. Rybak has already bought wood for this purpose. A tour group, directed by Paul Toews and myself, will visit the cemetery in conjunction with the ceremonies in Gdansk.

(3) Other Plans

Some of you have suggested that we support Polish (and other) persons studying Mennonite-Polish relations. Do you have other suggestions? Please let me know. Since we are so widely scattered, it is important that we stay in contact by mail.

Future Developments:

(1) Election of Executive Committee

This needs to be formalized.

(2) Selection of projects we wish to support

Your input is invited. Let me know, so I can share this with other members in a future report.

Thanks again for joining this effort to build Mennonite-Polish understanding.

Sincerely yours,

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