

MENNONITE-POLISH FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, MARCH 1992

To all members and friends,

Greetings!

Here is a report of some of our activities since this association came into being. Also, I am requesting your advice on further developments.

1. Update

Most of you are aware of activities in Poland last year, so I shall be brief.

a) Unveiling a plaque in Gdańsk

The plaque, in four languages, was unveiled in the former Mennonite Church (now Pentecostal) in Gdańsk. We covered the cost of preparing this handsome memorial (\$450).

b) Helping to fence the Heubuden Cemetery

Dr. Rybak has notified me that the cemetery has now been fenced and presents a good appearance. Our Association has given him \$1000. Others also have contributed. He has requested additional funds.

c) Assisting in the publication of a special issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*

Selected papers from the Symposium on Mennonites in Poland and Prussia that was held in Winnipeg during the summer of 1990 will appear in the April, 1992 *MQR*. Association officers have written articles, and are serving as guest editors of this issue. The Association is also subsidizing this enlarged issue.

2. Future efforts

At the present time there are several projects that could further the goals of the Association.

a) Support further restoration of the Heubuden Cemetery. Additional cleaning and restoration work needs doing, some bills remain unpaid, a marker should be placed at the entrance to the cemetery.

b) Assist in the establishment of a Mennonite museum in the former church building in Thiensdorf.

c) Support Roman Klim's efforts to establish a German museum (including Mennonites) in Tszew.

- d) Support efforts to have Mennonite exhibits in museums in Gdańsk or Elbląg.
- e) Support Polish scholars doing research on Mennonites (this could include graduate students doing work at Polish universities, or advanced Polish scholars, e.g., Kizik in Gdańsk, Marchlewski and Macak in Warsaw, Ciesielska in Toruń).
- f) Support scholars outside of Poland who are researching the story of Mennonites in Poland and Prussia.
- g) Support certain kinds of publications (e.g., significant documents, lists of archival holdings in Polish repositories—Gdańsk, Warsaw, Toruń, Grudziąz, Bydgoszcz, etc.).

Other suggestions are welcome. More could be added to this list of possible activities. Please let us know your sentiments. Forward your ideas a comments.

3. Good news from Europe

a) The Netherlands

The Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit has sent official notification stating that they wish to join our Association. Also, Dr. Piet Visser, Director of the Mennonite Library and Archives at the University of Amsterdam, has joined our board of directors. The *Algemeen Doopsgezind Weekblad* has carried several articles on the activities of the Association.

b) Germany

Brücke, the German Mennonite periodical, has reported on the Association's recent activities in Poland. Peter Foth, pastor of the Mennonite Church in Hamburg, has reported on his experiences in Poland last summer. Eckbert Driedger has helped to publicize the work and goals of the Association, and has established the following bank account for German Mennonites who wish to support this effort: Konto-Nr. 13 52 60-755, Postgiroamt Karlsruhe (BLZ 660 100 75). Gifts should be designated for the "Gesellschaft für mennonitisch-polnische Freundschaft." This account is under the auspices of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland.

4. Financial needs

Through the generosity of various individuals and agencies the Association has collected slightly over \$2300 (US funds). We are grateful for the many contributions. The expenditures for the Heubuden Cemetery, Gdańsk plaque and the special edition of *MQR* total \$2000. That means we are in need of continuing donations to further the work of the Association. Friends and members may designate gifts for any of our projects, and those wishes will be respected. Also, membership fees are now due: \$20 US for individuals and \$50 US for institutions. These fees, as well as other funds earmarked for the Mennonite-

Polish Friendship Association may be sent to the following addresses as well as the European address given above:

Mennonite Heritage Centre
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies
4824 E. Butler
Fresno, CA 93727-5097

Tax deductible receipts for the US Internal Revenue Service or Revenue Canada will be issued. Please assist us in this effort to preserve the story of our people who lived in the Polish/Prussian territory and in bringing reconciliation to the Mennonite-Polish story.

Peter J. Klassen
President

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