

THE MENNONITE-POLISH FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

4824 East Butler Avenue

Fresno, California 93727

February, 1995

NEWSLETTER

Some of you have sent me information about recent events in Poland; I know you will find these reports, as well as comments about our MPFA of interest. I also want to thank those of you who sent in the annual dues (\$20.00). Also, please send me suggestions that you think should be shared with others in our group. Our newsletter goes to about 120 interested persons.

1. The Elblag Museum

Many of you have visited the Elblag Museum, and are aware of the section devoted to Mennonite artifacts. Last summer I visited the museum and presented a check for \$1000.00 US. We had received some designated funds for this purpose. The Director of the Museum, Kazimierz Arbart, writes, "Thanks to the Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association for the good will in helping us with the renovation of historical relics (of Dutch-Mennonite origin), which we have in our Museum."

Reminder

Dr. Roman Klim, Director of the Maritime Museum in the "Old Crane," has also established a museum on the "Mennonite Story." It is situated in Tszew; appointments are required to see the exhibit.

2. Visits to Former Mennonite Centers

It is a pleasure to see that interested groups from Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, and United States are visiting these areas. Let me share briefly some comments I received from Pastor Peter Foth, Hamburg. He led a group of 89 persons who visited Gdansk, former Mennonite villages in the Werder, and other places. Pastor Foth has led such large groups before, and on one occasion, unveiled a marker at the Heubuden cemetery. At the present time, he is planning to take another group, later this year, and have a ceremony in Torun (Obernessau) and place a plaque here so that this church will also be remembered as a former Mennonite center. Those of you who have visited here will recall that the local Catholic priest is very open and friendly to Mennonite visitors.

Other groups, from Canada and elsewhere, such as those led by John Friesen, also keep interest and awareness level high. Keep up the good work, and send me reports to share with those who receive this newsletter.

3. Recent Scholarship

Dr. Edmund Kizik, University of Gdansk, has just had his dissertation published. It is a study of Mennonites in the Vistula delta. We hope it will also appear in English and/or German.

Dorota Popowska, who completed a Master's thesis on Mennonites in the Deutsch Kazun area, reports that an exhibit she arranged in Warsaw, has been moved to Gdansk.

Harvey Plett, Steinbach Bible Institute, completed a Ph.D. dissertation: "Georg Hansen and the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church: A Study in Continuity," (University of Manitoba, 1991).

4. Plans for 1996

The 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons will be celebrated (I hope) throughout the Mennonite community. Fittingly, the Dutch Mennonites are making extensive plans to note the occasion, and have formed a "Menno Simons 500 Committee." One of the projects calls for "a Dutch Mennonite Hymn Concert by the very renowned Consort Camerata Trajectina," according to Piet Visser (Curator, Mennonite Historical Library, Amsterdam). Dr. Visser hopes the group will be able to tour North America in September and/or October 1996. For more information, contact Piet Visser, Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam, Singel 425, 1012 WP.

If any readers of this newsletter are involved in special commemorative plans in Poland, please let me know.

5. 1000 Years, Danzig/Gdansk

In 1997, Gdansk will celebrate its 1000-year anniversary. The city is planning a wide range of activities, including scholarly conferences.

Annual Dues

These, as well as designated funds, may be sent to either address below. Checks should be made out to the Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association.

Name _____

Address _____

Annual dues (\$20.00) _____

Special Projects:

Mennonite-Polish
Friendship Association
Center for MB Studies
4824 E. Butler
Fresno, CA 93727

Mennonite-Polish
Friendship Association
Mennonite Heritage Center
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Canada R3P 0M4

For the Association,


Peter J. Klassen