

THE MENNONITE-POLISH FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION
4824 EAST BUTLER AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93727

September 24, 1996

NEWS BULLETIN

CONFERENCE PLANS CHANGED

The July 1996 **Bulletin** announced a conference, to be held in Gdansk in 1997.

Recently, a number of new developments have caused us to modify original plans. Here are the relevant factors:

1. The Prorector of the University of Gdansk, Professor Brunon Synak, informed me that the University Rector, Prorector and also the Director of the History Institute would all be leaving their positions. Whatever the reasons, this development meant that the persons who had negotiated the agreement for the University of Gdansk were no longer in a position to commit the university. You will recall that the University of Gdansk and California State University, Fresno, agreed to be chief sponsors, with major support from the Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association and other organizations.

2. Some of us discussed this situation, and felt we could not proceed to sponsor an academic conference in Gdansk without reference to the local university. This could too easily be misinterpreted.

3. Recently, Eckbert Driedger, chair of the Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein in Germany, sent me a letter, suggesting we consider working with those who were already involved in planning a conference in Nowy Dwor, Poland in 1997. Nowy Dwor, the former Tiegenhof, is in the heart of the Werder, where a large number of Mennonites once lived.

4. Just a few days ago, I received a letter from two staunch friends in the Netherlands. Piet Visser and Margreth C. Stubbe suggested that the "Stichting tot behoud en ontwikkeling van de Nederlands-Doopsgezinde Betrekkingen in Polen" would be glad to support our efforts if we joined with the group already working to promote a conference in Nowy Dwor.

Many of you know that this group in the Netherlands has already done a great deal to preserve evidences of the Mennonite heritage in Poland.

In view of these considerations, we have decided to do the following:

1. Cancel the projected conference with the University of Gdansk.

2. Support the effort to develop a strong conference in Nowy Dwor. It is scheduled for June 7,8, 1997, in Nowy Dwor. The theme: "Everyday Life Among the Mennonites in the Werder." I have contacted the organizing group, and have been assured that we would be enthusiastically welcomed as participants. The Nowy Dwor group has already strongly supported the preservation of reminders of Mennonite life in the Vistula Delta.

Persons wishing to present papers or otherwise participate should contact the organizing committee as soon as possible. Please send details to the following address:

Klub Nowodworski
Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Nowego Dworu Gdanzkiego
ul. Kopernika
82-100 Nowy Dwor Gdanski
Poland

Telephone: 48-55-47-27-59 or 47-22-03

Fax: 48-55-47-22-32

I hope to see many of you at this special event.

For those who have sent money to support the Gdansk Conference: Please let us know whether you would want your funds returned, or used to support the Nowy Dwor Conference.

For the Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association,



Peter J. Klassen