

CN 174

X/9/13 E/W -- POLISH PARTICIPATION IN GHENT FESTIVITIES OFF

BRUSSELS, AUG 28 (RFE SPECIAL/DYBVIK) -- POLISH PARTICIPATION IN PRIVATELY SPONSORED FESTIVITIES COMMEMORATING THE WORLD WAR TWO LIBERATION OF GHENT, BELGIUM, HAS BEEN CANCELLED, ACCORDING TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE EVENT.

THE CANCELLATION FOLLOWED LAST WEEK'S MILITARY OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, IN WHICH POLISH TROOPS TOOK PART.

A POLISH MILITARY BAND AND A DELEGATION OF THE POLISH EX-SERVICEMENS ASSOCIATION HAD BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE. POLISH GENERAL MOCZAR WAS INVITED TO LEAD THE DELEGATION FROM WARSAW.

ALL OF THE INVITATIONS WERE ISSUED BY THE SO-CALLED GHENT LIBERATION COMMITTEE, FORMED OF BUSINESSMEN ON ZWIJNAARDE STEENWEG (A GHENT SUBURBAN STREET). THE COMMITTEE HAS NO OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE BELGIAN EX-COMBATTANTS SOCIETY OR THE BELGIAN BRANCH OF THE POLISH EX-COMBATTANTS SOCIETY.

THE GHENT SUBURBAN STREET WAS THE FIRST IN THE CITY TO BE LIBERATED BY BRITISH TROOPS WHICH INCLUDED ONE POLISH ARMORED DIVISION.

THE INVITATIONS FOR POLISH PARTICIPATION DREW SHARP PROTESTS EARLIER THIS MONTH FROM POLISH EXILES HERE. THE BELGIAN BRANCH OF THE POLISH EX-COMBATTANTS SOCIETY LED THE PROTEST.

GHENT CITY OFFICIALS HAVE CAREFULLY REFRAINED FROM OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CELEBRATIONS, WHICH WILL BE HELD SEPT. 5-9 TO MARK THE 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF THE BELGIAN CITY. OFFICIALS OF THE BELGIAN FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES SAID THEY HAD NO RPT NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE INVITATIONS AND SAID THE MATTER WAS PRIVATELY ORGANIZED AND DID NOT RPT NOT WARRANT THE APPEARANCE OF ANY OFFICIAL BELGIAN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES.

THE POLISH ARMY BAND WAS TO HAVE ALSO PRESENTED CONCERTS IN BRUSSELS, CHARLEROI AND LIEGE. THE ENTIRE VISIT HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

BELGIAN FOREIGN OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO ANNOUNCED THE CANCELLATION OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS WITH BULGARIAN AND HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS DURING SEPTEMBER FOLLOWING THE PARTICIPATION OF THOSE COUNTRIES IN THE OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

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