

question'. We are now spending quite a few talking about the manner in which re-unification will occur, how best to assist the East, etc. All areas of the country are feeling the impact of so many new residents from the GDR. About a mile from our house there is a container development being built as emergency housing; four people are living in each of these containers, which are the same size as those we use to ship our belongings in when we move!

We have been able to maintain contact with friends we made in Czechoslovakia during our posting there in the early '70s, and we anxiously awaited the arrival of their Christmas letters. At last they were able to write freely and tell us about their joy at the first few steps their country had taken towards a democratic society. My son's kindergarten teacher, who has been such a faithful correspondent, said she would write in detail later; the events were too overwhelming to describe without breaking down.

Two final comments which come to mind—last week we attended a 65th birthday party, and one of the guests, a doctor from Czechoslovakia, had come especially for the occasion. He had studied under the host 25 years ago, but had never expected to be able to see him again. The last time I was at the hairdresser's, my hairdresser could hardly contain herself, and explained that her parents were coming from the GDR for the weekend. She had not expected to see them for at least a year, and certainly not here. Practically everyone has stories like this to tell, and one realizes once again what hardships have been endured in the last 40 years, not only in economic terms but in human ones as well.

CURTAIN RISES ON CULTURE

For those interested in ballet and opera, Warsaw boasts Europe's largest and most modern Great Opera and Ballet Theatre, which seats 2000 and is better known as the "Teatr Wielki". Among the more renowned halls for ballet, opera and theatre are the "Teatr Polski", "Teatr Ateneum", "Teatr Narodowy" and "Teatr Dramatyczny".

Major musical undertakings in Warsaw are presented at the National Philharmonic Hall, which offers many international music festivals throughout the year. The Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition takes place here every five years.

The Palace of Culture and Science, which dominates the city's skyline, houses many cultural and entertainment facilities such as theatres, cinemas and exhibition halls.

Warsaw has several art galleries and 17 museums. Among the more popular are the National Museum, the Ethnographic Museum, the Museum of the History of Warsaw and museums in the Royal Palace, Lazienki Palace, the Wilancow Palace and in the Pawiak Prison.

Warsaw's most beautiful street, "Krakowskie Przedmiescie", with its many old churches and palaces, leads to the Castle Square, over which rises the King Sigismund Column; the symbol of Warsaw. On this square is the Royal Castle, which was completely destroyed during the last war and was reconstructed in the 1970s. The square leads into the Old Town complex, a grouping of Gothic and Renaissance buildings surrounded by medieval fortifications and the Barbican, all reconstructed from their very foundations after having been destroyed during World War II.

Warsaw has many beautiful parks, but the loveliest is Lazienki Park, containing valuable monuments such as the Island Palace. There are concerts offered in the park, both summer and winter. On Sunday afternoons in summer, one can listen to Chopin music played by well-known Polish pianists. The grand piano stands next to an enormous statue of Chopin. In winter, one can attend concerts by candlelight in the Lazienki Orangery. In Zelazowa Wola, one can visit the Chopin Museum in the house in which he was born and listen to Chopin concerts on Sundays given by distinguished pianists.