6. Warsaw — the final days.

Two days remained for our Polish experience, and another palace was first on the schedule. Set in a lush and vast park within the city is Łazienki palace. One guide book calls this "Poland's most beautiful 18th century architectural and landscape complex." (Figure 86) The palace was emptied of furnishings by the German invaders, who set the building on fire in 1944. However, the Poles, as with the Royal Palace, managed to carry away many objects to the basement of the National Museum. But, again, the Germans found and sent to Germany the choicest of these objects. The victorious Armies returned to Poland what they later found. The Germans had drilled the walls of the palace for the setting of dynamite, but evacuation of the German Army came too soon and too fast and it frustrated their plans. Nonetheless, the interiors had suffered severely from the 1944 fire. All ceilings and second floor wood flooring were destroyed. Although darkened and stained by the fire some of the first floor wood flooring, and much of the marble fireplaces and door trim survived.

Łazienki palace has been completely restored since the war. The palace is surrounded by water with a paved front terrace reached by one of two columned bridges placed on each side of the front terrace; thus one approaches from the side onto the terrace and then into the palace. (Figure on page 11)

A facing of blue and white Dutch Delft tiles covered the walls in one or two of the first floor rooms; they fell off the walls due to the intense heat of the fire. Only a few whole tiles were rescued from the ashes; from these survivors new tile could be made and set into place once again. The restored ballroom is used for concerts of 18th century music. In the evenings during these concerts the ballroom and the adjacent rooms are lighted only by candles, the better to recall the feeling of the rooms during the 18th century.

Throughout the palace are inlaid parquet wood floors of varying and intricate designs. In the restorations, no "modern resins" were used, the floors were varnished and each Monday they are polished with a "simple floor polish."

In the small private chapel on the first floor is the dark marble tomb of Polish and American Revolutionary hero, Tadeusz Kosciusko. General Kosciusko was the leader of the unsuccessful 1794 Polish Uprising. He died in exile in Switzerland in 1817.*

The palace is owned by the Ministry of Culture, while the vast gardens are owned by the city of Warsaw. This separation of control results in a conflict of purpose. The Director of the palace, who escorted us about the palace and the gardens, expressed his, and I suspect the Ministry's opinion, that the gardens should be a part of the palace interpretative program and thus be redesigned into a proper 18th century park as a more accurate setting for the palace itself. On the morning of our visit, October 22nd, all was dampened by a constant drizzle. The leaves on the trees were gold; the ground and black asphalt walks were speckled with fallen leaves. Even with the dense overcast sky, a glimmer and sparkle was all about, and squirrels were darting about gathering nuts. The very vastness of the park, the density of large trees and expanses of lawns pushed away from our minds the surrounding city. And no litter lay about! (Fig. 87)

The afternoon was free; so, in spite of the constant drizzle, we scattered into the city for a shopping and sightseeing spree. In the evening we were treated to a piano concert in the comfortable Warsaw Philharmonic Hall. The all Chopin program was very well performed by an attractive blond, in her 30's. Her name is Lidia Grychtolowna. The hall was full, but at the cost of tickets for concerts in Poland, why not? The posted price at the ticket window was 20 Z's (under $1.00). At the opera the same night, to which a couple of our group had arranged to go, the price for their fifth row center seats was 50 Z's or under $2.50.

Wednesday, October 23, the last day of the seminar/tour, one last conference session was scheduled. It was held in the auditorium at the National Museum and was to be followed by lunch in the Museum's small but tidy public coffee shop.

The day, very oddly for Poland, dawned bright and sunny. I arose early, dressed quickly, grabbed my camera, a fresh roll of film, and rushed outside to enjoy a bright sparkling morning. I walked about town rapidly taking photographs, finished my last roll of film, and got back to the hotel in time for the 8:30 breakfast.

We were greeted at the Museum by our energetic

*All my guide books say that Kosciusko is buried in the Wawel Cathedral. My notes, however, say differently. Perhaps I am reversed as to who is buried where; I am confused! Jack McDermott, a member of our tour group and one of the two Americans who made prior trips to Poland to arrange this trip, told me that he was told that there are some six places throughout Poland which claim the Kosciusko tomb! Now, dear reader, I suspect that you are as confused as I. Perhaps Kosciusko was also, as Poland, "partitioned"?
Łazienki Palace sits on an island in its own long, narrow lake and is approached by short bridges from both sides leaving the main facades to overlook the calm water, figure 86. The Łazienki gardens are vast, forested, grassy preserves, figure 87. The area where once stood the defense walls of Cracow are now a space of green and shade, figure 88. Overlooking the Vistula river from Old Town Warsaw is this flock of birds, figure 89. Scattered about Warsaw are shrines and plaques depicting specific events during the Warsaw uprisings of World War II figure 90. Grave crosses in southern Poland, figure 91.
friend, Professor Lorentz, who introduced the Chief Conservator of Nature for Poland, whose paper, "The National Parks in Poland," was read for him. The paper outlined the history, departmental structure, park philosophy and long range planning. The legislation creating the National Parks, "one of the first laws concerned with preservation in the world," was enacted in the late 1880's. In 1972 the law was refined by the creation of the Department of the Preservation of Nature, which along with the National Park Service, is under the State Forest Ministry. Like the U. S. Park Service, the parks are feeling the pressure of too many vacationers. "Tourism in the National Parks should be limited to sightseeing . . . (controlled roads and defined walkways) . . . this is the only way to preserve the parks." The park visitor would thus be limited to the roads and paths; he "cannot go off of them." All campsites and tourist facilities will be developed outside the actual Park boundaries in "transitional zones." These zones "can be very wide" and will be managed by a special agency under the Forest Ministry; "no factories, no industry can be built in these zones." The Park Service controls all endangered species and—hear this now—it has a breeding and protection program for bison! Asked if there were ever conflicts between the timber and lumber interests in the Forest Ministry and the Park Service where forest and Park might overlap—"generally, no conflicts," the Parks "have their own legislation which says what can and cannot be done." All historic buildings located within National Parks are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and the local area Conservator, there generally are "no conflicts." Again, one suspects that because of the system, which solves problems without the meddling of public and press, "conflicts" can be argued out, or simply decided upon by the man at the top. He does not have to suffer the review of a Congressional committee or an alert, free press.

The final presentation by our Polish hosts was by Professor Dziewonski, a planner. From his talk and the subsequent discussion period I jotted the following notes and data:

Throughout Poland there are 1400 places—cities, towns and villages—possessing "urban character." Of these, some 700 have historic preservation needs which must be "considered in planning for growth."

It is almost impossible to establish a fully New Town, "there is already something there," which has historical character and which must be taken into consideration in the planning.

"In the end all the new buildings are alike," not only in Poland, "but all over the world." The only thing to give a sense of location to them are the natural elements and the older "historical remains." Although the "historical value" of the "remains" will vary, all are important to the future plan.

While most towns have sewer systems, many are antiquated and inadequate. But it has been discovered that the installation of modern sewage systems causes a change in the ground conditions through a reduction in the water content in the ground. This has had an adverse effect on the stabilization of the old existing buildings.

The oldest city in Poland is Kalisz, the earliest sections of which were built on an island located between branches of the Prosna River. The city was heavily damaged by the Germans in 1914, but it was "very successfully" rebuilt in 1918. The old street pattern was retained. Only the main street through the center was widened, and this by only a couple of meters. The old city is considered an area of "strict preservation," and is presently the shopping center for the industrial city of 75,000 inhabitants. However, plans call for a large "new center" just outside of the old city, but again, "is this a good idea?" In Cracow, for example, plans call for a vast new town center, again, just outside the old city. "I don't think it will work." The best shops are in the old city; "the people like to shop there, the tourist heart is there."

"One of the greatest dangers" to historic areas "is the eminent architect."

There is a national awareness and dedication to the preservation of the Polish culture. "The war's (WW II) destruction caused this consciousness."

Because of central planning "extremes" can be prevented. "We will have problems with traffic, but perhaps we can prevent the extreme problem." It is still very difficult to tell the people that they cannot drive into the center of the city.

This man was the first to be really relaxed and candid. He seemed to be more aware of the kind of present and potential planning problems which members of our group saw as we viewed the handsomely colored and drafted plans in Cracow and elsewhere. He expressed his own concern for the possible failures of these grand schemes.

Following a coffee break, Norman Pfeiffer, AIA, of New York, gave a well organized slide presentation overview of historic preservation across the U. S. Interestingly, our Polish hosts didn't seem to care—or were they not informed by Professors Majewski or Lorentz? Only Lorentz and Professor Majewski's pleasant assistant who had been with us during most of the past fifteen days were in attendance. Norman gave a fine summary to us. No one bothered to translate; there were no Poles to listen!

Throughout the trip and reinforced again on this last day, it was apparent that we were there to listen to them. I suspect that no interchange of ideas was actually planned on their behalf. They rarely asked questions of us; they responded to our questions in varying degrees of evasiveness, rarely with full open-

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ness or candor. Was this as planned? The few times that conversation began to probe, it was time to break for coffee or for the next scheduled event and we were rushed away. Were all those experts told not to probe our minds for opinions or methods? Certainly they have accomplished much. They have a commitment to preservation far in excess of our country. Would that we could spend less in the destructive hardware of military defense and more on the constructive bricks and mortar of preservation and conservation.

The final affair was a lavish state banquet in Wilanow palace. It had been arranged by Professor Lorentz, who could not attend. Earlier in the day he expressed sincere regrets to a member of our group; he had to attend another state banquet in another part of the city with the Prime Minister of Norway. He said that he really would prefer to have been with us in Wilanow.

Professor Majewski and the Vice-Minister of Culture and Art, Dr. Josef Fajowski, were the hosts and led the farewell toasts with much vodka. The toasts and speeches were heavy with pleasanties and well-wishes. By dessert time and on through coffee, I thought we would be drowned by the fast rising tide of international comradeship! — JPC

NOTES AND SOURCES:
1) THE ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW, a pamphlet.
2) Quotes from Professor Lorentz.
3) A GUIDE TO WARSAW.
5) CRACOW, a pamphlet.
6) POLAND, A GUIDEBOOK FOR TOURISTS.

The many quotations throughout the article are taken from my notebook which was with me always. They talked—I jotted.

Monument to the Heroes of Warsaw (Nike)