



On the 31st of October 2006, as a member of CIST (Centro Internazionale della Stampa Turistica) and of Fijet, the International Federation of Journalists and Writers of Tourism, I had the opportunity to attend the annual Congress held at Karlovy Vary, in the Czech Republic, in the westerly part of Bohemia. Personally I had never been in Czechoslovakia and I was pleasantly surprised to discover the very interesting town of Karlovy Vary, situated at the foot of the hills covered with pine trees, at approx 380 meters on the Teplà River where it joins the Ohre River

Coming from Cagliari, in Sardinia where the sun shines nearly all the year round and there is a hot climate in Summer and a mild one in Winter, we have had the pleasant surprise to run into two days of snow which offered a completely different scenery to which we are not accustomed. It was a beautiful sight to watch the slopes of the hills around Karlovy Vary, covered with pine trees all clothed in a beautiful mantle of white snow. On the plateau there were large fields covered with pure white snow which extended as far as the eye could see. It was so wonderful that it looked just like a fairy-land scenery which took the breath-away.

The town of Karlovy Vary is a very interesting town with offers a wide choice of interests in the cultural, architectural and historical fields as well as in the sanitary field. Karlovy Vary boasts of more than 70 hot springs of which 12 royal springs are in use. The Strudel is the most famous and popular spring. It sprouts from a depth of 2000 m. reaching a temperature of 72 to 73 degrees and has separate outlets which differs in temperature. There are many beautiful and imposing Spa buildings, amongst the lot some are worth mentioning, such as the Elizabeth Spa called after the Austrian Empress, the Thermal Spa Sanatorium which can house 1,200 spectators, for the International Cinema Festival, held every year. It also boasts of another five conference rooms for another 600 people, and a 50 meters long swimming pool with thermal water.

Another important one is the Imperial Hotel Spa built around 1910/1912 as an international Grand Hotel for a wealthy clientele. Millionaires and film stars usual-

ly stay there. The effective thermal waters of Sulphate-bicarbonate-chloride and sodium are used for many curative purposes: for drinking, for bath, showers, aerosol, gastro-intestinal, hepatic and gynaecologic ailments, for skin disease, for articulation and joints troubles etc. A vast field to satisfy all needs! Because of its numerous Spas with its curative and healing spring waters, Karlovy Vary counts something like 50.000 patients from countries all over the world and million of visitors every year.

Karlovy Vary has a very interesting story, and was recorded for the first time in 1325. The Czech King and Roman Emperor Carlo IV had a castle built in 1358

around which houses were built to house the people and it became the living centre of the village. In 1370 this living centre instead of being known as a village obtained the right to be called a town. Thus Karlovy Vary became known as a town and the count Schlick took possession of the city for the period 1434 to 1547 when it became state owned, but it remain faithful to the Hasburg dynasty, also during the Bohemian revolt of 1618/1620. although it had accepted the reform. In 1797 the town was raised as a free town of the crown.

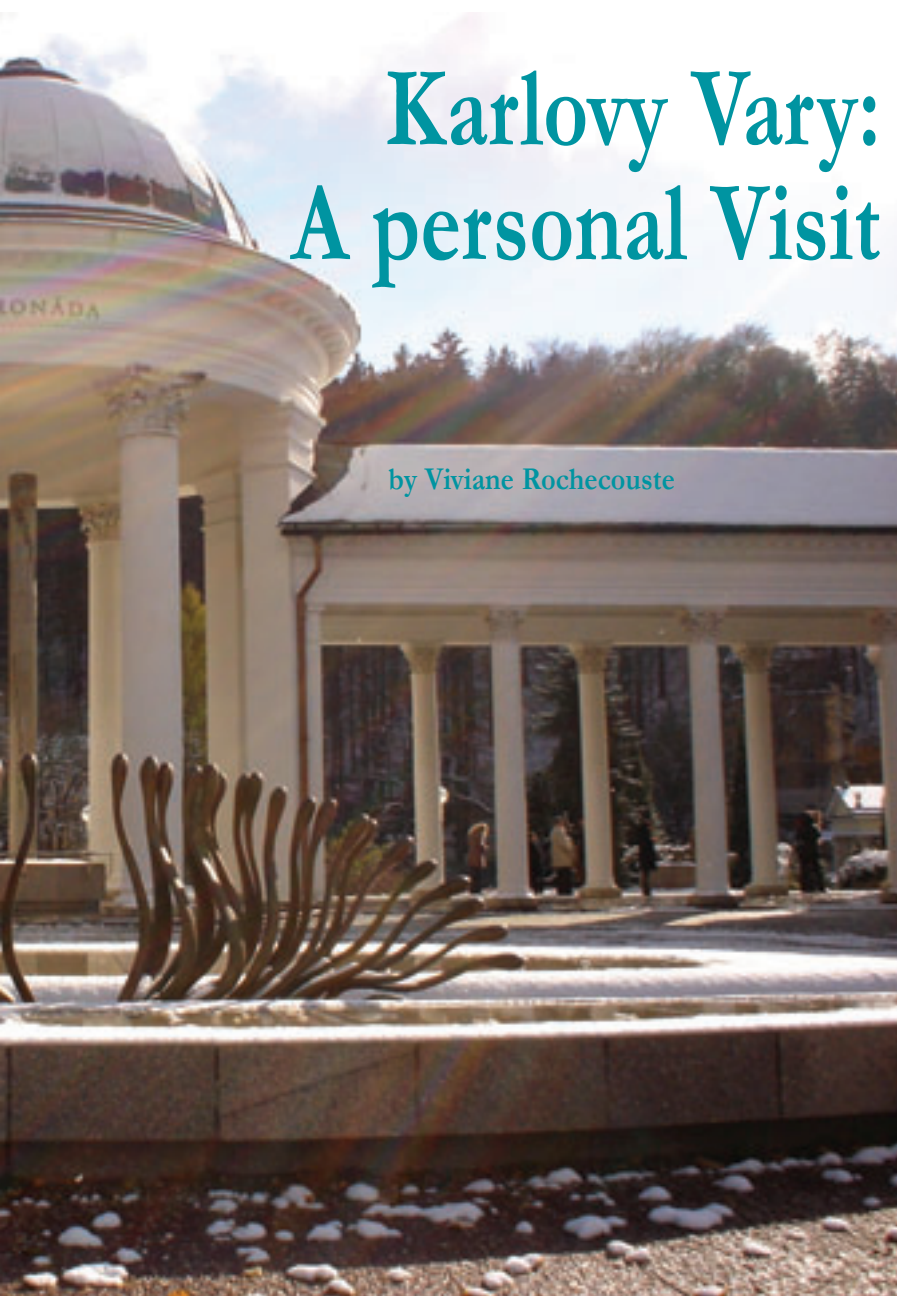
The Congress of Karlsbad held on the 25 April 1938 by the German Party of the Sudeti of K.Hemlein, accepted the pro-





Karlovy Vary: A personal Visit

by Viviane Rochecouste

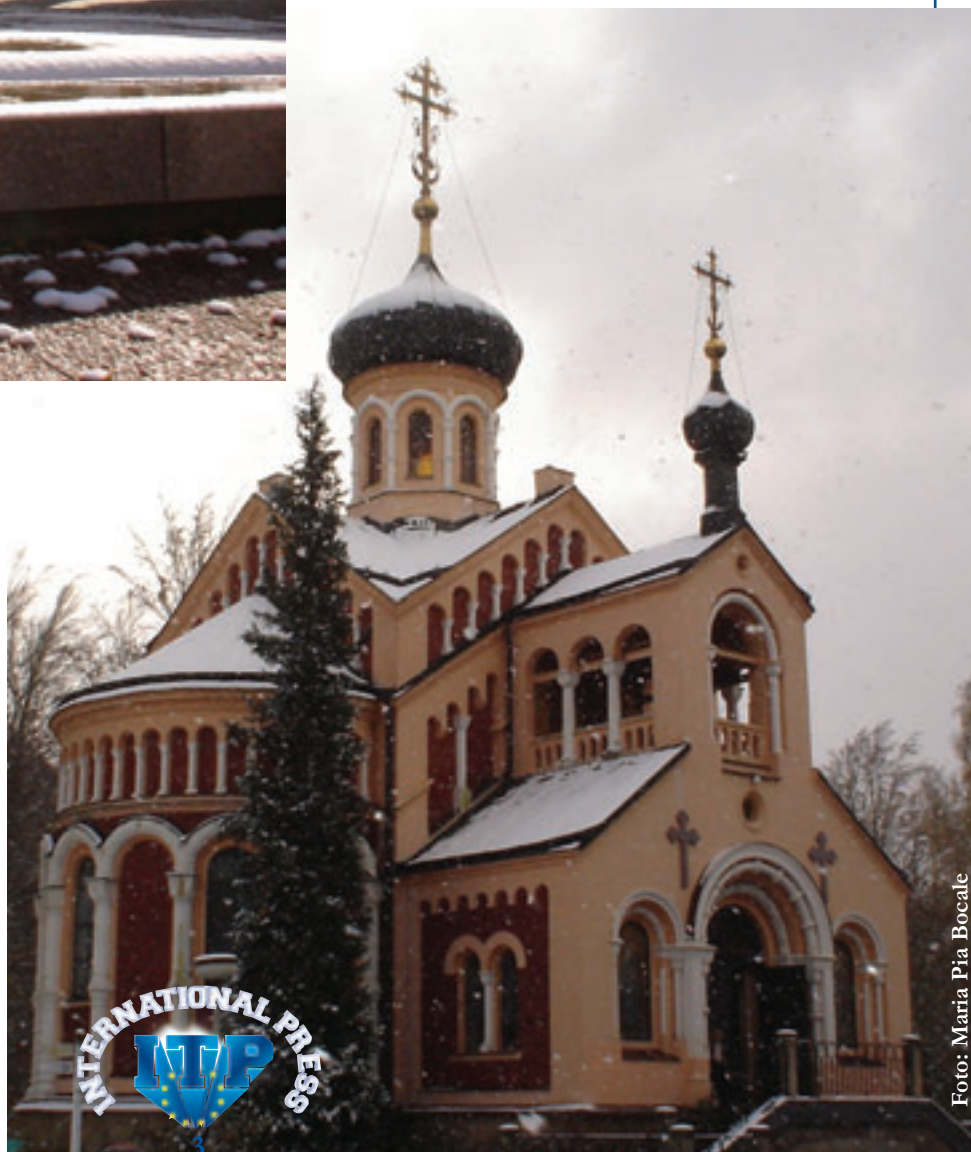


can to-day admire beautiful and imposing buildings of different architectural styles in Karlovy Vary, such as: the Main Post Office which is a historically registered and most imposing building built from the plans of Friedrich Setz in 1903. The four beautiful statues at the level of the 3rd floor represent the Telegraph, the Rail Transport, the Maritime Transport and the Post.

Also famous and worth seeing are the Mill colonnade with numerous columns, the Park Colonnade, the Sprudel Colonnade, the beautiful church of Santa Maria Magdalena in baroque style, with its precious altar, the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Peter and Paul, the Museum. The City Theatre is the architectural jewel of Karlovy Vary and is a masterpiece of the architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer well known throughout Europe as theatre builders. They also built a lot more buildings in Karlovy Vary which gave the town its typical character of Art Nouveau and historicism.

gram of national-socialism and a request to the Prague Authority was made to grant autonomy to the parties of Czech Republic of mostly German citizens. The settling of the Germans in the area of the Sudeti, a complex mountainous system, has its origin well far back..

The story of Karlovy is full of up and downs not only in history but also in natural disasters. The town was hit by fires in 1604 and 1759 and by floods in 1582, 1821 and 1890, but each time thanks to the initiative and the courage of its inhabitants, Karlovy was restored to its former beauty and architects from all over the world were welcomed to Karlovy Vary. As a result we





Amongst the numerous Hotel Spa of Karlovy Vary I personally can recommend the traditional luxurious five stars Grand Hotel Pupp, with the beautiful composition of Historicism and Art Nouveau of its Festive Hall. There is a plaque to Ludwig van Beethoven at the Café of the Pupp Grand Hotel. Beethoven took a treatment in Karlovy Vary in 1812 and during his stay he organized a concert for the town of

needs and with courtesy gave us an excellent service worthy of a 5 stars Hotel like the Grand Hotel Pupp. My niece and I had a most enjoyable stay as we took the opportunity to relax in the Spa Clinic & Cosmetic salon of the hotel which provides sauna, steam bath, whirlpool fitness and body massage.

There is plenty to see and do in Karlovy Vary. The origin of the famous liqueur

kept secret, has never been divulged and is shrouded in mystery. A visit to the factory is worth it and an explanation of how the liqueur is made is given, but not the making of the combination of the herbs of which it is made, which is top secret.!

The Moser glass manufacture is also worth a visit. The Moser is famous for its manufacture of lead free crystal, unique colours, hand cutting and engraving and for



Baden near Vienna which had been severely damaged by fire.

Standing in front of the hotel square and turning your back to the river, the Golden Harp House is on your right with a small angel in the corner cornice under the roof playing the harp up to to-day.

My stay at the Grand Hotel Pupp was a most pleasant one, the room was furnished with style and offered a luxurious comfort and excellent service. At Breakfast there was an ample choice to satisfy everybody. The Restaurant offered a first class cuisine with a wide choice on the Menu and the restaurant staff was most attentive to our

Becherovka dates as far back as 1805 when the pharmacist Josef Becher met the English physician Dr. Frobrig who had a passion for herbs and for experimenting and a new friendship was born. For two years the Pharmacist worked on the formula that Dr. Frobrig left him before leaving Karlovy Vary and in 1897 Joseph Becher started to sell the new digestive which he called English Bitter in memory of his friend. From then on, it became the original Karlsbader Becherbitter which grew and became well known. Today the liqueur is known as the Becherovka. It is a blend of 20 herbs and spices from remote lands but its recipe is

its cut glass, known worldwide. There are numerous shops of fine crystal ware in Karlovy Vary with the most beautiful articles and the choice of a crystal souvenir is difficult with such a wide choice of wonderful crystal articles for the house.

We roamed the town and got in contact with the people of Karlovy Vary which I liked very much. I found them courteous and pleasant to be with. I fancied a jacket which I liked in one of the shops but as I had left my purse in the Hotel, my niece went back to get it for me. In the meantime I had to wait in the shop. To my pleasant surprise the shop girl offered me a chair and a cup of





coffee while I was waiting. I enjoyed the coffee and we had a pleasant chat together.

After shopping we had lunch at the Posezeni U Svejka which is a most particular restaurant. We ordered duck which is the speciality of the house and when our meal arrived we found half of a whole duck on our plate. we enjoyed this fantastic meal, washed with the special flavoured hot wine of the house.

Unfortunately our visit to the most beautiful and interesting town of Karlovy Vary was marred by the bad organization which we received at the Fijet Congress. For instance, we went on an excursion outside Karlovy Vary and had a late lunch there and we came back, very late in the afternoon, at about 5 o'clock, with the stomach still quite full. We had to have an early dinner at the hotel if we wanted to attend what was organised at the theatre at 7 o'clock. As a result most of us gave up the idea of having dinner at such an early time.

I would also like to mention that we had two buffet dinners badly organised at two very important hotels of Karlovy Vary. There were a marvellous display and a wide choice at the Buffet but there was not enough tables to sit down for us all to enjoy the lovely dinner. Our group had managed to grasp a table but my niece and I had to give our seats to an old couple whose husband was lame and walking with a stick. How could a person like that, in such a bad condition, hold his plate and eat when he could hardly stand on his feet and he needed his hand to hold his walking stick to help him! And this was at a closing Farewell buffet offered on our last stay!

I have attended many Fijet Congress and this is the first time that I found the organizing lacking in such a bad way. The members of the Cist and Fijet are all professional journalists and writers, with a good education and a wide culture, They have travel far and wide as requested by their profession but all this was not taken into consideration at all, and the

treatment received was, unfortunately of a very low standard not fit for level required for professional journalists and writers.

Notwithstanding my disappointment and bitter feeling at the inadequate organization and the way we were treated which somewhat spoilt my stay in Karlovy Vary, I

they want in this beautiful town, for their health and for the enjoyment in the varied interesting fields which the town offers.

To finish I am glad to say that fortunately the tourists who will visit Karlovy Vary will not have to submit to any bad organization. They will be free to organise their



wish to warmly recommend Karlovy Vary to the tourists as it is really a town worth visiting, as tourists, they will find everything

stay and go where they want to, and do what they like, as Karlovy Vary is a marvellous town that will not disappoint them.

