

On A Business Trip In Denmark



This is a photo of me (Ladislav Urban) in August of 1971 on a business trip in Solrod Strand, Denmark. Because I was in our company's management, I traveled abroad a lot. We traveled mainly to France and the former Soviet Union, but we also went to other countries. I dealt with the management of the French company Soletance.

The director of Soletance was named Professor Hafen. He was coming here often back then. Once he was here when there was that famous hockey tournament between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, when Golonka [Golonka, Jozef (b. 1938): former Slovak hockey player and coach. One of the best forwards that played for the national team of the former Czechoslovakia – Editor's note] was beating the ice with his stick. The professor and his assistants were living at the Hotel Devin [Hotel Devin: a traditional four-star hotel located in the center of Bratislava – Editor's note]. The professor says to me: ""Isn't there a TV somewhere here, where we could watch the game in peace?"" I answered him: ""Only at my place."" ""Can't we go to your place?"" ""Sure we can, c'mon, I've got my car here."" At that time I had a brand-new Skoda. I'd bought it in 1967. I drove him home to our place. We watched the hockey game and they returned to the hotel. The next day our head director called me, that he'd heard that the Frenchmen had been at my place, and how did I dare to do that. I told him, we were watching the hockey game, I put a bottle of gin on the table, and wanted to make coffee too, but they didn't want anything at all. They didn't touch a single thing.

There were of course great differences between life in Czechoslovakia and in France. You can't even compare the two. Life there was calm, perfect. I spent some time in southern France too. First I was in Avignon. There we were looking at large marine structures, by La Ciotat. They were building garages for submarines. There were huge numbers of American soldiers there. We saw all of southern France, because we had a car at our disposal. I went on these trips mainly with Czechs, from Prague. We got along well.

Besides France, I was also in Russia. Twice I was the guest of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. There was this one Jew there, Viktor Danushevski. He was from Lithuania; today he teaches in Philadelphia. His mother-in-law, Olga Davidovna Lipschitz, was the head of the German department

at Lomonosov University in Moscow. I used to like going to her place very much. At Christmas I'd even send her presents. She was one superb professor. I've even got one of her dictionaries with a dedication from her.