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A Visit with a Friend of Chiropractic -- Karl Lewitt, M.D.

By Shawn Steel, Esq.

"I have always felt I have swindled a patient when I give them a drug." Dr. Karl Lewitt, Prague, September 20, 1990.

Photo

California chiropractic attorneys Shawn Steel (l) and Michael Schroeder (r) flank Dr. Karl Lewitt during their recent visit to Eastern Europe.

Prague, Czechoslovakia -- Having recently finished the second edition of his international best seller, *Physical Medicine*, this internationally renowned friend of chiropractic invited us to visit his office at a hospital near downtown Prague to see him at work.

While at Dr. Lewitt's office, a middle-aged female patient came in for her regular visit. She'd been struck by a car more than a year ago while walking through an intersection. The severity of the injury had required a cervical skull "halo" device to be embedded into her skull to stabilize the upper cervical spine. Under Dr. Lewitt's care she'd worn the halo device for a number of months.

During the examination Dr. Lewitt gave her several chiropractic adjustments. Dr. Lewitt spoke to us in detail about his physical examination and what he expected to accomplish with his adjustments. This was a lucky patient. More often than not, Dr. Lewitt is writing or teaching outside of his native Czechoslovakia. When we interviewed Dr. Lewitt he had just returned from the Soviet Union where he'd given an extensive series of lectures about his theories on physical medicine. Later this year he is due to lecture again at Los Angeles College of Chiropractic.

Dr. Lewitt is a frail looking man in his mid-60s with an unassuming manner. He still maintains an active practice in his native Prague when he is not traveling. Even though we gave Dr. Lewitt short notice of our visit, he made us feel at home by allowing us to observe him in practice, and by explaining his ideas for

future publications, which he revealed to us during a meal at a nearby Bohemian restaurant.

Early in his medical studies Dr. Lewitt developed a curiosity for the positive results of chiropractic. He made it his personal goal to study the techniques of an American trained DC (referred to here as Dr. S.) living in Prague. She'd been a student of D.D. Palmer and had returned to her native Czechoslovakia to practice the new healing art of chiropractic.

Dr. S. was not a willing teacher for Dr. Lewitt; she vowed not to reveal the "secrets" of success of chiropractic to a non-chiropractor, even a medical doctor. Dr. Lewitt, who had graduated from a medical university in Prague and studied to specialize in neurology, was relentless in his efforts to learn her techniques. When the communists seized control of Czechoslovakia in 1946, the practice of chiropractic was banned. Dr. S. was permitted to continue her practice, but only if she would "team-up" with a licensed medical doctor. That became Dr. Lewitt's opportunity to study the dynamics of chiropractic science.

Over the years, Dr. Lewitt studied osteopathy as well as chiropractic. Finally, Dr. Lewitt, who has published over 250 professional articles in numerous languages, wrote *Physical Medicine*, today a standard text in chiropractic colleges throughout the world. After publication of the first edition of *Physical Medicine*, Dr. Lewitt was invited to speak at numerous chiropractic conferences. Dr. Lewitt speaks comfortably in English, German, French, Russian, and Czechoslovakian.

Although initially skeptical of the depth of chiropractic education, Dr. Lewitt is impressed by the recent growth of the quality of the new chiropractic educational levels. Dr. Lewitt is particularly impressed with the level of chiropractic research at the European Chiropractic Union, which he witnessed in the June 1989 meeting in Norway.

Dr. Lewitt may very well represent part of the liberating spirit of Eastern Europe. Almost every discipline in Eastern Europe is vitally interested in breaking the shackles of the communist theocracy. New leaders desire to absorb all that is new and fresh in Western thought. Nothing is more Western than the science of chiropractic. Not having to rely on surgery or drugs for the relief of musculoskeletal disorders would be a welcomed breakthrough in health care systems throughout the recently liberated Eastern European countries.

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