

## **Pilsen in the period of major changes (1788–1918)**

During the operation of the regulated City Hall (after the year 1788) political and social changes were taking place slowly and hesitantly but they set the base for future rapid growth of the city. The Josephine reforms had already brought fundamental changes decreeing cancellation of some monasteries and cemeteries within cities.

In the early 19th century the removal of the walls began which gained greater momentum during another city major Mr. Martin Kopecky, when the garden ring was created with significant buildings. The bound of the burghers to agriculture gradually subsided which has transformed the structure and function of the houses which have been newly adapted for more living quarters, and later also for ground-level shops.

In the period of 1848–1849 Pilsen society was going through a revolutionary political school. The National Guard was created, there were celebrations held as well as political discussions and a Requiem for the fallen on Vienna's barricades. The first municipal elections and elections to the Reichstag were held in that time.

The early 50s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a strengthening of the political relations on one hand and on the other a boom in business which was hit the hardest by the economic crisis in the year 1873. Pragmatism of the time led to the destruction of monuments and urban written documents. In the year 1866 Pilsen experienced a military cast by the Prussian army, contributions, but also anti-semitic storms. The exile became a phenomenon of the time.

There was a gradual development of the network of schools and the construction of new school buildings taking place. However, the ratio of Czech and German schools still had remained in favor of the German ones.

Since the 70s of 19<sup>th</sup> century the city developed sharply during which it became a real industrial and administrative centre with the dominant heavy industry, beer making and rail transportation. Regulatory plans were drawn up for the suburbs and eventually for the entire city. The garden ring was completed, for whose boundary was expanded to the central area of the city. Pilsen was at that time an important centre of the middle and vocational education, which began to be dominated by the Czech phenomenon.

A period of peaceful development of the city was interrupted by the first world war. 12 000 Pilsen men took part in the war of whom at least 846 fell. A number of the soldiers got involved in the newly born CS legions. Inadequate food supply appeared in the city leading to food price rise and the usury, ultimately to the street turmoil and looting shops.

The explosion of Bolevec ammunition plant had tragic consequences, 200 people were killed there that day.

From the winter of 1917 Pilsen was getting news of foreign activities of CS politicians and the Legionnaires, aspiring to the Czechoslovak independence. The main anti-war wave lifted in the autumn of 1918.

## **Economic life**

The new industrial revolution and the advent of industrialisation made Pilsen a center of industry and a transportation hub for the area. In particular, the suburbs grew rapidly and the number of inhabitants grew mainly due to the migration of workers (in 1917, beyond 100, 000). The availability of mineral resources facilitated the emergence of stone enterprises (Jan Cingroš), tiles manufacturers (Karl König), brickworks or ironworks (eg. Horomyšlické, Waldstein, factory of Belani brothers). The second half of the century marked the development of the engineering industry and the emergence of plants for the production of metal furniture, baby strollers, carriages, pumps, wires, etc.

Waldstein machine works was founded in 1856 in Sedlec and in the end of the 50 's it was decided to relocate the company to Pilsen. The year 1866 meant a turning point for the company when the orders became more and more scarce, the Belani brothers separated themselves and Emil Škoda was appointed a Chief Engineer. Less than three years later he bought the industrial plant and started with the reconstruction, modernisation and expansion of its operations. In 1907 the cramped spaces between today's Theatre, Budilova and Kovářská Street were abandoned and the operation moved to these suburbs. The main product was high-quality iron and cast steel, and arms production company was newly opened. The factory has become a major defence company of the monarchy.

Brewing in Pilsen experienced a great boom in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beer production was concentrated in a few newly established breweries and its quality was substantially improved by going to the bottom of the fermentation. In the year 1842 the Town Brewery was established (starting in 1898 with the trade mark of Pilsner Urquell), in the year 1869 the first Pilsen joint-stock brewery was founded (later called Gambrinus). In 1896 Pilsner communal Brewery was put into operation (Prior), Světovar – the joint stock company was the last Czech brewery in Pilsen to begin to brew Pilsner beer in 1913.

## **Urbanism and architecture**

In terms of architecture it was the 19<sup>th</sup> century which was the time of major changes for Pilsen. With the arrival of the rural population the current predominance of family townhouses recedes to the rented flats. In connection to the major activities of Mr. Martin Kopecký area of Lochotín Spa was built and a ring of circular City Park was created. Construction of a series of public buildings takes place (city hospital, 1832; baths 1846; Burghers ' brewery 1842) and the construction of the railway was a turning point for the rapid development of the town. In 1859 construction of the synagogue (later designated the old) is started, the Evangelical Church in the 60s, in 1888 the corner stone is laid as the basis for the so-called Great synagogue. New Catholic churches are being built in the early 20th century (Dominican monastery with the Church of the Virgin Mary of the Rosary, Church of St. Martin and Prokop, St. John's Church, John's Of Nepomuk). New school buildings, urban (1832), German (1869) and the new town theatre (1902), international residential houses on one hand, and workers ' colonies on the other. To improve the technical facilities of the city new waterworks are built at Na Homolce hospital and transport facilitates witnessed the introduction of three tram lines (1899). The growth of the industrial city, however, has resulted in the demolition of a number of important historical sites (the old Dominican monastery, Říhovský House, Bezděkovský House, Guldenerovský House, armory, gun powder etc.).

## **Fine art and photography**

Sculpture focuses mainly on the funeral theme, statues and monuments, solitary portraits of famous personalities (J F Smetana, M Kopecký, J K Tyl) and orders for notable urban structures (theatres, churches) but also on series of decorations on facades. Most of the more prominent contracts, however, were entered by the Prague sculptors.

Painting is dedicated to painting portrait, sacral, genre and decorative motives. The most important authors of this period in Pilsen include Jan Herzog, František Sequens and Augustin Němejc, The contract on the facades of the 20 town houses in Pilsen is realized by Mikoláš Aleš.

Not only portraits but also catching the vanishing face of the city is engaged in the photography, whose origins in Pilsen date back to the 30s of the 19th century. The first images of the city were apparently taken by Andreas Groll, followed by Otto Bielfeld, Josef Böttinger and Čeňek Hrbek. The slides are also a testament to the social life of the city, the beginning of the 20th century brings the creation of advertising photography.

The production of handicrafts covered practical needs of Pilsen citizens and did not exceed the standard of artistic ambitions too.

## **Cultural life in the city**

Especially the second half of the 19th century was a period of great boom of a variety of associations, societies and forums that basically built on previous guild corporations and religious brotherhoods. There are Masonic, shooting, military, literary, religious, political, ethnic, and educational guilds formed. In the year 1862 Burghers clubhouse was established from which a craft clubhouse was separated in the year 1864 and Pilsen Sokol was established in October 1863.

However, 19<sup>th</sup> century was also the period of artistic boom in Pilsen in the field of literature, music and theatre.

From authors who excelled above all we name professors of the German gymnasium the Premonstrates František Xaver Němeček, Josef Stanislav Zauper, Josef Vojtěch Sedláček or Josef František Smetana. Historians and archivists Josef Strnad and Fridolín Macháček, literary historian Emil Felix and playwright librettist Felix Bernard Guldener from Lobzy worked here and for several years Eliška Krásnohorská lived here. Among the most prominent personalities belongs Karel Klostermann, dealing primarily with the Šumava. The beginning of the 20th century include in particular the socially engaged authors such as Tadeusz Vrba, Emanuel Valenta, Luděk Pik or Felix Adam Vondruška. German written literature is represented by Oskar Baum.

The musical life of the city is connected with the spiritual music performed at Kůry, music production presented by music bands of the straight shooters and thirtyfivers, music gets also into the town salons which were frequently visited by Bedřich Smetana during his three-year student's stay in Pilsen (1840–1843).

With the development of the club city life a formation of choirs and symphonic ensembles occurs. In the year 1864 choir Hlahol was established by Hynek Palla from which the chorus Smetana split in

1901. Various workers' singer choirs arise. In the year 1882 Pilsen Philharmonic Association was established, semi-amateur Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1907 by Norbert Kubát.

The theatre of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by the transition from nomadic theatre companies to stone theaters and also by the struggle to promote the Czech language on stage. It first appears on stage in the year 1818 in a stone theatre by Lorenzo Sacchetti opened on 12<sup>nd</sup> November, 1832, however, even after years it is still controlled by the German companies and Czech can seldom be heard.

The funeral of Josef Kajetán Tyl becomes a national manifestation who arrives with the Zöllner theatre company to Pilsen in June 1856, and dies shortly after his arrival.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was taken to heed to the Czech and German performances were in the same proportion. A change occurs in the rental of the building company of Pavel Švanda of Semčice in 1865 when for the first time a Czech theatre takes the greater part of the season, in 1868 the theatre becomes completely Czech. German minority, therefore, builds custom German Theatre (1868–1869).

The size and technical background of the Sacchetti theatre over the years became insufficient and so it was decided to build a new theatre building according to the plans by Antonín Balšánek which was inaugurated by Bedřich Smetana's Opera by Libuse on 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1902. Vendelín Budil became a director for the years 1902–1912 who with short breaks had been working with his company in Pilsen since 1887. Budil's domain was the drama, but the theatre presented Opera, operetta and even several ballets. Some of the titles were presented for the first time in Czech here.

The year 1912 brought a change in the management of the theatre when Karel Veverka becomes the new director. Through various prohibitions and restrictions in the activities of the theatre it continued with a substantial public appreciation till the end of war.

Pilsen is inextricably bound up with the puppetry tradition. The first amateur puppet ensemble was founded already in the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The popularity of puppet performances grew in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the newly formed ensembles presented plays for kids and adults. The puppet theatre of holiday villages whose activity is connected with the personality of Josef Skupa was particularly significant.