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The City of Prague and its logistic support. Transformation of the city and its technical networks in the years 1913-1952

### Abstract

The Prague's evolution into capital of the new republic is divided into three stages, split by two wars. The progress of the city began deep in the era of the Austria-Hungary imperium – in the middle of the 19th century, when the new town council was elected from Czech townsman upper classes. It led into the process started with series of construction and administration projects. The city was upgraded with new bridges, railway stations. On the place of the fortified walls, which were cancelled in the year 1866, shortly after Prussian-Austrian war, was quickly built piles of houses that bound inner Prague with its suburbs. The administration were trying to connect the Prague's suburbs with the inner city but only few of them this process accepted. The foursome of the inner satellites (Žižkov, Karlín, Královské Vinohrady and Smíchov) these projects declined and until the World War I remained on their own.

Building of the logistic sites city underwent from the middle of the 19th century. First two logistic sites, the water supply system and the sewer system, were ancient systems supplying the city from the Middle Age. As the city was growing, the systems weren't able to maintain their main purposes, so the town council took action to rebuild them to prevent huge hygienic damages. The water supply system had been finally rebuilt in the years 1899 – 1914 and the sewer system in the years 1892 – 1906. Since the moment that population of the Prague started using clean water from Káraný, where the new water plant had been built, and its sludge water was cleaned in the new clean station in the Bubeneč next to Císařský ostrov. The amount of the illnesses that had been devastating the health of the Prague's dramatically decreased.

The gas works started its existence in Prague in the year 1844 and the electric in the year 1878. First gas plant was built in that year in the district of Karlín by a private company from Vratislav and shortly after it had been finished in the year 1846, started the gas plant to supply the Prague's street lights. Since the cooperation with the company had been really inexpedient for the city, the Prague built its own gas plant in the district of Žižkov, opening it in the year 1865. The demand for the gas was so growing that the city had to build another two gas plants – in the district Smíchov and in Holešovice.

The origins of the electricity are bound with the gas works, because in the gas plant in Žižkov was built first experimental electric plant as well. This act unleashed huge founding of the private electric plants across the city. To prevent the Prague from the same situation as in the case of the private gas plants, the city had taken action and after several offers and discussions built up its own communal electric plant in the district Holešovice. With evolving of the electricity grew up a conflict between gas and electricity industry which has been fought even until the 50' of the 20th century.

In the interwar period, the city was finally united by the will of the state and grew up into the capital of the new republic with much more population and area than someone ever had thought about. To take care of all the new citizens, within the 20' and 30' there was a lot of the discussions about the next fate of the overflowed water supply and sewer systems. Lots of ambitious projects were planned but almost none of them was finished.

In the water supply system there existed plans to build doubled water lines or build a dam on the Vltava but at the end were constructed „only“ the two new water plants directly in the city – the water plant in the Podolí and the water plant in the Braník.

The situation in the sewer system was even harder than in the water supply system. Amongst

the experts existed two main ideas – either to build a new clearing station in the Císařský ostrov or in the village Řež. Several general projects had been passed through, the main one in the years 1933 – 1936, but at the end of the era, none of them was built.

The gas industry and electricity undertook almost the same planes, both of them to built up as central supply plants. The gas plant was built in the district of Michle and the electric one near to state lines in village Ervénice. In the interwar period the rivalry has been continuing between these two support systems which led into partition of the main interests of the supply industries. The electricity has been supplying the streets lights and even private houses and the gas works on the other side were distributing the gas for cooking and heating. Even the strong promotion from both sides didn't change the placing of the interests of the citizens. In the World War II the city was paralyzed by the Nazi reign and strict rules that were defined. The Czech citizens were shorted in their rights and the city itself was slowly prepared to be Germanized in future. Besides the loss of the lives of the citizens, the city was also damaged by the allied air strikes at the end of the war. After the war, long period took to rebuild war damages and to replace the administration system. After the February of the 1948 the situation was prepared for the next transition leading into massive changes of the city's image in the next years.

Both water supply and sewer system were mented to be changed by finishing new projects. They had got placed the new water plant near to river Jizera and the new clearing plant on the Císařský ostrov but both of them were rejected to be finished. Gas and electric plants were suffering from the dearth of the coal which led into strict distributing of the energy and gas, but suprisingly nothing more serious happend. After the war all of the supply lines were slowly repaired and the gas and electric plants were nationalised by the decrets of the president of the republic.

In the year 1952 the lines were repaired and got back in the service. But the next development was already taken by the different era of the communism.

As the result, Prague to the great war was leading the changes of its' logistic lines but in the interwar period the lines were developing on their own and the city was somewere just adapting. The main goal, to evolve the standarts of the living in Prague and increase the status of the city, was fullfiled.