

Possibilities and limits of development of technical museums in Ostrava region in the nineteenth–twenty-first centuries¹

Pavel Šopák

prof. PhDr. Pavel Šopák, Ph.D.
Brno University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Poříčí 273/5
639 00 Brno
Czech Republic
e-mail: sopak@vutbr.cz
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8763-2817>

Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo, 2024,12:3:5-16
doi: 10.46284/mkd.2024.12.3.1

Possibilities and limits of development of technical museums in Ostrava region in the nineteenth–twenty-first centuries

The paper analyses the ways in which the idea of the technical museum developed in the industrial region of Ostrava in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The issue is determined by political, economic and cultural changes in the following time periods: from the end of Austro-Hungarian monarchy (until 1918); the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938); WWII (1938–1945); post-war development, the so called Third Republic (1945–1948); the communist era (1948–1989); and from 1989 to the present. The development was always determined by whether the idea of the regional technical museum was interesting to powerful and intellectual elites, and what the response was from broader society – hence the significance of newspaper articles and other period reflections of the situation.

Keywords: technical museum, heavy industry, Ostrava region, cultural identity

The term *Ostrava region* covers the region of historically Czech lands on the borders of Moravia and Silesia defined by the upper river Oder and its tributaries the Ostravice and Olše (Olza), which overlaps with *Ostravsko-karvinský revír* (Ostrava-Karviná coal district), an economic unit which is part of the Upper-Silesian coalfield within the borders of the Czech Republic. The discovery of coal in the region in the middle of the eighteenth century and its economic exploitation influenced the course of the industrial revolution, whose consequences were dramatic changes to the mostly agricultural character of local economic production and the formation of an industrial district centred around heavy industry (mining, metallurgy), machinery, chemical industry, energy industry and industry of construction materials. The development of a vast spectrum of industrial activities demanded the region to be connected to the railway system, namely to the Vienna–Halič (Galicia, or Ruthenia in Ukraine) rail route, designed from 1829 by Franz Xaver Reipl (1790–1857), with important communication nodes

¹ The study was carried out within the PUTM project: The contribution of applied arts and technical museums to the economic development and educational culture of Moravia and Czech Silesia: foundations – situation – perspectives, which was funded by the Ministry of Culture, Czech Republic, via the NAKI III programme for the Support of Applied Research and Experimental Development of National and Cultural Identity, project no. DH23P03OVV041, performed in collaboration with Masaryk University, the Technical Museum in Brno and Brno University of Technology.

in Svinov on the Silesian side of the land border and Přívoz on the Moravian side (Ostrava-Přívoz today). The south–north railway complemented the imperial road (Reichsstraße) running Opava–Svinov–Moravská Ostrava–Slezská Ostrava–Těšín, which was built from east to west during 1775–1804. The industrialisation of the region stimulated an abrupt growth of populations in the existing settlements of rural type, which during the second half of the nineteenth century to WWI turned into densely populated industrial towns (Mariánské Hory, Přívoz, Vítkovice, Hrušov, Karviná, Třinec).

It might be presumed that the idea of a technical museum would surely be successful in such a region, because technology has been the source of wealth for the local people. But, for the following reason, this has not been the case: historians, sociologists and geographers often claim that the Ostrava region was a place to which people came to find work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but this is not true. People did not come to Ostrava to work; they came, and even now come, to earn money. The biggest earnings were, and still are, provided by ironworks, mines, chemical factories and power plants, that is, the biggest economic players in the field of heavy industry, machinery and transportation. The consequence of the work opportunities was an extraordinary growth in the number of inhabitants in Ostrava: in 1869 Ostrava (as a cluster of municipalities) had 39,000 inhabitants and by 1940 the number had grown by 200,000, while in the 1890s alone the population grew by 71%.² The situation can be simply described as follows: an enormous number of workers, but also businessman and shopkeepers/traders came to earn their living, and until 1945, i.e., up to the nationalisation of the largest factories and banks, that same influx was seen among the owners of the largest factories, ironworks and mines, the representatives of Austrian business circles. They invested in the museums in Vienna and more generally in the Austrian lands, but not in the Ostrava region. An example is the Museum Carnuntinum in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, focussed on the archaeological finds from the period of the Roman Empire and opened in 1904. The vestibule of the museum building even today features a commemorative plaque with the names of personalities who funded the construction of the museum, including those profiting from the industry in Ostrava (Max von Guttmann, Heinrich Müller von Aichholz, Count Hans Wilczek). The case of Count Hans Wilczek is especially important as the counts of Wilczek belonged to the traditional land-owning aristocracy of the the Ostrava region, namely Austrian Silesia, where they owned extensive lands, homesteads and, especially, the mines. Wilczeks lived in Vienna and Count Hans Wilczek built a private museum of art and applied arts in Kreuzenstein Castle near Vienna, but not in any of his castles in the Ostrava region (Poruba, Dobroslavice). Simultaneously he financially supported Viennese museums and galleries. Regarding the Ostrava region, we cannot say that the owners of the largest factories were uncaring, but the finances were more often invested in the construction of hospitals, schools and social institutes than in culture. Such investments were not acts of pure altruism, but attempts to decrease the permanent social tension. Museums and cultural institutions in general (whether artistic or scientific culture) were not supported as there was a lack of consumers of cultural goods. Workers were not interested in science nor arts; they were largely happy with various free-time activities, mostly sports, although even the labourers organised amateur theatres and choir singing.

² ŠOTKOVSKÝ, Ivan. Změny populační velikosti a proces stárnutí města Ostravy [Changes of the population size and ageing process in Ostrava]. In: *Geografie pro život ve 21. století: Sborník příspěvků z XXII. sjezdu České geografické společnosti pořádaného Ostravskou univerzitou v Ostravě 31. srpna - 3. září 2010*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, 2010, pp. 667–668.

Between the industrialists and the large group of labourers, there was a small local intelligentsia – engineers, lawyers, doctors and secondary school teachers – who had come into contact with a cultural life, and its various forms, during their studies in Vienna, Prague or Brno and who probably wanted to create a similar public space in which to share cultural goods directly in their localities. Science, namely the technical and natural sciences, were the source of living, but also the subject of deep personal interest; reading scientific books and journals, following current trends and making efforts to gain personal experience via travelling abroad to learn about technical innovations were natural for them. These personal intellectual interests were connected to the idea of public education which they wanted to develop in the Ostrava region in schools (grammar schools and technical schools) and club activities.

For this reason, the Ostrava region watched closely the foundation of the Technical Museum for Industry and Trades in Vienna (Technisches Museum für Industrie und Gewerbe). It was founded in 1908 on the 60th anniversary of the reign of Austrian-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph I and organised according to the famous Conservatoire des arts et métiers in Paris, created in 1794 to support French national industry. In March 1912 there was a general meeting of the Austrian association of architects and engineers, and the local group of Moravian Ostrava and Vítkovice, the Ostrava technicians, invited the senior councillor for construction, Ludwig Erhard (1863–1940), a specialist and from 1913 the director of the Vienna Technical Museum, to present the structure of the institution in preparation. “None of the Austrian regions is so important for industrial development as the Ostrava region”, it was written in the period press, “where the development of ironworks, chemical industry and many related industries, distinguishes such exemplary development”.³ From this we can infer that Ostrava industry was understood as an integral part of Austrian industry not only in terms of the economy, which is understandable, but also in terms of the perception of local protagonists, in terms of the self-reflection of cultural identity. A year earlier, in June 1911, an Ostrava newspaper had published an article on the Vienna Museum and pointed out that it was a living institution reacting to scientific development and the economic use of technical innovations.⁴ The museum was supposed to have two functions: to symbolically express the interest of the state in technical advancement and simultaneously to function as an educational institution informing its visitors about new trends in technology and industry.

Intellectual elites of Czech society in the Ostrava region did not have to share the Austrian patriotism bound to the development of technical museums, but they were definitely interested in the museum activities in Austrian and German lands. For example, in the Ostrava magazine *Horník* (Miner), published by the Union of Mining Supervisors, we can read in the issue from November 4, 1909 a report on the situation in German lands, where the institutions providing technical education (schools, science institutions, museums) covered both science based on primary research and the practice that followed the application of findings in industry.⁵ This text was written six years after the foundation of the Technical Museum in Munich, which belatedly reacted to the model in Paris, but founders energetically developed the idea, and thus on November 13, 1906 the collections were made accessible to the public in provisional spaces and simultaneously there was a ceremony where the foundation stone of a new museum building was laid. The practical aspect of art and craft, trade, technology and technical museums

³ Vortrag im Ingenieur- und Architekten-Verein. Oberbaurat L. Erhard über das Wiener technische Museum. In: *Ostrauer Zeitung*, March 5, 1912, p. 4.

⁴ Technisches Museum für Industrie und Gewerbe. In: *Ostrauer Zeitung*, Juni 27, 1911, p. 5.

⁵ Deutsches Museum v Mnichově. In: *Horník* November 4, 1909, pp. 182–183.

was continuously emphasised by Czech journalism before WWI, and in Moravia it was added that the region suffered from the lack similar institutions: “The situation in Moravia is not better [than in Bohemia]; moreover we can say it is considerably worse. Moravia lacks even the museums that are available in the kingdom [of Bohemia]. Individual technical schools have failed or reduced their interests to the closest vicinity.”⁶ This was also true for the Technical Museum of the Czech Kingdom that was founded on July 5, 1908, and whose activities were watched closely in Silesia and in the Ostrava region, as was declared in the programme of the excursion of the members of the Central Economic Society in Opava, realised in May 1913. The excursion included a visit to the jubilee exhibition of the chamber of commerce in the Prague Castle premises, as well as to the Technical Museum of the Czech Kingdom, both of which exhibited their collections in the Schwarzenberg Palace in Hradčany at that time.⁷

The Technical Museum of the Czech Kingdom was initiated by professors at the Czech Technical University in Prague and representatives of Czech industry, and the relation of the educational institution to the creation of collections or to individual museums can be traced throughout the entire existing tradition of technical museums in Czech lands. The beginnings of technical museums in Czech lands should include the study collection of the Estate Academy in Olomouc (founded 1724, restored 1791), which included the “economic museum”, a collection of education aids suitable for the teaching of construction, land surveying and other practical disciplines. An educational aspect was also present in the collection of the Society for the Support of Industry in Bohemia (Verein zur ermunterung des gewerbsgeistes in Böhmen) based in Prague, founded in 1833; the collection consisted of samples, models, machines and instruments, inventions and various technical aids. As a private project, Vojta Náprstek, inspired by the South Kensington Museum in London (founded 1852), established the Czech Industrial Museum in Prague and followed educational objectives.⁸ The establishment of similar institutions in the Ostrava region at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries was unimaginable; nevertheless, the professor at the Czech Grammar School in Moravian Ostrava, Antonín Mejstřík (1877–1932), tried to implement the idea of an industrial museum. He formulated the idea in his lecture “On the Industrial Museum”,⁹ held circa half a year after the establishment of an association that was created to realise this idea directly in Ostrava. The museum was opened on June 2, 1907 in a new building of the Czech real school, and in terms of the collection structure, it was at its nucleus a trade and technological museum focussed on various products and materials, including raw materials, and their processing. An important part was the library, opened to the public. However, the existence of this promising and developing institution was short, as WWI and the reorganisation of museum institutions in Ostrava that occurred after the war ended the operation of this independent Czech Industrial Museum.

The Czech Industrial Museum in Moravian Ostrava suffered from a serious deficiency: it was not directly connected to industry, to specific companies, factories, firms or workshops that would provide financial support or donate objects that had lost their purpose or sample products decently representing the companies. It was rather a study collection, a school cabinet

⁶ MELICHAR, A. Lidová akademie pro umělecký průmysl. [Folk academy for art industry.] In: *Moravskoslezská revue*. Ostrava, 1908–1909, pp. 40–41.

⁷ Program společné výpravy do Prahy. [The programme of the group excursion to Prague.] In: *Noviny těšínské*, Mai 5, 1913, p. 5.

⁸ GRUBER, Josef. *Technické museum pro Království české*. [Technical Museum for the Czech Kingdom.] Praha: Přípravný komitét, 1908, pp. 4–5.

⁹ Přednáška/Lecture. In: *Ostravský kraj*, February 16, 1907, p. 3.

of aids, focussing on models. Modern technical museums, which the inhabitants of Ostrava could see in Munich, Vienna or Prague before WWI and in the interwar period, had a different motivation, as summarised by Josef Gruber (1865–1925), a Czech lawyer, pedagogue and organiser of Czech economic life, on the occasion of the constitution of Prague museum:

It is an interesting as well as ethical phenomenon, that in the new era even technology specialists strive for a history and systematisation of technical sciences, for a cultivation of the history of industry, work and production. Older periods knew the collections of production aids, tools, instruments and machines, raw materials and auxiliary materials only as a means to elevate the industrial work, and only natural development made these collections historical ones. Even the most modern collection of technical aids will become a historic collection in the course of time.

And then, much as it may lose its interest for teaching, it may nonetheless be exceptionally interesting in other museological regards. Thus, numerous collections from technical schools and scientific institutions (namely those aforementioned, the Society for the Support of Industry in Bohemia, in Prague, and the Estate Academy in Olomouc) gradually lost their original attractiveness as objects were damaged or destroyed by frequent use. “The new era” Gruber continued, “having learned about the great educational as well as ethical meaning of the history of technology, fosters directly and continuously the collection of heritage and the foundation of historical-technical museums”.¹⁰ Gruber paraphrased the words of Wilhelm Exner (1840–1931), the initiator of the technical museum in Vienna, who emphasised that instruments and machines that have lost their practical function (as well as school aids that had lost their function) because they have been surpassed by new, modern, advanced technologies, provoke interest in technical progress in the viewers, and their collections generate the interest of society in new technologies and inventions.

The term *technology* has a broad meaning; it includes heavy industry (mining, metallurgy) and a wide area of machinery, and since the end of the nineteenth century has also covered electrical engineering and chemistry, and further, sound and visual media (photography, film), methods of measuring time, water-management, meteorology, geodesy and cartography and last but not least the road and train transportation that was developing massively at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Technical museums include objects and artefacts documenting the reproduction of script and conservation of texts (printing), construction technology and the food industry (sugar factories, distilleries, breweries). Technical museums may also document the construction of musical instruments, including some of particular technical and financial demands (organ making, bell foundry). Due to the organisation and financial demands, and large space requirements, only the central museum institutions are able to follow such a broad spectrum; thus, in the Ostrava region, without proper financial and space provisions, it was possible to document only a fragment, specifically the mining of black coal. Thus, a study collection on black coal was established by the District Mining Office in Moravian Ostrava with the title Museum für Unfallverhütung im Bergbau beim k. k. Revierbergamte in Mährisch Ostrau (Museum of mine rescue of the District Mining Office). Generally, the museum was known under the shorter, though imprecise title Mining Museum, imprecise because it did not document the methods of mining, the process of surveying and excavation works (mine surveying, underground construction), coal transportation and sorting, processing or technical use (coke production, gas production, i.e., the production of coal gas

¹⁰ GRUBER, *Technické museum...*, p. 6.

and its distribution). Also, the museum did not cover the social issues connected with mining (construction of miner colonies, health insurance), nor the special technical education. Without doubt, the reason was the fact that the museum was not a product of the chamber of commerce (the Ostrava region was part of the Opava and Olomouc chambers of commerce), nor of any technical university, none existing in the region; the museum was an initiative of the engineers of the mining office and the pedagogues of the mining school.¹¹ The collection of the District Mining Office was opened to professional public in 1905. By 1911 the museum had available four spaces in the building of the office, where one could see models of the mine works. The initiator of the collection was Ferdinand Zach (1866–?), who came to Ostrava in 1896 as a mining commissioner, in 1898 became senior mining commissioner and in 1908 left for Teplice v Čechách and became a director of the local mines. The collection was further enlarged and in 1911 a catalogue with 558 entries was printed. Two years later the collection was introduced at the international congress on work safety and rescue in Vienna.¹² Further development of the collection was interrupted by WWI.

The foundation of Czechoslovakia (October 28, 1918) opened a new, state perspective for technical museums, though numerous complications prevented the realisation of the idea to establish a museum in each region. Czechoslovakia consisted of four regions: Bohemia, Moravia-Czech Silesia, Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Rus. While the technical museum already existed in Bohemia, in Slovakia one was established only after WWII (in 1948 in Košice), the purely agrarian character of Sub-Carpathian Rus excluded such establishment there, but the industrially developed region of Moravia-Silesia was an ideal place for the establishment of a technical museum. Already in 1834, the Economic Society in Brno was striving for the establishment of a museum connected to the technical lyceum.¹³ An impulse for the development of technical museums in Brno was a constitution of technical universities, the German technical school being founded in 1849 and in 1873 becoming a university, while in 1899 a Czech technical university being established. A committee for the constitution of a museum was formed relatively late, in December 1924, and Prof. Ing. Karel Ryska (1868–1939),¹⁴ the chairman of the Brno office of the Association of Czechoslovak Engineers, and a member of the Czech Technical University, was an active member. It was this organisation that formed the basis for the preparation of Brno technical museum. Ryska, as a member of the scientific board of Masaryk Academy of Work, was well aware of the educational goals of this influential organisation, with a statewide scope and knowledge of trends in technical museums. Eventually, the members of Brno preparatory committee refrained from their goals in favour of the curatorium of the Technical Museum in Prague, which asked them to postpone their intention to establish a technical museum until a modern building for the Prague museum had been built.¹⁵ The Prague museum was finally completed during 1938–1941, and thus an

¹¹ Založena byla v roce 1871, výuka započala ve školním roce 1874/1875. DOHNAL, Miloň. Založení horní školy v Moravské Ostravě v roce 1871. [Foundation of the mining school in Moravian Ostrava in 1871.] In: *Ostrava. Sborník příspěvků k dějinám a výstavbě města* 6. Ostrava: Profil, 1973, pp. 241–252.

¹² *Bericht über den II. Internationalen Kongreß für Rettungswesen und Unfallverhütung*. Wien: Verlag der Kongressleitung, 1914, p. V.

¹³ *Die k. k. technische Hochschule in Brünn. Geschichtlich-statistische Skizze herausgegeben aus Anlass 25 jährigen Bestandes der Lehr-Anstalt*. Brünn: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1875, p. 8.

¹⁴ KONEČNÁ, Eva. Z historie Technického muzea v Brně. [From the history of the Technical Museum in Brno.] In: *Sborník Technického muzea v Brně – Acta technici Brunensis*. Brno: Technické muzeum, 1975, p. 7.

¹⁵ Bude na Moravě technické muzeum? [Will there be a technical museum in Moravia?] In: *Lidové noviny*, February 2, 1938, p. 8.

independent technical museum for Moravia and Silesia was not established in the interwar period.

The interwar period saw a constitution of a new type of memory institution – the archive for the history of industry. It was a specialised institution collecting documents produced by the activity of economic corporations, associations, trade chambers and other organisations tied with industry, commerce and the development of technology in a particular region. The Prague historians in Bohemia had striven for the establishment already at the beginning of the twentieth century, but their effort was completed only in 1931. In Moravia such an archive was constituted in Brno in 1936, and it gathered documents regarding Brno and its surroundings. Its operation was discontinued by WWII and was resumed in 1947 as a branch office of the Prague archive.¹⁶ In Ostrava the Archive for the History of Mining and Industry of the Ostrava Region was constituted only at the turn of 1930s to the 1940s; the date of foundation is established as December 1, 1940. It is not clear, though, who came up with the idea of a specialised archive for the Ostrava region, whether from Bohemia or – more likely – from Germany.

Thus, we get to the history of the district coal mining office museum that we abandoned during the years of WWI. After the war, it operated with the erroneous title Museum of Mining, and when the House of Art was completed (1926), the former was moved into its basement. There are very few reports on its operation; it was a low-profile institution representing the Ostrava industry on various occasions – for example, in 1926 the congress of educational workers of Moravia and Silesia visited the museum and an erudite commentary was provided.¹⁷ During the interwar period the idea of a technical museum was not implemented in the Ostrava region, even though the mining organisation was very active in the region and supported professional organisations (professional associations and supporting associations) and the construction of schools and health and social centres;¹⁸ but the idea of a museum was not developed. Moreover, state interest was lacking, because the state (sic!) mining museum had not been established in Ostrava, but in Slovakia in 1927, as the State Mining Museum of Dionýz Štúr in Banská Bystrica. The interest in technical museums in the Ostrava region increased at the turn of 1930s to 1940s, thus paradoxically during the German occupation. The product of this interest was a large exhibition on the history of industry in the Ostrava region organised in the House of Art in 1940, and the transfer of the newly organised Mining and Industry Museum (Bergbau- und Industrie Museum) together with the Archiv für Bergbau und Industriegeschichte im Ostrauer Kreis to the building of a closed school in Ostrava Vítkovice in 1942. Also paradoxically, after 1945 the interest in technical museums decreased and the collections of the Mining and Industry Museum merged with the city museum, the documents from the then Archive for the History of Mining and Industry of the Ostrava Region were moved to the city archive in 1950,

¹⁶ GRÜNFELD, Josef. Archiv pro dějiny průmyslu, obchodu a technické práce v Brně. [Archive for the history of industry, commerce and technical work in Brno.] In: *Vědecká ročenka Moravského uměleckopřemyslového muzea Obchodní a živnostenské komory*. Brno: Moravské uměleckopřemyslové muzeum, 1948, pp. 144–146; SLABOTÍNSKÝ, Radek. Archiv pro dějiny průmyslu, obchodu a technické práce v Brně v letech 1948–1953. Kapitola z počátků brněnského hospodářského archivnictví. [Archive for the history of industry, commerce and technical work in Brno during 1948–1953. Chapter on the beginning of Brno economic archives.] In: *Brno v minulosti a dnes. Příspěvky k dějinám a výstavbě Brna* 30. Brno: Archiv města Brna, 2017, pp. 383–436.

¹⁷ Sjezd osvětových pracovníků a obecních knihovníků župy moravskoslezské. [Congress of educational workers and public librarians of the Moravian region.] In: *Černá země*, November 11, 1926, p. 76.

¹⁸ Činnost těžářstev dokumentuje šestisvazkový soubor publikací Kamenouhelné doly Ostravsko-karvinského revíru, vydaný v letech 1929–1931. The activities of mining society are documented in the six volumes of *Kamenouhelné doly Ostravsko-karvinského revíru* [Hard coal mines in the Ostrava-Karvina region], published in 1929–1931.

and the publications from the museum library went to various libraries, including the State Study Library (today Research Library) in Ostrava.

Nevertheless, in the period after 1945, one condition for the successful development of technical museums in Ostrava was achieved – the Mining Academy was transferred from Příbram to Ostrava by decree of the president of the republic on September 8, 1945.¹⁹ Already at the beginning of the twentieth century Alois Irmeler (1846–1915) had pleaded for the establishment of an Austrian-wide mining academy in the centre of the territory where mining occurred, i.e. close to the mining and metallurgy works, while the intention was that such school would not be established in Vienna, but in Prague.²⁰ In the conditions of post-war Czechoslovakia, with the perspective of the restoration and significant development of industrial production in the Ostrava region, Ostrava seemed to be the centre. The act of the school transfer from Příbram to Ostrava was not sufficient, because the education was organised in provisional conditions and the modern school campus was constructed only during the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, the foundation of a technical museum in the region was not planned. Moreover, in the 1950s the Technical Museum in Brno was founded and took charge of the collections from North Moravia and Silesia. The official year of foundation of this museum institution is 1961, though this institution had older organisational predecessors.

After the communist coup d'état in February 1948, the situation of museums in the Ostrava region was paradoxical: on one hand the importance of the museum institution for the education of citizens of a socialistic state was emphasised, but on the other hand, museums were underfinanced and lacking in personnel, material and, foremost, buildings that would be suitable for museum work, as well as lacking a clear concept and methodical management. In the second half the twentieth century, the prevailing type of museums in the Ostrava region were museums of national history that followed the development of the region via traditional disciplines (archaeology, ethnography, history of art and the natural sciences, namely botany and zoology); technical museums were not developed, although there were certain attempts to balance the deficit. In May 1952, a framework concept for a completely new institution – a regional mining-metallurgy museum in Ostrava, was developed. Nevertheless, this material had no influence on the implementation of the idea of technical museums in the region and was never realised.²¹ In 1953, a new concept of a museum network of the Ostrava region was developed, including a requirement to establish a special mining and industrial department in the city museum in Ostrava. In 1954, there was a new proposal to establish a completely new industrial museum for the Ostrava region and to place this institution in a Renaissance castle in Stará Ves nad Ondřejnicí, located approximately 20 kilometres south-east from the centre of Ostrava.²² We need to emphasise that this proposal was not connected to the above mentioned proposal of 1952; both concepts point to the arbiters of technical museums in the Ostrava region: in the first case it was the Association of Czech Museums in Prague, and in the second

¹⁹ BÍOLKOVÁ, Jindra – KAŠING, Petr. Vývoj vysoké školy báňské v podmínkách ostravského regionu v letech 1945–1969 [Development of the Mining University in the Ostrava Region in 1945–1969]. In: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, Tomus LII, Fasc. 1. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2012, pp. 39–60.

²⁰ IRMLER, Alois. Scentralizování hornického vyučování. [The centralisation of mining education.] In: *Hornické a hutnické listy*. August 10, 1902, pp. 121–123.

²¹ KALUS, Jaromír. Podnikové muzejnictví v Severomoravském kraji. [Company museums in the North Moravian region.] In: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce*. Praha: Národní muzeum, 1986, pp. 213–214.

²² PLAČEK, Vilém. K otázce sítě, pracovních náplní a činnosti muzeí v Ostravském a Severomoravském kraji v letech 1949–1963. [On the question of network, work content and activities of museums in Ostrava and the North Moravian Region in 1949–1963.] In: *Časopis Slezského muzea*, série B. Opava: Slezské muzeum, 1980, p. 26–27.

case it was the Regional Museum Council of the Regional National Committee in Ostrava. Although this idea was not directly mentioned, it is obvious from the context that museums of a technical type, whether in the form of one regional institution and mapping more industrial branches, or as a multitude of documentary centres or expositions at the level of individual industrial works, could not start without the participation of managers and technicians working directly in the works. It was the *company museums*, whose emergence culminated in 1970s and 1980s, which became the updated form of technical museums. The trend of founding company museums complied with the state politics to expand existing museum institutions and to stimulate the foundation of new museums that would aim to comprehensively document the present. In the Ostrava region this applied to the company museums of Vagonka in Studénka (1956), the ironworks in Třinec (1969), the ironworks-wireworks in Bohumín (1976) and the rolling mill in Frýdek-Místek (1983). The centre of the industrial area – Ostrava – was preparing for the constitution of a mining museum. Around 1960, there was an idea to use the mine Eduard Urx and its grounds in Ostrava-Petřkovice for museum purposes, which developed during the 1970s and 1980s into theoretical considerations, historical studies and architectural proposals. In the middle of the 1980s, it was supposed that the museum would be opened to the public in 1995.²³ By this date we cross the border represented by November 1989, when Czechoslovakia and other states of the so-called Soviet Bloc saw the fall of communist regimes.

After 1989, the Ostrava region found itself in a completely new, unprecedented situation which, much more than in other regions of Czechoslovakia, was affected by the political events of the turn of the 1980s to 1990s and influenced the life of the local society. It is logical, because together with the implementation of political attributes of a democratic state (adoption of a new democratic constitution and in 1992 complemented with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, and thus opening plurality in the political system and the principle of free elections, de-politicisation of justice, police and army etc.), the post-communist governments enforced economic transformation, including price liberalisation, privatisation and restitution, such that the production means had a particular, private owner. The prevailing trend was the successful development of private entrepreneurship, including a banking sector and insurance companies, and the deregulation of foreign trade and capital flow. These economic processes fatally influenced the future development of the Ostrava region, because when privatising local large state companies, coupon privatisation was opted for with the aim to rapidly transfer the state properties into the hands of private persons, more precisely to joint-stock companies with specific owners. If the large companies in the Ostrava region had determined the lives of practically the whole population, including the operation of memory institutions (company museums and company archives) for decades, in this new political-economic situation characterised by the disassembly of the centrally planned economy, everything that was not directly connected with personal profit was put aside. The museums were not prepared for such societal processes; the existing museums lacked money, but foremostly visions. The radical changes in the inner organisation of the state and in the competences of individual ministries (including a recurrent idea to do away with the Ministry of Culture) had a negative impact on the museums. Specifically, in 1990 the regional national committees were abolished, but ten years later they were – again so to say – reestablished with the regional councils who became the authorities of the originally district, but nowadays regional museums, galleries and

²³ KALUS, Podnikové muzejnictví..., pp. 216–217.

libraries. The role of the state in the museum sphere was limited to state-funded organisations (in the Ostrava region there is only the Silesian Land Museum).

At the beginning of 1990s, nobody could imagine the future development of museums; it was only believed that museums would retain their social importance. “Now a completely new reality opens in front of us”, wrote Zbyněk Z. Stránský in his reflection on the future situation in the (still) Czechoslovak museums; “our existence depends on whether the new democratic public needs and will need us. In other words: what can we, museum workers and our institutions, give to this new society.”²⁴ Stránský vaguely indicates future events, because in 1990, when he said the words, the consequences of the fundamental structural changes that were to happen during the 1990s were not clear. From the sociological point of view, these changes can be generally summarised as a transformation from an industrial society to a consumer society. As a consequence of these changes, the goals and possibilities of museums also changed after 150 years. They were formulated with the intentions of an industrial society characterised by the development of industrial production and the pressure to increase the competences of the workers having to cope with more and more complex working methods. Technical museums of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century were related to education, with efforts to counterbalance the knowledge deficits among the members of the society, a consequence of unequal opportunities in education. And simultaneously – only symbolically – the museums seemed to the visitors as a *temple of progress* as well as a *temple of work*, because work was highly positively evaluated as activity leading to the production of material goods and to the development of welfare. In a consumer society, museums have a different function: as a form of entertainment, a free-time activity for all age groups; a certain relation of the museum to contemporary science is retained, but it is not so strong as it used to be 50 or 100 years ago. Nevertheless, states are not prepared to entirely relinquish the symbolic function of museums, though this tends to be fulfilled primarily by political and military museums and in museum expositions of modern history, while the symbolic function of technical museums is typically weaker.

After 1989, the development of technical museums in the Ostrava region got a new impulse during the restructuring of industry and the phase-out of mining (coalmining stopped within the city limits in 1994), and the vast industrial districts, mines, ironworks, electricity plants, factory halls, warehouses and administration building became redundant. It was obvious that the most valuable facilities might become museums as *mining skansens*. Similarly to Příbram in central Bohemia, where the Mining Museum opened in the 1990s presenting mining heritage in the locality of Březové Hory, or the Mining Skansen Mayrau in Vinařice near Kladno (opened to the public in 1994), Ostrava also opened three areas that musealise clusters of industrial objects, including the original technology: Michal Coalmine (Ostrava-Michálkovice), Landek Park – Anselm Mine (Ostrava-Petřkovice) and a multifunctional area in Ostrava-Vítkovice with the Hlubina Mine at its core and the blast furnaces. Their cultural use is comprehensive; they include programmes for all age groups, including children, and activities connected with the tradition of the place, but also events to which the industrial scenery forms only a spectacular backdrop (the music festival Colours of Ostrava in Dolní oblast Vítkovice, for example). Another essential function of mining areas is for gastro events. The breadth of cultural use of these three and

²⁴ STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. Víme, co chceme? Příspěvek na diskusním fóru dne 11. ledna 1990 v Národním muzeu v Praze. [Do we know what we want? A contribution to the discussion forum on January 11, 1990 in the National Museum in Prague.] In: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce*. Praha: Národní muzeum, 1990, p. 7.

similar industrial complexes has induced a need for university study programmes, particularly the creation of the study programme Geoscience and Mining Tourism realised at the Faculty of Mining and Geology, Technical University of Ostrava, which provides comprehensive knowledge of the natural environment, mining and technical industrial monuments and their presentation to the lay public. Mining tourism has raised great expectations to attract numerous visitors to the Ostrava region and its presence may help to develop the associated services (transportation, accommodation, gastro facilities, wellness). Today, mining tourism already forms 30 percent of tourism in the Moravian-Silesian region, and the number will rise in the following years. And thus, mining tourism will open new opportunities for the development of technical museums in the Ostrava region.²⁵

References

- Bericht über den II. Internationalen Kongreß für Rettungswesen und Unfallverhütung*. Wien: Verlag der Kongresbleitung, 1914.
- BIOLKOVÁ, Jindra – KAŠING, Petr (2012). Vývoj vysoké školy báňské v podmínkách ostravského regionu v letech 1945–1969 [Development of the Mining University in the Ostrava Region in 1945–1969]. In: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, Tomus LII, Fasc. 1. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2012, pp. 39–60. [In Czech]
- Bude na Moravě technické museum? [Will there be a technical museum in Moravia?] In: *Lidové noviny*, February 2, 1938, p. 8. [in Czech]
- Deutsches Museum v Mnichově. In: *Horník*, November 4, 1909, pp. 182–183. [in Czech]
- DOHNAL, Miloň (1973). Založení horní školy v Moravské Ostravě v roce 1871. [Foundation of mining school in Moravian Ostrava in 1871.] In: *Ostrava. Sborník příspěvků k dějinám a výstavbě města* 6. Ostrava: Profil, pp. 241–252. ISBN 59-194-73 [in Czech]
- GRUBER, Josef (1908). *Technické museum pro Království české*. [Technical Museum for the Czech Kingdom.] Praha: Přípravný komitét. ISBN nevedeno [in Czech]
- GRÜNFELD, Josef (1948). Archiv pro dějiny průmyslu, obchodu a technické práce v Brně. [Archive for the history of industry, commerce and technical work in Brno.] In: *Vědecká ročenka Moravského uměleckoprůmyslového muzea Obchodní a živnostenské komory*. Brno: Moravské uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum, pp. 144–146. ISBN nevedeno [in Czech]
- IRMLER, Alois (1902). Scentralizování hornického vyučování. [The centralisation of mining education.] In: *Hornické a hutnické listy*. August 10, pp. 121–123. [in Czech]
- JAŠKOVÁ, Klára (2023). Montánní cestovní ruch v Moravskoslezském kraji. Bakalářská diplomová práce. [Mining tourism in the Moravian-Silesian region. Bachelor's thesis.] Hradec Králové. Univerzita Hradec Králové, fakulta informatiky a managementu. [in Czech]
- KALUS, Jaromír (1986). Podnikové muzejnictví v Severomoravském kraji. [Company museums in the North Moravian region.] In: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce*. Praha: Národní muzeum, s. 213–220. [in Czech]

²⁵ JAŠKOVÁ, Klára. *Montánní cestovní ruch v Moravskoslezském kraji* Bakalářská diplomová práce. [Mining tourism in the Moravian-Silesian region. Bachelor's thesis.] Hradec Králové. Univerzita Hradec Králové, fakulta informatiky a managementu, 2023.

- KONEČNÁ, Eva (1975). Z historie Technického muzea v Brně. [From the history of the Technical Museum in Brno.] In: *Sborník Technického muzea v Brně – Acta technici Brunensis*. Brno: Technické muzeum, pp. 6–13. ISBN neuvedeno/not provided [in Czech]
- MELICHAR, A. (2010). Lidová akademie pro umělecký průmysl. [Folk academy for art industry.] In: *Moravskoslezská revue*. Ostrava, 1908–1909, pp. 40–41. [in Czech]
- PLAČEK, Vilém (1980). K otázce sítě, pracovních náplní a činnosti muzeí v Ostravském a Severomoravském kraji v letech 1949–1963. [On the question of network, work content and activities of museums in Ostrava and the North Moravian Region in 1949–1963.] In: *Časopis Slezského muzea, série B*. Opava: Slezské muzeum, pp. 14–28. [in Czech]
- Program společné výpravy do Prahy. [The programme of the group excursion to Prague.] In: *Noviny těšínské*, Mai 5, 1913, p. 5. [in Czech]
- Přednáška. [Lecture] In: *Ostravský kraj*, February 16, 1907, p. 3. [in Czech]
- Sjezd osvětových pracovníků a obecních knihovníků župy moravskoslezské. [Congress of educational workers and public librarians of the Moravian region.] In: *Černá země*, November 11, 1926, pp. 67–76. [in Czech]
- SLABOTÍNSKÝ, Radek (2017). Archiv pro dějiny průmyslu, obchodu a technické práce v Brně v letech 1948–1953. Kapitola z počátků brněnského hospodářského archivnictví. [Archive for the history of industry, commerce and technical work in Brno during 1948–1953. Chapter on the beginning of Brno economic archives.] In: *Brno v minulosti a dnes. Příspěvky ke dějinám a výstavbě Brna 30*. Brno: Archiv města Brna, pp. 383–436. ISBN 978-80-86736-56-3 [in Czech]
- STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. Víme, co chceme? Příspěvek na diskusním fóru dne 11. ledna 1990 v Národním muzeu v Praze. [Do we know what we want? A contribution to the discussion forum on January 11, 1990 in the National Museum in Prague.] In: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce*. Praha: Národní muzeum, 1990, s. 7–11. [in Czech]
- SULDOVSKÝ, Antonín a kolektiv (1973). 50 let Archivu města Ostravy. [50 years of Ostrava Archive.] In: *Ostrava. Sborník příspěvků k dějinám a výstavbě města 6*. Ostrava: Profil, pp. 9–68. ISBN 59-194-73 [in Czech]
- ŠOTKOVSKÝ, Ivan (2010). Změny populační velikosti proces stárnutí města Ostravy. [Changes of the population size and ageing process in Ostrava]. In: *Geografie pro život ve 21. století: Sborník příspěvků z XXII. sjezdu České geografické společnosti pořádaného Ostravskou univerzitou v Ostravě 31. srpna - 3. září 2010*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, pp.661–673. ISBN 978-80-7368-903-2 [in Czech]
- Technisches Museum für Industrie und Gewerbe. In: *Ostrauer Zeitung*, Juni 27, 1911, p. 5. ISSN neuvedeno [in German]
- Die k. k. technische Hochschule in Brünn. Geschichtlich-statistische Skizze herausgegeben aus Anlass 25 jährigen Bestandes der Lehr-Anstalt* [Technical University in Brno: Historical-statistical outline published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the institute]. Brünn: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1875. [in German]
- Vortrag im Ingenieur- und Architekten-Verein. Oberbaurat L. Erhard über das Wiener technische Museum. In: *Ostrauer Zeitung*, March 5, 1912, p. 4. ISSN neuvedeno [in German]