modernist furniture of the Brno based company of Jan Vaněk, an ordinary apartment, two rooms for single men (the so-called *svobodárna* in Czech) and a dining room, all again with decorations by designers and companies that had been represented across the other Czechoslovak displays, including the textiles by Teinitzerová and Paličková Milde.

One of the less prominent structures was the architect Bohuslav Fuchs's contribution to the Pastry and Charcuterie pavilion at the Galleries of the Esplanade des Invalides.[48] Food outlets would soon become an indispensable part of Czechoslovak presentations and an important place where national ideology was transmitted through food, drink, attire, music and gender. Again, I expand upon these connections in more detail in the chapters to come, starting with the Parisian food pavilion. Czechoslovak restaurants and cafés were a regular occurrence next to, or in, national pavilions. Generally, they would not serve complicated dishes but instead focus on quick snacks like Prague ham and popular drinks. Pilsner beer would therefore always feature in the role of a national drink and play the role of a key commodity and marker of nationality.

The hesitant exhibit: *Philadelphia 1926*

While food and drink provided one continuous attribute of Czechoslovak representations, the main emphasis lay elsewhere, namely on the trading and the representational benefits an exhibition could bring. The dividing line between the expected commercial gains and the ideological representation of the state was not usually clearly cut and this became prominent at the next entry in a world's fair that Czechoslovakia underwent only a year after Paris. The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia in 1926 is not one of the best-known or researched events of the world's fairs history. In terms of visitor numbers and profit, it was a failure. The poor attendance driven partly by very rainy weather for most of the time of the fair. Financially, it ended up with a huge loss and it left the organizer, the Sesqui-Centennial Exhibition Association, bankrupt and in need of bailing out by the city government.[49] In the trajectory of Czechoslovak interwar entries in world's fairs, however, it played a crucial role in moving the establishing narrative of national displays forward.

48 "Pavillon national," 42.
49 David Glassberg, "Philadelphia, 1926," *Encyclopaedia*, 246.

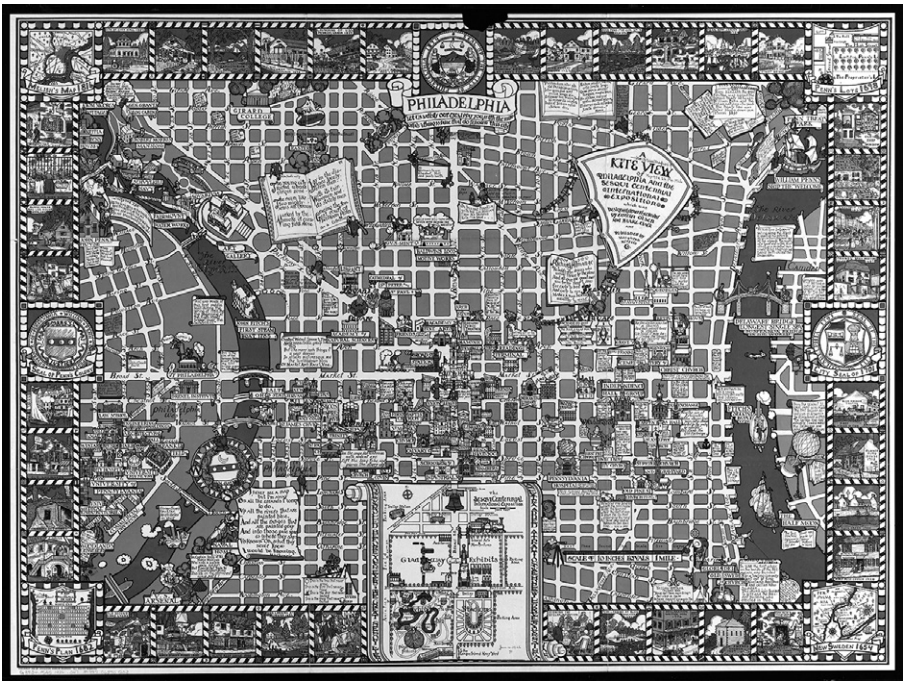

Fig. 7. Edwin Olsen, Blake Clark, and Houghton Mifflin Company, "A kite view of Philadelphia and the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition," map. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926.

The grounds were in south Philadelphia in and around League Island Park, which is today's FDR Park [fig. 7]. The Exhibition lasted from May 31 until November 30, 1926, and the three main pavilions of the Palace of Liberal Arts and Manufacturers, the Palace of Agriculture and Foreign Exhibits, and the Palace of US Government, Machinery and Transportation, were complemented by a variety of smaller halls mostly built in colonial architecture style, a large stadium and various entertainment zones. Forty-three foreign nations participated in the fair and seven, including Argentina, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Persia, Spain, and Tunisia, built their pavilions.[50] Apart from the national building, Czechoslovakia also built an exhibit in the Palace of Agriculture and Foreign Exhibits alongside Hungary that was represented here semi-officially. Austria, Germany, Poland or Yugoslavia had no official exhibits here and Czechoslovakia was therefore once again one of the few countries that invested its effort into such a venture.[51]

50 E. L. Austin and Odell Hauser, *The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 81.

51 There were, nevertheless, Polish, Austrian and Hungarian days and a German week. Austin and Hauser, *The Sesqui-Centennial*, 377.

The participation of Czechoslovakia at Philadelphia was aimed at strengthening the links between the USA and the new state. Celebrating its 150th anniversary from the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the USA and Philadelphia, especially, were particularly significant, as the Czechoslovak president summed up in his message sent to the city mayor W. Freeland Kendrick:

> Hearty greetings on the opening day of the Sesquicentennial exposition in which Czechoslovakia shall have its modest share in gratitude for the help the United States rendered to our nation during its struggle for independence in the world war. In 1918 in Philadelphia we have declared our independence on the same memorial place where George Washington declared Independence in 1776.[52]

The USA served as an inspiration and a useful model for the forming Central European republic in some of its aspects, for instance in the presidential system, republican state, and universal suffrage.[53]

In Philadelphia, the Czechoslovak organizers emphasized the affiliation between the USA and Czechoslovakia not only in the historic role the city played in the birth of the state but also in the proposed content for display. The pavilion was designed by the Czech architect Ladislav Machoň (1888–1973) as an L-shaped, single-floor building. The individual rooms were again lain out in a museum-like manner with glass cabinets and pictures on walls. On paper, the pavilion's space was divided into the promotional hall, the Prague room, the national liberation hall, and a hall dedicated to the American Czechs. [fig. 8]

The liberation hall was planned to contain photographs of resistance during the First World War and related memorabilia. The sculpture of President Masaryk by Otto Gutfreund featured here. Maps, diagrams and images of the Czechoslovak contribution to the Allies' victory surrounded the statue together with a small exhibit of the Czechoslovak legionnaires. These volunteer soldiers fought in Russia, Italy, and France in the First World War alongside the Allies and in some cases settled in the USA to form a vocal part of the diaspora.

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52 Letter from T. G. Masaryk to the mayor of Philadelphia of May 29, 1926, Světová výstava ve Filadelfii D2982/26, APRO.

53 Andrea Orzoff, "Interwar Democracy and the League of Nations," in *The Oxford Handbook of European History, 1914–1945*, ed. Nicholas Doumanis (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014–2016), 263; Peter Bugge, "A Nation Allied with History. Czech Ideas of Democracy, 1890–1948," in *Democracy in Modern Europe: A Conceptual History,* eds. Jussi Kurunmäki, Jeppe Nevers, Henk te Velde (New York–Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2018), 208.

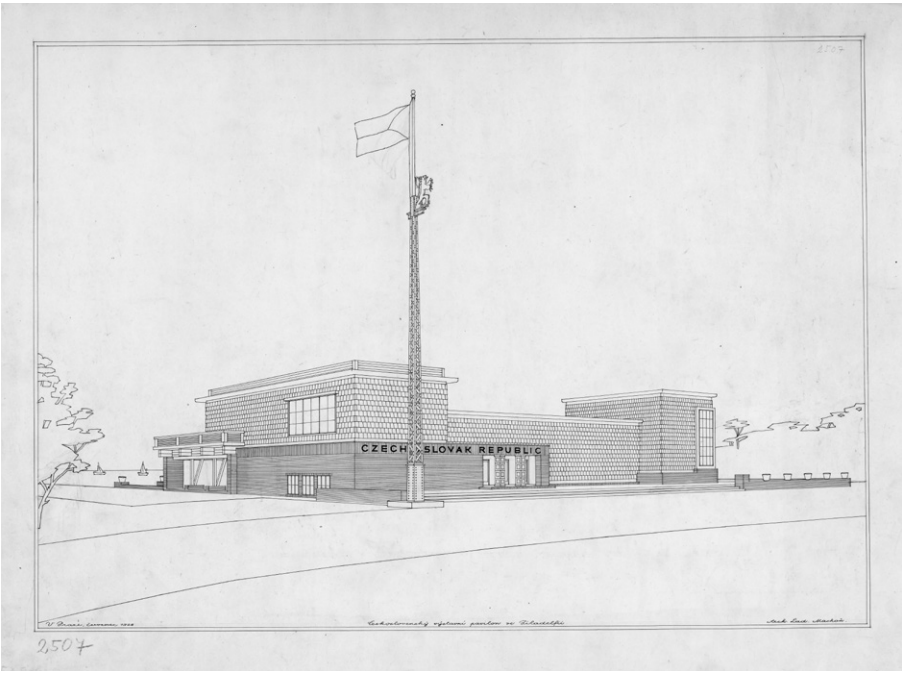

Fig. 8. Ladislav Machoň, The Czechoslovak pavilion in Philadelphia, 1926.

The room dedicated to Prague contained artifacts related to the Sokol gymnastic organization and to the capital which was represented by a large painting by the post-impressionist painter Jaroslav Šetelík (1881–1955). Vistas of Prague would become another constant in Czechoslovak pavilions occasionally accompanied by a view of the Slovak Tatra mountains in a juxtaposition of Czech history and Slovak nature. Alongside Masaryk's bust, the paintings formed a group of objects that provided visual continuity in national pavilions throughout the interwar period.

Many of these objects were included as planned but there was always a number that were added at a later stage for assorted reasons. This was the case in Philadelphia as much as in other world's fairs. One of the causes for the changes in the 1926 exhibition was the belated official decision about the state's participation. Several ministries of the Czechoslovak government (foreign affairs, public works, finance, industry, commerce and trade, as well as education) were involved in the national pavilion and other sites where Czechoslovakia appeared.

It can be said with a little exaggeration that the protruding discussions and hesitations about a Czechoslovak representation became another attribute of interwar exhibition efforts. In the case of Philadelphia, they seriously delayed the

construction of the Czechoslovak pavilion which only started in the summer of 1925. This brought other problems, for example late shipping of objects which resulted in the fact that the Czechoslovak participation ended as a collection of objects that were put together out of necessity. Subsequent exhibitions in the USA, the 1933 Chicago world's fair and the two exhibitions in 1939–40 in New York and San Francisco, were similarly challenged and while the Czechoslovak displays aimed to emphasize sending out a clear message about the state, they often struggled to produce a consistent and unambiguous narrative.

Exhibiting during the crises: *Barcelona 1929*

The ambiguous result of the Philadelphia world's fair followed a period of global economic downturn. During the financial crises of the late 1920s, the frequency with which international exhibitions were organized by various countries at large expense, often with financial losses to the organizer and the participants. Over time, this became a pressing issue. To supervise the organization of world's fairs, The Bureau International des Expositions (the BIE) was established in Paris in 1928 to regulate the frequency and location of these events. The BIE convention was signed by 39 states, including Czechoslovakia, who agreed on the classification of general exhibitions, introduced a rotation system and the need to oversee the quality of the exhibits.[54] One of the founding member states of the BIE was Spain that was responsible for the first exhibition to adhere to the rules.

The Exposición International de Barcelona (The International Exhibition of Barcelona) of 1929 was the first exhibition seriously affected by the global economic crisis prompted by the Stock Market crash on Wall Street in New York. While the USA, which halved its manufacture between 1929 and 1932, was the most affected country, other economies across the world suffered too. Until then, Czechoslovakia had enjoyed relatively successful financial emancipation. During the first decade of the state's existence, its exports and import had been increasing, reaching their peak in 1929. Compared to other successor states of the Habsburg monarchy like Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Romania, the results of Czechoslovak foreign trade and economy were much better.[55]

54 "Our history," *Bureau International des Expositions*, https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/about-the-bie/our-history. Accessed on July 2, 2023.

55 Zdeněk Kárník, *České země v éře První republiky. Vznik, budování a zlatá léta republiky (1918–1929)* (Prague: Libri, 2003), 436.