The inclusion of the painting was not his only on-the-spot decision about the content and the distribution of objects. A box of over 100 etchings dispatched from Czechoslovakia and meant for display in the Palace of Fine Arts was temporarily lost in transit. When it was eventually found, it was too late to install the etchings in the original location so Špaček made space for them in the national pavilion in an arrangement that he described as "pleasing." In his view, this was a better location for the works because they could receive more attention. To accommodate them, he had paintings of the Ministry of Railways moved to a different location because he saw them as too large and crowding the original space.

It was also the supervisor's decision to leave unboxed the heavy *Motorcyclist* by Otakar Švec sent here from the 1925 exposition in Paris, where it was awarded one of the prizes. Špaček explained that the sculpture "caused too much trouble, the cast would not give out a good impression to the public, hence … the 'Motorcyclist' was boxed up and taken to storage."[16] He took these steps upon consultation with the Czechoslovak ambassador Zdeněk Fierlinger, a former legionnaire and diplomat, who also advised on the content of the display. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the sculpture was considered too modern and abstract in comparison to other objects in the national exhibit.

In the larger scheme of things, the interventions of Příbramský, Špaček and his fellow expatriates into the Czechoslovak display in Philadelphia may come across as insignificant. The additions, removals and relocations of a few objects did not affect the overall effect the display had. Yet such input highlights an important aspect of the exhibits, especially those organized in the United States. Their content and ideology were often shaped, or intended to be shaped, by the official or unofficial involvement of the local émigré communities which went far beyond their participation as visitors or performers.

Czechs and Slovaks of Chicago

As I mentioned, Chicago was one of the main centers of the Czech and Slovak diaspora that, in the interwar period, was most prominently engaged with the Century of Progress Exposition in 1933. The city had a community of about 200,000 Czechs around the time of the world's fair who arrived to work in the

16 Špaček, "XV. Zpráva," 1.

garment factories, the docks, meatpacking and steelmaking industries.[17] Here, the first substantial Czech neighborhood was symptomatically called Pilsen after the west-Bohemian beer producing city or rather, a pub referring to it, established there in the mid-1870s.[18] The Bohemian National Cemetery was founded here in 1877 and featured the first "Czech" crematorium dedicated in 1919. Émigrés also founded many clubs and associations and organized cultural and social events here. The social club Slovanská Lípa (The Slavic Linden) was founded in 1861 and sponsored Czech language theatre plays, Lyra, the workingmen's singing society in 1890. Catholic, Protestant and Freethinkers' schools were established, the latter dedicated to the Czech ethnographer and traveler Vojta Náprstek and one to T. G. Masaryk.[19] Active Sokol branches opened at the end of the 19th century and organized massive gatherings of the American Sokol Union gymnasts in 1925, 1929, 1933 and 1937.[20]

Chicago had also long been an important hub for politicians and when Masaryk arrived in the city in May 1918, he received a "royal" welcome from a parade of 20,000 American Czechs and Slovaks in national and Sokol costumes.[21] It was also the center of exile nationalism during the war not only for the Czechs but for other Slavs too.[22] Before 1918, the Poles of Chicago, for instance, also campaigned for the creation of independent Poland. And after the Polish state was founded, they kept their Polishness by printing Polish-language publications, being united in various organizations and by observing traditional customs.[23] The Polish national heroes like Tadeusz Kościuszko, the general who fought in the American War of Independence alongside Kazimierz Pulaski, were fondly commemorated by the community together with non-military personalities like the astronomer Copernicus. There were also frequent exchanges between the Polish and Czech communities; the Czechs as an older and more established group in the city often served as a model for the Poles and their institutions.[24]

17 Malynne M. Sternstein, *Czechs of Chicagoland* (Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 23.
18 Sternstein, *Czechs of Chicagoland*, 23.
19 John J. Reichman, *The Czechoslovaks of Chicago* (Chicago: Czechoslovak Historical Society of Illinois, 1937), 11.
20 Joseph Čermák, "Physical Education among Czechs and Slovaks in America," 42–45, in *Czechs and Slovaks: World's Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group* (Chicago, 1933).
21 J. J. Zmrhal, "Masaryk v Americe," in *TGM 1850–1950 sborník*, ed. Otakar Odložník (Chicago: Národní jednota čsl. protestantů v Americe a v Kanadě. 1950), Chicago Public Library, 19.
22 Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W.W.Norton, 2017), 106–107.
23 Dominic A. Pacyga, *American Warsaw: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Polish Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2021).
24 Pacyga, *American Warsaw,* 105.

Judging from the vast number of Czech and Slovak publications printed in Chicago and Illinois in the interwar period, the community was thriving and keen on preserving its languages. The range of publications included titles like *Svornost* (Unity), "mouthpiece of liberalism," the socialist *Spravedlnost* (Justice), the Catholic daily *Národ* (Nation), the semi-weekly *Katolík* (The Catholic), and many others. The daily *Denní Hlasatel* (The Daily Tribune) and its semi-weekly agricultural version the *Hlasatel* (The Tribune) were also linked to a radio broadcast in Czech and had a wide reach.[25] This variety also reflected the political, religious and social diversity of the communities, catering for freethinkers, Catholics, Protestants, legionnaires, and women's clubs.[26] The newspapers, weeklies, calendars and magazines were also full of advertisements for local businesses run by Czechs and Slovaks. They were comprised of cafés and pubs, groceries and breweries like the Atlas, fashion and accessories shops, including branches of Baťa, various investment companies or repair services. These lists indicate that the diaspora expanded from manual work to owning businesses, surgeries and law firms with better economic self-sufficiency.[27]

Many members of the local Czech and Slovak diaspora welcomed the prospect of a Czechoslovak pavilion at the 1933 world's fair and engaged with the official Czechoslovak representation in Chicago in several ways. While the design of the pavilion and most of the content came from Czechoslovakia, the diaspora was involved as organizers, employees, performers and, indeed, visitors, to recall Geppert's division of the different actors in world's fairs. Initially, the participation of the émigrés in Chicago was planned independently of the governmental plans in Czechoslovakia. They had been actively calling for a Czechoslovak pavilion in the early stages of the fair, by which they fought the initial reluctance of the Czechoslovak government wary of the difficult economic climate of the early 1930s. This included a personal visit to Czechoslovakia by the Chicago mayor, Antonín Čermák. Having Czech roots, Čermák left for the USA with his family when he was a boy. In America, he became a businessman and a Democratic politician and eventually was elected mayor of Chicago in 1931. Czechoslovakia became the first stop on his tour of Europe to lobby for the participation of countries and companies in the planned world's fair. The primacy of Czechoslovakia on the itinerary was interpreted in his homeland as proof

25 Reichman, *The Czechoslovaks of Chicago*, 60.
26 Reichman, *The Czechoslovaks*, 8
27 Jaroslav E. S. Vojan, "How the Czechs Helped Build the American Civilization," 28–34, in *The Czechoslovaks of Chicago*, ed. by John R. Reichman (Chicago, 1937).

that the country's presence at the fair was important not only for the extensive émigré community but for the global audience too.

After the Czechoslovak officials reached the final decision to build a national pavilion, the diaspora formed the Czechoslovak Group (which in Czech appeared as Československý výbor) to contribute to it. Čermák became the honorary chair until his demise in early 1933. The Group had a committee consisting of twenty Czechs and twenty Slovaks, which was a split quite different from the practice in Czechoslovakia, where organization was reserved primarily to Czechs. Nevertheless, the joint venture in Chicago was a result of a compromise that the organizers had to arrive at.[28] Views on the union of the Czechs and Slovaks in Europe differed amongst the communities which were far from unanimous in their embrace of Czechoslovakism. As early as 1931, the *Slovak* Committee for the World's Fair was established to represent all Slovaks of America in "a unified and united way" at the exposition.[29] Yet soon it became clear that the Slovaks of America could not have their own representation separate from Czechoslovakia, because only recognized governments could have their pavilions. Therefore, they joined forces with the American Czechs.[30] They still sought to be presented as two equal national groups, not as Czechoslovaks but rather as hyphenated Czecho-Slovaks.

The Slovaks in the USA that held nationalist views were represented by the Slovak League of America, the same organization that was behind the emancipatory efforts of Slovaks in America before 1918. American Slovaks perceived themselves as the champions of the Slovak cause, unlike the Slovaks in Upper Hungary, and in position to take political decisions.[31] In 1915, representatives of the Slovak League had signed the Cleveland Agreement with the Czech National Alliance and both groups agreed on working jointly towards an independent state in which the two nationalities would have an equally independent standing. This goal was later slightly revised in the Pittsburgh Czecho-Slovak Agreement of 1918, signed by the Slovak League, the Czech National Alliance, the Alliance of the Czech Catholics and T. G. Masaryk. This document envisaged Slovakia as an autonomous part of the joint state with its own administration, parliament and judicial system.[32] This promise was, however, also never de-

28 J. E. S. Vojan, "Století pokroku, světová výstava v Chicagu 1933," *Kalendář New Yorských listů na rok 1933*, vol. 12, 1933, 96.
29 "Slováci vystúpili z výboru světovej výstavy," Náš svet, January 6, 1933, 3.
30 Slováci vystúpili, 3.
31 Kosatík, *Slovenské století*, 86; Michael Cude, "The Imagined Exiles: Slovak-Americans and the Slovak Question during the First Czechoslovak Republic," *Studia Historica Gedanensia* V (2014): 297.
32 Kosatík, *Slovenské století*, 85–86.

livered to the dissatisfaction of Slovaks both in the USA and in Czechoslovakia. Later, Masaryk claimed that the Pittsburgh document was not legally binding as it was drawn up in haste and not by those living in the land.[33]

The early attempt of American Czechs and American Slovaks to be presented separately from the new state at the Chicago world's fair suggests that the local organizational committee acted independently from the official representation of the Czechoslovak government. It perceived itself as composed of "local American citizens of Czech and Slovak descent."[34] Moreover, when the American Czechs and Slovaks settled on cooperation, the hyphen in the title of The Czecho-Slovak Group was of special importance; it suggested that the two groups were autonomous, not subsumed under a joint Czechoslovak identity. This, indeed, reflected the political situation in Czechoslovakia outside of Prague. While the state, represented officially at fairs by various ministries, institutions and companies, tried to consciously show itself as unambiguously unified with a single Czechoslovak identity, by 1933 the separatist tendencies grew stronger.

In Slovakia at this time, the political landscape was divided between autonomists and centralists, the latter consisting of the Agrarian and Social Democratic parties. The former included the Nationalists and the People's Party. It was especially the People's Party that was highly critical of the ideology of Czechoslovakism and anti-clericalism associated with Prague.[35] Moreover, throughout the interwar period, the radical representatives realized that Slovak autonomy was not limited to the Czechoslovak state. The Slovak League of America was especially vocal in its demands for a recognition of Slovaks as an independent nation and kept contacts with the nationalists in Slovakia.[36]

After the Slovak plans for an autonomous display failed, The Czechoslovak Group continued its efforts of putting together its own exhibit for a while. The Group aimed to show to the American audiences what the Czech and Slovak diaspora achieved "both in cities and in the countryside" during the previous century of progress.[37] This vision included presenting the first settlements against the current look of neighborhoods and farms, local businesses, schools, clubs and associations, and journalism.[38] Eventually, however, the presence of the di-

33 Kosatík, *Slovenské století.*
34 "Slováci vystúpili," 3.
35 Róbert Arpáš and Matej Hanula, "Postoje hlavných slovenských politických prúdov k čechoslovakizmu v medzivojnovom období," in *Čecho/slovakismus*, eds. Adam Hudek, Michal Kopeček and Jan Mervart (Prague: NLN, 2019), 182.
36 Cude, "The Imagined Exiles," 303.
37 Vojan, "Naše účast na světové výstavě 1933," *Most* no. 5, October–November 1931, 4.
38 Vojan, "Naše účast," 4.

aspora was reduced to a small section within the pavilion built by the Czechoslovak government, a topic I will come back to shortly. Despite that, the diaspora remained actively involved and organized the Czechoslovak national day, Sokol gathering, concerts and theatre performances and published *The World's Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group*.[39]

While the American Czechs and Slovaks were engaged in the pavilion, it is difficult to see the same level of enthusiasm in those who became the easternmost minority of the new state—the Ruthenians. While they were described as one of the oldest emigration groups from central Europe with about 250,000 Ruthenians living across the USA in the interwar period, it seems that the involvement of the Ruthenian diaspora in the 1933 fair was minimal.[40] The representation of Ruthenia in the Czechoslovak pavilions was overall marginal, reduced to references to the forested landscape and natural resources of the region. In the same way, the American Ruthenians were not part of the Czech and Slovak diasporic communities or the program of Czechoslovakism. As much as the Czechoslovak nation consisted of many disparate ethnicities bound by tentative unity, the diaspora cannot be considered as a single community. In the case of the Ruthenians, the failed promise of autonomy within the Czechoslovak state and the growing enthusiasm for closer cultural and political affiliation with Russia affected the dwindling feelings of allegiance with Czechoslovakia.

Where is my homeland

The initial reluctance of the Czechoslovak government to invest in a national pavilion at Chicago in the economically unstable times eventually waned, partly due to the lobbying and personal intervention of Mayor Čermák. In Czechoslovakia, Čermák partly represented the Czechs of Chicago (and less the Slovaks) as he saw the exhibition as an excellent opportunity for showing the best Czechoslovak industries and arts to Chicago, the whole United States and the world.[41] Before the exhibition, the Czechoslovak consul general in the USA was quite explicit about this when he stated that the Czechoslovak participation was seen as important for the Czechs (and Slovaks) in Chicago. He identi-

39 *The World's Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group* (Chicago, 1933).

40 Dušan Kubány to Central committee of Century of Progress, Government Correspondence, no.2, box 54 Century of Progress, University of Illinois at Chicago; Magosci, *With their Backs to the Mountains*, 244.

41 F. L. Vlček, *Náš lid v Americe (Sebrané články a verše)* (Týn nad Vltavou: O. Tunek, 1935).