MARTA FILIPOVÁ

DESIGNING NATIONAL PAVILIONS AND NATIONS: CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BAŤA AT INTERWAR EXHIBITIONS

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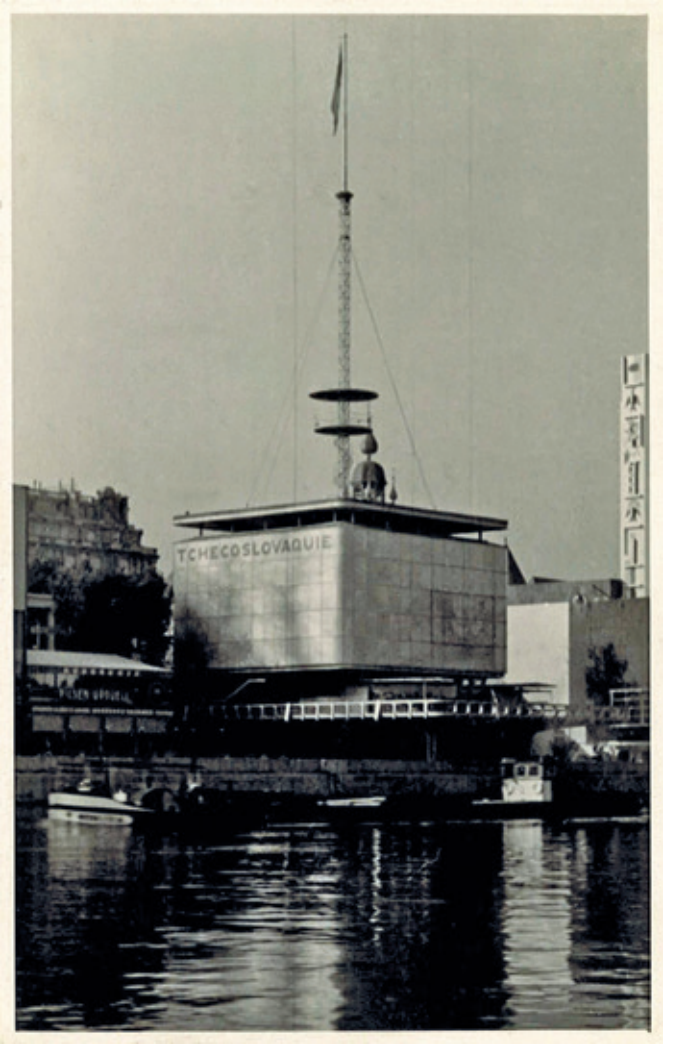
World's fairs are events where nations meet, are confronted with each other and where they share their understanding of the world order and themselves. One of the primary and original purposes of world's fairs was to showcase the best of industrial and commercial products and establish new trade relationships. Gradually, other important features emerged: displays of national or regional identity, displays of colonial possessions, as well as educating visitors and providing them with entertainment. Underlying these, however, were almost always the commercial interests that drove the participation of various states in these costly events.

The emphasis on trade was particularly pertinent for countries that emerged as new entities throughout the 20th century. The First World War and its aftermath restructured Europe politically. The end of the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman empires led to the creation of several new states, which in Central Europe included Austria, Hungary, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. The medium of the world's fair allowed them to inform others about their existence, products and companies, and showcase their national culture and even food or drink, which became one of the essential export items as well as external markers of national identity. The commercial factor remained key and for instance, in the case of Czechoslovakia, it infiltrated all aspects of the interwar national displays at world's fairs.



The Czechoslovak pavilion in the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, 1937 (postcard). [Author's collection]

Czechoslovakia, founded in 1918 as one of the successor states of the Habsburg monarchy, soon recognised the significance of participation in international exhibitions. It appeared officially at all the largest international exhibitions except for those whose primary focus was of a colonial nature, like the British Empire Exhibition in 1924/25 and the Parisian Exposition Colonial in 1931. The number of attended exhibitions reached twenty and Czechoslovakia was also immensely successful at these events. In 1937, the Czechoslovak pavilion at the Parisian International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life received the third-highest number of awards from the organisers, after the Soviet Union and Germany.[1] At home, though, it was criticised for its uneven content and layout, poor visitors numbers as well as insufficient representation of local industries.[2] These complaints came quite vocally from Jan Antonín Baťa of the Baťa company, which produced mainly shoes, but also rubber products and hosiery. Looking into the future and the national participation planned for New York in 1939, the manager-in-chief Jan Antonín Baťa proposed a national pavilion that his company would design on behalf of the state and which would contain his vision of what should be included as representative of the state.

The World of Tomorrow exhibition in New York was proposed on a much bigger scale than the exhibition in Paris and Baťa was mindful that the Czechoslovak pavilion needed to impress. He devised a plan for a 12-floor building, which would be 40 meters long and 80 meters wide. Inside, there was a ramp leading through all the proposed twelve floors, on which carts would transport visitors who would inspect the representations of the main sites of Czechoslovakia, including Prague, various mountain ranges, the cave regions, River Danube and the city of Zlín, the headquarters of the Baťa company. The carts would consist of 10 rows of 4 comfortable chairs each and would stop at three designated locations on each floor to allow disembarkation and embarkation of passengers. This leisurely ride would generate a fee of 50c per person and generate a daily income of 60,000 dollars. If anyone did not want to pay, they could simply walk through the pavilion on foot. Baťa envisaged that the visit to the pavilion would be both profitable for the organisers as well as entertaining and relaxing for the visitors.

Design of the exhibit 'Profile of Czechoslovak Person' for the Czechoslovak pavilion in New York, Archive of Architecture and Engineering, National Technical Museum, Prague, f.60 Exhibitions.

The idea of a pavilion that would be designed by a private company on behalf of a state raises many questions. Baťa cultivated a close connection with the state of Czechoslovakia during the interwar period and to an extent had the ambition to take on the role of the state, by suggesting various improvements in the national infrastructure as well as life. In the Baťa proposal for the New York pavilion, the company included an exhibit called 'The Profile of a Czechoslovak Person' which represented the company's view of the state with its typical resources and features. The map was intended to be displayed on the ground floor and observed from above and from different levels. The company's location was symbolised by the headquarters of Baťa, i.e. Building no. 21, designed by the architect Vladimír Karfík. It unmistakably occupied a central place in the representation of Czechoslovakia and was surrounded by depictions of key tourist sites like Prague and the spa towns, industries such as mining and the extraction of timber, and the birthplace of President Masaryk.

This vision fits in the broader aims of world's fairs oriented towards evolutionary progress and the future, which could be achieved by means of new technology and through hard work. World's fairs, however, also became crucial venues where collective identities of, for example, workers or nations were displayed, and the Baťa map and its details were indicative of that. For example, it showed mining areas and communities represented by the symbol of two hammers or Central Slovakia as a couple in folk dress.

In this text, I explore the techniques and methods that were employed to convey often complex identities and ideas in the settings of the world's fairs; I am interested in who devised them and with what aim. I focus on the relationship between the Baťa company and the state of Czechoslovakia and scrutinize the overlaps in the visions the two entities explicitly or implicitly presented at international exhibitions. I concentrate mainly on the interwar period as the time when the Czechoslovak state was established and consolidated and when Baťa experienced a boom in production, global reach, and confidence. Ultimately, I argue that the displays of the evolutionary trajectory of the Czechoslovak state as well as the concerns of Baťa in shaping the lives of its workers

owed a great deal to contemporary concerns of eugenics. Baťa and the Czechoslovak state serve as examples of how progress was communicated and identities shaped in the context of world's fairs.

A short history of world's fairs

Before embarking on the topic of the more or less explicit embrace of eugenics in state and company politics and displays, I would like to briefly introduce the context of world's fairs and the place of interwar Czechoslovakia in them. In the second half of the nineteenth century, many large cities and metropolises planned to host a national or international exhibition that would display the region's or country's achievements and inventions to date. International exhibitions soon became important events that created political visions about exhibiting nations and states and about the exhibited objects. Such ideology was not only contained in the physical exhibits on display but also in the events associated with the exhibitions and the intangible ideological messages that they were trying to convey.

Exhibitions of all sizes served as crucial vehicles for communicating modernity; they were linked with industrialisation, progress, and the growth of consumer culture. '[M]odernity turns the world into a panorama' and such a panoramic view of the globe offered classifications and explanations in a concise place and time.[3] Ever since the Great Exhibition of 1851, world's fairs had been staged on an enormous scale and were visited by millions of people.[4] For participating states, they provided a significant opportunity to gain visibility, strengthen political and economic alliances, find new trading partnerships and also embed a distinct image of the state in the minds of others.

The history of exhibitions in many ways reflects the history of progress.[5] These events also mirrored the rapid changes in culture, society, politics, and economy that took place at the time. Inventions and industrial advancements, the increasing importance of international trade and competition, and the rise and decline of colonial empires were projected onto exhibitions. In many ways, they summarized and reimagined the modern experience in the physical and condensed space of the exhibition ground.

This is one of the reasons why major exhibitions have often been examined from the point of view of metropolitan modernity. Large urban areas in Europe and North America, as the sites of modernist capitalist culture, have clearly demonstrated such changes. Yet while the best-known exam-

ples of these events were staged in the largest cities like Paris, Chicago and New York, the exhibition network extended much further. The attempt to achieve recognition through exhibitionary practices became also prominent among smaller, often emerging nations and in regional centres where regional or national identity was formed at the time.[6] While they were not in a position to stage a world's fair on a comparable level, they often eagerly partook in them. The international exhibitions boom therefore coincided with an era of important economic, cultural, and political changes across the globe. A number of emerging or revived national groups, and not only in Central Europe, adopted the exhibition medium to showcase their view of their history, present and future.[7]

The most important event in the Central European region before 1918 was the world exhibition, the *Weltausstellung* in Vienna, which took place in 1873.[8] This project was officially embedded in Vienna's eagerness to promote the economic, cultural and political position of the Habsburg Monarchy in Europe and showcase science and industry as well as contemporary culture and civilisation.[9] The different pavilions located in the Prater park hosted about thirty-five nations, contained displays of industries and technology, agriculture, science, arts and national domestic industries (or arts and crafts), alongside foreign exhibits of the British colonies, and the Japanese, Chinese, Persian and Egyptian sections. Apart from 'high art' objects related mainly to the bourgeois urban culture, it also showed a 'picturesque re-creation of Austria-Hungary's rural world' in the peasant material and visual culture of the so-called peasant village, which included various houses from Upper Hungary, Transylvania, Galicia, and many other regions.

The Weltausstellung had a profound impact on future large and small exhibitions in the region and on the way ethnic groups in the Habsburg monarchy were framed for display. The Millennium Exhibition in Budapest took place in 1896 and commemorated the foundation of the Kingdom of Hungary. It emphasized not only the historical existence of the Hungarian kingdom, but also its modernity as represented in the displays of industrial, economic, and cultural possessions. Under the auspices of Hungary's Magyarization policy at the time, strong emphasis was also placed on the representation of Hungary as one Hungarian nation

of several 'races' which were, according to a guidebook, 'united in the love of the joint fatherland'.[10] In order to demonstrate the different levels of advancement of culture within the Hungarian territory, a so-called Ethnographic Village, translated into English in the exhibition guide as a 'Nationality Street', was built at the exhibition grounds, which consisted of houses furnished with 'interesting ethnographic objects' from a variety of Hungarian regions (for example: Croatia, Bosnia and Slovakia).[11]

While the regional differences displayed in the 'Nationality Street' in Budapest or the village in Vienna were meant to express cultural diversity, the emphasis on the national unity of the peoples was equally important. Such emphasis, however, became more prominent at many other exhibitions in Habsburg Central Europe. In the regions where national awareness was on the rise, the national identity of minority groups living within a larger political unit (Austria or Hungary) was emphasised with increasing intensity and need. Examples of such exhibitions with closer ties to local communities, yet strongly embracing a specific national identity, were The Jubilee Exhibition and Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague (1891 and 1895), the 1894 Universal Exhibition in Lemberg (L'viv/Lwów), and the 1906 German-Bohemian Exhibition in Reichenberg (Liberec). In these cases, organizers often emphasized the uniqueness of the respective ethno-national group's history, culture, and industries on display.

It was the two exhibitions in Prague that set out an understanding of the ethnicities in Bohemia and Moravia. They also suggested an unequal relation to the Slovaks and other groups that would share the state after 1918. The organisers of the late 19th-century exhibition in Prague stressed the cultural homogeneity of the vernacular exhibits and their connection to the nation. Their appreciation for the uniqueness and constructed authenticity of folk art and culture thus gave pride of place to peasants – the main purveyors of Czech (or Czechoslavic) traditions and heritage. The invented ethnicity of the Czechoslavs, which gave the title to the 1895 Exhibition, was chosen to proclaim the unity of all Czech and Slavic inhabitants against the notion of the *Deutschböhmen*, which referred to the German inhabitants in the region in a way similar to the construction of the Czechoslovak nation of the interwar period.

Interwar fairs, Central Europe, and the Czechoslovaks

Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak nation did not exist until 1918 and immediately after its creation, it started to consistently construct its identity internally and externally. The presentation of Czechoslovakia as comprising a single nation of the Czechoslovaks was quite simple in the early days of the new state: the Czechoslovaks were an imagined community composed of Czechs and Slovaks; their unity was based on the similarities of language and culture. This identity excluded other, mostly non-Slavic, minorities of Germans and Hungarians – to name the most numerous. With Germans comprising some 23% of the inhabitants of the new state, and Hungarians about 12%, the need to create a Slavic majority was logical.[12] Ruthenians in the far east of the republic, whose territory became part of Czechoslovakia too, were a Slavic ethnicity but either subsumed into the project of Czechoslovakism or simply ignored. Ruthenia as a region was so remote from Prague that it was sometimes treated as a colony.[13]

This understanding of the state's composition affected the way Czechoslovakia was presented at international exhibitions. Sending out a consistent, yet not overly complicated message which would explain the country's existence and basic features, was key. Most of the Czechoslovak exhibits therefore shared similar objects and ideas they displayed: apart from industrial products, such as turbines, aeroplane and car parts, they contained a prominently placed sculptural representation of the President T. G. Masaryk, a selection of works of modern art and design objects such as furniture, textiles, glass and kitchen utensils, the function of which was to broadcast the modern and democratic identity of Czechoslovakia.

As is clear from the proportion of minorities in Czechoslovakia, the state also inherited most aspects of the multi-ethnic and multinational empire. As I have mentioned, it had the largest proportion of ethnic minorities, just like the preceding kingdom. In comparison, Austria and Hungary became more ethnically homogeneous, especially after the treaty of Trianon, which allocated various Hungarian territories with non-Hungarian majorities to neighbouring states. For example, Hungary lost the territories of Upper Hungary (Slovakia) and Transylvania to Czechoslovakia and Romania respectively.

The question of who it is that decides what or who the nation is became crucial in the construction of national pavilions and their context of public consumption. The purpose of such national participation was to let other states, potential allies and business partners know of one's existence and potential, especially with new entities that emerged after 1918. Apart from the opportunities related to trade, manufacture, and agriculture of the country (or its new geographical area), touristic attractions, social services, healthcare and culture, and its main symbols, like sculptures of the president or national emblems, were included. This was already a large amount of information to display, which could be quite overwhelming for visitors. It often therefore had to be simplified and it was spatial planning and information design that helped to organise the displays. The interwar period therefore saw a development of design not only of pavilions as exteriors and interiors, but also of the way communication occurred.

Much of this development was aligned with the endeavour of participating and often newly established countries to cohere with the world's fairs and their ideologies. This included an embrace of the shared vision of modernity and progress promoted by international exhibitions. Nevertheless, states such as Czechoslovakia combined these attempts with an emphasis on their cultural traditions and history. This often led to the creation of a tension between the competing principles on which their participation in world's fairs was based. These numerous contradictions foregrounded national exceptionalism in the displays and also tried to demonstrate the place of the newcomers in the shared modernity.[14]

In terms of the global history of world's fairs, the First World War meant a reset in the plans to stage these costly and ideologically complex exhibitions across Europe. Many projects were shelved or delayed by the conflict. The detailed proposals for the 1917 Budapest Universal Exhibition, for instance, which was to celebrate fifty years since the Compromise (Ausgleich) that created the Dual Monarchy and spurred Hungarian economic and cultural advancement, were abandoned. As a new political entity with a smaller territory and more ethnically homogenous population, Hungary had more pressing issues after the war than hosting an expensive international exhibition. By the same token, the

new political composition of postwar Central Europe created the need to present one's country as not only economically and politically independent, but also historically and culturally justified. Exhibitions provided an excellent opportunity to do that, both for the domestic population and for a larger, international audience.

It is worth drawing a comparison with two other political entities that emerged from the Habsburg monarchy: Austria and Hungary. After the war, they both took to the international stage gradually and more hesitantly than Czechoslovakia. Austria appeared for the first time at the Parisian exposition in 1925, where the focus on decorative arts and design had undeniable commercial benefit sought by the organisers and exhibitors. Austria took part in four other exhibitions in Philadelphia in 1926, Barcelona in 1929 and Brussels in 1935, with Paris 1937 being its last appearance.

The first interwar participation of Hungary in an international exhibition was at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia in 1926 where all three states took part. Here, thirty foreign nations participated in the event. The Hungarian pavilion was designed by the architect Dénes Györgyi who continued to design further Hungarian pavilions in Barcelona, Brussels and Paris. Hungary and Austria's last appearance in Paris and the lack of presence in the American fairs in 1939/40 were conditioned by their internal political affairs. While Austrofascism developed in Austria, in Hungary, Miklós Horthy introduced an authoritarian regime. Next to them, Czechoslovakia gave out a distinctive image of 'an island of democracy' that it cultivated during the interwar period and presented at world's fairs.[15]

The juxtaposition with Austria and Hungary (and Germany and Poland can also be added to the mix), contributed to the myth of a democratic, liberal, and peaceful state of Czechoslovakia, tolerant of its minorities. Already in the interwar period, however, historians and philosophers like Josef Pekař and Emanuel Rádl and more recently scholars, such as Zdeněk Kárník, Andrea Orzoff and Mary Heimann, challenged the traditional nationalist rhetoric. They disputed the narrative that presented the Czechs as a peaceful group who had suffered under Habsburg rule

and eventually liberated themselves, their language and culture in 1918 in order to embrace democratic values.[16] The state, however, had many severe problems and many of them penetrated, often unintentionally, the national pavilions. They included growing ethnic conflicts and demands for home rule from Slovaks, Germans and Ruthenians, as well as gender and class imbalance.[17]

As I have mentioned earlier, after 1918, Czechoslovakia embraced not only democracy but also the exhibiting of opportunities, despite the enormous cost and protruding disputes that accompanied the organisation of national pavilions. If judged by the number of awards received not only in Paris but at other exhibitions too, the investment paid off. The state – its culture, institutions and businesses displayed there – became recognised and recognisable. Shortly after its creation, Czechoslovakia participated in smaller exhibitions in the early 1920s. They included the International Trade Fair in Lyon and the Exhibition of Czechoslovak Folk Art at the Louvre in Paris in 1920, as France had been a key military, political and cultural ally for the Czechs and Slovaks. Yet the first properly planned participation of Czechoslovakia at an international fair, where the state built a national pavilion as one of only 13 foreign countries, was at the Centennial International Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro in 1922. It was followed by the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925, and the world's fairs in Philadelphia (1926), Barcelona (1929), Chicago (1933), Brussels (1935), Paris (1937), New York and San Francisco (1939/40).[18]

The last years of the interwar world's fairs were affected by the increasing political tensions. The international exhibition in Paris in 1937 saw the powerful juxtaposition of the German and Soviet pavilions, which did not seem to have any large impact on Czechoslovakia and many other participating nations who tried to retain their modernist optimism. However, by the time of the world's fairs in New York and San Francisco that took place in 1939 and 1940, Czechoslovakia, with its carefully cultivated image, ceased to exist. This history of the state, albeit brief, can be read alongside the rise of the Baťa company. To some extent, it copied the trajectory of the state towards a better place in global international trade and politics. Eventually, however, the two paths had to diverge.

View of the housing for Baťa employees, Zlín (postcard). [Author's collection]

State and business: Baťa

The company Baťa was founded in 1894 in eastern Moravia, in what was then the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy. It was run as a family business by Tomáš Baťa (who died tragically in 1932) and Jan Antonín Baťa until the company was nationalised after the Second World War. Before that, it grew quickly into a successful enterprise which extended beyond the manufacture of shoes to include financial services, transportation industries, aircraft production and many other activities.

Soon after the creation of Czechoslovakia in October 1918, Baťa started expanding abroad – its first shop opened in Belgrade in 1919 and by 1929 the company owned nearly 700 shops in 37 countries across four continents. Due to Baťa, Czechoslovakia became the number one country in shoe exports worldwide. In the second half of the 1920s. The founder of the company Tomáš Baťa, his stepbrother Jan Antonín and later his son Thomas Jr., created an international shoemaking empire with factories around the world. In Czechoslovakia, Baťa built the town of Zlín for his workers which featured modern housing, schools, hospitals, and entertainment facilities. The managers of Baťa replicated their vision of work and life not only nationally but globally too and founded, for example, the towns of East Tilbury in Great Britain, Batadorp in the Netherlands in 1933, Batanagar in India in 1934, Batawa in Canada in 1939 and a factory in Belcamp, Maryland in 1939.[19] The names of most of these towns unmistakably pointed to the corporate and family title of the company.

In the interwar period, Baťa was a highly ambitious enterprise with global ambitions which it brought to world's fairs. Baťa is, of course, only one of the many companies that grew into international corporations at this time that had its own idea of a better world which it tried to apply at home and to other countries. Comparable examples include Henry Ford or George Pullman and their visions of ideal company towns in the USA, or similar projects in Chile (the mining town of Sewell, Humberstone), Belgium (Cour centrale, Grand Hornu) and Germany (Wolfsburg, Leverkusen).

Baťa based its management of business and people on Fordism and Taylorism and their ideas of mass production, division of labour, serial

manufacture, and standardisation with immense success.[20] The owners also pursued an economic and social project, which included the introduction of new production techniques, getting the employees involved in profit-sharing and creating a 'healthy' working and family environment for them. The focus on the workers, their work lives, education, and leisure – a topic that I will explore shortly – was a great concern for the company. Nevertheless, it developed a paternalistic leadership similar to, for example, George Pullman's ideas that were put into practice in Chicago at the end of the 19th century.[21] The two companies shared an attempt to control workers' lives as well as financial affairs, yet Jan Antonín Baťa combined such ideology with the rhetoric of nationalism and eugenics.

When reflecting on the company's contribution, he claimed that

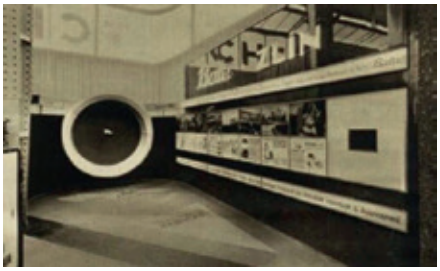
> our success lies in the Czechoslovak man… in that we managed to free him from the position of servitude, being a proletarian and a scared coward hiding behind the cupboard […]. We made him into a man of the world, a man who is not afraid of people and the world.[22]

This Czechoslovak man, Baťa further explained, evolved into a self-sufficient and self-aware individual without the help of a proletarian revolution. In the interwar period, the company successfully discouraged the creation of trade unions and detested communism. The Communist Party did notoriously badly in local elections in Zlín as workers received relatively high salaries and benefits.

Baťa's reference to creating the 'Czechoslovak man' comes out of the association he made between the company and the new state. The relationship between the firm (or, rather, its managers) and the state administration, whether at the national or regional level, had always been quite close. The founder, Tomáš Baťa, served as a mayor in the city of Zlín; he was followed by one of the company's general managers, Dominik Čipera, who also served as a minister for public works in the Czechoslovak government in the late 1930s. The intimate links were also transferred to the sphere of representation at international and national exhibitions; another general manager of Baťa, Hugo Vavrečka,

was elected the chief commissioner of the Czechoslovak exhibition for the New York World's Fair in 1939 and gained direct influence over the exhibit.

Baťa, the company, took an active part in international exhibitions in the 1930s, and later in the decade, the company's renown was such that it no longer needed to put up extensive displays of their actual products in exhibitions. Instead, it focused on promoting the company's vision and philosophy. For example, at the International Exposition of Arts and Technology that took place in Paris in 1937, the Czechoslovak pavilion contained the company's exhibit which consisted of a single high-heeled shoe in a large lit circle. This so-called 'suggestive' display represented Baťa's extensive production that consisted of 180 thousand pairs a day.[23]



Baťa shoe exhibit, the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, 1937, Pestrý týden 12, no. 35, 28 August 1937, p. 16.

Nevertheless, an independent Baťa pavilion, which housed a more comprehensive display of shoes, stood in a different location on the grounds. Foreign companies could not build their own pavilions in Paris and many other world's fairs and, for that reason, Baťa used its French branch at Hellocourt as its independent showcase. The pavilion also included a cinema and pedicure parlour to ensure the well-being of visitors. The shoe exhibit was accompanied by views of the city of Zlín in large-scale photographs that illustrated the modern and hygienic urban living and working environment. Here, and in many other exhibitions, Zlín became the model of what the future should look like, according to the vision of a better state and society held by company management. They called, for instance, for lower taxes, a more motorized society, better railways, more air traffic links to the outside world, technical and administrative reforms, and reforms of business and vocational training schools.[24]

Baťa was a financially successful enterprise, and this meant that it could afford its ambitious projects and collaborate with the best architects of the time. One of the designs for the Baťa pavilion, for example, came from Le Corbusier who had been working with Baťa for some time. The French architect also designed the French satellite town for Baťa and provided a template for Baťa stores which could be used around the world. He was also a member of the committee for selecting a model house to be used around Zlín for the employees.

Le Corbusier's projects were, however, never realised because of disagreements about the cost and alleged clash of personalities between the architect and J. A. Baťa.[25] The two men also held a conflicting view of how to envisage modern architecture in the context of living and working. Le Corbusier's interest lay in collective housing where facilities could be shared and therefore utilised economically. Baťa, on the other hand, promoted family houses in which each family unit had its own living space while shared housing was reserved for single men.[26] There were, nevertheless, some aspects they had in common and it was especially their concern about rationalisation and standardisation of the modern living space and living in general.[27] Baťa's ambition therefore reached far beyond the sale of products and extended into shaping its workers, and potentially the Czechoslovak nation and the Czechoslovak people.

Designing the interior, designing visitors' experience

The Czechoslovak participation in interwar world's fairs was overseen by several ministries, especially the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry for Public Works, and the Ministry of Education. Despite a suggestion in 1927 that a permanent cross-ministerial committee for exhibitions should be established, for each world's fair a new committee was composed.[28] They regularly and passionately discussed the main focus of the national pavilion or section. The cultural focus, advanced by the ministries of education and public works, aimed at the promotion of the state using the soft power of the artistic and educational displays. The Ministry of Trade, however, advocated a more practical and trade-oriented presentation that would lead to sales and financial gains.

Both of these goals had to be housed in appropriate buildings, the architecture of which needed to be as inviting and attractive for visitors as possible. Buildings in new materials and forms and functionalist design contributed to the image of the new, progressive state, that emerged out of the remnants of the archaic and desolate Habsburg monarchy. The modern orientation of the pavilions can be therefore read in line with the orientation of many artists in Czechoslovakia.

The decision-making behind the participation in world's fairs, planning and organising came first from the official places like the above-mentioned ministries. However, exhibition architects and designers also played a crucial role as they had to take into account a wide range of factors. The objects to be displayed were the primary concern, but increasingly other issues became important. These included expected visitors' numbers, their attention span and physical and mental fatigue in the immense exhibition ground.

Several commentators had focused on visitors and their experience at exhibitions already by the end of the nineteenth century. They often pointed to the ever-increasing size of these events which prevented visitors from meaningfully inspecting the exhibition grounds and the individual pavilions.[29] As early as 1880, the German professor of mechanical technology Egbert Hoyer introduced the term 'exhibition fatigue' [*Ausstellungsmüdigkeit*], which he used to describe a feeling from the abun-

dance of great exhibitions and from a visit to each of these overwhelming events with thousands of exhibits.[30] Later exhibition critics agreed that such a state caused by prolonged exertion and exposure to displayed objects can lead to information overload, distraction, limited cognitive capacity and higher selectiveness of what to view or visit.[31] By the First World War, critics discussed the end of the exhibitions era and suggested moving away from these large enterprises.[32] Yet the war changed that and brought a renewed need and eagerness for large exhibitions which, as was believed, could help re-establish trade as well as political, cultural and social recovery, while also engaging the visitor.

Visitors could be engaged in various ways and these mostly consisted in providing 'exotic' encounters: sampling local food and drink that somewhat replicated the experience of travel to foreign lands without the need to leave the home country. Being served or greeted by attractive hostesses, often in folk dresses, only intensified the sense of 'exoticism' of such encounters.

The way pavilions were laid out, the space arranged and the information presented was equally crucial for the visitors' engagement. The Czechoslovak pavilion at the Parisian Exposition of 1937 can serve as a case study for the approach to these topics. The grounds occupied 250 acres, of which 1,500m^2 was taken up by Czechoslovakia. The exhibition was visited by thirty-one million people in total, with estimates of 50,000 people seeing the Czechoslovak pavilion per day.

The winning design for the Czechoslovak pavilion came from four Czech architects and designers – Jaromír Krejcar, Zdeněk Kejř, Bohuslav Soumar and Ladislav Sutnar. The cubic shape of the building was supported by steel pylons and had a slim and tall tower.[33] Another prominent feature was the terrace, which extended over the Seine, and served as an extended exhibition space. For its main material, it was poetically called a 'magnificent fairy tale of steel and glass' in one of the Czech newspapers.[34]

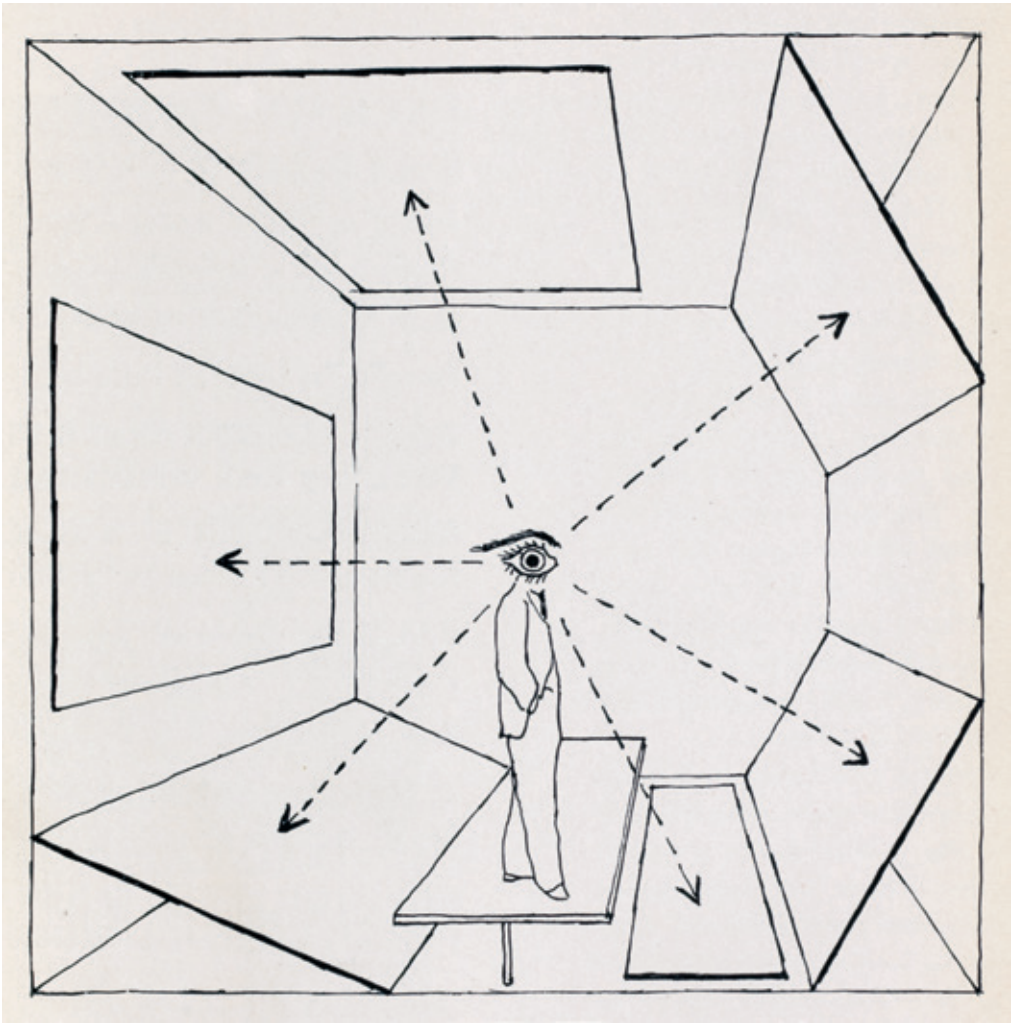
The designers were mindful of the need to engage their visitors but were quite judgemental when about them:

> We may say that 90% of people [visiting exhibitions] are not exhibition experts and do not share the cultural demands of the 'upper ten thousand' and as such they spend very limited time looking around exhibition pavilions. [...]. The content of the pavilion should therefore be such that it captures masses of these ordinary visitors while satisfying the demands of the culturally mature visitor.[35]

Competition at the fair was indeed fierce and this put demands on the architecture of the pavilion to be as inviting and as interesting as possible in order to lure people in. Once inside, the visitor would be taken on a predetermined route that showed them the country's best features and provided the information that the designers wished to communicate in a way not dissimilar from that offered by Baťa.

The guided route the visitors embarked on in the Czechoslovak pavilion was a result of a development in spatial design that many other architects worked on. Across Central Europe from the 1920s onwards, exhibition design was becoming a more self-aware activity with many Bauhaus architects, designers and visual artists like Mies van der Rohe, Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer and El Lissitzky involved in them.[36] A few examples can illustrate this international development. The Austrian designer and architect Herbert Bayer, who studied and taught at the Bauhaus, was instrumental in rethinking how to design exhibitions. He recommended using curved walls in exhibitions and rounding out the space and believed that in the future, exhibition ground plans would be designed in a way that would direct the traffic of visitors flow in a continuous direction.[37] He also suggested that when exhibition material was gathered and grouped in a 'reasonable succession' the direction of the visitors would follow in a free manner, using directional arrows, sound, and records. Interesting items to be observed were placed in succession from left to right in order to copy the way the majority of people followed the text when reading.

The Russian constructivist artist El Lissitzky also influenced exhibition design in the interwar period. He created many exhibition spaces, especially in Germany, that originated in his Proun rooms [Prounenraum], or demonstration rooms. These installations of various materials included, for instance, paint, wood, and foil.[38] El Lissitzky's design for the Soviet



Herbert Bayer, 'Fundamentals of Exhibition Design', New York Public Library Digital Collections. Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. [Public domain]

pavilion at the Pressa exhibition in Cologne in 1928 was the most discussed and praised in terms of its impact. The space was designed as a comprehensive whole of different elements which included displays of Soviet newspapers, magazines and brochures and combined large-scale photographs with text and inscriptions. They made the visitor engage with the objects by moving their eyes along and through them.

However, it was a long journey before architects arrived at such intricate arrangements. Many exhibition spaces for a long time retained the layout of a museum even in the temporary environment of world's fairs. Czechoslovakia was no exception and the first large pavilions that represented it as an independent country in the interwar period in the Exposition in Rio de Janeiro in 1922 and the Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts exhibition in Paris in 1925 had rather conventional interiors. Their architects experimented with the exterior, but inside the structures were traditionally conceived exhibition rooms with display walls and glass cabinets filled with objects. In 1925, many pavilions adhered to similarly conventional display in cabinets and cubic rooms, while a handful of buildings, including Konstantin Melnikov's Soviet pavilion and Le Corbusier's L'Esprit Nouveau, were much more innovative in their handling of the physical form and the ideological content of the display.

The wall inside a pavilion became an important feature in interior design. It guided the visitors' flow, provided display space, and also had the role of the so-called periods of silence. These were meant as spaces without objects where the visitor could take a break from the visual intake. Such technique was employed by Czech designers, too, most prominently by Ladislav Sutnar, who was involved in many international representations of Czechoslovakia. He applied advanced visualisation techniques and visual surprises in his design for the national pavilion in Paris in 1937, including giant photographs, photomontages, three-dimensional designs of diagrams, graphs, and maps.

Design of information and ideologies

Typography and graphics were other aspects of design practice that played an important role in the way information was communicated and displayed. One of the earliest examples of such use of graphic design in a world's fair context was the contribution of William Edward Burghardt DuBois who put together an exhibit for the Parisian Exposition Universelle of 1900 entitled 'American Negro'. DuBois was an African American historian and activist who was asked to come up with a tangible, contextualized method of showing why the African diaspora in America had been held back. Photographs from the life of the community in the USA were accompanied by visualised sociological data in graphs and diagrams with vibrant colours, which turned complex information into visually appealing and comprehensive data sets. These were very impressive renderings of sensitive statistical information, showing for example, charts of black people's occupations, income, and family budgets, land, and property they owned, or the percentage of slaves and free black people between 1790 and 1870.[39] Visualised in this straightforward and striking way, the bold colours clearly showed the ethnic bias and inequalities in the USA.

However striking this exhibit was, it did not massively change the place non-white ethnic groups had in world's fairs. Thirty years later, world's fairs and their surroundings were still full of ideas communicating white supremacy. In 1933 in Chicago, the Field Museum, located at the northern end of the exhibition grounds and focused on natural history, opened a new exhibit. The Races of Mankind consisted of over one hundred bronze sculptures and busts that represented different 'racial types' from around the world. They were executed by the sculptress Malvina Hoffman (1885–1966), who had been commissioned by the museum's president and local banker, Stanley Field.[40] Hoffman's works depicted full-size bodies and heads that divided people into racial categories and three main groups: the white, the negro and the mongoloid 'racial stock'. They included examples of a Native American, Japanese man, Sudanese or Inuit woman as well as the so-called Nordic type. The latter was an example of a 'man of the white stock' as he was labelled at the time.[41] He was depicted using the physical features and posture of Greek and Roman sculptures and made superior to the non-European types.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois, 'City and rural population', 1890, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, LOT 11931, no. 11.

These categorisations were characteristic of world's fairs in anthropological exhibits, performances of otherness by 'exotic people' as well as in the wider popular culture of these events. One of the most popular exhibits in the second year of the New York World's Fair was the 'Typical American Family' display.[42] It was preceded by an essay competition in which Americans were asked to write their explanations of why they thought about themselves as typical. The winners from each state were promised a free trip to the fair in a new car from Ford, a co-sponsored the competition.[43] The world's fair authorities assessed the racial origins of the families and their composition and clearly favoured nuclear and Caucasian families. All the winners were white Americans born in the USA to European descendants. They helped to create a very specific image of a typical American family, while the exhibit reinforced the classification of supremacy promoted at world's fairs and elsewhere.

The practice of systematisation and classification in and of displays was adopted by many countries in their national pavilions. These practices also helped to establish their understanding of their place in the world order. Visualisation of hierarchies in sculpture or by graphic design was a powerful tool. The whole point of the visual representation of race has been to capture attention and communicate the intended message. This technique was applied in many contexts but proved especially effective in the communication of data in exhibition spaces. In the case of Czechoslovakia, they would not convey explicit or implicit racist stereotypes but could play a role in the effective and clear display of complex information, sometimes related to the ethnic makeup of the state.

As a graphic designer, Ladislav Sutnar worked with data visualization. For the Press Pavilion at the Parisian exposition in 1937, he designed a large two-dimensional figure, seated and reading a glass newspaper on the background of statistical information about print runs in Czechoslovakia which were communicated by images. This impressive rendering was preceded by various other diagrams he devised, for example for the Pressa exhibition in Cologne. There, renditions of male figures held newspapers relative in size to their print runs and the distribution of press in Czechoslovakia according to the paper's language. The 'Czechoslovak' press was the most dominant; the least represented was the Ruthenian

and Polish press. Such visualisation can be placed in the tradition of graphic interpretation of statistics that, for example, the German designers Marie and Otto Neurath or Jan Tschichold respectively devised in their Isotype and new typography around the same time.[44]

Effective communication and the latest methods of information design were also applied by Baťa. The company successfully used graphic design and innovative techniques in their displays – and not only in exhibitions but also in shop windows and stores they ran.[45] It took an active part in national trade exhibitions during the interwar period and became ever more prominent at world's fairs, especially in the 1930s. At the Brussels International Exposition in 1935, for example, the Baťa section contained a display of shoes in glass cabinets arranged around the room which bore panels above them with large-scale photographs with accompanying text. The photographs portrayed the progress of the people, the city, and the company from the humble origins of tedious shoe making in primitive conditions to the modernity of the metropolitan life. They showed the 'immense factories', 'rapid means of connection', 'the psychology of happiness', 'progress through schooling', 'Mens sana in corpore sano' (a healthy mind in a healthy body), and 'the glorification of a marvellous whole'. The employees of Baťa were therefore presented as part of a larger whole, united by the common company goals and philosophy translated into the overseeing of their education, social and health care, factory production and private life.

Ladislav Sutnar, Czechoslovak press diagrams, Pressa, Cologne, 1928. Zprávy Svazu československého díla no. 1 (1928): 6.

Baťa, as a company, took a great interest in its workers, looking after every aspect of the their lives in the hope of creating a *new man*.[46] This man (using the period terminology which privileged the male gender) would be assisted by machines, which 'rescued him from slavery'.[47] This was a common view, explicitly voiced in an instruction brochure for company managers of Baťa entitled *Výběr a výchova průmyslového člověka* (*The Selection and Education of an Industry Man*) from 1938. It comprised the ideas of Tomáš and Jan Antonín Baťa, enthusiasm for the machines of the politician Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian nobleman with Czechoslovak citizenship, and also included the views of two French medical doctors. Emile Malespine contributed a chapter on occupational health and Alexis Carrel on positive eugenics. Positive eugenics (or more generally eugenics), meaning the encouragement of reproduction of genetically successful individuals, is a theme that does not often feature in the accounts of Baťa. Nevertheless, it is relevant not only when discussing the company's visions and their attitude to workers, but also in relation to world's fairs where eugenics was prominently visualised.

The Baťa booklet quoted Carrel's work on eugenics in which he provided distinctions between superior and inferior people and advised on how to differentiate between people's roles in the workplace and in life.[48] While women, Carrel argued, should return to their original natural role of not only bearing children but also educating them, men should perform tasks that are most suitable for them.[49] Individuality should be encouraged instead of equality. The company booklet, however, avoided explicit mention of selective breeding that Carrel had suggested in his text, but it emphasised the selection of fit individuals with desirable qualities.

Baťa's training manual deserves more attention because it reveals the company's stance on this controversial topic. The purpose of the publication was to give guidance to Baťa managers to 'create' the best possible employees. A new man, the employee of the new modern age, could be shaped up by education and it was best to start as soon as possible. Nurseries, schools, training institutes, hospitals, and maternity wards that Baťa built conformed to these beliefs and trajectories. Constructing and maintaining these facilities was an important topic that was also visualised for promotional purposes. Images of these facilities were habitually

Výběr a výchova průmyslového člověka, instrukční příručka (The Selection and Education of an Industry Man). Zlín: Baťa, osobní oddělení, 1938.

included in international and national displays in order to document the company's caring approach.[50]

Although *The Selection and Education of an Industry Man* had most probably a small readership, it is indicative of more general tendencies in treating workers. It also became clear that not only could better employees be moulded by the selection and provision of a suitable environment; a better nation and people could also be created. The so-called betterment of humanity was a concern of many scientists and politicians in the first half of the 20th century, and was applied at many levels at large exhibitions, which were supposed to showcase the best of humanity and its creations. Another graphic diagram, from the Eugenic Exhibit at the world's fairs in Chicago in 1933, illustrates this well.

At Chicago's Century of Progress in 1933, the science of 'human improvement by better breeding' as eugenics was known, was displayed for the first time at a world's fair.[51] The Eugenics Exhibit was located in the Hall of Science, where other exhibits included the contributions to progress from mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and medicine. The Eugenics Exhibit consisted of four large wall panels and charts showing the aims of eugenics 'as exemplified in human pedigree studies' for the 'average intelligent world's fair visitor'.[52] The first panel showed a graphic rendition of a tree of eugenics with roots in disciplines like genetics, environment, or anthropology. The accompanying description outlined the role of eugenics 'in improvement in the breed of man'. Panel 2 included a chart explaining changes in 'families, communities, races, and nations' through generations caused by migration or birth rate.[53] The remaining two panels displayed family trees of two strikingly different groups: the 'old, extensive and degenerate Ishmael tribe' from Indiana was contrasted with 'a superior family' of the Roosevelts, the family of American political, military, cultural and business leaders. The panels were meant to show the importance of hereditary qualities of the different family stocks as well as of the environment, which consisted of the physical, social, economic, educational, and spiritual surroundings.

Although the Chicago Eugenics exhibit was not extensive, by using infographics and charts, the information on display was made official and

therefore legitimised as science. Moreover, world's fairs had already been known as 'folk universities' and effective educational venues for the masses and this kind of information could therefore be taken at face value by visitors.[54] After all, as Harry H. Laughlin – a prominent representative of eugenics in the USA – noted, an intelligent farmer knew how to improve the breed of poultry, hog or cattle and would therefore recognise the parallel with the need to improve human pedigrees.[55]

The uncomfortable history of world's fairs which relates to eugenics and racial supremacy has been explored by various scholars; for example, by Robert W. Rydell.[56] He associated such exhibits with the efforts of exhibitors and organisers to convey a vision of specific progress and to understand what such progress meant at the time. 'Race betterment' became a term often used in America of the interwar period and it made its way into world's fairs. The emphasis on progress at fairs often equalled improvement, whether of people, machinery or living standards, and while, as Rydell has noted, 'world's fairs were well established as one of the most effective vehicles for transmitting ideas of scientific racism from intellectual elites to millions of ordinary Americans' these ideas, I would argue, also reached perceptive international audiences.[57] Presented as fact-based science, eugenics became part of the modernity project of the fairs associated with progress.

The new man of Czechoslovakia

Perceptive audiences were also located in Czechoslovakia. In the new state, the new Czechoslovak person could also be created and improved. Baťa had already suggested that in the booklet and several exhibitions, as well as in the suggested map depicting the profile of the Czechoslovak man. At the state level, science, especially anthropology and medicine, was employed to explain and justify the existence of the Czechoslovak people, the Czechoslovak nation, and their possible future direction, which was aligned with ideas of progress, evolution, and eugenics.

In 1921, the Czech medical doctor Ladislav Haškovec proclaimed his conviction that the 'life of the nation' could be strengthened and increased by carefully conducted and developed eugenics efforts. He held that eugenics was 'concerned with the health not only of the individual but also of the entire nation'.[58] Haškovec and his Czech colleagues presented eugenics as western and democratic science and understood in this way, eugenic ideas could be employed to construct, explain, and display the new nation of healthy Czechs and Czechoslovaks.

Even the composition of the new (albeit artificial) nation could be rationalised by science. The Czech anthropologist Jindřich Matiegka acknowledged the positive impact of mixing between races when he argued that historically, the 'Czech nation originated from various racial and national elements' that included Slavic, Gallic, and Germanic influences. They mixed and crossed, which 'strengthened the physical capabilities and [...] mental abilities of the Czechs'.[59] As a result, the most advanced nations – Matiegka claimed – were also the most complex in their racial and ethnic composition because mixing led to the creation of a strong culture.[60] The Czechs were mixed with the Germans, while Slovaks remained insular and isolated, and this was reflected in their respective cultures.

Matiegka's views on the composition of the Czechoslovaks were not dissimilar to his colleague Aleš Hrdlička (1869–1943). He was an influential anthropologist of Czech origin who lived in the USA from 1881 but retained contacts with Czech scientists. As a curator of physical anthropology of the U.S. National Museum, today part of the Smithsonian Museums, he

had a brilliant career which included the role of an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on migration (and to a large extent racial) issues during the Second World War. He founded the American Journal of Physical Anthropology and was a frequent participant at international scientific congresses, including those on eugenics, which he described as the 'science of improving the human stock'.[61]

Until recently, Hrdlička held a recognised place in Czech and American anthropology; however, his often unethical practices, partly conducted at world's fairs, have been recently critically re-assessed.[62] He was involved in, for example, the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis in 1904 and the Panama California Exhibition in San Diego in 1915. At the St. Louis World's Fair, he retrieved the brains of several native Filipinos who died there of pneumonia and used them for his further research at the Smithsonian, causing considerable controversy in recent years.[63] At San Diego, he co-curated the natural history exhibit Science of Man, which showcased the racial division of people according to technological development, classifying them into stages between savages and civilisation.[64] The visualisations of the different types depicted in sculpture and casts were complemented by a chart entitled 'The Races of Man' which included categorised racial types.

As an influential anthropologist and Czech native, Hrdlička helped to shape the development of the discipline of anthropology in Czechoslovakia.[65] In the USA, he was in close contact with the Czech and Slovak émigré communities and played a role in the Czechoslovak pavilion at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. The pamphlet entitled *World's Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group* was put together by the local diaspora to accompany the Czechoslovak exhibit. The publication included a basic description of the national pavilion and a brief explanation of various aspects of the history and culture of Czechoslovakia and its people.[66] Hrdlička contributed an article on the physical and mental characteristics of 'Czechoslovaks' for the pamphlet, in which he outlined the historical circumstances of the ethnic formations of the group. He overviewed the geography of the newly formed state, its history, and the different ethnic groups as well as the various traits of its inhabitants. Discussing the effects of the various historical struggles on the current racial composition, he stated his

view that the invasions of the territory by Germans and Magyars led to so-called admixtures.

This mixing between racial groups contributed to the different cultural development of the individual parts of the nation. According to Hrdlička, 'the Czechs particularly suffered, were much admixed, but through force of circumstances also rose culturally'.[67] The Slovaks, on the other hand, were repressed and isolated from the west by Magyars. The Slovak isolation had restricted their cultural advance but in direct proportion to this, the Slovaks (and Moravians) had better preserved their folk art and their individuality, while the Czechs became more cosmopolitan. The positive outcome of this isolation was for Hrdlička that the Slovaks and most Moravians 'remained purer than the Czechs'.[68]

For both Matiegka and Hrdlička, Czech culture was more 'western' and cosmopolitan, while that of Slovak retained its folk character and individuality.[69] According to this view, diversity was a necessary predicament in the composition of the new nation because the most advanced nations were also the most complex in their racial and ethnic structure.[70] Within this narrative, diversity was recognised but it played a specific role in distinguishing Czechs and Slovaks. However, it did not necessarily translate into the visual and material presentation at the Czechoslovak pavilions constructed physically and conceptually by the state and its representatives. The Czechoslovak nation was shown as homogeneous in that what was displayed was predominantly Czech, related to Czech culture, history, and businesses. When Slovaks appeared, they were represented by folk art and culture, which conveyed their rural image. Other than that, some sights from Slovakia or Ruthenia also appeared when built or used by Czechs as touristic destinations. These were spas, mountains and forests, as well as administrative buildings and infrastructure 'brought' by Czechs.

The lack of diversity, i.e. the emphasis on homogeneity, was a common feature of many national pavilions, whether they were affiliated with new or old states. The nation presented in a national pavilion at world's fairs was often an artificial version of the reality: an idealised and simplified version that would be easy to communicate, visualise and understand.

Diversity was suppressed unless it played a very specific role in marking ethnic and racial differences. These were cases of exoticized presentations of ethnic groups and minorities based on from recreations of 'native' villages and performances that have been the subject of extensive research.[71]

Ethnic difference and business

The inclusion, or rather more often exclusion, of groups and minorities from the national presentation was a symptom of the more general state of affairs in Czechoslovakia. While Slovaks played the role of the little peasant brothers and sisters to the Czechs, Ruthenians from the easternmost part of the state featured only very seldomly, while Hungarians, living in large numbers in Slovakia, were absent. The only exceptions in the representation were Germans and Jews. Companies as well as vocational schools run by German speakers, a group that included Jewish owners, were represented in Czechoslovak pavilions. They often came from the Bohemian border regions of the so-called Sudetenland, where factories of companies like Moser, Riedel, Harrach or Lobmeyr, producing porcelain, glass, or jewellery, were based. Their goods had been presented under the auspices of Bohemia before 1918 and Czechoslovakia after 1918.[72]

In September 1938, the Munich Agreement signed between Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom ceded the Sudetenland, with a large German majority, to Germany; many factories in these territories found themselves no longer in Czechoslovakia. For example, Czechoslovakia lost the entire production of plate, mirror, and bottle glass, alongside about half of the blown glass production, a large part of bijou making of Jablonec nad Nisou (or Gablonz an der Neisse in German) and several training schools.[73]

The glass manufacturer Moser was associated with not one state but several and participated in international exhibitions, and can therefore serve as an illustration of this history. The company was originally founded by Ludwig Moser (1833–1916) in the spa town of Karlovy Vary (Karslbad in German) in 1857 in western Bohemia, then part of the Habsburg Monarchy. It continued to be run by his Jewish family in Czechoslovakia and the German Reich and grew into a large enterprise that focused on more affluent customers with their luxurious objects.[74] At the *Weltausstellung* in Vienna in 1873, for instance, Moser featured glass engraved with genre scenes based on graphic arts from German templates. Following their success at the world's fair, the company was made the official supplier to the Habsburg imperial court.[75] At the beginning of the 20th century, it also became the court supplier for the Persian Shah and the King of England

and took part in further exhibitions around the world, in sections labelled as Austrian or Bohemian.[76] Before 1918, it had appeared in the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia (1876), the expositions universelles in Paris of 1878, 1889 and 1900, the Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exhibition in New Orleans (1884–1885), the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888, and the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis (1904).[77] At many of these, the company was awarded high prizes.

In 1918, the company became Czechoslovak and during the interwar period, it continued to successfully exhibit under the label of Czechoslovakia. Moser continued to receive medals and prizes, including a golden medal in Paris in 1925, and grand prix in the Brussels International Exposition in 1935 and in Paris in 1937, for their cut and engraved glassware and crystal.[78] After September 1938 and the Munich Agreement, however, the company, which was located in the Sudetenland, was nationalised and became affiliated with other German glass manufacturers.[79] This was preceded by the departure of the founders, the Moser brothers, from the management of the company in the early 1930s in response to increasing nationalism in the city and region.

Moser products nevertheless featured in exhibitions of German industries, including the Seventh Triennale in Milan that took place in November 1938. The company management changed several times: despite the Jewish origins of the family, their name was kept in the company's title Ludwig Moser & Söhne until 1941 when the firm was renamed Staatliche Glasmanufaktur Karlsbad AG.[80] Moser therefore experienced a rather turbulent history which was linked to its location in the border regions and the German/Jewish origins of the owners. These circumstances, however, did not affect the company's success at international exhibitions regardless of which national pavilion or section it came under.

Conclusion: The politics of exhibitions

The intensifying political situation of the late 1930s had a great impact on companies' affiliations with specific nations or states. While some businesses were subsumed under the new regime in the Protectorate or the Slovak Republic, others tried to negotiate the new environment to their economic benefit. This was the case with Baťa and their response to the changing political situation also serves as a conclusion on the interwar exhibitionary efforts of the Czechoslovak state that ceased to exist in 1939.

When the company Baťa could not build its vision of Czechoslovakia at the New York World's Fair in 1939, it planned its extensive exhibit to be located on a large area of the second floor of the national pavilion. The most prominent work here was an enormous painted curved window, measuring 35 metres, whose twenty-one panes depicted the story of the shoe giant Baťa and his 'happy family of workers' entitled *Hymn to Work*. It was depicted as an evolution which started with the old and laborious way of shoemaking and continued with depictions that saw the introduction of technological advancements in shoe manufacture and sales. The family also featured in the Baťa family tree and as providers of various amenities in Zlín, factories and the joyful life of the workers. The story told in the windows evolved as a trajectory from the tiresome shoemaking of a lone cobbler to effective mass production in a factory, overseen by the two Baťa half-brothers depicted in the centre. The associations with evolution and improvements in life and work were obvious.

However, the eventual political disappearance of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 presented new challenges not only for the official, national display but also for the companies like Baťa. In that context, where the Czechoslovak state no longer existed, the question of how it should be represented in New York became more pressing than ever. While earlier in the 1930s, Baťa was happy to stand in for the Czechoslovak state, and to an extent, the Czechoslovak nation almost as a metaphor, many individuals and companies started backing down from such associations after the German takeover.

A state that had disappeared presented many problems at various levels. The contract of participation at the world's fair became invalid, as the

'Hymn to Work' Baťa window in the Czechoslovak pavilion, New York, 1939. World's Fair. Czech mural I, Gottscho-Schleisner Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

'Hymn to Work' Baťa window. World's Fair. Window panels with illustrations and text on the profit-sharing system in the shoe industry II, Gottscho-Schleisner Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

legal entity that entered it no longer existed. This political restructuring raised many legal and moral questions. They included issues such as the who would make the payment for customs fees, shipping, and storage, provide the insurance for objects from a now alien country, and who owed the objects that originated from a country that had disappeared. The displacement did not only affect objects but also workers who were brought to the exhibitions. In many cases, they (the people and the artefacts) had to stay in the USA until the end of the war or even longer.

For the company Baťa, the situation concerning the New York participation became alarming. Immediately after the German occupation in March 1939, the new government in Prague terminated all the works on the Czechoslovak presentation.[81] In New York, however, the American government and the Fair Corporation in charge of the exhibition did not recognize 'German sovereignty over the provinces of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia' and continued to work with the representatives of the former government of Czechoslovakia.[82] In light of these orders, the exhibition representative of Baťa explicitly requested that all the company exhibits be removed from the pavilion. In an attempt to disassociate the exhibits from the Czechoslovak legacy, and not to upset the Germans, Josef Černovský described the Baťa exhibits as 'purely private property'.[83] His request for the removal of the objects was, nevertheless, dismissed by the authorities in the USA. Ultimately, Černovský conceded and suggested to the headquarters in Zlín to continue the exhibition, but not in an 'anti-German spirit' which would cause repercussions.[84]

Baťa's readiness to represent the state and the nation in a pavilion that the company would design was conditioned by the political circumstances. It came to a quick halt once the company's survival was threatened after it was affiliated with a state that ceased to exist. This could suggest another parallel with evolution and the survival of the fittest, but it may be more appropriate to view Baťa's activities as just opportunist and profit-driven. Firstly, the company's idea of an alternative to the national pavilion and later its involvement in the Czechoslovak representation was abandoned once it was no longer economically pragmatic. Yet during the interwar period, the company had shared many motivations and aims with the Czechoslovakia and other newly created political entities.

The presentation of ideas using the latest techniques and methods of graphic design and typography helped to succinctly convey complex ideas that companies and states put forward in their pavilions. These ideas presented the workers, the people and the nation as ever evolving towards a better, more successful future. This trajectory could be shaped by education and the selection of fitting individuals, informed by contemporary scientific findings of medicine, anthropology, and eugenics. In the environment of world's fairs, the ideas of who composed specific groups like nations were framed by scientific narratives. Even though findings about, for instance, the supremacy of the white race and ethnic composition of nations that foregrounded their cultural level, are from today's point of view dubious, their scientific framing made them appear authoritative. Communicated by comprehensible graphic and artistic renditions, designers and artists also helped to turn them into facts. Together with anthropologists, company executives and government officials involved in national presentations, they created the vision of new employees and new peoples. Such a vision was firmly built on eugenic ideology that strove for the creation of modern, healthy, and strong nations and their peoples.

ENDNOTES

1 'Z výstavy v Paříži: na třetím místě', *Večerní České slovo*, 26 November 1937.

2 Jan Antonín Baťa, 'Dva pavilony Světové výstavy v Paříži', *Zlín*, 4 October 1937, 1.

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