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## HOMAGE TO A GREAT MAN: INTERWAR MEMORIALS TO PRESIDENT MASARYK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA\*

### Abstract

*Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk represents an example of how the “cult of personality” can be fostered in a democratic environment. For his depiction, a de facto new iconography was created, although it was not inventive in any substantive way, and in many cases, the monuments occupied a significant spot in the public space. There were efforts not only to erect a monument in Prague in front of the presidential residence at Prague Castle, but also in Brno, the second largest city. Both competitions were announced in 1937, two years after Masaryk’s resignation. At the time, Czechoslovakia was facing the international threat of Hitler’s Germany, amplified by the activity of the significant German minority living in the Bohemian and Moravian borderlands. This was another reason for perceiving the construction of monuments to Masaryk as an act of strengthening national pride and lauding the democratic regime. The case of the Brno monument is interesting mainly for two reasons. First, some contestants in the competition to design the monument proposed a relatively innovative iconography, while others used traditional concepts. Secondly, there was an effort to create an entirely new public space in an urban structure dedicated to celebrating the democratic state. For this reason, a location was chosen where a statue of Emperor Joseph II had originally stood. Therefore, it already had strong political connotations for the German inhabitants of the city, and thus from the Czech side, it was an attempt to imbue the site with new meaning and erase the original one.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918 as one of the successor states to the Habsburg Empire, and the interwar Republic still retains the aura of the only truly democratic state in Central Europe at that time. Although it proclaimed itself as the national state of Czechoslovaks, it was as multi-ethnic as Austria-Hungary itself, with German, Polish, Ruthenian, Magyar and Jewish minorities. The whole concept of the so-called “Czechoslovakian nation” consisting of Czechs and Slovaks was very fragile.<sup>1</sup> The similarities with the preceding monarchy could also be seen in the person of the state’s leader. The

\* English revised by Stuart Roberts.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State That Failed* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press 2009), 20–86.

first President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937), originally a university professor, was elected four times, so he held the post from 1918–1935. Masaryk was, on the one hand, the object of a “cult of personality” and, on the other hand, a visual propaganda device for the democratic republic.<sup>2</sup> His nickname among the people was “tatiček” (Little Father) and after his abdication in 1935, the official title “President Liberator” was granted to him by law. He commented on this part of his role, the veneration of his person, with the words: “... political life is also expressed in symbols sensually and ideologically. I have lived as privately as possible up to now, but now I have had to put up with the guards downstairs, the parades, the receptions and all the representation; what to do, I sometimes say, it goes with the business.”<sup>3</sup>

## HOW TO DEPICT A DEMOCRATIC LEADER?

The topic of Masaryk iconography is an exciting field.<sup>4</sup> One of the typical depictions of the President is in uniform-like clothing – jacket, trousers, cap, and riding boots – which he liked to wear not only when he went riding but literally as his everyday dress.<sup>5</sup> Masaryk wore it as informal dress, and he explained this choice only with regards to his comfort. Karel Čapek wrote: “He wears it the whole year round ... it is civilian, with some of the strictness of a uniform; or a work suit and sports dress in one. It is his fashion, a pattern with which he has grown into one.”<sup>6</sup> This uniform-like dress had military connotations, of course. He was caught wearing it in a photo, for example, during army manoeuvres in 1922 and on a ride with Prime Minister František Udržal in 1929.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the painter Jaroslav Riedl (an officer of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia fighting against Austria-Hungary) depicted the President in his “uniform” on horseback as an army leader in a picture intended for military barracks, to replace the portrait of Emperor Franz Joseph I.<sup>8</sup> (fig. 1) The painter František Horník (a pupil of Vlaho Bukovac at the Prague Academy) also depicts Masaryk on horseback in uniform-like clothing. This picture became very popular as a postcard. The continuity of these portraits with the depiction of Emperor Franz Joseph I in the era of the monarchy seems clear, not only in form but also in function.<sup>9</sup> The same, of course,

2 On this topic see Pavel Kosatík, *Jiný T.G.M.* [The Different TGM] (Praha: Paseka, 2018), 342–345.

3 Karel Čapek, *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem* [Talks with T. G. Masaryk] (Praha: Fr. Borový, 1948), 110. If not stated otherwise, the translations of quotations are by the authors.

4 On the topic see Jaroslav Sedlář, “Podobizny T. G. Masaryka ve výtvarném umění” [Portraits of T. G. Masaryk in Fine Arts] I. and II., *Universitas*, no. 1 and 3 (1998): 30–38 and 23–33; Vít Vlnas, “Portréty T. G. M. od karikatury k ikoně” [Portraits of TGM: From Caricature to Icon], *Český časopis historický*, no. 4 (2018): 967–989.

5 See e.g. his photographs in Karel Čapek, *Masaryk ve fotografii momentky z posledních let* [Masaryk in Photography, Moments from the Last Years] (Praha: Orbis – Čin, 1936).

6 *Ibid.*, 6.

7 *Ibid.*, fig. 7 and 73.

8 See Ilona Krbcová, “Jaroslav Riedl, T. G. Masaryk, 1929”, *Vojenský historický ústav*, accessed July 27, 2021, <http://www.vhu.cz/jaroslav-riedl-t-g-masaryk-1929>.

9 See also Vlnas, “Portréty,” 983–984; for the representation of Francis Joseph I see Werner Telesko and Stefan Schmidl, *Der verklärte Herrscher. Leben, Tod und Nachleben Kaiser Franz Josefs I. in seinen Repräsentationen* (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2016).



**Fig. 1.** Jaroslav Riedl, *T. G. Masaryk*, 1929, oil on canvas, Military History Institute Prague. Photograph by Military History Institute Prague.

applies to the President's depictions on stamps, banknotes, and in photographs intended for classrooms and offices.<sup>10</sup> Despite the popularity of this iconography in painting and photography in the inter-war period, it was never used for an official statue such as monument or memorial in public space. We can connect this with the statement of the jury of the monument competition in Brno in 1938, which states that it is:

... categorically against an equestrian statue of the President (...) an equestrian statue, based in today's designs on the late Roman period was always characteristic of a soldier or ruler and is alien to the Czech iconography (with a few exceptions). Against objections that the President Liberator appeared on horseback not only as commander-in-chief of our military forces but that the sport of horse riding was his particular hobby, the jury states that President T. G. Masaryk, who was freely recognized by the nation as the Liberator, fulfilled this ideal as the creator of the Czechoslovak state solely by his mental powers, personal wisdom and maturity.<sup>11</sup>

Masaryk was not a symbol of military power but a philosopher, professor, statesman and thinker – a man of peace. Jan Mukařovský, the Czech linguistic and aesthetic

theorist, demonstrated this, for example, in his remarks on Vincent Makovský's (1900–1966) bust of Masaryk. In the case of this sculpture, the contemporary viewer could see the President in his “triple form”: in the “physiognomy of a ruler, a man of fateful decisions and a shaper of history”; as “an old man, wise, calm, at peace with life, a man who had been through a great deal and was not broken by anything, who had survived and understood everything; it is also Masaryk the philosopher”; and, lastly, “as an ascetic, a man of the resistance and a conqueror.”<sup>12</sup>

So, what kind of iconography suits the statues and memorials of Masaryk well? The direction was indicated as early as 1919 by the first official portrait of President, a print by the prominent painter of the older generation Max Švabinský (**fig. 2**), and by the first official statue made by Jan Štursa in 1920–1921 for a hall in the Czechoslovak National Assembly in Prague. A statue made by Otto Gutfreund for a memorial to the President in Hradec Králové in 1925–

10 Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al., *Building a State. The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design / Budování státu. Repräsentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* (Praha: UMPRUM, 2015), 95, 97–100.

11 [jr.], “Untitled,” *Lidové noviny*, March 4, 1938, 3.

12 Jan Mukařovský, “Troji podoba T. G. Masaryka” [Tripl Form of T. G. Masaryk], *Lidové noviny*, February 27, 1938, 5.





**Fig. 2.** Maxmilián Švabinský, T. G. Masaryk. *The First President of The Republic of Czechoslovakia*, 1919, print on paper, private collection. Photograph by Radomír Debowski.

1926 was also influential. Each of these shows the President standing calm and focused, dressed in formal day wear (or cutaway, in Czech known as a *žaket*, which is phonetically derived from the French – *jaquette*).<sup>13</sup> This detail is essential. Between the wars, a *žaket* was taken to be formal dress for men in the highest positions, and Masaryk used it for ceremonial events, even during his installation in his post. Czechoslovak diplomat Prokop Maxa remembers Masaryk wearing a *žaket* at meetings with foreign ambassadors,<sup>14</sup> and Karel Čapek records the following event:

Just after the penultimate presidential election, Prime Minister Švehla telephoned Masaryk's secretary at the last minute to ask what attire the President was wearing for the ceremony because the Prime Minister wanted to dress the same way when he came for him. So, the secretary put the question to the President, and Masaryk answered: 'What attire? My chamberlain Hůza told me to take a *žaket*.'<sup>15</sup>

Švabinský's engraving and Štursa's and Gutfreund's statues are not then informal portraits of the President, but formal ones, depicting him as bearing the symbolic burden of his office. Of course, a figure of a politician standing in *contrapposto* was nothing new, and was used, for example, for Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln. These three depictions

forged the iconography commonly used for Masaryk memorials throughout the interwar era. Literally dozens of similar statues were erected in many towns and cities across Czechoslovakia, designed by various artists and of varying quality. Only in connection with Józef Piłsudski were a comparable number of monuments created in Central Europe; the latter was comparably perceived as the "father" of the Second Polish Republic.<sup>16</sup>

## PLANNING THE MONUMENT FOR PRAGUE

In 1937 there was a preliminary competition in Prague to find the right location for the President's memorial in the city and to settle on the urban setting of the area chosen.<sup>17</sup> From forty submitted designs, first prize was

13 Eva Uchalová, *Česká móda* [Czech Fashion] (Praha: Olympia, 1996), 105.; Ludmila Kybalová, *Od zlatých dvacátých po Diora* [From Golden Twenties to Dior] (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2009), 136, 198.

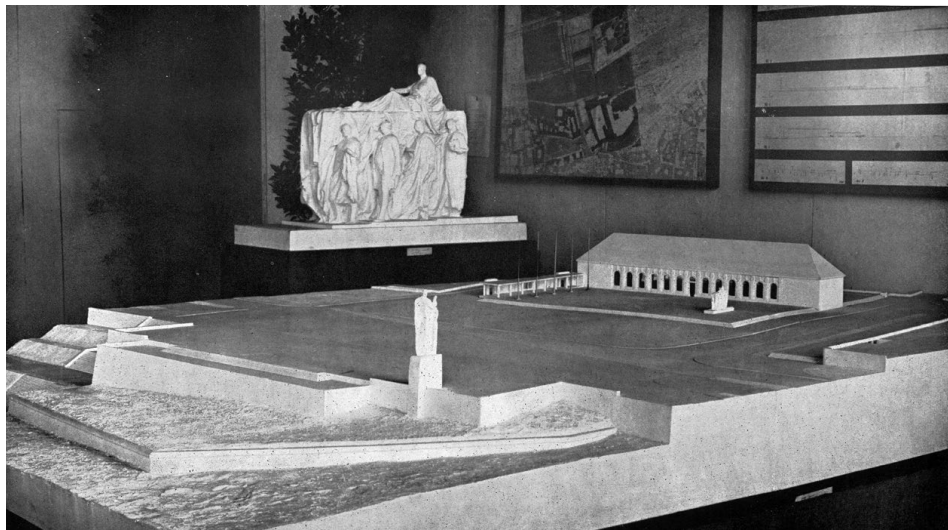
14 Prokop Maxa, "Ze vzpomínek" [From Memories], in *T.G.M. jak jsme ho viděli*, eds. Josef Hofmann and Oskar Odstrčil (Praha: Mikuta, 1948), 88.

15 Karel Čapek, "Drobnosti o velikém presidentovi" [Trifles about the Great President], *Lidové noviny*, September 19, 1937, 3.

16 Martin Kohlrausch, *Brokers of Modernity. East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects 1910–1950* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019), 235–236.; David A. Messenger, *War and Public Memory. Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2020), 57.

17 On this topic see Zdeněk Hojda and Jiří Pokorný, *Pomníky a zapomínky* [Memorials and Forgettals] (Praha – Litomyšl: Paseka, 1996), 191–204.; Jiří Hlušička, "Sochař Vincenc Makovský" [Sculptor Vincenc Makovský], *Vincenc Makovský*, ed. Jaroslav Malina (Brno: CERM, 2002), 49–50.; Bruce R. Berglund, *Castle and Cathedral*

Fig. 3. Jaroslav Fragner and Vincenc Makovský, *Model of the Masaryk Memorial* from the second round of the competition, 1938, in: *Volné směry*, no. 1 (1938), 335.



awarded to the sculptor Vincenc Makovský and the architect Jaroslav Fragner (1898–1967). Makovský acquired experience in Antoine Bourdell's atelier in Paris, and Fragner was a prominent functionalist architect. They chose an unused plot near Prague Castle, next to the Royal Garden. As a critic in a newspaper said, their proposal was inspired by Jože Plečnik's monumental regulation of the Hradčany district.<sup>18</sup> The ambitious architectural and urbanistic solution assumed a new bridge from the Castle across the Stag moat, with a so-called House of the President – which was intended as a museum – and a large tribune for up to 200 politicians to speak during official celebrations. The whole area was not intended merely as a monument to one man but as an entirely new space dedicated to the veneration of the first President and a new main promenade for parades in the Czechoslovak capital.

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On the other hand, the design assumed the demolition of the early Baroque Riding Hall, which would be a serious intrusion into the original historical setting. Compared to more modest memorials, like Gutfreund's in Hradec Králové, the iconography also underwent changes because it had to be more complex. Makovský and Fragner proposed two groups of statues visually communicating with each other – the memorial to the President and an allegory of Masaryk's ideals. The first group consisted of eight figures of famous philosophers of the past carrying the prone figure of Masaryk with a gesture of blessing. However, Masaryk was still alive, and this form was considered inappropriate. The second group was an allegory consisting of an antique female figure and smaller ones on a pedestal. In 1938 a second competition was held for the plot that Fragner and Makovský chose in the first round.<sup>19</sup> They embellished the original proposal, (**fig. 3**) but the jury did not select a winner

in *Modern Prague. Longing for the Sacred in a Skeptical Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017), 308–324.

<sup>18</sup> “Pomník prezidentu Osvoboditeli” [Memorial to the President Liberator], *Lidové noviny*, May 9, 1937, 6.

<sup>19</sup> “Pražská soutěž na pomník T. G. Masaryka” [Prague Competition for T. G. Masaryk Memorial], *Volné směry*, no. 1 (1938), 324–339.

and only recommended that the National Assembly, the government, and the City of Prague reconsider the whole idea once more.<sup>20</sup> After that, the idea of the project was abandoned.

## PLANNING THE MONUMENT FOR BRNO

In Brno, a competition was also held in 1937. It must be said that in these years after Masaryk's death, Czechoslovakia was in a difficult political situation. In Germany, Adolf Hitler was in power from 1933; in Czechoslovakia, the Nazi *Sudetendeutsche Partei* led by Konrad Henlein was on the rise from 1935 – it was even one of the strongest political parties in the Czechoslovak parliament – and the coexistence of the Germans and Czechs in one state began to be problematic.<sup>21</sup> The government had to face the demands of the local Germans for autonomy, which would, of course, result in the unification of the borderlands of Czechoslovakia – inhabited mostly by Germans – with the Third Reich. This situation became a reality in September 1938 after the Munich agreement, when the representatives of France and Great Britain yielded to Hitler and granted him part of Czechoslovak territory, hoping thereby to avoid war.<sup>22</sup>

In this atmosphere, when the very existence of the Czechoslovak Republic was under threat, it made sense to design a large memorial to the ex-President Liberator in front of the Prague Castle to “boost” national pride and to show that the state had solid foundations and real heroes. The situation in Brno was similar. The competition was held in July 1937, then extended after Masaryk's death and evaluated in February 1938. The memorial was to have been “an artistic expression of national liberation.”<sup>23</sup> In some ways, the whole idea was close to that in Prague – to create a place of national pride and celebrations, planned not only as a memorial to the President but also as a monument to national Liberation with a statue of Masaryk. Only in Prague, one of the tasks of the competitors was to choose the best place for such memorial within the city's structure, requiring the cooperation of a sculptor and an architect.<sup>24</sup> As was stated in the press of the day: “Considering the nature and importance of the monument, it should be in the liveliest parts of the city, in a valuable place and as exposed as possible. Moreover, the site and the monument should allow participation of the public during festive occasions.”<sup>25</sup>

As the organizer of the competition, the City of Brno recommended six prominent possible locations within the broader city centre, but only three of

20 [re], “Pomník presidenta Osvoboditele na hradě” [Memorial of President Liberator on the Castle], *Lidové noviny*, May 16, 1938, 3.

21 On topic, see, e.g., Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State That Failed*.

22 On the political situation of interwar Czechoslovakia see e.g. Jaroslav Pánek, Oldřich Tůma et al., *A history of the Czech Lands* (Praha: Karolinum, 2019), 437–480.

23 [--o--], “O pomník osvobození a prvního presidenta v Brně” [About a Memorial Liberation and the First President], *Lidové noviny*, June 19, 1937, 1.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

them were suitable. Furthermore, the selection of these three was certainly not random but rather a reflection of the specific historical connotations of each of them. The semantic pattern of this choice had deeper roots connected with questions related to the national movement and identity of the newly-founded Czechoslovakia.

The first possible location was on foothill below Špilberk Castle, within sight, so to speak, of one of the most dreaded prisons of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>26</sup> This site was in the middle of today's Husova Street, next to the Museum of Applied Arts, where an undeveloped plot was being considered as a place for a new administrative city building to expand the Brno City Hall. This building was planned in the form of a huge functionalist block and was to create new squares on both sides, while next to it a new court building was also planned.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the Masaryk monument would become an integral and symbolic part of this new Brno administrative quarter and an apparent ideological counterweight to Špilberk castle.<sup>28</sup> It can be seen on one of the competition designs which was awarded third prize, which was prepared by Brno painter František Kaláb and the architect Ladislav Rado, who was Bohuslav Fuchs's collaborator and later a student of Walter Gropius in the USA. They designed a cut into a hillside in the shape of a sector of a circle just opposite the entrance of the planned city administrative building. Here on a stone beam, carried by a group of allegorical figures, stands the statue of the President (surprisingly in his riding suit). A slim parabolic arch stretches over the whole structure as a paraphrase of a triumphal arch (**fig 4**).<sup>29</sup>

The second proposed site was a public space directly in front of the former Augustinian monastery, which had served since the late 18th century as the Governor's Palace of the Margraviate of Moravia. Coincidentally, in the early 19th century, this place had been chosen for a new fountain crowned by a sculptural allegory of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>30</sup> So, it was evident that this site had strategic significance within the city, and this fact would play a role in its later selection for the new presidential monument. The competition

26 Jiří Vaněk, "Hrad Špilberk" [Špilberk Castle], ed. Jiří Kroupa, *Dějiny Brna 7. Uměleckohistorické památky. Historické jádro* [History of Brno 7. Artistic Monuments. Historic City Centre] (Brno: Brno City Archive, 2015), 117–192.

27 Lenka Kudělková, "Historie největší nerealizované stavby v meziválečném Brně" [History of the Largest Unrealized Building in Brno], *Bulletin Moravské galerie*, 52 (1994), 111–115.; Jan Galeta, "Urban Development Strategies in Brno and Moravská Ostrava / Komunální strategie výstavby Brna a Moravské Ostravy", ed. Jindřich Vybíral, *The Strength and Future of the Nation is National identity. Architecture and Czech Politics in the 19th Century / Síla i budoucnost jest národu národnost. Architektura a česká politika v 19. století* (Praha: UMPRUM, 2020), 314–374.

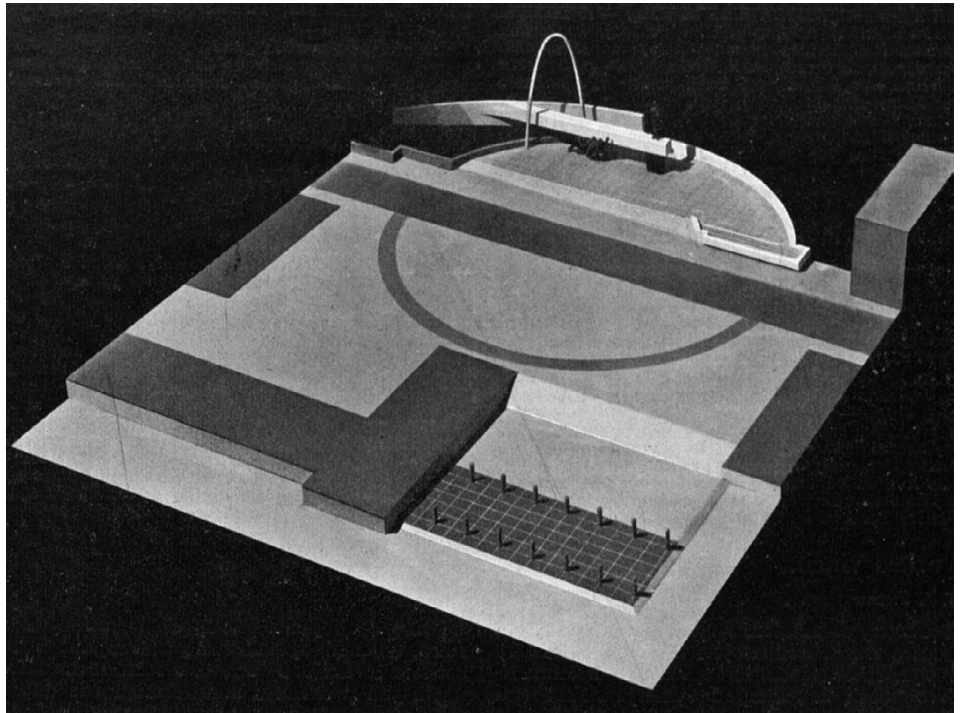
28 Compare the situation with plans for remodeling part of Warsaw around Na Rozdrożu Square for the Monument to Józef Piłsudski: Sylwia Paplińska et al., *Warsaw. The City Today. Plans for the Future* (Warszawa: Centrum Edukacyjno-Kulturalne Łowicka, 2000), 12.

29 [jr.], "Pomník presidenta osvoboditele v Brně" [Memorial of President Liberator in Brno], *Lidové noviny*, February 2, 1938, 2.; The pictures of the design were published in journal *Index. Leták kulturní informace*, no. 3 (1938): 25, 28.

30 Michaela Šeferisová Loudová and Jiří Kroupa, "Kláštery ve městě II. (severní část)" [Cloisters in the City II. (Northern Part)], ed. Jiří Kroupa, *Dějiny Brna 7* (Brno: Brno City Archive), 427.



**Fig. 4.** František Kaláb and Ladislav Rado, *Project for the Monument of National Liberation with a Statue of President Masaryk in Brno, 1937/1938*, in: *Index. Leták kulturní informace*, no. 3 (1938).



design for this location, made by an anonymous artist, was very conventional and conservative.<sup>31</sup> An equestrian statue of Masaryk dressed in his uniform-like suit was placed on a high pedestal. On the sides of the base were two sculptural groups representing the Liberation of the Nation. Three figures depicted Czechoslovak legionaries from Russia, France, and Italy and people in traditional folk costumes. Part of the monument design also consisted of two water basins, coats of arms, other reliefs and symbols, flowers, and even a living lime tree (**fig. 5**).

The same strategy of overlaying old meanings with new ones was apparently used on the last proposal to be considered, at the most provocative and attractive spot – the northern part of Lažanský square (today known as Moravian Square). This site was ultimately chosen by the organizers of the competition. From 1891 onward, a grand architectural monument and emblem of German-speaking inhabitants of Brno stood there – the German National House (Deutsches Haus). It was designed by architects from Berlin in the northern brick neo-Renaissance style and furnished with works of art depicting the famous past of the Moravian Germans back to the Middle Ages and antiquity. Thus the whole building was a manifesto of German supremacy and national pride. It served as a cultural and political centre for Germans in Brno and the whole of Moravia, with its large social hall, café, restaurant, library and the rooms of many clubs and associations.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, a

<sup>31</sup> Plans for a Monument, Heslo: Pravda vítězí [Codename: Truth Prevails], December 21, 1937, Fonds Sbirka kresby a grafiky (B 30499 – B3502), Moravian Gallery, Brno.

<sup>32</sup> For more about the German House, see the recent study (with references to older literature): Jan Galeta, “National Houses in Moravia and Austrian Silesia before 1914. Architecture and Fine Art as an Opportunity for the Manifestation of National Allegiance,” *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, no. 2 (2020): 103–124.





**Fig. 5.** Unknown Artist, *Motto: Truth Prevails*, 1937/1938, drawing on paper, Moravian Gallery in Brno, inv. no. B3502. Photograph by Jan Galeta.

monument by sculptor Anton Břenek dedicated to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II had been erected in front of the building in 1892. It dominated the vista of the boulevard connecting Lažanský and the main city square. However, the monument to the Emperor, who was perceived as a protector of the Germans within the Austrian Monarchy, was torn down by Czech nationalists and former legionaries on the night of 28 September 1919, that is, on the feast of the Czech patron saint, Wenceslas, and just one month before the first anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>33</sup> (**fig. 6**)

Thus, this location in front of the German House embodied the fundament of the defeated Habsburg Monarchy and memories of German Brno. Importantly, for both main groups of city residents, this sensitive spot became the logical space for creating a new monument commemorating the first Czechoslovak President and the state he represented, especially in the 1930s. The winning proposal was made – as in Prague – by Fragner and Makovský (although they

were awarded only second prize, while first prize was not awarded at all) and again had the character of a sacral space, comprising not only a statue but a memorial area suitable for celebration in the presence of representatives

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**Fig. 6.** Anton Břenek, Joseph II Memorial in front of the Deutsches Haus in Brno, 1892, ca. 1895, postcard, private collection.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Pavla Cenková, “Pomník císaře Josefa II. v Brně” [Memorial to Emperor Joseph II in Brno], *Brno v minulosti a dnes*, no. 28 (2015): 263–312.

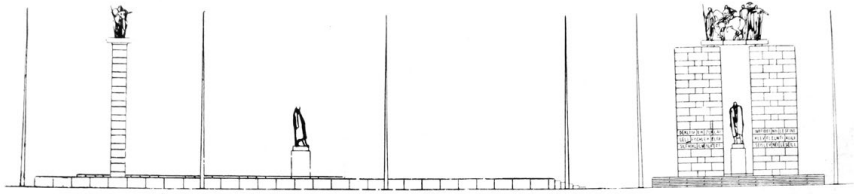
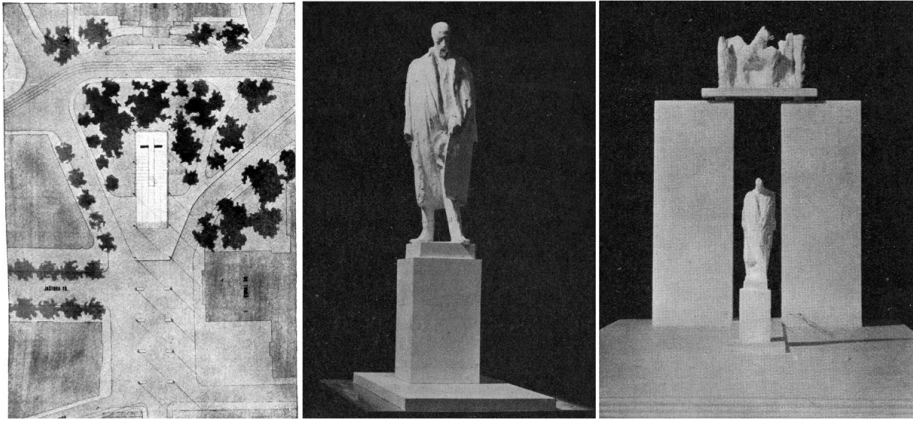


Fig. 7. Jaroslav Fragner and Vincenc Makovský, *Project for the Monument of National Liberation with a Statue of President Masaryk in Brno, 1937/1938*, in: *Stavitel* (1937–1938), 99.



of the state.<sup>34</sup> Masaryk's statue in a coat was to stand alone. The jury report stated: "It is a tall figure of the President Liberator, characteristically erect but with his head bowed and thoughtful."<sup>35</sup> Behind the figure of Masaryk, the authors proposed two stone pillars with inscriptions serving as a pedestal for an allegorical sculptural group symbolizing the National Liberation. This bronze sculpture was to be gilded "so that the dark mass of the monument to the President Liberator will have a special bright, one might say shining, background that will perfectly balance the inappropriate architecture of the German House."<sup>36</sup> (fig. 7)

It is clear not only from this quote, but from the whole layout of the winning design, that the primary purpose of the structure was to cover the façade of the Deutsches Haus so as to conceal architecture perceived by Czechs as alien, and to block out the view of the German community centre, literally erasing the building from the image of the city.<sup>37</sup> Instead of just legitimizing the newly created state, the whole idea of the monument came with a brand-new set of meanings for a place that had its own history, intending to use the device known from antiquity as *damnatio memoriae* to efface the memory of the monument to Joseph II and visually suppress the German presence in Brno. This exciting but

34 Designs and photos published as "Ideová soutěž na pomník Národního Osvobození s pomníkem T. G. Masaryka v Brně" [Preliminary Competition for Memorial of National Liberations and Memorial of T. G. Masaryk in Brno], *Stavitel*, unnumbered, (1937–1938), 99.; Rudolf Spazier, *Brno zítřka* [Brno of Tomorrow] (Brno: město Brno, 1939), 128–129.

35 [jr.], "Pomník presidenta", 2.

36 [jr.], "Brněnský pomník presidenta Osvoboditele" [Brno Memorial of President Liberator], *Lidové noviny*, May 11 (1938), 4.

37 Deutsches Haus was heavily damaged in April 1945 during the bombardment of the city and the fight between the German and Soviet armies. In August 1945, the remains of the building were demolished by the Czechoslovak authorities as a symbolic proclamation that German rule over the city was gone forever. Also, the German population was almost completely expelled from Brno (and the whole of Czechoslovakia) in 1945–1946.

overconfident attempt was an apparent reaction to the growing confidence of local Germans, boosted by the Nazi regime in Germany.

## CONCLUSION

Masaryk's memorials were not just the vehicles for commemoration of the first President of Czechoslovakia – they became a form of state representation. However, the aforementioned cases show that these designs depended partially on traditional depictions of rulers. As Peter Burke has concisely pointed out: “We should look at royal statues or ‘state portraits’ not as illusionistic images of individuals as they appeared at the time but as theatre, as public representations of an idealized self.”<sup>38</sup>

The notion of Masaryk's monuments as national symbols became more critical with the onset of the Second World War, of course. Unfortunately, due to Germany's occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in 1939, these large and costly monuments in Brno and Prague were never erected. After the war, in the short-lived so-called Third Republic (1945–1948), the question of Masaryk memorials was once more on the table. In 1946 the City of Brno proposed that Frágner and Makovský prepare a new Monument of Liberation, now to be called “the first Liberation” because the main new question was how and where to build a monument to the Red Army, the new liberators of Czechoslovakia.<sup>39</sup> Even in 1948, when Vincenc Makovský was awarded a state prize, his Monument to Masaryk was intended to be erected on the so-called Academical Square in Brno in front of the Faculty of Law.<sup>40</sup> However, at the same time, he also worked on the Red Army monument; after the Communist *coup d'état* in 1948, only the latter was implemented (in 1955) because any depiction of President Masaryk became taboo.

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38 Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 68.

39 [O.M.], “Budovatelské starosti města Brna” [Building worries of the City of Brno], *Rovnost*, March 10, 1946, 4.

40 [Jbs.], “Sochař Vincenc Makovský poctěn státní cenou” [The sculptor Vincenc Makovský honoured by State Prize], *Rovnost*, October 30, 1948, 5.

