

A Fading Friendship:

Czechoslovak-Japanese Interwar Relations

Daniel Lochman

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At the end of the First World War and during the Russian Civil War (1918-1922), the so-called Czech Legion cooperated with Japanese military forces in the Russian Far East. In this way Japan became one of the first Entente Powers to recognize the newly established state of Czechoslovakia. The countries exchanged diplomatic missions and soon established friendly bilateral relations. However, both the geopolitical conditions and national interests of the two countries began to change in the late 1920s. Thus, foreign policies started to diverge and it became more difficult to uphold cordial relations.

In this talk, I will examine the nature and dynamics of Czechoslovak-Japanese relations in the interwar period from a political and diplomatic point of view. Using unpublished primary sources and foreign policy analysis, I will discuss the attitudes of Czechoslovak and Japanese decision-makers and the policies of the involved diplomats. Particular attention will be paid to the critical junctures causing bilateral deterioration within the international affairs in Europe and Eastern Asia in the 1930s, such as Czechoslovakian Foreign Secretary Beneš' highly critical stand regarding the Manchurian Incident in 1931, or the Czechoslovak alliance with the Soviet Union in 1935, followed by the Japanese military challenge of the Soviet Union in Outer Mongolia.

Daniel Lochman is a visiting scholar at the Sophia University's Institute of Comparative Culture and a PhD Candidate at Charles University, Department of General History in Prague, Czech Republic. His research is focused on political and diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and pre-war Japan.

No prior registration necessary / Lecture in English

This talk is organized by Professor Sven Saaler (FLA)