

LOCATING THE NATION IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD:
DEBATES ON THE GLOBAL POSITION OF INTERWAR
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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The interwar period is often thought of as a time of ‘deglobalization’, a conception that refers mainly to the process of economic disentanglement that occurred at the time. This does not always reflect reality, however: like other newly founded Central European states in the 1920s and 1930s, the Czechoslovak republic needed to initiate and pursue international contacts in a variety of fields such as diplomacy, economy or academic research, both in a European context and beyond. This article makes a plea to link Czechoslovak history into wider global history, connecting Central European regions with the world outside Europe. With a focus on contemporary public discussions about potential markets in Asia and on the importance of the topic of Oriental Studies in Prague, but also on the country’s emigration problem and the search for Czechoslovak colonies, this article argues that discussions at the time on the risks, opportunities and necessity for a global outreach often identified non-European regions as having the potential to solve some of the central political, social, and economic issues of the interwar period, thereby negotiating Czechoslovakia’s place on a global map.