

This work seeks to answer questions concerning the role France played in shaping the Czechoslovak elite in the first half of the 20th century. The study rests on three basic pillars. The first is a study of the framework in which Franco-Czechoslovak relations developed in the area of culture, cultural and educational policy. The second pillar is the question of France's direct involvement in Czechoslovakia – by means of solid structures created in connection with the establishment of the new state, and with the development of active French cultural policy after 1918. On the one hand, the French Institute in Prague, which, in the period under study, wanted to be more than a mere cultural centre, its ambitions primarily concerning scientific cooperation (language, philosophy, history, law, medicine, economics, chemistry, technical disciplines). On the other hand, the French Real Grammar School in Prague, the example of which gives a very good study of the competitive limits of cooperation between the two countries in the field of secondary education. Despite the growing number of students, this private institution (nationalised in 1937), never stopped addressing a key question: is it a Czechoslovak school teaching in French or a French educational institution operating in Czechoslovakia? The third pillar is the question of the formation of the Czechoslovak elite in France, by means of special sections at the lyceums in Dijon (1920), in Saint Germain en Laye (1923) and in Nîmes (1924), and the use of scholarships intended for university students, but also for representatives of the “functional elites” – soldiers, diplomats and scholars. The work shows that the question of educational relations is closely linked to the issue of Czech francophillia, but it was also an integral part of both countries' foreign policy.