

Roads to Peace? Infrastructures, Peace, and Conflict

Online Workshop June 14–15, 2022

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Title: Preparing for war by fostering alpine winter tourism: Herman Czant and his ideas on infrastructure for fighting in high altitude

Abstract: Already before the First World War Austro-Hungarian mountaineer and officer Herman Czant was amongst those, who like Mathias Zdarsky, Rudolf Wahl or Georg Bilgeri promoted alpine winter tourism, but also reminded his military colleagues that it was important for the Habsburg monarchy to prepare for war in mountainous terrain such as the Alps or the Carpathians. After the end of the First World War, in which Czant had served as an alpine officer, he published two studies, in which he dealt with the relationship between mountaineering, winter tourism and military operations in high altitude. While Tait Keller already addressed Czant's ideas on the relationship between mountaineering and future military operations in high altitude, Czant's statements on infrastructure have so far not received any attention.

It is therefore the aim of the presentation proposed here to present an analysis of Czant's statements on temporary or more permanent infrastructure for fighting in high altitude and to link these to other interwar ideas to set up further infrastructure projects in the context of measures taken to foster an alpine winter tourism in the first Austrian republic, which in turn generated new conflicts that were at least less deadly than those, in which Herman Czant had been involved in and for which he had made his plans.

Biographical information on the author

Daniel Marc Segesser is Adjunct Professor (Privatdozent), Director of Undergraduate Studies and Collaborator of the Head of Department at the Department of History of the University of Bern in Switzerland. He focuses on the social, cultural and environmental history of the military and has widely published global as well as local implications of the First World War as well as on the history of international law in the 19th and early 20th century. Recent publications – partially in collaboration with the Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research – have specifically dealt with environmental aspects of the war in high altitude: “Fighting Where Nature Joins Forces with the Enemy”: Nature, Living Conditions and their Representation in the War in the Alps 1915–1918, in: *Hungarian Historical Review* 7, 3, 2018, S. 568–593; with Yuri Brugnara, Stefan Brönnimann, Marcelo Zamuriano, Jonas Schild and Christian Rohr: Reanalysis sheds light on 1916 avalanche disaster, in: *ECMWF Newsletter* 151, 2017, S. 28–34; with id.: *December 1916: Deadly Wartime Weather* (Geographica Bernesia G91), Bern, Institute of Geography, 2016.