

The Emotions of Internationalism: "Feeling" International Cooperation on the Mountains in the Interwar Period (Fellowship am Dahlem Humanities Center, Freie Universität Berlin, von Dr. Ilaria Scaglia)

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In recent years, historians have devoted much attention to emotions, showing how these played a central role in the definition and appeal of political and cultural movements in the twentieth century. The emotions of internationalism, however, have never been the subject of an academic work. Yet internationalist rhetoric was imbued with emotions, and these served as prime means for the dissemination of ideas. Most strikingly, people involved in internationalism placed a high value on emotions, expressed them profusely, and tenaciously chased them as they considered them an important part of their work. As a result, internationalist ideas and practices came to be defined by their ability to suppress the animosity left by the First World War, to help people manage national pride and universalist aspirations, and to elicit friendship among peoples and nations. To shed light on the interplay of emotions and internationalism, this project uses mountains as an alternative spatial category to reveal dynamics that traditional frameworks based on the nation-state have misinterpreted or missed. It demonstrates that mountains served as distinct concrete and metaphorical grounds for various forms of international cooperation. The main site of the League of Nations was in a mountain city, Geneva, and the League's publicity emphasized this fact. Mountains - and their people - came to exemplify a set of ideals and emotions closely associated with the League; also, they served as a site for healing bodies and minds as they witnessed the proliferation of international open-air schools, sanatoria, and other medical establishments in this period. At a time when the health of the human body was connected to that of the nation, mountains were trusted to improve the well-being of the international system as well. Against this backdrop, this study sheds light on how mountains became an essential milieu for defining a set of shared feelings that affected internationalism for decades to follow.

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