

## **War economy as a project for peace: Otto Neurath's 'Utopia as a Social Engineer's Construction'**

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The studies on wartime economy are a little-known chapter in the work of the sociologist and economist Otto Neurath (1882-1945), who gained renown during the interwar period as the founder of a method of pictorial statistics and a member of the 'Vienna Circle' group of philosophers. These studies date back to around 1910. At this time the young scholar began publishing articles on a 'theory of war economy' in various academic journals and edited volumes. A grant from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace finally allowed him to undertake a number of journeys to Serbia, Bosnia and Bulgaria. Here he was able to further his studies with a specific focus on the Balkan wars (1912-13). His main thesis was that the instruments used in wartime economy (such as calculation in kind and central planning) could become tools of a peacetime economy beyond capitalism. This 'Utopia as a Social Engineer's Construction' (as an essay was entitled) did not become a practical possibility until after World War I. In spring 1919, as head of the Central Planning Office in Munich, and during the two council republics, Neurath sought – and ultimately failed – to implement his programme of 'full socialisation'.