

# Narrating Nanga Parbat

## GERMAN HIMALAYA EXPEDITIONS AND THE FICTIONAL (RE-)CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

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For both British and German mountaineering, the year 2003 carried significance beyond any date in recent sports history. While the British climbing community had occasion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest on 29 May 1953 by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, their German counterparts were able to commemorate the first successful climb of Nanga Parbat by Hermann Buhl on 3 July 1953. British and German mountaineering, however, do not simply share in this important date. In fact, their mountaineering histories are inextricably linked by the obsession with which the elusive goals of Mount Everest and Nanga Parbat had been pursued from the 1920s through the 1950s. Finally, and most importantly, these two mountains and the various efforts directed at them over a period of several decades would serve as a virtual backdrop against which both Britain and Germany would explore, debate and define their particular notions of identity, empire and nation.

For Great Britain, these processes have been described and documented in great detail by alpine historians such as Gordon T. Stewart, Peter H. Hansen, Walt Unsworth, Audrey Salkeld and others. Thanks to their work, we possess a definitive mountaineering history of Everest (Unsworth),<sup>1</sup> a bibliography of all writings about Everest (Salkeld),<sup>2</sup> and a fascinating discourse about the cultural meaning(s) of the first ascent of Everest in Great Britain and beyond (Stewart, Hansen).<sup>3</sup> German scholars, in contrast, have only very recently begun to explore and map the complex historical and cultural space occupied by Nanga Parbat. While Rainer Amstädter in his excellent treatment of German and Austrian alpinism and its organizations,<sup>4</sup> Helmuth Zebhauser in his discussion of German mountaineering during the National Socialist period,<sup>5</sup> and finally Peter Mierau in his detailed history of the Deutsche Himalaja Stiftung [German Himalaya Foundation]<sup>6</sup> laid the foundation, a comprehensive treatment of German Nanga Parbat mountaineering

became available only in 2002 with the publication of Horst Höfler's *Nanga Parbat. Expeditionen zum "Schicksalsberg der Deutschen" 1934-1962* [Nanga Parbat. Expeditions to the German "Mountain of Destiny" 1934-1962]<sup>7</sup> and, most importantly, Ralf-Peter Martin's *Nanga Parbat Wahrheit und Wahn des Alpinismus* [Nanga Parbat. Alpinism's Truth and Insanity]<sup>8</sup>.

It is to this intensifying discourse on Nanga Parbat, the German 'mountain of destiny',<sup>9</sup> that I would like to contribute with this essay. Specifically, I will explore an area which, once more, has its equivalent in the history of British Everest mountaineering: the fictionalization of Nanga Parbat expeditions for a youth audience as an attempt to shape the ideological (re-) construction of German national identity. To this end, I intend to demonstrate initially how the notion of (Himalaya) mountaineering as a path to national recovery—a notion frequently discussed in German and Austrian alpine publications throughout the 1920s — was translated into a format that would directly address a new generation of Germans: adventure novels for teenagers and young adults. Following this path of inquiry, I will document how, during the 1930s, the process of (re-) defining German national identity via Himalaya mountaineering was adopted by National Socialism and reflected in youth novels of the 1940s and, finally, how the need for a stable national identity, now in the aftermath of World War II, would continue to resonate in the youth literature of the 1950s, the time Nanga Parbat's elusive summit was finally reached by Hermann Buhl.<sup>10</sup>

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In German and Austrian alpine journals of the 1920s, calls for the mountains and the act of mountaineering to play an essential role in the psychological and political reconstitution of the German nation after the devastating defeat in World War I can be found with great regularity.<sup>11</sup> Already in 1919, the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein DÖAV [German and Austrian Alpine Club], in its *Nürnberger Leitsätze* [Nuremberg Principles] identified the mountains as key to German efforts at recovery: 'Alpinism, and especially the act of mountaineering, is one of the most important means in rebuilding the ethics and morale of the German people'.<sup>12</sup> A few years later, in a 1922 *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Österreichischen Alpenvereins* [Journal of the German and Austrian Alpine Club] essay titled 'Die Berge und ihre Bedeutung für den Wiederaufbau des deutschen Volkes' ['The Mountains and their Significance for the Restoration of the German Nation'],<sup>13</sup> a Dr Gustav Müller called upon German youth to adopt the notion of 'struggle' as the guiding principle for their lives and to seek out this struggle in the mountains:

Yes, in the mountains we still find ideals [...] There [...] is the realm of unselfish struggle; there burns the fire of patriotism [...] From these treasures, Alldeutschland, draw your will, your courage, and your power

for your existential struggle; there, Jungdeutschland, steel your arms, your senses and your will, nourish your soul and forge your defenses!<sup>14</sup>

For Müller, only the mountains have the potential to strengthen a sick people — 'ein krankes Volk zu ertüch-tigen'.<sup>15</sup> This view of the mountains as a remedy for the paralyzed German nation also characterized an article by Margarete Große, published in 1923 in the *Österreichische Alpenzeitung* [Austrian Alpine Journal].<sup>16</sup> Commenting on the current state of (Weimar) Germany, she complains about the dominant spirit of excessive materialism among her contemporaries and calls upon them to counteract the all-pervasive cold-heartedness, envy and indifference typical of her age. In Große's view, the strength and courage needed for this struggle can be found in the mountains since they already require these very characteristics of the successful mountaineer. Even more importantly, the mountains in Große's essay serve as an encouraging metaphor for the future of the German nation: despite having been exposed to the forces of nature for aeons these giants still stand, their power and greatness persistently repelling the elements. And so does the German nation: despite having been thrown into chaos and tossed about by world politics, it will submit neither to interior nor exterior forces.

The notions of the mountains as a place of struggle, a refuge of patriotism and therefore the most promising catalyst for a German national renewal connect these three treatises to Friedrich Otten's youth novel *Der Kampf um den Riesen* [The Struggle for the Giant] (1924),<sup>17</sup> a work of fiction that outlines for a new generation of Germans<sup>18</sup> two paths that would allow Germany to reclaim its lost glory as a nation. First, by focusing on its considerable scientific and technological achievements, and second (and for our purpose more importantly), by engaging in a patriotic enterprise that would allow it to compete once more with the victors of World War I, albeit on a more symbolic and less bloody field of engagement, the field of high-altitude mountaineering: a sport 'battling' and 'conquering' the tallest mountains in the world, a vertical form of imperialism. The author clearly states this goal in a foreword to his novel:

This book is dedicated to the German people and the German youth. It has been written with intense fervor for our beloved German homeland [...] May our youth grow strong in body and in soul, may it grow up in the proud thought: Your fatherland has little in terms of money and goods! All the more it shall possess our German patriotism, all the more every girl and boy, every German shall diligently strive, struggle and create! Then German knowledge will once again lift our fatherland to freedom, greatness and power!<sup>19</sup>

Reflecting an acute awareness of both Germany's economic distress as well as its citizens' lack of national pride and identity, Otten's statement suggests that the current crisis may be overcome by relying on German diligence and

knowledge while, at the same time, nurturing one's patriotism. In regard to one of these issues, the area of science and technology, Otten postulates, Germans can already look back upon a most impressive tradition:

The air was conquered. The airship, glistening in the sunshine and like a celestial body, flew magically across the ocean; and with the giant steamers it passed it exchanged wireless greetings, news and weather reports. Deep below the ocean surface glides the U-boat. Protected from the storms, it calmly holds its course, a technological marvel. And in all these areas Germany, the poor, the deprived, the enslaved, holds the lead. To German diligence and German knowledge the civilized races will someday bow.<sup>20</sup>

Guidance on and motivation for this difficult journey of recovery, the author claims, can be found in the example of the British: 'May a new generation of Germans learn from the patriotism of the English people'.<sup>21</sup> Involvement in science and technology, then, combined with a healthy dose of patriotism, is seen as an antidote to present German feelings of helplessness and national inferiority and as a promise for a once more dominant role among the great nations of the world.<sup>22</sup>

In order to provide his young German reading audience with a convincing example of both British patriotism and German scientific achievement, Otten — out of all possible scenarios and localities — chooses the drama of recent British mountaineering efforts (1921, 1922, 1924) on Tschomolungma, or Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the novel proper — to which I now turn my attention — this British enterprise is presented as a project of great national importance, the narrative characterized by frequent references to British pride and glory, culminating in a statement by the expedition leader, General Russe, which, incidentally, links the planned expedition to a renewal of Great Britain itself: 'This is just the plan that we now need; it is truly worthy of our great and magnificent fatherland. It will be carried out; I vouch for it [...] Once again the world shall see what old England is capable of'.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the notion of national renewal, Otten links the act of mountaineering to the concept of empire, thereby suggesting to his readers a way to compensate for negative feelings generated by the loss of Germany's colonies after World War I.<sup>25</sup> During a meeting at the Royal Geographical Society, Russe's expedition is awarded official status,<sup>26</sup> promised support by the British government and, for 'political reasons',<sup>27</sup> declared a national secret. The 'political reasons' refer to concerns regarding British control over Tibet in the face of not only competing Russian and Chinese interests, but also increasing German influence in Afghanistan,<sup>28</sup> at the time bordering on India. Germany, in the eyes of Kallory and Gerving, two gentlemen and mountaineers fashioned after two well-known British climbers of the period,

George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924) and Andrew Comyn Irvine (1902-1924),<sup>29</sup> recovered from its defeat in World War I sooner than expected and might indeed challenge British rule in India:

Germany has recovered much faster than all of us thought. Even if it does not play a role as a military power, even if its financial situation is highly unfavorable, it has already regained the lead as a scientific power. Hundreds of young Afghans are being educated and drilled in the German way at the federal educational institution in Lichterfelde near Berlin. Dozens of engineers, physicians and teachers leave Germany for Afghanistan, and if we continue to simply look on for a few years, we will find a neighbor at the gates of India who may make us feel rather uncomfortable.<sup>30</sup>

Given this potentially dangerous geopolitical scenario, bringing Tibet under British control is of national importance, and for Kallory and Gerving, this goal can best be achieved through an expedition to Mount Everest: 'We will pass through Tibet and bring it under our control. And the highest summit we will conquer as mountaineers.'<sup>31</sup>

This idea of the mountain as a new imperialist playing field, invested with the hopes and desires of an entire nation, also characterizes the main conflict of the novel, the antagonism of the single German participant in the expedition towards his British hosts. During a visit of several British expedition members to Berlin under the pretense to review 'several scientific innovations',<sup>32</sup> the group invites an old acquaintance, Dr Zonlund, a 'Norwegian' scientist and physician (who in reality is a most loyal German), to join them in their enterprise. Motivated by the need to protect Germany's own geopolitical interests in the region,<sup>33</sup> Zonlund accepts the invitation, supported by his superior, Professor Hütte, who promises to demonstrate to the British visitors the high standards of German (mountaineering) technology:

Well, then, let the English come. I will demonstrate things to them that will make them green and blue in their faces. I will also inform the Potsdam colleagues to this end. You will assist [the English] with the purchase of their instruments, and my new breathing apparatus with its four cylinders they shall get as well. There they shall see what German technology, industry and science can achieve. Make sure that they get the best measuring equipment, too [...] May a benevolent fate be with you, and may your enterprise become a rich blessing for our poor, beloved German fatherland!<sup>34</sup>

Through Hütte's statement, Otten highlights once more that element which, in his eyes, in conjunction with a revitalized German patriotism, will eventually allow Germany to regain equal standing with the victors of World

War I, especially Great Britain. It is therefore not surprising that throughout the novel references to German science and technology abound, its achievements repeatedly being admired by the British expedition members. Famous examples of German industry are showcased: the tunnel under the Elbe river, the gigantic shipyards of *Blohm und Voß* and *Vulkan*, the *Kaiser Wilhelm* canal. Parallel to these examples of 'superior' German science and technology, the author frequently interjects into his novel discussions on subjects such as the Himalayan mountain range, the Suez Canal, the Giant Octopus, Asian geography, Hindu and Buddhist religious rituals, the states of Nepal and Tibet and, finally, poisonous snakes. He thereby directly contributes to the very project he postulated earlier as one potential antidote to German feelings of national inferiority: science education and training.

It is this kind of education and the actions made possible by it, represented by Dr Zönlund, the 'Norwegian'/German scientist and physician, that repeatedly gain the respect of the British expedition members during the expedition proper. Their appreciation for Zönlund, in turn, leads to a gradual change in the original (antagonistic) relationship of Zönlund's towards his British colleagues. This change is further motivated by the fact that Zönlund uncovers an impending Indian revolt set upon destroying the expedition and subsequently liberating the subcontinent from British rule. This discovery forces Zönlund to reevaluate his attitude towards the British and to recognize his commonality with them: they both belong to the same Germanic race. This revelation happens at a time when his love interest for one of the female British expedition members, Alice Wildermoore, is threatened by the impending attack of the Asian revolutionaries:

The intense agitation the discovery of the conspiracy had caused in him did not allow him to find peace and quiet [...] He fought a difficult struggle with himself.

As a German he had learned that the English expedition to Tschomolungma was very much in danger; furthermore, that the entire English empire in India was confronted by a fierce enemy. A revolt threatened to remove India from English control and thereby destroy the power of the British Empire:

And suddenly there appeared a figure of light: Lady Alice. The conspirators planned to abduct the pure and noble women who served the expedition with such enthusiastic devotion. What that meant, with Asians, the doctor knew. Never could one allow this to happen! [...] He had to save the women from this impending danger! That was the honorable duty of the German man, the man of the white race in the fight against the yellow peril, against the trickery of the Tibetan Mongols.<sup>35</sup>

In the end, Zönlund successfully repels the attack of the Tibetan porters

threatening the life of Alice Wildermoore. He cannot, however, save the lives of Kallory and Gerving who, during their attempt to reach the summit of Mount Everest, are killed in an avalanche caused by Tibetan revolutionaries. Despite this tragedy, Zönlund and Alice decide to marry and thereby, symbolically, initiate a new relationship between Germany and Great Britain, a relationship based not on antagonism but on partnership, deriving its foundation from the common fight against the 'yellow peril' and the common desire for imperialist control. This new kind of relationship is expressed most clearly at the very end of the novel in the words of the expedition leader, General Russe, who presides over the ceremony:

Several English women have become the wives of Germans. I remind you of Moltke's wife. If only the Germanic people would understand and shake hands with each other. England, Germany, Scandinavia, North America: they belong together. If they stick together, we will never again have war. Our civilization and culture will lead all nations into the golden age.<sup>36</sup>

For this to happen, however, Germany has to first regain its previous status among the world powers. For Friedrich Otten, this goal can be achieved via two distinct, but nevertheless related, strategies. By directing his young reading audience towards the pursuit of excellence in the areas of science and technology, Otten attempts to tap into a resource routinely associated with German greatness during the nineteenth and early twentieth century and relatively untouched by the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles: Germany's intellectual capabilities. While military, industrial and monetary assets could be claimed and removed, intellectual property could not. This cachet of knowledge, celebrated and popularized in countless youth novels of the mid-1920s,<sup>37</sup> would inform future exploits directed beyond the borders of Germany: renewed imperialist pursuits, imagined on levels both symbolic and real and directed to the far reaches of the globe, in our case the high mountain regions of the Himalayas; the locus of the ultimate struggle and, by extension, the ultimate expression of one's patriotism.

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With its implied call upon German youth to expand German mountaineering into the Himalaya region and, by extension, into other high-mountain ranges around the world in order to gradually reestablish a German geopolitical presence and subsequently rebuild German feelings of self-worth, Otten's novel mirrored, if not anticipated, similar proposals in German and Austrian alpine journals of the second half of the 1920s. In 1926, two years after the publication of Otten's novel, the well-known Viennese alpinist Dr Heinrich Pfannl, in an article published in the *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, expanded the traditional alpine playing field to include the Andes and the Himalayas.<sup>38</sup> In 1927, the Austrian writer and mountaineer

Sepp Dobiasch, in the Viennese periodical *Der Bergsteiger. Deutsche Wochenschrift für Bergsteigen, Wandern, und Skilaufen* [The Mountaineer. German Weekly for Mountaineering, Hiking and Skiing], identified Germany's greatest challenge as catching up with the British; not only in mountaineering terms, but also, and more importantly, in terms of concrete political influence, i.e., the global projection of power.<sup>39</sup> And finally, in 1928 the owner and editor of the magazine *Der Bergsteiger*, Julius Gallhuber, characterized German overseas expeditions as a key ingredient in the process of German national renewal.<sup>40</sup>

The 1920s, then, through their preoccupation with rebuilding a German national identity in the aftermath of World War I, serve as a rhetorical staging area for future actions perceived to achieve that goal. In German and Austrian mountaineering circles, this preoccupation generates repeated calls, in both programmatic and fictional form, for the involvement of Germany in the field of high-altitude mountaineering, an activity perceived to lead the nation back to an equal standing with its former adversaries and to subsequently open the door to not only a symbolic, but very real status as a world power.

Responding to this growing chorus of voices calling for an engagement beyond their traditional area of activity in the European Alps, German alpine organizations soon launched their own expeditions to various high-mountain ranges around the globe; a sustained engagement that would end only with the outbreak of World War II in 1939.<sup>41</sup> From these activities, it was the Himalaya region that eventually emerged as the ultimate destination for German expeditions during the 1930s. While several early efforts in 1929, 1930 and 1931 focused on Kangchendzönga, the third-tallest mountain in the world, it was soon replaced by Nanga Parbat, the world's ninth-tallest peak. German nineteenth-century explorers, Hermann, Adolph and Robert Schlagintweit had tied the mountain to the imagination of early twentieth-century German mountaineers, and it would be onto its slopes that the vision of a new Germany would be projected by the National Socialist leadership after they came into power in 1933. Originally attempted by Dr Willy Merkl, one of the premier climbers of the interwar period, as part of a German-American expedition, Nanga Parbat would be visited a total of five times (1934, 1937 (2), 1938, 1939). The mountain, however, did not yield. The German expeditions were struck by two major disasters in 1934 and 1937 and accumulated a death toll of eleven dead mountaineers, including Willy Merkl. It was these tragic failures that elevated Nanga Parbat to the German 'mountain of destiny'.

The German sports leadership wasted no time to convert these failures into political capital. Almost immediately, they set out to define for a transfixed German public the essential 'qualities' of National Socialism; qualities that were central to the expansionist goals of the nation after 1933.

They cast the two disasters of 1934 and 1937 in a glorifying light, stressed the sacrificial nature of the eleven deaths and turned the dead mountaineers into national heroes who had given their lives for the greater good of the German people. At two public memorial services conducted by the *Deutscher Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* [German *Reichsbund* for Physical Education] in 1934 and 1937, respectively, *Reichssportführer* [Reich Sports Leader] Hans von Tschammer und Osten extolled the 'virtues' of comradeship, loyalty and sacrifice exhibited by the German Nanga Parbat mountaineers. The tragic events on the mountain were further ideologized in a series of essays which appeared in various German and Austrian alpine publications at the time. Both the *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*<sup>42</sup> and the official *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Bergsteigerverbandes im Deutschen Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* [Bulletin of the German Mountaineering Organization in the German *Reichsbund* for Physical Education] adopted von Tschammer und Osten's interpretation, the latter journal characterizing the mountaineers' demise as 'the heroic and loyal fulfillment of one's duty in a forward position and as a symbol of a great patriotic task'.<sup>43</sup> Additional statements by Meinhart Sild, personal assistant to the 'Führer des DAV' [Leader of the German Alpine Club], Dr Arthur Seyß-Inquart, in three essays in the *Österreichische Alpenzeitung* and the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Alpenvereins. Jahrbuch* [Journal of the German Alpine Club. Yearbook] in 1938 and 1939, respectively, soon identified this task as Germany's preparation for war. Reflecting sentiments originally voiced by Dr Gustav Muller in 1922 and Sepp Dobiach in 1927, Sild postulated a direct connection between mountaineering and armed conflict.<sup>44</sup> In 'Bergsteigen als Rüstung' ['Mountaineering as a Form of Mobilization'] (1938),<sup>45</sup> Sild defined the mountaineer as a manifestation of the warrior and mountaineering as both a form of battle and a means of total mobilization. One year later, in 'Bergsteigen — Notwendigkeit und Aufgabe' ['Mountaineering — Necessity and Task'],<sup>46</sup> Sild elaborated on this relationship and proclaimed a link between mountaineering (as a 'manifestation of fight'), German youth, and the (re-) construction of German national identity. Sild confirmed his view of mountaineering as a key educational tool the very same year in an article titled 'Der neue Weg' ['The New Path'],<sup>47</sup> In it, he refined the concept of education introduced in his previous article and subsequently outlined the new role of the German Alpine Club within the National Socialist state:

Education means primarily one thing: to act upon the youth and for the youth [...] Mountaineering has been integrated into the comprehensive education plan of the German youth; it is consciously being used as an educational tool.

In conjunction with many other examples, this most important one shows us the direction which mountaineering and the German Alpine Club have embarked on; among these examples, one [...] of

the most recent and important ones is its relationship with the SS and the armed forces; a relationship in which mountaineering as a tool for team- and leadership as well as paramilitary training becomes directly applicable.<sup>48</sup>

Sild's statements about the role and purpose of mountaineering represent an act of 'Gleichschaltung'<sup>49</sup> and amount to nothing less than a total reconceptualization and reorganization of the German Alpine Club, specifically its youth branch, into paramilitary units, educating and training a new generation of German youth in the ideals and practices of the German military, including the SS.<sup>50</sup> This reorientation was confirmed by Sild's superior, Dr Arthur Seyß-Inquart in a speech on 29 July 1939 during the second general meeting of the German Alpine Club in Graz in which Seyß-Inquart welcomed General Eduard Dietl, commander of the German mountain infantry and assured him of the DAV's new task: 'The German Alpine Club considers it one of its most important goals to provide the mountain infantry with physically capable and alpinistically trained recruits.'<sup>51</sup>

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As with previous reflections on the role of mountaineering in a national (ist) context, this new focus, which clearly anticipates the possibility of war, found its way into the youth literature of the time. In our area of interest, it resonated most strongly in Ad. W. Krüger's novel *Der Kampf um den Nanga Parbat* [The Struggle for Nanga Parbat],<sup>52</sup> published in 1941 as volume 48 in the *Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei* [Aufwärts Youth Library] of the *Aufwärts-Verlag* [Aufwärts Publishing] (Berlin).<sup>53</sup> By 1941, of course, the German army was already at war ('im Kampf), thereby lending both title and plot of Krüger's novel a high degree of timeliness and urgency. Attempting both to revive and benefit from the widespread fascination of the German public with pre-World War II Himalaya expeditions,<sup>54</sup> the novel dramatizes the ill-fated 1934 expedition to Nanga Parbat and, in doing so, celebrates the heroic 'qualities' both von Tschammer und Osten and Sild had propagated in their commentaries: the notion of the selfless leader together with such related concepts as loyalty, comradeship and self-sacrifice (to the death).<sup>55</sup>

A strong sense of loyalty between the expedition members is stressed from the outset of the novel.<sup>56</sup> Having just finished their final preparations in a Munich warehouse, several mountaineers report to their leader, Dr Willy Merkl, at his home. There, Merkl shows them a photograph of Nanga Parbat taken during his 1932 expedition. Impressed by the sheer size of the mountain, the men look at the image in awe; then, after a moment of hesitation, they walk up to Merkl and assure him of their dedication to the common goal:

And then, as if they had arranged it beforehand, even though they were simply overcome by a common, profound emotion, they

stepped up to Willy Merkl, one after the other, and silently shook his hand. It was a vow of loyalty, and Merkl understood them.<sup>57</sup>

More importantly, the mountaineers' loyalty extends beyond the merely personal to their fatherland. Inspired by a farewell telegram from *Reichssportführer* Hans von Tschammer und Osten, the German expedition departs for India and is soon at work preparing for the first attack on the mountain. Realizing that the goal of the expedition is threatened by inclement weather and poor snow conditions, the fictional Merkl reflects on the dangers associated with continuing the assault on Nanga Parbat and finally decides to carry on, stressing the importance of their undertaking for their fatherland in the eyes of the world:

'Nevertheless!' he finally said firmly and confidently, 'here we stand as Germans, and an entire world is looking at us! As Germans we want to apply what we possess, power, energy, intelligence, belief, and our trust in the one above us!'<sup>58</sup>

Merkl's sentiment about his mission is shared by Alfred Drexel, the mountaineer who volunteers to set up the first high-altitude camps. Fueled by the trust of his comrades — 'Every man knows that he can trust the other like himself'<sup>59</sup> — Drexel overexerts himself during his push up the mountain, falls ill with pneumonia and eventually dies in the arms of his fellow mountaineer and friend, Fritz Bechtold. In his final words, however, Drexel pays tribute to the larger cause of the expedition:

'Fritz!' The voice of the stricken climber sounded through the low tent. 'Fritz! If I die now, — promise me, — the attack on the mountain — it will continue — yes? — Don't let up —, the summit —, the summit — for Germany—!'<sup>60</sup>

Parallel to Drexel's demand for loyalty to the national cause in this scene runs the notion of sacrifice, a notion reinforced soon after by the narrator in a comment on Drexel's death. 'What is there left to say? They know each other, they know that each one is prepared to give his life for the other'.<sup>61</sup> The connection between Drexel's sacrificial death and the beneficiary of his sacrifice beyond the immediately personal is most clearly expressed in Krüger's depiction of the burial:

The coffin, prepared by the Nepalese, is being lowered. The flag carrying the swastika falls on top of it. With bared heads the men stand in front of it. And then, then from their mouths, here, in far-away India, the Horst-Wessel song rises to the heavens. Alfred Drexel, whoever died like you, he died well!<sup>62</sup>

With this reference to Horst Wessel, Drexel is inducted into the National Socialist pantheon, the locus of its 'Totenkult' ['cult of death'], the mystification of those who had given their lives for the movement. This

economy of death, as Jay W. Baird has documented, can be traced all the way back to the death myth of World War I and is connected to such events as the 'martyrdom' of Albert Leo Schlageter, the saga of Horst Wessel and, above all, the 'Immortals' of the abortive Hitler putsch of 9 November 1923.<sup>63</sup> Many of these 'martyrs' had been immortalized in books,<sup>64</sup> several also in films: the early fighters in *Hitlerjunge Quex*, Horst Wessel in *Hans Westmar* (both 1933). Elevating the death of Alfred Drexel on Nanga Parbat to the level of national martyrdom fits squarely into this economy of death and its continuing need for symbolic figures. Furthermore, it ties, in no uncertain terms, the death on the mountain to a 'political' death.

The concepts of leadership and loyalty, comradeship and sacrifice meld together in the central scene of the novel, positioned halfway through the narrative. Immediately following Alfred Drexel's burial, the mountaineers, standing next to Drexel's grave, discuss the future of their enterprise. It is their leader, Willy Merkl, who sets the tone with an offer to call off the expedition, this despite the fact that he might have to forego the goal of his life:

Comrades! Down there lies one of our best! At his mound I offer one last time to any one of you who believes that he may not be able to complete the final and most difficult part of our journey the opportunity to turn around. Please step forward and tell me openly if today you are not striving with a full soul, with your entire will, and with the greatest joy towards the goal of my life. I will not hold it against anyone! In case some of you retreat, I will attempt the ascent with the remaining ones! In case all of you retreat, well, I will go home quietly and wait! Wait that a future year will present us with more favorable odds!<sup>65</sup>

Before accepting any decision from his men, however, Merkl lists the various challenges the expedition, if continued, will face. While assuring them that his calculations and preparations were as detailed and thorough as possible, Merkl nevertheless has to concede that the conditions for an assault on the mountain are far from ideal. He goes on, however, by saying that, due to the sheer height of the mountain, there may never be perfect conditions for such an attempt, not even years from now. Having weighed all these factors, Merkl decides that he will continue with the expedition, despite the possible dangers:

We will risk it anyway! Nevertheless I need to tell you urgently: The dangers we will expose ourselves to are very great! Avalanches are going off more frequently, the snow we need to lay our tracks in has become loose, the speed of the glacier has increased! Now then: I will not hold it against anyone! Step back, if you are not into this with all your heart!<sup>66</sup>

Merkl's fellow mountaineers respond to his decision to carry on with a sense

of total dedication to the cause. One by one, looking into Merkl's eyes and shaking his hand, the Germans vow to follow their chosen path to the very end: 'Alfred Drexel! Hear us! We will fulfill your last wish! We will fight until the end!'<sup>67</sup>

With this commitment, the goal for the rest of the expedition — and the second half of the novel — is set. The remaining mountaineers attempt to conquer Nanga Parbat for their fallen comrade as well as Germany, and for most of them, this conquest ends in death. Three more German climbers, Willy Merkl, Willo Welzenbach and Uli Wieland lose their lives due to exhaustion and high-altitude exposure, adding to the list of 'martyrs' who gave their lives for the German cause. In his portrayal of their last stand on the mountain, Krüger advertises once more the 'qualities' of the German character: loyalty, comradeship, selflessness and sacrifice. Despite being implored by Angstering, one of the Sherpas assisting the Germans during their ascent, to descend with him, Merkl tells Angstering to go alone. He cannot leave his friend, Uli Wieland, behind:

'Let it be, Angstering! I will stay with my friend! I will not leave him behind!' 'You have to come with us, Bara Sahib!' Angstering shouts desperately. But Merkl looks at him calmly: 'I will not leave my friend behind if I cannot save him!' he says firmly.<sup>68</sup>

Encountering yet another expedition member, Willo Welzenbach, close to death, Merkl passes up his second chance to escape from the mountain — and thereby accepts certain death for himself:

'Bara Sahib! The night is falling! The storms are returning! If you survive the night, I will bring help for you! I will descend now!' Angstering steps close to him. Yes! Leave! And be quick! Maybe we can still save Willo!<sup>69</sup>

The author uses his narrator to comment on Merkl's motivation for his ultimate sacrifice: selflessness. 'He does not care for himself!'<sup>70</sup> Krüger concludes his novel with a final reference to the brave fight Germans put up in the struggle with Nanga Parbat, reminding his young audience one last time of the heroic traits called for in a time of national distress and the place they can be found:

Down below, at the 'Märchenwiese', a simple rock cairn, not far from Balbo's [Alfred Drexel's] grave, reminds us that high up there, not far from the summit so fervently desired, three brave Germans gave their lives in the struggle with the mountain, the unconquered Nanga Parbat<sup>71</sup>

For Ad. W. Krüger, like for Dr Gustav Müller almost two decades earlier, the key to German salvation still lies in the mountains.

Neither the indoctrination of the German (alpine) youth with National Socialist ideals nor their desperate recruitment into German fighting units and last-minute home defenses ('Volkssturm') could of course prevent the eventual demise of the Third Reich. With that, Germany, for the second time in less than thirty years, was faced with the challenge of reinventing itself, of (re-) defining its identity as a nation. While some Germans looked to the brief democratic tradition of the Weimar Republic for guidance in this process, many of them chose alternative strategies: not to deal with the recent past at all, to characterize oneself as having been apolitical and therefore unknowing (with the implication that one was innocent), to focus on the challenge that lay immediately ahead: rebuilding Germany in a physical and economic sense.

The German Alpine Club (DAV), as Helmuth Zebhauser's study shows, applied on an institutional level what many German citizens practiced in private. German mountaineering officials wasted no time declaring that their organization — despite clear evidence to the contrary submitted to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior in Juli 1946<sup>72</sup> — had been (and still was) 'apolitical', thereby denying any link to and involvement in the activities of National Socialism and absolving themselves of any responsibility for acts committed in that name. One month earlier, in June 1946, for instance, former NS district official Adolf Sotier, in a document pertaining to attempts at receiving permission from the American military government in Bavaria to re-establish the German Alpine Club as a national sports organization, had described the future envisioned for the club as follows:

In these statutes, which have been cleared of those articles that had been forced upon the German Alpine Club by the National Socialist government, the former apolitical character of the club has been reestablished, the Führer principle and the Aryan paragraph have been eradicated, and the rebuilding of the club on a democratic foundation has been guaranteed.<sup>73</sup>

The articles Sotier refers to, had, by no means, been forced upon the DAV; rather, they had been eagerly adopted by the club leadership when called upon to do so. Especially the Aryan paragraph has a history of its own; it was adopted by several sections of the pre-war German and Austrian Alpine Club (DÖAV) as early as 1920 and can be traced in its origins all the way back to 1899.

The notion of the German Alpine Club as an essentially apolitical entity was adopted as part of its official statutes in 1950,<sup>74</sup> the year the club finally received permission to reorganize on a national level. To be fair, the influence of individuals such as Fritz Schmitt, Hans Ackermann, Paul Hübel and Albert Heizer led to a clearly democratic reorganization of the DAV, but there is no denying the fact that politically tainted former functionaries like Adolf Sotier,

Paul Nuber, Hans von Bomhard and others<sup>75</sup> were able to continue to serve in official roles for the club.

In Austria, the situation was somewhat different — and even more bleak. As both Helmuth Zebhauser and especially Rainer Amstädter were able to document, neither Austria nor its alpine organizations had to undergo a process of denazification due to the highly questionable self-understanding of Austrians as the first 'victims' of Hitler's politics (and later war) of aggression and expansion. This allowed individuals such as the former president of the DÖAV, Raimund von Klebelsberg, as well as its former General Secretary, Walter von Schmidt-Wellenburg, to regain positions of considerable status and power within Austrian alpine organizations.<sup>76</sup>

As far as the role envisioned for the post-war alpine youth was concerned in these early years of rebuilding, old notions of loyalty, comradeship and fatherland continued to invade official discourse.<sup>77</sup> In a draft from 1950 outlining the statutes of the so-called 'Jungmannschaft', the youth branch of the DAV, for instance, we find the following lines:

The Jungmannen are expected to preserve, in the spirit of the statutes of the [German] alpine club, the traditional forms of mountaineering and to ground themselves in the notion of the 'home- and fatherland'. They are expected to become capable mountaineers; however, they ought to grow not only as individuals, but also as part of a close community, thereby practicing and improving the appropriate mountaineering skills and, according to their preference, talent and skill, develop towards the highest goal of alpinism, high-altitude mountaineering. Beyond their individual training they are expected to practice comradeship, including total loyalty and dedication to their peers. They are to develop and maintain a sense for the purity of the Alps and alpinism.<sup>78</sup>

Similar 'qualities' and ideas continued to hold sway in Austria until much later. In 1964, almost twenty years after the end of World War II, an advertisement in volume 4 of *the Jugend im Alpenverein*, the youth publication of the Austrian Alpine Club (ÖAV), still glorified the belligerent past of Nazi Germany in its reference to songs currently sung by its alpine youth: 'Once again, they are sung by our cheerful troop, as well as by soldiers marching in step, just like in the past in Narvik and El Alamein'.<sup>79</sup> Handed down to a new generation whose knowledge of the tainted origins of these lyrics had faded or never existed in the first place are the songs of a previous generation still incapable of coming to terms with the true nature of their memories.

With its call to prepare the German alpine youth for the most difficult challenge in mountaineering, to enable them to climb the tallest mountains in the world, alpine officials placed an important part of German post-World War II alpinism in the tradition of pre-war Himalaya expeditions to

mountains such as Kangchendzönga and, especially, Nanga Parbat. Expeditions to the latter mountain, however, had clearly been used (and abused) for propagandistic purposes after the National Socialist ascent to power in 1933. Even if this attempt at reclaiming a 'memorable' German alpine tradition was shared by those who themselves had no use for old nationalistic concepts such as loyalty, struggle, heroism and sacrifice, this heritage was still a problematic one: it required a clear distancing of one's own enterprise from previous National Socialist efforts. For others, of course, the old ideas posed no problem; they still held on to militaristic 'qualities' and ideals that dated all the way back to the trenches of World War I.<sup>80</sup> This particular split became clearly visible in the months preceding the 1953 'Deutsch-Österreichische-Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition' [German-Austrian Willy Merkl Memorial Expedition] to Nanga Parbat. Headed by the half-brother of Dr Willy Merkl (who had died on Nanga Parbat in 1934), Dr Karl Maria Herrligkoffer, this undertaking marked the first expedition launched without the financial backing provided to previous (National Socialist) Nanga Parbat expeditions by the German Himalaya Foundation. In fact, Herrligkoffer had been successful in securing the single annually available expedition permit for Nanga Parbat against strong competition and interference from this foundation. Herrligkoffer was criticized repeatedly by Paul Bauer, the leader of the 1937 and 1938 expeditions, for his lack of organization and especially the selection of team members. Whereas Herrligkoffer simply tried to recruit the best climbers of the post-World War II period, Bauer favored (as he had on previous expeditions) the idea of an already familiar group of mountaineers or 'Bergkameraden'.<sup>81</sup> While Bauer insisted on the sole right of representation of the German Himalaya Foundation regarding expeditions into the Himalayas, Herrligkoffer ignored this 'right' and pointed instead to the questionable National Socialist past of the foundation. In the end, Herrligkoffer emerged victorious from this extended struggle for the right to travel to Nanga Parbat<sup>82</sup> and would carry on with his expedition; an expedition which would ultimately lead to the singular triumph of the Austrian climber Herrmann Buhl on 3 July 1953. Since Nanga Parbat was only the third 8,000m peak to be successfully scaled, Buhl's climb put Germany and Austria, together with its former adversaries, Great Britain and France, at the forefront of high-altitude mountaineering. The international importance of this achievement was not lost on post-World War II German society: the excitement the success on Nanga Parbat caused in the young Federal Republic during these years would only be matched by the 1954 'Miracle of Bern', the unexpected victory over Hungary in the final of the Soccer World Cup.

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It is against the background of these developments that we may now

approach Arthur Werner's 1956 youth novel, *Zum Gipfel des Nanga Parbat* [To the Summit of Nanga Parbat], published as volume 47 in the *Leuchtturm Jugendbücher* [Youth Book] series by the Michael Winkler publishing house in Cologne. In it, Werner, who had previously authored a larger volume on the same subject,<sup>83</sup> retells the story of the 1953 'Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition'. It is clear from the outset that Werner seeks to present the expedition as the logical continuation of previous attempts when he introduces Nanga Parbat as the German 'mountain of destiny' and characterizes Buhl's successful climb as the fulfillment of the legacy left behind by earlier (unsuccessful) expeditions.<sup>84</sup> The members of Herrligkoffer's expedition are referred to as the 'new team',<sup>85</sup> and Werner repeatedly stresses the advantages of a team consisting of both members of previous expeditions to Nanga Parbat— 'the old ones' Peter Aschenbrenner, Walter Frauenberger and Fritz Ertl — and members of the young generation of German and Austrian mountaineers — 'the young ones'<sup>86</sup> Hermann Buhl, Kuno Rainer, Albert Bitterling, Otto Kempter, Hermann Köllensperger and Fritz Aumann: 'The experience of the "old Himalaya guard" and the youth of the new generation of mountaineers complement each other most successfully'.<sup>87</sup>

Werner's efforts at creating a sense of continuity between the various pre-war expeditions to Nanga Parbat and the 1953 'Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition' are further reflected in the overall organization of his narrative. While the story of Herrligkoffer's expedition takes up approximately two thirds of the novel, Werner uses the first third of his text to tell about the fate of all six previous expeditions to the mountain, thereby creating a strong sense among his young post-war readership of the price exacted by Nanga Parbat on those who try to climb it. Even in narrative terms, then, the 1953 expedition is built upon those that preceded it. This is further evident in the fact that three times throughout his narrative Werner chooses to insert references to memorial plaques left on the mountain honoring the deceased of previous expeditions, in two instances in fact depicting the actual inscriptions and their arrangement through textual miniaturization. With this, the memory of previous expeditions to Nanga Parbat is literally 'inscribed' into the narrative of the most recent effort at scaling the peak, adding to the already strong sense of continuity between pre- and post-World War II expeditions Werner tries to communicate to his audience and highlighting once more the 'legacy' left behind by those who died on the mountain.

By relying on the notion of legacy, however, Werner finds himself in dangerous ideological territory. It was this very notion that lay at the heart of the 1938 feature-length documentary *Kampf um den Himalaja* [Struggle for the Himalayas], a film which 'chronicled' the ill-fated 1937 expedition to

Nanga Parbat for the purpose of celebrating — and thereby propagating — such 'German' values as honor, comradeship and, ultimately, sacrifice (to the death). As I have shown in a detailed analysis elsewhere,<sup>88</sup> the film itself becomes an extension of the obligation extending from the original 1934 expedition via the ill-fated 1937 attempt to the present of 1938. It is the notion of legacy that calls to duty not only the survivors, but also those of a new generation of German mountaineers. The film implies that part of that duty is to tell the story of the fight and ultimately the defeat on Nanga Parbat. By adopting the notion of legacy as a key concept for his own narrative, then, Werner not only continues with this narrative tradition, but also with the transmission of the very (problematic) notions celebrated in *Der Kampf um den Himalaja*.

What is transmitted in Werner's novel as well is the notion of high-altitude mountaineering as an enterprise of national interest and importance, carrying the potential for national glory. This view becomes evident first in Werner's account of Himalaya mountaineering as a race to the 'Third Pole':

Only the 'Third Pole', the highest elevation on earth, remained unattained. The nations' best mountaineers competed with each other to conquer the Himalayan giants. Magically, the 8,000 m peaks of the Himalayas cast a spell over the bravest of men. The draw of these mountains was so strong that not only individuals, but also entire nations were enthralled by them. The result was a competition between the best from all nations; a competition between Germans, Austrians, Swiss, British, American, French, Italian, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish and Japanese climbers who wanted to reach the top of 'their' mountain.<sup>89</sup>

For Germany, Werner elaborates, the goal lay with two mountains in particular, Kangchendzönga and Nanga Parbat, the latter soon occupying more than merely the minds of German mountaineers. In reference to Willy Merkl's 1934 expedition, Werner writes:

The struggle for Nanga Parbat turned into much more than a simple sports competition. The entire German people had made the challenge of scaling this mountain their communal affair, an act of collaboration between like-minded individuals, intended to serve a great and important goal.<sup>90</sup>

And in reference to the 1937 disaster which killed altogether seven German mountaineers and nine Sherpas: 'When the news of the avalanche deaths on Nanga Parbat reaches Germany, the homeland immediately organizes a rescue expedition under the leadership of Paul Bauer, the pioneer of German Himalaya exploration'.<sup>91</sup>

Werner's awareness of the national(istic) character of previous German

expeditions to Nanga Parbat (specifically those conducted after 1933), however, does not keep him from positioning the 1953 'Willy-Merkel-Gedächtnis-Expedition' within a similar context. As mentioned earlier, the narrative still refers to Nanga Parbat as the German 'mountain of destiny', and the characterization of various celebrations of the expedition's success is interspersed with references to its German origin:

The return of the successful team is one triumphant procession. Fellow mountaineers from all nations send congratulatory telegrams; one of the first is Colonel Hunt, the leader of the 1953 Mount Everest expedition. Even in the smallest mountain hamlets which the team passes through on their return from the Rakhiot bridge, the population welcomes them in the most heart-felt way. Flower wreaths and banners with German inscriptions decorate the streets, flowers are being showered upon the team. In Gilgit the band of the Gilgit scouts welcomes them with German songs. And in Rawalpindi and Lahore, too, the population exuberantly expresses their thanks for planting the Pakistani flag on the summit of the 'King of the Mountains'.<sup>92</sup>

To these observations we need to add one more important — and most interesting — detail. Throughout his text, Werner goes to great lengths to describe the members of Herrligkoffer's expedition not only as belonging to the 'old' and 'young' generation of Himalaya mountaineers, but also as being of both German and Austrian origin. The significance of this lies in the fact that all previous expeditions to Nanga Parbat had drawn their members from these two nations, and that the two countries had in fact become one on 13 March 1938. Consequently, one has to ask the question whether Werner, with his focus on the joint nature of the expedition, is still caught up in outdated Pan-Germanic notions when he describes the return of Hermann Buhl 'to his beloved Ramsau in the Berchtesgaden region', an area in south-eastern Germany bordering directly on modern-day Austria:

And there, too, a forest of flags flying the German and Austrian colors waves to his arrival. He is being showered with flowers, enveloped by the crowd's cheers of welcome. The homeland honors, in its characteristic manner, the mountaineer whose achievement they all admire — so much so that Hermann Buhl, the very man who conquered Nanga Parbat in a 40-hour solo ascent, can simply comment afterwards: 'That's somewhat exhausting!' — these celebrations, almost more so than the climb to the top of Nanga Parbat.<sup>93</sup>

Viewed together, these observations reveal that Werner's account of the 1953 'Willy-Merkel-Gedächtnis-Expedition' is still very much influenced by the notions and concepts that had dominated the discourse surrounding

German high-altitude mountaineering prior to World War II.<sup>94</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in a passage literally located at the very center of the novel, halfway through the narrative; a passage recalling an ideal we were able to trace all the way back to 1922: the fatherland and the never-ending fight for its glory:

In this struggle for one of the world's tallest mountains we vow to be honorable fighters, to obey the laws of comradeship, and to put in all our effort in order to reach this great goal. For the glory of mountaineering all over the world and the honor of our fatherland.<sup>95</sup>

For Werner, even a decade after the end of World War II, the pursuit of mountaineering success can only be described via the vocabulary of armed conflict.

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Revisiting the history of Nanga Parbat fifty years after the first ascent of the mountain and re-reading its story through the eyes of mountaineering officials and youth authors of past decades adds an important facet to the present discussion surrounding this German 'mountain of destiny'. It reveals a disturbing picture of German (and Austrian) mountaineering functionaries who, over a period of thirty years and despite the experiences of two world wars, continually identified the only viable path to a stable German national identity as a return to the past and its (rightly) discredited ideals; individuals who, more importantly, showed no concern and hesitation in communicating these ideals to subsequent generations of young Germans (and Austrians). Still more disturbing is the fact that their visions could (and would) be duplicated in various print publications targeted at teenagers and young adults. Despite different times and different voices, then, the building blocks used to (re-) construct a German national identity, whether in programmatic or fictional form, remained essentially the same.

## Endnotes

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- 1 Walt Unsworth, *Everest: A Mountaineering History*, Mountaineers Books, Seattle, 2000.
- 2 Audrey Salkeld and John Boyle (eds), *Climbing Mount Everest. The Bibliography. The Literature and History of Climbing the World's Highest Mountain*, Sixways Publishing, Clevedon, 1993.
- 3 Gordon T. Stewart, 'The British Reaction to the Conquest of Everest', *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 7 (Spring 1980), pp. 21-39; Gordon T. Stewart, 'Tenzing's Two Wrist-Watches: The Conquest of Everest and Late Imperial Culture in Britain, 1921-1953', *Past and Present*, vol. 149 (November 1995), pp. 171-197; Peter H. Hansen, 'Debate: Tenzing's Two Wrist-Watches: The Conquest of Everest and Late Imperial Culture in Britain, 1921-1953, Comment', in: *Past and Present*, vol. 157 (November 1997), pp. 159-177; Gordon T. Stewart, 'Reply',

- Past and Present*, vol. 157 (November 1997), pp. 178-190; Peter H. Hansen, 'Confetti of Empire: The Conquest of Everest in Nepal, India, Britain and New Zealand', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 42 (April 2000), pp. 307-332.
- 4 Rainer Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus. Kultur— Organisation — Politik* [Alpinism. Culture — Organization — Politics], WUV-Universitätsverlag, Wien, 1996.
  - 5 Helmuth Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat. Gedanken, Erinnerungen, Dokumente* [Alpinism in the NS State. Thoughts, Recollections, Documents], Bergverlag Rudolf Rother, München, 1998.
  - 6 Peter Mierau, *Die Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung von 1936 bis 1998. Ihre Geschichte und ihre Expeditionen* [The German Himalaya Foundation from 1936 to 1998. Its History and Expeditions], Bergverlag Rudolf Rother, München, 1999.
  - 7 Horst Höfler, *Nanga Parbat. Expeditionen zum "Schicksalsberg der Deutschen" 1934-1962*, AS Verlag, Zürich, 2002.
  - 8 Ralf-Peter Märtin, *Nanga Parbat. Wahrheit und Wahn des Alpinismus*, Berlin Verlag, Berlin, 2002.
  - 9 A term chosen by German mountaineers of the 1930s, reflecting the fact that German climbers lost their lives on Nanga Parbat with frightening regularity.
  - 10 For a detailed discussion of the connection between youth literature and the transport of ideology during the period under investigation, see the following titles: Reiner Wild (ed.), *Geschichte der Deutschen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* [A History of German Children's and Youth Literature], J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart, 1990, especially pp. 257ff.; Wolfgang Promies (ed.), *1870-1945. Erziehung zum Krieg — Krieg als Erzieher. Mit dem Jugendbuch für Kaiser, Vaterland und Führer* [1870-1945. Education for War — War as Educator. With the Youth Book for Emperor, Fatherland and Leader], Ad. Littmann, Oldenburg, 1979; Ulrich Nassen, *Jugend, Buch und Konjunktur 1933-1945. Studien zum Ideologienpotential des genuinnationalsozialistischen und des konjunkturellen 'Jugendschrifttums'* [Youth, Book and Business 1933-1945. Studies into the Ideological Potential of Genuinely National Socialist and Cyclical 'Youth Literature'], Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1987; Klaus Doderer (ed.), *Zwischen Trümmern und Wohlstand. Literatur der Jugend 1945-1960* [Between Rubble and Prosperity. Youth Literature 1945-1960], Beltz Verlag, Weinheim und Basel, 1988. None of these titles, however, addresses the literary representations of mountaineering in this context.
  - 11 The rationale for including both German and Austrian alpine organizations and their respective publications in my investigation is threefold: 1. Since its foundation in 1869 the Deutscher Alpenverein DAV [German Alpine Club] understood itself as reaching beyond the borders of the German state; 'German' was understood as referring to the German 'Volk': The German Alpine Club does not recognize political borders; as much as it plans to gradually make the entire German Alps the subject of its research, it intends to represent all German tribes, whether they reside in Germany or in Austria', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Osterreichischen Alpenvereins* [Journal of the German and Austrian Alpine Club] vol. 1 (1869-70), pp. 1f. Quoted in Amstädter, p. 43. 2. In both World War I and II, Germans and Austrians fought — and experienced defeat — together. Sentiments of loss and disorientation were expressed by both and are therefore almost interchangeable, especially when originating from

- a discursive environment that defines 'Germany' along 'volkisch' lines. This is even more true after March 1938, the date Austria (the *Ostmark*) became part of *Groß-deutschland* [Greater Germany]. 3. Almost all expeditions launched into the Himalayas from Germany included both German and Austrian mountaineers.
- 12 Quoted in Märtin, *Nanga Parbat*, p. 104.
  - 13 Gustav Müller, 'Die Berge und ihre Bedeutung für den Wiederaufbau des deutschen Volkes', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Österreichischen Alpenvereins*, vol. 53 (1922), pp. 1-9.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
  - 15 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
  - 16 Margarete Große, 'Berge und Alltag' [The Mountains and Everyday Life], *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, vol. 45 (1923), pp. 164-169.
  - 17 Friedrich Otten, *Der Kampf um den Riesen*, A. W. Hayn's Erben, Berlin, 1924.
  - 18 Otten identifies as his intended audience 'the German people and the German youth'. The German term 'Jugend' traditionally refers to ages fourteen through eighteen.
  - 19 Otten, *Der Kampf um den Riesen*, pp. 5-6.
  - 20 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
  - 21 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
  - 22 With this focus on German science and technology, Otten partakes in what anthropologist David J. Hess has termed 'techno-totemism' (David J. Hess, *Science and Technology in a Multicultural World. The Cultural Politics of Facts and Artifacts*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, p. 21), a phenomenon Luke Springman further characterized as 'the scientific and technical achievements that have acquired the emblematic status for a unique and coherent German national identity for the modern industrial age' (Luke Springman, *Science Fiction and Non-Fiction for Youth. Prosthetic Gods*, typescript, p. 5) and a development which, in the youth literature of the time, manifested itself most prominently in the works of Hans Dominik who, in his novel *Atlantis* (1925), stressed that it was a German geologist, Alfred Wegener, who devised the continental drift theory, and that all the great inventions since then had been by Germans. Many of these authors, as Springman observed, suggest or openly proclaim in their novels Germany's defeat in World War I 'as the motivation for the technological genius of the fatherland to arise'. (Springman, *Science Fiction*, pp. 6-7).
  - 23 The author has based his book on the English scientific expeditions to Mount Everest'. (Otten, *Der Kampf um den Riesen*, p. 5) In an appendix to his novel, Otten elaborates on the various sources for his narrative: The following resources were consulted for the present book: 1. Rudyard Kipling, *Dschungelbilder* 2. Professor Sauter, Berlin, formerly Calcutta, *Mein Indien* 3. Walter Flaig, *Im Kampf um den Tschomolungma, den Gipfel der Erde* [...] The latter volume presents, in a strictly scientific manner, the geographic, zoological and botanical characteristics of those areas of Asia suited for an ascent to Mount Everest (Tschomolungma). Equally represented are the various former attempts of the British to scale and explore this immense mountain. In my book, which is primarily aimed at fostering patriotism, I have condensed the various British expeditions into that of 1924 in order to create a gripping picture of this phenomenal cultural effort [...] 4. Various English and German news publications' (*Ibid.*, p. 215).

- 24 Ibid., p. 19. Russe is clearly modeled after the leader of the British Everest expeditions of 1922 and 1924, General Charles Granville Bruce.
- 25 In creating this link, Otten joins a discourse in German (youth) literature which, since the years of the German Empire, had thematized the colonial experience for the purpose of clarifying the (national) 'self through the juxtaposition with the foreign 'other'. German (youth) authors continued to engage in this discourse during the years of the Weimar Republic as well as the Third Reich. For details on this subject, see: Joachim Warmbold, 'Stückchen neu-deutsche Erd-'. *Germania in Africa: Germany's Colonial Literature*, Peter Lang, New York, 1989; Nassen, *Jugend, Buch*, pp. 101ff.
- 26 '[...] truly national and patriotic enterprise [...]' Otten, *Der Kampf um den Riesen*, p. 20.
- 27 Ibid., p. 27.
- 28 For a brief discussion of the German engagement in Afghanistan, see A. Samad Hamed, 'Die Afghanisch-Deutsche Beziehung: Aus afghanischer Sicht' ['Afghan-German Relations: An Afghan Point-of-View'] in *Afghan German Online* (<http://www.afghan-german.de/index.html>).
- 29 Mallory and Irvine never returned from a summit attempt on Mount Everest in June 1924. Irvine's body was found in 1975, Mallory's remains only recently in 1999. For a detailed account see: Jochen Hemmleb, Larry A. Johnson, and Eric R. Simonson, *Ghosts of Everest. The Search for Mallory and Irvine*, The Mountaineers Books, Seattle, 2001.
- 30 Otten, *Der Kampf um den Riesen*, p. 15.
- 31 Ibid., p. 18.
- 32 Ibid., p. 32.
- 33 These concerns are clearly voiced by Zönlund's superior, Professor Hütte: 'If English science should achieve such a success there, it would not only put Great Britain into a leading scientific position, but also into a dominant position of influence in Tibet and, consequently, in Afghanistan. All our hard work there would have been in vain!' Ibid., pp. 32-33.
- 34 Ibid., p. 35.
- 35 Ibid., pp. 153-154.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 209-210. Otten's call for a future cooperation of 'Germanic' peoples and countries (Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavia, North America) positions him squarely within the 'völkisch' ideology of the time. His call for the collaboration of various representatives of the white race in the fight against the 'yellow peril' reflects the very ideas Adolf Hitler formulated the same year in *Mein Kampf*, ideas which identified the 'Aryan' peoples of Europe and North America as 'Kulturbegründer' ['founders of culture'] and positioned them against, among others, the racially inferior people of the Indian subcontinent; ideas, finally, which can be traced to the racial theories of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and, more importantly, Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, who, in his 1855 treatise *The Inequality of Human Races (Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines)*, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1853-1855) had identified three essential races, the 'white', the 'yellow' and the 'black' and located the white race in Western Europe and North America.
- 37 Springman, *Science Fiction*, pp. 6, 11.
- 38 Heinrich Pfannl, 'Zu neuen Taten' [Towards New Deeds], *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, vol. 1046 (1926), p. 1.

- 39 Sepp Dobiasch, 'Übersee-Expeditionen' ['Overseas Expeditions'], *Der Bergsteiger. Deutsche Wochenschrift für Bergsteigen, Wandern, und Skilaufen*, vol. 7(1927), p. 1.
- 40 Julius Gallhuber, 'Die Expeditionen des DÖAV und die alpine Öffentlichkeit' ['The DÖAV Expeditions and the Alpine Public'], *Der Bergsteiger. Deutsche Wochenschrift für Bergsteigen, Wandern, und Skilaufen*, vol. 19 (1928), p. 1.
- 41 The year 1928 saw already three of them: German mountaineers (Eugen Allwein, Erwin Schneider, Karl Wien), jointly financed by the Emergency Foundation of German Scientists, the German and Austrian Alpine Club and the Soviet Academy of Science traveled to the Alai-Pamir range where on 25 September 1928 they reached the summit of Pik Lenin (7,127m); the German Caucasus expedition (Sektion Hochland) under the leadership of Paul Bauer (soon to emerge as one of the key figures in German high-altitude mountaineering during the 1930s); and the first German Andes expedition sponsored by the DÖAV, led by Hans Pfann. During the following year 1929, Willy Merkl, one of the premier German mountaineers of the period, led an expedition into the Caucasus region sponsored by the Sektion Bayerland (Munich). Over the next ten years, German mountaineers would focus their attention on two of these mountain ranges: the Andes and the Himalayas, the tallest mountain range in the world. In both of these regions, German explorers had left their early mark. In 1801, during his South-American expedition, Alexander von Humboldt reached an altitude of 5,350m on Chimborazo (6,310m), then considered to be the highest peak in the world. Between 1919 and 1939, Germans repeatedly followed in von Humboldt's footsteps. In 1932, once again sponsored by the DÖAV, German mountaineers traveled to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru and successfully scaled Huascarán (6,768m). The Andes remained a goal for German and Austrian mountaineers until the outbreak of World War II: the years 1936 (Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera de Huayhuash; expedition leader: Hans Kinzl), 1938 (Cordillera Blanca; Sepp Schmidbauer, Sepp Bucher), and 1939 (Andes Reconnaissance Expedition of the German Alpine Club) saw three more expeditions into this region.
- 42 *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, vol. 1148 (1934), p. 227.
- 43 Quoted Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat*, pp. 128-129.
- 44 On the connection between sport and militarism, especially war preparations, see recently: Jean-Michel Faure, 'Forging a French Fighting Spirit. The Nation, Sport, Violence and War', in J. A. Mangan (ed.), *Tribal Identities. Nationalism, Sport, Europe*, Frank Cass, London, 1996, pp. 75-93.
- 45 Meinhart Sild, 'Bergsteigen als Rüstung', *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, vol. 1195(1938), pp. 160-164.
- 46 Meinhart Sild, 'Bergsteigen — Notwendigkeit und Aufgabe', *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, vol. 1201 (1939), pp. 9-15.
- 47 Meinhart Sild, 'Der neue Weg', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Alpenvereins. Jahrbuch*, vol. 70 (1939), pp. 7-9.
- 48 *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 9.
- 49 The coordination or unification of the *Reich* along ideological or organizational lines as determined by the National Socialists. For details, see: James Taylor and Warren Shaw, *Dictionary of the Third Reich*, Penguin, London, 1997, pp. 109-111. For a thorough discussion of this process in regard to sports in Germany, see: Hajo Bernett, *Der Weg des Sports in die nationalsozialistische*

*Diktatur: Die Entstehung des Deutschen (Nationalsozialistischen) Reichsbundes für Leibesübungen* [The Path of Sports into National Socialist Dictatorship: The Genesis of the German (National Socialist) *Reichsbund* for Physical Education], Hofmann, Schorndorf, 1983.

- 50 For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus*, pp. 466-476, especially p. 475. Amstädter speaks of a 'total symbiosis' between the youth branch of the German Alpine Club (DAV) and the German armed forces.
- 51 Quoted in Martin, *Nanga Parbat*, p. 218.
- 52 Ad. W. Kürger, *Der Kampf um den Nanga Parbat*, Aufwärts-Verlag, Berlin, 1941.
- 53 The *Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei* came into existence in 1939 as part of an effort among German publishing houses to address an emerging, increasingly politicized youth market after the National Socialists' rise to power in 1933. The *Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei* continued to be published into the final years of World War II. For more detailed information on this type of publication during the Nazi period, see Heinz J. Galle, *Populäre Lesestoffe. Groschenhefte, Dime Novels und Penny Dreadfuls aus den Jahren 1850 bis 1950. Katalog zur Ausstellung* [Popular Readings. Groschenhefte, Dime Novels and Penny Dreadfuls from 1850 to 1950. Exhibition Catalogue], Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek, Köln, 2002, pp. 88-97.
- 54 Fritz Bechtold's book *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934* [Germans on Nanga Parbat. The Attack 1934], Bruckmann, München, 1935, for instance, was an immediate bestseller. Its 12th edition, published in 1944, still had a run of 50,000 copies. Karl Maria Herrikkoffer's *Willy Merkl. Ein Weg zum Nanga Parbat. Leben, Vorträge und nachgelassene Schriften* [Willy Merkl. A Road to Nanga Parbat. Life, Lectures and Writings], Bergverlag Rother, München, 1936, achieved a total of eight editions over a period of only two years.
- 55 A more detailed discussion of the treatment of these concepts in National Socialist youth literature can be found in Nassen, *Jugend, Buch*, pp. 62-76.
- 56 The following discussion of Krüger's novel appears courtesy of *Sport in History*, especially its editor, Tony Collins. It is included here in order to document the persistent efforts of various German authors and publishing houses to utilize German Himalaya expeditions for purposes of nationalistic indoctrination. (*Sport in History*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 2003), pp.74-78).
- 57 Krüger, *Der Kampf*, p. 6.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 63 Jay W. Baird, *To Die For Germany. Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990.
- 64 For a detailed discussion of hero worship within the context of National Socialist youth literature see Nassen, *Jugend, Buch*, pp. 47-62.
- 65 Krüger, *Der Kampf*, p. 22.
- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

- 70 Ibid., p. 39.
- 71 Ibid., p. 40.
- 72 For a detailed discussion of the various charges leveled against the German Alpine Club after the war, see Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat*, pp. 206-209.
- 73 Quoted in Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat*, p. 205.
- 74 See Ibid, pp. 220-221.
- 75 For details, see Ibid., p. 216.
- 76 For a detailed discussion of the post-war development of Austrian alpine organizations, see Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus*, pp. 523ff.
- 77 On this subject, see Märtin, *Nanga Parbat*, p. 304.
- 78 Quoted in Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat*, p. 229.
- 79 Quoted in Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus*, p. 544. Narvik was as a battle ground for Austrian mountain infantry or *Gebirgsjäger* (2nd and 3rd Mountain Division; stationed in Innsbruck and Graz, respectively) in 1940.
- 80 On this connection see Mierau, *Die Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung*, p. 159.
- 81 Bauer explained his position in the *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Bergsteigerverbandes*, vol. 4 (1937).
- 82 For a detailed discussion of this conflict between Herrligkoffer and Bauer, see: Mierau, *Die Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung*, pp. 158-81; Märtin, *Nanga Parbat*, pp. 255ff.
- 83 Arthur Werner, *Weg und Ziel Nanga Parbat 1895-1953* [Journey and Goal Nanga Parbat 1895-1953], Verlag für Jugend und Volk, Wein, 1954.
- 84 Herrligkoffer, of course, wanted to fulfill a legacy as well - that of his deceased half-brother, Willy Merkl, who died on the mountain in 1934. His intention to separate himself from the tainted National Socialist legacy of Nanga Parbat, however, is clear.
- 85 Werner, *Gipfel*, p. 5.
- 86 Ibid., p. 22
- 87 Ibid., p. 23
- 88 Harald Höbusch, 'Germany's "Mountain of Destiny": Nanga Parbat and National Self-Representation', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 19, no. 4 (December 2002), pp. 137-68.
- 89 Werner, *Gipfel*, p. 7.
- 90 Ibid., p. 8.
- 91 Ibid, p 18.
- 92 Ibid., p. 70.
- 93 Ibid., p. 71.
- 94 This tendency is not uncommon in the German youth literature of the late 1940s and 1950s. Winfred Kaminski uses the term 'backward oriented beginnings' when he describes these tendencies in his discussion of early post-World War II German youth literature (Doderer, *Zwischen Trümmern und Wohlstand*, p. 20).
- 95 Werner, *Gipfel*, p. 33.