«Stunde Null» on Nanga Parbat? The German «Schicksalsberg» in Pre- and Post-WW II Youth Literature

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Bisected by the «Stunde Null»¹ – the «Zero Hour» which, at least in theory, separated National Socialist Germany from its eventual democratic and socialist successors, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) – the story of the ascent of Nanga Parbat, Germany’s «Schicksalsberg» in the Himalayas, spans a period of two decades (1932–53), is equaled in drama only by the British epic of climbing Mount Everest, and has been recounted extensively – and one might even say, obsessively – in a variety of media (print, audio, film), both pre- and post-World War II. In this essay I will explore one particular aspect of this expansive body of narratives, the presentation of the Nanga Parbat story to a young German readership both before and after the «Stunde Null,» with the double intent of exploring the narrative and ideological (dis-)continuities² between these various Nanga Parbat stories and of defining the respective functioning of these stories as an integral part of the youth literature of the final years of the Third Reich and the formative years of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The story of Nanga Parbat (8,126 m), the world’s ninth-highest peak, located in the extreme western part of the Himalaya chain in modern-day Pakistan, originates in the years following World War I, a time when Germany’s leading mountaineers had begun to set their sights on goals located well beyond their traditional area of activity, the European Alps. In the decade between 1928 and 1939 German expeditions repeatedly traveled to such remote locations as the Andes, the Caucasus, the Pamir and, most importantly, the Himalayas.³ In 1929 the Munich notary and mountaineer Dr. Paul Bauer (1896–1990) had organized the first German Himalaya expedition to Kangchenjunga (8,598 m), the third-highest mountain in the world. In 1930, the «Internationale Himalaya-Expedition,» organized and led by the Breslau geologist Prof. Dr. Günther Oskar Dyhrenfurth (1866–1975),⁴ set out to conquer Kangchenjunga once more but, like Bauer the previous year, failed to reach the summit. Kangchenjunga remained one of the primary goals for German mountaineers during the early 1930s: 1931 marked the year of the second German Kangchenjunga expedition, again under the leadership of Bauer.
However, in the dreams of German mountaineers at the time, Kangchenjunga was soon replaced by Nanga Parbat, and the fact that Nanga Parbat had been «discovered» by a German undoubtedly contributed to the claim by 1930s German mountaineers that Nanga Parbat was a «German» mountain. Bauer, for instance, repeatedly pointed to the Munich explorer and scientist Adolph Schlagintweit (1829–57) as the first European paying attention to the mountain and sending news of its existence to Europe. To him, Schlagintweit was the true «Entdecker» of Nanga Parbat.

In 1932, a joint German-American expedition, led by Willy Merkl (1900–34), one of the premier German climbers at the time, and bankrolled primarily by two American participants, Rand Herron and Elizabeth Knowlton, made the first (unsuccesful) German effort at scaling the peak. Over the next seven years, until the outbreak of World War II, a total of five German expeditions would visit Nanga Parbat in addition to the 1932 Merkl expedition (expedition leaders in parentheses): 1934 (Merkl), 1937 (Dr. Karl Wien), 1937 rescue expedition (Bauer), 1938 (Bauer), 1939 (participants: Peter Autschnaiter, Heinrich Harrer, Hans Lobenhoffer, Lutz Chicken). Nanga Parbat, however, did not treat its visitors kindly; in fact, it soon gained the title of German «Schicksalsberg» because of the repeat disasters striking German expeditions on its slopes and the resulting body count of altogether twenty-six dead: fifteen local porters as well as eleven German and Austrian mountaineers, among them some of the most highly regarded climbers of the interwar period.

Disaster struck first with the 1934 expedition. Financed and executed with the full support of German National Socialist government agencies – the majority of funds were raised through the Reichsbahn-Turn- und Sportvereine and the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein (DuÖAV) – nothing less was expected of this expedition than «[…] die Eroberung des Gipfels zum Ruhme Deutschlands.» That goal, however, proved elusive. Early on during the expedition, one of the nine German mountaineers, Alfred Drexel, succumbed to lung edema. During a subsequent summit attempt, three more German mountaineers, Merkl, Willo Welzenbach, and Uli Wieland, as well as three porters lost their lives. Caught in the onset of the monsoon, they failed in their attempt to descend from their high-altitude camp to lower elevations due to heavy snowfall and the effects of high-altitude sickness.

The 1937 expedition to Nanga Parbat fared even worse. Financed by the newly formed Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung, an organization closely connected to the National Socialist Deutscher Reichsbund für Leibesübungen through two of its founding members, Reichssportführer Hans von Tschammer und Osten and Bauer, the expedition left Munich with great expecta-
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In an instant, seven German mountain climbers and nine porters were killed by an avalanche leveling their high camp. It was with this tragic event that Nanga Parbat gained the title «Schicksalsberg.» Immediately after receiving news of the disaster, the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung launched a rescue expedition to Nanga Parbat. Its members, after several days of digging through the avalanche, were able to locate and lay to rest the bodies of five German mountain climbers. In addition, they succeeded in retrieving most of the deceased’s personal belongings, including their diaries, as well as the film material of the original 1937 expedition.

The year 1938 saw yet another German effort at fulfilling what by then had become somewhat of a German «Vermächtnis.» Again led by Bauer, yet another expedition traveled to Nanga Parbat in order to reach its summit, this time supported by a specially modified JU-52 transport plane supplied by Colonel Ernst Udet, at the time head of the T-Amt, the development wing of the Reichsluftfahrtministerium. Although this time no one got injured or killed, death was present on the mountain nevertheless; it was this expedition that discovered the bodies of the deceased of 1934, Merkl and Welzenbach.

German efforts on Nanga Parbat continued in 1939. Reacting to the sobering fact that four previous expeditions had failed to reach the summit via the north side of the mountain, this visit was designed to explore a potential new route up the mountain from the east and, by doing so, lay the groundwork for a large expedition planned for the following year 1940. The outbreak of World War II, however, put an end to anybody’s mountaineering dreams; the four German expedition members were soon interned by the British forces in India.

It took until eight years after the end of World War II that Germans (and Austrians) once more tried to reach the summit of Nanga Parbat. Named the Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition and headed by Merkl’s half-brother, the Munich physician Dr. Karl Maria Herrligkoffer (1916–91), this undertaking marked the first expedition conducted independently of the organizational and financial resources of previous (National Socialist) Nanga Parbat expeditions. In fact, Herrligkoffer had been successful in securing the single annually available expedition permit for Nanga Parbat against strong competition and interference from the then still active Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung. Herrligkoffer was criticized repeatedly by Bauer, the leader of the 1937 and 1938 expeditions, for his lack of organization and, especially, his selection of team members. Whereas Herrligkoffer simply tried to recruit the best climbers of the post-World War II period, Bauer favored (as on his previous expeditions) the idea of an already familiar group of
mountaineers or «Bergkameraden.» While Bauer insisted on the «Alleinvertretungsanspruch» of the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung regarding expeditions into the Himalayas, Herrligkoffer ignored this «right» and pointed instead to the questionable National Socialist past of the Stiftung. In the end, Herrligkoffer emerged victorious from this extended struggle for the right to travel to Nanga Parbat and was able to carry on with his expedition, an expedition which ultimately lead to the singular triumph of the Austrian climber Hermann Buhl (1924–57) on 3 July 1953.

The exploits of German and Austrian mountaineers on Nanga Parbat between 1932 and 1953 were brought to the attention of the German public in both traditional and novel ways. A good half century after the publication of the Schlagintweits’ volume Reisen in Indien und Hochasien, Merkl’s limited documentation of the 1932 German-American Nanga Parbat expedition in a few articles in German and Austrian mountaineering journals marked the sole exception to the otherwise carefully planned and executed media campaigns associated with all subsequent Nanga Parbat expeditions. Beginning with Merkl’s own 1934 expedition, intensifying with the three expeditions organized and supported by the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung (1934, 1937, 1938), and culminating in Herrligkoffer’s 1953 Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition, the reporting of these mountaineering enterprises to the German public turned out to be both extensive and all-inclusive, ranging from official expedition reports, personal expedition diaries, national radio broadcasts, and feature-length «documentary» films all the way to adventure stories geared specifically to teenagers.

The first of the official accounts of the German Nanga Parbat expeditions of the 1930s, Fritz Bechtold’s Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934, became one of the most widely read expedition reports ever. 50,000 copies were printed for its first edition in 1935, another 20,000 copies followed the next year. Even in 1944, which saw the twelfth edition of the volume, the astounding number of 50,000 copies was produced. Willy Merkl – Ein Weg zum Nanga Parbat, a book that recounted the mountaineering life of the leader of the 1934 expedition and was published in 1936 by Herrligkoffer, had to be reprinted a total of seven times over a period of only two years. Similar popularity was achieved by Hans Hartmann’s posthumously published diary Ziel Nanga Parbat. Tagebuchblätter einer Himalaja-Expedition, a small volume which appeared in 1938 and had an initial print run of 5,000 copies. Hartmann’s text, however, was subsequently reprinted a total of four times: in 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945. The print run of the second edition alone was 10,000 copies. The last book-length report of German pre-World War II expeditions to Nanga Parbat, Ulrich Luft’s account of the 1938 attempt titled
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Nanga Parbat. Berg der Kameraden, did not make it into print until 1943. However, once the volume did appear, it underwent a print run of 20,000 copies in 1943 and another 20,000 copies in 1944.

The German public’s fascination with the «Schicksalsberg» clearly extended past the «Stunde Null.» This fact is attested to first by Rudolf Skuhra’s *Sturm auf die Throne der Götter*, a volume originally published in 1938 and subsequently republished five times (in both West Germany and Austria): in 1949, 1950, 1952, 1953, and 1954, now with added subtitle: *Sturm auf die Throne der Götter. Die Himalaya-Expeditionen der Nachkriegszeit*. Herrligkoffer, the leader of the successful 1953 *Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition*, followed in the literary footsteps of earlier expeditions with the publication of his official expedition report titled *Nanga Parbat 1953*, a volume matched in popularity only by Bechtold’s pre-war book *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934*. While the West German original experienced two editions in 1954 alone, licensed editions appeared in Austria (Die Buchgemeinde) and the GDR (Verlag Neues Leben), in the latter case with an astounding print run of 50,000 copies. An alternative to Herrligkoffer’s official account was provided in Hermann Buhl’s *Achttausend drüber und drunter*, a book written in collaboration with the Viennese mountaineer and Alpine writer Kurt Maix (1907–68). Buhl’s book, too, was licensed to the Büchergilde Gutenberg (Frankfurt/Main) and the Buchgemeinschaft Donauland (Wien) and published in the GDR by the VEB Leipzig (F.A. Brockhaus Verlag). The publication, finally, of Ulrich Link’s *Nanga Parbat. Berg des Schicksals im Himalaya* (1953), Arthur Werner’s *Weg und Ziel Nanga Parbat 1895–1953* (1954), Dyhrenfurth’s *Das Buch vom Nanga Parbat. Die Geschichte seiner Besteigung 1895–1953* (1954), and Bauer’s *Das Ringen um den Nanga Parbat 1856–1953. Hundert Jahre Bergsteigerischer Geschichte* (1955) serves as yet another piece of evidence that the fascination of the German public with the story of Nanga Parbat continued well into the 1950s, a popularity which, at the time, was matched only by the story of the «Wunder von Bern,» the miraculous victory of the German soccer team in the championship game of the 1954 World Cup.

A most intriguing aspect of the range of publications thematizing the exploits of German expeditions to Nanga Parbat lies in the fact that this range included numerous texts which were targeted specifically at a young reading audience, both before and, even more so, after the «Stunde Null.» During the final years of the Third Reich, the topic of German mountaineering expeditions to Nanga Parbat was adapted for a youth audience by two authors who were neither personally nor professionally affiliated with any of these expeditions: Ad. W. Krüger and Wilhelm Kreuz. Both of their ac-
counts were published exclusively during World War II, and both of them were aimed specifically at a young male reading audience. The first of these two texts, Krüger’s story *Der Kampf um den Nanga Parbat*, appeared in 1941 as volume 48 in the *Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei* of the Aufwärts-Verlag Berlin.\(^{17}\) The *Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei* had been conceived in 1940 as part of a campaign by the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* to produce a range of youth booklets\(^{18}\) which were to impart National Socialist ideology in direct propagandistic fashion and replace the still highly popular, but from now on prohibited «Schund-» or «Groschenhefte.»\(^{19}\) Its titles (altogether 99) continued to be published into the final years of World War II.\(^{20}\) By the time Krüger’s story appeared, of course, the German armed forces were already at war («im Kampf»), thereby lending both title and plot of Krüger’s story a high degree of timeliness and urgency. Attempting both to revive and capitalize on the formerly widespread fascination of the German public with pre-World War II Himalaya, and especially Nanga Parbat, expeditions, the story recounts Merkl’s ill-fated 1934 enterprise and, in doing so, celebrates many of the «heroic» qualities von Tschammer und Osten, Bechtold, Bauer, and Luft had ascribed to German mountaineers in their aforementioned commentaries and accounts of several Nanga Parbat expeditions: the notion of the selfless leader along with related concepts such as loyalty, comradeship, and self-sacrifice (to the death).\(^{21}\)

A strong sense of loyalty between the expedition members is stressed from the very outset of Krüger’s story. Having just finished their final preparations in a Munich warehouse, the mountaineers report to their leader, 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:

Und dann, als hätten sie sich verabredet, wo doch nur die Übermacht eines sie alle beseelenden großen Gefühls vorherrschte, traten sie zu Willy Merkl heran, einer nach dem anderen, und reichten ihm die Hand. Ein Gelöbnis der Treue war es, und Merkl hatte sie verstanden. (6)

More importantly, the mountaineers’ loyalty extends beyond the merely personal to their fatherland. Inspired by a farewell telegram from 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: «Dennoch!»
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sagt er endlich fest und zuversichtlich, «wir stehen hier als Deutsche, und eine
ganze Welt sieht auf uns! Da wollen wir als Deutsche geben, was wir besitzen,
Kraft, Energie, Verstand, Glauben und die Zuversicht auf den da oben!» (14).

Merkls sentiment about the mission is shared by Alfred Drexel, the moun-
taineer who volunteers to set up the first high-altitude camp. Driven by the
trust of his comrades – «Man weiß ja doch, der eine kann auf den anderen
bauen wie auf Fels» (15) – Drexel overexerts himself during the push up the
mountain, falls ill with pneumonia, and eventually dies in the arms of his fel-
low mountaineer and friend, Bechtold. In his final words, however, Drexel
pays tribute to the larger cause of the expedition: «Fritz! Selsam klar tönt
plötzlich die Stimme des Kranken durch das niedrige Zelt. Fritz! Wenn ich
jetzt sterbe, – versprich mir, – der Angriff auf den Berg – der geht weiter –
gelt? – Nicht nachlassen –, den Gipfel –, den Gipfel – für Deutschland –!»
(20).

Parallel to Drexels 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 Drexels death. «Was ist darüber noch zu reden? Sie kennen ein-
ander, sie wissen, daß der eine bereit ist, für den anderen zu sterben» (20). The
connection between Drexels sacrificial death and the beneficiary of his sac-
rifice beyond the immediately personal is most clearly expressed in Krügers
depiction of the burial:

Der von den Nepalesen gezimmerte Sarg sinkt hinab. Die Hakenkreuzfahne fällt
darauf. Mit entblößten Häuptern stehen die Männer davor. Und dann, dann braust
aus ihren Kehlen, hier, im fernen Indien, das Horst-Wessel-Lied empor. Alfred
Drexel, wer so starb, wie du, der starb wohl! (21)22

The concepts of leadership and loyalty, comradeship and sacrifice meld to-
gether in the central scene of the novel, positioned halfway through the narra-
tive. Immediately following Drexels burial, the mountaineers, standing next
to his grave, discuss the future of their enterprise. Once again it is their leader,
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:

Kameraden! Da unten liegt einer unserer Besten! Und an seinem Hügel stelle ich
euch noch ein letztes Mal anheim, umzukehren, wer immer von euch unseres
Werkes letztes und schwerstes Stück nicht zu bewältigen glaubt. Trete jeder hervor
und sage mir offen, wer heute nicht mehr mit voller Seele, mit ganzem Willen
und mit seiner größten Freude das Ziel anstrebt, das ich mir als Lebensaufgabe gesteckt
habe. Ichnehms keinem übel! Treten einige zurück, so will ich mit dem verblei-
benden Rest die Besteigung versuchen. Treten alle zurück, nun, so will auch ich noch
heimgehen und warten! Warten, daß ein künftiges Jahr uns günstigere Aussichten
bringt! (22)
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:

Wir wagen es dennoch! Trotzdem sage ich es jedem eindringlich: Die Gefahr, der wir uns unterziehen, ist sehr groß! Die Lawinenfälligkeiten ist verstärkt, der Spur- schnee ist gelockert, die Gletschermoränen haben ihre Fahrgeschwindigkeiten um viele Meter vergrößert. Also: Ich nehme es keinem übel! Trete zurück, wer nicht mehr ganzem Herzens bei der Sache ist! (22)

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! Höre uns! Dein letzter Wille geschieht! Wir halten aus bis zum Letzten!» (23).

With this commitment, the goal for the rest of the expedition – and the second half of the story – 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, Merkl, Welzenbach, and 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, Wieland, behind: «Laß, Angstering! Ich bleibe bei dem Freunde! Ich verlaß ihn nicht!› >Du mußt mitkommen, Bara Sahib!› schreit Angstering verzweifelt. Merkl aber sieht ihn ruhig an: ›Ich verlasse meinen Freund nicht, wenn ich ihn nicht retten kann!‹ sagt er fest» (37).

Encountering yet another expedition member, Welzenbach, close to death, Merkl passes on his last chance to escape from the mountain and thereby accepts certain death for himself: «[Angstering]: ›Bara Sahib! Die Nacht kommt! Das Wetter hebt von neuem an! Wenn du diese Nacht hier überstehst, dann bringe ich dir Hilfe! Ich will hinab!› Angstering tritt an ihn heran. [Merkl]: ›Ja! Geh! Und eile dich! Vielleicht kann er gerettet werden, der
Willo» (39). The author uses his narrator to comment on Merkl’s motivation for his ultimate sacrifice: selflessness. «An sich denkt er nicht!» (39). Krüger concludes his novel with a final reference to the brave fight Germans put up in the struggle with Nanga Parbat, reminding his young reading audience one last time of the «heroic» traits called for in a time of national distress and the place they can be found: «Unten, auf der ‹Märchenwiese›, kündet ein schlimmes Steinmal, unweit von Balbos Grab, daß da hoch oben, unweit des so heiß ersehnten Gipfels, drei tapfere Deutsche ihr Leben ließen im Kampf um den Berg, den unbesiegten Nanga Parbat» (40).

Kreuz’s Am Gipfel des Nanga Parbat, the second fictionalized account of the deadly 1934 Nanga Parbat expedition, appeared in the same year as Krüger’s text (1941) as volume 57 of the Erlebnis-Bücherei, a series – just like the Aufwärts-Jugend-Bücherei – initiated by the Reich Propaganda Ministry and realized by the NSDAP-owned Steiniger publishing group in Berlin. Just like Krüger's text, the booklet was part of a series of adventure stories (105 titles between 1940 and 1945) which were aimed primarily at a young male reading audience and often openly supportive of National Socialist ideology. And, again like Krüger’s text, Kreuz’s version of the by now familiar story of the 1934 expedition pays special attention to several select issues: the idea of a Himalaya expedition as a national enterprise, the «heroic» character traits of the German mountaineers, and the portrayal of Merkl as a selfless leader and absolute authority figure.

Already in the first paragraph of Kreuz’s account, the 1934 expedition to Nanga Parbat is identified as an enterprise shared by the entire German nation: «Es geht hier um ein hohes und hehres Ziel, und das ganze deutsche Volk nimmt im Geiste teil an dem kühnen Unterfangen seiner tapferen Söhne, als erste den schweren Achttausender, den sagenumwobenen Nanga Parbat, den Eckpfeiler des Westhimalaya, […] zu besiegen» (3). Repeatedly in Kreuz’s narrative we encounter references to the quintessential symbol of the «neues Deutschland» (19), the swastika: it flies high over the preliminary base camp and, later, over camp IV, and it is draped over the coffin of Drexel, the first mountaineer to die during the 1934 expedition, thereby claiming both the expedition and its participants for the German nation. Immediately after the extended portrayal of Drexel’s funeral the notion of a national expedition is played up once more. As the narrator tells us, the postal stamps of «sämtliche Großstädte des Deutschen Reiches» on the letters and postcards received by the expedition indicate the level of attention the mountaineers and their exploits are being afforded by the fatherland: «Was aber das Schönste ist und wahrhaft erhebend: ganz Deutschland nimmt Anteil an dieser deutschen Expedition. Das verpflichtet» (19).
The mountaineers fulfilling this «obligation» are characterized in Kreuz’s text via a series of «heroic» qualities. Repeatedly, they are described as «stark und hart,» their «markige Gesichter» as expressing a «zäher Kampfeswille und frohe Siegeszuversicht» (3). Especially their fighting spirit is referred to throughout the narrative: as a desire to attack the mountain while still in the preliminary base camp, during the ascent to the first high camps, and on the traverse of the ice face of Rakhiot Peak, a key section of the 1934 ascent route. Their relationship among each other, in turn, is described as an «unverbrüchlich verschworene Gemeinschaft» (4). As part of this community «tut jeder Expeditionsteilnehmer sein Bestes für die Allgemeinheit nach seinen besonderen Kräften und Fähigkeiten» (9) and is «zum letzten Einsatz bereit […]» (4).

But among all the expedition members it is the person – and character – of the expedition leader, Merkl, who receive most of the narrator’s attention. From the outset of Kreuz’s account, Merkl is portrayed as a «[g]roßer Führer» who supports the goal of the expedition in «selbstloser, unermüdlicher Weise» (4). As the expedition’s «Meister und Führer» (13) he issues orders; orders that are being followed without any debate: «Befehl ist Befehl» (14). And it is one of these orders that signals for the reader the beginning of what the narrator calls a «Heldenkampf deutscher Bergsteigerzähigkeit» (27), the expedition’s – and especially Merkl’s – last stand on the mountain. Once more, the German climbers, caught in a snowstorm high up on the mountain, display their «[T]apferkeit,» their «[Z]ähigkeit,» and their «[V]erbissenheit» (29). While some of them escape the icy inferno (Erwin Schneider, Peter Aschenbrenner), others succumb to the cold: first Wieland, then Welzenbach. But it is Merkl, who, in his effort to save his fellow mountaineers, holds out the longest: «Merkl, den die Natur zur Führernatur vorbestimmte, hat bis zum Letzten in Sturm und Kälte ausgehalten, ein leuchtendes Vorbild bergsteigerischer Makellosigkeit» (31).

Kreuz’s retelling of the 1934 Nanga Parbat expedition concludes with a brief discussion of the impact of Merkl’s death on the German mountaineering community. Kreuz claims that «Willy Merkl ist nicht umsonst geblieben» (31), rather, that his death inspired the subsequent expeditions to the mountain in 1937 and 1938. For Kreuz, the expeditions to the German «Schicksalser Berg» are far from over; as he proclaims in the last sentence of his narrative: «Bald wird die Zeit kommen, wo die Zeitläufe den letzten Angriff auf den Berg gestatten» (31).

Both Krüger and Kreuz, then, in their respective retellings, use the dramatic events of the German 1934 Nanga Parbat expedition as a vehicle (among several others in their multiple contributions to the two youth book series)
to stress to their audience those qualities they perceived to be of the utmost importance to the German nation (and especially its young men) in a time of war: an unbreakable fighting spirit, a strong sense of personal comradeship and national community, a spirit of sacrifice, and an unquestioning trust in authority. In conjunction with our previous observations, their stories are therefore easily identifiable as belonging to what Norbert Hopster has termed «ns-affine Abenteuerliteratur» (Hopster et al. 2: 525); that is, a type of literature which selects its topics primarily on the basis of their respective affinity to the principal themes of National Socialism – themes which Viktor Böhm identifies as following:

Unbedingter Wille zur unbeschränkten Macht, mythisiert in der Weihe an Deutschland, organisiert in hierarchischer Führer-Gefolgschaftsstruktur, legitimiert durch das ‹Recht› des Stärkeren, der ‹Herrenrasse›, dynamisiert durch gnadenlose Härte und Haß gegenüber allen inneren und äußeren humanen Regungen und Kräften, konkretisiert in Rüstung und Krieg. (Böhm 12)

More specifically, Krüger’s and Kreuz’s stories can be characterized as a «modernisierte […] Form von Exempelliteratur,» a type of literature «an der beispielhaft scheinbar objektive Tatbestände oder Notwendigkeiten vorgeführt werden»; in our case how «Mut, Tatkraft und Aufopferung deutscher Männer […] sich auf das Schicksal des Volkes und kommender Generationen aus[wirken]» (Hopster et al. 2: 525). In this particular process of exemplification, as Hopster further observes, even failure – or death, as with the German Nanga Parbat mountaineers – carries a deeper meaning: it enters those who succumb to it into «die Phalanx jener Großen […]», deren Tat zum Movens der völkischen Erneuerung stilisiert wird» (526). The ultimate purpose of this exemplification lies in the «psychophysische Indienstnahme» (533) of the young German male through the presentation of «kriegsaffiner Einstellungen» (520) in the adventure literature of the Third Reich.

While during the final years of the Third Reich the story of Nanga Parbat was adapted for a youth audience by two authors unaffiliated with the expeditions, the situation after World War II was somewhat different. Herrligkoffer, the leader of the 1953 Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition, went to great lengths to reach a young reading audience himself, surpassing in his effort (and success) even that of pre-«Stunde Null» authors Krüger and Kreuz. Herrligkoffer wrote almost half of all youth publications describing the 1953 Nanga Parbat expedition in person, the majority of which were published through the Für Euch-Bücherei Verlagsgesellschaft, a choice that allowed Herrligkoffer to market his various expedition accounts directly to German schools. And, finally, while Krüger’s and Kreuz’s accounts had appeared only after the expeditions’ return to Germany, Herrligkoffer’s first
volume for the Für Euch-Bücherei – Nanga Parbat. Die deutschen Himalaya-Expeditionen 1932–1953 dargestellt von Willy Merkl † und seinem Bruder Dr. Karl M. Herrligkoffer – was published even before the expedition departed for Pakistan on 17 April 1953, an indication of the degree of control Herrligkoffer planned to – and, with very few exceptions, would – exert over all publications in connection with the Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition.29

But how did he tell – and this is the crucial question – the story of his own Nanga Parbat expedition after having drawn a clear distinction between his enterprise and those pre-World War II expeditions conducted under the aegis of the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung? Would there be a «Stunde Null» on Nanga Parbat, and would it mark a new beginning in terms of mountaineering philosophy and, especially, mountaineering narrative?

As the lengthy title already hints, Herrligkoffer, in his first volume for the Für Euch-Bücherei, employed a double strategy of portraying his own expedition as the fulfillment of the legacy handed to him by his half-brother Willy (as well as all subsequent Nanga Parbat expeditions) and of identifying his own expedition as a national enterprise. In Nanga Parbat. Die deutschen Himalaya-Expeditionen 1932–1953, Herrligkoffer, in a brief introductory piece titled «Zum Geleit,» establishes these two connections at first in rather general terms: «Wir Männer der jetzigen Generation sind Erben der Überlieferungen und Wegbereiter für neue Taten der heranwachsenden Jugend.»/«Viele Nationen haben ihre Besten ausgeschickt, um sich im Kampf mit den eisgepanzerten Riesen des Himalaja zu messen […]» (2). However, in a brief address at the end of this volume headlined «Liebe Jungen und Mädel in Deutschland und Österreich!» and signed by three German expeditions members, these two connections are spelled out in detail:

[B]ei uns Bergsteigern kommt dazu noch die Verpflichtung, das zu vollenden, was zwei Mannschaften unter Willy Merkl begonnen haben. / Den Bergsteigern dieser zukünftigen deutsch-österreichischen Himalaja-Expedition ist es ein großer Ansporn, wenn sie wissen, daß alle ihre Landsleute, auch die jüngsten, hinter ihnen stehen und sie mit ihren guten Wünschen begleiten. (31–32)

It comes as no surprise, then, that Merkl’s voice dominates Herrligkoffer’s 32-page volume: twenty-one pages alone are dedicated to Merkl’s report of his 1932 expedition, originally published in 1936 by Herrligkoffer in Willy Merkl. Ein Weg zum Nanga Parbat. The remaining seven pages of the text, authored by Herrligkoffer himself and describing the challenges of Himalaya mountaineering (one page), Merkl’s 1934 expedition (four pages), the expeditions conducted by the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung (two pages, but containing a lengthy passage about the discovery of Merkl’s and the Sherpa Gay Lay’s
remains in 1938), and the new attempt in 1953 (one page), focus this volume even more strongly on Merkl and his expeditions. This personal connection is further intensified due to the fact that Herrligkoffer reiterates almost verbatim Merkl's 1932 mantra regarding the proper mental attitude for Himalaya mountaineers and, in conjunction with the fateful 1934 expedition, highlights Merkl's foremost mental characteristics: «innere Härte» (26) and «unbeugsamen Willen» (28). And, as regards the relationship of Nanga Parbat (and the expeditions to it) with the German nation, Herrligkoffer identifies Merkl's 1932 enterprise as the one that established Nanga Parbat as «deutscchen Berg» (24), indeed, as «deutschen Schicksalsberg» (28, 30). Clearly, for Herrligkoffer, scaling Nanga Parbat remains a national enterprise, especially since his second use of the term «Schicksalsberg» occurs in the context of discussing his own 1953 expedition: «Doch allmählich wird es wieder Zeit, daß wir das Erbe unserer Kameraden antreten, jener Bergsteiger, die voll Begeisterung und Opferfreudigkeit im Kampf um den ‹deutschen Schicksalsberg› im Himalaja, den Nanga Parbat, gestanden und gefallen sind» (29–30).

Herrligkoffer's second contribution to the Für Euch-Bücherei titled Sieg über den Nanga Parbat, in its portrayal of the successful 1953 expedition, continues where Nanga Parbat. Die deutschen Himalaya-Expeditionen 1932–1953 had left off – in more than one way. Not only does it complete the narrative arch in these two volumes spanning from Merkl's 1932 expedition to Herrligkoffer's own expedition of 1953,30 but it also continues the characterization of Herrligkoffer's expedition as the fulfillment of Merkl's legacy from 1934 (as well as all subsequent Nanga Parbat expeditions) and as a national, i.e., German, enterprise. It does so by following almost exactly the overall structure and, repeatedly, even the wording of Nanga Parbat 1953; it is, in fact, nothing more than a condensed version of Herrligkoffer's official expedition report, including its acknowledgement of the sponsorship provided by various German companies at the end of the booklet. What sets Sieg über den Nanga Parbat apart from these two texts, however, is its increased focus on the notion and importance of comradeship, a notion traceable all the way back to Merkl's report of the 1932 German-American expedition. Already in his brief introduction – once again titled «Zum Geleit» – Herrligkoffer identifies comradeship as the expedition's key to success on Nanga Parbat: «Unser Sieg über diesen Giganten entsprang letztlich dem gemeinsamen Einsatz aller Expeditionsteilnehmer, von denen jeder für den anderen dachte und handelte. Es war ein Sieg des fanatischen Willens, der Gemeinschaft, der Kameradschaft, […]» (2). His description halfway into his narrative of the oath taken by all expedition members prior to establishing the high camps – «Wir geloben, in dem Ringen um einen der höchsten Gipfel unserer Erde ehren-
hafte Kämpfer zu sein, die Gesetze der Kameradschaft zu achten [...]» (14) – reinforces this point, and the principle receives its ultimate validation at the conclusion of Herrligkoffer’s account when he states, «Wir hatten gesiegt! Dank der selbstlosen Kameradschaft, dank der Energie eines einzelnen, der wußte, daß hinter ihm eine Mannschaft stand, von der jeder bereit war, für den anderen sein Leben zu opfern» (30). However, in addition to repeatedly simply postulating the notion of comradeship as the expedition’s guiding and unifying principle, Herrligkoffer takes the worship of his half-brother’s expedition philosophy one step further by including in his account several scenes in which this principle manifests itself in action, repeatedly with himself at the center. One such moment is depicted in a segment titled «Ein schwerer Entschluß» in which Herrligkoffer rationalizes his wrong and correctly ignored order to recall the lead party from the mountain for the purpose of rest and physical recovery – despite perfect weather conditions:

Allein die Sorge um die jungen Kameraden, die sich nach der Schinderei der letzten Wochen zu viel zumuteten, bestimmte mich so zu handeln. [...] Ich wußte, daß die jungen Kameraden mich nicht verstehen würden, ja, daß auch in der Heimat die Meinung aufkommen könnte, meine Entscheidung sei vielleicht falsch gewesen. (22)

Herrligkoffer goes on to claim that «All mein Denken und Handeln galt ihnen, und ich wünschte ihnen aus heißem Herzen den verdienten Erfolg» (22) – characterizing himself as the ultimate protector of and comrade to his fellow team members, and thereby inscribing himself into their community. This dynamic can be observed in two additional scenes. In one, titled «Bange Stunden,» Herrligkoffer describes the wait for Buhl’s return from his summit attempt from the perspective of the main camp, i.e., his perspective: «Immer und immer wieder sandten wir unsere guten Wünsche und Gedanken gleich einem Gebet nach oben zum Gipfelaufbau des Berges, wo wir Hermann Buhl in dieser von fahlem Mondlicht durchfluteten Nacht vermuteten» (24). Here, Herrligkoffer presents himself as the ideal comrade and leader, filled with concern for the well-being of his lead climber. And, in a final scene that describes Buhl’s return to camp V and his first conversation (via wireless) with the expedition leader after his summit success, Herrligkoffer creates the impression of an extraordinarily caring relationship between him and his fellow expedition member(s): «Ich sprach anschließend mit Hermann und begläubigte ihm in Namen aller Kameraden. Er dankte mir, daß ich ihn an der Expedition habe teilnehmen lassen und flüsterte mit heiserer Stimme: ‹Es sind die glücklichsten Stunden meines Lebens!›» (27). With these repeat invocations of the notion of comradeship and multiple depictions of moments of comradeship in action, Herrligkoffer once more tries to fulfill the legacy of
his half-brother Willy who, in his report, had praised the «restlos harmonischen Verlauf» of his 1932 expedition. Herrligkoffer’s *Sieg über den Nanga Parbat* tries to conjure up just such an image; an image which, as the author himself in *Nanga Parbat 1953*, in a segment titled «Vom Unerfreulichen nachher,» grudgingly had to acknowledge, was far from reality.

The notion of comradeship, so prominently featured in *Sieg über den Nanga Parbat*, also plays an important role in Herrligkoffer’s third, and most personal, contribution to the *Für Euch-Bücherei* titled *Tagebuchnotizen des Expeditionsleiters Dr. Karl M. Herrligkoffer*. In this diary, a stylized day-to-day account of the events of the successful 1953 expedition to what the author still identifies as Germany’s «Schicksalsberg» (9, 10, 78), Herrligkoffer in fact uses the very scenes from *Sieg über den Nanga Parbat* to once more depict this principle in action, including the (in)famous oath on the mountain, and concludes that Buhl’s summit success was due only to the «zähen, verbissenen Ringens aller Teilnehmer um den Erfolg» (7), that Buhl’s individual act had grown out of the «Gesamtleistung einer verschworenen Mannschaft» (78). But it is the notion of the 1953 expedition as the fulfillment of Merkl’s Nanga Parbat legacy of 1932 and 1934 that dominates Herrligkoffer’s diary, a link suggested to the reader both verbally and visually. While the volume’s cover depicts Herrligkoffer at his typewriter in the main camp, the leaf immediately following the title page contains a drawing of Merkl from 1932. That drawing, in turn, carries the following caption: «Willy Merkl und den guten Kameraden, die im Kampf um den Nanga Parbat ihr Leben gelassen haben, zum Gedächtnis» (5). With that, the focus of Herrligkoffer’s account in this volume is set; his daily entries again and again reference Merkl’s two expeditions, especially the one of 1934 that ended in tragedy. Already Herrligkoffer’s brief historical overview of Nanga Parbat’s mountaineering history contains three references to «mein Bruder» (9), and in his subsequent diary entries the author maps the mountain and the expedition’s progress on it – similar to *Nanga Parbat 1953* – with the help of frequent references to his half-brother’s earlier expeditions: on a flight over Nanga Parbat (on 6 May) as he recalls Merkl’s photographs of the mountain and tries to locate his final resting place; during a walk (on 16 May) from the preliminary main camp to the main camp proper as he studies the mountain’s east ridge, the place of the 1934 tragedy; during deliberations (on 18 May) regarding the expedition’s general ascent strategy; while reflecting (on 22 June) on the proper mental attitude in the face of adverse weather conditions prior to the lead group’s final push up the mountain; and during the final ascent of Buhl (on 4 July) as he reports on the renaming of the «Mohrenkopf,» Merkl’s final resting place, into «Merklestein» (73). Herrligkoffer’s account in this volume concludes with
the assertion that «Das Vermächtnis Willy Merkls und seiner im Kampf um den ‹deutschen Schicksalsberg› gefallenen Kameraden ist erfüllt» (78), a final statement that leaves no doubt as to Herrligkoffer’s highly personal mountaineering point of reference.

Viewed together, Herrligkoffer’s three contributions to the Für Euch-Bücherei are far from providing a new beginning in terms of mountaineering philosophy and mountaineering narrative after the «Stunde Null.» Just like in his public statements during the planning phase of the expedition, Herrligkoffer initially draws a clear line between his 1953 expedition and those previously conducted under the aegis of the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung by marginalizing them in his accounts, thereby avoiding any direct contamination by Germany’s National Socialist past and its institutions. He then portrays his own enterprise almost exclusively as the fulfillment of Merkl’s personal Nanga Parbat legacy, effectively bridging, so to speak, the era of German Himalaya mountaineering dominated by the Stiftung. However, many of the «heroic» qualities lauded by Krüger and Kreuz in their respective accounts of Merkl’s 1934 expedition – will, determination, loyalty, comradeship, selflessness, and self-sacrifice (to the death) – as well as the notion of a Himalaya expedition as a national enterprise continue to play a key role in Herrligkoffer’s accounts. Indeed, most of the pre-war concepts are still very much alive, including the one of Nanga Parbat as the German «Schicksalsberg.» While Herrligkoffer tried to free these concepts from being associated with Germany’s National Socialist past by attributing them to his half-brother, i.e., by once more privatizing the Nanga Parbat story, this strategy had the potential to backfire. To begin with, Herrligkoffer was still talking about «legacy»: that notion, however, had permeated every single expedition report before the war, but especially those published by the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung. Finally, the very fact that Herrligkoffer linked his own enterprise so closely and exclusively to the memory of Merkl and the way Merkl had conducted his 1932 and 1934 expeditions meant that the one notion that had dominated Merkl’s mountaineering philosophy – the notion of comradeship – continued to dominate Herrligkoffer’s own enterprise and his respective accounts of it. Unfortunately for Herrligkoffer, the notion of comradeship as a key principle of German Himalaya mountaineering had predated Merkl. As Reinhold Messner observed in his foreword to Karl Maria Herrligkoffer. Besessen, sieghaft, umstritten, Merkl had borrowed it from none other than Herrligkoffer’s arch-nemesis Bauer, and it was this very notion that played a central role in the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung’s expedition reports after Merkl’s death in 1934.

In addition to Herrligkoffer’s own dramatizations of his 1953 expedition there exist several additional accounts – like Krüger’s and Kreuz’s texts writ-
ten by individuals unaffiliated with any Nanga Parbat expedition – in which the authors nevertheless take on the task of retelling and, more importantly, reinterpreting its story (and that of previous expeditions) for the German public; a group of texts once again written specifically for a youth audience by authors such as Hans Geifes (Angriff auf den Nanga Parbat, 1950), Hans Thür and Hans Hanke (Sieg am Nanga Parbat, 1954), Thomas Trent (Sturm auf die Eisriesen, 1955), and Arthur Werner (Zum Gipfel des Nanga Parbat, 1956).

The first of these four booklets, Geifes’ Angriff auf den Nanga Parbat, was part of Bachem’s Spannende Reihe, a series of adventure stories published by the Bachem Verlag Köln that included titles such as Blinkfeuer über der Ostsee. Geheimnisvolle Erlebnisse einer Jungengruppe im Ostseezeltlager (1949), Das Erbe am Kwantan. Straf-Expedition auf Sumatra (1950), and Hellm und die Hellgrüne Fahne. Eine Straßenjungengeschichte (1950). In Angriff auf den Nanga Parbat, Geifes focuses his narrative exclusively on Merkl’s 1934 enterprise, unmistakably – and unashamedly – basing his text on Bechtold’s official expedition report Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934. Adopting Bechtold’s heavily militarized language, he portrays Merkl’s enterprise as a «Feldzug» (8) directed at the German «Schicksalsberg» (45), as a «ganz persönliche Auseinandersetzung auf Leben und Tod zwischen dem Berg und ihnen [the German mountaineers]» (7). Repeatedly, Geifes stresses for his young readers the unyielding «Kampfstimmung» (32) of these German mountaineers, their utter fearlessness as well as the absolute loyalty to the German expedition members exhibited by the Sherpa porters. Geifes concludes his account of Merkl’s 1934 expedition with the last sentence of Bechtold’s expedition report – «Schön muß es sein, mit dem Siegespreis dieses gewaltigen Berges nach Hause zurückzukehren. Größer noch ist es, sein Leben hinzugeben um solch ein Ziel, den jungen Herzen kommender Kämpfer Weg und Flamme zu werden» (Bechtold 64) – and a reminder that the death of Merkl and his companions was perceived by subsequent generations of German mountaineers as a «Vermächtnis,» a «leuchtender Auftrag» (Geifes 45) to continue the pursuit of Nanga Parbat’s summit. For Geifes this «Vermächtnis» and «Auftrag» extend to the present when, in the very last paragraph of his text, he points to the fact that to this day none of the 8,000 meter peaks has been climbed.

Geifes’ volume, published at least three years earlier than all the other post-World War II texts discussed in this essay, serves as the most extreme example for the continuing presence after the war of pre-«Stunde Null» mountaineering philosophies and narratives in connection with the German Nanga Parbat expeditions; a disturbing phenomenon already observed – if only to a some-
what lesser degree – in connection with Herrligkoffer’s texts and equally discernable in the remaining texts by Thür and Hanke, Trent, and Werner.

Thür and Hanke’s *Sieg am Nanga Parbat* was published in the *Andermann-Bücher* series which focused – as the inside cover states – on «Abenteuer in unserer Zeit» and included additional titles such as *Geheimnis der Meerestiefe, Der Busch brennt, Die Freibeuter, Christian der Grenzgänger, Das Blockhaus am Biberfluß, Der weiße Biber*, and *Sieg über den Everest*. Ranging from 64 to 128 pages in length, the series was aimed at an audience of nine years of age and older and enlivened its adventure stories by including – as in the case of *Sieg am Nanga Parbat* – a series of photographs and, especially, drawings that visually rendered the events recounted in the text. A second characteristic element of these youth texts, including Thür and Hanke’s, is the inclusion of frequent dialogic passages into their ongoing narrative; another structural element designed to capture and keep the limited attention of a young reading audience. A third element of this kind can be identified in the anthropomorphizing of the mountain itself, the characterization, for instance, of Mount Everest and Nanga Parbat as «Riesen,» of Nanga Parbat as Everest’s «Bruder» (8), and as the seat of the «furchtbare Schneegott» (60) Kang-mi who thwarted the efforts of man to climb his throne.

For their portrayal of these efforts, Thür and Hanke consistently employ the language of war in a fashion that immediately recalls Bechtold’s *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934*, Kreuz’s *Am Gipfel des Nanga Parbat*, and Geifes’ *Angriff auf den Nanga Parbat*. In fact, the authors themselves proclaim that with regard to the 1937 expedition «[e]in Vergleich mit militärischen Operationen und eine Anleihe beim Wortschatz der Generalstäbler […] wirklich am Platz [ist]» (73). Thür and Hanke’s use of this type of language, however, is not limited to their description of the 1937 expedition; rather, it applies to their text as a whole and extends to all expeditions between 1932 and 1953. Repeatedly, the German efforts («der Kampf» [14]) on Nanga Parbat are described with military terminology such as «Großangriff» (13), «Kriegsrat,» «Großkampftag» (22), «Hauptstützpunkt» (25), «Bollwerk» (31), «Streitmacht» (38), «Einsatzbesprechungen» (39), «Kampfgruppe» (49), «Stoßtrupp» (74), «Rückzugsbefehl» (75) – the list of terms is all-encompassing and almost endless.

Hand in hand with this all-out militarization of German expeditions to Nanga Parbat in Thür and Hanke’s text goes the authors’ heroicizing portrayal of the climbers’ struggle against the unyielding mountain. Repeatedly depicted as unfailing comrades to each other, their efforts to reach the summit of the «Schicksalsberg der Deutschen» (2) bring out the best of their manly qualities: Merkl’s «Zähigkeit» (13) during the planning phase of the 1932 ex-
pedition; the sheer «Willenskraft» (24) and drive of his men during their time on the mountain; the steadfastness of Drexel and the loyalty of the Sherpa porters in 1934; the willingness among the members of the 1937 expedition to sacrifice their lives for a great and unprecedented cause; and, once again, the «übermäßige Willenskraft» (118) exhibited by Buhl during his 1953 solo summit attempt.

As regards the representation of individual expeditions in *Sieg am Nanga Parbat*, Thür and Hanke foreground the expeditions directly – and indirectly – associated with Merkl’s person. Out of a total of 126 pages, 113 pages are dedicated to Merkl’s 1932 (14–36), 1934 (37–71), and Herrligkoffer’s 1953 expedition (86–126). For Thür and Hanke, very much like for Herrligkoffer in *Nanga Parbat. Die deutschen Himalaya-Expeditionen 1932–1953*, Merkl’s expeditions are the center of interest; they serve as the ultimate point of reference from which the German mountaineering efforts on Nanga Parbat are being interpreted. And very much like Herrligkoffer in *Nanga Parbat 1953* and *Tagebuchnotizen*, Thür and Hanke include in their text frequent references to Merkl’s two pre-World War II enterprises: the history of German Nanga Parbat mountaineering in general is narrated relative to Merkl’s expeditions; references to Merkl’s mountaineering philosophy – «Was im Himalaja entscheidet, ist vor allem das Zusammenwirken gleichgesinnter Charaktere, ist Gemeinschaftsarbeit, die niemals dem persönlichen Ehrgeiz, sondern einzig dem großen Ziel dient» (108) – can be located throughout their text; and their accounts of the post-Merkl expeditions literally map their respective progress on the mountain via regular references to Merkl’s route, camps, and those who had died. These expeditions follow, as one chapter title claims with specific regard to the 1953 expedition, «In Willi Merkls Spur» (91), all the way to the summit of Nanga Parbat.

The motivating force behind these expeditions, as Thür and Hanke already hint in the introduction to their volume, is a «heilige Verpflichtung» (8); a legacy they trace all the way back to Adolph Schlagintweit’s death in 1857 and see reinforced by the death of Drexel in 1934 whom Merkl had promised at his grave: «Freund Drexel, […] du bist gestorben mit dem Glauben, daß wir unser Ziel erreichen werden. Ich verspreche dir, daß wir mit aller Kraft, mit dem vollen Einsatz unseres Lebens weiter darum ringen wollen» (46). With the subsequent deaths of Merkl, Welzenbach, and Wieland during the same expedition, Nanga Parbat became Germany’s «Schicksalsberg»; and the legacy of the dead mountaineers now extended to the «ganzes deutsches Volk» (71). The expedition of 1937, as we know, further added to this legacy as Thür and Hanke interpret it: «Wieder war der Berg Sieger geblieben. Aber das Dutzend Gräber, in dem 27 Männer lagen, seit der Nanga vor mehr als einem
Menschenalter seine ersten Opfer gefordert hatte, schien den Heimkehrern
eine Verpflichtung» (83). And it was, of course, Herrligkoffer’s Deutsch-
Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition that attempted once
more to fulfill this legacy: «Das Opfer, daß Willy Merkl und seine Freunde
gebracht hatten, war für die ganze Bergsteigerwelt verpflichtend» (86).
Buhl’s climb to the top of Nanga Parbat, finally, is seen as the fulfillment of this
obligation, the conclusion of an age-old legacy: «Im letzten Licht des scheidenden
Tages steht Buhl auf dem Gipfel. Er hat erreicht, worum sechs Jahrzehnte
hindurch die besten Bergsteiger vergeblich gerungen hatten» (122).

In sum, Thür and Hanke’s text is characterized by a double identity simi-
lar to that observed in Herrligkoffer’s three accounts of his 1953 enterprise.
On the one hand, the authors present Merkl’s 1932 and 1934 expeditions as
the ultimate point of reference for Herrligkoffer’s own expedition and conse-
quently minimize the narrative exposure given to the expeditions conducted
by the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung in 1937, 1938, and 1939; but even those,
Thür and Hanke tell us, followed in Merkl’s footsteps. On the other hand, the
authors resort to the very narrative strategies utilized and the mountaineering
philosophies advertised in the official expedition reports of the Stiftung and,
subsequently, the accounts of Krüger and Kreuz: the use of heavily milita-
rized language, the heroicizing of the German Nanga Parbat mountaineers,
the notion of legacy as the ultimate driving force for the expeditions, the idea
of a Himalaya expedition as a national enterprise. All in all, their reliance in
Sieg am Nanga Parbat on both narrative as well as philosophical concepts
associated with a by now supposedly discredited era of German Himalaya
mountaineering is considerably more extensive, undifferentiated, and unre-
flected than Herrligkoffer’s in his texts.

While Thür and Hanke’s Sieg am Nanga Parbat limited its narrative scope
to German expeditions to Nanga Parbat, Trent’s «Jugendbuch vom Kampf
gegen Nanga Parbat und Mount Everest» titled Sturm auf die Eisriesen, pub-
lished in 1955 by the W. Fischer-Verlag as part of the Göttinger Jugend-Bände
series, approaches these very expeditions in the context of parallel (British)
expeditions to Mount Everest and earlier (German) expeditions to Kangchen-
junga; that is, in the fashion of Skuhra’s Sturm auf die Throne der Götter.
Trent’s volume is comprised of a series of twenty-eight short, descriptive
chapters that are alternatively introduced by guiding questions or statements,
narrate the events on the three mountains with the help of frequent quota-
tions from individual mountaineers, and orient the reader via multiple draw-
ings and maps, often directly referenced in the running narrative.

Trent opens his volume with a brief chapter that poses a fundamental and,
on the surface, innocent, question: «Warum besteigen sie die Berge?» For the
author, the answer cannot be found in practical reasons: «Nun haben aber einmal die Himalaja-Besteigungen keinen sogenannten praktischen Zweck, man kann sich nichts dafür kaufen, und niemand kann daran Geld verdienen, […]» (8). Rather, as Trent postulates, mountains are being climbed «[w]eil Männer ihren Mut und ihre Kraft erproben müssen, weil sich ihr Freiheitsgefühl nach der ewigen unbezwinglichen Bergwelt sehnt und weil die Schönheit der Natur für sie das Erlebenswerteste ist, was sich ein Mensch auf Erden wünschen kann.» Finally, as Trent adds, «[ersteigt] [d]er Mensch […] die Berge, weil er einen Zipfel der Ewigkeit ergreifen möchte» (10). For the teenage (and novice) reader, i.e., a reader unfamiliar with German mountaineering history, Trent’s rationalizations essentially disconnect British and especially German Himalaya expeditions from any historical and political context, thereby seemingly allowing for a fresh and unburdened approach to this topic. But, as it turns out, Trent’s rationale – with its rejection of the practical, its search for freedom in nature (and away from civilization), and its desire to experience the eternal – exhibits strong similarities to a 1922 article titled «Die Berge und ihre Bedeutung für den Wiederaufbau des deutschen Volkes» by the DuÖAV official Dr. Gustav Müller; a programmatic article that closely linked the act of mountaineering to the renewal of the German Volk and prepared the ground for the eventual appropriation of German (and Austrian) mountaineering by the National Socialist state.35

In its subsequent treatment of the British Everest, German Kangchenjunga, and German Nanga Parbat expeditions, Trent’s narrative, in fact, repeatedly betrays this connection to an earlier era and its mindset. To begin with, the various mountaineering expeditions to the Himalayas are still presented as a matter of national importance: the British struggle on Everest is categorized as «eine nationale englische Angelegenheit» (14), and for Trent, «das englische Volk darf stolz darauf sein, daß es nach einer Serie von oft tollkühnen Angriffen innerhalb zwanzig Jahren einer englischen Mannschaft gelungen ist, die Göttinmutter der Berge zu besteigen» (31). The 1929 German Kangchenjunga expedition, in turn, lays claim to the mountain by leaving behind the German flag in a snow cave, and the repeat German attempts at reaching the summit of Nanga Parbat are presented as a matter of great import to the German nation, both before and after World War II: Nanga Parbat, as it turns out, is still the «Deutscher Schicksalsberg» (58). However, the degree to which Trent is caught up in outdated concepts of the German nation is most tangible in a comment on Buhl’s successful 1953 climb – «Allerdings ist Buhl Österreicher, aber sind sie nicht auch Deutsche, so gut wie wir?» (85) – a comment that unmistakably recalls the «Großdeutschland» of a bygone era.
In fact, it is in the extended portrayal of the German expeditions to Nanga Parbat that Trent’s deep-seated connection to this bygone era reveals itself most prominently. Throughout his coverage of these enterprises, Trent refers to Nanga Parbat as a «Mörderberg» (53), a «Riese aus Urzeiten» (69) who directs his «gefährlichste Waffen» (56) against those who intrude into his realm. With that, Trent employs an anthropomorphizing of the mountain traceable – via Thür and Hanke – all the way back to Hartmann’s Ziel Nanga Parbat of 1938, a text that like none other also expressed an unaltering «spirit of attack» on the part of the German mountaineers. And it is indeed once more the terminology of war that dominates Trent’s account of German Nanga Parbat expeditions; they are presented as a series of «Angriffe» (53), their goal the «Eroberung» (62) of the mountain, etc. – we are by now familiar with the terminology, its origins, its previous adherents. Not surprisingly, then, Trent’s presentation of the events of Herrligkoffer’s 1953 Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition follows the same pattern of backward orientation in its reliance on the equally familiar and burdened concepts of comradeship and legacy. Its members are still bound together by an oath – an oath that Trent quotes in its entirety – and thereby enter a bond that Trent himself identifies as one of the outstanding characteristics of Bauer’s expeditions to Kangchenjunga more than two decades ago, as «den vorbildlichen und kameradschaftlichen Geist der Mannschaften» (33). Furthermore, Herrligkoffer’s expedition is seen as fulfilling Merkl’s legacy from 1932 and 1934, Buhl’s «Gipfelsieg» as «die lebendigste Gedenktafel für Willy Merkl, eine in alle Welt lodernde Fackel» (89). Here again, pre-World War II interpretive constructs invade Trent’s text; a text which, compiled from a variety of sources not always compatible with each other (Bauer, Herrligkoffer), reveals the author’s unreflected and uncritical transmission of German Himalaya mountaineering history beyond the «Stunde Null.»

The last text in our investigation, Werner’s Zum Gipfel des Nanga Parbat, was published in 1956 as volume 47 in the Leuchtturm Jugendbücher series by the Michael Winkler Verlag in Cologne. The Leuchtturm series was aimed at both boys and girls eight to fourteen years of age, offered (by 1956) a selection of 50 titles (mostly adventure stories such as Robi im Dschungel [vol. 16], Erich unter Schmugglern [vol. 18], Hilde will zum Zirkus [vol. 19], Sindbad, der Seefahrer [vol. 25], Robinson Crusoe [vol. 39], Abenteuer auf Norderney [vol. 44], etc.), and was advertised as «gut, spannend und lebensnah, mit zahlreichen Bildern.»36 Like Thür and Hanke’s Sieg am Nanga Parbat, Werner’s text exclusively thematizes the German expeditions to Nanga Parbat, focusing its narrative on Herrligkoffer’s Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition. And again like Thür and Hanke, Werner
seeks to portray Herrligkoffer’s 1953 expedition as the successful conclusion to previous failed attempts on the mountain when, in a brief foreword, he introduces Nanga Parbat as «Deutschen Schicksalsberg» (2) and characterizes Buhl’s successful climb as the fulfillment of the legacy left behind by earlier expeditions, especially those conducted by Merkl.37 Furthermore, in his extensive account of Herrligkoffer’s enterprise, Werner repeatedly stresses the advantages of the «neue Mannschaft» (5) consisting of both members of previous expeditions to Nanga Parbat – «diese ‹Alten›» Peter Aschenbrenner, Walter Frauenberger, and Hans Ertl – and members of the current generation of German and Austrian mountaineers – «die ‹Jungen›» (22) Hermann Buhl, Kuno Rainer, Albert Bitterling, Otto Kempter, Hermann Köllensperger, and Fritz Aumann: «Erfahrung der ‹alten Himalaya-Garde› und Jugend der neuen Bergsteiger-Generation ergänzen einander in glücklicher Weise» (23).

Werner’s efforts at creating a sense of continuity between the various pre-World War II expeditions to Nanga Parbat and the 1953 Deutsch-Österreichische 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 volume, Werner uses the first third of his text to inform his young readers about the often tragic fate of the six previous expeditions to the mountain, thereby creating a strong sense among them of the terrible price exacted by Nanga Parbat on those who tried 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 in his narrative Werner chooses to insert references to actual memorial plaques placed on the mountain and 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 Werner’s account 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 young readers and highlighting once more the «legacy» left behind by those who died on the mountain.

What is transmitted in Werner’s text 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»:

nur einzelne Männer, sondern ganze Nationen davon gefesselt wurden. Es begann ein Wettstreit der Besten aller Völker, an dem neben Deutschen auch Österreicher, Schweizer, Engländer, Amerikaner, Franzosen, Italiener, Holländer, Norweger, Polen und Japaner teilnahmen, die «ihren» Berg ersteigen wollten. (7)

For Germany, Werner elaborates, the goal lay with two mountains in particular, Kangchenchunga and Nanga Parbat, the latter soon occupying more than merely the minds of German mountaineers. In regard to Merkl’s 1934 expedition, Werner writes, «Das Ringen um den Nanga Parbat wurde ja mehr als ein sportlicher Wettkampf. Das ganze deutsche Volk hatte die Ersteigung dieses Berges zur Sache der Gemeinschaft gemacht, zum Zusammenwirken Gleichgesinnter, das einem großen Ziele dienen sollte» (8). And in regard to the 1937 disaster which killed altogether seven German mountaineers and nine Sherpas: «Als die Kunde von dem Lawinentod am Nanga Parbat nach Deutschland gelangt, rüstet die Heimat unverzüglich zu einer Bergungsexpedition unter Führung Paul Bauers, des Vorkämpfers der deutschen Himalaya-Forschung» (18).

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 Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition within a similar context. As mentioned earlier, his narrative still refers to Nanga Parbat as the German «Schicksalsberg,» and his characterization of various celebrations of the expedition’s success is interspersed with multiple references to its German origin:


To these observations we need to add one more crucial – and most revealing – 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 countries, and that the two countries had in fact become one on 13 March
1938. Consequently, one has to ask whether Werner, with his focus on the joint nature of the expedition, is still caught up – we recall Trent’s equation of Austrians with Germans in *Sturm auf die Eisriesen* – in outdated Pan-Germanic notions when he describes Buhl’s return to his «geliebte Ramsau im Berchtesgadener Land» (71), the «Ramsau» referring to a cultural and geographic region encompassing parts of both modern-day Germany and Austria.

Viewed together, these individual observations reveal that Werner’s account of the 1953 *Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkl-Gedächtnis-Expedition* is still very much rooted in the notions and concepts that had dominated the portrayal of German Himalaya expeditions to the German public prior to the «Stunde Null.» This assessment is strengthened further by one final piece of evidence: a direct quote from Herrligkoffer’s official expedition report; a quote recalling an ideal we were able to trace all the way back to Bauer’s expeditions of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the ideal of comradeship:

Wir geloben, in dem Ringen um einen der höchsten Gipfel der Erde ehrenhafte Kämpfer zu sein, die Gesetze der Kameradschaft zu achten, und uns mit ganzer Kraft für die Erreichung des hohen Zieles einzusetzen, zum Ruhme der Bergsteiger in der ganzen Welt und zur Ehre unseres Vaterlandes! (33)

More than any other text, then, Werner’s account represents a conscious effort on the part of its author to extend Germany’s storied, if troublesome, mountaineering history in the Himalayas into a new era, a bold and open attempt at claiming the German Nanga Parbat tradition in its entirety for the future.

Revisiting our original question about the narrative and ideological (dis-)continuities between pre- and post-«Stunde Null» youth texts about German Nanga Parbat mountaineering expeditions, we can now confidently state that in both regards the degree of continuity observed in these texts is substantially greater than the degree of discontinuity. While some authors like Herrligkoffer and, to a lesser degree, Thür and Hanke, indeed make an effort to dissociate German Nanga Parbat mountaineering from the expeditions conducted by the *Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung* and seem to believe that the privatization of the Nanga Parbat story (by refocusing it on the personal link between Herr-
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ligkoffer and Merkl) would amount to a «Neuanfang,» a new beginning of some kind, the reality is that the ideological constructs and narrative strategies identified in their texts reconnect them to the very era of German Himalaya mountaineering from which they seek to dissociate themselves. The same has to be said for Trent. While his strategy of dehistoricizing and depoliticizing German Nanga Parbat expeditions differs from the approach observed in Herrligkoffer’s and Thür and Hanke’s texts, the final outcome is the same: Trent’s effort, too, is undermined by the ties of his supposedly new mountaineering philosophy to a bygone era and the contamination of his account with pre-«Stunde Null» mountaineering principles. But where Herrligkoffer, Thür and Hanke, and Trent at least perceived the necessity to dissociate their accounts from those published before the «Stunde Null,» other authors did not. Geifes clearly sees nothing wrong with following in the ideological and narrative footsteps of Bechtold’s Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934, and Werner even goes as far as consciously trying to rescue the legacy of all German Nanga Parbat expeditions, including those conducted under the aegis of the Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung, into a new era. For these two authors, nothing has really changed.

And there is yet another form of continuity we can observe in connection with these post-«Stunde Null» texts. As we recall, both Kreuz’s and Thür and Hanke’s volumes were part of two youth book series that had played a key role in the Reich Propaganda Ministry’s campaign against the «Schund-» or «Groschenhefte.» This campaign, however, as Heinz J. Galle38 and Hopster39 have observed, had its early 1950s West German equivalent in the «Kampf gegen Schund und Schmutz,» a campaign that manifested itself most prominently in the Gesetz über die Verbreitung jugendschädlicher Schriften of 1953,40 the very year of Herrligkoffer’s successful Nanga Parbat expedition. Taking a last look at our post-«Stunde Null» texts, we realize that many (if not all) of them are indeed closely tied to this struggle. Herrligkoffer’s texts, for one, were part of the Für Euch-Bücherei, a book series which, according to reviews published by youth education agencies in several West German states, was perceived as providing «spannende Erlebnisberichte aus Forschung, Technik und Sport,»41 lauded as a «wertvoller positiver Beitrag im Kampf gegen Schund und Schmutz,»42 and recommended for purchase by schools, youth centers, and youth hostels. Trent’s book was published as part of the Göttinger Jugend-Bände, a series advertised as «Klar und sauber wie der Quell des lieblichen Göttinger Gänseleises» (Trent 96) and obviously aimed at the moral fortification of the German youth. Werner’s account, finally, published in the Leuchtturm Jugendbücher series, contributed to a collection of youth titles characterized as «gut, spannend und lebensnah.»

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The seemingly innocuous term «gut,» however, ties this series to the 1950s campaign for the «gutes Jugendbuch» and thereby directly to the struggle against «Schund und Schmutz.» Once again, then, the story of Nanga Parbat was considered suitable reading material for young Germans; now, however, not in the context of a military war against the allies of World War II, but rather that of a war in defense, as Petra Jäschke has observed, of the values of the «christlich-abendländische Kultur» (Doderer 351). Here, too, we find no «Stunde Null» on Nanga Parbat; a conclusion that underscores the current consensus about early post-1945 West German children’s and youth literature: that it lacks a «Neuanfang» (Leutheuser 138), and that it is tainted by the same «üble Kontinuität» (Hopster et al. 2: 47) which characterized German post-World War II society in general.

Notes

1 In historical terms, «Stunde Null» refers to 12:00 AM on 8 May 1945, the hour of the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces under Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel. For a general overview of the developments in German literature during the years immediately following the «Stunde Null» see Schnell 61–71, esp. 68, 70. A detailed treatment of these developments and the central question of a «Neuanfang» in German literature can be found in Koopmann. Pertinent historical information is provided in Hockerts.

2 On the concept of (dis-)continuity as the reigning interpretative paradigm in recent German historical research on this period see Hockerts 149–50.

3 The year 1928 saw already three of them: German mountaineers (Eugen Allwein, Erwin Schneider, Dr. Karl Wien), jointly financed by the Emergency Foundation of German Scientists, the German and Austrian Alpine Club (DuÖAV), and the Soviet Academy of Science traveled to the Alai-Pamir range where on 25 September 1928 they reached the summit of Pik Lenin (7,127 m); the German Caucasus expedition (Sektion Hochland) under the leadership of Dr. 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 DuÖAV, 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 5,350 meters on Chimborazo (6,310 m), by then still 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 DuÖAV, German mountaineers traveled to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru and successfully scaled Huascarán (6,768 m). 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 Re-
connaissance Expedition of the German Alpine Club) saw three more expeditions into this region.

4 In 1934, Dyhrenfurth led the second «Internationale Himalaya-Expedition» into the Baltoro region, successfully scaling five peaks above 7,000 meters. His wife, Hettie Dyhrenfurth, set a female altitude record on Sia Kangri (Queen Mary Peak), reaching an altitude of 7,315 meters. Dyhrenfurth's expedition also served as the background for the production of Der Dämon des Himalaya, a feature film directed by Andrew Marton and starring Gustav Diesl and Jarmila Marton.

5 Various aspects of the life and work of Hermann, Adolph, and Robert Schlagintweit are discussed in Müller and Raunig. Additional information, particularly on the relationship between Alexander von Humboldt, the brothers Schlagintweit, the British Society, and the British East India Company can be found in Finkelstein.

6 Excerpts from the Schlagintweits' expedition report Reisen in Indien und Hochasien were published in both German natural science journals and journals of popular science such as Globus. Illustirte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde and Das Ausland. Wochenschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde. Even while the brothers were still in Asia, local Munich newspapers such as Neue Münchener Zeitung had reported on their progress.

7 For a detailed account of this «discovery» see Bauer, Das Ringen 7–14.

8 Reichsportführer Hans von Tschammer und Osten. Quoted in Amstädter 409.

9 Bauer explained his position in the Mitteilungen des Deutschen Bergsteigerverbandes 4 (1937).

10 For a detailed discussion of this conflict between Herrligkoffer and Bauer see Mierau, Die DHS 158–81.

11 All this, of course, was in addition to extensive media coverage in form of regular national and local newspaper and magazine reports.

12 Following the return of Merkl's 1934 expedition to Germany, Herrligkoffer, through his parents Therese and Rudolf Herrligkoffer, had claimed the expedition’s estate for himself and his family. Despite being under no legal obligation to do so, Bechtold agreed to pay Herrligkoffer the sum of 1,150 Reichsmark and provide him with access to the diaries and photos of the expedition for the production of his book. For details on this matter see Höfler and Messner 60; Mierau, Die DHS 158.

13 This was Hartmann’s second personal account of a Himalaya expedition. In 1934, Wien had published Hartmann’s diary of the 1931 Kangchenjunga expedition.

14 At least 10,000 copies were printed of this original edition.


16 «Wilhelm Kreuz» is a pseudonym for Walther Schreiber. See Hopster et al. 1: 672.

17 Krüger published two additional titles in this series: Entscheidung auf dem Muss Alla (vol. 64), and Alfred Wegener im Grönlandeis: Ein Tatsachenbericht (vol. 84).

18 Additional series were titled: Die Mädelbücherei, Kriegsbücherei der deutschen Jugend, Kolonialbücherei, Erlebnis-Bücherei. For details see Hopster et al. 2: 511, 624–25.

19 For a discussion of the National Socialist campaign against the «Schmutz- und Schundliteratur» see Nassen 31–46. See also Hopster et al. 2: 108–12.

20 For more detailed information on this type of publication during the Nazi period see Galle 88–97.

21 A detailed discussion of the treatment of these concepts in National Socialist youth literature can be found in Nassen 62–76.
With this reference to Horst Wessel, Drexel is inducted into the National Socialist pantheon, the locus of its «Totenkult,» 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. Many of these «martyrs» had been immortalized in books, several also in films: the early fighters in *Hitlerjunge Quex*, Horst Wessel in *Hans Westmar* (both 1933). Elevating Drexel’s death 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. For a detailed discussion of hero worship within the context of National Socialist youth literature see Nassen 47–62.

This vow immediately reminds the modern reader of Josef Goebbels’s infamous «total war» speech at the Berlin Sportpalast on 18 February 1943.

Kreuz indicates that his account is based on Bechtold’s official expedition report, *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934*.

Krüger himself contributed four titles to the *Erlebnis-Bücherei: Auf der Fährte des Säbelzahn-Tigers* (vol. 89), *Wie der Pekingmensch gefunden wurde* (vol. 94), *Deutsche bauen das Dnieprkraftwerk* (vol. 96), and *Einer gegen Billionen* (vol. 101).

Kreuz’s text also contains a drawing that depicts the swastika placed on top of a cairn memorializing the deceased of the 1934 expedition. See Kreuz 30.

The militaristic overtone of this statement is characteristic of Kreuz’s overall account: vocabulary such as «Schlacht,» «schwere Artillerie,» «Kämpfer,» «Streitmacht,» «Rüstzeug,» «Bresche,» «Abwehr,» «Kommandant,» etc. can be found throughout the narrative.

The Für Euch-Bücherei Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H. (Hankensbüttel/Hann.) was founded on 30 January 1952 by Dr. Paul Ullrich. Its business model was the production and distribution of a youth book series titled «Für Euch-Bücherei» with titles such as *Im Ballon zum Nordpol* (vol. 1), *Bezwinger des Kibo* (vol. 2), *Roter Fels im Meer* (vol. 3), *Passat auf großer Fahrt* (vol. 4), *Flossentaucher im Mittelmeer* (vol. 5), *Elefantenjagd am Tschadsee* (vol. 6), *Meister der 1000 PS* (vol. 7), and *Wir fliegen wieder!* (vol. 8). The typical volume retailed for DM –.30 to DM –.50.

In his contract with the members of the 1953 *Deutsch-Österreichische Willy-Merkel-Gedächtnis-Expedition*, Herrligkoffer prohibited any unauthorized interviews, presentations, and publications. See Märtin 299.


Herrligkoffer himself, on page 13, speaks of «schönste Bergharmonie» among the expedition members.

The twenty-seventh individual is the British mountaineer Albert Frederick Mummery who died on Nanga Parbat in August 1895.

The «Göttinger Jugend-Bände,» a youth book series aimed at individuals of the ages of twelve through sixteen, consisted of several subcategories: «Beliebte Jugendbücher,» «Aus unseren Tagen,» «Grosse Reihe (Für Mädchen/Für Jungen und Mädchen),» and «Volksgesang (Mädchenbücher/Immer wieder neu).» The series was immensely popular: 450,000 copies were sold in 1952, one million in 1953, and 1.5 million in 1954.
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35 Rapp calls Müller’s essay a «Schlüsseltext für die Neuorientierung» of the German and Austrian Alpine Club DuÖAV. (Rapp 37).

36 See the back cover of Werner’s book.

37 See Werner 22 and, especially, 57: «Buhl sieht den Gipfel jenes Achttausenders vor sich, […] um dessen willen einunddreißig Kameraden […] ihr Leben ließen. Er will ihr Ver- mächtnis erfüllen.»

38 See Werner 81.

39 Hopster et al. 2: 46.

40 On the genesis of this legislation see Doderer 317–24.

41 Amtsblatt des Ministeriums für Unterricht und Kultus von Rheinland-Pfalz, 7 March 1953.


43 On this subject see Steinlein 323.

44 On this «positive Phase» of the fight against dirt and trash see Doderer 321–23, 328/29, 333–46.

Works Cited


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