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European Mountaineers between East and West: A Transnational History of Alpinism in the Twentieth Century

A dissertation presented

by

Carolin Firouzeh Roeder

to

The Department of History

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

May 2017

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Dissertation Advisor: Professor Alison Frank Johnson Carolin Firouzeh Roeder

European Mountaineers between East and West: A Transnational History of Alpinism in the Twentieth Century

Abstract

This dissertation explores ideas of internationalism in Europe's long twentieth century through a transnational study of mountaineering. It examines how alpine clubs—traditionally regarded as the vanguard of bourgeois nationalism—developed networks across changing political fault lines in an effort to regulate the usage, risk, and environment of mountain spaces. Locating a major source of interwar internationalism in East Central Europe, the dissertation reveals how actors from the newly sovereign states emerged as active shapers of the transnational community rather than as victims of nationalist imperatives. Internationalism offered a tool for the marginalized states to overcome the divisions of a formerly shared Habsburg space and at the same time assert their ranks in a larger European community. In the Cold War, encounters between Soviet and Western alpinists provided an unsurpassed opportunity for citizen diplomacy outside of the controlled environments in which standard forms of choreographed East-West exchanges took place. Building on evidence gathered in archives across Europe, the United States, New Zealand, and Russia, as well as published sources in eight languages, this dissertation highlights the structural connectedness of European history and re-inserts marginalized actors back into the history of internationalism and transnational exchange.

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Writing history and mountaineering are often misconceived as being lonely pursuits. In fact, both experiences are deeply social—just as the solo climber is supported by an invisible network, it takes more than one person to write a dissertation, even if in the end all faults are in the sole responsibility of the ascensionist or author. I owe enormously to those who have supported me during the past years. My first debt of gratitude is to my dissertation committee. My advisor, Alison Frank Johnson, has offered me intellectual guidance, encouragement, and mentorship for many years. I am grateful for the trust she put in me; her confident belay kept me moving whenever the wall seemed too steep and the next move too hard. Nothing makes me prouder than being told that I am "clearly her student." Terry Martin ignited my interest in Soviet history; thanks to him this project left the confines of the Eastern Alps and now stretches all the way to the Soviet-Chinese border. Maya Jasanoff inspired me to find my own way of writing history. She assured me that there is a place for stories in history and gave me the confidence to tell them. Mark Carey joined the rope-team as the alpine expert, I am immensely grateful for his advice that pushed me into new heights. I am also indebted to Florian Bieber, who advised this project in the Old World, when it still looked very different, and who encouraged me to sail the ocean blue.

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Note on Translations

All translations in this dissertation from German, Russian, French, Italian, Czech, and Slovenian are mine. I follow the Library of Congress system for transliterating Russian terms and names that aren't commonly used in English. I transliterate both Russian personal names as well as mountain names, which often appear in a variety of spellings in non-Russian sources due to differences in transliteration styles as well as declension issues. Pik Lenin, for example, is rendered in English as either Pik Lenin, Peak Lenin, or Lenin Peak. I opted for the transliteration Pik Lenin, Pik Razdel'naia, Pik Korshenevskoi, etc., except in direct quotations. While many of the Pamir Mountains were re-named after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, I use the names common in the time-period under interrogation. All places in Soviet Central Asia are referred to by the names commonly used in Russian. As for place names in bi-lingual or multi-lingual regions of Europe, I treat the issue according to the time-period and introduce several names only when necessary for the argument.

Many organizations appear in this work, often with unwieldy names. In order to balance precision with readability, I introduce each organization's name in the English translation and provide the original name and the official acronym in parenthesis. In the following text, I then use the translated English title, for example: Československý Horolezecký Svaz (Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation, ČSHS). I make exceptions for reasons of readability and clarity and refer to the Deutscher und Oesterreichischer Alpenverein (German and Austrian Alpine Club, DOeAV) as the Alpenverein. Similarly, I refer to the Club Alpino Italiano and Club Alpin Français in their original language; and, the British Alpine Club as the Alpine Club; I use the adjective occasionally for the sake of clarity. When translating names of organizations, I use "alpine" only for those organizations the name of which entails the root *alpin*, e.g. Club Alpino

Italiano (Italian Alpine Club, CAI). If I use a demonym to refer to a specific club, it does not imply that the club is the sole representative of mountaineers in the respective country.

A confusing organizational term is "section." The legally independent clubs united as the German and Austrian Alpine Club were called *Sektionen,* which could be translated as branch, chapter, or section. While I opted to use "section," it is important to note that the Russian term *sektsiia* as in Vsesoiuznaia sektsiia a'lpinizma (All-Union Section of Alpinism) refers in this case not to an independent club but a division of a governmental department.

Abbreviations

AAC	American Alpine Club
AC	Alpine Club (Great Britain)
BMC	British Mountaineering Council
CAF	Club Alpin Français (French Alpine Club)
CAI	Club Alpino Italiano (Italian Alpine Club)
DAV	Deutscher Alpenverein (German Alpine Club, 1938-1945; 1952-)
DOeV	Deutscher und Oesterreichischer Alpenverein (German and Austrian Alpine Club, 1873-1938)
FFM	Fédération française de la montagne (French Mountaineering Association)
GHM	Groupe de Haute Montagne
IMC	International Mountaineering Camp
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NZAC	New Zealand Alpine Club
OeAV	Oesterreichischer Alpenverein (Austrian Alpine Club, since 2014 Österreichischer Alpenverein, ÖAV)
SAC	Schweizer Alpen-Club (Swiss Alpine Club)
UIAA	Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation)

INTRODUCTION

August 14, 1875, was a particularly busy day at the Hôtel de la Poste, the hostelry located on the mountain plateau of Mont Cenis, one of the most frequented passes in the Alps. Only a few years earlier, a tunnel had been opened which now connected France and Italy, making the cumbersome journey across the pass by horse, foot, or railway obsolete.[1] But on that sunny day, two large groups had made their way up the meandering routes along the ridges from opposite sides of the mountain. The local section of the Club Alpino Italiano, the Italian Alpine Club, had invited mountaineers from the French side of the mountain to an international meeting. Opening the lavish banquet, the president of the host organization toasted his "alpine brothers" and encouraged them to "scale, climb, and ascend the peaks, because it is on their summits that the cordial union of French and Italian alpinists is strengthened."[2]

At his side sat Richard Henry Budden, a native of Great Britain, who was selected to preside over the international gathering. Educated in Germany and France, the well-traveled Englishman had made Italy his home in 1856 and had become involved in the creation of alpine club sections. Budden closed the evening with final remarks: "March together to conquer the mountains! Europe, applaud, for it is at these meetings that the confraternity of the heart is formed, that the spirit is raised, that the body is strengthened, and that the people [le race] grow and improve." The crowd cheered ecstatically. "Yes, gentlemen, our clubs will continue to move

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[1] Mont Cenis served as a connection across the Alps for hundreds of years. In the Middle Ages, it was highly trafficked by pilgrims on their way to Rome. The Mont Cenis railway opened to the public in 1868. Financed with British money, it considerably cut down travel time from London to various European destinations and further via Brindisi to the East. Four years later, the opening of the Mont Cenis tunnel replaced the ride over the pass with an even faster connection. See "The Mont Cenis Railway," *The Times,* May 26, 1868; P.J.G. Ransom, *The Mont Cenis Fell Railway* (Truro: Twelveheads Press, 1999).

[2] François Descostes, "Le rendez-vous international du Mont Cenis," *Annuaire du Club Alpin Français* 1875, no. 2 (1876): 17.

forward in the path of progress," Budden went on. "There is honor, there is glory in climbing the highest mountains. Young people, unite in this campaign, all of Europe will be behind you!" he proclaimed and raised his glass to the unity of all European alpine clubs.[3]

The members of the French and Italian alpine clubs celebrated mountain climbing as an expression of progress and modernity, as a source of spiritual and national uplift, and as a tool to strengthen the body. Yet the meeting on Mont Cenis at the very border of France and Italy also evoked the transnational dimension of mountaineering, or alpinism, as a European experience. When Richard Budden called upon all of Europe to join the pursuit of climbing mountains, he expressed a vision of Europe as a community defined by a shared practice. And while nationalist rhetoric praising the victory of Italy against the Habsburgs suffused the speeches of the evening, the first international meeting of alpinists in history also heralded the beginning of an internationalist tradition that would remain part of mountaineering throughout the coming century.

This dissertation sets out to explore ideas of internationalism in Europe's long twentieth century through a transnational study of mountaineering. It traces alpine internationalist ideas as expressed in international congresses, international organizations, and cross-border exchanges from the late nineteenth century into the Cold War. Central to this story is the historical development of an "alpine internationalism," which expressed the belief that cross-national exchange is conducive to the activity of mountaineering, and that certain themes, issues, and problems relating to mountains require cross-border exchange or even a permanent international organization. Mountaineers, as this dissertation will show, not only crossed the limits of altitude

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[3] François Descostes, "Le rendez-vous international du Mont Cenis," *Annuaire du Club Alpin Français 1875* 2 (1876): 17.

and the borders of what was physically possible, but also blurred the frontiers between nationalism and internationalism. In reconstructing networks that connected urban mountain enthusiasts from Geneva to Cracow and from Moscow to Munich, this dissertation explores one aspect of the "structural connectedness" that characterizes European history.[4]

Mountaineering is a useful lens to understand the complexities of European history and offers a fruitful vantage point for charting the various ways in which internationalism has been imagined. In the nineteenth century, alpinism emerged as an initially British pastime but was quickly emulated by middle-class men (and some women) across the Western hemisphere. As a cultural practice, it intersected with phenomena such as leisure, tourism, science, and consumption, and was strongly shaped by cultural ideas about the natural environment. Mountaineering served as an expression of class affiliation and gender anxieties, as a self-fashioning tool for individuals, and as a way to participate in the enactment of political enterprises—be they imperialism, nationalism, or, as this dissertation will show, internationalism. Mountaineers' reliance on geographical features and concrete spaces automatically invoked questions of territory, borders, and sovereignty. The history of mountaineering thus opens up many avenues of historical inquiry and connections to other fields of study.[5]

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[4] Philipp Ther suggests structural connectedness as an approach to study the interconnected histories of Europe not only in terms of transfers but also mutual dependencies. See Philipp Ther, "Beyond the Nation: The Relational Basis of a Comparative History of Germany and Europe," *Central European History* 36, no. 1 (2003): 71. See also "Comparison, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks: Towards a Transnational History of Europe," in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (New York: Berghahn, 2009).

[5] In addition, mountaineering is a theme that is multidimensional while at the same time specific enough to make transnational history feasible. For the conditions of choosing a limited topic or a restricted timeframe to write successful transnational European history, see Philipp Nielsen, "What, Where and Why is Europe? Some Answers from Recent Historiography," *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 710.

Furthermore, the history of mountaineering traces European actors and their ideas across long historical time spans and large geographical spaces. Despite images of the individual man on mountain peaks and narratives of the lonely explorer, climbing was first and foremost a social institution that was nurtured, promoted, and advanced in a quintessential middle-class venue: the club. Most alpine clubs were heterogeneous associations, serving the interests of the occasional hiker alongside those of the skilled technical climber. While mountaineering developed in the Alps, the terms "alpine" and "alpinism" soon related to a practice independent of geographical location—"alpine clubs" thus serve as shorthand for a variety of associations dedicated to the touristic use of mountains. These associations formed both real and imagined communities of hundreds of thousands of middle-class (and sometimes working class) citizens in Europe and beyond.[6] Many alpine clubs were highly cohesive and stable, and their actors remained in office for a long period of time. With their vast network of members, sections, parent organizations, and property holdings, the alpine clubs linked disparate corners of Europe together.

In the history of mountaineering, the actors who feature most prominently are British mountaineers, who are credited with the invention of the sport, as well as those of Alpine states—Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and France. This dissertation introduces a new set of protagonists. The central story that this work features is one of small states in East Central Europe who fought for their place in a larger European and eventually global community.[7] In his

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[6] The German and Austrian Alpenverein alone, for example, had 200,000 members in the interwar period. It is reasonable to estimate the membership of all European alpine clubs at roughly half a million. For membership numbers of the Alpenverein, see Anneliese Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen* (Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 79-82.

[7] Akira Iriye understands the term "global community" as a transnational community formed by a "global consciousness" and the idea that individuals share common concerns that transcend national societies. See Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 8.

now classic 1984 essay, “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” the Czech-born writer Milan Kundera elaborated on Central Europe’s marginality. Central Europe, for him, includes those nations that, after the Second World War, ended up “culturally in the West but politically in the East:” Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.[8] Because of its geographical location and its historical connection to the Habsburg monarchy, (Yugoslav) Slovenia is also included in this dissection of Europe. It was the “in between” position of these countries that motivated non-state actors from East Central Europe—so often relegated to the margins of world history—to actively shape transnational communities in the twentieth century.

Holly Case has argued that in order to comprehend Europe, we need to understand how “marginal states” have interpreted their role in international relations.[9] Her work on interwar Transylvania has demonstrated that the idea of Europe emerged from the interactions between neighboring states. Mountaineering provides a useful lens to incorporate often marginalized regions back into a holistic history of Europe and normalize their histories.[10] The territorial claims of alpine clubs across national borders forced mountaineers to constantly interact with their neighbors and solve conflicts. At the same time, East Central European alpine clubs strove

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[8] Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," *New York Review of Books* 31, no. 7 (1984): 33. In this dissertation, I prefer to speak of East Central Europe; this term explicitly brackets off Germany and Austria and allows for more precision. See for this term and a larger discussion of the shifting political implications of Central/East Central/Eastern Europe Timothy Garton Ash, "The Puzzle of Central Europe," *New York Review of Books*, 18 March 1999.

[9] Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 4.

[10] For the potential of transnational history to write the history of smaller nationals back into a European framework and counterbalance great power dominance, see Patricia Clavin, "Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts," *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 634. For the call to normalize Central European history, see Tara Zahra’s remarks in "Forum: Habsburg History," *German History* 31, no. 2.

to secure recognition, visibility, and influence in an unequal European international system. As I will argue, internationalism was a strategy to do both.

Although East Central Europe features prominently in this dissertation, it is not a history of East Central Europe. Rather, the story follows alpine internationalism without a particular geographical bias. Before alpine internationalism turned "Carpathian," the French Alpine Club emerged as the main promoter of international alpine congresses. Chapter one is concerned with the early nineteenth century internationalism that followed the meeting on Mont Cenis. Chapter two and three will show that in the interwar period, the new sovereign states appropriated and transformed internationalism into a tool to address the problems of national frontiers which divided a formerly shared imperial space. By forming an international organization, they strove to not only to elevate their profile among the larger European clubs but also to lobby for relaxed border regimes. Internationalist connections provided some measures to keep transnational networks alive during the division of Europe after the Second World War. In the postwar period, the topic of chapters four and five, the Soviet Union emerges as a new protagonist that sought to be integrated into the larger mountaineering community.

Mountains in History

In what could be labeled the Whig history of the Alps, the high places of Europe used to be feared by superstitious locals. Ferocious creatures, dragons and lindworms, inhabited this wasteland, roaming through the deep valleys in mean spirit. It happened that a group of dragon slayers, not surprisingly of British origin, decided to call an end to the Geography Fabulous that

dominated the imagination of the Alpine space.[11] A reconfigured aesthetic understanding, driven by literary developments, turned ugly mountains into places of splendor and glory. Secularization then turned the sublime wasteland into landscapes of leisure which lured scientists, tourists, and sportsmen alike to the Western Alps. Marjorie Hope Nicolson's literary history, *Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory*, has provided the master narrative that many scholars have followed.[12]

Yet, the aesthetic appropriation of the Alps is only part of the story. In what could be called the "new alpine history," historians such as Peter Hansen and Daniel Speich have argued that politics and science need to be reinserted into our understanding of how mountain landscapes became cultural landscapes.[13] "It is not easy to clearly discern between the artists' appreciation, the scientific investigation, the technological domestication, the tourists' commodification, or the political instrumentalization of landscapes," argues Speich and points out to the entangled processes that "made" the Alps.[14] While the shift of attitudes towards

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[11] The term Geography Fabulous was coined by Joseph Conrad to describe a particular period of exploration, see Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 3.

[12] This interpretation resembles the Enlightened historiography of the natural sciences in which scientific progress is understood as the defeat of superstition and the victory of reason. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997). For recent works on the aesthetic aspects of Victorian receptions of mountain landscapes, see Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); Darren Bevin, *Cultural Climbs: John Ruskin, Albert Smith and the Alpine Aesthetic* (Saarbrucken: VDM, 2010); Helga Dirlinger, *Bergbilder: Die Wahrnehmung alpiner Wildnis am Beispiel der englischen Gesellschaft 1700-1850* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2000); Simon Schama, *Landscape And Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1996). For the reception of mountains in German thought, see Sean M. Ireton and Caroline Schaumann, *Heights of Reflection: Mountains in the German Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Twenty-First Century* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2012). For a new interpretation of early modern attitudes towards mountains, see Dawn L. Hollis, "Re-Thinking Mountains: Ascents, Aesthetics, and Environment in Early Modern Europe" (Ph.D., University of St Andrews, 2016).

[13] Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 8.

[14] Daniel Speich, "Mountains Made in Switzerland: Facts and Concerns in Nineteenth-Century Cartography," *Science in Context* 22, no. 3 (2009): 388.

mountains has traditionally been interpreted as an elite project, recent research has argued that the cultural construction of mountains occurred through a complex intermingling of external and local voices which contributed to alpine discourses.[15] Synthesizing the insights of these works and broadening the geographical focus, the geographers Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz have delivered a comprehensive global treatment of the political history of mountains from the Enlightenment to the present. Their conceptualization of mountains as "global political objects" and sites of national and global governance speaks to the argument and purpose of this dissertation.[16]

A related field to which this dissertation also contributes is the growing literature that is concerned with the conceptualization of large spatial systems such as the oceans, the polar regions, and the atmosphere. Although mountaineering formed part of the culture of exploration, historians of science have only just started to explore the contribution of mountaineering to knowledge making in a larger transnational context.[17] Denis Cosgrove and Veronica della Dora's

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[15] Simona Boscani Leoni, "Knowledge and Perception of Mountains in History: New Perspectives for Research," in *An Environmental History of the Early Modern Period: Experiments and Perspectives*, ed. Martin Knoll and Reinhold Reith (Zurich: Lit, 2014), 63-64. Oftentimes, a lack of written sources hinders the historian from discovering how porters, peasants, and local residents perceived the outsiders. How national authorities, scientists, economic developers and other interest groups interacted with mountaineers depended not only on the international political climate, but also on the state of the material environment. See Mark Carey, "Mountaineers and Engineers: The Politics of International Science, Recreation, and Environmental Change in Twentieth Century Peru," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92, no. 1 (2012). An excellent account of relationships between mountaineers is the anthropological work of Sherry Ortner, see Sherry B. Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). For other work dealing with locals, see Susan Frohlick, "'Who is Lhakpa Sherpa?' Circulating Subjectivities within the Global/Local Terrain of Himalayan Mountaineering," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5, no. 2 (2004); Peter H. Hansen, "Partners: Guides and Sherpas in the Alps and Himalayas, 1850s-1950s," in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jaś Elsner and Joan Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); Joy Logan, *Aconcagua: The Invention of Mountaineering on America's Highest Peak* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).

[16] Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 194.

[17] The term "cultures of exploration" is coined by Felix Driver whose "Geography Militant" remains the seminal work in this field, see Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. With few exceptions, those works considering the connection of scientific knowledge production and mountaineering are concerned with British

collection, *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science*, exemplifies the conceptual overlap between thinking about mountains and polar regions. The authors argue that mountains and polar regions share an intellectual heritage of being constructed as a "high place" not by the locals inhabiting the physical space but by the "imaginative act" of outsiders who attributed similar characteristics to both environments.[18] Yet, while the authors maintain that high places remained "pre-eminently spaces for science," this dissertation shows that mountaineers, too, contributed to the construction of mountains as an abstract spatial category.[19]

Another group of works is concerned more specifically with the history of mountain climbing. Any scholar who decides to engage with the history of mountaineering is faced by the paradox of a historiography that is rich and meager at the same time. Rich it is as climbers and alpine clubs have from the very beginning exhibited an almost fanatic relationship to their past and filled libraries with popular works. The fact that "the history of alpinism is a constitutive part of alpinism itself" has fundamental consequences for the way we understand the phenomenon.[20] Alpinism, with its intrinsic historicity and its narratives of endurance, conquest, heroism, and individualism, nurtures a historiography that reinforces rather than deconstructs these narrative—

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examples. Michael Reidy' work is at the forefront of bridging the gap between the history of science and mountaineering, see Michael S. Reidy, "John Tyndall's Vertical Physics: From Rock Quarries to Icy Peaks," *Physics in Perspective* 12, no. 2 (2010); "Coming Down: Or How Mountaineering Changed Science," *Alpine Journal* 116 (2013); "Scientific Naturalism on High: The X-Club Sequesters the Alps," in *Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity*, ed. Gowan Dawson and Bernard V. Lightman (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014). For cultures of exploration in the Habsburg Empire, see Stephen Anthony Walsh, "Between the Arctic & the Adriatic: Polar Exploration, Science & Empire in the Habsburg Monarchy" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2014).

[18] Denis Cosgrove and Veronica Della Dora, *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 7.

[19] *High Places*, 13.

[20] Hans-Michael Körner, *Wozu Geschichte? Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Alpingeschichte?* (München: Deutscher Alpenverein, 1997), 21.

like exploration history, popular historiography on mountaineering is mostly concerned with narratives of failure and successes of individuals.

Recently, historians have demonstrated that mountaineering history can be more than just "one damn peak after another." By and large, most of the English language works focus either on British mountaineering or Germany and Austria.[21] In her social and cultural history of the German and Austrian Alpine Club (Deutscher und Oesterreichischer Alpenverein), Dagmar Günther noted in 1998 that the history of alpinism "remains historiography by and for those involved."[22] Since then, scholars have built on Günther's work and examined the role of mountains and the Alpenverein in the nation-building projects of Germany and Austria.[23] Peter

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[21] English-speaking scholarly literature on alpine clubs other than the British and German and Austrian Alpenverein is limited, although works in the respective national literatures exist for most European clubs. On the Club Alpin Français see Yann Drouet, "The 'CAF' at the Borders: Geopolitical and Military Stakes in the Creation of the French Alpine Club," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 1 (2005); Olivier Hoibian, *Les alpinistes en France 1870-1950: Une histoire culturelle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000). On Italy see Marco Armiero, *Rugged Nation: Mountains and the Making of Modern Italy* (Cambridge: White Horse, 2011); Alessandro Pastore, *Alpinismo e storia d'Italia: dall'unità alla Resistenza* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2003). On the Swiss Alpine Club see Tanja Wirz, *Gipfelstürmerinnen: Eine Geschlechtergeschichte des Alpinismus in der Schweiz 1840-1940* (Baden: Hier & Jetzt, 2007). On Slovenia see Tone Strojin, *Zgodovina slovenskega planinstva: Slovenska planinska organizacija SPD-PZS, 1893-1948-2003* (Radovljica: Didakta, 2009).

[22] Dagmar Günther, *Alpine Quergänge: Kulturgeschichte des bürgerlichen Alpinismus, 1870-1930* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1998), 15.

[23] The reason why the Alpenverein attracted much historical interest is, firstly, because of its size and hence relevance for civic life. Since the interwar period, the Alpenverein has continuously ranked as one of the largest civil associations in the German Reich and the Habsburg Empire. Its post-1945 successors continued this trend. Secondly, historians are interested in the Alpenverein's role as a nationalist agitator, its long history of antisemitism, and the transformative power it yielded over the material environment of the Alps. The alpine clubs of Austria, Germany, and South Tyrol have commissioned a three-part series on their history, see Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*; Martin Achrainer, Friederike Kaiser, and Florian Trojer, *Berg heil! Alpenverein und Bergsteigen 1918-1945* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011); Deutscher Alpenverein, ed. *Aufwärts! Berge, Begeisterung und der Deutsche Alpenverein 1945 bis 2007* (Munich: Deutscher Alpenverein, 2007). For the main English-speaking works on the Alpenverein see Tait Keller, *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860-1939* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Lee Wallace Holt, "Mountains, Mountaineering and Modernity: A Cultural History of German and Austrian Mountaineering, 1900-1945" (Ph.D., University of Texas, 2008). See also Corinna Peniston-Bird, Thomas Rohkrämer, and Felix Robin Schulz, "Glorified, Contested and Mobilized: The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein from the 1860s to 1933," *Austrian Studies* 18 (2010); Edward Dickinson, "Altitude and Whiteness: Germanizing the Alps and Alpinizing the Germans, 1875-1935," *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (2010). For an environmental approach to alpinism, see Ben M. Anderson, "The Construction of an Alpine Landscape: Building, Representing and Affecting the Eastern Alps, c. 1885–1914," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 29, no. 2 (2012); "Alpine Agency: Locals,

Hansen's extensive work explores the history of the (British) Alpine Club and the imperial dimension of British mountaineering in the Alps and the Himalayas.[24] Beyond Himalayan mountaineering after World War II, however, scholarly treatment of mountaineering in the postwar period is very limited.[25]

By contextualizing mountaineering in larger historical frameworks and overcoming the endless chronologies of first ascents and fatal tragedies, mountaineering offers a fascinating window into the mindset of Europeans and how they understood their place in the world and nature. Yet, while geographically inherently transnational, most of the scholarship on alpine clubs has explicitly remained within the confines of the nation-state narrative or, if dealing with the German and Austrian Alpine Club, within the German-speaking world.[26] As Tanja Wirz in

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Mountaineers and Tourism in the Eastern Alps, c. 1860–1914," 27, no. 1 (2016). For works on the appropriation of mountains under the Nazis see Peter Mierau, *Nationalsozialistische Expeditionspolitik. Deutsche Asien-Expeditionen 1933–1945* (München: Utz, 2006); Rainer Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus: Kultur, Organisation, Politik* (Vienna: WUV-Universitäts-Verlag, 1996); Harald Höbusch, *"Mountain of Destiny": Nanga Parbat and its Path into the German Imagination* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016); Helmuth Zebhauser, ed. *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat: Gedanken, Erinnerungen, Dokumente* (Munich: Rother, 1998).

[24] Peter H. Hansen, "British Mountaineering, 1850-1914" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 1991); "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 3 (1995). For his work on British mountaineering in the Himalayas, see "The Dancing Lamas of Everest: Cinema, Orientalism, and Anglo-Tibetan Relations in the 1920s," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996); "Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire, 1868–1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, no. 1 (1996); "Confetti of Empire: The Conquest of Everest in Nepal, India, Britain, and New Zealand," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000). For popular but thorough histories of British mountaineering, see e.g. Jim Ring, *How the English Made the Alps* (London: John Murray, 2000); Fergus Fleming, *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001); Simon Thompson, *Unjustifiable Risk? The Story of British Mountaineering* (Cumbria: Cicerone, 2010).

[25] Exceptions include Alpenverein, *Aufwärts! Berge, Begeisterung und der Deutsche Alpenverein 1945 bis 2007*; Logan, *Aconcagua: The Invention of Mountaineering on America's Highest Peak*.

[26] Maurice Isserman's and Stewart Weaver's history of Himalayan mountaineering is a first step towards a global history of mountaineering—global in terms of actors, rather than of geographical focus. Maurice Isserman and Stewart A. Weaver, *Fallen Giants: A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Mark Carey, taking the example of German mountaineering expeditions to Peru in the 1930s, has shown how international affairs, science and perceptions of nature influenced and were influenced by border-crossing alpinists, see Carey, "Mountaineers and Engineers: The Politics of International Science, Recreation, and Environmental Change in Twentieth Century Peru."

her gender history of the Swiss Alpine Club writes, “although the alpine clubs were bound by a common interest, all tended their own nationalisms.”[27] Exploring the transmission zones and relations between the multitude of alpine organizations that existed in Europe and beyond, this dissertation challenges this argument in providing a new perspective of alpine clubs as promoters of both nationalism and internationalism. Even the German and Austrian Alpenverein, which refused to take part in alpine internationalism until the postwar era, nonetheless formed part of the larger networks of alpine clubs and was admired for its strength and reach. In situating the Alpenverein in a larger European context, this work thus also Europeanizes German history.[28]

Mountaineers and Transnationalism

Methodologically, my research builds on growing scholarship that explores the connectivity of the modern world. The terminology within this field centers around the terms internationalism, transnationalism, international, as well as global, and is rather fuzzy.[29] In the framework of this dissertation, I use the terms transnationalism and internationalism to describe related yet distinct phenomena. I understand transnationalism as both as a method of historical inquiry and as an experience of historical actors. Internationalism, which will be discussed in the next section, is an actor-driven idea or movement. While possibly all histories of internationalism are transnational, not all transnational histories are about internationalism.

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[27] Wirz, *Gipfelstürmerinnen*, 124.

[28] Ute Frevert, "Europeanizing German History," *GHI Bulletin* 36, no. Spring (2005): 18-19. Frevert argues among others that Germany’s ties to Europe should not be disregarded because transnational connections were not able to avert war.

[29] As Reinisch laments, the scholarship on transnationalism is more preoccupied “with taming and defining the delineators and containers than studying what is inside them.” See "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 196.

As a method, transnational history is based on the premise that the nation as the main framework of historical interrogation is inadequate to account for the complexity of historical processes, especially on the modern period.[30] The approaches which form part of this body of literature are diverse. They can be comparative in method or not, follow people, ideas, and goods across borders, deal with explicitly international affairs such as international organizations, or explore a theme in a particular local yet cross-border context. This dissertation takes three of these perspectives: first, it follows mountaineers across borders; secondly, it reconstructs the history of the idea of internationalism among mountaineers; and thirdly, it reconstructs the history of an international organization, the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme, UIAA).[31]

This dissertation exemplifies how an approach beyond the nation state unearths a completely different set of European actors who are cut out from previously existing accounts. Jessica Reinisch has lamented that the existing historiography of Europe often presents a "flattened, colourless, skewed version of Europe" that does not adequately represent the diversity within Europe.[32] In introducing mountains to transnationalism, I hope to have taken care of the issue of flatness; but what is more, this work represent the diversity of the European mountaineering community that consisted of more actors than just an elitist British Alpine Club and a nationalist German and Austrian Alpenverein. Some alpine clubs were poor, some rich, some large, some small, some political, some less, some had access to mountains, some did

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[30] Reinisch, "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism," 195.

[31] For the value of studying international organizations see Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 424.

[32] Reinisch, "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism," 204.

not—but they all participated in a larger “web of communication and interaction” which, as Ute Frevert has argued, made up the essence of Europeanness.[33]

As a historical experience, transnationalism is connected to the notion of border crossings and, as Clavin remarks, “first and foremost about people: the social space that they inhabit, the networks they form and the ideas they exchange.”[34] The people in this story are primarily white, male, educated members of the middle class of Europe, North America, and Soviet Russia who share the passion of mountain climbing. Two kinds of transnational actors appear in this story. First, there are those who I call “alpine bureaucrats.” These people feature as the main agents of alpine internationalism. They constituted a subset of dedicated alpine club officials who devoted a considerable time of their life not to the mountains but to writing letters, organizing conferences, and propagating the internationalist idea. Examples of these alpine bureaucrats include the president of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, Egmond d’Arcis, and the Russian climber, Evgenii Gippenreiter, who served as the secretary for international affairs of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation.[35]

Secondly, there are those actors who enter the story not as internationalists but as mountaineers with specific transnational experiences worth of historical interrogation, for instance the British climber Joyce Dunsheath, who in 1957 became the first Western mountaineer

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[33] Frevert, "Europeanizing German History," 11.

[34] Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," 422.

[35] Transnational relations are usually defined as cross-border interactions among non-state actors or between a non-state actor and a foreign state. Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane for example consider transnational interactions as “the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organization.” Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction," in *Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction*, ed. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), xii. For the most part, mountaineers act as private agents. In some instances, mainly in the case of the socialist countries, they were indeed members of the state bureaucracy, whether officially employed or voluntary sports officials.

to climb in the Caucasus since the 1930s. Another example includes the participants of the First International Mountaineering Camp in the Pamirs, which is at the center of chapter five. I reconstruct the transnational experience of these actors in two ways: through the organizations they formed and their transnational experiences as recorded in expedition reports, memoirs, and oral history interviews.

Transnational processes do not necessarily entail the unraveling of borders; transnational actors can also exploit and reinforce borders.[36] This is thus a story as much about individualists and anarchists, for whom borders did not mean much, as it is about political entities and organizations that rested on the assumption that the world was divided and rightly so. An individualist appearing in this story is, for example, the British mountaineering Dough Scott. He thought very little of any forms of national prowess and was mostly interest in climbing mountains as an athletic challenge. The UIAA, on the other hand, was organized along national lines. While its founders created the organization to ameliorate the practical obstacles arising from national borders, i.e. the limitations of mobility across them, they did not strive to unravel nation-states as such.

Mountaineers as Agents of Internationalism

In reconstructing ideas about internationalism among mountaineers, this dissertation contributes to the history of internationalism at large. In the framework of this work, I understand internationalism according to the definition of Akira Iriye, who defines the term as "an idea, a movement, or an institution that seeks to reformulate the nature of relations among nations

[36] Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," 422.

through cross-national cooperation and interchange."[37] Traditionally focused on Western-centric international organizations, the scholarship concerned with internationalism embraces now a variety of actors and issues, including multinational co-operations, social movements such as the women's movement, abolitionism, socialism, post-war relief work, as well as religion and sport.[38] Accounting for the different forms internationalism can take in synchronic perspective, historians have now suggested to referring to internationalisms in the plural.[39]

Much of the recent literature on both transnationalism and internationalism has been devoted to refining arguments about the relation between the nation-state and internationalism. Scholars now agree that the nation-state cannot be neglected and that a focus on national history and international or transnational history is not mutually exclusive.[40] In a recent effort to rethink the history of internationalism, Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin have called upon historians to

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[37] Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

[38] Studies relevant to this work are e.g. Barbara Keys, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Anna-Katharina Wöbse, *Weltnaturschutz: Umweltdiplomatie in Völkerbund und Vereinten Nationen 1920-1950* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2012); Katrin Steffen and Martin Kohlrausch, "The Limits and Merits of Internationalism: Experts, the State and the International Community in Poland in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *European Review of History* 16, no. 5 (2009).

[39] Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016). See also Peter Waterman, *One, Two, Three, Many New Internationalisms!: On a New Third World Labour Internationalism and its Relationship to those of the West and the East* (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1990).

[40] Reinisch, "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism," 199. Glenda Sluga, for example, has explicitly treated internationalism as a constituent part of the twentieth century as an age of nationalism and national interest. Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Many of the new transnational histories demonstrate the robustness of borders and pertinence of the nation state, see e.g. the introduction and contributions in Daniel Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris 2011), 2; "Exhibiting, Encountering and Studying Music in Interwar Europe: Between National and International Community," *European Studies: A Journal of European Culture* 32, no. 1 (2014).

pay "attention to uneasy alliances and unlikely fellow travelers across the conceptual borders of nationalism and internationalism."[41]

This dissertation follows this suggestion in two ways. First, it introduces a new set of actors who usually have been treated as bearers of nationalism as agents of internationalism. In doing so, it not only expands our understanding of the social and political function of alpine clubs but also illuminates further the entangled relationship between internationalism and nationalism. Although the origins and rhetoric of alpine clubs betrayed their political orientation, the multidimensionality of their activity touched upon elements of sport internationalism, environmental protection, infrastructure development, border regimes, and in particular technical agreements and standardization, a theme that recently has attracted renewed interest in the League of Nations and interwar transnationalism.[42]

Secondly, this dissertation gives voice to the "unlikely fellow travelers" of East Central Europe.[43] Scholars have increasingly expanded their analysis of internationalism beyond the Western states; historians of Europe, too, have also called for re-engaging with a diverse Europe. Yet while historians have illuminated why small states like Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland became major proponents of internationalism, few works are concerned with the way East Central European actors took part in the larger interwar and postwar European political,

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[41] Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, "Rethinking the History of Internationailsm," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11.

[42] Wolfram Kaiser, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, and International Organizations*, ed. Johan W. Schot and Wolfram Kaiser (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Wöbse, *Weltnaturschutz*; Mai'A K. Davis Cross, "Rethinking Epistemic Communities Twenty Years Later," *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 1 (2013); Akira Iriye, "Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s," (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016); Paul Weindling, ed. *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918-1939* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[43] For normalizing East Central European history see Tara Zahra, "Going West," *East European Politics & Societies* 25, no. 4 (2011); "Forum: Habsburg History."

social, and cultural community.[44] In his work on international music events, Daniel Laqua has argues that the East Central European fusion of national, transnational, and international ideas reflected the Habsburg tradition of celebrating itself as a multinational empire.[45] This dissertation advances this perspective on the historical agency of the Habsburg successor states. Reconstructing what I call "Carpathian" internationalism, i.e. the appropriation of alpine internationalism by the newly independent East Central European states, this work demonstrates that mountaineers from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia actively shaped the transnational alpinist community rather than being victims of nationalist imperatives. As I will show, a dialectical link existed between the invisibility of these actors in standard histories and their visibility in transnational history: combatting marginality was one of the major reasons of historical actors to resort to internationalism.[46]

For the postwar period, the historiography on internationalism in East Central Europe is much richer. The growing field of New Cold War history, to which this dissertation contributes,

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[44] See for example Madeleine Herren, *Hintertüren zur Macht: Internationalismus und modernisierungsorientierte Aussenpolitik in Belgien, der Schweiz und den USA 1865-1914* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000). Daniel Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013). For the few existing works that include East Central Europe see Katharina Kreuder-Sonnen, "From Transnationalism to Olympic Internationalism: Polish Medical Experts and International Scientific Exchange, 1885-1939," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016); Steffen and Kohlrausch, "The Limits and Merits of Internationalism."; Jessica Reinisch, "'We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation': UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 3 (2008); Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). One reason for this neglect is the occupation of historians with major question of a period that was bookended by the two world wars: fragile democracies, the rise of totalitarianism, anti-Semitism, minority disputes, just to name a few. In terms of transnational history as a method, Central European historians are at the forefront of the field. See Brendan Karch, "Regionalism, Democracy and National Self-Determination in Central Europe," 21, no. 4 (2012); "Forum: Habsburg History."

[45] Laqua, "Exhibiting, Encountering and Studying Music in Interwar Europe: Between National and International Community," 209.

[46] This argument is also advanced in *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium*. For one of the few works making this argument for East Central Europe, see Steffen and Kohlrausch, "The Limits and Merits of Internationalism." See also contributions in Reinisch, "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism."

highlights the way non-state agents improved East-West relations through regular interactions with the other side.[47] In the framework of Cold War history, historians have recently challenged the Orwellian perspective of sport as "war minus the shooting" arguing that sport was not only a cultural battlefield but also an opportunity to develop ties across the Iron Curtain that otherwise would have not been possible.[48] Drawing hitherto unexplored connections between climbing and the historiography of modern spectator sports, this dissertation shows that encounters between Soviet and Western alpinists in Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia provided an unsurpassed opportunity for citizen diplomacy outside of the controlled environments in which standard forms of choreographed East-West exchanges took place.[49]

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[47] In the case of the Soviet Union it is often less clear what constitutes a "non-state actor." For the implications of transnationalism for Soviet historiography see Michael David-Fox, "The Implications of Transnationalism," Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 12, no. 4 (2011). Major works in transnational Soviet history include Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Susan Gross Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together: Germany and Russia Between the Wars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin, *Fascination and Enmity: Russia and Germany as Entangled Histories, 1914-1945* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012). For an overview of transnational organizations in the Cold War see Matthew Evangelista, "Transnational Organizations and the Cold War," in The Cambridge History of the Cold War, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Soviet cultural relations within the socialist bloc are almost completely unexplored. For a path-breaking study see Rachel Applebaum, "Friendship of the Peoples: Soviet-Czechoslovak Cultural and Social Contacts from the Battle for Prague to the Prague Spring, 1945-1969" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2012).

[48] For this argument, see e.g. Annette Vowinckel, "Cold War Television: Olga Korbut and the Munich Olympics of 1972," in *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*, ed. Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk, and Thomas Lindenberger (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

[49] For cultural and unofficial diplomacy in the Cold War, see e.g. Simo Mikkonen and Pia Koivunen, eds., *Beyond the Divide: Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2015); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945/1958* (Cornell University Press, 2015).

Method and Sources

Reconstructing transnational interactions requires the historian to interrogate a different set of sources than those meant for a public audience. The voices of those who supported internationalism were quieter than those who acted as agitators of nationalism. The work of alpine bureaucrats is thus less visible than the work of those who spent their time in the mountains, returned, and wrote about their experiences. Instead of concentrating on self-reflective mountaineering literature, the focus of this work lies thus on hitherto unexploited archival material, primarily correspondence between alpine clubs, which is supplemented with published sources of major European alpine journals as well as memoirs. Putting the archival collection of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation at the center, I reconstruct the networks and relationships between alpine clubs without overemphasizing one particular country. These sources are supplemented with materials from the archives of alpine clubs in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, the USA, New Zealand, and Slovenia. The Soviet perspective is reconstructed through material from the Soviet Mountaineering Section (later Federation), the Committee for Education and Sport, and the Central Council for Tourism of the All-Union Committee. Chapter five also draws on oral history interviews with participants of the International Mountaineering Camp Pamir 1974.

Organization

This dissertation spans one century. Chapter one covers the second half of the nineteenth century when alpine clubs were established across Europe. Chapters two to four develop the theme of European mountaineers “in between” East and West through an institutional history of

the UIAA from the interwar period until the 1970s. The first Pamir International Mountaineering Camp in 1974 provides the ending point of the dissertation, and is the topic of chapter five.

Chapter one sets the scene for the following chapters by introducing alpine clubs as agents of internationalism. The roots of alpine internationalism were closely tied to scientific internationalism. Turning scientific knowledge into applied knowledge, mountaineering provided a specific lens to understand mountains as a spatial system. Nineteenth century alpine internationalism was expressed in the form of institutionalized knowledge exchange and international congresses. At these meetings, enthusiastic alpine bureaucrats, oftentimes scientists holding prominent positions in one of the major alpine clubs, evoked the understanding of mountain environments as a common international cause and alpinism as a unifying practice. Starting with the emergence of alpine clubs in the second half of the nineteenth century, the chapter ends with the international alpine congress in 1920 that marked the end of this particular style of alpine internationalism.

Chapter two traces the emergence of a new form of internationalism as a response to the lost imperial Habsburg space after World War I. It explores how the project of alpine internationalism was appropriated and expanded by the successor states of the Habsburg Empire—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. Carpathian internationalism promised a solution to ameliorate the obstacles posed by new borders and to partake in a larger European community while also celebrating national sovereignty. The chapter begins with a discussion of the territorial changes after 1919 and how these changes profoundly affected alpine clubs across Germany and the former Habsburg Empire. As the larger clubs of the Alps responded to the new territorial order with political radicalization, the smaller tourist associations of the Carpathians searched for solutions first on a bilateral and then on an international level.

Re-invigorating the international alpine congresses, the first taking place in Zakopane, Poland, the efforts of the Carpathian clubs culminated with the International Congress at Chamonix in 1932, when the represented alpine clubs decided to create the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA), an organization tasked to secure the mobility of mountaineers across political borders. Ultimately, the chapter demonstrates that East Central European actors were not, as commonly held, mere victims of nationalist imperatives but also agents of internationalism in their own rights.

Chapter three explores the "in between" position of East Central Europeans in tracing the inequalities of power and influence of East Central Europe within the UIAA from 1933, the year it became operational, until the beginning of the Thaw period after Stalin's death, thus transcending the war as a natural closing point.[50] The chapter begins with a discussion of "small state internationalism" and great power isolationism exhibited by the Alpenverein, the British, and the American Alpine Club. It then traces the two instances of East Central Europe's forced retreat from internationalism: the first caused by Hitler's occupation of Eastern Europe and the outbreak of World War II, the second by the process of Stalinization in the immediate postwar era.

The Carpathians disappeared from the mental map of Western European alpine clubs from the Second World War until the mid-1950s. The institution that Carpathian internationalism created, however, remained. Slowly, the Western alpine clubs established a hegemonic position within the UIAA. Their fall-out with the three East Central European clubs, who were partly still led by the alpine bureaucrats who instigated the creation of the UIAA, illustrated the fact that

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[50] As Clavin notes, transnational history allows to detect processes which follow a different timescale than standard national historiographies, it "exposes hidden continuities and connections in time and space, as well as the gaps in between them." Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," 439.

transnational actors were ready to accept Cold War rhetoric even if there was little to gain from a confrontation with the other side. Rethinking traditional understandings of East-West division, the chapter then concludes with the re-integration of the now socialist clubs during the Thaw period. While internationalism could do little to combat the ever-increasing marginalization of East Central Europeans, the networks that they forged nonetheless provided a framework for retaining some form of adhesion across changing political fault lines.

Chapter four explores the development of transnational relations between mountaineers of East and West from 1953 into the 1970s on both individual and institutional level. The chapter argues that the Thaw period did not only require the Soviet Union getting used to the wider world but also vice versa. Building personal relations was the key for the Soviets to win the hearts and minds of Western mountaineers. The chapter starts with a brief discussion of the late Stalinist years and then explores the first interactions between Western and Soviet mountaineers in the early Thaw period, moving to a discussion of the Soviet struggle to be accepted to the UIAA. Unlike competitive sports, like for example hockey, mountaineering never became a battleground for Cold War rivalries. Nevertheless, the Western clubs' rejection of standardized competitions was accompanied by demonization of the Soviets. In the absence of standardized rules, Western alpine clubs defended their idea of how alpinism was supposed to be practiced. Eventually, personal relationships with leading British mountaineers enabled the Soviet Union to overcome the resistance of the UIAA's most anti-Soviet members.

Chapter five analyzes the texture of transnationalism in the microcosm of an international mountaineering meeting in Soviet Central Asia. Narrating the story of the 1974 First International Mountaineering Camp in the Pamirs, the chapter revisits the theme of mountaineering as cultural diplomacy and explores the interaction with the "other" in extreme

intimate and intense situations: mountaineering expeditions and disasters. Serving as a micro-level study to explore previously raised questions of East-West connections, the chapter argues that East-West differences were often superseded by other dividing lines of national identities, gender roles, and different attitudes toward mountaineering. Revealing the limits of Soviet control over international encounters and mountain environments, the chapter shows that it was the break-down of control, caused by a serious of environmental disasters and deadly mountaineering accidents, which brought Soviet hosts and Western guests closer together

1 THE ORIGINS OF ALPINE INTERNATIONALISM

Alpine Clubs as Networks of Knowledge, 1874-1920

Introduction

In 1894, thirty years after the creation of the Austrian Alpenverein, the Austrian alpinist, historian, and geologist, Eduard Richter, pondered in a *Festschrift* the question of how much the club had contributed to the scientific exploration of the Alps. The picture he drew depicted the Alpenverein, which had merged in 1866 with its German equivalent, as a hybrid organization: while it was no scientific association, it dedicated some funds to scientific work, offered a social venue for scientists, facilitated exploration through its infrastructure projects, and provided a space for publishing niche disciplines such as glaciology that were outside of the working fields of state-funded research institutes. While crediting most of the exploration of the Eastern Alps to German and Austrian scholars, he recognized that their work was "often motivated by outsiders" and acknowledged that "[the] science of the Alps is international. Apart from the Germans, English, French and Italians have contributed much to it, and within the German-speaking world, Switzerland again stands apart with a leading role."[51] The exploration of the Alps was thus a common European project.

This chapter explores how knowledge and ideas about the Alps and subsequently also other mountain ranges were formed in the transnational space between alpine clubs starting in the 1860s. Focusing on the transmission of this knowledge rather than its content, the chapter

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[51] Eduard Richter, "Die wissenschaftliche Erforschung der Ostalpen seid der Gründung des Oesterreichischen und des Deutschen Alpenvereines," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins: Festschrift zur Feier des 25-jährigen Bestehens des D. u. Oe. AV* 25 (1894): 3.

expands on common historical interpretations of alpine clubs in interpreting them as networks of knowledge.[52] In order to garner, preserve and enhance mountain-related knowledge, alpine clubs formed transnational networks that connected different mountain areas conceptually to the Alps. Mountaineers contributed to knowledge creation in various roles—sometimes as scientists, but also as promoters of "play"—a play though that required an extensive body of knowledge that overlapped with scientific knowledge.[53] This knowledge was never neutral but closely tied to the imperial and national agendas that historians have identified as being central to the mission of alpine clubs. Yet while national imaginaries feature prominently in the historiography of mountaineering, this chapter argues that the making of mountains was shaped by internationalist sentiments just as much as by imperial and nationalist agendas.

Mountaineers were not the first, but rather the last ones to contribute to the standardization of mountains as abstract spatial systems. Before them, naturalists, cartographers, military surveyors, and geographers gathered information about mountains across the globe and organized it into an ever-growing body of knowledge. This process formed part of imperial projects of gathering empirical data through scientific exploration, which started in the

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[52] Historians of science have identified several practices that formed part of the culture of exploration: material, social, literary, bodily an reproductive practices. Nicholas Jardine and E. C. Spary, "The Natures of Cultural History," in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. Nicholas Jardine, James A. Secord, and E. C. Spary (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8-9. The term "cultures of exploration" is coined by Felix Driver whose *Geography Militant* remains the seminal work in this field. Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. For networks of scientists and geographical entities, see Helen M. Rozwadowski, *The Sea Knows no Boundaries: A Century of Marine Science under ICES* (Copenhagen: International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 2002).

[53] In this sense, mountains have more in common with oceans. On the importance of play and ocean exploration see Rozwandowski's take on Richard White's argument about knowing nature through play and work. See "Playing By--And On and Under--The Sea: The Importance of Play for Knowing the Ocean," in *Knowing Global Environments: New Historical Perspectives on the Field Sciences*, ed. Jeremy Vetter (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2011); Richard White, ""Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?" Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1996). See also Michael S. Reidy and Helen M. Rozwadowski, "The Spaces In Between: Science, Ocean, Empire," Isis 105, no. 2 (2014): 341.

eighteenth century as an effort to standardize and rationalize knowledge. Just as scientists and civil servants started to think "internationally" at the turn of the century in order to understand the marine environment and the challenges of its management, mountain science as well became a transnational pursuit. The literature on imperial cultures of knowledge and the intersection between science and power is vast, yet little attention has been paid to those who gathered mountain knowledge for leisure purposes.[54]

The chapter commences with a brief overview of the origins of mountaineering and the development of the Alps as a place of leisure nineteenth century. It then discusses the creation of alpine clubs as institutions of knowledge. As the chapter will show, nineteenth century alpine internationalism, i.e. the idea that certain themes, issues, and problems relating to mountains require international cooperation, was closely tied to scientific internationalism. Publication exchange and international congresses turned alpine internationalism from an idea into practice. The chapter closes with the 1920 International Alpine Congress at Monaco which was the last to celebrate alpinism primarily as a scientific endeavor.

The Origins of Mountaineering

Mountaineering was part of a larger social and economic development the Alps underwent in the mid-nineteenth century. With railroads connecting the major cities of Europe to the Swiss mountain towns such as Davos, Zermatt and Grindelwald, the Alpine valleys turned their industrial backwardness into an asset. Tourists, initially mainly from Great Britain, sought

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[54] For an overview discussion of mountains and colonial territoriality, see Debarbieux and Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History*, 143-46. For imperial knowledge in the British context, see Richard H. Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*; Jim Endersby, *Imperial Nature: Joseph Hooker and the Practices of Victorian Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); David N. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013 [2003]).

relief and diversion for their civilizatory ills in the *Kurorte* (spa towns) and brought money to previously remote mountain areas. While most of them cured in the Swiss spas, a few ventured out to follow steps of locals who had begun scaling the daring peaks of the Alps.[55] Tourism in the Austrian Alps lagged behind compared to the Western Alps, yet by the early twentieth century major tourist centers had developed in the Eastern Alps which were predominantly flocked with German-speaking tourists. By the end of the nineteenth century, going to the mountains became a thoroughly European middle-class experience. The Alps had been re-imagined as places of adventure and leisure, as schools of manhood and national treasures, as landscapes of health and science. Together with the imaginative transformation, material landscapes transformed as well. If visitors to the Alps looked for respite from urban crowds and congestion, debates over crowds and environmental impact of tourism already started in the nineteenth century.[56]

The mountain landscape invited all sorts of activities—hiking, swimming, climbing, and skiing. Mountaineering, or "alpinism," in particular referred to the technical climbing of mountains that often involved the crossing of ice and snow and vertical climbing of steep rock faces. Mountaineers had as their aim a summit—the higher, the better. What separated the mountaineer—particularly the Victorian of the nineteenth century—from the average mountain

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[55] See Susan Barton, *Healthy Living in the Alps: The Origins of Winter Tourism in Switzerland, 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008). For the Eastern Alps, see Alison Frank, "The Air Cure Town: Commodifying Mountain Air in Alpine Central Europe," *Central European History* 45, no. 2 (2012).

[56] For the importance of the railway to tourism in Switzerland see Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*, 49. For the origins and development of health tourism in the Swiss Alps see Barton, *Healthy Living in the Alps: The Origins of Winter Tourism in Switzerland, 1860-1914*. For the development of mountain tourism in the Eastern Alps see Anderson, "Alpine Agency: Locals, Mountaineers and Tourism in the Eastern Alps, c. 1860–1914."; Alison Frank, "The Pleasant and the Useful: Pilgrimage and Tourism in Habsburg Mariazell," *Austrian History Yearbook* 40 (2009); Jill Steward, "Tourism in Late Imperial Austria: The Development of Tourist Cultures and Their Associated Images of Place," in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and North America*, ed. Shelley Baranowski and Elles Furlough (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). For the environmental impact of mountain tourism see Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*.

tourist was the fact that he (rarely she) would be accompanied by one or several local guides.[57] In mere numerical terms, the numbers of sportsmen who practiced proper mountaineering in the Alps was small, compared with average tourists who hiked easier paths. The alpinists' feats, however, provided excellent material for the popularization of mountain vacations.[58]

Guided mountaineering in the Alps became a new pastime of the English middle class. It was thanks to a colorful showman named Albert Smith that the idea of climbing the peaks of Switzerland gained hold in the British metropole. Having scaled the highest mountain of the Alps in 1851, Smith entertained the London public with a show about Mont Blanc in the Egyptian Hall that by 1858 had drawn hundreds of thousands into the spectacle of a mountain ascent.[59] Smith was a gifted entertainer who promoted the Alps as an aesthetic landscape but also as one of adventure and exhilaration. Furthermore, he filled the information void that existed about the Alps as such. C.E. Mathews, a contemporary of Smith's, credited him not only with promoting mountaineering, but also for bringing "more or less accurate knowledge" of the Alps to "the hearths and homes of educated Englishmen;" information of this kind was previously hard to obtain and could only be sought for in "isolated publications."[60]

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[57] Exploring heights was thus not the product of lonely explorers, but both a social and a transnational act—how exactly the interaction with their local guides shaped the experience of both groups historians only start to explore. The literature on mountain guides is limited, see e.g. Andrea Hungerbühler, *"Könige der Alpen": Zur Kultur des Bergführerberufs* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013); Natascha Knecht, *Pionier und Gentleman der Alpen: Das Leben der Bergführerlegende Melchior Anderegg (1828-1914) und die Blütezeit der Erstbesteigungen in der Schweiz* (Zurich: Limmat, 2014); Andrew J. Kauffman and William L. Putnam, *The Guiding Spirit* (Revelstoke, BC: Footprint, 1986).

[58] For the beginnings of alpinism, see Martin Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht: Eine Kulturgeschichte des frühen Alpinismus 1750-1850* (Wien: Böhlau, 2007); Fleming, *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*; Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*.

[59] Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," 305.

[60] Charles Edward Mathews, *The Annals of Mont Blanc: A Monograph, with a Chapter on the Geology of the Mountain* (Boston: Page, 1900), 195.

Initially, accurate knowledge about the peaks of the Alps and the art to climb them was indeed rare to come by. In the 1950s, Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Switzerland and the Savoy and Piedmont* was the only source which, in regularly updated editions since 1852, provided somewhat useful information pertaining to the Swiss mountains, passes, and glaciers.[61] Although offering descriptions of various mountain hikes, Murray's handbook was geared towards the average traveler and not towards those interested in technical mountaineering. The aficionados of the new activity thus sought information that was more specific, addressed particular climbs, and was faster circulated. The nineteenth century was the era of clubs—not only in Victorian Britain where sports associations accompanied the rise of modern sports but also in continental Europe.[62] It thus was just a matter of time that like-minded mountaineers founded an organization that in the words of writer Jim Ring "would soon possess an influence and importance entirely out of proportion to its size:" the Alpine Club.[63]

The British botanist and land surveyor William Mathews, who firstly articulated the idea of an alpine club, understood that although the unknown was part of the mountaineering experience, so too was the gathering of knowledge about mountains and how to climb them. "Alpine tourists now want to know the particulars of the following courses, which I believe have been recently made, Finsteraarhorn, Jungfrau from Grindelwald, Altels, Galenstock, Dom,

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[61] For guidebooks, see Jan Palmowski, "Travels with Baedeker: The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain," in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar (Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002).

[62] For sports in Victorian Britain, see Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Roger Hutchinson, *Empire Games: The British Invention of Twentieth-Century Sport* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1996). On the central role of clubs in the Habsburg Empire, see Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

[63] Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*, 62.

Weishorn, Zinal Pass, Crête à Collon, and many others," Mathews wrote to a friend in 1857.[64] Previously, mountain lovers had told stories of their adventures to their friends, but hardly wrote anything down. Mathews thus proposed a club that provided its members the opportunity to exchange information over an annual dinner. After any trip taken to Switzerland, its members should be required to submit "a short account of all the undescribed excursions" which would be published in an annual or bi-annual volume. Mathews hoped that in this way "a good deal of useful information" could be disseminated which was specific to mountaineering and circulated more promptly than those provided by travel handbooks: the club should serve as a tool for collecting and disseminating expert knowledge.[65]

Mathews's vision materialized the same year when he, together with a group of distinguished Englishmen, convened in the premises of a London hotel on 22 December 1857 and founded the world's first alpine club. With this step, mountaineering became an activity with an organizational framework, print periodicals, and a lobby base. Corresponding to Mathews's vision, the club's major aim was bringing knowledge garnered in the Swiss Alps, and increasingly also elsewhere in the world, back to the metropole. The opening statement of the first club circular reiterated the function of the club as both a network and collector of information, stressing that the club "will also give to all an opportunity of interchanging information, of recording the results of novel expeditions, and of consulting the maps and books to be placed in the rooms which it is expected the Club will eventually possess."[66] Born out of a need to establish an institution that was capable of collecting, organizing and disseminating

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[64] Quoted in Arthur Fenton Hort, ed. *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* 2vols., vol. 1 (London: Macmillan 1896), 370.

[65] "Alpine Notes," *Alpine Journal* 9, no. 61 (1878): 501-51.

[66] Quoted in George Band, *Summit: 150 Years of the Alpine Club* (London: Collins, 2006), 14.

information of use to all mountaineers that would join the ranks, the Alpine Club continued the Enlightenment tradition of knowledge circulation.[67] However, the members of the Alpine Club did not regard themselves as a learned society such as the Royal Geographical Society, even though a few of them practiced the gentleman science of collecting on their trips to the Alps.[68]

With imperial aplomb, the Alpine Club did not regard it necessary to add a geographical specification to their name—mountaineering was deemed an exclusive British, if not English, sport and little time was spent on the thought of other nations.[69] As Peter Hansen has argued, for those who did not make it to Africa, mountaineering in the Swiss Alps provided the professional Englishmen with the opportunity to "act out the drama of the empire in the Alps" and partake in the glory of Britannia during his summer vacation.[70] Accordingly, there was little expectation that also other clubs could contribute to the collection of "alpine knowledge." But, as Alpine Club president C.T. Dent would remark in front of his fellow club colleagues in 1878: "The original members, like the fish in the aquarium, could hardly have known what they were in for."[71]

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[67] Cf. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge*, 139.

[68] See Reidy, "Coming Down: Or How Mountaineering Changed Science."

[69] The construction of mountaineering as something British did not mean that the rationale behind the activity was unanimously accepted across British genteel society. Edward Whymper's ascent of the Matterhorn, an achievement that marked the zenith of the "Golden Age of Mountaineering" while at the same time left four climbers dead, led to fierce critique at home. John Ruskin, known for his appreciation of alpine aesthetics, was in fact one of the prime critics of Albert Smith (Hansen) but interestingly changed his opinion after the accident. HANSEN

[70] Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," 323. Ellis argues that mountaineering discourses shifted towards exploration narratives in the context of the high imperialism of the 1890s. See Reuben J. Ellis, *Vertical Margins: Mountaineering and the Landscapes of Neoimperialism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 22-24.

[71] C.T. Dent, "Alpine Climbing: Past, Present, and Future," *The Alpine Journal* 9, no. 66 (1878): 65.

Alpine societies were soon created all over Europe: The Austrian Alpenverein was established in 1862 and merged in 1873 with German Alpenverein, founded in Munich in 1869. Switzerland followed suit in 1863, France a year later, in 1879 the Club Alpino Italiano was created. In the next two decades, Belgium, Sweden, New Zealand, and South Africa followed, succeeded in the first decade of the twentieth century by clubs in Russia, the Netherlands, the United States, Canada and Japan. While some clubs, in particular the Alpine Club, were focused only on technical mountaineering, the overwhelming number of clubs included also "tourism" in the portfolio, a term which in this context refers to an active form of tourist, including hiking.[72] In addition to larger clubs, also smaller mountaineering and tourist societies with regional focus mushroomed, the Habsburg Empire in particular saw a multitude of tourist and alpine clubs emerging. By the 1880s, mountain sports, including hiking, skiing, and alpinism, had become a cultural force which drew Europeans from all over the continent first to the Western and then to the Eastern Alps and other mountainous places around the globe.[73] London might have provided the spark; yet, while the British formed an elitist gentlemen's club with strict membership rules, most of the continental clubs saw an educational mandate and opened up their ranks to anyone who claimed to have an interest in mountains and was able to afford the membership dues.[74]

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[72] For details on alpine tourism, see Laurent Tissot, "From Alpine Tourism to the "Alpinization" of Tourism," in *Touring beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism*, ed. Eric G. E. Zuelow (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).

[73] For the development of skiing, see Andrew Denning, *Skiing into Modernity: A Cultural and Environmental History* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).

[74] This included women, with an exception of the British Alpine Club and the Swiss Alpine Club, which banned female members in 1907 until 1980. For details on this decision see Wirz, *Gipfelstürmerinnen*, 158-68.

Central European Networks

The expansion of alpine clubs across Europe and the Western hemisphere created a vibrant global community that over the next century had to negotiate its inner workings, formulate common goals, and face ideological divisions. In the multinational space of Central Europe, which includes the Habsburg Empire as well as the German Reich pre-and post-unification, alpine clubs took on a specific role as repositories of national agitation: tourism, science, and nationalism. In the context of rising nationalist tensions in the Habsburg Empire, knowledge about mountains became nationalized. Tourism, together with a general drive for cultural uplift, was a mean to overcome the locally and regionally fragmented patchwork of identities in the Austrian Empire which had given only a superficial impression of integration.[75]

When the first continental alpine club was founded in Vienna in 1862, knowledge of the Alps—or the mitigation of the lack thereof—stood at the heart of the idea. The higher alpine regions of the Eastern Alps, largely on Habsburg territory, were little known until the middle of the nineteenth century, despite being considerably lower than the Western Alps.[76] The original intent in 1856 of the promoters of the club was in fact to found an international geological

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[75] On tourism and national agitation in the Habsburg Empire, see e.g. Steward, "Tourism in Late Imperial Austria: The Development of Tourist Cultures and Their Associated Images of Place."; Alexander Vari, "From Friends of Nature to Tourist-Soldiers: Nation Building and Tourism in Hungary, 1873-1914," in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane Koenker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Peter Stachel, *Zwischen Exotik und Vertrautem: Zum Tourismus in der Habsburgermonarchie und ihren Nachfolgestaaten*, Histoire (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014); Pieter Judson, "Frontiers, Islands, Forests, Stones: Mapping the Geography of a German Identity in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1900," in *The Geography of Identity*, ed. Patricia Yaeger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). On the nationalization of scientific knowledge, see Mitchell G. Ash and Jan Surman, eds., *The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848-1918* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[76] See Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 17-19. The Eastern Alps are defined as the mountain ranges east of a line from Lake Constance in the north to the Splügen Pass at the Alpine divide to Lake Como in the south. The initiative to found the Österreichischer Alpenverein came from three students who, as it became re-iterated in the club histories, were inspired by the British Alpine Club. For details on the founding of the Austrian and the German Alpenverein and their merger, see *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 21-47.

society, an aim that proved too difficult—the Austrian authorities were highly suspicious of internationalist ambitions of the proposal. Focused on scientific lectures, the Austrian Alpenverein was first and foremost an elitist learned society.[77]

Soon, alternative visions of a less centralized and elitist club emerged. Dissenting voices proposing a decentralized association with independent local chapters or "sections" (*Sektionen*) that would be engaged in the practical development of tourism in the Alps. This model had been the choice of the Swiss Alpine Club (Schweizer Alpen-Club, SAC) which was created in 1863 as a response to the dominance of British mountaineers and other foreigners in the Swiss mountains.[78] In 1869, an alternative German Alpenverein was founded in Munich bringing together sections from the German lands as well as from the provinces of Austro-Hungary. Both associations merged in 1873. The largest alpine club in the world, the German and Austrian Alpenverein was created with the aim to "disseminate and enlarge the knowledge about the Alps, especially the Austrian, to promote the love of the Alps and facilitate the travel thereof."[79] Briefly before the outbreak of World War I, the German and Austrian Alpenverein connected one-hundred thousand urban mountain enthusiasts in 417 sections from Berlin to Bozen.[80] As one of the largest pan-German organizations, its transnational character transcended the border

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[77] *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 21. Peniston-Bird et. al. cite practicability issues as the reason why a national rather than international organization was created, see "The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein," 143.

[78] Wirz argues that the initiators hoped to regain the symbolic and regulative ownership of the Swiss Alps by means of first ascents, publications, Swiss built huts and trails, rules and regulations, and new cartographical projects. Wirz, *Gipfelstürmerinnen*, 124-25.

[79] Quoted in Johannes Emmer, "Geschichte des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins," *Zeitschrift des DOeAVs*, 2. Abt., (1894):178.

[80] Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 84.

between the Habsburg Empire and the German Reich and upheld the idea of a Greater Germany after the political project had failed in 1871.[81]

The idea of pure nature, physical exercise and cultural uplifting connected well with the *Volkstümelei* of that time. The support of the German cause in the "battle of nationalities" became especially apparent in the chapters of the mixed areas of the Southern Alps including Carniola and Carinthia. Other organizations in the Habsburg Empire were founded as a response to the predominantly German-speaking Alpenverein.[82] In the Julian Alps, the activities of the German and Austrian Alpine Club, which regarded itself as a "mighty patron of German culture" evoked resistance from the growing Slovene-speaking elite supporting the Slovene national idea.[83] However, among Slovene speakers, a middle class was missing from which an organized Alpinism could develop at an equal pace; the small urban elites mostly retained loyalty to the Empire.[84] Eventually, in 1892, the Slovene Alpine Society (Slovenska Planinska Društva) was founded in Ljubljana.[85] Its proponents were well aware of the lacking touristic culture among the Slovenian speaking rural population; educating the locals to become a tourist and develop pride for the aesthetic qualities of the homeland was therefore part of the nationalistic endeavor.[86]

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[81] Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz, "The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein," 146. For the transnational character of the Alpenverein, see also Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*.

[82] In 1974, also the Österreichische Touristenclub and the Verein für Gebirgsfreunde in Graz were founded. For the relations between the OeAV and the DAV see Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 47.

[83] *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 47.

[84] Velikonja, "The Quest for Slovene National Identity," 252. See also Strojin, *Oris zgodovine planinstva*, 8.

[85] The first attempt to organize Slovene mountaineers was undertaken by Kaplan Ivan Žan from Srednja Vas (Bohinj) in 1872 with his "Friends of the Triglav" (Triglavski prijatelji). The group was only active until the end of the year when Žan was removed from his post due to supporting rebellious local peasants. By 1914, the Slovenian Alpine Club had 26 chapters with 3337 members and owned 38 huts. See Strojin, *Oris zgodovine planinstva*, 17.

[86] See Carolin F. Roeder, "Slovenia's Triglav National Park: From Imperial Borderland to National Ethnoscape," in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective*, ed. Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Höhler, and

Railway and the press facilitated the communication between different nationalist interest groups within the Empire and German nationalism was encountered with Pan-Slavic cooperation: traditionally well connected to Bohemia, the Slovenian Alpine Club received support from the Czech elite which, in the late 1880s and 1890s, started to populate the hiking paths of the Julian Alps. A Czech branch of the Slovenian club in Prague was founded in 1897, a Czech-Slovene academic circle in Prague followed in 1903, the first Czech hut was built in 1900. The Czechs mountaineers, too, contributed to the Alpine body of literature through tour guides, scholarly contributions and the journal *Alpský Věstník***,** which was launched in 1898.[87]

The role of tourism in the creation of national identities is well explores, yet the focus on nationalism often obscures transnational dynamics. Similar to other interest groups that emerged in the mid-1800s, mountaineering culture was characterized by the formation of civic associations, the striving for common values and standards across borders, and the sharing of geographical spaces.[88] The continental alpine clubs formed a two-layered grid that served as an exchange network of knowledge, people, services, and technologies. Organized mostly in local sections with a national umbrella association, the national tier formed the first network. The second tier was made of an extensive network between national clubs: a transnational grid that was dedicated first and foremost to the production and dissemination of mountain knowledge but also to the physical facilitation of alpine travel through the construction of huts, trails, and shelters.

Patrick Kupper (New York: 2012); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 141-76.

[87] Tone Strojin, *Oris zgodovine planinstva* (Ljubljana: Planinska založba, 1978), 20-21.

[88]Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 18. For liberal associations in the Habsburg Empire, see Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*.

A Republic of Journals

Ice axe and crampons helped mountaineers to overcome crevasses and bergschrunds, but it was the printed word that sustained the transnational imagined community of mountaineers.[89] Alpinism embraced all those factors which according to Benedict Anderson enabled the creation of a new spatial reality: Reproducible nature disseminated through periodicals, journals, and books, new cartographic discourses, and the promotion of tourism.[90] In order to "see like a mountaineer," the alpinist was expected to master a variety of disciplines. Whether science was an important or even necessary part of mountaineering remained under debate. Mountaineers, many of them being scientists, equally formed a transnational community that was based on both private interests to gather knowledge for the leisurely aspects of their pursuits but also on the notion that mountaineering had something to contribute to the broader scientific discourse.

The alpine clubs were thus far from waging war against science, but strove to broaden the appeal of high places, which the German and Austrian Alpine Club attempted to claim not only from scientists but also from highly-skilled alpinists. The task of the club's publications was to describe "areas that despite their beauty and sublime impressions were hitherto only known to the eager naturalist or avid mountaineer, but to other travelers only hardly by name" so that they would receive their rightful appreciation; through an intelligible description of the "natural phenomena and the life of the people" the traveler would then start to apprehend the region and hence enjoy the journey more, but also "provide rich material for comparison to the scientific

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[89] For the role of printing see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

[90] For the term spatial reality, see *Imagined Communities*, 181.

understanding of the Alps and stimulate further research."[91] Publications and lectures should train the traveler to the Alps to not only see the sublime in alpine landscapes, breathe in the fresh air, and enjoy spiritual uplift through physical exercise, but also to develop a scientific gaze. By reporting his observations, the tourist became an alpine version of the Victorian collector, contributing to the process of knowledge production if only at its very beginning.[92]

In practice, mountaineers profited from advancements in geographical mapping, meteorology, and physiology. Knowing mountains consisted of two aspects, the practical knowledge necessary to conduct the exhibition or the climb, and the knowledge that would be generated during the trip. The latter could consist of experience and a refined understanding of mountaineering as a practice. Producing mountain knowledge was not very different from producing knowledge about the deep sea, only that on the oceans maritime practices and technologies had existed for centuries: extreme weather, bad food, the constant need for physical and mental discipline were challenges both scientists, professional and amateurs faced.[93] Sharing this knowledge created an imagined but also real community of mountaineers. The construction of mountains as spaces of leisure, science, sport, and national imaginaries was based on a geography of knowledge produced in high places that was disseminated through transnational networks and consumed in the urban centers.

From the nineteenth century throughout the twentieth century printed information formed an intrinsic part of the culture of mountaineering. When preparing for climbing vacations or

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[91] Aufruf des 1. Committees des OeAVs, 1862, quoted in Johannes Emmer, "Geschichte des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins: Festschrift zur Feier des 25-jährigen Bestehens des D. u. Oe. AV* (1894): 178.

[92] For the relationship of the Alpenverein with science see also Günther, *Alpine Quergänge*, 46-57.

[93] Cf. Helen M. Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean: The Discovery and Exploration of the Deep Sea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 178.

expeditions, climbers collected any information available and carefully skimmed publication lists and library catalogs. Knowledge collection, production, and dissemination was an integral part of mountaineering identity. While the actual deed of climbing could be performed alone or with a group of friends, knowledge production required the construction of networks that reached beyond the national realm.

The first mountaineering periodical appeared in 1863, published by the British Alpine Club. Bearing the unpretentious title *Alpine Journal*, it was "intended to report all new and interesting mountain expeditions, whether in the Alps or elsewhere; to publish all such new items of scientific and geographical knowledge as can be procured from the various available sources; to give some account of all new books treating of Alpine matters, and, generally, to record all facts and incidents which it may be useful to the mountaineer to know."[94] In "Notes and Queries" all sorts of inquiries, observations, and news were shared, covering topics such as transport, new routes, accommodation, equipment, and accidents.

Every alpine club established thereafter published at least one periodical; some larger clubs provided their members with bulletins published in higher frequency in addition to an annual or semi-annual publication. As Anneliese Gidl has argued, the Austrian Alpine Club and the German Alpine Club even understood themselves primarily as publishers. After the merger of the two clubs, the German and Austrian Alpenverein spent as much as 67 percent of its budget on publishing activities between 1867 and 1871.[95] It was due to the "social standing and level of education of its members" that the club reserved ample space for scientific questions in its

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[94] "Introductory Address," *Alpine Journal*, no. 1 (1863): 1. The journal was preceded by two issues of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*.

[95] Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 45. See also Helmuth Zebhauser, *Alpine Zeitschriften: Entwicklungsgeschichte der Zeitschriften des Alpinismus in Deutschland und Österreich* (Munich: Deutscher Alpenverein, 1992), 37.

publications.[96] Whether the *Zeitschrift* of the German and Austrian Alpenverein, the Swiss *Jahrbuch des SAC* or the Italian *Bolletino di Club Alpino Italiano*—the publications of the clubs did not differ significantly in content. The content of the alpine journals mirrored the different types of knowledge that were regarded important to the clubs' missions: scientific, aesthetic, and practical topics were covered. In addition to the publications of the clubs, private publishers, too, discovered alpine themes. Private publications offered freedom from the political and national dispositions the alpine clubs had but also suffered from the strong competition with official club journals.[97]

Newspaper and periodicals permitted to overcome the constraints of local peculiarities and to create a generalized but local derived tradition. The amateur, the popular, and the local became part of a larger network of knowledge that claimed universality. The Slovene Alpine Club was well aware of the potential of the press and, in 1895, launched the first issue of its monthly journal *Planinski vestnik* (Mountain Herald). In the first issue the editors made it clear the *vseslovensko* [embracing all Slovenes] Slovenian Alpine Club, though based in Carniola, was open to all Slovenes in the Empire and that it was its “heartfelt wish that the Slovenes become better acquainted with the natural beauty of their wide homeland and henceforward it appreciate much more sincerely.”[98] Print media thus were geared to connect members of the national community in the absence of national political entities.

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[96] Richter, "Die wissenschaftliche Erforschung der Ostalpen seid der Gründung des Oesterreichischen und des Deutschen Alpenvereines," 2.

[97] See Zebhauser, *Alpine Zeitschriften*, 34-36, 39-38.

[98] Fran Orožen and Anton Mikuš, "Planinski vestnik," *Planinski vestnik* 1, no. 1 (1895).

On the other hand, the print culture also created a republic of journals that spanned the globe. Exchanging publications was the easiest way to disseminate information. While presiding members of foreign clubs were invited to yearly general assemblies and jubilee events, invitations had often to be kindly rejected as traveling was expensive and cumbersome. In the 1800s, for example, the German and Austrian Alpine Club entered in publication exchange with societies in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Argentina, the United States, Spain, and Russia. The Appalachian Mountain Club, headquartered in Boston, maintained exchanges with thirty-eight alpine and geographical societies around the world in the 1880s.[99] Academic institutions, too, shared publications and thus formed part of the hybrid leisure-scientific network. The Royal University of Uppsala, for example, initiated an exchange with the Alpenverein in 1894; the Smithsonian Institution, established in 1846 "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge," with the Swiss Alpine Club.[100] The Swiss Alpine Club also corresponded with the Portland based mountaineering club Mazamas (starting in ca. 1896/97) and the Sierra Club (starting in 1923).[101] Although all clubs acknowledged the need to share knowledge regardless of organizational model and political orientation, there was a marked unevenness: the impulse for exchange was usually initiated by the smaller clubs. As physical spaces of knowledge collection, most of the clubs maintained a library from the very beginning of their existence, filled with publications, but also with pins and other paraphernalia of partner clubs. The amateur, the popular, and the local became part of a larger network of knowledge.

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[99] Appalachian Mountain Club to SAC, 20 January 1883, GA SAC 291, 16-2, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[100] Smithsonian Institution to SAC, 04 February 1881, GA SAC 291, 16-2, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[101] See correspondence between these clubs and the SAC in GA SAC 291, 16-2. Burgerbibliothek, Berne. The exchange with the Sierra Club started upon the suggestion of SAC member Dr. O.P. Schwarz who lunched with Sierra Club assistant secretary W.J. Aschenbrenner. Appalachian Mountain Club to SAC, 20 January 1883, GA SAC 291, 16-2, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

Congress Alpinism

The members of the continental alpine clubs, which were rapidly established across Europe, soon outnumbered the members of the Alpine Club. In 1880, a note in the *Alpine Journal* read the following: "An association of which not one member in twenty climbs can hardly be called 'Alpine' in the strictest sense of the word; an association of 5,000 to 6,000 members ceases to be, in a social sense, a Club." Distinguishing the Alpine Club, whose members were elected based on their climbing accomplishments, the author continued: "It is, in truth, an Association for the Promotion of Alpine Knowledge, the members of which are no more responsible to one another than those of our Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." Making clear that the Alpine Club, "a body of gentlemen and mountaineers," would never abandon its restriction on membership, the author contended that "for the sake of the world, it is well that one real Alpine club should exist;" but that the members of the Alpine Club cordially accepted the fact that the continental clubs adopted a model different to theirs.[102] While the author attempted to exercise hegemony over the meaning of "alpine club," he was correct in pointing out to the different structure of the continental clubs. The members of the Alpine Club regarded themselves responsible for their close social network, the continental clubs on the other hand thought of the alpine community in larger and more utopian terms. With their connection to the tradition of learned societies, they promoted alpine knowledge on a pan-European scale by appropriating forms of scientific internationalism.

The Club Alpin Français (French Alpine Club, CAF) took on the role of the internationalist avant-garde. Similar to the other major clubs of the continent, the Club Alpin

[102] "The Publications of the German Club," *Alpine Journal* 9, no. 67: 445.

Français had a dual mission of both promoting leisure and science and to facilitate and promote "exact knowledge of the mountains," not only of the French but also of the neighboring countries through regular gatherings, a library, and special collections.[103] Historian Yann Drouet has argued that the Club Alpin Français was founded out of a desire to improve military preparedness for a mountain war; its creation was a reaction to the 1870 defeat by the Prussians and also reflected growing Italophobia.[104] Yet due to the delayed entry of the French into alpinism and their missed chance to claim first ascents in their own French Alps, the Club Alpin had to find alternative ways to showcase the cultural sophistication of the Belle Époque in the realm of alpinism.[105] Closely connected to the learned societies of Paris, the Club Alpin appropriated the model of international congresses that emerged in the nineteenth century as a major expression of scientific internationalism.[106] The international alpine congresses constituted the foundation of alpine internationalism and tell a story of troubled attempts to understand and regulate mountain spaces on a non-governmental international level.

In August 1876, only two years after its founding, the French invited all European alpine

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[103] Quoted in Olivier Hoibian, "Le Club Alpin Français (1874-1914)," in *L'invention de l'alpinisme: La montagne et l'affirmation de la bourgeoisie cultivée, 1786-1914*, ed. Olivier Hoibian (Paris: Belin, 2008), 256.

[104] Yann Drouet argues that it was not the general European trend to form bourgeois leisure societies that was decisive for the formation of the CAF but the 1870 defeat and, even if irrational, fear of a German-Italian alliance that would attack France on two fronts. His argumentation is mainly based on Ernest Cézanne, a co-founder of the CAF and a parliamentarian who introduced a bill on the defense of mountain frontiers. Drouet, "The 'CAF' at the Borders: Geopolitical and Military Stakes in the Creation of the French Alpine Club." While the existence of patriotic sentiments cannot be denied, this was nothing particular to the CAF. The founding statues do not differ from other European clubs. Hoibian, the most important historian of the CAF, does not follow this interpretation but rather emphasizes the connection to learned societies and the rise of the bourgeoisie Hoibian, "Le Club Alpin Français (1874-1914)," 251.

[105] For the CAF in the *Belle Époque* see "Le Club Alpin Français (1874-1914)," 256.

[106] For international congresses see e.g. Paul Servais, "Scholarly Networks and International Congresses: The Orientalists before the First World War," in *Information beyond Borders: International Cultural and Intellectual Exchange in the Belle Époque*, ed. W. Boyd Rayward (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). For the relationship of the CAF to science and other learned societies, see Hoibian, "Le Club Alpin Français (1874-1914)," 256-59.

clubs to the First International Alpine Congress in Annecy. For three days, excursions, lectures and social events entertained participants from France, Italy and Switzerland. Three members of the Alpine Club of London were present, too. Here, in French Alps, the Alpine Club was revered as "the highest expression of alpinism"; yet, the three representatives saw that their imperial project had been appropriated by Europeans and fit into their nationalist and internationalist agenda.[107] Combining science, aesthetics and an appreciation of the written word, the French Alpine Club saw itself as a public gatekeeper to the mountains and as a network of knowledge—a task it duly fulfilled by initiating international alpine congresses.[108] Yet although these gatherings resembled in their form very closely the congresses of other learned societies, that excursions rather than the scientific discussions were the most coveted part of the events, even if Annecy, in the words of a participant, maintained "an equal balance between science and pleasure."[109]

Encouraged by the success of Annecy, the Club Alpin invited to the Second Congress of the French Alpine Club and "Fêtes Internationales" to Grenoble, the capital of the French Alps, in August 1877. Over three hundred guests spent four days enjoying social gatherings, excursion, and scientific lectures devoted to general questions regarding mountains.[110] The only representative of the Alpine Club encouraged to increase the British representation at the next meetings as "so much friendly feeling and desire to welcome Englishmen was felt evidently by

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[107] François Descostes, *Trois jour en Savoie: Congrès des clubs alpins à Annecy (août 1876)* (Annecy: Perrissin, 1877), 49.

[108] Cf. Hoibian, "Le Club Alpin Français (1874-1914)," 251.

[109] Descostes, *Trois jour en Savoie*, 49.

[110] On the ground, the congress was organized by the CAF section of Isère and the Tourist Society of Dauphiné (Société des Touristes du Dauphiné) whose founding preceded the CAF of two years. "Deuxième Congrès du Club Alpin Français et Fêtes Internationales a Grenoble, en août 1877," GA SAC 291, 15-9, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

all," at the same time assuring his club colleagues that the "processions and other carnival absurdities with which these fêtes were at first accompanied, have been tabooed by the French club, and also, I believe, by the Italian, and the meetings have now become as sensible and businesslike as they always have been lively and sociable."[111] This indicated a shift from celebratory internationalism towards an internationalism with an agenda that addressed concrete issues pertinent to mountaineering, such as the improvement of mountain lodging.

Part of this shift were discussions to make these congresses a regular occurrence. At an international meeting in Gressoney in August 1877, a resolution was passed to organize only one annual congress successively by the French, Italian, Swiss and German club, the Alpine Club if it wished so.[112] The meeting was supposed to do preparatory work for an "international treaty" that would "tighten more and more the brotherly bonds between the alpine clubs."[113] Another resolution that was made in Gressoney regarded mountain etiquette: above 1,000m men should only use the *salut militaire* among each other, while ladies should be greeted by taking the hat off.[114] Seemingly mundane, this decision indicated that high spaces had turned into a new shared space that required the establishment of rules governing social interaction.

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[111] A.B.H., "The Fête of the French Alpine Club at Grenoble in 1877," *Alpine Journal* 9, no. 60 (1878): 46.

[112] "The Fête of the French Alpine Club at Grenoble in 1877," 46.

[113] Descostes, *Trois jour en Savoie*, 49.

[114] "The Fête of the French Alpine Club at Grenoble in 1877," 46.

Figure 1: International Alpine Congress 1878. Source: *Journal Universel* 74 (21 September 1878): 188.

A series of congresses followed in Paris (1878), Geneva (1879), Salzburg (1882), and Turin (1885). For the French Alpine Club, the Congresses elevated the profile of the club; the lavish events that took place in France received more and more attention from government officials and the general public.[115] Yet no commitment to an institutionalization of alpine internationalism as suggested in Gressoney was made. The German and Austrian Alpenverein, in particular, opposed any binding agreements. At the IV. International Alpine Congress in Salzburg in 1882, Burghard von Barth, president of the Alpenverein, expressed his resistance to any statute that would be binding for the autonomous national clubs. He was pushing back

[115] Reports about the Paris gathering appeared for example in "Congrès International des Clubs Alpins," *L'illustration: Journal Universel* 72 no. 1856 (21 Sep 1878): 181-182.

against a motion of Austrian Tourist Club (Oesterreichischer Touristen-Club) that suggested the establishment of an international alpine organization with a permanent office. Although he allowed the motion to be discussed, he refused to open a vote on it. Warning against too much haste, Barth, in his closing remarks, compared the internationalization of alpinism with the trunk of an oak—slowly but steadily growing.[116] The limited effort the Alpenverein made to organize the Congress underlined its disinterest in alpine internationalism. Despite having by far the largest membership base that rolled in the money, the IV. International Alpine Congress was a meager event and had little in common with the elaborate celebrations the French had organized for their alpine colleagues—a garden party organized by the City of Salzburg was the only social event. Furthermore, none of the lectures were given by foreign guests. Salzburg set the tone the Alpenverein club would follow for a long time—international exchange was a laudable goal but only if it refrained from any supra-national structure and binding agreements that would infringe on the autonomy of the Alpenverein.

Some clubs were not satisfied with the loose networks that connected the alpine clubs. Especially those active in the realm of tourism were intrigued by the potential collective bargaining power of an international organization vis-a-vis hotel and railway companies that often provided discounts to various clubs. In 1895, the Swedish Tourist Club, founded ten years earlier with the aim to facilitate travel and disseminate knowledge about the mountainous regions of Sweden, saw a chance to build on the power of many: It would be a major advantage if "all these discount systems were merged into one, or in other words, if all clubs in the world with touristic objectives or at least a major number of them would form an international association in

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[116] "Bericht über den IV. internationalen alpinen Congress am 12. und 13. August 1882 und über die neunte General-Versammlung des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins am 14. August 1882 zu Salzburg." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins (1882):441-455.*

order to make discount arrangements across the world on joint account by means of an executive."[117]

The executive committee of the Swedish Tourist Club, a mixture of military officers, academics, and higher civil servants, was thinking globally—not Europe, but the "entire world" was the point of reference. But the Swedes envisioned more than just a new way of lobbying globally for the interests of tourists and alpinists. Providing a list of steps to be taken, including the organization of an international conference, the Swedes expressed their belief that "this merger [Verschmelzung] would set the foundations for an institution that, if steered in the right direction, would be of almost unfathomable international importance."[118] The polemic excitement about global governance of tourism was lost on the Germans. In a bland note back to Stockholm, the Alpenverein informed the Tourist Club that hitherto none of the members had indicated any interest in discounts. Hence there was no reason to act.[119] While small states outside of the Alps, such as Sweden, saw internationalism as a way to facilitate access to the Alps and other regions of touristic interest, the Alpenverein did not only regard an international organization superfluous but also as a threat to its privileged position.

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[117] The booklet that would entail the discount register would not only be a tool for members to save money, but also entail "articles of practical interest" and serve as the joint voice of all organizations. By virtue of its "colossal circulation" it would serve as a "publication of utmost influence on implementing useful reforms in the area of tourism." The Swedes hence envisioned that in joining forces globally, the individual members could be educated in new ways that were unattainable so far. Schwedischer Touristenverein to DOeAV, 04 October 1895, nicht verzeichnet, fremde Vereine, Schweden, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[118] Schwedischer Touristenverein to DOeAV, 04 October 1895, nicht verzeichnet, fremde Vereine, Schweden. Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[119] In a second letter, dated February 1897, the Swedes informed the hesitant Germans that most of the approached clubs met their idea with lively interest (in contrast to the obdurate Germans). The suggestion was raised to defer the conference to a later date as in some countries, tourist clubs were only about to form. See Schwedischer Touristenverein to DOeAV, 16 February 1897, nicht verzeichnet, fremde Vereine, Schweden, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

The creation of an international organization for Alpinism thus did not gain momentum. However, internationalist actions emerged in a variety of other forms. Alpine internationalism necessitated the development of a particular gaze at the Alps and mountains in general, one that elevated the landscapes from the local to the international level. As Ben Anderson has argued, alpinists of the German and Austrian Alpenverein used material objects such as landscape reliefs and panoramas to represent the Alps as a governable landscape and promote an affective response of middle-class urbanites. The development of the Alps was thus not a form of anti-modern escapism, rather the alpine clubs advocated a modern, non-Romantic gaze at the mountains: through rationalizing alpine aesthetics, mountain tourism became a central part of cultural progress.[120] Since the first gathering in Annecy, each International Alpine Congress also entailed an "alpine exhibition" of kitsch and useful equipment, as well as books, photographs, reliefs, maps and paintings provided by different clubs. This rationalizing of mountain landscapes through material objects, which according to Anderson served the justification of intervention in the Alps, was a precondition for alpine internationalism. For the solution of "principal questions" of mountains and the imagined alpine family, Alpine landscapes had to be understood as shared spaces. The representability of the Alps through symbols, such as the chalet, the alpenstock, and the Edelweiss, contributed to the creation of the cultural alpine space in the imagination of urban mountain lovers.

The culmination of this practice of exhibiting the Alps took place in 1900, when the International Universal Exposition and the 25th anniversary of the Club Alpin Français made

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[120] Anderson, "The Construction of an Alpine Landscape: Building, Representing and Affecting the Eastern Alps, c. 1885–1914," 177.

Paris the choice for the 6th International Alpine Congress.[121] Demonstrating its growing importance, the Club Alpin was the only learned society that participated in the Exposition with its own building, bringing the Alps to the urban center. A marvelous mountain chalet had been built, adorned with paintings on the outside, in which a plethora of exhibition items attracted the interest of visitors. Taxidermy and ice axes, mountain boots and scientific instruments, all sorts of objects of natural history and ethnographic items were displayed.[122] The alpine symbolism had also formed part of previous International Congresses, but the chalet at the World Exhibition also presented the Alps to a larger audience.

Whether it was in form of postcards representing the Paris delegates with ice axes climbing up to the "Refuge Eiffel 5,800m" or the "Alpine-artistically" decorated riding school in which the banquet in Grenoble was held, by the turn of the century, alpinists and mountain tourists had formed a shared symbolic language of kitsch that was available to a broad public.[123] While the language of kitsch was universal, the exhibition of specialized equipment was geared towards the insider. In addition, the Alpine Club organized regular exhibitions with a particular emphasis on climbing equipment solicited from abroad.[124] In 1913, Sporthaus Schuster, the first

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[121] For the impact of world fairs on international tourism, see Angela Schwarz, ""Come to the Fair": Transgressing Boundaries in World's Fairs Tourism," in *Touring beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism*, ed. Eric G. E. Zuelow (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).

[122] Ferdinand Wythe Peck, "Report of the Commissioner-general for the United States to the International Universal Exposition, Paris, 1900 " (Commission to the Paris Exposition, 1901), 339.

[123] For the postcard see "Report of the Commissioner-general for the United States to the International Universal Exposition, Paris, 1900 " 340. For "Alpine-artistically" and the decoration of the riding school see A.B.H., "The Fête of the French Alpine Club at Grenoble in 1877," *Alpine Journal* 9, no. 60 (May 1878): 46.

[124] In 1891, the Alpine Club sent an inquiry to other alpine clubs with the aim to prepare a "report upon the Equipment for Mountaineers:" "Will you kindly send us such *precise* information as you may have acquired from your own practical experience?" Giving detailed instructions how to answer, the survey was divided into three sections concerning (1) ordinary climbers in the Alps, (2) guideless climbers, and (3) climbers intending to explore remote mountain ranges. The Alpine Club asked furthermore to state the contact details of the tradesman or firm where the "objects" could be purchased and requested that if possible "any objects or instruments" might be send to

specialized store for alpine equipment, opened its doors in Munich, providing equipment to mountaineers across the globe (see Figure 2).

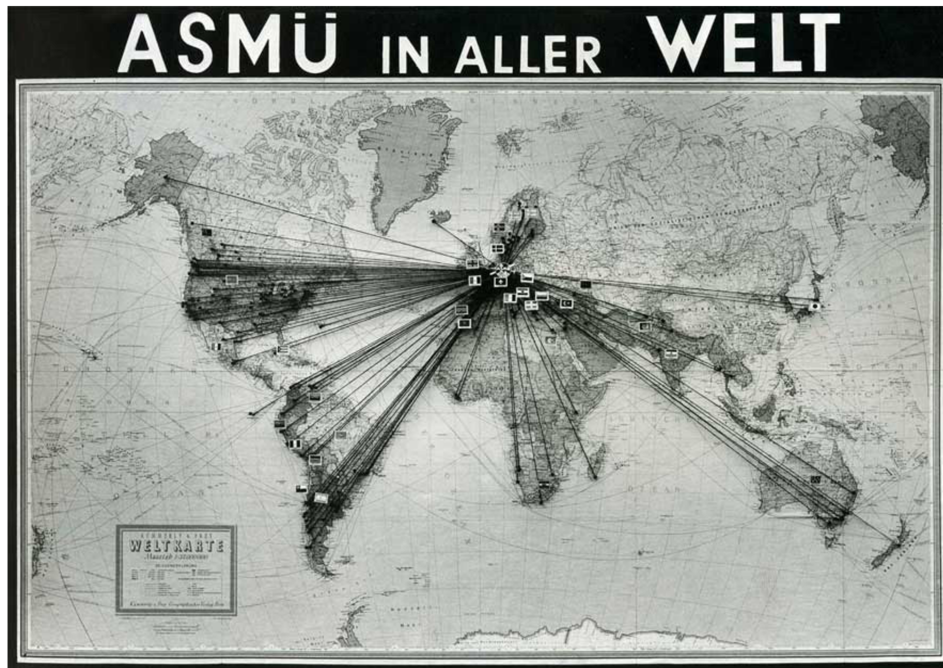

Figure 2: Distribution chart of Albert Schuster Munich. Source: www.sport-schuster.de

Alpinists in the Great War

The International Alpine Congress at Paris in 1900 was the last international gathering of mountaineers before the Great War. With the onset of the war, the internationalist project came to a halt, and so did most of recreational climbing in the Alps. Contemporaries such as the Scottish mountaineer Graham Brown, asserted that "[a]lthough few can have realized it at the time, the

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the club. See Alpine Club to DOeAV, 04 March 1891, nicht verzeichnet, fremde Vereine, Grossbritannien, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck. In 1899, the categories of equipment were extended to kit, food, photography, surveying instruments, make-shift apparatus, and historical exhibits. See Alpine Club to SAC, 16 May 1899, GA SAC 291, 15-3, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

outbreak of war marked the end of an epoch in mountaineering."[125] When Italy declared war on Austro-Hungary in May 1915, an alpine front built up from Switzerland to the Mediterranean. Losing their most important clients, Swiss mountain guides faced destitution so severe that the Association of British Members of the SAC initiated a Swiss Guides' Relief Fund to support families in need.[126] At the same time, the alpine warfare put alpinists at the center of attention. The German and Austrian Alpenverein joined the euphoria of August 1914 underscoring its contribution to the German-Austrian alliance and seizing the chance to legitimize alpinists as the ultimate heroic soldier-mountaineer whose knowledge of the mountains is invaluable for the victory; as associational activities had to almost cease, the Alpenverein represented itself now as a civil defense society. As Dagmar Günther has shown in her discourse analysis of German and Austrian mountaineering literature, alpinists had actively participated in the fin-de-siècle *Kulturkritik* by drawing on analogies between "alpinism" and "war" as existential experiences.[127] The war turned the figurative conquest of mountains from discourse into reality and the romanticized depiction of the heroic mountaineer into a powerful discursive trope.[128]

The war elevated mountaineering in the public opinion from a pursuit of the useless into a heroic preparation for war—not only in those countries involved in alpine mountain warfare but also in Britain and the United States. Furthermore, the changing perception of alpinism through the alpine warfare coincided with larger postwar development that originated in the changing image of physical activity and the body and initiated a wave of hyper-masculinity. The

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[125] Graham Brown, "The Alpine Club: 1920-1932," *Alpine Journal* 45 (1933): 121.

[126] See material on the relief fund in GA SAC 291/15, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[127] Günther, *Alpine Quergänge*, 243-45.

[128] On alpinism and the Alps during World War I, see Tait Keller, "The Mountains Roar: The Alps during the Great War," *Environmental History*, no. 14 (2009); *Apostles of the Alps*, 89-118.

war provided the foundations that turned sports in general into a mass phenomenon and a political affair. Governments began to perceive physical exercise as a contribution to national defense capabilities. Serving in the military, millions of men were introduced to physical exercise which became part of the military training.[129] The Great War was thus both a blessing and a curse for European alpinists.

An Alpinist Versailles

The political polarization of the Great War re-invigorated internationalist ideas. Already in early 1917, when hopes were high that the war would not last for long, mountaineers of the Allied nations envisioned a congress "beneath the entwined national banners of the victorious Allies" after "the common enemy [had been] crushed."[130] The initiative came once again from the president of the Club Alpin Français. Against all odds of organizing an international congress in war-shaken Europe and internal resistance from club colleagues, Baron Gabet had been determined to revive the role of the Club Alpin as the leading organizer of international alpine gatherings—a tradition that lay dormant since the last International Alpine Congress held in Paris in 1900.[131] Eventually, three months after the diplomats and delegates had left Paris, the mountaineering clubs of the Allied and neutral countries met for their own version of postwar

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[129] On masculinity and alpinism after the war, see Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 274-75. On the development of sports and physical culture in the interwar period, see e.g. Keys, *Globalizing Sport*.

[130] Gabet to Alpine Club, 21 January 1917; for "common enemy" see John D. Patterson to Gabet, 23 January 1918, F14 Alpine Congress Monaco, Alpine Club, London. Present were members of alpine clubs from France, Great Britain, Canada, USA, South Africa, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, and Japan.

[131] The event was a blow to the fraction in the French Alpine Club who advocated a sportified version of alpinism and regarded the traditional leaning towards "cultivated excursionism" of the CAF as obsolete. Within the French Alpine Club, this rift manifested itself in the founding of the Groupe de Haute Montagne (GHM), an elite alpine group that was founded in 1919. The institutionalization of this new form of alpinism through the GHM, Olivier Hoibian argues, legitimized the new elite alpinism that departed significantly from the excursionism of the nineteenth century. For a detailed discussion of the internal debate of the CAF, the term "cultivated excursionism," and the GHM see Hoibian, *Les alpinistes en France 1870-1950: Une histoire culturelle*, 132.

conference in Monaco at the French Riviera. Thanks to the hospitality of Prince Albert, who co-hosted the alpinists as part of a larger scientific congress, Gabet's vision came true despite all economic difficulties.

The relations between Europe's alpine clubs resembled a microcosm of interwar politics more generally. The congress was conceived as a celebration of the Allied victory and provided an opportunity to re-unite mountaineers from around the globe—with the explicit exclusion of the war enemies. Just as in other realms of transnational relations, most prominently in the scientific realm, the former Central Powers were thus excluded from the early re-constitution of international exchange.[132] Drawing on the ambiguous concept of European civilization, the representatives of the Allied nations saw no place for the "unspeakable barbarians," i.e. the German and Austrian Alpenverein, in the postwar alpine order.[133] Conveniently, the Alpenverein represented two adversaries in one—being one of the few organization that spanned both the German Reich and the former Habsburg Empire.

The International Alpine Congress, hosted by Prince Albert in his museum of oceanography as part of a larger international congress between May 1 to 9, was an affirmation of the belief that alpinism received its legitimacy from its close connection to science rather than from tourism or sport.[134] The context of the congress underlined the continuing perspective on mountains as a spatial system that can and should be studied equally to the oceans. Paul Girardin,

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[132] Cf. Laqua, "Exhibiting, Encountering and Studying Music in Interwar Europe: Between National and International Community," 210-11.

[133] John D. Patterson, president of the Alpine Club of Canada, referred to the Germans as "unspeakable barbarians." 25 January 1919, Patterson to Gabet, F14, Alpine Club, London. For the concept of civilization and the intellectual foundations of interwar internationalism, see Mark Mazower, "An International Civilization? Empire, Internationalism and the Crisis of the Mid-twentieth Century," *International Affairs* 82, no. 3 (2006).

[134] Cf. Gabet's inaugural speech in which he calls alpinism a "scientific as well as a moral and physical force.," "Discours de M. Le Baron Gabet," in *Congrés de l'Alpinisme: Comptes Rendus*, ed. Maurice Pailion (Paris: 1921).

glacier scientist at the University of Fribourg, claimed in Monaco that not only the "Mountain" should be studied from a scientific perspective but also that "all of the sciences, by one or another of their themes, plunge their roots into the Mountain."[135] The mountain thus was a microcosm of the natural world at large.

Scientific internationalism had provided the impetus for the first international alpine congresses; if it was for Baron Gabet it would also determine the future ones. Girardin even hailed the congress as the first instance of re-invigorating scientific relations among the Allies and neutral states.[136] The victory over Germany, so the Allies hoped, provided a chance to end German-Austrian domination in the field of glaciology. "I take it that for many years to come the scientists of the Nations of the Entente and Romance Switzerland will gladly dispense with the collaboration of our former enemies," commented the American Henry Montagnier. He proposed founding an international glaciological commission that would end the German and Austrian domination of the science.[137] The proceedings of the Congress in Monaco spoke for the seriousness of the eight-day long endeavor. Almost one-thousand pages long, the two volumes included not only the scientific and semi-scientific papers given at the Congress but also detailed information about the activities of the participating club—ranging from the Japanese Alpine Club to the Sagebrush and Pine Club, a local organization in Washington State.[138]

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[135] M.J. Marchandise, ed. *Congrès International d'Alpinisme Chamonix Mont-Blanc 1932: Rapports et travaux du Congrès* (Paris: Club Alpin Français, 1932), 407.

[136] Paul Girardin, "Le Congrès de l'Alpinisme à Monaco (1er Mai-10 Mai 1920)." *La Montagne* 16 no. 143 (1920): 193.

[137] Montagnier to Alpine Club, 20 October 1919; Eaton to unknown, 27 December 1919, 1922/F14 Alpine Congress Monaco, Alpine Club, London. The International Commission for Glaciers was founded in 1897 at the 6th International Geology Congress. The International Glaciological Society was eventually founded in 1936 by the British scientist and skier Gerald Seligman.

[138] Maurice Pailion, ed. *Congrès de l'Alpinisme: Comptes Rendus*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1921).

However, the case for scientific alpinism was difficult to maintain. The participants shirked the panel discussions (even at pre-war congresses, feasts and excursions had ranked much higher in popularity than the papers given). Only the illustrated lectures of faraway lands—the Canadian Rockies, the Himalayas, and the Japanese Alps—attracted a major audience.[139] Echoing the pacifist tradition of internationalism, a number of participants expressed that the "feeling of international good will" during times of peace was of greater importance than lectures.[140] The Congress celebrated alpinism as a "medium of human progress and as contributory to a larger measure of international fraternity."[141] This normative framework stood in stark contrast to the discourses of "war alpinism" which, as discussed earlier, endowed mountaineering with an unprecedented legitimacy during the war—particularly in the countries of the Central Powers and Italy.[142]

While the Congress served to showcase loyalty among the prestigious alpine clubs and the symbolic re-invigoration of mountaineering after the war, it is important to highlight what did not happen at the Congress, which is any major commitment for continuing or even institutionalizing further international cooperation. As mountaineering oscillated between science, sport, and tourism, it was not clear in which direction internationalism should develop. In the same period, advocates of international sports competitions, above all Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, promoted a form of internationalism that

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[139] "Le Congrès de l'Alpinisme à Monaco 1er Mai-20 Mai 1920," *Alpine Journal* 33 (1921): 250.

[140] "International Congress of Alpinism," *Appalachia* 15 (1920):106. For comments on the social aspects of the congress see also Charles E. Fay, "As Delegate to the Congress at Monaco," *Appalachia* 15 (1920): 166; "Le Congrès de l'Alpinisme à Monaco 1er Mai-20 Mai 1920," *Alpine Journal* 33 (1921): 250.

[141] Charles E. Fay, "As Delegate to the Congress at Monaco," *Appalachia* 15 (1920):169.

[142] For Italy, see Armiero, *Rugged Nation*, 87-108.

reconciled national peculiarities and patriotism with the notion of a common humanity. While both representatives of a variety of sports disciplines as well as of scientific disciplines moved towards institutionalizing their international connections in the late nineteenth century, alpine clubs refrained from making this commitment. The British, traditionally skeptical towards "scientific" alpinism though devoted to institutionalizing sport in general, even attended the congress mainly to "show a good feeling towards the French, if nothing else," and enjoy themselves lest overeating and overdrinking.[143] The first wave of alpine internationalism thus remained mostly social in form.

Conclusion

In their mission nationalist, in their origin the result of transnational diffusion, alpine clubs exemplified how nationalism and internationalism were only made possible through one another. Europe's first club dedicated to mountaineering, the Alpine Club in London, was created in 1857 with the aim to provide a venue for interchanging ideas "on Alpine geography and Alpine possibilities," and the vision that "if men bent on a common object could make each other's acquaintance and plan expeditions in concert, […] a new field might be opened for enjoyment and exploration."[144] What had started as an idea of British gentlemen transformed on the continent into a wide-reaching transnational phenomenon that merged political aspirations, nationalist sentiments, touristic, and scientific endeavors. The transmission of knowledge did not happen simply by diffusion, but through the work of historical actors who regarded alpinism as

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[143] "Le Congrès de l'Alpinisme à Monaco 1er Mai-20 Mai 1920," *Alpine Journal* 33 (1921): 250. For the motivations to attend see Farrar to J.E.C. Eaton, 20 March 1919, 1922/F14 Alpine Congress 1920 Monaco, Alpine Club, London.

[144] Mathews, *The Annals of Mont Blanc: A Monograph, with a Chapter on the Geology of the Mountain*, 197.

an activity that called not only for the exchange of but also for institutionalization of knowledge. The necessity of gathering knowledge about mountains to climb better and faster turned the alpine community into a hybrid scientific, popular scientific, athletic body. The aesthetic, heroic and athletic elements of mountaineering never could do without rational knowledge.[145]

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[145] On the romantic ideals, see Thompson, *Unjustifiable Risk? The Story of British Mountaineering*, 16.

2 CARPATHIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Central Europe and the Search for the Lost Mountains, 1919-1932

Re-imagining Europe

In August 1932, dozens of mountaineers hailing from twenty countries convened at the Third International Alpine Congress in the French town of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. Representing almost fifty alpine, tourist, and ski clubs, they had come together to discuss the establishment of a global organization for mountaineering.[146] Chamonix was the ideal place for such a gathering. Over a century had passed since here, at the base of the Alps' highest peak, the first institutionalization of mountain sports had taken place. In 1821, local guides had formed the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix, the first association of mountain guides in the world.[147] A century later, in 1924, Chamonix had hosted the world's first Olympic Winter Games.[148] The cordial atmosphere of the Congress was briefly disturbed when a debate broke out between a delegate of the Polish Tatra Society and his colleague from the Czechoslovak Alpine Club. Here is how a British observer described the altercation:

> The chief delegate of yet another new republic—represented at the gathering by no fewer than fourteen official members—asserted that a certain 'mountain' poet of his nationality was greater by far than any other, including Shakespeare and

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[146] While not every participant acted as an official representative of a club, some delegates represented several organizations. Rudolf Pilát, for example, represented the Czechoslovak Alpine Club as well as three other Czechoslovak clubs. See Marchandise, *Congrès International d'Alpinisme Chamonix Mont-Blanc 1932: Rapports et travaux du Congrès*, 5-7.

[147] The organization was created to protect the rights of local guides, see Daniel Chaubet, *Histoire de la Compagnie des guides de Chamonix* (Montmélian: Fontaine de Siloé, 1994); Mario Colonel, *Compagnie des guides de Chamonix: une belle histoire*, 2nd ed. (Chamonix: Editions du Grépon, 1997).

[148] Initially named the International Winter Sports Week, the games were retrospectively designated as the First Winter Olympic Games.

> or Goethe. This statement was received sympathetically, since no one was present able to understand the language of the said poet. [*footnote:* Name unpronounceable—spelling indecipherable]. The further statement by the selfsame delegate, that the Tatra belonged geologically to his country, was, however, denied indignantly by the representatives of the other new republic owning the southern slopes. Both delegates produced intestinal-looking maps to prove their claims.[149]

The condescending tone of the alpinist flagrantly displayed British chauvinism towards the newly independent states. His statement projected a hierarchy of European nations in which the new republics, the names of which he did not bother to mention, occupied a place at the margins. The snarky footnote underlined Milan Kundera's point about the "curtain of their strange and scarcely accessible languages" which inhibited the full integration of East Central Europe into the wider consciousness of Europe.[150] Moreover, the commentary revealed a particular understanding of East Central Europe as a region that was self-absorbed in territorial disputes which defied any rational argumentation. Sarcastically, the British added that the episode reminded him "of the famous declaration that a certain Free City belonged ethnologically to the country now mis-controlling it, because 1 per cent. of its inhabitants were of Slav origin, whereas only 99 per cent. were Teutonic!"[151]

Until today, the view of East Central Europe as a fragile region caught up in territorial disputes continues to shape much of its historiography. In his now seminal survey, *East Central*

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[149] "Alpine Notes: IIIe Congrés International d'Alpinisme," *Alpine Journal* 44 (1932): 342. The incident was so memorable that ten years later, Alpine Club vice president Sidney Spencer recounted the episode in a letter to someone who inquired about the fate of the UIAA. Sidney Spencer to Donkin, 18 September 1943, 1922/B4/25, Alpine Club, London.

[150] Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe."

[151] "Alpine Notes: IIIe Congrés International d'Alpinisme," *Alpine Journal* 44 (1932): 342. The Free City of Danzig was created in 1920 in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles as a semi-autonomous city state consisting of the sea port Danzig and surrounding towns. The city and the surrounding towns were mainly inhabited by ethnic Germans and a Polish minority. The city was put under League of Nations protection in order to remain separate both from Weimar Germany and the Polish Republic, the latter having the rights of developing port and transport facilities in the absence of another access to the Baltic Sea. Paul R. Magocsi, "Historical Atlas of East Central Europe," (Seattle: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 130.

Europe between the Two Wars, first published in 1974, historian Joseph Rothschild maintained that "[it] is scarcely an exaggeration […] that as a general rule in interwar East Central Europe, common borders entailed hostile relations."[152] Rothschild suggested that it was the lack of regional solidarity and willingness for mutual assistance that eventually sealed the political fate of the region in the interwar period: the "multiple divisions and rivalries that were born of competing territorial claims, ethnic-minority tensions, socioeconomic poverty, mutually irritating national psychologies, and sheer political myopia" prevented the East Central European states from offering sufficient resistance against Hitler.[153]

Yet the British delegate withheld a crucial fact he perhaps was unaware of: if it was not for the Polish-Czechoslovak rivalry over the Tatra mountains, he would not have enjoyed the hospitality of the French in Chamonix. The dispute over the territory featured on the "intestinal looking maps," which so highly amused the British delegate, was the origin of a new kind of internationalism that had re-invigorated the project relinquished by the Club Alpin Français after the Congress at Monaco in 1920. The Union Internationale d'Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA), which was conceived at the congress at Chamonix, emerged from an initiative of the Slavic tourist organizations for which the new postwar borders posed challenges non-existent in Habsburg times.

Offering a corrective to Rothschild's argument, this chapter demonstrates that the history of interwar East Central Europe cannot be reduced to a story of "political myopia." Territorial

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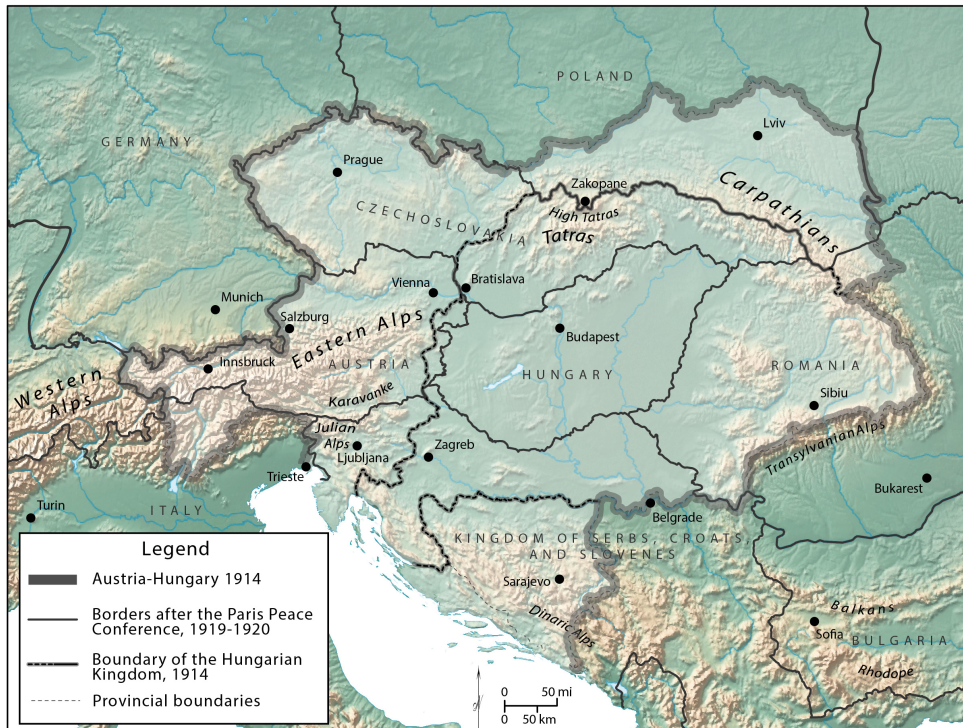
[152] Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 8.

[153] *East Central Europe between the two World Wars*, 8. This work remains to date the standard survey of East Central Europe in the interwar years. Rothschild's work encompasses the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire minus Austria (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia) as well as Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and the Baltic states. For a recent interwar history see also Zara S. Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford Univerisity Press, 2005).

disputes indeed determined much of the region's political realities, but they also motivated civil society actors to think creatively about how to address the challenges of the new European order. Internationalism was part of the answer to this problem. Exploring how the successor states of the Habsburg Empire turned their experience of bilateral and transnational cooperation into a larger project of internationalism, this chapter argues that East Central European actors were not only victims of nationalism but also agents of internationalism in their own right. Carpathian internationalism served a dual function: firstly, it was both a symptom of and a solution to the conflicts arising from the loss of a shared imperial space. Secondly, it was an attempt to combat the marginalization of East Central Europe and the very chauvinism the British alpinist exhibited in his report to the *Alpine Journal*.

The chapter traces the project of Carpathian internationalism from the end of the First World War until the International Alpine Congress in Chamonix in 1932. It commences with a discussion of how the new interwar order affected clubs both in the Alps and the Carpathians and outlines the variety of responses to this new order. It then discusses briefly the territorial conflicts over the Tatra between Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Cracow Protocol of 1924, which settled the dispute, entailed provisions for an innovative scheme of border arrangements for mountain tourists in 1924. How one of the key actors in this process, the Polish scientist and mountaineer Walery Goetel, turned the Polish Tatra Society together with other Slavic tourist organizations into the vanguard of internationalism is at the center of the next part. The chapter concludes with the 1932 Congress at Chamonix, which represented the culminating of Carpathian internationalism and at the same time the re-appropriation of internationalism by the Alpine countries.

Mountains Lost – Mountains Gained



Map 1: Mountains and Political Boundaries of Central Europe, Pre-and Post-1919

The First World War dramatically changed the map of Europe. New states appeared where imperial rule ended. Out of the former Habsburg Empire emerged Czechoslovakia, Hungary, German-Austria, and a reconstituted Poland. The South Slavic lands of the Dual Monarchy joined the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The Kingdom of Romania and Italy both acquired new territory. In the Baltics, an independent Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the ranks of new states. The Russian Revolution terminated Tsarist rule and the German Reich made way for the Weimar Republic.

The question of the nature of political borders loomed large when in 1919 diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference pored over maps and debated the territorial details of the new Europe. The rough contours of Europe's new map were mostly established fact but the fine touches were still to be determined. There would be a Poland; this was agreed upon already

before Paris. Settling on the borders of a state which was wiped off the map in 1795 however was no easy task. In fact, it was one of the most arduous on the Paris agenda.[154]

Equally contested was the shape of independent Czechoslovakia. In June 1918, the Allies had recognized the Czechoslovak National Council under leadership of Edvard Beneš and Tomáš Masaryk yet without making any concrete territorial concessions. Romania made a successful case at Paris for annexing large parts of Hungarian territory, including Transylvania. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the new state assembled primarily from the South Slavic lands of Austro-Hungary, Serbia, and Montenegro, quarreled with Italy over its most western border, the latter defending its claim on the former Habsburg coastal provinces and the city of Fiume/Rijeka in addition to the Trentino and German-speaking South Tyrol.[155]

While President Woodrow Wilson's concept of national self-determination implied that borders should be based on ethno-linguistic considerations, a solution most contemporary historians and geographers advocated, some of Europe's diplomats eagerly defended what the geographers Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz call a "policy of natural boundaries" and advocated for borders that followed rivers and mountain crests.[156] Eventually, decisions in Paris

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[154] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002), 208.

[155] For a readable narrative of the Paris Peace Conference and the details of each country's claims, see *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*. For details on how Masaryk and Beneš promoted the legitimacy of a Czechoslovak state among statesmen of the Allies, see Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). On the Transylvania, see Holly Case's important study, Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II*. For details on the border chances and maps see Magocsi, "Historical Atlas of East Central Europe," 125-29. For the contestation over Galicia, see Alison Fleig Frank, *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 209-36.

[156] Debarbieux and Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History*, 62. The authors choose the term "policy of natural boundaries" to emphasize that borders are always political. The ways in which mountains were included in understandings of political territory shifted over time and was always context-dependent—practical or philosophical considerations could place them alternatively in the heart of the territorial project. Alternative positions, such as the "Lebensraum" concept of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, disputed the validity of physical borders in favor of a fluid conceptualization of the territorial state. On mountains and the territory of the modern state in detail see ibid., 46-71.

were made on a case-by-case basis. The treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon, which settled the peace with Austria and Hungary respectively, combined geostrategic, ethno-linguistic, and economic considerations. A glance at the map of postwar Europe (Map 1) reveals that some mountain ranges now served as a natural border to the newly established states while others lost this function.

The implications of the postwar re-ordering of Europe became, as historians have argued, the determining factor in the future of Europe.[157] Prima facie the question how these changes affected European alpine clubs seems like a side story. Yet with their vast network of members, sections, parent organizations, and property holdings, the alpine clubs linked disparate corners of Central Europe together like hardly any other social institution. The alpine clubs, which formed both a real and an imagined community of hundreds of thousands of European middle-class (and partially working class) citizens, experienced the repercussions of the territorial re-shuffling of Europe at full tilt.[158] As new borders were drawn across mountain ridges, they affected spaces that in pre-alpinist times were devoid of human settlement but of which the alpine associations considered themselves both stewards and stakeholders.

The two large mountain ranges of Austro-Hungary, the Eastern Alps and the Carpathians, were now divided among no fewer than six states. Through their interest in peripheral mountain lands, urbanites of the national centers became stakeholders in Europe's border regions.[159]

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[157] See e.g. Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*.

[158] The German and Austrian Alpine Club had 200,000 members in the interwar period, the UIAA members together the same amount in 1934. In addition, those clubs which were not members of the UIAA have to be counted. Although some people were members of more than one alpine club, it is reasonable to estimate the membership of all European alpine clubs at roughly half a million.

[159] Some alpine clubs even found themselves at the table of border commissions, sometimes as official representatives of their clubs, sometimes indirectly as their members also held other official functions. The German

International borders restricted the mobility of tourists and mountaineers across Central Europe. In the case of the Western Carpathians, the old inner-imperial border between Austria and Hungary, which followed the crest of the highest ridge, now functioned as an international border between Czechoslovakia and Poland. During Habsburg times, tourists from the southern side of the Tatra, the highest mountain range in the Carpathians, could freely roam across the mountains. After the war, the new international border necessitated anyone who planned to cross the mountain ridge to carry a passport.

A similar situation occurred in South Tyrol. Once one of the most favorite vacation spots of German-speaking tourists from the Reich and Austria, South Tyrol was now Italian territory.[160] The Slovenian Alpine Club, too, was cut off from mountain regions its members used to frequently visit. While some parts of the Julian Alps were now on the Italian side, the mountain ridge of the Karavanke now formed the Western-most border of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. After the population of bilingual Carinthia decided via referendum to remain in German-Austria, a substantial number of Slovene-speakers remained outside of Yugoslavia.[161]

On a more intimate scale, the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire furthermore led to a fragmentation of the network of alpine clubs formerly operating within the borders of the empire. Many constitutive sections found themselves cut off not only from their parent organization, but

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and Austrian Alpenverein participated in a border commission which Austria established to negotiate the Italian-Austrian border. See e.g. Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 122.

[160] For German tourists in South Tyrol, see Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, 170. Claiming the Alps as a defensive wall against Austria, Italy had successfully lobbied to annex the predominantly German-speaking South Tyrol. The Austrian border had now shifted to the ridge line and the Brenner Pass. See Florian Trojer, "Südtirol," in *Berg Heil! Alpenverein und Bergsteigen 1918-1945*, ed. Oesterreichischer Alpenverein Deutscher Alpenverein, Alpenverein Südtirol (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011).

[161] Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 255.

also from the huts they owned in the mountains. As most alpine and tourist clubs were organized along ethno-linguistic lines, new governments often feared the nationalistic aspirations of minority clubs and demanded severance from the parent organization. In other cases, their property remained within state borders but was appropriated by the new government. While some alpine associations gained huts and territory, others lost theirs, or managed to break even after this reshuffling.

These fundamental changes determined the political orientation of the Central and East Central European alpine clubs for decades to come. In the case of the German and Austrian Alpenverein, the club's expansive network was also its biggest liability. Before the war, 406 sections counting together over 100,000 members from Strasbourg in Alsace-Lorraine to Prague and from Danzig/Gdánsk to Bozen/Bolzano owned 184 huts across the Eastern Alps.[162] Alpenverein sections located in Germany, but also in Austria and other successor states, lost sixty huts in South Tyrol and sold their severely damaged huts in the Julian and Steiner Alps to the Slovenes. The loss of German territory to Poland and France also diminished the club's number of sections.

The sections which were now outside of Germany and German-Austria had either to be dissolved or were forced to cut ties to the Austro-German parent club as the new governments feared pan-German sentiments.[163] Section Prague, for example, lost its hut in the now Italian Dolomites and had to cut ties to the Alpenverein parent organization whose headquarters shifted

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[162] Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen*, 79.

[163] See in detail Trojer, "Südtirol," 340-43. On the same issue for other sport organizations, see Miroslav Bobrík, "Deutsche Turnvereine und Organisationen in der Slowakei während der Jahre 1918-1928," in *Sport-Ethnie-Nation: Zur Geschichte und Soziologie des Sports in Nationalitätenkonflikten und bei Minoritäten*, ed. Diethelm Blecking and Marek Waic (Hohengehren: Schneider, 2008); Marek Waic, "Der Skibund der Tschechoslowakischen Republik und der Hauptverband der deutschen Wintersportvereine," in *Die Deutschen und Tschechen in der Welt des Turnens und des Sports*, ed. Marek Waic (Prague: Charles University, 2004).

between Austria and Germany.[164] To remain a functioning organization, the Bohemian sections of the Alpenverein formed the Association of the German Alpine Clubs in Czechoslovakia in 1920.[165] The fourteen club sections in the now Italian-controlled territory tried a similar strategy and formed the independent Alpenverein Bozen in 1920, yet soon the association was prohibited by the fascist government.[166]

Nationalizing the Alps

In the context of the complex nation-building projects of the interwar period, the Alps continued to play a central role—as multiethnic borderlands, as objects of national symbolism, and as a landscape that promised economic revenues at a time in which mass tourism and mountain sports developed into a significant economic force as the popularity of mountaineering and mountain tourism increased.[167] In this highly tense political climate, alpine clubs sought both nationalist and internationalist strategies to lay claim on mountains, both physically and symbolically.

For the German and Austrian Alpenverein, the loss of South Tyrol, which was not only a main site of alpine warfare, but also a popular vacation destination and a major field of activity

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[164] Trojer, "Südtirol," 341.

[165] In 1943, this association comprised fifteen clubs with 660 members from both parts of the country. UIAA questionnaire, 15 February 1934, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne. For the history of the German alpine club sections in Czechoslovakia, see Pavlína Chaloupská, "Vývoj německých alpských spolků v Českých zemích do roku 1938" (Charles University, 2014).

[166] Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 123-23. The complicated legal battle in the triangle between Germany, Austria, and Italy which lasted into the post-World War II era constitutes a prime example of how Central European alpine clubs were affected by the new re-ordering of Europe in a way unlike any other organizations. The Treaty of St. Germain did not even address how property owned by other defeated powers would be handled, neither did the Treaty of Versailles account for German property in annexed Austrian territories. The Alpenverein was thus left in a legal vacuum. Despite all protests on public and diplomatic level, it never succeeded in regaining ownership of the huts.

[167] See e.g. *Apostles of the Alps*, 152-53.

(“Arbeitsfeld”) in terms of hut and trail construction, turned into a source for radicalization.[168] Initially providing space for a multitude of political opinions, not at last due to its decentralized organization, the Alpenverein continued the polarized war rhetoric and unified different political currents into a more radical, nationalist, and anti-Semitic outlook.[169] The politicization of the club also altered its vision of Alpine space. Foregoing its former more inclusive and universalist message, the club turned towards a nostalgic master narrative of a paradise that was yet untouched from the destructive signs of industrial progress, seeing itself under attack “by tourism, capitalism, and enemies both foreign and domestic.”[170]

Yet it would be a mistake to see the Alpenverein as a loser of the war. The Alpenverein might have lost huts, territory, and sections, yet it nonetheless emerged strengthened from the war. Within a brief period of time, the club managed to double pre-war membership numbers on a much smaller territory and considerably expand its alpine infrastructure.[171] More specifically, the alpine warfare had legitimized a previously marginal activity and elevated the image of the

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[168] Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz, "The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein," 155.

[169] Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 121-51. For the political radicalization during the Weimar Republic as a response to the loss of South Tyrol see also Kurt Scharr, "'Unser Alpenverein will und soll kein politischer Verein sein…' Der 'Deutsche und Österreichische Alpenverein' und der Erste Weltkrieg," *Eforum Zeitgeschichte* 2/2002 (2002). Keller does not cite Scharr but comes to similar conclusions. After taking decades to tackle the issue of *Vergangensheitsbewältigung*, there is now ample work on antisemitism in the Alpenverein. In addition to Keller’s and Holt’s work, see also *"Hast Du Meine Alpen Gesehen?": Eine Jüdische Beziehungsgeschichte*, Exhibition Catalogue (Hohenems: Bucher, 2010); Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz, 156-58. Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz, "The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein," 152-56; Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 121-51; Achrainer, Kaiser, and Trojer, *Berg heil! Alpenverein und Bergsteigen 1918-1945*; Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus: Kultur, Organisation, Politik*; Dickinson, "Altitude and Whiteness: Germanizing the Alps and Alpinizing the Germans, 1875-1935."

[170] Holt, "Mountains, Mountaineering and Modernity," 8.

[171] Günther, *Alpine Quergänge*, 82. In 1923, membership had risen to over 220,000 members on the massively reduced territory of the German Reich and the Austrian Republic. The rising membership numbers fed into debates about alpine values and the core mission of the club, a discussion that was already taking place before the war. The leadership of the club attributed the rise in membership to dishonest new members who were only after financial benefits. See for details *Alpine Quergänge*, 79-87. In 1913, the club owned 284 mountain huts, this number rose to 308 in 1928 despite the loss of property in the aforementioned territories, see ibid., 93. See also Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz, "The Alps in the Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein," 149.

mountaineer as a defender of the nation. The notion of alpinism as a school of manhood and preparation for war was nothing new and propagated by alpinists prior to the outbreak of World War I, yet it was only after alpinists proved that their skills were indeed needed that this notion found widespread public acceptance. Alpinism in the public mind had turned from an obscure activity to a heroic and national deed.[172]

In Fascist Italy, political discourse also exploited the Alps for these purposes. As historian Marco Armiero has argued, the Alps were turned into a "sacred border," which was celebrated both as a natural border against outside enemies and as a frontier land "where the new, strong, fascist Italian was being created by exercise and the environment."[173] The Club Alpino Italiano, absorbed into the regime's machine, became the main agent in what Armiero called the "going-to-the-mountains fascist plan."[174] The following episode demonstrates how its relationship with the Alpenverein strained international alpine relations on a larger scale. In 1926, the Club Alpino had canceled its reciprocity agreement, which was the result of the club's own initiative in 1922, with the Swiss Alpine Club. The Club Alpino bemoaned that Germans and Austrians had "infiltrated" the Swiss Alpine Club in order to profit from the Swiss membership benefits. These tourists and alpinists were now "invading" the Italian huts, in particular at the Eastern border, and exhibiting an "attitude" that threatened the stability of Italy. Since Italian inn keepers were not able to check the nationality of a guest carrying the Swiss membership card, the Club Alpino saw itself forced to cancel the agreement altogether. While the Swiss were able to convince the Italians otherwise, this episode shows that political

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[172] See in detail Günther, *Alpine Quergänge*, 243-45.

[173] Armiero, *Rugged Nation*, 137.

[174] *Rugged Nation*, 151.

radicalization menaced alpine internationalism even among clubs which otherwise entertained friendly relationships.[175]

A different development can be observed in the most Eastern part of the Alps. The Slovenian Alpine Club had its gains and losses, too, yet regarded itself overall as a winner.[176] Founded as a Slovenian response to the German-speaking Alpenverein, the Slovenian Alpine Club suddenly emerged as the major representative of mountaineering in a national framework.[177] The Julian Alps, previously contested terrain between the Alpenverein and the Slovenian Alpine Club, were now Slovenian territory. Although the first postwar issue of the club's journal *Planinski Vestnik* (mountain herald) bemoaned the loss of parts of the Julian Alps to Italy and the northern slopes of the Karavanke to Austria, it deemed it more important that the Slovene Alpine Club was finally master in its own house. The German and Austrian Alpine Club sections were dissolved and their huts acquired and repaired by the Slovenes. Even more, in the new Kingdom, the Slovenian mountains would be the prime destination for their "Slavic brothers," so the author hoped.[178] It is this position of strength that allowed the Slovene Alpine Club to take a more relaxed attitude towards the borderlands.

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[175] CAI to SAC, 27 January 1926; SAC to CAI, 25 May 1927, GA SAC 291/15, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[176] A sizable portion of the former Dutchy of Carniola was allocated to Italy and hence lost to the new state of Yugoslavia. With it, the Trenta valley with accesses to many popular mountains was gone, so were other mountains of the Julian Alps. Half of the sections and one-fourth of the club's members were now situated in Italy and Austria. Strojin, *Oris zgodovine planinstva*, 25. In addition, the Bohemian Section of the Slovenian Alpine Club, an expression of Habsburg pan-Slavism, had to be dissolved, its members joined instead the Swiss, French, and Italian alpine clubs. The Ski Club of Czechoslovakia decided to unite these members again and founded an alpinist section which in turn asked to become a member of the SAC (which the SAC did not allow). See Czechoslovak Ski Union to SAC, 26 July 1924, GA SAC 291/16/3, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[177] See for more details Boštjan Šaver, *Nazaj v planinski raj: alpska kultura slovenstva in mitologija Triglava* [Return to the Alpine paradise: Slovene Alpine culture and the mythology of the Triglav] (Ljubljana: Fakultet za družbene vede, 2005).

[178] "Društvene vesti, prevrat," *Planinski Vestnik* no. 1 (1921): 18-19.

Rather than promoting revisionism, the article in the *Planinski Vestnik* argued that the mountain regions now in the possession of other countries "still remain Slovenian" and that "traveling to these places will be certainly possible upon arranging traffic conditions."[179] If the previous work of the club had been mainly of importance for the national cause, there was now an opportunity to focus on economic development and the tourist sector, which was equally regarded as a contribution to the national good.[180] In order to defend the national character of the mountains in front of the world, the Slovenian Alpine Club promised to continue promoting these regions. This merger of nationalist interest with pragmatic internationalism characterized the active role of the Slovenian Alpine Club in the internationalist project in the decades to come. Reconfiguring the power relationships between formerly regional alpine associations vis-à-vis the all-mighty German and Austrian Alpenverein, new borders thus also allowed a space for internationalist ideas of clubs which previously were mainly characterized by their opposition to the Alpenverein.

Nationalist Internationalists

With Europe's alpine clubs occupied in nationalizing their mountains and defending or challenging borders symbolically, economically, and politically, what would be the fate of the transnational network, which connected the clubs in the prewar era and provided the base for internationalist projects such as the International Alpine Congresses? On a larger level, the "war to end all wars" did not only end imperial rule and give birth to new states; but it also urged a novel outlook on state sovereignty and an interest in organizing international relations in a way

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[179] "Društvene vesti, prevrat," *Planinski Vestnik* no. 1 (1921): 18-19.

[180] "Društvene vesti, prevrat," 18.

that would prevent another war.[181] The Great War had put a temporary hold on the works of international organizations, but rather than discouraging internationalist, myriad new institutions were created in the interwar period. Most prominently, the League of Nations was founded as a new form of international organization at the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference in 1920.[182]

In the realm of mountaineering, however, all was quiet on the Western front. The Club Alpin Français had relinquished its leading role as organizer of international congresses. The impulse to renew internationalist efforts came from an unexpected group of actors who were not even invited to Monaco: the clubs of the new sovereign East Central European states. The various tourist associations active in the Carpathians suddenly found themselves caught between the imperatives of competition and the need to cooperate across the new borders that segmented a previously shared space. The internationalism that developed in the Carpathians was a product not of utopian peace projects but a co-product of the fierce nationalist tensions between the clubs, which were now representing the titular nations and those which either represented minorities or had a multi-ethnic profile.

Similar to the Eastern Alps, the Habsburg Empire's second significant mountain range was now divided among several states—Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania. Stretching in a 1,500 kilometer arc west to east, home of brown bear, lynx, and wolves, as well as to a linguistically diverse human population, the Carpathians were geographically central to the

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[181] See e.g. Iriye, *Global Community*.

[182] *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, 20-21. For interwar internationalism, see also Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Cociety in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*.

region and yet “oddly peripheral when examined from the point of view of most individual nations,” as Patrice Dabrowski has pointedly remarked.[183] The lower half of the Carpathian arc, the Eastern and Southern Carpathians, in pre-war times the natural border between the Habsburg Empire and Romania, became part of the largely expanded Romania after the war. The Western Carpathians were now shared between the re-established Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Hungary, which lost two-thirds of its territory, was left empty-handed and scrambling to remain part of the mountain-going group of nations. With the Western Carpathians now being part of Czechoslovakia and Transylvania part of Romania, the Treaty of Trianon had reduced Hungarian territory by two-thirds and stripped it of all mountainous regions. The principle of “national self-determination” had turned Hungary into the flattest of all Habsburg successor states. Its new high point reached barely beyond the 1,000m mark: Kékestető (1,014m) in the North Hungarian Mátra Mountains.

The compartmentalization of the Habsburg space put both German and multi-lingual clubs in a particularly difficult position. The first tourist association in Transleithania was the Hungarian Carpathian Club (Ungarischer Karpathenverein/Magyarországi Kárpátegylet), which was founded in 1873 and based in Kesmark/Késmárk (today’s Kežmarok in Slovakia), a town at the foothills of the High Tatra. The organization was dedicated to the exploration of the Tatras and had no particular nationalistic agenda. It represented German and Hungarian speakers as well as Polish and Slovak speakers from the Galician and Silesian slopes.[184] Already in the nineteenth century, the Budapest-centered Hungarian Tourist Association tried to sideline the

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[183] Patrice M. Dabrowski, "Constructing a Polish Landscape: The Example of the Carpathian Frontier," *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (2008): 47.

[184] Vari, "From Friends of Nature to Tourist-Soldiers: Nation Building and Tourism in Hungary, 1873-1914," 67.

Karpathenverein and other associations in an effort to create "an imaginary 'mountain-loving Magyar nation' and take possession of the Carpathians which were mainly inhabited by—allegedly parochial—non-Hungarian speaking groups."[185] Alpinists were seen as the vanguard in this process as agitators regarded mountaineering as especially suited for training able-bodied patriots prepared to defend the nation.[186] In the interwar period, the Hungarian Tourist Federation (Magyar Turista-Egyesület), which was founded in 1913 but became operational only after the war, advanced the nationalization and centralization of associational tourism.[187]

After the war, the Hungarian Karpathenverein was no longer on Hungarian territory, but found itself in Czechoslovakia. With a majority of Hungarian and German speakers, it displeased the Czechoslovak authorities just as much as the Hungarian national agitators. Claiming that the club obstructed the work of the Czechoslovak Tourist Association, the new government expropriated the Carpathian Club's shelters, huts, and property and prohibited the use of German and Hungarian topographical names. Dropping the "Hungarian" in the name, the club operated now simply as Karpathenverein and only barely avoided prohibition. It was only thanks to the cross-border intervention of the Polish Tatra Society that the club was able to reconstitute itself.[188] The club active in the Southern part of the Carpathians, the mainly German-speaking Transylvanian Carpathian Club (Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein), operated now in Romania.

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[185] "From Friends of Nature to Tourist-Soldiers: Nation Building and Tourism in Hungary, 1873-1914," 79.

[186] For the key role of alpinism in the rhetoric of Hungarian tourist officials and the militarization of tourism prior to World War I, see "From Friends of Nature to Tourist-Soldiers: Nation Building and Tourism in Hungary, 1873-1914," 69, 76-81.

[187] Hungarian Tourist Federation to Egmond d'Arcis, 22 March 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. By the end of 1933, the Federation had 59 members.

[188] Alfred Grosz, *Die Hohe Tatra: Geschichte des Karpatenvereins* (Stuttgart: Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Karpatendeutschen aus der Slowakei, 1961), 127. See also Anton Klipp, *Die Hohe Tatra und der Karpathenverein* (Karlsruhe: Karpatendeutsches Kulturwerk Slowakei, 2006), 194-95.

Another group of clubs active in the Carpathians were the German-speaking nationalist-orientated Beskids clubs, named after a traditional toponym for a series of Carpathian mountain ranges in Silesia. After the war, the different sections found themselves on two sides of the border. From the ranks of these local clubs the first postwar cross-border arrangement came. The most active section of this club was located in Bielitz/Bielsko, which was home to the largest German-speaking community in the Silesian region of Teschen/Těšín/Cieszyn, and now had become Polish. Pressured by the authorities, it had to cut ties with the parent organization in Ostrau/Ostrava, which was now on the Czechoslovak side. Despite these obstacles, the club succeeded in acquiring limited border-crossing rights from the Polish and Czechoslovak authorities as early as in 1919, thanks to "personal connections" of the vice-chairman. With a membership card, hikers were able to cross the Polish-Czechoslovak state border without a passport. Despite difficulties and frequent revocations of these rights, they remained in place until 1939.[189]

The new borders that divided the Tatras were not only a nuisance to the German-speaking clubs. On a much larger scale, the Polish and Czechoslovak states embarked on a bitter battle over the demarcation of the shared border in the Silesian Teschen area as well as in the rural Tatra regions of Arwa and Zips in the High Tatras.[190] The latter were not of economic importance but of symbolic. The Tatra Mountains carried particular national significance for the re-established Republic of Poland. In the nineteenth century, the Polish-speaking elites of Galicia had transformed this mountain chain from a southern borderland into a symbol for a nation that

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[189] "Der Beskidenverein Bielitz in der Polenzeit von 1919 bis 1939," p. 5, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Polen, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[190] For details on this conflict see Felix Buttin, "The Polish-Czechoslovak Conflict over Teschen Silesia (1918–1920): A Case Study," *Perspectives*, no. 25 (2005); Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1918-1922," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35, no. 84 (1956).

had been without state since the third Polish Partition of 1795. Zakopane, the town at the Tatra base, turned from a village into holiday spot for the Polish elite from all parts of the partitioned country.[191] In the Second Polish Republic, the Tatras continued to act a landscape of significance.

While Zakopane developed into a thriving place of both summer and winter tourist activities, the border disputes meant that the resurrection of Poland had not completed the national project.[192] In March 1924, the high-profile conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia was eventually solved by the League of Nations in March 1924; the following year the Cracow Protocol solidified the official border line between the two countries.[193] An addendum to this treaty entailed two suggestions for peace projects aimed at reducing competition over the

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[191] See in detail Patrice M. Dabrowski, ""Discovering" the Galician Borderlands: The Case of the Eastern Carpathians," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 58. The "discovery" of the Tatras resembled the appropriation of mountains into other national narratives very closely—a merger of scientific investigation, touristic excursionism to a rural area that promised spiritual uplift, and a discursive nationalization of the landscape were all part of this project. The Tatra Society, as Dabrowski's work shows, was central to the process of inscribing Polish national virtues into this remote place, yet it also took actively part in developing the region's infrastructure and tourist industry. As the Polish alpinist Wacław Sonelski put it, the "[Tatras's] role in the national culture was overdone, inflated by poets, writers and journalists…They were seen as a sanctuary for the national spirit, a storehouse of patriotic virtues and became, as one poet put it, 'the altars of independence.' For climbers, this meant that their activity was "burdened with all manner of national and artistic virtues" while they were simultaneously "eyed with suspicion and often referred to as would-be suicides." See Waclaw Sonelski, "Climbing under Communism," in *Orogenic Zones: The First Five Years of the International Festival of Mountaineering Literature*, ed. Terry Gifford and Rosie Smith (Leeds: Bretton Hall, 1994), 145.

[192] Patrice M. Dabrowski, "Borderland Encounters in the Carpathian Mountains and Their Impact on Identity Formation," in *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, ed. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 195. See also Timothy J. Cooley, *Making Music in the Polish Tatras: Tourists, Ethnographers, and Mountain Musicians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Already in the nineteenth century, a famous dispute over the Morskie Oko, a picturesque alpine lake, had pitted the Tatra Society against a Reichs-German landholder who owned property on the Hungarian side. For an interpretation of this conflict see Dabrowski, "Constructing a Polish Landscape," 61. See also Daniel Stone, "The Cable Car at Kasprowy Wierch: An Environmental Debate in Interwar Poland," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 3 (2005): 605.

[193] See for details Bianca Hoenig, "Geteilte Berge: Nutzungskonflikte und Territorialisierung in der Tatra im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert" (University of Basel, 2016), 55-61; Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1922-1926," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35, no. 85 (1957); Buttin, "The Polish-Czechoslovak Conflict over Teschen Silesia (1918–1920): A Case Study."

territory: one proposed a zone of relaxed border regimes in which tourists would be allowed free border crossings, the other concerned a cluster of binational parks—an idea that was formulated on the Polish side.[194] This larger Carpathian story has been explored in detail by historian Bianca Hoenig, whose works demonstrates that the Tatras became a laboratory of both innovative visions of international cooperation and contested national projects characteristic in the interwar period. Hoenig has shown that while some measures decided in the Krakow Agreement were implemented, the master project of a binational national park eventually failed—political, economic, and identity conflicts could not be overcome.[195]

One part of the treaty addendum which the two countries did implement concerned the relaxed border regime. The Polish-Czechoslovak Tourist Convention which entered into force in 1926 allowed national alpine and tourist club members to cross the borders in particular areas.[196] Yet the Convention did not include all clubs: the Beskidenverein Bielsko lost half of its members to the Tatra Society, which had the exclusive rights to distribute the "Tatra Cards" that served as passport surrogates and provided much broader rights than that Bielsko had to offer.[197] The case demonstrated the limited loyalty of the "thousands of German tourists," who according to Bielsko were "forced" to become members of the Tatra Society. The perks of the Polish society were in the end more valuable than loyalty to the defender of "volksnahe[r] deutsche[r]

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[194] Hoenig, "Geteilte Berge," 61.

[195] "Geteilte Berge."

[196] See for more details Łukasz Lewkowicz, "Polsko-czechosłowackie konwencje turystyczne jako przykład współpracy transgranicznej," *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, no. 45 (2014).

[197] "Der Beskidenverein Bielitz in der Polenzeit von 1919 bis 1939," nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Polen, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

Kulturarbeit" (German cultural work close to the people).[198] Transnational cooperation was Janus-faced. While it was propagated under the banner of international cooperation and understanding, it also instigated competition among those with and without access to transnational regimes: transnational networks were not spread out on an even plane but created and re-enforced hierarchies.

The bilateral experience of sharing the Tatras translated into a larger internationalist story. Central to this story is Walery Goetel, who was the driving force behind the idea of a binational park. Goetel demonstrates the fluency with which transnational actors navigated between various roles—holding academic, political, and non-governmental functions, he was professor of geology at the Cracow Mining Academy, served on the state environmental commission and as its representative in the Polish-Czechoslovak border commission, and was a leading figure in the Polish Tatra Society.[199] Born in 1889, Goetel's biography is a prime example of the kind of Central European expert and lends itself exceptionally well to studying "the symbiotic relationship between experts and states."[200] In Anna-Katharina Wöbse's study on world environmentalism, Walery Goetel appears as a well-respected internationalist who propagated borders as "common ground" and national parks as "a place that transcended national

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[198] "Der Beskidenverein Bielitz in der Polenzeit von 1919 bis 1939," p. 1, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Polen, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[199] Stone, "The Cable Car at Kasprowy Wierch," 209.

[200] Steffen and Kohlrausch, "The Limits and Merits of Internationalism," 717. The authors argue that the newly emerging Polish nation-state created a space for Polish technical experts who prior to 1918 were deeply entrenched in a transnational knowledge community and now called upon to apply their urgently needed expertise in a national framework of a (re-)emerging state. This particular constellation created both challenges and opportunities for experts that did not exist in established Western nation-states. For details to Goetel's vita see Stefan Witold Alexandrowicz, "Walery Goetel (1889-1972)," *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Geologicznego* 43, no. 4 (1973). For an autobiography of his early life, see Walery Goetel, *Pod znakiem optymizmu: wspomnienia*, Wyd. 1. ed. (Krakow: Wydawn. Literackie, 1976).

identities."[201] He stood for an internationalism that merged utopian visions with technocratic ideas of governance.

While Goetel's vision of a binational Tatra park did not succeed in the mid-1920s, other internationalist projects that involved no commitment from state authorities did succeed. As the German-speaking organizations in the new states tried to secure their existence through forming new associations and at least officially relinquish pan-Germanism, the Slavic-dominated tourist organizations turned to pan-Slavism, a concept developed in the nineteenth century that advocated the union of all Slavic people. In 1926, four major Slavic organizations, the Slovenian Alpine Club, the Polish Tatra Society, the Bulgarian Tourist Club (Bolgarsko Turistovsko Družestvo), and the Czechoslovak Tourist Club (Klub Československíh Turistů) founded the Association of Slavic Tourist Societies. With this step, the founding members, representing together 190,000 members, secured their dominance in regulating the admission of other clubs from their respective countries.[202]

But Goetel, an avid mountaineer and skier, saw the necessity to go one step further. The realization of cross-border arrangements motivated him to call for a joint association that would be concerned with those questions regarding mountains that needed to be dealt with on an international level. Existing international organizations, such as the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme in Brussels and the Conseil Central de Tourisme in Paris, were not able to address questions important to alpinism—mountaineers required their very own organization.[203]

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[201] Wöbse, *Weltnaturschutz*, 266.

[202] Membership data for 1933, see Polish Tatra Society to d'Arcis, 3 March 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[203] Polish Tatra Society to DOeAV, 10 July 1929, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Polen, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

Consequently, in 1929, the Tatra Society, on behalf of the Slavic Tourist Association, proposed to all European alpine clubs to organize a congress and debate an "international alpine federation." In the invitation letter to European alpine clubs, the Tatra Society evoked the notion of the "ideology of alpinism" which necessitated this move. This rather strange wording reflected the larger internationalist movement of the interwar period which was sustained by idealistic and utopian ideas such as feminism, socialism, and pacifism.[204] In 1918, the Austrian alpinist, Karl Plank, had already referred alpinism as a symptom of a "totally new culture, most impressive in its internationality and its ability to command the world [Weltbeherrschbarkeit]."[205] Comparing the phenomenon to socialism and the women's movement, Plank was convinced that alpinism was an expression of a modern culture that, although it had originated in Western Europe, resonated globally. Framing alpinism as a universal ideology in relation to others was thus not an entirely new concept.

From Zakopane to Chamonix

When the First International Alpine Congress met in 1930 in the Polish town of Zakopane, a restart of the count of congresses signified a new era. The Congress remained a mainly East Central European affair. Reflecting the close political connection of Poland and Czechoslovakia to France and demonstrating its commitment to internationalism and its close relationship to the Tatra Society, the Club Alpin Français was the only West European representative in Zakopane who joined the member clubs of the Slavic Tourist Association. Yet despite the limited number of participants, the Congress was remarkable as it reflected a new

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[204] Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium*.

[205] Karl Planck, "Zur Entwicklung der alpinen Motive I. Teil," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen und Österreichischer Alpenvereins*, May 31 1918, 57.

form of internationalism. In contrast to the international congresses organized in the prewar era, the meeting at Zakopane emphasized governance and practical solutions to problems rather than lavish celebrations: Representatives addressed different conceptions of alpinism in the European countries, practical issues of cooperation among tourist organizations in the mountains, and international treaties which allowed cross-border tourism.[206] All representatives agreed that solving these practical questions necessitated an international organization with a permanent bureau.[207] This vision to create an international organization that facilitated cross-border mobility surpassed previous forms of alpine internationalism.

While the alpine clubs of East Central Europe had concrete issues to solve, namely the problem of restricted mobility across national borders, the Congress also helped to create legitimacy both on the domestic and the international level. As Katrin Steffen and Martin Kohlrausch have argued, experts of the new states of East Central Europe were able to raise their domestic profile by building international contacts. For both experts and state authorities "there existed an imagined European or even global context of comparison in which the new state had to prove its potential to live up to the demands of modernity."[208] As previously mentioned, already for the Club Alpine Français, alpine internationalism was a tool to raise its prestige among the more accomplished alpine clubs. For the Polish Tatra Society, the Congress at Zakopane was equally a prestige project. However, the fact that the East Central Europeans still

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[206] "Réunion d'Associations de Tourisme en montagne à Zakopane," *La Montagne* 57 (January 1931): 59. Goetel, unsurprisingly, presented on nature protection, national parks, and their relation to alpinism.

[207] "Réunion d'Associations de Tourisme en montagne à Zakopane," 59. In their periodical, the French called upon the other European alpine clubs to take part in this project, informing them that a commission was tasked with further preparations. The presidency of the commission was offered to the French, while the Swedes were offered the vice-presidency, and the Tatra Society the secretariat.

[208] Steffen and Kohlrausch, "The Limits and Merits of Internationalism," 726.

relied on the support of the French Alpine Club as their spokesman implied that a congress alone did not automatically resolve their marginal status.

An announcement by the Hungarian Tourist Federation (Magyar Turista Szövetség) shortly after the Congress in Zakopane illustrated the link between internationalism and the quest for recognition. The Hungarians planned to host an international alpine congress, which was to be held in conjunction with the first Hungarian National Tourist Exhibition in Budapest in September 1931. Deprived of mountainous territory, tourist officials went out of their way to proclaim Hungary as a mountain-loving nation and to stake a territorial claim on mountains, symbolically at least. In 1930, an international exhibition of mountain art had showcased the work of three hundred artists in Budapest.[209] The authoritarian Hungarian regent Nicholas Horthy de Nagybánya himself inaugurated the exhibition.[210] The fact that mountains were incorporated to Hungary's interwar efforts of nation-branding even though the country had hardly any hills left demonstrated the ubiquitous symbolic role of mountains in nationalist discourse but also the potential small states saw in the deployment of internationalism.

There were, however, hierarchies in the Carpathian pecking order. What legitimated mountain-less Hungary to call an alpine congress? These were presumably the thoughts of Walery Goetel when he heard about the Hungarian plan on a sojourn in Paris. Irritated by the Hungarian proposal, he took the opportunity to consult with his colleagues from the French Alpine Club. Together, they decided that they would accept the invitation of the Hungarians,

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[209] "L'Art Alpin à Budapest," *La Montagne* 57, no. 230 (1931): 52; Ungarische Landesausstellung für Touristik 1931, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Ungarn, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck. The exhibition presented photos and pictures of Hungarian mountain regions, models of refuges, maps and museum items, and other items related to tourism.

[210] Horthy rained Hungary from 1920 to 1944, see for more detail Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the two World Wars*, 137-99.

under the condition that this congress was recognized as a follow-up to the meeting in Zakopane.[211] That way, the Polish Tatra Society could claim the status of the original initiator.

When the Second International Congress took place in Budapest, the list of participants was longer than Zakopane's. Yet it became evident that Europe's largest club, the German and Austrian Alpenverein, had limited interest in the project.[212] The Alpenverein officials argued that no common alpinist issues existed that warranted an international discussion, and only sent delegates to Budapest as promises had been made earlier.[213] Regardless of the lack of their endorsement, the delegates decided to hold another congress in Chamonix, organized by the French Alpine Club, with the clear objective of establishing an international organization of alpine societies and agree on a number of technical questions.[214] While the Germans and Austrians showed disinterest, the Club Alpin Français gratefully brought Carpathian internationalism back to the Alps.

Here we return to the meeting at the foot of Mont Blanc, with which this chapter began. The Third International Congress of Alpinism in Chamonix, as has been shown, largely owed its existence to the East-Central European clubs—mainly to the Polish Tatra Society and the Hungarian Tourist Association which shared the task of leading the secretariat. While the patronage of the French was indispensable for the initiators in order to win the support of the other European alpine clubs, East Central European mountaineers were not junior partners in this

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[211] "Kongres Alpinististyczny w Budapeszcie," *Wierchy* 9 (1931): 169.

[212] Few of the actual proceedings were retained and thus little is known about the event as such.

[213] 46. Sitzung des Hauptausschusses des D.u. Ö. Alpenvereins, 4-6 September 1931. Zu Punkt 2, p.2. Hauptauschussprotokolle 1929-1940. Österreichischer Alpenverein, Archiv. The representatives were not authorized to vote for any binding resolutions.

[214] There is relatively little information available on the details and agenda of the 1931 Third International Congress in Budapest.

process. Yet the disinterest of the Alpenverein and the disdain of the British delegate towards the newly independent countries, which he expressed in the patronizing comments in the *Alpine Journal*, also showed that despite their initiative, the East Central European clubs were still met with suspicion and had to fight for their legitimate place among the Western clubs. The Polish and Czechoslovak delegates, humiliated by the British colleague in the Alpine Journal, protested vehemently against the insults which in their opinion undermined the very foundation on which the UIAA was created.[215] Their marginalization was hard to overcome.

The Alpenverein's reluctance to take part in any internationalist project was not solely owed to the fact that the East Central Europeans had taken the lead. The club also remained reluctant to attend the Congress in Chamonix. Initially, the club agreed to attend only if the Swiss and the British Alpine Clubs confirmed their participation and if in those meetings chaired by a German speaker and of German would be used as a conference language. While the first condition was met, the question of languages in transnational organizing was always both a political and practical one, and it would remain a challenge for the coming decades.[216] Confusion arose over the language issue and eventually the Alpenverein sent only one delegate who was not authorized to agree to any binding resolutions.[217] In addition of being upset about the language issue, the central committee of the Alpenverein had decided that "the agenda [of the Congress] is

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[215] Polish Tatra Society to d'Arcis, 24 January 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[216] Alpine Notes: IIIe Congrés International d'Alpinisme. *Alpine Journal* 44 (1932): 341. During the 1932 congress, rumors made the round that the Germans had refused to partake because only French, Italian, and English would be official languages. The president of the Club Alpin Français, Jean Escarra, openly quoted from his statement that German was assigned official status as well, refuting the "mischievous lie" as a representative of the Alpine Club put it, adding that the absence of the Alpenverein delegates "was sincerely and universally regretted." See for similar examples Leila J. Rupp, "The Persistence of Transnational Organizing: The Case of the Homophile Movement," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 4 (2011): 1030.

[217] This was despite the efforts of the Hungarians to convince the Alpenverein to send all those delegates who also attended the Budapest Congress. Chair of the Tourist Congress Committee to J. Moriggl, 28 July 1932, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Ungarn, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

so extensive and diverse that it cannot be taken seriously—it defies the character of a meeting of alpine experts [alpiner Sachverständige]."[218] Whether this criticism was the main reason to boycott the Congress, the comment reflected the fact that the multidimensionality of alpinism also complicated the formulation of a clear internationalist message.

Despite all this, the Congress did reach a major milestone: the creation of the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA), which in the postwar years became known as the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation. Taking the broadest approach possible, the UIAA was charged with "the study and solution of all problems related to alpinism in general, mainly from an international perspective;" as well as with the organization of future congresses.[219] More concretely, the assembly bestowed on the bureau of the UIAA the task of "tak[ing] steps to assist the movements of climbers in frontier regions." As Pierre Bossus, a future president of the UIAA, wrote in the only existing brief institutional history of the UIAA, "the clubs expressed it as their wish that they henceforth be the beneficiaries of an evolutionary process that would eventually eliminate the problems of national frontiers."[220] The alpine clubs who created the UIAA were neither representing cosmopolitanism nor utopian pacifism. Rather, their internationalism was pragmatic and motivated by their self-interest in gaining access to mountains. The belief in an "evolutionary process" of a withering away of national frontiers was

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[218] 47. Sitzung des Hauptausschusses des D. u. Ö. Alpenvereins, 7-8 Mai 1932. Zu Punkt 26, Hauptauschussprotokolle 1929-1940, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[219] Resolutions of the Third International Congress of Alpinism, 27 August 1932, folder "Assemblée Générale 19332-1935, UIAA, Berne.

[220] Pierre Bossus, *Les cinquante premières années de l'Union internationale des associations d'alpinisme* (Geneva: UIAA, 1982), 73.

remarkable, given that the 1930s were marked by nation-centered agendas, yet demonstrated the confidence in the effectiveness of internationalism.[221]

An Institution to "Eliminate the Problems of National Frontiers"

Carpathian internationalism achieved what alpine clubs had discussed since the late nineteenth century: the creation of an international mountaineering organization. The ultimate implementation of this idea in 1932 rested on the initiative of East Central European alpine clubs who fused their nation-building projects, regional competition, and a commitment to universal European ideas into an internationalist agenda. Although historians have lamented that the geographical region lacked both uniformity to be a meaningful historical concept as well as regional solidarity, tourism in fact necessitated collaboration beyond borders: divisions brought entanglement. The wish to eliminate national frontiers was not a disguised call for reinstating the prewar order. Carpathian internationalism was a response to the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, not an attempt to re-create it.

During the war, neither the allies nor the national groups within the Empire anticipated or desired the end of the Habsburg Monarchy.[222] But when the nation-state finally triumphed, competing territorial claims turned mountain sports from a domestic into a foreign policy issue. As Holly Case has argued, "the interwar period was one of trying to make new states work, rather than about joining another European empire."[223] For alpine clubs, "making Europe work"

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[221] For internationalist efforts in the same time period, see also Iriye, *Global Community*, 34-35.

[222] As Pieter Judson has argued, nationalist activists initially strove to advance their state-building efforts inside a Habsburg imperial framework. See Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 432.

[223] Holly Case, "Being European: East and West," in *European Identity*, ed. Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 122.

in the postwar era meant dealing with new borders, resolving legal fights over property, securing access to formerly shared space, tending for club sections now located in a foreign country. But it also meant streamlining alpine infrastructure, standardizing risk assessment, and protecting mountains from environmental hazards: all these areas became part of the UIAA agenda. While Carpathian internationalism was geared towards the solution of concrete problems, being perceived as a nation with a vital mountaineering and climbing culture was also a way of asserting sovereignty vis-à-vis much stronger which dominated the Alps.

A new situation resulted from the fact that some alpine clubs now emerged as the representative of a national majority, such as the Polish Tatra Society. Representing a sovereign nation allowed for new projects of internationalism that addressed new challenges in a new political context but also reflected old political aspirations. The step from regional cooperation to a Carpathian internationalist project was motivated by the wish to take part in a larger re-imagination of Europe—a Europe that was formed by sovereign nation-states which regardless of their size were treated as equals. It was also born out of the realization that the multiplication of national borders simultaneously required a new way of guaranteeing mobility across these borders. If mountaineers and mountain tourists wanted to protect their right to roam across political borders, contribute to the protection of the environment, and lobby politicians to pass legislation in the interest of mountain tourists, they needed to be organized institutionally in an association like the UIAA.

3 THE SINEWS OF EUROPE

Alpine Internationalism in Times of Crisis, 1933-1953

Hinge Years

The UIAA was founded at a time of transition. Like many international organizations, it was conceived in the 1920s but only started functioning in the early 1930s. In her seminal international history of interwar Europe, Zara Steiner has characterized these years as "hinge years": a period shaped by the Great Depression in which many internationalist projects failed, hopes of peace faltered, and nationalist interests became irreconcilable with international cooperation.[224] The precariousness of the time was not lost to contemporaries. At the International Alpine Congress in Chamonix in 1932, Pierre Escarra addressed the delegates with words of warning. The president of the French Alpine Club felt encouraged by the international spirit that surrounded him yet he was also wary of the times to come: "The common sentiments that unite us must act as a counterweight to the political and economic controversies that threaten to divide our peoples [les peuples]; such is the task of reconciliation in which we invite you to participate and ask your active and valuable collaboration."[225] Escarra was well aware that the timing of the UIAA's establishment was far from ideal; in the 1930s, the heyday of internationalist euphoria had already passed. As hopes of economic prosperities waned, the mid-1920s mood of stability did as well.[226] Informed by the idealistic sentiments of peaceful

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[224] Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 800-01.

[225] Jean Escarra to alpine clubs, 08 October 1931, folder "Assemblée Générale 1932-1935," UIAA, Berne.

[226] Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, 93. See also Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 800-01. Steiner identifies the growing global depression as the main reason for the changing international atmosphere.

internationalism, Escarra nonetheless hoped that the cultural force of alpinism could transcend national politics and provide unity in an increasingly tense international climate.

This chapter discusses the fate of the UIAA from 1933, the year it commenced work, until the post-Stalinist Thaw period of the mid-1950s. Transcending the Second World War as a caesura, the chapter analyzes the fate of Carpathian internationalism and its achievements at a time when internationalism seemingly lost out to exclusionary nationalism.[227] The chapter highlights the competing projects of Europe's alpine clubs which mirrored the political developments in the individual states. It shows that even a marginal organization such as the UIAA was able to survive the onslaught of Nazi aggression on its most active members, subsequent war, and the division of Europe during the Cold War.

Rather than viewing the interwar period only in terms of a nationalist triumph over internationalism, recent work has argued that interwar internationalism created the foundations for a novel system of global governance which emerged more forcefully in the post-Second World War period.[228] In the realm of environmental protection and conservationism, for example, expert communities used the League of Nations to lay the bedrock for a global environmental regime—where governments failed, technocrats prevailed.[229] As a promoter of internationalism, the UIAA played its part in efforts of environmental protection and standardization of technical

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[227] Scholars working on the non-western world have argued that the 1930s were not in every realm a time of closure. Rather, World War II is seen as a "mid-point of a transitional period in which certain ideas and institutions endured." Instead of breaking up transnational relationships, the war instead transformed and often strengthened them. See Matthew Hilton and Rana Mitter, "Introduction," *Past & Present* 218, no. 8 (2013): 9.

[228] Cf. Andrew Webster, "The League of Nations, Disarmament and Internationalism," in *Internationalism: A Twentieth Century History*, ed. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 143.

[229] See for example Wöbse, *Weltnaturschutz*.

issues such as the creation of universal avalanche warning symbols. These initial results provided the basis for further standardization efforts in the postwar period.

Moving beyond the question of what the UIAA achieved in its first decade of existence in technical terms, what is of interest is the question of how an international non-governmental organization founded by marginal states faired in the interwar period. Evoking Verta Taylor's concept of an "abeyance structure," or the ability of social movements to continue in non-favorable political climates, this chapter demonstrates the viability of alpine internationalism across major political upheavals.[230] Alpinism was not an ideology-driven movement like socialism, feminism, or pacifism, but it did offer a network to connect East Central European mountaineers to a wider transnational community in a time of political ruptures. Transcending the Second World War as a closing point, the chapter reveals that connections among the expert community of alpinists remained in place during the Cold War, even if seriously hampered by the political division of Europe.[231]

Between Small State Internationalism and Great Power Isolationism

Created in the early 1930s, the UIAA was a latecomer among international sport organizations and did not quite fit the mold as mountaineers did not compete in standardized competitions. Its history needs nonetheless to be understood in the larger context of interwar sport. Most international sport organizations, the majority of which were founded prior to the First World War, started off as shaky, financially unstable, and marginal organizations. Yet, in the

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[230] Verta Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 5 (1989).

[231] For an endorsement of this rationale see the introduction to the series *Making Europe*, Kaiser, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, and International Organizations*, ix-x.

long-term, sport organizations proved to be one of the most stable and appealing non-governmental organizations established in the same period.[232] The crucial factor behind this success story was the development of mass sports and the rise of international sports competitions. The UIAA shared with these organizations its marginality and financial troubles. Practical issues doomed the UIAA to a slow start; members frequently owed their dues, communication channels were slow, traveling was expensive, and the executive committee was not able to meet more than once a year.[233]

What was more, the UIAA had to build a membership base in the increasingly politicized arena of the interwar period.[234] As a beacon of political neutrality, host of international organizations, and cradle of alpinism, the Swiss received the privilege to fill the president's post with Egmond d'Arcis. Born in Italy to a British father and a Swiss mother, he embodied all features of the idealist, elitist, and Eurocentric internationalism of the interwar period and would for the next three decades exercise hegemonic control over the UIAA. While the selection of Switzerland as the future home of the UIAA is less surprising, more curious is the location of its first General Assembly: Cortina d'Apezzo in Italy. Having emerged as a major force of fascism, the Club Alpino Italiano hosted the first meeting in September 1933.[235]

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[232] Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 40.

[233] Cf. various material in the folder "Comité Éxecutif, 1932-1959," UIAA, Berne.

[234] See contributions in Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan, *Sport and International Politics* (London: Spon Press, 1998).

[235] For the Club Alpino Italiano's intergration into fascist state structures, see Armiero, *Rugged Nation*; Pastore, *Alpinismo e storia d'Italia*.

Fascism and internationalism entertained an ambiguous relationship in the interwar period; Italy in particular merged liberal internationalism with fascist objectives.[236] Sport and fascism had a particularly close relationship and it is against this background the willingness of the Club Alpino to participate in the UIAA needs to be understood. For the Club Alpino, the General Assembly provided the opportunity to pose as a promoter of the domestic fascist agenda.[237] Its president, Angelo Manaresi, was a veteran of the Italian mountain forces *Alpini* and undersecretary of war in Mussolini's government. In a report to the Duce, Manaresi boasted that the UIAA's statute passed at Cortina followed the fascist spirit of the Italian proposal rather than the "liberal" one proposed by the Swiss and the French.[238] Furthermore, as he told Mussolini, the alpine clubs present at Cortina had celebrated Fascist Italy; the Hungarians in particular had been very vocal in expressing their support for the Duce. Historian Allesandro Pastore has interpreted this report as nothing more than an internal propaganda piece that demonstrated the efforts of the Club Alpino to participate in the fascist project.[239] Partaking in an internationalist project offered thus a tentative prospect for fascist infiltration, but it also served to buttress domestic legitimacy.

Contrasting the Italian approach to the position of the German and Austrian Alpenverein, the different fascist responses to internationalism become apparent. As previously mentioned, the German and Austrian Alpenverein had long been suspicious of alpine internationalism. It is thus

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[236] Madeleine Herren, "Fascist Internationalism," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 201-06. Angela Teja, "Italian Sport and International Relations under Fascism," in *Sport and International Politics : The Impact of Facism and Communism on Sports*, ed. James Riordan (London: Spon Press 1998); "Italian Sport and International Relations under Fascism."

[237] Armiero, *Rugged Nation*, 154.

[238] Pastore, *Alpinismo e storia d'Italia*, 179.

[239] *Alpinismo e storia d'Italia*, 180.

not surprising that the Alpenverein did not join the UIAA in 1933, the year in which Hitler seized power and retreated immediately of the League of Nations.[240] National Socialist sport functionaries smoothly appropriated the nationalist and militaristic rhetoric of the Alpenverein.[241] The 1930s saw the probably fiercest race ever in the alpine arena when German, Swiss and Austrian mountaineers endeavored to solve "the last problem of the Alps": the Eiger Northface.[242] Also the conquest of Himalayan peaks loomed large in the Nazi imagination. Following the urge to compete with the British and other nations in the quest for high-altitude ascents, the German Himalaya Foundation, created in 1936, concentrated its efforts on putting a German expedition on Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in British India. Officially supported by the Third Reich, three expeditions unsuccessfully attempted the mountain in the 1930s. Appropriated by the National Socialists, Nanga Parbat became known as the German "mountain of destiny" and the attempts to climb it turned into a tragic story used for propaganda purposes.[243]

Neither the Alpenverein nor sports officials of the Third Reich saw any value in partaking in the UIAA. The absence of the German and Austrian Alpenverein posed a serious problem to the organization, which was started by small states yet relied on larger powers to lend it

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[240] Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, 94-95.

[241] For the appropriation of mountains under the Nazis see Mierau, *Nationalsozialistische Expeditionspolitik. Deutsche Asien-Expeditionen 1933–1945*; Amstädter, *Der Alpinismus: Kultur, Organisation, Politik*; Höbusch, *"Mountain of Destiny": Nanga Parbat and its Path into the German Imagination*; Zebhauser, *Alpinismus im Hitlerstaat: Gedanken, Erinnerungen, Dokumente*.

[242] See e.g. Rainer Amstädter, *Eiger: Die vertikale Arena* (Zurich: AS, 2008).

[243] For the appropriation of this movie by the National Socialists see Harald Hoebusch, "A 'Triumph of the Will'? Andrew Marton's Der Damon des Himalaya and the National Socialist Need for Heroes," *Sport in History* 29, no. 4 (2009). For an extensive study of Nanga Parbat in the German imagination see Höbusch, *"Mountain of Destiny": Nanga Parbat and its Path into the German Imagination*. For National Socialist expeditions, see Mierau, *Nationalsozialistische Expeditionspolitik. Deutsche Asien-Expeditionen 1933–1945*; *Die Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung von 1936 bis 1998. Ihre Geschichte und ihre Expeditionen* (Munich: Rother, 1999).

legitimacy. D'Arcis in particular was afraid that without the clubs of the largest countries, the UIAA would not be a legitimate international body. As Alpine Club member Sydney Spencer put it: "The fact that the Alpenverein, the most numerous and important of the foreign societies, refused to join, rendered the term "international" just a bit absurd."[244] His own club, Europe's most prestigious club, was also notably absent from the membership list. The British had withdrawn from the UIAA immediately after its establishment in 1933, arguing that the club had no territorial stakes in the Alps.[245] D'Arcis regarded the resignation as a major damage to the credibility of the organization, since the Alpine Club commanded such "a moral position in the world, such influence, such power."[246] The American Alpine Club, too, withdrew just a year after the UIAA was founded, by its own account due to financial reasons, but mostly because it had no stake in the work of the Alps-centered UIAA.[247] Numbers reflected this anxiety about representation. In 1935, the UIAA comprised twenty-three organizations representing 200,000 members from thirteen countries. What appears to be a substantial figure was the same number of members as the German and Austrian Alpenverein had alone.

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[244] Sydney Spencer to Donkin, 18 September 1943, 1922/B4/25, Alpine Club, London.

[245] A.C. Hon. Sec. to d'Arcis, 05 October 1933, folder "Grande-Bretagne B.M.C. A.C. etc," UIAA, Berne.

[246] D'Arcis to John Withers, 24 December 1933, folder "Grande-Bretagne B.M.C. A.C. etc," UIAA, Berne. D'Arcis relentlessly tried to change the minds of the British Alpine Club.

[247] D'Arcis to AAC, 12 June 1934, folder Etats Unis/Canada, UIAA, Berne. D'Arcis proposed the formation of a union or federation of all American mountaineering clubs which then would become a UIAA member and distribute the membership fees. Just a few months before war broke out in Europe, d'Arcis made another attempt to get the AAC to join. D'Arcis to AAC, 29 May 1939, folder Etats Unis/Canada, UIAA, Berne.

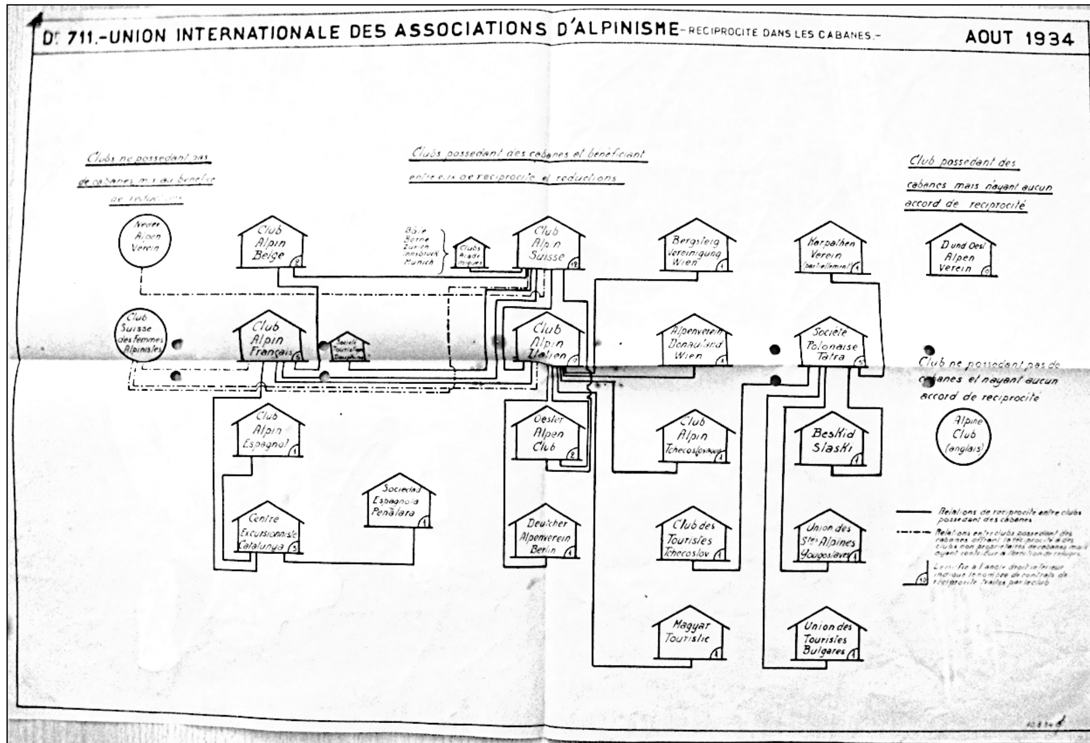

Figure 3: Chart of Reciprocal Hut Agreements, August 1934. Source: UIAA, Berne.

A chart annexed to a 1934 report on reciprocity agreements, commissioned by the Belgian Alpine Club, illustrated this existential issue (Figure 3).[248] A house represented those clubs that were in the possession of mountain refuges, a circle indicated those clubs without, such as the Swiss Women's Alpine Club and the Dutch Alpine Club. A good number of lines connected the Swiss, French, and Italian clubs to others, representing twelve, nine, and five bilateral agreements respectively. The Polish Tatra Society boasted five connections to its East and South-East European neighbors; these were the result of agreements necessitated by the division of a formerly shared space. The Alpenverein and the Alpine Club stood visually apart.

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[248] The Belgian Alpine Club proposed to introduce a membership card for the members of the UIAA organizations to facilitate the reciprocal enjoyment of fee reductions. The report was compiled following this proposal. "Réciprocité de facilités accordées entre clubs alpins pour l'utilisation des cabanes-refuges en montagne," July 1935, folder "réciprocité," UIAA, Berne.

Whether a national alpine club decided to join the UIAA or not ultimately related to the very issue that initially inspired the organization's establishment: access to territory. The German and Austrian Alpenverein had no interest in reciprocity agreements—i.e. the mutual provision of discounts at mountain huts—simply because it owned the largest network of huts and for decades regarded reciprocity agreements as exploitative and as a disadvantage to itself. Most of the members of the Alpine Club were also members of a continental club and profited from those clubs' reciprocity agreements.

For the smaller states, in contrast, the UIAA offered a number of benefits. For the Polish Tatra Society, for example, membership in the UIAA asserted not only Polish sovereignty but also its ability to take the lead in an internationalist project, even if it was the Club Alpin Français who carried off the laurels by presiding over the congress in Chamonix. For Hungary, the UIAA provided a tentative solution to its struggle to remain an "alpine" nation despite their lack of mountains. Small states without mountains, such as the Netherlands and Sweden, hoped that the UIAA would provide a framework to negotiate favorable reciprocity agreements between them and the hut-owning alpine clubs.

In order to bolster the UIAA's representativeness, the promoters of alpine internationalism embarked on a process of alpine appeasement in an effort to win the alpine clubs of the great powers for their cause. For years, Egmond d'Arcis tried to entice the Alpine Club with a seat on the Executive Committee, yet the club refused to join—ostensibly due to the financial obligations of membership.[249] These monetary reasons were clearly a pretense. If in the immediate postwar period the Allied alpine clubs had marginalized the Alpenverein, the UIAA now wooed the club at the zenith of the Alpenverein's political radicalization. While these

[249] "Internationaler Touristen-Kongress." *Mitteilungen des DOeAV* 59, no. 4 (1933): 86.

attempts were unsuccessful, the UIAA provided tentative recognition for those clubs which were a victim of the Alpenverein's illiberal policies, such as the Alpenverein Donauland.[250] Donauland, initially a section of the Alpenverein, was expelled from the club after a major anti-Semitic campaign in 1924.[251] The German Alpenverein Berlin e.V., which was founded out of resistance against the anti-Semitic stance of the Alpenverein Section Berlin and closely connected to Donauland, was also admitted as an affiliated member. First being harassed by the authorities and unable to pay membership dues, the club was soon forbidden by the Gestapo, the secret police of Nazi Germany.[252] January 30, 1933, the day Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany, was both an ending and beginning, as Zara Steiner remarked: the lights of internationalism were dimmed and Hitler took the central stage for the story that followed.[253] Yet it is likely that the Alpenverein would have not joined the UIAA even in more favorable political circumstances, given that its rejection of internationalism reached back to its very beginnings. For now, the UIAA would struggle with its own internal difficulties.

Creating Hierarchies

The East Central European countries had initiated the creation of the UIAA, but it soon became obvious that the organization could not and would not remain an exclusively East Central European project. Most frequently those organizations who had been the most eager

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[250] D'Arcis to Gerald Seligman, Ski Club of Britain, 18 May 1934, folder "Grande-Bretagne." UIAA, Berne.

[251] On the "Donauland affair," see Martin Achrainer and Nicholas Mailänder, "Der Verein," in *Berg heil!: Alpenverein und Bergsteigen 1918-1945*, ed. Martin Achrainer, Friederike Kaiser, and Florian Trojer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011), 224-49.

[252] Kalischer to d'Arcis, 12 October 1933, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[253] Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 816.

supporters of the UIAA—Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia—defaulted on their dues.[254] The Polish Tatra Society, led by Walery Goetel, not only took on the task to serve as the UIAA's debt-collector but also pushed forward a motion ruling that clubs would lose their voting rights as long as they had outstanding dues.[255] Financial constraints thus translated into procedural marginalization.

International sport organizations, Barbara Keys has argued, distinguished themselves from most international non-governmental organizations in their oftentimes autocratic government and self-appointed memberships.[256] Escarra and d'Arcis promoted peaceful internationalism in their rhetoric which equaled other sport organizations created in the same environment. However, the absence of regulated competitions and national teams that could represent the nation on international stage complicated the functioning of internationalism among mountaineers.[257] The fuzzy boundaries of "alpinism" did not even provide clear guidelines about which clubs should be admitted and which activities promoted. Were ski clubs allowed to join the UIAA, or only if they promoted ski mountaineering?[258] Could a country without mountains make a legitimate claim in regard to membership? At Chamonix, Escarra had stressed that solely organizations that had alpinism as their core task should be allowed to join. He invoked Manaresi's idea of an "alpine aristocracy" which regarded alpinism not only as an

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[254] Goetel to d'Arcis, 4 November 1935; 29 October 1937, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. See e.g. Hungarian Tourist Union to d'Arcis, 22 March 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[255] Executive committee meeting, 6 September 1934, Pontresina, folder "Comité Exécutif 1932-1959," UIAA, Berne.

[256] Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 41.

[257] For sport organizations and their relationship to peaceful internationalism, see *Globalizing Sport*, 41.

[258] For the Alpine Club and Ski Federation debate see exchange Gerald Seligman to d'Arcis, 28 June 1934, folder Grande-Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

enjoyable sport but also one that promoted loyalty and improved humanity.[259] If the Alpine Club had scoffed at the large continental associations in the previous century, hierarchies within the UIAA started to take shape immediately after its creation.

The exclusiveness of the term alpine aristocracy became reality when debates arose over the membership of the Hungarian Tourist Federation. As mentioned previously, both the Polish Tatra Society and the French Alpine Club had treated the Hungarians with suspicion when the mountain-less country declared its intentions to take an active role in promoting alpine internationalism. In 1933, the president of the Hungarian Tourist Federation, Jean Vigyázo, had to reassure UIAA president Egmond d'Arcis that all clubs united in the Federation were "pure alpine clubs." While he acknowledged that the "mountains and hills of up to 1000 meters altitude" that remained Hungarian after the war did not lend themselves to "proper alpinism," he stressed that those mountains were easy to scale, close to the urban centers, and offered "excellent opportunities for excursions and beautiful rocks for training, as well as numerous caves of various difficulty."[260] Vigyázo asserted furthermore that the Hungarians were committed to cultivate the sport in higher mountain ranges abroad.

The fact that the Hungarian Tourist Federation had to defend its interest in mountains although the Dutch Alpine Club did not illustrated that being on the margins of Europe's mental map mattered. The claim that all member clubs of the Hungarian Tourist Federation were true "alpinists" was indeed a gross overstatement, as the organization included hiking and tourist

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[259] D'Arcis report to executive committee, 1 September 1933, folder "Comité Exécutif 1932-1959," UIAA, Berne.

[260] Jean Vigyázo to d'Arcis, 24 July 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. To bolster his claim, Vigyázo pointed out that the term "touriste, touristique" in the Hungarian language referred to alpinists and not to automotive tourists, similar to the German term *Hochtourist*. D'Arcis was not completely wrong with his suspicion. In a letter to the Swiss Alpine Club in 1931, the German translation on the letterhead read "Hungarian Tourist Association" (Ungarischer Touristen-Verband). Ungarischer Touristen-Verband to Schweizer Alpenclub, 28 March 1931, GA SAC 591/Ungarischer Touristenverband, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

clubs as well. However, the German and Austrian Alpenverein also catered largely to mountain hikers and tourists and explicitly claimed not to be a club of mountaineers.[261] Regardless, the Alpenverein was beseeched to become a member of the UIAA.

The statute of the UIAA regulated that each country had one vote—yet how many clubs were allowed to represent a country? Should there be a principle of one country-one association? And, what would that mean for minority clubs? These discussions had an implicit political dimension, in particular in regard to the former Habsburg space. As tourist and alpine clubs were mostly organized along ethno-linguistic lines, the minority clubs were easily sidelined by the larger clubs of the national majority.

Among the East Central European countries, smaller marginalized clubs hoped that their position would be elevated. The Beskidenverein Bielsko, for example, asked the UIAA if it could intervene in a dispute that emerged between the club and the Polish state. In 1904, the club had built a hut on the Babiagóra peak (1725m) on Hungarian territory with the acknowledgement of the landowners. Both the Hungarian and the Czechoslovak state to which territory the area fell after 1919 had supported the project. When in 1933 the Polish state bought the area, the authorities ordered the Beskidenverein to relinquish the hut.[262] Though not a UIAA member, the club surmised from the fact that it was invited to the 1931 and 1933 congresses that "it may count on the support of this world organization" in its claims.[263] This episode demonstrates that

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[261] Holt, "Mountains, Mountaineering and Modernity," 16.

[262] Beskidenverein to UIAA, 26 January 1934, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[263] Beskidenverein to UIAA, 13 July 1933, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. After the UIAA promised to talk to its national members, Bielsko did not reply. In spring 1934, the club wrote again and asked to raise this issue with the Hungarian Tourist Association as well as the Polish Tourist Association. The latter was the head organization which included all Polish tourist clubs including the Beskidenverein. Correspondence Beskidenverein and d'Arcis, 15 April 1935; 29 April 1935; 29 April 1935, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

minority clubs, now marginalized by those clubs who founded the UIAA, hoped to engage the organization as mediators between them and the larger national clubs for solving their own post-imperial territorial issues.

Crisis and War

Despite Carpathian internationalism, the mountains remained on the margins of Europe's mental map. In 1937, George Anderson, a member of the British Fell and Rock Climbing Club, paid a visit to the Czech Tatras. Upon his return, he admitted that he wasn't quite sure where in fact he was traveling: "For myself, my ignorance was so abysmal that, prior to that holiday, I was not completely aware this new European Independent State was fashioned out of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Russia, at the expense, mostly, of Austria and Hungary."[264] On March 15, 1938, Hitler's troops marched into Vienna. Two days after the *Anschluss,* the incorporation of Austria into the Third Reich, the Alpenverein dropped the "Austria" in its name. Had the transnational character of the club until then prevented its *Gleichschaltung*, it was now incorporated into the political structure of the Nazi regime.[265] But the annexation of Austria was only the beginning. Just as British climbers discovered the Carpathians, Europe was on the eve of another war.

At the end of August 1938, the Czechoslovak Tourist Club hosted the fifth general assembly of the UIAA in Prague. The occasion was a festive one—the club was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. Yet political instability had already taken its toll at the UIAA, which had lost two of its members. The Union of Polish Tourist Societies had to dissolve, probably due to

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[264] George Anderson, "A Holiday in the Carpathians," *Journal of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club* 12, no. 32 (1938).

[265] Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 193.

financial reasons. What was more, the Alpenverein Donauland—the predominantly Jewish club that was expelled from the Alpenverein—was "absorbed," to use d'Arcis's euphemism, into the Alpenverein. In fact, the club was prohibited by the Gestapo.[266]

At this second-to-last General Assembly before war did break out, the UIAA's tentative achievements became visible. The UIAA members reported on existing and new environmental protection legislations of their countries and shared their experiences. New legislation in Bulgaria, for example, required alpinists and hikers to report environmental abuses related to fauna protection to the authorities, thus turning them into active agents of the state. The UIAA was now a corresponding member of the International Office for the Protection of Nature, located in Brussels.[267] Apart from nature protection, the standardization of risk was high on the agenda. After the UIAA had decided on standardized distress signals, posters were sent to the clubs to educate all members of the alpine clubs. In addition, it was decided to create a commission to implement the conclusions of the snow and avalanche report. A fund was in place to help families of mountain guides who had lost their lives while guiding clients. Despite a slow start, the UIAA could therefore point to some achievements in its first decade of existence. There was also a newly created information office which received only rarely an inquiry; the world was waiting for war.[268]

While the UIAA met in Prague, the Sudeten crisis, which brought the aggressive policies of Nazi Germany to bear against the Beneš government, was in full swing; France and Britain

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[266] "Rapport du Président du Comité Exécutif, présenté à l'Assemblée des 29-3- août 1938 à Prague, August 1938," GA SAC 595, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[267] "La Protection de la nature alpestre (III), rapport présenté à l'assemblée générale des délégués de l'U.I.A.A.," 30-31 August 1938, Prague, GA SAC 591, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[268] "Rapport du Président du Comité Exécutif, présenté à l'Assemblée des 29-3- août 1938 à Prague, August 1938," GA SAC 595, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

had already decided that they would not go to war over Czechoslovakia. Defying their fate, the East European members present at the UIAA' small meeting made all attempts to boost their influence in the organization they had created.[269] Among the twenty-two members of the UIAA, the East European clubs were still the most dedicated members, eagerly stocking the permanent office with their publications.[270] At the meeting in Prague, the Yugoslav delegate called for representation of the region on the permanent committee. This was only just and equitable in his view since the Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Czechoslovak associations together had 137,000 members and hence the majority of the 240,000 alpinists represented by the UIAA.[271] In a situation of political instability, when the integrity of East Central Europe was threatened, internationalism as an expression of national sovereignty retained its appeal.

Yet Prague would wear black soon. One month later, the Munich Agreement sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia and permitted Hitler to annex the German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia, marking the beginning of the end of an independent East Central Europe. After the annexation, Arthur Seyß-Inquart, *Vereinsführer* of the Alpenverein since its Gleichschaltung, welcomed its former sections of what was now Sudetenland "back home" in the bosom of the *Hauptverein*.[272] The former sections of the Alpenverein rejoiced in the letters pouring in from Eger/Cheb, Gablonz/Jablonec, and other corners of annexed Sudentenland, expressing their

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[269] Twelve representatives from nine clubs were present.

[270] "Rapport du Président du Comité Exécutif, présenté à l'Assemblée des 29-3- août 1938 à Prague, August 1938," GA SAC 595, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[271] "Procès-verbal de la 5e Assemblée Générale des Délégués de l'Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme," 30-31 August 1938, Prague, GA SAC 591, Burgerbibliothek, Berne. As this required a change of statute, d'Arcis proposed to decide this at the next assembly in Stockholm since the Prague one didn't reach the necessary quorum. That assembly however did not take place due to the war.

[272] Arthur Seyß-Inquart, 18 October 1938, OeAV ZV/4.23/Sudentendeutsche Alpenvereine, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

delight to be “liberated from years-long subjugation” and the end of “Czech rule” [Tschechenherrschaft].[273] While the German Alpenverein Silesia lamented that “still large parts of [its] German-Arian club members,” especially in Moravia, remained under “Czech rule,” this was soon to be changed.[274] After the brief existence of a shrunken “Second Czechoslovak Republic,” Germany annexed the Czech parts into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in May 1939. The four Czechoslovak clubs that were represented at the UIAA founding meeting in Chamonix in 1932 all underwent major organizational changes during the division of Czechoslovakia.[275] The Slovak club IAMES left the UIAA, unable to pay its dues, in February 1939.[276] Yet the most astounding change befell the project that inspired the UIAA in the first place, as the Polish government unilaterally declared the establishment of a nature reserve in the Tatra. Taking advantage of the dissolution of its neighbor, the reserve also included annexed territory. What had started as a peace-building project ended in a forceful land grab.[277]

When the UIAA executive committee met in Zermatt, Switzerland, on August 20, 1939, the participants did not know that they would not convene again until 1947. Twelve days later, on September 1, German troops marched across the border into Poland. The world was plunged into another world war. At the UIAA’s inception in 1932, d’Arcis had envisioned the organization as

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[273] Various letters, October-December 1938, OeAV ZV/4.23/Sudentendeutsche Alpenvereine, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[274] Silesia to Seyß-Inquart, 4 November 1938, OeAV ZV/4.23/Sudentendeutsche Alpenvereine, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[275] These were the Czechoslovak Touring Club (Klub československých turistů, KČST), the Czechoslovak Alpine Club (Klub alpistů československých, KAČT), the Society of Tatra Mountaineers (Spolok Tatranských Horolescov) and the Czechoslovak Ski Federation (Svaz Lyžařů Republiky Československé v Praze).

[276] D’Arcis to IAMES, 15 February 1935, folder “Tchécoslovaquie,” UIAA, Berne.

[277] Hoenig, "Geteilte Berge," 78.

"lend[ing] its support to the moral reconstruction of the world."[278] All d'Arcis could do now was write letters to the clubs in occupied Belgium, France, and Poland expressing his moral support.[279] His letters to Walery Goetel went unanswered. Only later would d'Arcis learn that Goetel had received his communications yet was unable to reply due to the political circumstances, thus his Swiss colleague remained in the dark about his fate.[280] Nonetheless, d'Arcis' letters provided comfort in signaling that the Poles "had not been forgotten by their alpinist friends."[281]

Support for European clubs came also from the other side of the Atlantic. The president of the American Alpine Club, Henry Hall, who had been elected honorary member of the Club Alpin Français after World War I, expressed his support to France already in March 1940, two months before the German invasion. The US might be still officially neutral, he wrote to Paris, but the Americans "are far from being neutral in [their] sympathies." Hall's commitment was not limited to words of encouragement. A personal donation of one thousand francs, intended to support the club in times of hardship, accompanied this letter.[282] While neither d'Arcis nor Hall could do more than writing letters and sending money, their dedication to show solidarity demonstrates their dedication to uphold transnational networks in times of crisis.

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[278] Edmund d'Arcis quoted in Bossus, *Les cinquante premières années*, 79.

[279] D'Arcis became honorary member of the KAC in 1933. See Pilát to d'Arcis, 20 March 1933, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[280] Coincidentally being on a visit to Lwów (Lviv), Goetel had escaped the "Sonderaktion Krakau," a Nazi operation of November 1939 during which 183 academics of the Jagiellonian University and other institutions were assembled under false pretense and subsequently deported to the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Dachau. Permitted by the Nazis to head a technical mining school during occupation, Goetel was restored as Rector of the Academy of Mining and Metalurgy right after the war.

[281] Procès-verbal de la séance du Comité Exécutif, 4 July 1947, p.3, folder "Comité Exécutif 1932-1959," UIAA, Berne.

[282] Henry Hall to CAF, 01 March 1940. Box 2, file 1, Henry Hall Papers, AAC Library, Golden, Colorado.

War and shifting borders in East Central Europe once again relocated mountain assets. On the winning side, very briefly, was Hungary. Joining the Axis Powers, the mountain-deprived country regained the Ruthenian Carpathians and parts of the Transylvanian Carpathians in 1938 and 1940 respectively.[283] For the second time, the sections of the German-dominated Transylvanian Carpathian Club found themselves separated in a new state and were forced to reorganize while hoping for the help of the "great German brother club," i.e. the Alpenverein.[284]

For the Polish Tatra Society, no help was in sight. Its human and material losses were devastating. By the end of the war, a quarter of the Tatra Society's members, Goetel estimated, were missing or dead—four to five thousand people, largely intellectuals, who were among the many target of Nazi murdersquads. Almost a third of the leading figures of the club were killed in the concentration camps of Mauthausen and Dachau or otherwise vanished. Most of the huts were damaged or destroyed, and the equipment wrecked. Forced to cease all activities, the Tatra Society was able to at least clandestinely conserve its archive and library, an opportunity few other Polish organizations had.[285]

Re-Joining "The Grand Family of Alpinists"

On May 8, 1945, World War II on the European continent ended with the surrender of the Axis powers. For six years, all mountaineering activities had ceased, with the exceptions of those

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[283] The territorial expansion was based on the First and Second Vienna Award. On November 2, 1938, the First Vienna Award transferred parts of southern Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia to Hungary. In September 1940, Hitler divided Transylvania evenly between the Axis members Romania and Hungary.

[284] Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein to DAV, 25 April 1941, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Ungarn, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck. The Carpathian Club asked for club statutes, yet the Alpenverein was itself in a process of re-organization with the aim to "better represent the Führer principle." See DAV to Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein, 15 May 1941, nicht verzeichnet/fremde Vereine/Ungarn, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[285] Goetel to d'Arcis, 19 March 1946; 22 October 1946, folder "Polande/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

of alpinists who were serving in divisions employed in the mountains. But unlike after the First World War, the romantic notion of the alpine hero-soldier in Europe lost some of its allure. Elite climber Lionel Terray, who served as part of the French 15th Battalion of Chasseurs Alpin and continued climbing for pleasure when off duty, pondered on the war he had initially experienced as a game: "No, climbing is not war: because war is no longer anything but an immense murder."[286]

While the romanticized alpine war-rhetoric of the interwar period had lost its credibility, the notion of alpinism and sport in general as a preparation for warfare remained. Governments, like those of France and Switzerland, invested mounting resources into both military and civilian training of alpine skills and the promotion of mountain sports. Sport ministries established new academies or took direct control of existing ones.[287] Non-governmental organizations such as the British Mountaineering Council were founded in the desire to prepare citizens for mountain warfare.[288] In Switzerland, the (unfounded) belief that the Alps saved Switzerland from a Nazi invasion perpetuated the national "Alpine myth" which had dominated debates of national identity since the 1930s.[289] The 10th US Mountain Division's battles in the Italian Alps became

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[286]Lionel Terray, *Conquistadores of the Useless* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 2001), 98.

[287] In Switzerland, the Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen (Eidgenössische Hochschule für Sport Magglingen) was founded in 1944 by the Federal Military Department. The Swiss Patrouille des Glaciers—which became the largest ski mountaineering race in the world—was firstly organized in 1943 to test the ability of the alpine troops. In France, state institutions included the French National School of Ski and Alpinism (École National de Ski et d'Alpinisme, ENSA) and the Collège National de Ski et d'Alpinisme which was later merged with ENSA.

[288] In Britain, climber Geoffrey Winthrop Young voiced concerns during the war that British mountaineers—dispersed in many individual clubs—were not contributing enough to the armed forces and had no central authority speaking in a single voice. To mitigate this, the British Mountaineering Council was founded as an umbrella organization at the end of 1945. Geoff Milburn, Derek Walker, and Ken Wilson, eds., *The First Fifty Years of the British Mountaineering Council* (Manchester: The British Mountaineering Council, 1997), 3-5.

[289] Oliver Zimmer, "In Search of Natural Identity: Alpine Landscape and the Reconstruction of the Swiss Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 4 (1998): 660.

material for legend and lore; its veterans turned into crucial promoters of recreational alpine skiing.[290] In Germany, mountains, too, remained a cultural source for (re-)defining nationhood.[291]

Overall, the number of people casually interested in climbing rose to unprecedented numbers. Technological advancements, both before and during the war, led to the ready availability of new equipment. Ropes and slings made from nylon and the new rubber soles developed by the Italian Vitale Bramani, for example, allowed the climbing elite in the postwar period to push new frontiers.[292] Furthermore, the prewar competition for the Himalayan peaks could be resumed, now that the war had ended. Despite major efforts, none of the fourteen eight-thousand meter peaks had seen a first ascent in the interwar period. With the re-establishment of their sovereignty, the East Central European states had now a chance to take part in the Himalayan game.

Shortly after the war in 1945, the Czech engineer and mountaineer, Alois Kraus, had a daring dream. What if a Czechoslovak expedition would be the first to climb Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world? Three times a well-equipped British expedition had attempted the

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[290] According to Morten Lund, 2,000 veterans became ski instructors and around 60 American ski resorts were founded or managed by veterans, Morten Lund, "The 10th Mountain Miracle," *Skiing Heritage Journal* 7, no. 2 (1995). The following works are both testimony and representations of the legend-making process: A. B. Feuer, *Packs on! Memoirs of the 10th Mountain Division* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004); McKay Jenkins, *The Last Ridge: The Epic Story of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division and the Assault on Hitler's Europe*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2003); Charles J. Sanders, *The Boys of Winter: Life and Death in the U.S. Ski Troops during the Second World War* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005); Peter Shelton, *Climb to Conquer: The Untold Story of World War II's 10th Mountain Division Ski Troops* (New York: Scribner, 2003).

[291] See e.g. Harald Hoebusch, "Ascent into Darkness: German Himalaya Expeditions and the National Socialist Quest for High-Altitude Flight," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no. 4 (2007): 73-74.

[292] For the post-war developments in Great Britain, see e.g. Ronald William Clark and Edward C. Pyatt, *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Phoenix House, 1957), 236-52. Compared to the traditional hemp ropes, nylon ropes were stronger, behaved better in wet conditions, and added more safety due to their elasticity. In addition to new equipment, also new climbing techniques such as hand jamming, developed by Peter Harding in Britain, pushed the scale of difficulty upwards.

summit—in 1922, 1924, and 1933—without success. Yet, “considering the professional and moral quality of the [Czechoslovak] mountaineers,” Kraus believed that “[they] too can and should venture out to places which so far were the exclusive domain of the big and powerful.”[293] Together with leading personalities of the Czechoslovak mountaineering community, Kraus founded the Czechoslovak Himalayan Society (Českoslovenksá himalajská společnost). Similar to the British Mount Everest Committee or the Nazi-supported German Himalaya Foundation, the society was tasked with the organization and fundraising of a Himalayan expedition.

Possibly no other achievement could have been a more powerful expression of national sovereignty than the first ascent of Everest. Even the mere capability of organizing an expedition into altitudes that had mainly the domain of the “powerful” would convey a message of independence. In November of 1945, an audience of two hundred people gathered in the botanical institute in Prague and listened to Kraus’ slide show about new ways to supply alpine expeditions from the air. Two movies about Nanga Parbat, most likely the 1935 Dyhrenfurth’s *Demon of the Himalayas* and the 1936 documentary *Nanga Parbat: Das Schicksal deutscher Helden,* complemented the program.[294] It must have been a cathartic experience for the spectators who on that November evening watched the German defeat in the Himalayas while envisioning their compatriots on Everest.

The Czechoslovak Himalayan Society was active for only two years and never succeeded in sending a team abroad. Nonetheless, the level of interest in the Himalayan dream immediately after the end of the war—when political and economic instability still shook the country after

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[293] Alois Kraus, “Českoslovenksá himalajská společnost 1945,” 26 April 1977, p.1, ID E000008, Digital Archive ČHS. Kraus worked as an engineer in Teheran in the 1930s where he started to climb easy peaks and became fascinated with Himalayan climbing.

[294] For Nanga Parbat in German film, see Hoebusch, "A 'Triumph of the Will'? Andrew Marton's Der Damon des Himalaya and the National Socialist Need for Heroes."

Nazi occupation, political division, and six years of war—was remarkable and illustrated the connection between the reconstruction of national sovereignty and mountaineering.[295] While a new government under Edvard Beneš was forming, climbers in re-instated Czechoslovakia quickly reinvigorated alpinist associative life and training courses in the Tatra Mountains in order to make up for the lost years of occupation and war.[296]

Sometime in May 1945, on the day he learned about the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Egmond d'Arcis drank to the health of Rudolf Pilát a glass of Tajemstvi Prachovskych Skal (The Secret of the Prachov Rocks).[297] Pilát, a banker, politician, and central figure in the creation of the UIAA, was a "near and dear friend" of d'Arcis who had lost contact with him in the war years.[298] The toast was not without effect—the Czechs were the very first to respond to d'Arcis's first post-war letter to former members.[299] D'Arcis was filled with joy to hear from Pilát; he had followed the fate of Czechoslovakia with much distress. Seven years earlier, at the occasion of the general assembly in 1938, Pilát himself had presented d'Arcis the bottle of the liquor at his forest house in the sandstone landscape of Český ráj.[300] Through the institutional connections of the UIAA, both men had become more than just fellow internationalists.

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[295] For the origins of political sovereignty and mountain climbing see Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment*.

[296] Miloslav Jedlička to d'Arcis, 12 March 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne. See also Alois Kraus, "Českoslovenksá himalajská společnost 1945," 26 April 1977, ID E000008, Digital Archive ČHS. During the occupation, Czech climbers had no access to the Tatras.

[297] The last battle in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Prague Offensive, concluded on May 11, thus three days after Victory Day.

[298] Otto Jelinek quotes Pilát in a letter to d'Arcis, 29 October 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[299] Telegram, Preparatory committee of the Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation to d'Arcis, 1945, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[300] D'Arcis to Pilát, 01 September 1945, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

The reconstitution of the UIAA was a sign of the return of internationalism. Rudolf Pilát died of apoplexy in October 1946; yet as d'Arcis lost his closest connection to the Czechoslovaks, the Czechoslovak alpine clubs remained committed to return to the European mountaineering community.[301] Shortly, other clubs notified the UIAA of their interest to reinvigorate the organization, signaling the power of the abeyance structure of the UIAA, discussed earlier.[302] The Czech Tourist Club expressed their pleasure "to support the renewed cooperation among the grand family of alpinists who, as [d'Arcis] wrote in [his] letter, take part in the grand [belle] task of reconstructing the morale of the world, which is the prerogative of the new international entente and of durable peace and blessing of the world."[303] Committed to take an active role in the UIAA, the newly found Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation (Svaz Československých Horolezců, SČSH), which included the Alpine Club and the Tourist Club, proposed to organize the UIAA general assembly in 1948.[304]

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[301] Otto Jelinek to d'Arcis, 29 October 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[302] Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance." For other examples see Rupp, "The Persistence of Transnational Organizing: The Case of the Homophile Movement." The concept of an abeyance structure, developed by sociologist Vera Taylor in her work on the women' movement, describes the ability of an organization to retain its members in hostile environment such as war for future mobilization. Alpinism was not a social movement, yet the four internal factors, which Taylor identifies as necessary to retain potential activists, also apply for the narrower expert-driven internationalism of the UIAA. These factors are temporality, commitment, centralization, exclusiveness, and culture. The leaderships of alpine societies and membership in the UIAA were exclusive and alpinism represented a coherent and shared culture. In terms of temporality, both individuals in leadership positions and alpine clubs were comparatively stable. Key figures of the UIAA, such as Walery Goetel and Egmond d'Arcis, were highly committed to the cause; the latter impersonated the "single center of power" which Taylor regards as crucial for the strength of the structure.

[303] KTC to d'Arcis, 22 February 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne. In the Soviet Union, the image of the family of alpinism (*druzhnaia sem'ia sovetskikh al'pinistov*) was also a term widely used to describe the alpine community of Soviet alpinists in the post-war era Eva Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin: Sowjetische Alpinisten 1928-1953* (Zurich: Chronos, 2010), 258.

[304] In 1946, the newly founded Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation united the Tourist Club and the Alpine Club (both now again Czechoslovak) and the Slovak-based Tatra club IAMES. In the pre-war era, the Czech Alpine Club was a regular member of the UIAA, the Tourist Club and IAMES were affiliated members.

The eagerness with which the Czech clubs (now re-organized as Czechoslovak clubs) reinstated ties with the UIAA demonstrated not only a commitment to internationalism but also the linkage of nationalism and internationalism. At the center of postwar reconstruction in Czechoslovakia stood the nationalizing project, the recovery of national sovereignty, and the rehabilitation of national honor. These ideas fused with internationalist activism in the postwar period, as Tara Zahra has shown.[305] When the Czechoslovak climbers re-invigorated their ties with the UIAA and European alpine clubs, they equally signaled the desire to rehabilitate their country among the larger mountaineering community.[306] After years of silence forced upon the clubs during Nazi occupation, renewing contacts with European alpine clubs was both a symbolic and factual act of confirming that Czechoslovakia was once again a political entity.

The Poles also aspired to resume their prewar internationalist project. In spring 1946, news arrived from the Tatra Society and the Polish Ski Federation.[307] For the Tatra Society, too, affirming membership of the UIAA was a symbolic first step out of the underground into which it was forced during the Nazi occupation. The enthusiasm over rejoining the UIAA was great. Despite the slow start of the organization before the war, the UIAA played a vital role in the immediate postwar period by offering a form of moral support that arose from reconnecting with a community. D'Arcis hoped that as long the UIAA still had the functioning frame, a new start would be possible.[308] "We almost have to start all over again," he wrote to Goetel, invoking all

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[305] Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*, 334.

[306] For the retention of transnational connections beyond the war, see Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism."

[307] Goetel to d'Arcis, 19 March 1946; Polish Ski Association to d'Arcis, 16 April 1946, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[308] D'Arcis to Goetel, 26 April 1946, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. D'Arcis suggested to first organize an unofficial meeting of members and hold off convening the General Assembly until more members would be able to attend.

"small and big dramas" that unfolded over the years since the last assembly of the UIAA.[309] Relentlessly, d'Arcis wrote to former members and established regular exchange with the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, and his own Swiss Alpine Club.[310] By spring 1946, fifteen associations representing thirteen countries were recognized as members of the UIAA.[311] Despite the postwar internationalist enthusiasm among the East Central European clubs, most of them were unable to pay their membership fees due to economic hardship and restrictions on foreign currency transactions, perpetuating the precarious financial situation of the organization.[312]

Likewise, the suspicion with which the British in particular had treated the East Central Europeans before the war did not subside. In fact, the looming Cold War perpetuated their marginalization. Knowing that high altitude aspirations in the Himalayas relied on support of the British, the Czech Alpine Club aspired to form close connections with the Alpine Club. Yet

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[309] D'Arcis to Goetel, 08 December 1948, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[310] D'Arcis to Pilát, 06 January 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[311] D'Arcis to Jedlička, 27 April 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne. In July 1947, d'Arcis welcomed in Geneva the representatives of the permanent members of the executive committee—the Swiss Alpine Club, the French Mountaineering Federation (FFM), the Italian Alpine Club, Poland—as well as Dr. Avčin who represented the Slovenian Alpine Club. The Fédération française de la montagne (French Mountaineering Association) was founded upon pressure of the Vichy government in 1942. The CAF was its main members, sharing staff and location with the Federation. The president Lucien Devies was president of the CAF, FFM as well as the GHM. While it was still unclear what the role of the UIAA should be, d'Arcis was determined to extend its membership base well beyond Europe. At this first session, the Federación Mexicana de Excursionismo (Mexican Tourist Federation) and the Argentinian Club Andino Bariloche (Andian Club of Bariloche) were admitted, together with the Canadian Alpine Club and the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), who received the seat initially reserved for the Alpine Club. Furthermore, d'Arcis established contact with organizations in South Africa and East Africa. See D'Arcis to Barford, 24 March 1947, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[312] Acquiring foreign currency for paying membership was a major problem for the Central European clubs as well as for the Spanish Mountaineering Federation that operated under the constraints of the Franco regime. See e.g. note from Rudolf Pilát to d'Arcis asking for reduced membership fees, 18 January 1946, folder "Tchécoslovaquie;" president of the Federacion Españiola de Montanismo to d'Arcis, 12 May 1947, UIAA, Berne. The BMC was able yet reluctant to pay its membership dues, debating back and forth the usefulness of the organization and the problems of sending delegates to the meetings on the continent. See various committee meetings between 1946 and 1953, BMC Minute Book 2.12.44-3.10.60. BMC, Manchester.

when in 1945 its president Miloslav Jedlička wrote to London after "more than six years of silence forced upon [the Czechs]," his repeated invitations to British club members were met with wariness.[313] For British alpinists, Czechoslovakia remained uncharted territory, and the growing power of the Communist Party intensified British worries about cooperating with the Czechs.

The establishment of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia followed a slightly different pattern than in the other East Central European states. Many Czechs felt betrayed by the 1938 Munich agreement which had settled Germany's annexation of Sudetenland and hence turned towards the Soviets who they celebrated as liberators.[314] The country emerged as the Soviet Union's closest ally in the interwar period, a relationship that later was mirrored in the close connections between the Czechoslovak alpine bureaucrats and their Soviet colleagues. In May 1946, the Communist Party won slightly over 40 percent in Bohemia and Moravia and 31 percent of the votes in Slovakia. The Communist Party was already promoting the unification of all sports and tourist clubs, evoking the end of the institutional and political independence of the mountaineers.[315]

The looming Cold War thus added another burden on East Central European mountaineers to assert themselves vis-à-vis "great power" mountaineers. Otto Jelínek, Honorary International Secretary of the newly founded Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation, tried to assuage the British concerns in a letter written in English: "once in Czechoslovakia you can go

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[313] Miloslav Jedlička to Alpine Club, 20 October 1945, 1922/H24, Alpine Club, London. The KČA was the Czech part of the KAČT which was dissolved during Nazi occupation.

[314] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 137.

[315] Marek Waic, "Sport in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1998," in *In the Shadow of Totalitarianism: Sport and the Olympic Movement in the "Visegrád countries" 1945-1989*, ed. Marek Waic (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2014), 16.

wherever you want, you can speak to everybody about everything you want, you can get English newspapers etc. You will find a free, hospitable people, trying to do the best."[316] In 1947, a small group of British climbers did accept the invitation to climb in the Tatras and the Elbe Sandstone. Upon his return, Bryan Donkin, a member of the party, assured the readers of the *Alpine Journal* that "although many of these young rock climbers are ardent Communists, there was no evidence that the clubs had any political significance," and lauded the "excellent training" and the "fortitude and faith" of "these young men."[317] For now, Donkin vouched for the Czechs and Slovaks as alpinists worthy to climb with.

Describing "the communism of democratic Czechoslovakia" as "very different from that of their eastern neighbour," Donkin captured the ambivalent political climate of the postwar period, which was marked by struggle over Czechoslovakia's position on the East-West axis.[318] For mountaineers, the question was whether the Alps or the mountain ranges of the Soviet Union would provide the training grounds for Czech high altitude aspirations. According to Eva Maurer, the Czech Alpine Club proposed a literature exchange with the Soviet All-Union Section of Alpinism immediately after the war.[319] Reaching out to the Soviet Union did not necessarily represent a political choice; as chapter four will show, Western clubs, too, were eager to receive access to Soviet mountains. However, the expectation that Czechoslovakia would remain a largely democratic country was belied in early 1948. Despite the firm domestic support of the

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[316] Otto Jelínek to Warren, 03 March 1947, 1922/H24, Alpine Club, London.

[317] Bryan Donkin, "Czechoslovakia 1947," *Alpine Journal* 56 (1948): 238.

[318] Bradley F. Abrams, *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

[319] Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 407, note 139. According to Maurer, this request motivated Soviet mountaineers, isolated since 1938, to bring forward a regular publication.

Communist Party and the allegiance with the Soviet Union, the Communists plotted a coup d'état in February 1948 and seized full control of the country.[320]

Frost Nips: The Sovietization of East Central Europe

With the consolidation of Soviet power and the onset of the Cold War, the alpine clubs retreated from the internationalist project and temporarily suspended their effort to secure their place in the European community of mountaineers. The brief period of internationalist enthusiasm after World War II became subsumed in the new geopolitical realities of the Cold War. The network of East Central European alpine and tourist organizations, the social fabric of which was already severely damaged during German occupation and war times, were substituted by government-controlled organizations. All previously independent traditional organizations were quickly integrated into a state-sponsored system of ideologically driven Communist sports clubs. The Czech Alpine Club, together with all other Czech and Slovak tourist organizations, was incorporated into a state-run Federation of Czechoslovak Sokols (Českolovenská obec Sokolská) in 1949.[321]

In Poland, the establishment of Communist power had preceded the Czech coup by one year. The Communist-led Committee of National Liberation had sidelined competitors for power with ruthless tactics already in 1944. In 1947, the Communist-dominated government established full control of the country by means of a rigged election and the ousting of non-Communist political leaders. Similar to Czechoslovakia, the onset of Stalinization stymied Polish attempts to re-create their organizations of civil society. The Polish Tatra Society, an emblem of Polish

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[320] For the relevance of the coup for the postwar order see Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, 138.

[321] The *Sokols* (falcons) were founded in 1862 as the Czech equivalent to the German gymnasts, *Turners*.

culture far beyond the inner circles of mountaineers, was once again dissolved in 1948.[322] Climbing became organized along Soviet lines: the freedom to solo climb was substituted with collective ascents, Soviet-style classification and certificating schemes were introduced, and climbers had to undergo ideological consciousness tests.[323]

On a larger cultural scale, the postwar appropriation of the Tatra Mountains into the new socialist order did not fully succeed, as Hoenig argues. As Socialist modernity was represented by industrial and urban landscapes rather than lofty heights, the reconciliation of the bourgeois tradition of mountain tourism with the ideological primacy of modernization remained ambiguous.[324] The narrative that emerged under Soviet rule sought to create a proletarian mass tourism while also promoting a new model of nature protection. This model combined the Tatra Society's emphasis on nature protection with a new vision of the proletarian tourist who also acted as a conservationist—a character who, Hoenig argues, remained a "somewhat hypothetical figure."[325] For climbers, the physical restrictions the new government imposed on the Tatras were real: as the national border became militarized, climbing in the Tatra became limited to two valleys. While the Tatra Society's yearlong project of a National Park was finally fulfilled and opened in 1954, the National Park regulations intensified the restriction on climbers and turned the community into an "isolated and isolating group."[326] If the "Tatra card" controlled cross-border tourism in the interwar period, climbers now had to be certified by the sport authorities if

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[322] Bianca Hoenig, "Nature into a Socialist Landscape? The Case of the Polish Tatra Mountains after 1945," *National Identities* 16, no. 3 (2014): 257.

[323] Sonelski, "Climbing under Communism," 147.

[324] Hoenig, "Nature into a Socialist Landscape?."

[325] "Nature into a Socialist Landscape?," 248.

[326] Sonelski, "Climbing under Communism," 148.

they wanted to leave the marked trails. Climbers without permits risked attracting warning shots from border guards.[327] The Carpathian dream of a future without state borders had withered away as the borders became even more impenetrable than in the interwar period.

Sovietization was furthermore accompanied by a reevaluation of the international ties that previously connected the clubs to their Western counterparts. What would be the relationship between the new alpinist institutions of Communist Central Europe and earlier internationalist organizations? During these early postwar years, it appeared that the old guard of alpine bureaucrats who resumed posts in the new institutions would continue their commitment to alpine internationalism. Now they found themselves in a difficult position. Walery Goetel, skilled at working under different regimes, served as the president of the Commission for Mountain Tourism, part of the Polish Tourism Society that now also incorporated a special Mountaineering Section. When Goetel informed Egmond d'Arcis about the organizational changes in Polish mountaineering in 1950, he kept quiet about his own views on the matter, citing wartime destruction and the development of mass tourism as the reason for the reorganization.[328]

The fact that Goetel avoided the political heart of the matter indicated that the alpinists subjected to Sovietization found themselves in a predicament.[329] Most likely, it was with certain embarrassment that Goetel had to announce the dissolution of the Tatra Society, after devoting so

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[327] "Climbing under Communism," 147.

[328] Goetel to d'Arcis, 04 September 1950, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[329] On the Sovietization of East Central Europe see E.A. Rees, "The Sovietization of Eastern Europe," in *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on the Postwar Period*, ed. Balázs Apor, Péter Apor, and E.A. Rees (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2008); John Connelly, *Captive University: the Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

much energy into resurrecting it from the underground.[330] In contrast to 1939, Goetel was not able to blame an occupying power. What also remained unsaid was the fact that by 1950, the Polish state had not only solidified its borders but also ensured that they were almost impenetrable. While Goetel appealed to the "old circle of the friends of alpinism" and promised to continue his international work in the UIAA, only a minuscule number of Poles would able to travel abroad until Khruschev's Thaw of the mid-1950s.[331] What was internationalism worth if there were no opportunities to travel abroad?

It is thus not surprising that Goetel's appeal for remembering the long-term friendship among alpinists had already been cast aside. In the tense climate of the early Cold War, the politicization of the East Central European clubs alienated the Western clubs early on. The debate about where to hold the general assembly was the first in which Cold War rhetoric crystallized and a distinct Eastern European "otherness" was reinforced. When the Czechoslovaks reiterated their offer to hold the 1948 General Assembly in the Tatra Mountains, already voiced two years earlier, several UIAA members warned that they would refuse to send a representative. The Swiss Alpine Club declared they wished "to keep away from any political influence," while the Dutch Alpine Club (Nederlandsche Alpenvereenigung*)* opposed meeting a meeting on "the other side of the Iron Curtain."[332] In addition, d'Arcy feared that not all delegates would be able to attain visas. He preferred holding the meeting in a "neutral place"—to

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[330] Goetel to d'Arcis, 1950 (no date), folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[331] Dariusz Stola, "Opening a Non-exit State: The Passport Policy of Communist Poland, 1949–1980," *East European Politics & Societies* 29, no. 1 (2015). The numbers Stola offers are telling of the degree of isolation: In 1951, less than 2000 passports were issued for travels to non-Soviet bloc states, most of them to state and party officials on business trips. In 1954, only 52 individuals were able to receive a passport for private travels to the West. Ibid., 98.

[332] D'Arcis to British Mountaineering Council, 13 May 1948, folder "Grande Bretagne, A.C..," UIAA, Berne.

avoid having to accept invitations by the Czech government by proxy of the Czechoslovak Sokols—an idea d'Arcy found more than uncomfortable."[333]

D'Arcis told the Czechoslovaks that the UIAA could not afford the costs for the bureau to travel to the Tatras. Instead, he suggested holding the general assembly in Geneva in conjunction with a week of climbing in the Czech mountains.[334] Otto Jelínek, the Secretary for International Affairs of the Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation, was irritated. After all, the Tatras had been discussed the previous year without the travel circumstances having changed in the meantime.[335] D'Arcis could not mask the political reasoning at play and Jelinek could not be fooled, no matter how often the Swiss stressed that it was a mere budget decision.[336] Dealing with old colleagues, d'Arcis felt uncomfortable to voice political concerns—a problem he would not have later when dealing with the Soviet Mountaineering Federation. The decision to cut ties was therefore mutual. After paying their outstanding dues for 1949 and 1950, the Czechoslovaks informed Geneva of their decision to withdraw from the UIAA in 1952.[337]

The influx of the Central European clubs into the UIAA immediately after the war turned into a sudden retreat. In 1951, the Hungarian Tourists, part of the Hungarian Federation of Friends of Nature, sent a letter of protest against the Korean War to the UIAA in 1951—as if the organization was the United Nations of mountaineers. A year later, the Hungarians left the UIAA

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[333] D'Arcis to British Mountaineering Council, 13 May 1948, folder "Grande Bretagne, A.C..," UIAA, Berne.

[334] D'Arcis to Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation, 02 April 1948, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[335] Jelinek to d'Arcis, 18 April 1948, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[336] D'Arcis was open about the political factors at play in correspondence with the British Mountaineering Council, yet not with the Czechs. D'Arcis to Jelinek, 13 May 1948, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[337] Českolovenská obec Sokolská to d'Arcis, 24 May 1951, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

altogether.[338] Between 1952 and 1955, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary broke off communication, with only the Bulgarian Tourist Union and the Yugoslavs remaining active members.[339] The response of the UIAA's executive committee to these withdrawals was rather creative. In the absence of a formal cancellation of membership, d'Arcis decided to continue treating the Czech Federation as a member.[340]

The immediate discomfort of continuing to work with the new Czechoslovak organizations after 1948 revealed that an organization structured according to the nation-state principles could not be "apolitical." The falling out with the three East Central European organizations, which were still partly led by the alpine bureaucrats who instigated the founding of the UIAA in the first place, illustrated the fact that transnational actors were ready to accept Cold War rhetoric even if there was little to gain from a confrontation with the other side. The reason behind the politicization of the UIAA was, paradoxically, its proclaimed apolitical stance, which meant that the realities of the Cold War could not be officially called by name. In turn, no official mission or program could fill the claim of "the moral reconstruction of the world" with an explicit effort to resist the bipolarity of international affairs.

In response to this situation, President d'Arcis set his sights beyond Europe, wooing both the American and the New Zealand Alpine Club to join the UIAA.[341] "I think it is most important that—in our Union as in other international organizations—all associations of the western

[338] Antoine Erős to d'Arcis, 29 August 1950; 14 August 1951, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[339] Pressedienst des Deutschen Alpenvereins, no. 12, 6 June 1955, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[340] D'Arcis to Českolovenská obec Sokolská, 13 August 1951, folder "Tchécoslovaquie," UIAA, Berne.

[341] The honorary secretary of NZAC regretted that the club cannot be represented in Geneva, but hoped that a meeting once will coincide with a Europe visit of a member. He gave no hint whether there was any interest in joining the UIAA. NZAC Honorary Secretary to d'Arcis, 12 June 1947. ARC-0105, MS-1164-1/6/19. Hocken Collections, Dunedin, folder "Etats Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

hemisphere should join in order to keep them alive and strong," d'Arcis wrote to the American Alpine Club president Henry Hall in 1950, continuing his prewar efforts to convince the Americans to rejoin the UIAA.[342] Yet, much like the British Alpine Club, the American Alpine Club had a small yet elitist member base and saw little reason to do so. It was not until 1966, when the UIAA expanded its focus from territorial-bound issues such as hut reciprocity to dealing with equipment and safety standardizations, that the Americans re-joined the association they had left briefly after its creation.[343] D'Arcis's attempts to attract the larger overseas clubs to bolster the capitalist camp in the UIAA indicates that his universalist vision of alpinism had succumbed to Cold War polarization.

With the British and American clubs disinterested, another major club stepped out of its isolation: in 1953, the (West) German Alpine Club (Deutscher Alpenverein, DAV) decided to join the UIAA.[344] The final death of the project of Greater Germany had also meant an end to the isolationist German and Austrian Alpenverein. Dissolved by the allied occupation in 1945, Austria and Germany re-instated separated alpine clubs in 1947 and 1953 respectively.[345] For the German Alpenverein, still the largest alpine club in the world, the membership in the UIAA constituted a major step out of self-inflicted political isolation. Immediately, the German

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[342] D'Arcis made a plea to the AAC in 1939, then starting again in 1947. See D'Arcis to Henry Hall, 12 June 1934 (regret of AAC withdrawal); 29 May 1939; 4 May 1947; 29 September 1948; 18 August 1950, folder "Etats Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

[343] Lawrence Conveney to UIAA president Wyss-Dunant, 14 February 1966, folder "Etats Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

[344] Alfred Jennewein to d'Arcis, 23 June 1951, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[345] The postwar situation of the Alpenverein was complicated to say the least and a turned into a tale of three countries. In the Soviet zone, all Alpenverein sections were dissolved and expropriated. See Schicksal der Hütten der ehemaligen mittel-und ostdeutschen Sektionen des DAV, 22 May 1990. DAV DOK 3 SG/53, p.1, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Munich.

Alpenverein filled the permanent seat on the executive committee that had been reserved for it since 1933 serving as a marker of Germany's changing role in the world after WWII.[346]

The Return of East Central Europe

The year 1953 marked the beginning of the end of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and, to a large extent, also in its satellite states. In the context of de-Stalinization and the Thaw, a major organizational change reinstated the autonomy of mountaineers within the framework of state organizations, facilitating increased transnational relations among mountaineers.[347] In Czechoslovakia, the Sokols were dissolved in 1953. Separated from tourism, the Czechoslovak Mountaineering Section under the control of the Sports Committee was henceforward responsible for the organization of climbing and mountaineering.[348] In Poland, the Section for Alpinism was dissolved in 1956 and the Klub Wysokogórski (formerly the alpinist section of the Tatra Society) re-established as an independent and sole representative of Polish alpinism.[349] While travel policies remained strict, inter-bloc mobility was eased. In 1959, Czechoslovakia agreed to reinstate the prewar convention on small border traffic.[350]

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[346] See Pressedienst des Deutschen Alpenvereins, Nr. 12, 6 June 1955, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[347] For a discussion of spectator sports in East Central Europe after 1953 and increased anti-Soviet sentiments in the sport arena, see Keller, "The Mountains Roar: The Alps during the Great War."; Mikhail Iu Prozumenshchikov, "Sports as a Mirror of Eastern Europe's Crises," *Russian Studies in History* 49, no. 2 (2010).

[348] The State Committee for Physical Culture and Sport (Státní výbor pro tělesnou výchovu a sport), an agency similar to a sports ministry, took the place of the Sokols.

[349] Polska Sekcja Alpinizmu to UIAA, 17 August 1956, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne. Secretary Andrzej Zawada, who in the 1970s would emerge as one of the world's strongest alpinists himself signed the letter to the UIAA asking for re-admission. The club had now 14 local sections and about 1100 members, see *UIAA Bulletin Trimestriel*, no 4 (May 1959): 2.

[350] Stola, "Opening a Non-exit State: The Passport Policy of Communist Poland, 1949–1980," note 50.

With these changes in effect, the Klub Wysokogórski, still under leadership of Walery Goetel, and the Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation approached the UIAA and requested the resumption of their memberships. The UIAA tasked the Yugoslav Alpine Federation to vet both the new Czechoslovak and Polish institution for their political independence. The Yugoslavs gave the green light—both organizations, they stated, were of non-state character and members were free in exercising their activities.[351] The new statute of the Polish club indeed did not entail any ideological references; yet the organization relied on funding from the Central Committee for Physical Culture. In 1957, the general assembly decided to re-integrate the alpine societies of Czechoslovakia and Poland with the explicit wish for joint activities.

The UIAA never grew into a mighty governing body for reasons rooted in the reluctance of its very constituency to be governed by rules; its financial troubles and instability were considerable. However, it managed to survive due to a personal network that connected its president Egmond d'Arcis with committed alpine bureaucrats across Europe. The story of the UIAA provides a clue about the difficulties of East Central European non-state actors to assert their place in a larger European community. Spearheading a movement to assist in the "evolutionary process that would eventually eliminate the problems of national frontiers," the dream of creating a Europe of nation-states without borders—or with permeable borders—turned out to be achievable on regional scale, yet utopian on larger scale.[352]

The struggle for East Central Europeans to boost their influence in an organization they created mirrored their countries' reduced role in international affairs. East Central European mountaineers endeavored to become part of a European alpine core community, yet the fate of

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[351]Polska Sekcja Alpinizmu to UIAA, 17 December 1956, folder "Pologne/Hongrie," UIAA, Berne.

[352] Bossus, *Les cinquante premières années*, 73.

their countries in the 1930s under Nazi assault and Sovietization after the Second World War posed immense challenges this project. Alpine internationalism did not offer enough resilience to counter larger geopolitical shifts—in fact, it mirrored them closely. The immediate enthusiasm after World War II subsided after the Communist takeover; yet the Thaw under Nikita Khrushchev brought the clubs back into the UIAA. The abeyance structure of the UIAA, despite its early political polarization, worked across the Iron Curtain even though the organization did itself little to retain its East European members.

4 CLIMBING ICE IN TIMES OF THAW

Alpine Ideologies and Cold War Sentiments, 1953-1970s

"They should understand that this is the way our country runs, it does not mean that we wish to ram our philosophy down their throats."

Evgenii Gippenreiter (1961)

Thaw Weather

In the mountains, a thaw is a complex phenomenon. After prolonged periods of snowfall, a thaw can consolidate the snow cover and, when followed by an immediate freeze period, make progress easier for mountaineers. If temperatures are too high, snow will turn into slush, causing snow bridges over crevasses to become unstable. Slopes become prone to avalanches, large freestanding pinnacles of ice called seracs topple unexpectedly, and rocks, once securely held in place by solid ice, break loose and tumble down deep couloirs. The Thaw that followed Stalin's death in March 1953 was an equally ambiguous phenomenon. Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *Ottepel'* (Thaw) provided the period with a metaphorical name that conjured a spirit of hope and anticipation but also evoked images of slush, confusion, and instability.

Even if assessments of the Thaw differ—some historians stress its continuities with the Stalinist period while others interpret the period as a major watershed in Soviet history—a transnational perspective on the period undeniably reveals its distinctiveness from the preceding Stalinist epoch. Although no massive avalanche swept away the foundations of the Soviet Union, the era of the 1950s and 1960s altered the molecular structure of the Soviet snow pack for good.

Most importantly, the Thaw opened the avenue for the Soviet Union and its satellite states to become integrated in the transnational flows that marked the latter half of the twentieth century.[353]

What opportunities did the Thaw promise in the realm of mountaineering? For Western mountaineers, access to mountains was at stake. Stalin's death opened up the opportunity to return to the Caucasus, once a playing field for European elite alpinists; the high peaks of the Pamir called, too. For Soviet mountaineers, the ease of travel restrictions promised the chance to climb in the European mountains. In addition, the Soviets hoped to be integrated into the UIAA. Regardless of the fact that membership in this organization did not facilitate anything in particular, it was a symbol of international recognition and promised also to elevate the status of mountaineering at home. Yet the process of rapprochement was a complicated one, as this chapter will show.

Situated at the intersection of two fields of interest, the Soviet Union's entry into international sports structures and the opening of the country to international tourism, this chapter explores the complicated integration of Soviet mountaineers into a larger international climbing community from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. While the expanding transnational scholarship on the post-Stalin period has focused on the domestic impact of the country's opening, this chapter assesses the reaction of the wider world and the awkward position the East Central European countries acquired as intermediaries in this process.[354] It demonstrates that the

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[353] For a detailed discussion of the Thaw metaphor and an overview of the historiographical debates on the period see Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, "The Thaw as an Event in Russian History," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, ed. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 18-23.

[354] Most of the literature on Soviet tourism during the Thaw focuses on domestic tourism or Soviet travelers abroad, see Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2013); Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011);

Thaw challenged not only the Soviet Union to deal with its newly achieved openness, but also created major anxieties among members of the wider world into which the Soviet Union inspired to be integrated.

By the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union had joined all major international sports organizations, including most importantly, the International Olympic Committee. Yet when the Soviet Mountaineering Federation applied for membership in the UIAA in 1958, a debate over the political goals of Soviet alpinism and alleged ideological differences broke out, causing the Soviet Federation to be refused entry until 1967. Visions of mountaineering as an anti-sport free of regulations clashed with Soviet practices of "sportified" alpinism, which was highly regulated and organized as a competitive sport. Eventually, it was due to the private contacts forged with British mountaineers that the Soviet Mountaineering Federation was admitted. Following the development of relationships from the early Thaw period into the late 1970s, the chapter makes three interrelated observations.

First, this chapter demonstrates that forging semi-official relations between Western mountaineers and their Soviet counterparts was the most effective means of rapprochement.[355]

Eleonory Gilburd, "Books and Borders: Sergei Obraztsov and Soviet Travels to London in the 1950s," in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Diane Koenker and Anne E. Gorsuch (Ithaca: Cornell, 2006); Alexander Hazanov, "Porous Empire: Foreign Visitors and the Post-Stalin Soviet State" (University of Pennsylvania, 2016). Shawn Connelly Salmon has written on the internal history of the Soviet travel agency Intourist, "Marketing Socialism: Inturist in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s," in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Diane Koenker and Anne E. Gorsuch (Ithaca: Cornell, 2006); Shawn C. Salmon, "To the Land of the Future: A History of Intourist and Travel to the Soviet Union, 1929-1991" (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley). For prewar travelers to Soviet Union, see Matthias Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets: Der ausländische Tourismus in Russland 1921-1941* (Münster: LIT, 2003). For the integration of the Soviet Union into international sports, see Barbara Keys, "Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003); Jenifer Parks, *The Olympic Games, the Soviet Sports Bureaucracy, and the Cold War: Red Sport, Red Tape* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books); "'Nothing but Trouble': The Soviet Union's Push to 'Democratise' International Sports During the Cold War, 1959–1962," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no. 13 (2013).

[355] The relations were semi-official because Western mountaineers always dealt with Soviet sports officials, thus their contacts were never completely private.

Jenifer Parks has demonstrated that Soviet sport administrators had a "significant degree of maneuverability" and skillfully used personal relations and informal channels in addition to formal contacts to lobby for the Soviet Union's participation in the Olympic Games.[356] This insight also applied to the Soviet mountaineering officials. As the chapter will show, the major obstacle in the process of rapprochement was less on the side of the Soviets. Rather it was the fear of the capitalist members of the UIAA that was nurtured by a mixture of confused Cold War anxieties and the rejection of Soviet-style alpinism.

Second, the chapter argues that the advance East Central Europe had in alpine internationalism limited Soviet hegemony within the socialist bloc but also provided a bridge to the West. For the alpine clubs of Poland and Czechoslovakia, as the previous chapter has shown, the Thaw and the process of de-Stalinization offered the opportunity to revitalize relations with the West and rejoin the UIAA. While in other sport disciplines, it was the self-ascribed task of the Soviet Union to lobby for its satellite states, matters were reversed in the case of the UIAA.[357] Instead of an omnipotent power, Soviet mountaineering officials relied on their Eastern European counterparts to support their membership bid. At the same time, the Western alpine clubs hoped to enroll the Eastern European members as mediators in the contentious relationship with the Soviets. What appeared to be a bipolar conflict thus was in fact a triangular relationship.

Third, the chapter demonstrates that cultural transfer in the Cold War was not a one-way street. Although Western alpinists initially loathed Soviet practices of competitive climbing, the integration of the Soviet Union popularized climbing competitions also in the West. Studying

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[356] Parks, *The Olympic Games*, xvii.

[357] In the International Olympic Committee, for example, Soviet sports representatives pushed an agenda of "democratization" by promoting the inclusion of socialist states and developing countries. "'Nothing but Trouble'."

Soviet musicians abroad, Kiril Tomoff has identified a dynamic relationship between Cold War competition and the integration of the Soviet Union into legal and economic systems of American design, which was accompanied by the selective adoption of Soviet practices in the West. This process, Tomoff argues, should not be understood as Sovietization but one of "gradual standardization and eventual globalization."[358] A similar process occurred in the realm of sport climbing. While climbing outside of the Soviet Union never became Sovietized, the impact of Soviet practices was nonetheless long-lasting. By the 1980s, organized climbing competitions (on artificial walls) became a regular occurrence in the West.

Prelude: High-Altitude Rumors, 1945-1953

In mountaineering, the time period during which the weather is stable enough to warrant a summit attempt is called a summit window. For many of the highest mountains in the world, the window of an entire season can be as short as a fortnight. Expedition teams will often wait in base camp for weeks, prepared to leave on short notice as soon as the weather allows. The last political summit window for Western mountaineers to climb a Soviet peak occurred in 1938. In 1937, the Great Purges had initiated a new wave of pre-war Soviet isolationism and xenophobia that ended all Western climbing activities in the Caucasus, a destination that since the mid-nineteenth century had attracted European mountaineers who considered the Alps to be too crowded.[359] Their legacy came under attack in 1938 and 1939 when a xenophobic campaign

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[358] Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad*, 14.

[359] German and British climbers pioneered many ascents in the pre-revolutionary era, for a history see Audrey Salkeld and José Luis Bermúdez, *On the Edge of Europe: Mountaineering in the Caucasus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993). In the interwar period, the Caucasus had lost its appeal to the British but still attracted German climbers. A lone British traveler to the area speculated in 1936 that the reason was the cumbersome journey. See W. Heybrock, "A Second Caucasian Tramp," *Alpine Journal* 48 (1936): 86-87.

removed foreign summit notes from the Caucasian mountains. What was more, the Stalinist terror cost the lives of most of the Soviet elite mountaineers. Some were sentenced to death or labor camp because of their Austrian or German origin, others because they had entertained contacts with foreign climbers.[360] Since the late 1930s, the West knew little about how mountaineering developed in the Soviet Union. A rare opportunity to learn about Soviet mountaineering opened up in 1940 when the largest library of the Soviet Union, the All-Union Lenin Library, suggested a publication exchange with the American Alpine Club. "I don't want to swap any Russian books, will sell cash [...], at our regular rates—will you answer?" read a hand-written note on the letter in the AAC archive, revealing that the Americans had little interest in seizing this rare chance.[361]

European mountaineers were much more interested in the Soviet Union than the Americans were. Once the war had ended, they carefully watched the political weather forecast. Hoping that their war ally would allow them to return to the Caucasus, Western climbers were now eager to scale once again the jagged peaks of Ushba and Shkara and the rounded top of Kazbek, the mighty Caucasian volcano reputed to be the site of Prometheus' ordeal. Yet what was happening on the other side of the Iron Curtain was not easy to determine. "News from Russia is hard to come by in this country," as the British climber H.W. Tilman affirmed, who snatched information from an Indian bulletin which published information on Soviet Central

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[360] Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 215. The most prominent alpinist who lost his life was Nikolai Krylenko. Among other charges, he was accused of prioritizing mountaineering over his duties as Commissar of Justice and shot in July 1938. See also Stuart Horsman, "Peaks, Politics and Purges: The First Ascent of Pik Stalin," *Alpine Journal* 107 (2002).

[361] Vsesoiusnaia Biblioteka imeni Lenina to AAC, 14 April 1940, box 2, file 5, Henry Snow Hall Jr. Papers, American Alpine Club, Golden, CO. It is unclear whether an exchange happened, presumably not.

Asia.[362] A few published Soviet sources found their way to the West by devious routes: some via contacts in the emerging Soviet bloc, some via the Soviet partition zone of Austria.[363]

As early as 1947, the British Alpine Club took a leap of faith and asked the Soviet tourist agency Intourist whether there was any possibility for its mountaineers to climb in the Caucasus. The answer from Moscow raised hopes: Intourist promised an announcement in the British press as soon as the touristic mountaineering camps were repaired and resumed operation.[364] These camps, which chapter five will describe in more detail, were the backbone of Soviet mountaineering and the place where all mountaineering training took place.[365] Intourist did not exaggerate the desolate state of the camps. The reconstruction of the mountaineering infrastructure indeed proceeded slowly. Yet the promise was hollow no matter what. The onset of the Cold War and the anti-Western cultural campaign known as *Zhdanovshchina*, launched by Andrei Zhdanov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, heralded a new phase of isolationism. At a time during which traveling to and from the Soviet Union was

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[362] H.W. Tilman, "More News from Tartary," *Alpine Journal* 57 (1948): 184-187.

[363] Before Poland temporarily ceased its active membership in the UIAA, Walery Goetel passed on achievements of Russian mountaineers upon the request of Egmont d'Arcis, see "Procès verbal de la séance du Comité Exécutif," Geneva, 25 September 1948, p. 2, folder "Comité Exécutif 1948-1959," UIAA, Berne. British alpine magazines quoted excerpts of Soviet press articles about mountaineering from a bulletin published in Delhi and from *In Fels und Firn* (Rock and Firn), a journal published in the Soviet sector of Austria, see H.W. Tilman, "More News from Tartary," *Alpine Journal* 57 (1948): 184-187; "News from Tartary," *Mountaineering*: *Bulletin of the British Mountaineering Council* 1, no. 8 (1950): 20-29. In 1952 and 1953, the German Alpenverein published two detailed articles based on Russian sources about mountaineering developments in the Pamir and Tienshan (1928-1947) and the Caucasus, see Hellmut Schöner, "Sowjetische Expeditionen im Pamir und Tienschan, 1928-1947;" *Alpenvereinszeitschrift* 77 (1952): 26-36, "Die neuere Erschließung des Kaukasus," *Alpenvereinszeitschrift* 79 (1953): 111-147.

[364] USSR Intourist to Alpine Club, 10 March 1947, 1922/H24, Alpine Club, London.

[365] For the state of Soviet mountaineering in the immediate postwar period see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 230-31. Maurer also provides a discussion of the role of training in the mountaineering camps. See also "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation: Soviet Mountaineering Camps under Stalin," in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane Koenker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

highly restricted and the purges among Soviet athletes continued, hosting climbers in the Soviet mountains was out of the question; the vastness of Soviet mountain environments eschewed tight control.[366]

Regardless of the true state of Soviet mountaineering, the Cold War climate fueled rumors that the Soviet Union was secretly partaking in the race for the Himalayan peaks. With the Soviets shrouded in secrecy, the lack of information provided fertile ground for all sorts of speculations. In the postwar period, the world had caught Himalayan fever and anxiously awaited the first ascent of one of the world's fourteen 8000m high peaks. Fortune favored the French. On June 3, 1950, expedition leader Maurice Herzog and Chamonix guide Louis Lachenal stood on the tenth tallest mountain of the world: 8,091m high Annapurna I.[367] Mount Everest was next. "One hears rumors of all sorts of things for 1952. The Russians to Everest, the Swiss, the British, the Japs, Dutch, French […] and various and sundry. What do you hear?" American Alpine Club president Henry Hall asked a friend in early 1952.[368] That year, only

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[366] Victor Peppard and James Riordan, *Playing Politics: Soviet Sport Diplomacy to 1992* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1993), 166-67.

[367] Herzog's account *Annapurna*, published soon after the expedition, inspired not only generations of climbers to come but also became an international bestseller propelling high-altitude mountaineering into the popular mainstream. The original French edition was published in 1951, the American edition in 1953. With more than 11 million copies in forty languages, Annapurna counts as the most successful mountaineering book ever published. Maurice Herzog, *Annapurna: First Conquest of an 8000-meter Peak (26,493 feet)*, 1st American ed. (New York: Dutton, 1953). Accounts of other expedition members partly challenge Herzog's narrative. For this controversy but also a discussion of how important the ascent of Annapurna for the French national discourse was see David Roberts, *True Summit: What Really Happened on the Legendary Ascent of Annapurna* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). For a discussion on gender in Annapurna, see Julie Rak, "Social Climbing on Annapurna: Gender in High-altitude Mountaineering Narratives," *English Studies in Canada* 33, no. 1-2 (2007): 118-26.

[368] Henry Hall to Maynard Miller, 3 January 1952, Henry Hall Papers, box 3/13, American Alpine Club, Golden, CO.

Switzerland would receive permission from Nepal to make an attempt on Everest, though one that became thwarted by ill-luck and the death of a Sherpa.[369]

Yet was it possible that in the same year Soviet mountaineers had attempted to climb Everest from the Tibetan side, unknown to the West? After China had annexed Tibet into the People's Republic in 1950, access to Everest's north face was off limits to Western climbers. The Cold War climate fueled rumors in the public media which, starting in 1951, eagerly picked up on alleged Soviet preparations for an Everest expedition.[370] In 1952, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a headline "Cold War for Mount Everest?" and even went so far as to conflate Soviet mass mountaineering with the preparation of a high-altitude expedition, stating that "thousands of Russians are reported to be training" for Everest of which 150 would be selected for the expedition.[371]

A year later, several newspapers, including the *Times*, picked up an account of an alleged failed Soviet Everest expedition. This story was relayed by a wealthy book collector named Andras Bolinder. The well-connected Swede spent his time collecting mountaineering books and vetting European expedition reports for accuracy. According to Bolinder's report, a large group of Soviet climbers had been killed in an avalanche during an attempt on Everest in fall 1952.[372]

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[369] The Swiss expedition took place under the leadership of Edouard Wyss-Dunant, a Swiss radiologist who coined the term "death zone" for altitudes above 8,000m and later served as the president of the UIAA. For an account of this expedition, see e.g. Edouard Wyss-Dunant, "The First Swiss Expedition to Mount Everest, 1952," *The Geographical Journal* 119, no. 3 (1953).

[370] E.g. "Russians Plan Climb," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1951. According to this article, the source was a correspondent of the Hindustan Times in London. See also Isserman and Weaver, *Fallen Giants*, 274.

[371] "Cold War for Everest?" *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 21, 1952. The Soviets did indeed organize mass ascents in the interwar period, see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 145-83.

[372] Bolinder himself died in an unexplained single-car accident in 1986 while investigating this story further. His collection and papers made it into the archives of the American Alpine Club via the American collector John Boyle. According to him, Bolinder managed to make contact with a certain Dr. Frank, someone with connections to the Soviet army. A letter from Frank to Bolinder was supposed to be in his collection, written on blue air mail paper

However tenuous the sources were, the Everest rumors remained powerful. To Western mountaineers it seemed unlikely that the superpower would not take part in the race for Everest, notwithstanding shortcomings in equipment and training. Even Soviet climbers thought it possible that a secret expedition had been carried out and covered up after it failed.[373]

Whether it was rumors about secret Soviet expeditions or the international fascination with the Yeti, also known as the Abominable Snowman, the Cold War provided a new context for the public to politicize high altitude mountaineering.[374] If the interwar period had couched expeditions in nationalist terms, the Cold War added another layer of political meaning to Himalayan mountaineering, which was now imagined as a new Great Game. The Soviet Union and other regional actors often regarded Western mountaineering expeditions as excuses for espionage.[375] For the public, however, Cold War rivalries made mountaineering even more

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(Boyle stated this an email to the author.) Yet, in 2013 the ominous letter was nowhere to be found. There is a possibility that the expedition was led by the Soviet army without the knowledge of civilian climbers. John Hunt investigated that the rumors originated in Berlin; he speculated that a defected East German mountaineer made up the story and sold it for good money to the press. This might be said Frank, see Malcolm Slesser, *Red Peak: A Personal Account of the British-Soviet Pamir Expedition 1962* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964). The book also contained a reprint of the *Times* article.

[373] See Yevgeniy B. Gippenreiter, "Mount Everest and the Russians 1952 and 1958," *Alpine Journal* 99 (1994).

[374] For the Cold War story of the Yeti and the Soviet obsession with the fictive creature, see Carolin F. Roeder and Gregory Afinogenov, "Soviet Science and the Problem of the Abominable Snowman," in *Exploring Ice and Snow in the Cold War*, ed. Christian Kehrt, Julia Herzberg, and Franziska Torma (New York: Berghahn, forthcoming). The public celebration of mountaineering as a national achievement was just one part of alpine politics. Removed from the public discourse, alpine bureaucrats and active climbers faced problems that called for international cooperation rather than outright competition. The Himalayan states soon learned how to turn their inaccessible peaks into assets: for European mountaineers, the first obstacle to overcome was from now one to receive "permission" to climb—a process that was highly political and often expensive. The true competition among expeditions did not take place on the mountain but in the pre-expedition phase—who would be granted permission and would this permission be exclusive or shared with groups from other countries? As a response to this new postcolonial excision of control, Lucien Devies, president of the French Alpine Club, suggested in 1954 to the UIAA the establishment of a Himalayan Committee. This centralized body should be tasked with the facilitation of permissions avoiding any overlap of planned ascents and should act as a clearing house for collecting information, maps, expedition reports and such on Himalayan climbing. It took until 1976 until the Expedition Committee was finally installed. See D'Arcis to Hunt, 03 April 1955, folder "Grande-Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[375] The suspicion was not unfounded—the CIA was indeed involved in several high-altitude expeditions, the most notable being an American-Indian expedition to Nanda Devi that was tasked to set up a plutonium-powered sensor

exciting. When on May 29, 1953, the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay stood on top of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, the popular attraction of mountaineering around the globe had reached its zenith. Successes of the "Golden Age of Himalayan Climbing," as the period became known, were without a doubt the most spectacular developments in postwar alpinism. Between 1950 and 1960, all but one of the fourteen 8000m peaks would be climbed.[376]

Assuming the failed Soviet expedition was just rumors, the Soviet Union only took part in this game via its press, which decried the British Everest expedition as an imperialistic act. Soviet mountaineers remained limited to the peaks of the Caucasus and Pamirs. Occurring in the same fateful year Stalin died, the ascent of Everest represented nonetheless a turning point. As Maurer has argued, the overlap of these two events provided an opportunity for Soviet alpinists to redefine their place in the transnational mountaineering community and resolve their ambiguous attitudes towards Western mountaineering. Initially, in the early 1950s the critique of Western mountaineering appeared to be even more vicious than in the preceding period: Western alpinism was fervently decried as bourgeois, capitalist, and decadent. At the same time, mountaineers increasingly moved towards a de-politicizing of mountaineering discourse.[377] The Soviet mountaineering print media started to increase their coverage of western climbing activities considerably in the first half of the 1950s. Critical reviews of "capitalist" Western

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near the summit to collect data on the Chinese missile program, see M.S. Kohli and Kenneth Conboy, *Spies in the Himalayas* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002). Anecdotal evidence suggests further that many Americans received money from the CIA for expeditions, further research is necessary to gain a proper understanding to what extent climbers were involved in espionage.

[376] Shishapangma, situated on Chinese territory, was first summited by a Chinese expedition in 1964. For a comprehensive history of Himalayan climbing and the Golden Age, see Isserman and Weaver, *Fallen Giants*.

[377] Eva Maurer, "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship': Soviet Mountaineers and Mount Everest, 1953-1960," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 4 (2009): 489-90.

equipment catalogues and climbing activities made it possible to print information about alpinism abroad. Slowly but surely, ideological aspects were separated from technical discussions. This development paved the way for a constructive engagement with international mountaineers in the years to come.[378]

Private Diplomacy and a "Case of Love at First Sight"

For Western mountaineers, the Thaw finally opened a summit window. The government under Nikita Khrushchev initiated an unprecedented program of openness, including an expansion of tourism that was radical for Soviet standards.[379] "What on earth was left after Everest" was a question that occupied especially British elite climbers since 1953. The Soviet mountains provided an answer.[380] In contrast to the mid-1960s and 1970s, when the Soviet Mountaineering Federation started to invite mountaineers in large numbers to its camps in the Caucasus and Pamirs, the visits of the first foreigners to the Soviet mountains in the 1950s were neither part of a larger tourist program nor a well-planned cultural or citizen diplomacy effort.[381] Rather, they were the result of the persistent efforts of Western mountaineers to gain access to the Caucasus and the Pamirs—mountains that had been out of reach for a long time. They also reflected the wish of Westerners to receive a rare glimpse of the world behind the Iron Curtain.

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[378] For the changing tone in the Soviet media, see *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 245.

[379] Gilburd, "Books and Borders," 227.

[380] See John Hunt, *Life is Meeting* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 145.

[381] For pre-war cultural diplomacy and its key function in the making of the Soviet system, see David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*. The author uses the term cultural diplomacy to describe all Soviet missions and programs directed at foreigners designated as members of the intelligentsia.

During the early Thaw, contacts between Soviet and Western mountaineers occurred mainly between individuals who were part of both the cultural and the alpine elite. Crucial to Western-Soviet mountaineering relations were the British mountaineer John Hunt and a young Russian alpinist named Evgenii Gippenreiter. These two men took the role of cultural mediators for the next two decades.[382] In 1954, Sir John Hunt, the leader of the British 1953 Everest expedition, and his wife, Joy, traveled to Moscow under the auspices of the British Foreign Office to lecture on the ascent of Everest to ten carefully vetted Soviet climbers. One of them, who later remembered "with shame how some top Soviet and Party dignitaries deemed it 'undesirable' on political grounds" to allow a larger audience listen to the "'achievement of British imperialists,'" was the young Evgenii Gippenreiter.[383] In his memoirs, John Hunt described meeting Gippenreiter as "without the usual connotation, a case of love at first sight."[384]

"Gip," or Eugene to his international friends, had recently graduated from the Military Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow with a degree in English and had started climbing three years earlier. Despite his background as a scion of a noble family, the talented Russian was able to embark on a successful Soviet career.[385] While serving as an interpreter for various sport committees at the All-Union Sports Council, Gippenreiter had developed a keen interest in athletic international affairs. In 1955, he continued his education in the field of medicine and experimental biology and started to publish extensively on high altitude physiology and other

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[382] For an example of postwar Soviet cultural mediators see Gilburd, "Books and Borders."

[383] Gippenreiter, "Mount Everest and the Russians 1952 and 1958," 109.

[384] Hunt, *Life is Meeting*, 144. A shared class background also facilitated the instant connection between the two men.

[385] George Band, "In Memoriam Yevgeniy B Gippenreiter 1927-1997," *Alpine Journal* 103 (1998): 333.

sports-related topics.[386] Following their first meeting in Moscow, Gippenreiter traveled to London as an interpreter for the Soviet rowing team. On this occasion, he dined with John Hunt and Basil Goodfellow, the president of the British Mountaineering Council. The connections forged with both men turned into a crucial asset in the years to come. Later in life, the young Gip recalled his trip as an "unforgettable experience for a Soviet citizen."[387]

Gippenreiter was a member of the class of new Soviet bureaucrats who emerge in Jenifer Parks' work on Soviet sports politics as autonomous savvy information gatherers: pragmatic, knowledgeable, and well connected.[388] With his reportedly bewitching character, Gippenreiter was the archetype of the Soviet cultural mediator of the 1950s and 1960s. He was also an alpine bureaucrat in the proper sense. This is not to downplay his climbing skills (after all, he held the Soviet rank of Master of Sport), but compared to Soviet elite alpinists such as Evgenii Abalakov, Gippenreiter excelled as an alpine diplomat and mediator as well as a translator of Western mountaineering books (which he slightly "revised" to fit the Soviet context).[389] Gippenreiter, described by Hunt as "an indispensable link with sportsmen over the world," surpassed the ideal of the "politically mature" Soviet representative who was not only skilled in his field of sport but also able to gain support from foreign representatives in support of the Soviet cause.[390]

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[386] Mountain.ru Forum, Pavel P. Zakharov, "Vydaiushchiesia semeinye pary otechestvennogo al'pinizma Gippenreiter Evgenii i Romanova Lidiia, accessed 1 April 2017, http://mountain.ru/article/article_display1.php?article_id=5622.

[387] Gippenreiter, "Mount Everest and the Russians 1952 and 1958," 110.

[388] See Parks, *The Olympic Games*.

[389] John Boyle to Glandeck, 30 January 2010, "Tales from the Crypt" manuscript, American Alpine Club, Golden, Colorado.

[390] Hunt, *Life is Meeting*, 145. The vision of the "politically mature" sports representative was formulated by Nikolai Romanov who is introduced later in this chapter. Parks, *The Olympic Games*, 44.

Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Gippenreiter acted as the main cultural mediator between the Soviet Union and European mountaineers. Gippenreiter's command of English not only allowed him to win the trust of Western mountaineers, but also facilitated his career within the Soviet sport bureaucracy. As Parks has pointed out, Soviet sport officials knew that the linguistic capabilities of their sport representatives were key to winning international recognition. A translator moving up the career ladder to a top-level position was thus a regular phenomenon.[391] According to John Boyle, Gippenreiter was even allowed to travel outside of the Soviet Union for anything related to mountaineering without a KGB minder.[392]

Just as important as his command of English, were his personality and looks, which left an impression on Western mountaineers. The personal qualities of this Soviet alpinist would decisively influence the relationship between Western and Soviet mountaineers during the entire period of the Cold War. "Handsome and dapper," a man "of great wit," and endowed with a dare-devil character, Gippenreiter managed to enchant any visiting climber.[393] Over the next decades, Western mountaineers who came to know the Russian climber passionately expressed their admiration of this "larger than life fellow," this Russian version of "George Plimpton or perhaps Indiana Jones," as book collector Jon Boyle described him, noting that "this guy was so perfect that he must have come from some German prewar manufacturing operation (see his name)." Suggesting that "there must have been a lottery or draft somewhere to produce this couple,"

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[391] *The Olympic Games*, 44.

[392] John Boyle to Glandeck, 30 January 2010, "Tales from the Crypt" manuscript, American Alpine Club, Golden, Colorado.

[393] For "handsome and dapper" see Robert W. Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs* (Seattle: Mountaineers, 1980), 43. For "great wit" see Schoening to Expedition Members, 08 April 1974, series 4, folder 2, Evans Papers, American Alpine Club, Golden, Colorado.

Boyle found his wife equally enchanting: "She was striking. Perfect English."[394] The admiration Western mountaineers had for Evgenii Gippenreiter profoundly impacted their perspectives on the Soviet Union. While it did not change their view on the Soviet system as a whole, the realization that Soviet individuals were able to defy the inefficiencies inherent on the Soviet system and make things happen encouraged Western climbers to expand their relationships with Soviet mountaineers.

British mountaineers were the first to realize that access to the Soviet mountain ranges could only be gained through personal contacts with Soviet alpinists of rank. These were the handful of highly educated alpine bureaucrats who voluntarily served on the presidium of the All-Union Mountaineering Section (Vsesoiuznaiia sektsiia al'pinizma), most importantly Evgenii Gippenreiter hinself, who served as the Section's secretary for international relations. Formed in 1937, the Section was the highest authority of mountaineering in the Soviet Union and part of the Central Council of the Sport Societies and Organizations. Only one full-time paid staff member, the secretary, supported the work of the presidium.[395]

On Hunt's first visit to Moscow, ideas of a joint climbing trip to the Caucasus with the Soviets emerged. Before any commitments were made, reciprocal lecture trips following Hunt's visit to Moscow deepened the contacts between the British and the Soviets. Charles Evans went on a tour to the Soviet Union to present on the 1955 British first ascent of Kangchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. The year after, Evgenii Beletski, Master of Sport, and

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[394] John Boyle was acquainted with Gippenreiter and purchased his book collection in 1993. John Boyle to Glandeck, 30 January 2010, "Tales from the Crypt" manuscript, American Alpine Club, Golden, Colorado.

[395] The organization of sections was structured along federal lines. The All-Union Section had various permanent commissions dealing with questions of training, qualifications, equipment etc. For relations between local clubs and the center in the postwar Stalinist period, see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 270-73.

Evgenii Gippenreiter visited the Alpine Club; Beletski's speech printed in the *Alpine Journal* introduced the English-speaking audience to the peculiarities of Soviet mountaineering.[396]

The British missed no opportunity to inquire about possibilities to climb in the Soviet Union whenever climbers had the chance to interact with Soviet sports officials. Athlete and climber Chris Brasher approached Soviet sport officials during a visit to Moscow with the British Athletics Team as well as at the 1956 Olympic Games in Australia. The Sydney Olympics became known for the "Blood in the Water" water polo match between Hungary and the Soviet Union, which took place against the background of the revolution in Hungary. The diplomatic achievements of Brasher who secured further negotiations were remarkable yet not surprising, given the fact that the Soviet representatives explicitly pressed the IOC to keep an apolitical stance.[397]

In June of the following year, the British Mountaineering Council, for the first time, hosted Russian climbers who sampled the local climbing grounds in England and Scotland.[398] According to John Hunt, it was not easy to negotiate this visit with the Soviet sports ministry, which deemed the British hills and cliffs not worthy enough for a costly visit.[399] For the Soviet authorities, prestige was tied to climbing in grand mountain ranges, not the Lake District. However, the invested efforts to develop ties with John Hunt and the British Mountaineering Council later paid off for both sides. The Soviets profited tremendously from these contacts

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[396] Evgenii Beletsky, "Mountaineering in the USSR," *Alpine Journal* 61 (1956-57): 310-29.

[397] Nick Mason, "Chris Brasher, Obituary," *The Guardian*, February 28, 2003. Brasher also won the first British medal in athletics for twenty years. For the efforts of the Soviet National Olympic Committee to keep politics out of the Melbourne games, see Parks, *The Olympic Games*, 47-48.

[398] Milburn, Walker, and Wilson, *The First Fifty Years of the British Mountaineering Council*, 225. The Soviet Relations Committee of the British Council helped facilitate this visit.

[399] John Hunt, "In Memoriam Yevgeniy B Gippenreiter 1927-1997," *Alpine Journal* 103 (1998): 344.

forged in the mid-1950s; private diplomacy built the indispensable foundation for the gradual international recognition of the Soviet mountaineering organization in the 1960s.

Scooped by a Woman

The first to climb in the Caucasus after World War II was not John Hunt, but a woman—Joyce Dunsheath. A fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Joyce Dunsheath was an avid mountaineer whose climbing vitae included trips to Iran, Peru, East Africa, Canada, and Australia.[400] In 1956, already in her mid-fifties, she had led an all-women's expedition to the Himalayas, driving the 9000 miles from Europe to India by car.[401] It was through her husband, the president of the International Electrotechnical Commission, that she became acquainted with the Soviet Deputy Minister of Electric Power Stations. Learning about her passions, the minister promised to organize a climb in the Caucasus at the occasion of the International Electrotechnical Commission conference that was to take place in Moscow in 1957—all expenses covered.

Accompanied by Evgenii Gippenreiter with whom she became close friends, Dunsheath's visit occurred during a particular period of Soviet internationalism when cultural exchange and citizen diplomacy challenged the state's monopoly on information about the world outside of the Soviet bloc.[402] Paradoxically, the International Youth Festival of 1957, seen by historians as the

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[400] Dunsheath was not the first British woman who would venture out to the Caucasus. In 1932, Una Cameron, an adventurous woman of good social standing and later elected president of the Ladies' Alpine Club, succeeded in climbing five towers of the Chaukhi massive in the Georgian Kazbegi region together with two guides from Courmayeur. See Janet Adam Smith, "Una Cameron's Climbs and Expeditions," *Alpine Journal* 96 (1990/1991): 157-73.

[401] Anita McConnell, "Dunsheath, Cissie Providence (1902–1976)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/64718.

[402] See e.g. Eleonory Gilburd, "The Revival of Soviet Internationalism in the Mid to Late 1950s," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, ed. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (Toronto:

climax of postwar Soviet internationalism, interrupted her travels. After just a few days of climbing, Gippenreiter was called back to Moscow from his leave and ordered to take part in the organization of the festival. Dunsheath had to return to England. Persistently calling the Soviets on their promise that she could return after the festival, Dunsheath obtained a second visa at rather unheard-of speed and embarked once again for the Caucasus.[403]

It was this seminal moment of openness in the mid-1950s that enabled Dunsheath to travel twice to the Soviet Union in a short period of time. While she was not permitted to stay in the Caucasus in Gippenreiter's absence, she was able to travel with hardly any restrictions in an area closed-off for decade to Westerners. Her two visits to the Caucasus provided an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about Soviet mountaineering practices but also to feed a Soviet audience hungry for pictures and stories from abroad.[404] While Dunsheath found it "a little distracting to have the words *Miru Mir* (World Peace) facing [her] all the time in large letters," her experiences demonstrate that Soviet peace rhetoric carried genuine meaning on the ground.[405]

Despite differences in gender, nationality, and language separating her from Gippenreiter as well as other male Russian and Georgian mountaineers with whom she climbed during her

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University of Toronto Press, 2013); Kristin Roth-Ey, "'Loose Girls' on the Loose? Sex, Propaganda and the 1957 Youth Festival," in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Melanie Ilič, Susan E. Reid, and Lynne Attwood (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Pia Koivunen, "The 1957 Moscow Youth Festival: Propagating a New, Peaceful Image of the Soviet Union," in *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. Melanie Ilič and Jeremy Smith (London: Routledge, 2009). Other well-known events that exemplified the opening of the Soviet Union were the Brussel's World's Fair and the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959.

[403] Joyce Dunsheath, *Guest of the Soviets: Moscow and the Caucasus, 1957* (London: Constable, 1959), 75.

[404] Carrying a projector with her, Dunsheath showed slides from her Himalayan expedition and the car drive from Europe to the subcontinent to enthusiastic Soviet audiences. *Guest of the Soviets*, 60, 97. For the Soviet audience see also Maurer, "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship'," 491.

[405] Dunsheath, *Guest of the Soviets*, 100. Italics are mine.

second stay, Dunsheath developed a close relationship with Gippenreiter who refined his English with her help. At the same time, she had the rare opportunity to interact with the local population. Carrying a projector with her, she showed slides of her previous expeditions to enthusiastic local audiences.[406] The travel accounts of her adventurous expeditions neatly fitted the Soviet vision of *turizm,* which was a combination of hiking and camping rather than of leisure. Furthermore, her stories from far-away lands fitted well with Khrushchev's ideal of peaceful co-existence.[407] Dunsheath's visit was the first arrangement facilitated by private contacts and made with the Mountaineering Section directly. The mechanisms of *blat*, the distinctive practice of informal relationships in Soviet culture, thus also worked for foreigners.[408]

Starting at the same time, the sports officials of the Soviet All-Union Council of Sport Societies also made conscious efforts to extend international contacts more broadly and started to offer *bezvaliutnyi obmen*, currency-free exchanges, to foreign mountaineers. Via this mechanism, the host organization covered all expenses, often including pocket money, from the point of arrival in order to avoid the difficulty of obtaining foreign currency. Exchanges were thus a win-win situation: they provided an opportunity for Soviet mountaineers to finally climb outside of the Soviet Union and allowed a limited circle of foreigners to scale the magnificent peaks of the Caucasus and later Soviet Central Asia.

When Khrushchev reinstated ties with the Yugoslav leader Tito, the path was open to develop a rocky, yet long-lasting relationship with the seasoned Slovenian mountaineers. In July of 1956, six Soviet mountaineers participated in a large international meeting organized by the

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[406] *Guest of the Soviets*, 60, 97. See also Maurer, "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship'," 491.

[407] Cf. Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, 106.

[408] For the concept of blat see Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchanges* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Yugoslav Mountaineering Federation in Peć, a town near the Prokletije Mountains in Kosovo. That same year, Yugoslav mountaineers visited the Caucasus.[409] Additional Soviet exchanges in 1957 included meetings with alpinists from France, Poland, Czechoslovak, and Yugoslavia.[410] Between 1957 and 1964, Austrians and French were regular guests in the Caucasus; Swiss and Italians came once and British groups visited four times, in addition to climbers from the socialist countries.[411] By the mid-1950s, the opportunities for international contacts with Soviet mountaineers had dramatically increased compared to the previous decade of isolationism.

Guests in the Caucasus

Before exchanges became more regular, British climbers learned that making plans with the Soviets required patience. Sport administrators, as Parks has shown, were able to "cut through the red tape and get things done," yet they did not possess a magic wand to make Soviet bureaucracy disappear.[412] Towards the end of 1957, Intourist finally approved the application of a British expedition to the Caucasus—after "five years of frustration, correspondence, mounting files."[413] Lead by John Hunt, eight mountaineers set course for a one-month visit to the Caucasus, equipped with the unique permission to climb any mountain by whichever route they

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[409] A. Heizer to d'Arcis, 20 July 1956, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne; "Zlet Planincev Jugoslavije v Prokletijah," *Planinski Vestnik* 56, no. 10 (1956): 529-530; "Spravka o mezhdunarodnykh sviaziakh po al'pinismy v 1956-57 g.g.," fond R-5451, opis 32, dela 674, list 6-7, GARF, Moscow.

[410] A.I. Poliakov, "Mezhdunarodnye sviazi sovetskikh al'pinistov," *Pobezhdennye vershiny* 1961-1964 (1968): 247. While sport relations within the Eastern bloc became part of Soviet soft power strategies as part of the Soviet "friendship project," East Central European countries had a much longer mountaineering tradition and were generally also better equipped than their Soviet counterparts.

[411] "Mezhdunarodnye sviazi sovetskikh al'pinistov," 247.

[412] Parks, *The Olympic Games*, xvii.

[413] John Hunt and Christopher Brasher, *The Red Snows: An Account of the British Caucasus Expedition, 1958* (London: The Travel Book Club, 1960), 16.

chose.[414] The first half of the visit was spent in the Spartak Camp near Mt. Ushba, during the other half the team sojourned in the Bezengi area. Ushba, not the highest but the most stunning and difficult mountain in the northern Caucasus, adorns itself with a double summit and formed an important part of European alpinist history. The lower peak was first climbed by a British climber and a Swiss guide in 1888, the first ascent of the higher peak was achieved by a German team of four in 1903.

In 1958, the British came not as imperial explorers but as guests of the Soviets. The political events of this year, first and foremost the murder of the Hungarian reformer Imre Nagy, affected their overland journey to the Soviet Union but otherwise politics remained in the background.[415] The British mountaineers were more interested in gaining a first-hand insight into what differentiated the rigidly organized and controlled Soviet mountaineering culture from their own. Elements of the Soviet system which were alien to the British included the ranking system of mountaineering badges, the permissions required to climb, and the "control time," a system which required groups to provide a cut-off time for their return at which a dispatch party is sent.[416]

Yet as escaping the ideological framework of the Cold War was difficult, every evaluation of the practices of the other team could be interpreted as a political commentary. David Mazel has argued that mountaineering discourse is less about rules but rather about "good style." Rather than being a fixed notion, the understanding of what constitutes good style is "constantly in flux

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[414] Hunt, *Life is Meeting*, 149. The party consisted of Sir John Hunt, Christopher Brasher, George Band, Alan Blackshaw, Ralph Jones, David Thomas, Derek Bull, Michael Harris, and John Neill.

[415] *Life is Meeting*, 148.

[416] Hunt and Brasher, *The Red Snows*.

and evolves out of an ongoing process of discussion and negotiation."[417] Mazal and Julie Rak have shown how discourses about style entail an unspoken gendered dimension, but they could also take on a political dimension.[418]

Being aware of this, both Soviets and British climbers explicitly communicated to their home audiences that regardless of technical differences there was also common ground between the two groups. Quoting British newspapers running headlines such as "The Russians are good people" and "We can learn something from Russian alpinism," an article in the Soviet mountaineering journal *Pobezhdennye vershiny* advocated for expanding contacts with foreign climbers. While pointing out that the reports of the British visitors, friendly in their tone, put much emphasis on the difference between British and Soviet practices, the article quoted John Hunt on his appreciation of Soviet control mechanisms. Even if Hunt thought it not necessary that British climbers had to adopt all rules the Soviets followed, he acknowledged that certain regulations could potentially reduce the number of accidents in Great Britain.[419] In this aspect, the account of the Soviet group leader followed the script of Soviet published tourist accounts, which, as Anne Gorsuch has pointed out, were always purposefully crafted to provide a comforting account of the journey and reassure the audience that the foreigners were appreciative of the Soviet Union.[420]

For the British, it was equally important to portray the encounters across the Iron Curtain in the domestic media as constructive, friendly, and overall successful. This was to ensure

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[417] David Mazel, ed. *Mountaineering Women: Stories by Early Climbers* (College Station: Texas A&M University press, 1994), 17.

[418] Rak, "Social Climbing on Annapurna."; Mazel, *Mountaineering Women: Stories by Early Climbers*.

[419] "Novye kontakty," *Pobezhdennye vershiny* (1954-1957): 407-406. See for this also Hunt, *Life is Meeting*, 149.

[420] Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, 22.

supports from domestic audiences for what could be construed as siding with the enemy but also to not endanger further expeditions to the Soviet Union. While published expedition monographs like *The Red Snows* allowed for more detailed discussions of intercultural miscommunication, the shorter pieces in the media and climbing journals overall lauded the expedition as successful even though two British climbers died in an accident.[421]

An article about Soviet exchanges with French mountaineers in the official organ of the Soviet sports committee, *Fizkul'tura i sport*, serves as another example of how Soviet mountaineering discourse shifted from ideological fervor towards pragmatic comparisons between differences in technique, risk taking, and equipment. French-Soviet exchanges started with a French visit to the Caucasus in 1958 and a return visit from twenty Soviet climbers the year after. As their first trip was haunted by bad weather, the French returned to the Caucasus in 1959 and the Russians to France in 1961.[422] The author of the article, Master of Sport Boris Garf, was himself fluent in French, a skill that also led to a close friendship with John Hunt, who portrayed him as a man of "gentle and scholarly character."[423]

In the article, Garf refrained from overt ideological deliberations. He found differences between Soviet mountaineers and French to be of technical nature, not ideological, and admitted that the Soviets were lagging behind in the newest developments in alpinism in comparison to the Western nations.[424] Rather than perpetuating the Stalinist idea of the incompatibility of

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[421] Hunt and Brasher, *The Red Snows*.

[422] For the 1961 visit see Anatolii G. Ovchinnikov, "Sovetskie al'pinisty na skalakh Frantsii," *Pobezhdennye vershiny* (1958-1961): 280-88.

[423] Hunt, *Life is Meeting*, 148.

[424] "Dobro pozhalovat'! Soyez les bienvenus!" *Fizkul'tura i sport* no. 2 (1960): 26-27. The journal was the organ of the Central Council of the Union of Sport Societies and Organizations of the USSR.

Western and Soviet alpinism, Garf attributed differences to environmental factors: mountain conditions in the Caucasus and the Alps were simply not the same. The French conducted their ascents in "alpine style," a technical term which describes a climbing strategy that follows the rule "fast and light"—meaning mountaineers carry minimal equipment in order to achieve maximal speed. This style, according to the Soviets, was not adequate for the Central Caucasus, which they characterized as "something in the middle between the Alps and the Himalayas."[425]

While the Soviets admired the speed and efficiency with which the French were moving over demanding terrain, they deemed the French method too risky. Indeed, the French underestimated the severity of the mountains and eventually relied on the Soviet mountaineers to provide them with tents. The spare use of pitons and the tendency to climb short-roped in difficult terrain also did not find Garf's approval.[426] In the decades to come, these differences in style would be a major talking point for each Western climbing group visiting the Soviet Union. Yet also among Western climbers, opinions about techniques differed. In the interwar period, for example, American climbers criticized Europeans for their high death rates; in return, English climbers mocked Americans for being overly cautious.[427] While differences in climbing styles were rooted in local and regional traditions, environmental conditions, and schools of training, debates about style often took on national form.[428]

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[425] "Dobro pozhalovat'! Soyez les bienvenus!" *Fizkul'tura i sport* no. 2 (1960): 26-27.

[426] "Dobro pozhalovat'! Soyez les bienvenus!" *Fizkul'tura i sport* no. 2 (1960): 26-27. Pitons are metal spikes driven into rock. They serve as intermediate belay points to protect climbers from falling. Short-roping is a technique that is still regarded as one of the most controversial belaying methods. It is almost impossible to catch a fall on steep terrain if one person, tied to others, slips and falls.

[427] Susan R. Schrepfer, *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 137. According to the English, American climbers were overusing pitons.

[428] For an example see Kerwin Lee Klein, "A Vertical World: The Eastern Alps and Modern Mountaineering," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, no. 4 (2011).

Exclusive Internationalists

Discussions of style, David Mazel notes, were usually led among climbers themselves. The absence of "extensive, centralized superstructures of conventional sport," coupled with the marginality of mountaineering in commercial and social terms, allowed climbers to reach a consensus about acceptable practices much more easily than other sport disciplines.[429] The exchanges between Western and Soviet mountaineers demonstrated this flexibility of mountaineering discourse. However, when the Soviet Mountaineering Federation applied for membership in the UIAA, it became obvious that mountaineers, too, were able to use their limited superstructure as a gatekeeping mechanism.

In March 1958, a few months before John Hunt's expedition left for the Caucasus, the president of the All-Union Mountaineering Section, Nikolai Romanov, requested admission to the UIAA "with the wish to deepen and expand the friendly relations among the alpinists of the USSR and other countries."[430] The application was submitted only months after Czechoslovakia and Poland had been re-integrated into the UIAA. Romanov himself was an experienced sport official. As chairman of the USSR Sports Committee, he had overseen the Soviet admission to the International Olympic Committee.[431] Joining the UIAA should thus surely pose no major

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[429] Mazel, *Mountaineering Women: Stories by Early Climbers*, 17.

[430] Nikolai A. Romanov to UIAA, 20 March 1958, French translation in letter to the executive committee, 8 April 1958, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[431] Jenifer Parks, "Red Sport, Red Tape: The Olympic Games, the Soviet Sports Bureaucracy, and the Cold War, 1952-1980" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2009), 29. Romanov had served in this capacity since 1945 (with an intermission as deputy from 1948-1953).

difficulties, or so the Soviets probably assumed. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union had already been admitted to all other major international sports federations.[432]

The UIAA was markedly different compared to other sports organizations. It was neither a governing authority nor did the UIAA organize international competitions at that time. Rather, it acted as a clearinghouse for information and as a facilitator of international cooperation in various fields related to alpinism. Despite its limited importance, membership in the UIAA was highly important to the Soviet Mountaineering Federation. From the very beginning, mountaineers in the Soviet Union had struggled to secure access to limited state funding. The Soviet sport system devoted most of its resources to competitive sports that allowed direct competition in the international arena. A way to resolve this dilemma was to organize mountaineering along lines similar to other sports, a process Maurer refers to as "self-sportification" (*sportizatsiia*).[433] In the fight for rare financial resources, Soviet mountaineering officials pushed towards a professionalization of mountaineering. Although they faced resistance from within the Soviet mountaineering community, the Soviet embrace of competition as part of the larger social order made the process more palpable.[434]

In all other sport disciplines, it was the West which first staged international competitions, spurred standardizations of sports, and established international authorities that governed competitive sports. Barbara Keys has documented the futile interwar attempts of the

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[432] E.g. FIFA (football) 1946, IOC (Olympics) 1952, IIHF (ice hockey) 1954.

[433] Maurer, "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship'," 486. See in detail also *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 239-42. Sportification also entailed an individualization of Soviet mountaineering. Instead of emphasizing the collective, the achievements of individual mountaineers moved into the focus. As Maurer shows, this process did not happen without resistance from older generations.

[434] The most prominent case was the Stakhanovite movement, which celebrated the emulation of the Soviet shock worker. For the Stakhanovite movement, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 169-70.

Soviet Union to create an alternative to the "capitalist and bourgeois" competitive sports system through the Red Sport International (or Sportintern). After tentative contacts with mainstream competitive sports in the 1930s, the Soviets had relinquished this alternative vision of sports and joined the international sport system in an effort to celebrate Soviet nationalism and augment Soviet prestige in a Cold War context.[435] In the realm of mountaineering, the West-East direction of sportification, meaning the institutionalization and standardization of an athletic practice, was reversed.[436] While in the interwar period the Soviet Union decried competitive sports as a bourgeois activity, the country was the first to organize standardized forms of competitive mountaineering and rock climbing.

At the time the Soviet Federation applied for membership in the UIAA, climbing in general had already split into specialized disciplines. While historically related, technical rock climbing became increasingly separate from mountaineering. The Soviet Union organized competitions in both fields. In 1955, and then from 1965 more regularly, the Soviet Union conducted annual Mountaineering Championships.[437] From the perspective of individual Soviet climbers, there was much to gain from partaking in competitions. Winning championships was a way to qualify for independently organized larger climbs and even helicopter-supported

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[435] Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 167-1972, 179-180. This was by no means a smooth process—it was hampered both by anxieties on the Soviet side as well as obstruction by several sports organizations which feared ideological contamination. While the Soviet Union gradually began to adopt Western sports practices, such as rules, tactics, and training methods, it transformed them into a distinct Soviet form. Older but still relevant is also James Riordan's work, see e.g. *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[436] For a discussion of the process of sportification and examples see Cécile Collinet et al., "Physical Practices and Sportification: Between Institutionalisation and Standardisation. The Example of Three Activities in France," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no. 9 (2013).

[437] For an overview of the development of Soviet climbing competitions, see Vladimir Shataev, "Competition Climbing in the C.I.S.," *Alpine Journal* 39 (1997). The competitions were organized in four categories: high altitude, traverses, high altitude/technically difficulty and technically difficulty.

expeditions—privileges that came with the coveted title of Master of Sport. As a Russian mountaineer put it, “the best climbers became real professionals: they had to climb the whole year, not for money, but for the possibility [of] future climbs.”[438] Thus, there was not much space for Soviet climbers to pursue their passion outside of official structures. This system reinforced the professionalization of climbers which the West so dreaded, even if major Western mountaineering magazines, including the *Alpine Journal*, regularly printed the results of the Soviet competitions.

Against this background, membership in an international organization promised to enhance the prestige of mountaineering both domestically and internationally while also underscoring the sportive elements of alpinism. Yet, for many members of the UIAA, the latter was a highly contentious matter. Western clubs regarded Soviet-style mountaineering as anathema to their understanding of mountain sports. They took umbrage both at the Soviet practice of necessitating permits for each and every climb and at the organization of climbing competitions which they deemed against alpine ethics. The Dutch Alpine Club, for example, strongly repudiated the competition element in Soviet alpinism, deeming it against the principle of alpinism and favoring risk-taking.[439]

Evidently, Western attitudes against competitive climbing were incoherent and dosed with a certain level of hypocrisy since non-formalized competition always existed in alpinism.[440] Still, in the absence of clear regulations and ethical guidelines, Western mountaineers strove to

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[438] Pavel Chabaline, Will Gadd, and Steve House, "Commercialization and Modern Climbing," *American Alpine Journal*, no. 42 (2000): 152.

[439] C.J.A. de Ranitz to d’Arcis, 26 September 1959, folder “Russia/Bulgaria,” UIAA, Berne.

[440] Cf. Ronnie Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir, July/August 1974: Some Impressions of Soviet Mountaineering Attitudes," *Alpine Journal* (1975): 90.

preserve *Deutungshoheit*, interpretational sovereignty, over what constituted alpinism. The question of whether mountaineering was a sport did not arise for the first time in the Cold War context. Rather, debates about ethics and techniques, ethics and equipment, purity and development of climbing always formed part of the soul-searching dynamic discourse associated with mountaineering.[441] The Cold War context added an additional layer to the debate, turning the Soviet bid into the most contentious matter the UIAA had dealt with thus far.

The fault line that divided the alpine community in this matter did not neatly follow the Iron Curtain. Those who had first-hand experiences with the Soviets, mostly the British, pursued a pragmatic and open approach that clashed with the anti-Soviet view of other members of the UIAA, first and foremost president Egmond d'Arcis. Prewar connections had made the re-integration of the Czechoslovaks and the Poles relatively smooth. Walery Goetel was still Poland's leading representative and after all, the UIAA owned its existence in large part to him. Hardly any connections existed between the Soviets and any other alpine club with the exception of the British, who emerged as the Soviet's most ardent supporters.

By summer 1957, the UIAA still had not replied to the Soviet request. Evgenii Gippenreiter tasked John Hunt to convey his disappointment to Egmond d'Arcis upon his return to Europe. Writing to the Swiss, Hunt lost no time endorsing the Soviet application as an "excellent plan:" there was "nothing but good" in the Soviet efforts to establish contacts with associations across the Iron Curtain.[442] The president of the British Mountaineering Council, Basil Goodfellow, who had met Gippenreiter in London, also weighed in and assured d'Arcis

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[441] For more recent commentaries see Philip Bartlett, "Is Mountaineering a Sport?," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 73 (2013); Doug K. Scott, "Awards and Recognition in Climbing," *Alpine Journal* 114 (2010/2011).

[442] Hunt to d'Arcis, 10 September 1958, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

that in the Caucasus "the Soviet mountaineering authorities gave every possible help […]; the whole visit was a most happy one."[443] Rebutting enemy stereotypes, the Soviets had proven to be respectable mountaineers, excellent hosts, and, in their appreciation of mountains, not very different from their Western colleagues. "There was everything to gain from admitting Soviet mountaineers since the best way of overcoming the question of access to the Caucasus and other Soviet ranges was through personal contacts," Goodfellow relayed to d'Arcis.[444]

Goodfellow's statement revealed the high stakes involved in the admission question: access to the Soviet mountains. He explicitly stressed that he valued opportunities to climb in the Caucasus and Pamirs more than any political considerations. The British comprehended that carefully crafted personal contacts were indispensable if Western mountaineers wanted to climb in the Soviet Union. D'Arcis, however, had other prerogatives. In office since the UIAA's inception, he ran the UIAA as an exclusive organization, as a "club of friends, but not as a world governing body," as an Austrian UIAA representative remarked.[445] At the same time, d'Arcis treated the UIAA as a microcosm of the international system and was apprehensive that the socialist countries would gain considerable influence. "I must say that since Poland, Bulgaria and Czecoslovacia [sic] have joined again, there is a feeling that the 'beyond the iron curtain' countries are likely to take a great place in the Union," d'Arcis shared his worries with Hunt.[446] From his institutional perspective, political considerations took precedent over the access

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[443] Goodfellow to d'Arcis, 17 September 1958, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[444] BMC committee meeting no. 68, 23 September 1958, BMC Minute Book 02.12.1944-03.10.1960, British Mountaineering Council, Manchester.

[445] Franz Hiess, "Die UIAA: Kritisches und Unkritisches," *Alpenvereinsjahrbuch* 111 (1987):113. Hiess was active in the UIAA since 1950 and acted as vice-president from 1970-1973.

[446] D'Arcis to members of the Executive Committee, 13 September 1958, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

question, a matter he personally had little stake in. This was underscored by his suggestion that if the American Alpine Club joined, the Soviet Union would be more easily admitted "and its influence would be in some way counterbalanced."[447]

John Hunt was taken aback by d'Arcis's suggestion, realizing that it went against all claims of being an apolitical organization: "[…] it would be that I fail to see the implied connection, in the context of mountaineering, of politics on either side of any political barrier. Surely the U.I.A.A. should not be concerned with achieving some sort of Balance of Power in its deliberation? It is specifically because mountaineering can and should be kept aside from, and beyond, politics that we want as many as possible to get together under your aegis?"[448] Although the Swiss brushed Hunt's concerns away, stating "politics never played—and I hope will never play—any part in our doings," his actions betrayed his true sentiments.[449]

It remained unclear which exact negative repercussions d'Arcis feared, though his apprehension of socialist domination mirrored the anxieties of sports officials of other international organizations. The attitude d'Arcis exhibited over the next decade resembled that of Avery Brundage, the Vice President of the International Olympic Committee, who initially resisted vigorously Soviet membership in the IOC under the pretense of bureaucratic rules.[450] Eventually, the IOC accepted the Soviet Union under the larger pretense of the Olympic ideal while debates over the political neutrality of their national Olympic Committee and their

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[447] D'Arcis to Hunt, 14 September 1958, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[448] Hunt to d'Arcis, 17 September 1958, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[449] D'Arcis to Hunt, 26 September 1958, folder "Grande Bretagne," UIAA, Berne.

[450] Parks, *The Olympic Games*. In the case of the IOC, the political independence of the national Olympic Committee and the question of whether state-sponsored athletes conformed with the Olympic amateurism rule raised concerns, but also who in the Soviet Union would be qualified to serve on the IOC.

adherence to the principle of amateurism intensified.[451] Just as IOC members were afraid of accepting anyone who was not "like them" in terms of class, education, and Euro-centric outlook, UIAA officials constructed Soviet alpinists as "others."

Not only d'Arcis, but also other UIAA members participated in this othering. Some regarded the admission of the Soviets as "dangerous," fearing "domination or at least a 'veto' attitude [...] (a la U.N.)."[452] When the executive committee met in October 1958, the clubs supportive of the Soviet admission—the French Mountaineering Federation, the British Mountaineering Council, as well as clubs from Greece and Sweden—were absent. The delegates who were present concluded that as long as the Soviet Union considered alpinism as a competitive sport and inhibited the free travel of foreign mountaineers to the Soviet Union as well as the right of Soviet alpinists to travel abroad, the decision had to be deferred.[453]

While the British skillfully negotiated permissions to climb in the Caucasus and later the Pamirs through personal ties, other members hoped to leverage UIAA admission to press for an opening of the Soviet Union to foreign climbers. Pointing to practices in other socialist member states, d'Arcis urged Romanov to examine how access could be provided for individual alpinists and groups to climb in the USSR. Yet Romanov rejected this request as an intervention in Soviet

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[451] "Red Sport, Red Tape," 83.

[452] BMC Committee meeting no. 67, 13 May 1958, annex: Report of Christopher Penn on the UIAA Executive Council Meeting at Lucerne, 19 April 1958, BMC Minute Book 02.12.1944-03.10.1960, British Mountaineering Council, Manchester. The official protocol is less specific on this point, Séance du Comité Exécutif, 19 April 1958, folder "Comité Exécutif 1948-1959," UIAA, Berne.

[453] D'Arcis to members of the Executive Committee, 13 September 1958; process-verbal de la séance du CE, 4 October 1958, folder "Comité Exécutif, 1932-1959," UIAA, Berne. Prior to the meeting, d'Arcis wrote to the members of the executive committee to reflect on the issue in order to avoid debate and express their opinion beforehand and telegraph a "yes" or "no," yet he did not receive responses from all of them. At the Lugano meeting, a debate occurred over whether the voting should be secret or not—foreshadowing the intense political debates that followed. It was to the Soviets' disadvantage that the representatives of the CAF, BMC, Greece and Sweden were absent since their organizations were supportive of the USSR. Present were representatives of the SAC, DAV, CAI, VaVÖ (Austria), PZJ (Yugoslavia), the Royal Dutch Alpine Club, and the Spanish Mountaineering Federation.

internal affairs.[454] Whether it was a calculated ideological provocation or disinformation, it must have been clear that the Soviet Mountaineering Federation had limited power to lift Soviet travel restrictions. D'Arcis seemingly understood little of the Soviet realities on the ground. Many of the mountaineering camps ran at their maximum capacity, infrastructure was still lacking, and the staffing of camps with qualified trainers was difficult.[455] The British example, however, showed that the Soviets were open to hosting foreign climbers if the relationships were based on trust rather than pressure.

Matters became more complicated when in 1960, the Soviet government initiated major organizational changes of its sports policies that underlined the political control of sports organizations even more. Substituting the Central Council of Sport Societies and Organizations with an All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport (Vsesoiuznyi komitet po fizicheskii kul'ture i sportu) under the direct authority of the Council of Ministers, a quasi-sports ministry was now in place.[456] As part of these changes, the Mountaineering Section was transformed into the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, presided by Aleksandr Borovikov, Honored Master of Sport. The Federation received a new statute, which entailed explicit references to the goals of the Communist Party, the advancement of Communism, and political education.[457] In the UIAA, two distinct views developed on this matter. Some, like the Swiss Alpine Club, assumed that this was presumably a necessary clause for all Soviet sports organizations and thus an internal matter.

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[454] D'Arcis to Romanov, 12 May 1959, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[455] See e.g. inquiry into the work of mountaineering camps of DSO Profsoiuz 1961, R-5451, opis 32, dela 717, list 93-98, GARF, Moscow. The report mentions that the skill level was improving thanks to preparation courses, though in 1961 still seven percent of the participants (843 out of 12,000) had no mountaineering skills whatsoever.

[456] James Riordan, *Sport under Communism: The U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, the G.D.R., China, Cuba*, 2nd, rev. ed. (London: Hurst, 1981), 38.

[457] Circular to members, 10 May 1960, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

Others, like the German Alpenverein, rejected the admission of the Soviets based on these political clauses.[458]

For the next decade, d'Arcis, supported by other UIAA members, embarked on a bitter battle with the Soviets over this very passage in the Soviet statutes. Using the apolitical character of the UIAA as a pretense to keep the Soviets at arm's length, he pressured the Soviets to relinquish either any mentioning of Communism in their statutes or their aspiration to become a UIAA member. This argument was familiar to Soviet sports representatives from their previous experiences with international sports associations, particularly the International Olympic Committee. As Parks has pointed out, "Soviet sports representatives believed that the IOC's apolitical stance was a mask for maintaining the influence of capitalist nations within the Olympic movement."[459] Evoking the non-political character of the UIAA was indeed a highly political maneuver.

D'Arcis' presided over an organization with several members of the Warsaw Pact. Yet he had clear political allegiance, which was demonstrated by the fact that he informally inquired with a speaker of NATO about whether an admission of the Soviets would be against or in accordance with the general political line of NATO. D'Arcis did not appreciate NATO's response—the speaker confirmed that NATO supported all kinds of exchange in the cultural, art and sports realm between the West and the Soviet Union. A "handshake" between the alpinists of both groups would be regarded favorably.[460] While his contemporaries described Egmond d'Arcis as an idealist who believed in the universal spirit of alpinism, his view of

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[458] Circular to members, 10 May 1960, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne

[459] Parks, "'Nothing but Trouble'," 1556.

[460] D'Arcis to Hans von Bomhard, 30 August 1959, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

internationalism was a Western-centric one. To the opponents of the Soviet admission, D'Arcis was eager to stress "the UIAA has no reason to follow, even the friendly, advice of NATO." By the mid-1950s, the UIAA, which had been founded by East Central European alpine clubs with the goal to transcend national borders, had been co-opted by the Cold War worldview of its president.

When in May 1960, the general assembly of the UIAA met in Yugoslavia, the request of the Soviets was rejected by secret vote of eight to five "on the ground that [the Federation] has political aims, including the spread of communism."[461] D'Arcis informed Moscow that all members of the UIAA supported friendly relationships between "the Western alpinists" and those of the USSR as desirable. However, this would require the Soviets to guarantee free travel and only "in the absence of any dirigisme," with which d'Arcis probably meant the restriction on climbing parties to choose their own projects.[462] D'Arcis added that when in some future these obstacles would be removed, "the alpinists of the West and the alpinists of the East will be able to fraternize by realizing the best possible ideal they aspire."[463] It was a remarkable rhetorical twist to pitch the UIAA as the "West," given that the assembly took place in non-aligned Yugoslavia and that Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia were all UIAA members. Those East Central European countries with established alpinist traditions—first and foremost Poland and Czechoslovakia—found themselves in an awkward position as old alpine friends of the West, as

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[461] Committee meeting no. 76, 13 June 1960, circular no. 295, BMC Minute Book 02.12.1944-03.10.1960, British Mountaineering Council, Manchester. The BMC was absent but had informed d'Arcis that they were in favor of admitting the Federation, but would not press the issue if this would trigger other members' resignation.

[462] D'Arcis to Borovikov, 21 September 1960, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne. The letter exchange is also in fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 836, GARF, Moscow.

[463] D'Arcis to Borovikov, 21 September 1960, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne. The letter exchange is also in fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 836, GARF, Moscow.

mediators between the two blocs, and as suspected Communist foes. Continuities of the prewar era thus continued to shape relationships between the West and what was now the "East," yet despite a certain degree of robustness of these relations, Western alpine club functionaries were quick to adopt a Cold War lens and once again marginalize their East Central European colleagues.

Socialist Internationalism

The UIAA affair became awkward for the Soviets who felt considerably wounded in their pride. A rejection from an organization of which a number of Soviet satellite states were long-term members reversed the power play Soviet sports officials were accustomed to. In other sports federations, it was the Soviets who demanded "democratization" and inclusion of smaller socialist states.[464] In the realm of alpinism, however, the Soviets relied on the Czechs, with whom they entertained the closest contact, as advocates and informers.[465] The Soviets saw the rejection as a "clear manifestation of political discrimination and intolerable politicization, obviously imposed by hostile tendencies and ill-disposed attitudes of the most reactionary and conservative forces in the UIAA against [their] country and Soviet alpinists."[466] This assessment was not unjustified. As has been shown, the conservative forces, primarily Egmond d'Arcis, were indeed responsible for politicizing the Soviet request for admission.

The fear that the Soviet Union would rally the socialist countries around them became a self-fulfilling prophecy. In January 1961, the first international conference of the representatives

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[464] Parks, "'Nothing but Trouble'."

[465] Czechoslovak Section for Tourism and Alpinism to Mountaineering Federation of the USSR, 2 September 1961, fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 701, list 16. GARF, Moscow.

[466] Borovikov to d'Arcis, December 1960, fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 701, list 31, GARF, Moscow.

of mountaineering associations of the socialist bloc countries convened in Prague.[467] Apart from the host, representatives were present from tourist and alpine organizations from Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Romania, and the Soviet Union. The larger aim of the congress was to foster further cooperation among socialist countries in the growing field of mountain sports, yet the debacle of the Soviet admission seemed to have been a major catalyst for organizing the congress. While Cold War rhetoric and the proclamation of systemic antagonisms were prevailing, the conference appeared to be a reaction to the conservatism of the UIAA rather than a genuine demonstration of the superiority of socialist climbing.

As Patrick Baibracki and Austin Jersild suggested, "common claims about the virtues and special characteristics of 'internationalism'" provided part of the glue that held the Second World together: the deployment of internationalist rhetoric was a common practice among communist regimes to create cohesion among themselves, to attack the capitalist West, or to reach out the Third World.[468] At this first conference of socialist alpine and tourist organizations, the members deployed this form of Cold War socialist internationalism in order to combat the exclusive alpine internationalism of the UIAA, formulate the need to support the Third World in developing an

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[467] "Protokoll der 1. Internationalen Konferenz der Vertreter der Touristikverbände der sozialistischen Länder," BArch DY 12/4300, p. 28-31, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin. The same material in Russian (protocol, resolutions, concluding communique) also in fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 701, list 44-64, GARF, Moscow. It is unclear whether this conference became a regular occurrence. In 1982, a symposium of socialist countries took place in the mountaineering camp Bezengi in the Caucasus. In addition to the Soviets, delegates from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Eastern Germany, and Yugoslavia were present. The meeting was concerned only with technical questions such as mountain rescue and environmental protection, yet the Soviet representatives suggested to form a rescue organization similar to the International Commission of Alpine Rescue (ICAR), but that was exclusively catering to socialist countries. The report mentions that another meeting was planned for the following year in Czechoslovakia. Borut Bergant, "Poročilo s simpozija socialističnih držav v alplageru Bezengi na Kavkazu [1982]," no date, šk. 33, f. Paule Šegula, Slovenian Alpine Museum, Mojstrana.

[468] Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild, "Editor's Introduction," in *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild (Cham: Springer International, 2016), 4. For postwar socialist internationalism, see Rachel Applebaum, "The Friendship Project: Socialist Internationalism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 3 (2015); Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild, eds., *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World* (Cham: Springer International, 2016).

alpinist culture, and, at the same time promote the need to jointly promote the interests of the socialist countries within the existing structures of the UIAA.

A full day was dedicated to discussing matters on the UIAA based on a report prepared by the Czechoslovak Mountaineering Federation.[469] This report, which together with the conference protocol was marked confidential when distributed to all participating organizations, illustrates the three objectives of socialist internationalist rhetoric. A central theme of the report was what can be called alpine assistance: a form of sport diplomacy in the realm of alpinism. This idea provides a clue about the interest of the Soviet bloc in the Third World while also illuminating relationships within the wider socialist world during the Khrushev period.[470] As Khrushchev's brinkmanship evoked one political crisis after another, most importantly the Cuban missile crisis, his government tried to save Soviet reputation by increasing its soft power efforts in the realm of sports in order appeal to "potential client states."[471] Reflecting this practice, the report postulated that Socialist countries with a longer alpine tradition had a responsibility to assist newcomers such as Albania and China but also countries of the Third World in developing their mountaineering culture.

The Soviets in fact had already started to use alpine assistance as an opportunity to showcase their superiority and link sport with foreign policy. In 1956, the first Soviet-style alpine camp had taken place in Albania. Although with fifteen participants this was not a mass event, an Albanian-authored article in *Fizkul'tura i sport* praised Soviet support in developing alpinism in

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[469] No title, 12 January 1961, BArch DY 12/4300, p. 32-34, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

[470] See e.g. David C. Engerman, "The Second World's Third World," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (2011); Anne E. Gorsuch, ""Cuba, My Love": The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties," *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015).

[471] Parks, *The Olympic Games*, 35. For a comprehensive treatment of Soviet sport diplomacy towards neighboring and developing countries see Peppard and Riordan, *Playing Politics*, 95-114.

the country. As the article stated, alpinism was unknown in Albania until the "liberation of the country" by the Soviet army as "antinational regimes and fascist occupation hindered the development of this wonderful discipline."[472]

Until the Sino-Soviet split, Soviets also supported the development of Chinese mountaineering on a much larger scale compared to Albania. As Eva Maurer has noted, Soviet contacts with Western mountaineers were individual affairs while Soviet-Chinese cooperation in the realm of mountaineering was a state affair.[473] Soviet mountaineers provided training for the Chinese, who asked for "brotherly help" in establishing mountaineering camps and developing technical equipment, and even organized joint expeditions.[474] The Sino-Soviet split in 1959 ended the alpine development assistance and lead to the cancelation of a joint Everest expedition in the last minute.[475]

The idea of alpine assistance was not free of self-interest but linked with the desire to receive access to the territories of those states receiving assistance. The Czech delegate reminded the audience that a large number of the highest peaks in the world were located on territories of socialist countries, i.e. the Soviet Union and China; but also the former colonies of Asia and Latin America had mountains of alpinist interest. He projected that mountaineers of developing countries, including India, Pakistan, and Morocco, would soon start to independently climb their

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[472] "V gorakh Albanii," *Fizkul'tura i sport* no. 11 (1960): 9. The Albanian author conjured familiar narratives of the mountains as "mighty bastions of the resistance movement" and the heroism of the youths who subsequently turned alpinism into a favorite activity.

[473] Maurer, "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship'," 493.

[474] See communication in fond R-5451, opus 32, dela 674, e.g. list 20-23, GARF, Moscow.

[475] For a history of Sino-Soviet relations, see Austin Jersild, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

mountains and "successfully join the ranks of the privileged Western European countries."[476] Yet if the socialist countries did not take action, these mountaineers would come under the influence of capitalist climbers. At the same time, it was important to maintain good relations with the "classic alpine countries," not only because of the advanced level of Western alpinism, but also because successes of socialist climbers in the Alps received broad attention by the press in these countries and aided socialist propaganda aims.[477] For the socialist countries, thus, access to foreign mountain ranges was just as important as for Western mountaineers.

The author of the report furthermore lamented that the organization established for facilitating international cooperation, the UIAA, was not producing major results despite its thirty-year existence; the commission on safety and the UIAA bulletin that appeared since 1957 counted as its only achievements. Furthermore, he took offense at the political attitude of the majority of the UIAA members, in particular Western Germany, Austria, and the UIAA presidium whose reluctance to admit the Soviet Union exposed their "immeasurable conservatism and completely reactionary attitude." However, the Czech report also blamed the socialist countries for this imbalance of power. If it was not for the withdrawal of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in the early 1950s, these countries would have not lost key positions and influence.[478]

Again, the similarities to Western thinking were striking: not only d'Arcis, but also the Eastern bloc members worried about the balance of power within the allegedly apolitical UIAA. The socialist countries saw the solution in democratizing the UIAA, meaning a change of

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[476] No title, 12 January 1961, BArch DY 12/4300, 34, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin

[477] No title, 12 January 1961, BArch DY 12/4300, 34-35, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

[478] Poland and Hungary were permanent members of the executive council according to the statute that was in place until 1957. The withdrawal of the countries, discussed in the previous chapter, led to the loss of these positions.

procedural rules and a diversification of its membership. Highlighting the decidedly undemocratic composition of the executive council, which consisted of eight non-elected permanent members and followed unclear procedural rules, the Czechs interpreted the reluctance of the UIAA to change these matters as an indication that the capitalist countries eagerly defended their influence. Thus, the report called for a broadening of the UIAA membership base to countries of Asia and Africa, echoing the democratization efforts the Soviet Union undertook during that time in other sports organizations. It suggested that two further possibilities were available to remedy this situation: either forming a new international organization, or democratizing the UIAA by changing its statutes. While the first possibility had been discussed but eventually dismissed as not viable, democratization promised more success, not least because several capitalist countries started to support the Soviet bid.[479]

The delegates at the Prague conference decided upon a list of actions, which they hoped would increase their influence in the UIAA. Firstly, the current socialist UIAA members were tasked to take part more actively in all UIAA commissions. Secondly, it was decided to encourage China and Albania to join. Thirdly, all socialist UIAA members and contenders should jointly attend the general assembly in Vienna. Lastly, the aim was formulated to organize the 1962 general assembly in a socialist country. This, so the delegates hoped, would provide a favorable context for the vote on the Soviet Union's admission.[480] Yet what appeared to be a viable plan failed soon thereafter due to inaction, lacking coordination between the socialist UIAA members and the Soviet Federation, and the stubbornness of the Soviets who did not follow the advice of their Czech colleagues. Only in 1969 would Prague host another general

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[479] No title, 12 January 1961, BArch DY 12/4300, p. 35-43, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

[480] No title, 12 January 1961, BArch DY 12/4300, p. 48-49, SAPMO, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

assembly. The support of China and Albania lost its priority presumably due to the intensification of the Sino-Soviet rift and the diplomatic break between Tirana and Moscow.[481]

More importantly, the Soviets did not attend the next UIAA general assembly in Vienna despite being officially invited. The reason was wounded pride. The president of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, Aleksandr Borovikov, refused to send a delegate who would have no voting rights. To make matters more complicated, the Soviets also declined to submit a new application that some UIAA members demanded in light of the restructured Federation.[482] The absence of the Soviets verifiably hurt their case which was subsequently dropped from the UIAA agenda, much to the dismay of the Czechoslovaks who pointed out to the Soviets that all socialist representatives were willing to support the Soviet application but were "not familiar enough with [the Soviet] situation to argue for [their] case."[483] The Czechoslovaks thus expressed frustration over the inflexible attitude of the Soviets who were not inclined to follow their advice.

Stubbornness on both sides and the shielding behind allegedly bureaucratic rules was at the core of a conflict that was a lost opportunity more than anything else. The Czechoslovaks and Poles meanwhile found themselves in between fronts. D'Arcis, most likely not aware of the secret negotiations in Prague, hoped to enlist the Poles as mediators and asked his friend Walery Goetel if he could advise the Soviets to drop the contentious clause: "for the dedication of the cause of the Communist Party and the permanent preparation for work and the defense of the

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[481] For the diplomatic break between Albania and the Soviet Union as well as Albanian-Chinese relations see in brief Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania," in *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Joseph Held (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), 38.

[482] Czechoslovak Section for Tourism and Alpinism to Mountaineering Federation of the USSR, 27 October 1961, fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 701, list 3, GARF, Moscow. Some members of the UIAA saw this as a lack of interested and proof that their application wasn't meant very seriously in any case. The presidium decided with a majority vote that the question could not be decided until the Soviet Federation had submitted a new application.

[483] Czechoslovak Section for Tourism and Alpinism to Mountaineering Federation of the USSR, 27 October 1961, fond R-9579, opis 1, dela 701, list 3, GARF, Moscow.

socialist fatherland."[484] Yet the Soviets did not move on this point. D'Arcis lacked either the vision or the spirit to deal further with this topic. "I have enough of the continuous semi-political, semi-propaganda discussions and I wished one would once concern oneself with alpinism," he complained.[485] Revealing his exclusivist idea of who belonged into the community of alpinists, he wondered if the UIAA should not be transformed into a "European Union or a Union of purely alpine associations, with the exclusion of the Andes, Carpathians, and Rockies."[486] Had d'Arcis lobbied for years to convince the American Alpine Club to join the UIAA, he now thought it desirable to not only exclude the countries which inspired the foundation of the UIAA, i.e. those active in the Carpathians, but also all overseas clubs.

While the UIAA was awkwardly torn between its spatial connection to the Alps and the realization that alpinism had gone global, the sour relations with the UIAA endangered British efforts to secure an expedition to the Pamirs.[487] When the Scottish mountaineer, Malcom Slesser, visited Moscow in order to negotiate permission for a joint expedition of the Alpine Club and the Scottish Mountaineering Club, Gippenreiter expressed his bitterness to him. Each Soviet sport organization had this clause, only for the UIAA this appeared to be an unsurmountable problem, he lamented. "They should understand that this is the way our country runs," Slesser

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[484] D'Arcis to Goetel, 20 March 1962, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[485] D'Arcis to Bomhard, 27 April 1962, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[486] D'Arcis complained that there was little use of having members entertaining only a distant relation, in addition most of the non-European associations were overdue with their membership fees. D'Arcis to Bomhard, 27 April 1962; 05 June 1962, folder "Deutscher Alpenverein bis 1985," UIAA, Berne.

[487] When in 1960, John Hunt brought Russian climbers to Scotland, two members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club—Malcom Slesser and Ken Bryan—developed an idea of an expedition to Pik Stalina in the Pamirs to quell their curiosity of what was going on behind the Iron Curtain. While Hunt had his own plan and rejected to join forces, the Soviets decided to give permission only to a party of twelve consisting both of member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the London-based Alpine Club—a combination which led to its own set of problems. For an account of the expedition see Malcolm Slesser, *With Friends in High Places: An Anatomy of Those who Take to the Hills* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2004); *Red Peak*.

remembered the words of the Russian, “it does not mean that we wish to ram our philosophy down their throats.” Outraged, Gippenreiter added “none of them, none who voted against [them], will ever be allowed to climb in the Soviet Union.”[488] These stark words demonstrated that the Soviets were well aware of their assets. If it had not been for John Hunt, who was the designated leader for this expedition, and his overt support for the Soviet case, the permission would have been refused. While the UIAA barricaded itself behind a wall of bureaucratic excuses to refuse the Soviets entry, the British once again profited from their informal diplomacy and set off for the Pamirs in 1962.[489]

When all negotiations came to a complete standstill in 1962, both sides missed taking advantage of the dynamic decade of the 1960s, which was marked by an increase in international exchange.[490] Only in 1966, when Egmond d’Arcis vacated his post after over thirty years, a new opportunity arose. His successor, Edouard Wyss-Dunant, a well-known mountaineer and former president of the Swiss Alpine Club, renewed attempts to reach out to the Soviets despite the fears enormous fears among UIAA members.[491] Support came from the German born Swiss Himalayan explorer G.O. Dyhrenfurth: “By no means do I want to get involved in high politics […],” he wrote to Wyss-Dunant, “but would it be possible to also invite the USSR [to the general assembly in Chamonix]? Or are there general reservations? That the slogan ‘mountaineers of all countries, unite’ is pretty yet not quite real I do not doubt. Gippenreiter

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[488] *Red Peak*, 49.

[489] The expedition ended in the tragic deaths of two British climbers. Anatoly Ovtchinnikov, "A British Pamir Tragedy [1966]," in *Around the Roof of the World*, ed. Nina Shoumantoff and Nicholas Shoumatoff (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Slesser, *Red Peak*.

[490] For various kinds of border-crossings in the 1960s, see the contributions in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane Koenker, *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013).

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himself is a charming man."[492] Once again, Gippenreiter's personality played a crucial role in increasing the willingness of Western mountaineers to advocate for the Soviets.

The Soviets had in fact already been invited and after yet another intervention by John Hunt, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation was finally admitted to the UIAA in September 1966.[493] Hunt, supported by other vocal supporters, had pressed the presidium to let go of procedural and formal objections in regards to the Soviet application and acknowledge it as valid.[494] The same year, the American Alpine Club relinquished its decade-long position of isolationism and joined the UIAA. D'Arcis's wish of admitting the alpine clubs of both super powers at the same time thus materialized.

While the Soviets refrained from "ramming their philosophy" down anyone's throat, they nonetheless embarked immediately on an effort to democratize the UIAA. One of the first suggestions Borovikov brought to the table was an additional passage in the UIAA statutes: "The UIAA acknowledges full equality of men and women in alpinism."[495] Soviet administers, Parks has shown, linked the promotion of women's sport with their overall democratization strategy and indeed achieved to increase women's participation in international sports.[496] In addition, the

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[492] G.O. Dyhrenfurth to Wyss-Dunant, 25 January 1966, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[493] Wyss-Dunant to Hunt, 11 May 1966, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[494] Comité exécutif, 3 September 1966, Courmayeux, folder "Comité exécutif 1959-1971," UIAA, Berne.

[495] Borovikov to Chartoriiskii, June 1967.R-9570, opis 1, dela 1522, list 128-129. GARF, Moscow. The most recent version of the Articles of the UIAA, mentions that the UIAA will "encourage the involvement in its organisation of women, athletes and representatives from all continents; in case of necessity the General Assembly can establish quotas of minimum representation." See article 4 k) of the UIAA Articles of Association, version 16 December 2015, available at http://theuiaa.org/documents/members/UIAA_AoA_Seoul2015_Amendments.pdf (accessed 30 March 2017).

[496] Parks, "Red Sport, Red Tape," 50-51. The explicit support of female elite mountaineering in the Soviet Union terminated with the tragedy in 1974 which cost the lives of the countries' leadings female mountaineers (see chapter five).

Soviet Mountaineering Federation attempted over the years to abolish the system of permanent members of the executive committee, which gave advantage to the established large European clubs. This suggestion was repeatedly rejected on the basis that these clubs contributed most actively to the UIAA, including financially; the UIAA executive committee hence remained dominated by the European clubs.[497] However, Gippenreiter and his East Central European colleagues followed through with their pledge made at Prague and actively participated in the technical commissions which constituted the most active component of the UIAA.

The Soviet Union also expanded the opportunities for climbers of both the Eastern and Western bloc to climb in the Pamirs. Coupled with a demonstration and celebration of Soviet prowess, the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1967 provided the occasion for the first *al'piniada*, a large mountaineering event, to which foreign climbers were invited, too.[498] Firstly organized in the 1930s, the 1967 *al'piniada* invited three hundred climbers from eight selected countries to climb the 7134m high Pik Lenin in the Pamirs. Two years later, in 1969, the centenary of Lenin's birth was celebrated with another international gathering of mountaineers. Once conceived as a staging of Soviet alpinism and its dedication to *massovost'*, i.e. the involvement of the masses, the *al'pinady* now served as a celebration of Soviet internationalism.[499]

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[497] This attempt was made in 1969 and brought up again at least once in 1972, Bossus, *Les cinquante premières années*, 88. For 1972 see Protocol of the meeting of the executive committee, 8/9 April 1972, Vaduz, p. 6. Microfilm, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Munich. In a similar effort to de-emphasize the Euro-centric outlook of the UIAA, the Latin American members of the UIAA attempted in 1967 to substitute *Alpinisme* with *Montagne* in the organization's name. Although the proposal was declined, the UIAA became referred to, at least in English, as the International *Mountaineering* and Climbing Federation.

[498] For details on the *al'piniady* in the 1930s see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 145-60.

[499] Ovtchinnikov, "International Pamir Climbers [1972]," 148. In 1969, climbers from following countries participated: Austria, Italy, France, West Germany, Japan, Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Rumania, Mongolia, and Yugoslavia.

A Soviet Charm Offensive

When the Soviet Union was finally admitted to the UIAA, a contentious chapter was closed—almost. For the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, the preceding decade was one of humiliation; for the UIAA, it was one of distraction. Challenges of a political nature remained, and so did the position of East Central European members caught between East and West. This became obvious, for example, when the UIAA accepted the Czechoslovak invitation to hold the 1969 general assembly in Prague, briefly after the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Addressing the concerns of the executive committee, the Czechoslovak delegate, Zdenek Franc, had declared "in an almost pitiful way" that he and his colleagues would do everything to make the assembly happen, though they could not promise anything.[500] The Austrian Alpenverein, however, worried that holding the assembly in Prague could signal a legitimization [Aufwertung] of the Soviet-installed regime of Gustáv Husák.[501] The German Alpenverein countered that those kinds of political considerations should not play a role. The situation thus resembled the debates in the 1940s, when the Czechoslovaks were invited to a general assembly just after the Communist coup—only this time, the sympathies were directed towards the Czechoslovaks.

Despite these contentious matters, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation joined the UIAA executive committee as a non-permanent member in 1970.[502] Now being able to deal with all alpine clubs on an equal level, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation embarked on a charm

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[500] Franz Hiess, "Bericht über die UIAA Exekutiv-Kommittee Sitzung in Zürich," 22 April 1969, nicht verzeichnet/UIAA generelle Schriftwechsel 1949-1970, Historisches Alpenarchiv, Innsbruck.

[501] VA-Sitzung 08 September 1969, DAV BGS 2 SG/176.

[502] "Protokoll der Sitzung des Exekutiv-Kommittees der UIAA," 18 April 1970, Innsbruck, folder "Comité Exécutif 1959-1971," UIAA, Berne.

offensive to convince other UIAA members of the merits of climbing competitions. At stake was not only the legitimization of the Soviet way of doing alpinism but also the legitimacy of alpinism within the Soviet sports system. Contemporary observers, like the British climber Ronnie Richards, confirmed this explanation. Richards pointed out that the Soviet political climate rewarded officials supporting competitive sports with “power, status and prestige.” Secondly, if mountaineering became Olympic, there were chances that the funding and equipment would improve.[503]

In contrast to what contemporary Westerners believed, the beginnings of competitive rock climbing in the Soviet Union were rather incidental; rather than being rooted in ideological convictions it was the dire need to improve the quality of climbing instruction which motivated the first competitions. In 1947, the director of the mountaineering camp Dombaj in the Western Caucasus started to organize competitions for climbing instructors, mainly with the aim to raise awareness of poor technique and get the instructors in shape. Within a week, neighboring camps emulated the idea; a Caucasus championship followed the year after.[504] Starting in 1949, the limestone cliffs around Yalta provided the stunning setting for the All-Union championships. Each autumn, when the heat of the sub-tropical peninsula became bearable, men, and women competed in three categories: speed, individual, and rope teams.

In September 1971, twenty-two representatives from Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Japan, and Yugoslavia entered a bus in Simferopol on the Crimean Peninsula bound to Yalta where the fifth Soviet Championship in Sport Climbing

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[503] Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir."

[504] Franci Savenc, “Teknovalno plezanje opažnja s v. šampionata SSSR v športnem skalolazenju,” November 1971, fond Pavle Šegula, škatla 33, Slovenian Alpine Museum, Mojstrana.

was to take place. The goal of the foreign guests was to receive a better understanding of the by now mythical Soviet climbing competitions.[505] When the guests were invited to try an attempt against the clock, the best foreigner, Manfred Sturm from Munich, needed thirteen minutes to complete the route. The fastest Soviet woman, Nina Novikova from Leningrad, flew up the wall in under four minutes.[506] The initial idea behind organizing competition had evidently paid off: The Soviet athletes had pushed rock climbing to a new level, at least within the parameters set by the competitions.

The Soviet charm offensive proved successful. No matter how much opponents of competitive climbing protested against the admission of the Soviets and no matter how much they pitted their own belief system as incompatible with the Soviet approach, attitudes towards competitions started to change. Especially the younger generation of Western climbers became interested in competitive rock climbing, while technical mountaineering competitions remained anathema. In 1972, a Soviet delegation of climbers was sent to Munich at the time of the Olympic Games to demonstrate their competition methods at an international meeting organized by the German Alpenverein. During this meeting, a public debate with international participants was held addressing the possibility of rock climbing becoming an Olympic discipline. In the following year, the general assembly of the UIAA took place in Tbilisi, for the first time on

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[505] Franci Savenc, "Teknovalno plezanje opažnja s v. šampionata SSSR v športnem skalolazenju," November 1971, fond Pavle Šegula, škatla 33, Slovenian Alpine Museum, Mojstrana.

[506] Franci Savenc, "Teknovalno plezanje opažnja s v. šampionata SSSR v športnem skalolazenju," November 1971, fond Pavle Šegula, škatla 33, Slovenian Alpine Museum, Mojstrana.

Soviet territory.[507] This meeting provided another opportunity to propagate climbing competitions.

Competitive climbing continued to fuel debates among climbers and mountaineers and in the climbing press. It was mostly the younger generation who was in favor of competitions.[508] Increasingly, Soviet expertise was asked for. The UIAA could no longer ignore the topic and tasked the Soviet Mountaineering Federation to share its experience with competitions.[509] In March 1976, the Federation invited UIAA president Pierre Bossus to the international sport climbing competition in Crimea in order to give him the opportunity to get acquainted firsthand with this kind of event.[510] The same year, the Soviets deemed the time ripe to request the recognition of organized competition climbing. The strongest opposition was voiced from the American Alpine Club and the British Mountaineering Council.[511] In an abrasive letter to Pierre Bossus, William "Bill" Putnam, president of the American Alpine Club, made clear that American opposition to competition climbing remained strong, "while it may well be that history will prove us wrong."[512] Putnam threatened to leave the UIAA over this issue even if the club

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[507] "Bericht über die Tagung der UIAA vom Oktober 1973," Mitteilungen des DAVs, no. 1 (1974): 32. The Germans lauded the hospitality of the Soviets and used the meeting to talk about sending two groups to the Pamir and the Caucasus the same summer.

[508] The Club Alpino Italiano for example pointed out to the growing interst of young people in climbing competitions. Protocol UIAA General Assembly in Barcelona, 06 October 1976, folder "UIAA Genf versch. Schriftwechsel 1976-1979," UIAA, Berne.

[509] Bossus to Anufrikov, 24 October 1975, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[510] K. Kuzm'in to Bossus, 30 March 1976, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[511] BMC committee meeting No. 175, 14 July 1976, BMC Minute Book 03.74-11.80, British Mountaineering Council, Manchester.

[512] William Putnam to Bossus, 12 July 1976, folder "États Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne. Not everyone had equal objections to competitions. The previous AAC president John Hart for example, who had good personal connections to the Soviets, was less opposed to them. Hart to Borovikov, 13 September 1973, folder "États Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

was offered a permanent seat on the executive committee—a request he saw as a precondition for the AAC's remaining in the organization that had little appeal to the Americans.[513]

Notwithstanding the American attempt to blackmail the presidium, the general assembly of the UIAA decided a few month later to form a working group for competition climbing with nine votes against four and one abstention. The willingness to engage with organized competition climbing did not mean that climbing in the West became Sovietized. Rather, by the mid-1970s competitive climbing had lost most of the political connotation it had carried the decades before. The Western alpine clubs thus experience a similar process of de-ideologizing alpinist discourse as their Soviet counterparts in the post-Stalin era. Yet competition climbing never lost its contested character and continued to be a divisive topic among climbers.[514] In 1977, at the UIAA general assembly in Munich, Bill Putnam addressed the audience in a passionate appeal directed against the Soviet proposal of international climbing competitions: "The competition, if there is any at all, is between Man and Nature, each in the raw state in which we alpinists demonstrate our love for our mountains rather than our rivalry among man."[515] Yet, history indeed proved him wrong. By the 1980s, climbing competitions on artificial walls became widespread also in the United States.

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[513] William Putnam to Bossus, 12 July 1976, folder "États Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

[514] With climbing competitions attracting media attention in France and Italy in the mid-1980s, for example, the British climber Dennis Gray, a staunch opponent of competitions, feared the contamination of British climbing culture: "The climbing world is now too international for developments in one major country not to affect others. […] We need to oppose organized competition climbing developing in Britain and try to use such influence as we have abroad to do the same. "Dennis Gray, "Competition Climbing," *Alpine Journal* (1986): 198-99. See also Bartlett, "Is Mountaineering a Sport?."; Chabaline, Gadd, and House, "Commercialization and Modern Climbing."; Scott, "Awards and Recognition in Climbing."

[515] Putnam to Bossus, 12 July 1976, folder "Etats Unis/Canada," UIAA, Berne.

Learning from the Soviet Union means Learning How to Compete

For historians of the Soviet Union and the Cold War, competitive sports represent the quintessential proxy war between superpowers. Mountaineering, however, never became a public battleground for Cold War rivalries. Rather, the battle was fought over the admission to an organization unknown to probably most members of the climbing community. The story that unfolded during the Cold War between the alpine clubs confirmed that the global community was not and could not be unaffected by Cold War divisions, but succeeded partially in following its own agenda.[516] While old connections between the Eastern European countries and their Western neighbors remained resilient as internationalist-minded alpine bureaucrats remained in office, Cold War rhetoric, advancing the image of the "Eastern bloc," stalled Soviet efforts to join the UIAA for almost a decade.

At a moment when the Soviet leadership and their sports representatives were most willing to forge international ties, the UIAA kept its doors closed, missing the opportunity to rectify misconceptions of Soviet mountaineers whom some members thought to be utterly different from them. While those alpine clubs with little connections to the Soviets employed warnings of a Communist threat to keep the alpine community an exclusive club, it was due to years of private British-Soviet diplomacy that the Soviet Union was eventually admitted to the UIAA. The strategy of having skillful and trusted Soviet sport representatives in place who fostered private connections with foreign representatives bore fruit, even if it took almost a decade to be admitted to the UIAA.[517] Through personal contacts, growing opportunities to

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[516] For this argument see Iriye, *Global Community*.

[517] Parks, "'Nothing but Trouble'," 1559.

climb across the Iron Curtain, and integration into the UIAA, both sides developed increasing knowledge about what separated their alpine culture from each other but also which elements were worth considering adopting.

Once one of the prime reason to refuse the Soviet Union access to the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, as the UIAA started to become known, climbing competitions on artificial walls became now a staple across Europe and North America. While the West never adapted either mountaineering competitions or climbing competitions on real rock, the Soviets were able to score a partial victory. In 2016, the International Olympic Committee approved sport climbing (on artificial walls) as a new discipline to be featured in the 2020 Olympic Games. More than a decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a major goal of its alpine bureaucrats had been achieved.

5 CLIMBS ACROSS THE CURTAIN

Death, Disaster, and Diplomacy in the Pamirs, 1974

In the diary as the wind began to tear
at the tents over us I wrote:
We know now we have always been in danger
down in our separateness
and now up here together but till now
we had not touched our strength

Adrienne Rich, Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev (1978)

The Summit of Détente

In 1967, when the Soviet Mountaineering Federation finally joined the UIAA after a long battle for recognition, the aspirations of its officials were only half fulfilled. Officially, Soviet alpinists were now part of the international mountaineering community. Yet beyond this formal achievement, Soviet mountaineers could not boast any major climbing accomplishments. The times were favorable for the Federation to embark on a new strategy. Relations with the West moved towards détente and the internationalization of Soviet sports saw its heyday: athletes and trainers of many disciplines travelled abroad, the Sports Committee gained domestic authority, and Moscow was ready to bid for the Olympics.[518] It was in this context that the Soviet Mountaineering Federation decided to expand its sports diplomacy in the realm of mountaineering: As internationally admired first ascents were unattainable for Soviet alpinists,

[518] See in detail "Red Sport, Red Tape."

the Federation decided to bring together the world's best climbers to celebrate mountaineering as an international pursuit.

Private diplomacy, chapter four has shown, was instrumental in alleviating the political tensions between the UIAA and the Soviet Mountaineering Federation. This chapter examines the texture of transnational exchange in the context of the first International Mountaineering Camp "Pamir 1974." It continues to rethink the classic state-centered approaches to the Cold War and highlights the way non-state agents improved East-West relations through regular interactions with the other side.[519] Mountaineers participated in three areas that scholars of the new cultural Cold War history have identified as major arenas of transnational interactions: tourism, sport, and consumerism.[520] Among the flows of people, ideas, and goods that crossed the Iron Curtain and rendered it not an insurmountable wall but a "semipermeable membrane" were hundreds of mountaineers from capitalist countries.[521] Preceded by two international *al'piniady* in 1967 and 1969, the first International Mountaineering Camp (IMC) hosted hundreds of climbers from ten Western countries at the base of Pik Lenin, the second highest peak of the Soviet Union. When Western mountaineers met with their Soviet hosts in basecamp,

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[519] For the implications of transnationalism for Soviet historiography see David-Fox, "The Implications of Transnationalism." Major works in transnational Soviet history include Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*; Gross Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together: Germany and Russia Between the Wars*; David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*; David-Fox, Holquist, and Martin, *Fascination and Enmity: Russia and Germany as Entangled Histories, 1914-1945*. For an overview of transnational organizations in the Cold War see Evangelista, "Transnational Organizations and the Cold War."

[520] See for example Parks, "Red Sport, Red Tape."; Peppard and Riordan, *Playing Politics*; Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*; Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream*; Salmon, "Marketing Socialism: Inturist in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s."; "To the Land of the Future: A History of Intourist and Travel to the Soviet Union, 1929-1991." For consumption see Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002); Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-war Eastern Europe* (Oxford Berg, 2000); Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[521] For the term semipermeable membrane see David-Fox, "The Implications of Transnationalism."

piercing the Iron Curtain with ice axes, the mountains of the Soviet Union turned into microcosms of Cold War interactions. At a time when the term "summit" came to stand in for the highest level of meetings between head of states, actual mountain summits, too, provided the setting for the negotiations of differences.[522]

Soviet sport diplomacy formed part of the set of cultural diplomacy strategies of the Soviet Union, a concept that interests historians both as an analytical term as well as a concrete Cold War policy aimed at easing political tensions.[523] As Victor Peppard and James Riordan argue, sport diplomacy was a highly effective yet complex genre of political communication which allowed its authors less control over the outcome than others.[524] The authors refer to competitive spectator sport, yet the Soviet project of sports diplomacy in the mountains was equally complicated: a fusion of economic interests, differing ideas of internationalism, personal ambitions, and the interaction with the environment shaped East-West contacts between mountaineers. Hidden agendas of hosts and guests complicated communication among them. Officially, the camp was conceived as a détente summit—as a celebration of comradeship and climbing excellence against the backdrop of one of the most magnificent landscapes of the Soviet Union. Unofficially, it was an opportunity for the Soviet Mountaineering Federation to collect foreign currency. Cultural exchange and commercial interest formed an inseparable bond.

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[522] David Reynolds argues that it was the Everest frenzy of the 1950s that turned Winston Churchill's metaphor of a "summit meeting" into a common term, see David Reynolds, *Summits: Six Meetings that Shaped the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 1. The first political event that the press labeled a "summit" was the US-USSR Geneva Summit in 1955. Subsequently, media referred to one-on-one meetings of head of states as summits. Elmer Plischke, *Summit Diplomacy: Personal Diplomacy of the President of the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 3-4.

[523] For a discussion of the term "cultural diplomacy" and related concepts of "public diplomacy," "propaganda," and "cultural exchange" see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, "The Model of Cultural Diplomacy," in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, ed. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[524] Peppard and Riordan, *Playing Politics*, 5-6.

The Soviet experiment of inviting foreign mountaineers to the country paradoxically commodified the experience of high altitude mountaineering long before commercially organized expeditions became the target of critique in the West.[525]

The story of the international gathering in the Pamirs in 1974 also introduces an environmental component to transnational Cold War relations. If Soviet sport diplomats had no control over the results of international sport competitions, they had even less command over the fierce environment in which the mountaineering camps took place. Twenty years before the 1996 Mt. Everest disaster and Jon Krakauer's book *Into Thin Air* sparked a public debate about the expedition industry, competitive individualism, and the management of risk, the tragic events on Pik Lenin had called into question the nature of organized alpinism in the unlikely context of Soviet mountaineering.[526] Reflecting the Soviet tradition of conquering nature through extensive infrastructure, Soviet mountaineering officials sought to create a controlled mountain environment for the enjoyment and safety of the foreign guests.[527] Yet, it was exactly these measures of control that alienated the visitors. Western alpinists cherished their sport because of the unpredictability of mountain environments. This separated mountaineering from Olympic disciplines and international sports such as soccer which were exercised in controlled environments governed by strict rules and reproducible conditions aimed at reducing the

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[525] Cf. Ellis, *Vertical Margins: Mountaineering and the Landscapes of Neoimperialism*, 15. For the commodification of mountaineering expeditions see also Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*; Logan, *Aconcagua: The Invention of Mountaineering on America's Highest Peak*.

[526] Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (New York: Anchor, 1998).

[527] See e.g. Stephen Brain, "The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature," *Environmental History* 15, no. 4 (2010); Paul R. Josephson, *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World* (Washington, DC: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2002).

ambiguities of the outside world.[528] When a series of natural disasters of tremendous force hit the Pamir range, it became obvious that the Soviet attempts to remain in control of the environment were futile. The first International Mountaineering Camp in the Pamirs would witness the gravest mountaineering catastrophes in the history of the Soviet Union. Thirteen mountaineers vanished in a series of accidents; among them all eight members of a Soviet all-women team.

In times of storm and sorrow, the mountaineering camp at the base of Pik Lenin became more than an international gathering; it became a laboratory for gender relations, national prejudices, and differing perceptions of risk. Challenged were bodies and minds, tactics and equipment. Economic advantages and better equipment left some unharmed while others met with death. Yet, rather than undermining the project of cross-cultural communication, the shared experience strengthened ties between Western mountaineers, Soviet climbers, and camp officials. The storm disrupted Soviet occupation with protocol and broke down dividing lines of national affiliations, gender roles, and differing attitudes towards mountaineering. Between consternation and condemnation, Western participants developed respect and trust towards their Soviet colleagues and vice versa. In an unexpected way, Soviet attempts to promote transnational understanding in a controlled environment were doomed to fail yet rescued by a tragic event—the unpredictability of sport diplomacy in the mountains played out in favor of the hosts.[529]

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[528] Keys argues that the reduction of complexity was one reason of the rising popularity of international sport in the first half of the twentieth century. The rules and regulations of sport that created the idealized space furthermore suited nationalists as it provided an arena for direct national competition. Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 6.

[529] The following account must unfortunately rely overwhelmingly on Western sources. Given the weight of available evidence, the view of the visitors rather than the Soviet side, the experience of the Western climbers is emphasized in this account; wherever possible, voice is given to the Soviet hosts. Crucial files seem to be missing, whether by chance or not, in the respective collections of the State Archive of the Russian Federation. No discussion of the incident could be found in GARF. A meeting of the Central Council for Tourism and Excursions, VTsSPS, on 27 August 1974, did not mention anything related to the IMC Pamir 1974, see fond R-9520, dela 1920, GARF, Moscow.

Ambassadors, Unshaven

In fall of 1973, a letter from the Soviet Union arrived at the American Alpine Club (AAC). The stamp indicated it had been dispatched back in July; communication was slow between Moscow and New York. It enclosed three invitations: one was to the General Assembly of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation in Tbilisi in October, another encouraged the Alpine Club to send participants to a climbing competition in Yalta. The most excitement was generated by the third invitation, the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream in the American mountaineering scene: an invitation to climb in the Pamirs the following summer.[530] In the imagination of the Americans, the ranges of Soviet Central Asia held the allure of novelty, adventure, even "wilderness"—all of which had been missing from the Alps and other mountain ranges of Europe and North America for generations—with the exception perhaps of Alaska: seemingly infinite opportunities for new technical routes, first ascents, and adventures in a truly remote terrain. Permitting an official US team to climb in the geopolitically-sensitive area close to the Chinese border was a historic novelty. As mentioned previously, in the context of Cold War rivalries, the Soviet Union had accused Western expeditions as being a pretense for espionage.

[530] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 19-20.

Map 2: Soviet Central Asia

As the previous chapter has shown, the Thaw under Nikita Khrushchev provided the first opportunities for contacts among European and Soviet mountaineers. Since 1957, alpinists from socialist countries as well as from Austria, France, Switzerland, and Italy received the opportunity to climb in the Caucasus, though confined in their freedom to roam the ranges by the

strict rules of the Soviet mountaineering camps.[531] Most of the Western mountaineers who climbed in the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev era participated in "currency-free exchanges" (*bezvaliutnyi obmen*) organized by the All-Union Council of Trade Union's Voluntary Sports Associations. Only a selected number of high-profile mountaineering teams successfully arranged individual permits for expeditions through the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, most prominently John Hunt, who in 1958 led a British expedition to the Caucasus in 1958 and the Pamirs in 1962.[532] The first *al'piniada* took place in 1967, when three hundred climbers from eight selected countries together with Soviet climbers were called upon to climb the 7134m high Pik Lenin in the Pamirs in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Two years later, in 1969, the centenary of Lenin's birth was celebrated with yet another international gathering of mountaineers.[533]

In contrast to the *al'piniady*, the International Mountaineering Camps, organized from 1974 in both the Caucasus and the Pamirs, were directed only towards international guests while Soviet mountaineers acted as trainers and counselors. Inviting a US team to the first IMC in 1974 was a matter of prestige and aided by a diplomatic framework that facilitated US-Soviet exchanges since the late 1950s. The Lacy-Zarubin Agreement on cultural exchange in 1958 had fostered scholarly, scientific, artistic, and athletic exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union and aimed to provide an arena for cultural infiltration, honest competition, and an

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[531] Fond R-5451, opis 32, dela 717, list 94, GARF, Moscow. Polish mountaineers climbed most frequently in the Soviet Union, followed by climbers from Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. For an overview of foreign mountaineers visiting the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1964 see Poliakov, "Mezhdunarodnye sviazi sovetskikh al'pinistov." In 1961, for example, 105 foreigners climbed in the Soviet Union, climbers from Austria being the only one from a non-socialist country.

[532] Hunt and Brasher, *The Red Snows*. Hunt also climbed in the Pamirs in 1962.

[533] Ovtchinnikov, "International Pamir Climbers [1972]," 148. In 1969, climbers from following countries participated: Austria, Italy, France, West Germany, Japan, Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Rumania, Mongolia, and Yugoslavia.

actual reduction of mutual ignorance.[534] It was only during the years of détente that cultural exchanges among US and Soviet intensified. While President Nixon shook hands with Brezhnev at the Moscow Summit of 1972 and instigated a new chapter in Cold War relations, the American Alpine Club had pursued its own strategy of détente. John "Jerry" Hart, a native of Colorado and a Harvard graduate, presided over the club from 1971 to 1973 during favorable times for rapprochement. Not only did the political climate allow Hart to travel frequently to Moscow and establish relations with mountaineering officials, but also the re-entry of the Americans into the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, the UIAA, provided a platform to communicate with the Soviets. Ultimately, however, it was thanks to Hart's personal efforts that the Americans were asked to join "Pamir 1974."[535]

To understand what a monumental shift in Soviet policy towards mountaineering this planned international camp represented, it helps to recall how difficult contemporaries found it to believe that it would actually take place. In March 1974, when head of the Pamir camp Mikhail Monastyrskii announced the application of the US team in the newspaper *Sovetskii Sport* under the headline "We are waiting for you on the Roof of the World," *New York Times's* Moscow correspondent Christopher Wren felt relieved.[536] A mountaineer himself, he had been invited to

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[534] Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War*. The US reacted to the agreement by recruiting private organizations to participate in exchanges with the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side, in contrast, the absence of non-governmental organizations meant that the hosts were usually state organizations, such as in the case of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation.

[535] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 20. Hart transferred his office to Charles Hollister in 1974 due to health issues, but remained in charge of international affairs. Craig mentions that Hart was "an essential link to the future success of all American-Soviet exchanges owing to his admirable patience and doggedness in keeping the channels of communication and cooperation open."

[536] *Sovietskii Sport*, 10 March 1974, 4.

A translation is to be found in Wren to Schoening, 11 March 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 3, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

join the American team in the Pamirs. Sending a translation of the article to Pete Schoening, who was selected to lead the expedition, he assured him that "[s]uch articles do not appear here by accident, so I think that you should consider that everything is on, short of some big disruptions in the international climate, which seems quite unlikely, particularly with Nixon's visit planned here next summer."[537] Nixon hardly had a dozen mountaineers fraternizing with Soviet climbers around the campsite in his mind when he embarked on his second visit to Moscow at the end of June 1974, but a US-Soviet summit meeting shortly before the gathering in the Pamirs also indirectly facilitated individual exchanges. Soviet invitations, an Austrian team had learned three years earlier, were easily revoked, but this article clearly indicated that the offer still held good. In 1970, an Austrian expedition team received notice two days before departure that their permission to visit the Pamirs, obtained after long and difficult negotiations, had been canceled; the Soviets cited military reasons. Even the intervention of the Austrian government in Moscow could not help to reverse the decision.[538] The Pamirs remained a heavily protected space and carried more strategic significance than the Caucasian mountain ranges.

Thus, if Schoening regarded the American participation in the international meeting explicitly as a diplomatic mission, he did not overestimate the significance of the trip.[539] Schoening knew very well that the invitation from the Soviets provided a historical opportunity

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[537] Wren to Schoening, 11 March 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 3, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[538] Wolfgang Axt to Bolinder, 17 July 1970, Anders Bolinder Collection, box 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[539] As a young mountaineer, Schoening had become a legend during the American K2 expedition in 1953 when he arrested the fall of five men with his ice ax—a deed that became known among climbers simply as "the belay." The men fell on an ice sheet while trying to evacuate their expedition member Art Gilkey who suffered from pulmonary embolism. While the team made efforts to recover from the fall, they realized that Gilkey, wrapped in a sleeping bag, had vanished. Some of his team members speculated that he cut the rope in order to save the lives of the others. For an account of the expedition see Charles S. Houston, *K2: The Savage Mountain* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954).

as much as it presented a responsibility. Only if the entire American team behaved well would there be hopes for future invitations. Schoening was hence "determined to leave a good impression."[540] Yet, communication with the mountaineering officials in Moscow was slow and cumbersome; misunderstandings and unanswered telegrams warranted further action when it became clear that the Americans and the Soviets had different understandings of what constituted adequate climbing objectives for the US team. In April 1974, Schoening traveled to Moscow for a pre-expedition meeting. His agenda was clear: first, to clarify how many spots the Soviets would grant the Americans, and second to communicate that the US team would not be satisfied with climbing a "tourist" route, that is, one of the two rather easy standard routes on Pik Lenin. Instead they aimed for "original climbing" on hitherto unclimbed technical routes, a style the Russians referred to as "pioneer climbing."[541] While the Americans had put together a strong team hungry for first ascents, the Soviet understanding of what constituted mountaineering achievements differed. Western climbers took into account how rarely a climb was repeated: first ascents of new technically-demanding routes were the standard they were measured against. The Soviets, in contrast, took pride in large numbers of repeated accents. The technical difficulty of a route mattered less than the number of ascents a particular climber had completed. This was one reason why the technically less challenging Pik Lenin stood out as the most often climbed 7000m peak in the world.[542]

In Moscow, the officials of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation proved to be accommodating. Schoening was instantly charmed and impressed by the men he met: the camp

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[540] Roskelley's words. John Roskelley, *Stories off the Wall* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1993), 72.

[541] Expedition newsletter, 19 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 3, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[542] For mass ascents as a differential criteria to Western mountaineering see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 165-68.

director, Mikhail Monastyrskii; the secretary of the Mountaineering Federation, Mikhail Anufrikov; the eminent father of Soviet mountaineering, Vitalii Abalakov; and last but not least Evgenii Gippenreiter, responsible for foreign relations; all "very competent; really fine men."[543] Highly educated, Gippenreiter's Oxford English was impeccable, also Monastyrskii spoke English. Talking to the Russians, Schoening remained diplomatic and stressed that he did not come to Moscow to negotiate climbing objectives but to "know how to be good guests."[544] A demonstration of the superiority of American climbing skills was not part of his agenda, he assured the Russians who worried about national competition. Rather, the US objectives were to establish a few new routes, climb Pik Lenin as time allowed, and develop a continuing relationship with Soviet climbers.[545] The inaccessibility of the Pamirs, not posed by natural obstacles but by political circumstances, made the expedition attractive enough—if the trip was successful and remained without incidences, so Schoening hoped, further invitations to climb in the Soviet Union would follow.

The Russians had been reluctant to provide area photos or precise maps of this politically sensitive border area. It disturbed Schoening that the objectives his team had chosen had to be based solely on comments of climbers who had been in the area and the account of the British expedition in 1962 even though the amount of available information about the Pamirs in the

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[543] Schoening to expedition members, 08 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado. It is worth mentioning that Evgenii Gippenreiter received a copy of this letter.

[544] Schoening to expedition members, 08 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[545] American Alpine Club, "The American Mountaineering Expedition to USSR/Pamirs 1974," 19 December 1973, private collection of Arlene Blum, Berkeley, California.

West had hardly increased since that year.[546] Although he shared his worries at the meeting in Moscow, the Soviets withheld even the official glossy pamphlet which declared proudly that "well known Soviet climber Vitaly Abalakov wishes you to conquer Pik Lenin."[547] With the Soviets exercising control over information, the trip seemed to be a shot in the dark. Schoening yet was confident: "I sincerely believe we do have a clear understanding and that we will not encounter restrictions to which American climbers are not accustomed," he wrote to his teammates. "Our trip should be compatible and successful if we have a reasonable understanding towards the Soviet attitude and philosophy," he reassured, carefully avoiding the term ideology.[548]

Being aware of the political dimension of the expedition, Schoening asked team member Jocelyn C. "Jock" Glidden, a philosophy professor at Weber State College in Utah, to help prepare the group for possible culture shock.[549] Glidden provided the group with a "sketch of modern Russian social and political philosophy" entitled ""Marxism for Beginners," a careful and balanced ten-page exposition of ideological differences between Americans and Soviets that he nonetheless asked participants to read but leave at home. Initially believing that the Americans would climb in a mixed American-Soviet team, Glidden thought some intellectual guidance would be of use. "I imagined there would be times at base camp or in tents waiting out a storm where discussions about the differences of our respective cultures would arise.

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[546] In French, hardly any information was available. See the report of the French team, François Valla and Jean Paul Zuanon, *Pamir: Escalade d'un 7000 au pays des Kirghizes* (Saint-Martin-d'Hères: J.-P. Zuanon, 1976), 12.

[547] Brochure "International Mountaineering Camp Pamir," 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 1, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[548] Expedition newsletter, 19 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 3, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[549] In addition, Schoening asked everybody to read Slessner's *Red Peak*, the account of the 1962 British expedition, even if he was not fond of the book, but refrained from any further diplomatic drilling of the team.

Accordingly, I thought these times would pass better if we understood in a general way, on some fundamental issues, why the Russians are dedicated to their present culture," Glidden wrote.[550] John Roskelley, a climber from Washington who was as talented as he was defiant on expeditions, alluded to the challenge that the alpine ambassadors would face on the first part of their journey: "I am pretty sure that every one of us was aware of the fact that we needed to behave ourselves; although that didn't pan out very well."[551] After a last minute acclimatization climb of Mt Rainier in adverse weather, the team of ten men and two women was Moscow-bound.[552]

Moscow

Moscow in mid-July, 1974. The capital was awaiting its visitors from ten countries under a grey sky. Temperatures were moderate; those rare days when the mercury would reach 30 degrees Celsius had not yet arrived. For a few days the mountaineers would be tourists—a sojourn in Moscow was an inseparable part of the "Pamir package." One group after the other took up quarters at Hotel Sputnik. The Americans arrived on July 12, their tents still wet from the Rainier climb. Every group had its own travel arrangement with the Soviet Mountaineering Federation; the American enjoyed special treatment. Their travel arrangements were handled by the Soviet Mountaineering Federation directly, instead of the infamous Soviet travel agency Intourist.[553]

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[550] Jocelyn C. Glidden, A Sketch of Modern Russian Social and Political Philosophy, June 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, p. 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[551] John Roskelley, interview by the author, 07 February 2014.

[552] For details on the expedition preparations, see Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 36-40.

[553] Schoening to expedition members, p. 4, 08 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

Genia Gippenreiter himself, "handsome and dapper" as usual, greeted the team at the airport and assured that his visitors would not suffer from long custom and visa procedures, a privilege other invited groups did not enjoy.[554] "I can't imagine anyone other than Henry Kissinger having ever been more rapidly processed entering the Soviet Union," Bob Craig marveled at the efficiency of his host who was said to be appointed directly by the Soviet Foreign Ministry.[555] Even during détente, contact with the Soviet Union's major opponent remained a highly political affair.

Eight cheerful West Germans arrived on July 13; no time to lose, they celebrated their arrival at Sputnik by gulping down considerable amounts of vodka, presented by Russian friends, from toothbrush mugs, ash trays, carafe lids, and anything else that made do as a glass. For the West Germans, too, it was the first official invitation to the Pamirs. Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik had proven successful in improving relations with the Soviet Union.[556] Although it was unclear which precise challenges the climbers would face, everyone understood that this was no ordinary trip but one contingent on a changing Cold War climate. The West German team had succeeded in enlisting Foreign Minister Walter Scheel, who was to become Federal President in May 1974, as their patron. Expedition leader Gerhard Friedl expressed a certain nervousness about the endeavor: "Thank God, we did not have to invoke it, but it is a relief to know when you receive the "blessing" of the head of state."[557] French climbers had already been guests of the Soviets in

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[554] For "handsome and dapper" see Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 45. The German Alpine Club group needed hours to pass immigration procedure and customs; they were greeted by a student at the airport and not by Gippenreiter himself. DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 8, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[555] John Boyle mentions this in a note on Gippenreiter who he knew in person. John Boyle, "Tales from the Crypt of the Himalayan Library," email collection, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado. For Craig's words see *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 45.

[556] For Brezhnev's rapprochement with West Germany see in brief e.g. V. M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 210-11.

[557] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

previous years; that summer, two groups would join the Pamir camp. Nine Frenchmen, one Pamir veteran among them, had arrived in Moscow together; so had the Italians—"three old famous men"—Nino Oppio, born 1906, had climbed Pik Lenin already in 1967.[558] A national contingent from Liechtenstein was present, consisting of "two yet unknown, very young men," both named Peter; also a team from the Netherlands found its way to Russia.[559]

More spectacular was the unkempt group of long-haired Englishmen that disembarked from the London-Moscow Express, "piratical in appearance" yet in fact the choicest of the English climbing community.[560] Among the rough-looking Britons was Doug Scott, one of the UK's most prolific mountaineers, who had just returned from the Everest south-west face. With him was Paul Nunn who had previously climbed in the Caucasus. A van bearing the letters "Scottish Pamir Expedition" spit out another contingent of scruffy islanders. On invitation of the Soviets, also the UIAA president and its secretary, the Swiss Jean Juge and Pierre Bossus, had travelled to Moscow. A taciturn group of fifteen Japanese with high-altitude experience but little knowledge of European tongues completed the crowd.

Moscow was only a staging post en route to the Central Asian highlands; yet it offered the only contact with Soviet everyday life outside of the controlled and remote environment of the mountaineering camp. For those who travelled by air, the city offered the first glimpse into the unknown, a possibility to correct "fairy tales and heavy assessments of Soviet life" that dominated Western perceptions of the Soviet Union and fill the empty imagination of those who

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[558] For "three old famous men," see DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 25, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[559] For "two young unknown men," see DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 25, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[560] Paul Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," in *The Mammoth Book of Mountain Disasters: True Accounts of Rescue from the Brink of Death*, ed. Hamish MacInnes (New York: Caroll & Graf), 299.

had no conception of the country at all.[561] First time crossings of the Iron Curtain, no matter in which directions, produced "mighty psychological and cultural effects," as historian Vladislav Zubok argues.[562] Rather than having ideologically-charged preconceptions of "the other," many of the Western mountaineers who were invited first time to the Pamirs had little idea what to expect. American climber John Roskelley recollected that he "didn't have any preconceptions of climbing in the Soviet Union." "I wanted to go because I had great successes…in Nepal and I wanted to see that part of the world. I had no idea really what kinds of routes would be there and what we would encounter as far as political problems."[563] "I simply wanted to go on an adventure," remembered Arlene Blum, a young American scientist and mountaineer.[564] She had had no luck with her application to join the official American expedition team, but was not discouraged by the rejection.[565] Now she was member of a small all-women's team, together with three women from Switzerland: Heidi Lüdi, a young medical doctor, Eva Isenschmid, a photographer by profession, and lastly, the experienced 54-year-old climber Margaret Münkle.[566]

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[561] For "fairy tale" see Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 42. For interpretations of non-state US-Soviet encounters see Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren, *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the present*, vol. 19 (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[562] Vladislav Zubok, "Introduction," in *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange Across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s-1960s*, ed. Kenyon Zimmer and Patryk Babiracki (Arlington: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 1.

[563] John Roskelley, interview by the author, 07 February 2014.

[564] Arlene Blum, interview by the author, Berkeley, CA, 17 March 2014.

[565] The Americans would not be amused about the uninvited fellow countryman—in their eyes, the "delegation" had been carefully selected and the International Mountaineering Camp was not just some alpine hut where one wandered in as desired; exercising control over the team members was regarded as a vital way to guarding the American image and securing a return invitation. Schoening had been informed in Moscow that "there will be 3 ladies with the Swiss team," but he probably did not anticipate that an American climber would join that small all-women team. Schoening to expedition members, p. 7, 08 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

Heidi Lüdi also confirmed that she knew little about the Soviet Union: "I think I had no idea, we simply went."[567]

After the brief encounter with the Soviet capital, the travelers took off to the Soviet periphery. Waiting for the flight to Osh, the second largest town of the Kyrgyz Republic, a curious mixture of characters filled the waiting lounge of Domededovo airport waiting for the 11pm flight. Upon arrival in Osh, a parade of schoolgirls in uniform greeted the travelers with flower bouquets that wilted away in the stifling heat. Having enjoyed a brief but festive banquet at the airport, two jets took the travelers across the summits of the Alai mountains to the village of Daroot-Korgon—no pictures allowed.[568] While later in camp the participants were able to take pictures as they wished, the aerial view of the Central Asian landscape was, in the eyes of the Soviets, too strategically precious to be taken home as a souvenir. Before the arrival "in a new world" with "dimensions and distances unknown" lay three hours of a breakneck truck trip that shook up even the hardiest mountaineers.[569] Moscow was already far away.

An Olympia for Mountaineers?

Where the great ranges of the Tian Shan, Karakorum, Kunlun and the Hindu Kush meet, a messy world of snow-capped peaks, glaciers, rubble fields and steep ravines form the Pamir Mountains.

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[566] Connections had been made through the Rendez-Vous Hautes Montagnes, an informal international women's climbing club: In 1968, the German alpinist and writer Baroness Felicitas von Reznicek decided to organize an international women's mountaineering meeting. Seventy climbers attended and the Rendez-Vous Hautes Montagnes was born, organizing yearly meetings in changing locations. Heidi Lüdi, interview with the author, 02 February 2014.

[567] Heidi Lüdi, interview with the author, 02 February 2014.

[568] John Evans, *1974 USA-USSR Pamirs Expedition: Climbing Journal* (Evergreen: Westwater, 2014), 26.

[569] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 10, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

Lacking the elegance of the elongated shape of the Alps or Andes, their muddled core became known as the Pamir Knot. The Achik-Tash basement was located in the Pamir Alay range, just south of the border between the Kyrgyz and Tajik SSR. At 11,700 feet, the base camp spread across a green alpine meadow devoid of trees yet abundant with wildflowers. To the south, the magnificent north face of Pik Lenin rose large and clear against the stunning blue sky. With 23,406 feet, Lenin was the second highest peak of the Soviet Union, only exceeded by the roughly 1000 feet higher Pik Stalin. The exceptionally sturdy Edelweiss dominated the ground. Celebrated in Europe as a symbol of alpine culture, the flower was so abundant here that the Russians called the grounds the Edelweiss Glade. "White and tall," remembered the American John Roskelley, perhaps paraphrasing from *The Sound of Music*, but "small and dusty," the Germans thought of this Pamir version of their beloved flower and "not worth anything to the photographer."[570] The highlands of Central Asia were the original homeland of the Leontopodium alpinum that in the nineteenth century turned into a national symbol of Germans, Austrians, and Swiss alike.

In 1974, the Edelweiss adorned the logo of the International Mountaineering Camp as a universal symbol of alpinism. Now, after having joined the International Mountaineering Federation in 1968, Soviet mountaineering officials celebrated alpinism as part of a universal culture. Evgenii Gippenreiter, Honorary Secretary for Foreign Relations of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, often quoted his friend John Hunt telling his foreign guests: "Mountains separate nations, not mountaineers."[571] This vision differed considerably from the

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[570] Roskelley, *Stories off the Wall*, 79. DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[571] Schoening to expedition members, 08 April 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, p. 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

attempts under Stalin to "indigenize" mountaineering and pitch Soviet *al'pinizm* against the allegedly individualist bourgeois mountaineering culture of the West.[572] From mid-July to mid-August of 1974, 170 people from around the world populated the Edelweiss Glade, not counting the officials of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, trainers, and camp staff, joining Kyrgyz herdsmen and their life stock: sheep, yaks and camels.

Hundreds of miles away from any larger settlement and in immediate proximity to one of the world's largest glaciers, the camp offered astounding luxuries that represented remnants of Stalinist visions of "good life."[573] Against the backdrop of the stormy peaks of the Bam-i-dunya, the Roof of the World, rows of two-man tents made in Poland formed the Achik Tash basecamp, so neatly stacked that they evoked the organization of a military facility. Each national contingent was attributed a specific section of tents. A flag post and a little plate in front indicated the inhabitants' nationality. "Dog kennels," scoffed the Germans to whom the entire setup appeared "somewhat too neatly organized."[574] Hot showers and electric bulbs dangling from the tent ceilings brought urban comfort to the Pamirs, more comfort than the participants probably experienced on most of their expeditions.[575] A movie tent, volleyball and soccer fields provided opportunities for casual recreational activities. Frugality was unknown in the mess tent full of Beluga caviar, smoked salmon, and sweet Russian tea. These commodities were shipped either via airplane or arrived by truck from Osh, a twelve-hour drive away. Vodka and Georgian

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[572] Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 147. For the concept of indigenization see Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 9.

[573] Arlene Blum, *Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life* (New York: Scribner, 2005), 155. For the development of the mountaineering camps under Stalin see Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation."

[574] Franz Neubauer, DAV Pamir Fahrt Tagebuch, 1974, DAV EXP 1 SG/25, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[575] Arlene Blum, "The Tragic Mountain," Women Sports (1975): 28.

wine were available for a few rubles.[576] Thirty- or even fifty-dollars' worth of caviar, Arlene Blum calculated upon her return to Moscow, would vanish in her hungry mountaineering stomach each morning.[577] What could impress the Western visitors more than an abundance of the Soviet kitsch commodity? In the remoteness of the Pamir highlands, caviar, not *kumys*, the fermented dairy drink of the locals, represented Soviet *kul'turnost*, "culturedness."[578]

The awkward mixture of military camp and leisure facilities was perhaps unusual for the visitors, yet it reflected the specific history of Soviet mountaineering camps that provided the core infrastructure for Soviet mountaineering instruction first in the Caucasus, then also in the Altai and in Siberia since the 1930s. Historian Eva Maurer characterized the state-run permanent mountaineering camps that had sprung up at the beginning of the 1930s as "a place at the border of the Soviet realm."[579] Before the war, the camps were conceived as places of *kul'turnyi otdykh*, "cultured vacations," for the masses: sanitary facilities, cinemas, libraries and even pools were part of the sport-leisure complex.[580] Yet, Stalinist attempts to bring mountaineering to the masses failed. Financial constraints and a push towards a more militarized, athletic form of mountaineering during wartimes being the main reasons.[581] After the Second World War, the

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[576] Roskelley, *Stories off the Wall*, 80.

[577] Blum, *Breaking Trail*. The unlimited caviar was also Japanese climber Kenji Kondo's fondest memory. Mikhail Volkov, "Pamir-74 glazami iaponskikh uchastnikov," Mountain.ru, accessed 5 April 2014, http://www.mountain.ru/world_mounts/pamirs/2004/Shataeva_pamir1974.

[578] See chapter 3 in Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

[579] Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 145.

[580] For a discussion of the Soviet turn towards nature as a source of pleasure, rest, and healing see Johanna Conterio Geisler, "The Soviet Sanatorium: Medicine, Nature and Mass Culture in Sochi, 1917-1991" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2014).

[581] See Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 198-201, 10-14.

camps served privileged citizens who could spare time and money for mountaineering courses that lasted several weeks.[582]

"Here in the Pamirs everything was huge and primordial; everything breathed with the freshness of creation," Russian mountaineer Vladimir Shataev evoked the magnitude of the Pamirs which were so different to the Caucasus, "which is cozy, domestic, and intimate, like the outlying streets of an old European city."[583] Yet the camps were an attempt to bring Soviet order into the primordial space. Even if the amenities of the Achik-Tash camp were nowhere near as elaborate as those of older camps in the Caucasus, they were still antidotes to any concept of wilderness. The elaborate infrastructure of the camp spoke not only to its historical roots in Soviet *kul'turnyi otdykh*, but also to the Soviet desire to impress the visitors and provide value for the participation fee. If in the prewar era, the camps provided spaces to educate the cultured Soviet citizen, starting in the late 1960s they offered an opportunity to combine Soviet sport diplomacy with commercialized international tourism. A practical reason behind the organization of the camps besides increasing the international reputation of Soviet alpinism, was to earn hard currency in order to finance expeditions abroad, in particular Soviet expeditions to Mt. Everest. Just as the Soviet tourist provider Intourist was eager to create foreign currency values, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation had a similar desire.[584] Being a non-competitive and non-Olympic sport, Soviet mountaineering was marginalized in the Soviet sports arena and chronically underfunded. The camps provided at least one source of hard currency revenue for

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[582] "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation."

[583] Vladimir Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1987), 2.

[584] As Salmon argues, generating foreign currency revenue became an obsession of Intourist in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For later periods he notes that this claim is difficult to prove as archival files are still classified. See Salmon, "Marketing Socialism: Inturist in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s," 189.

the sport. Some participants were well aware of this. A fee of $750 per person, which seemed like a bargain for most of the participants compared to the costs of other expeditions, was charged to cover transportation from Moscow to the Pamirs, food, and operation of the camp.[585] Foreign climbers commented on the camp's awkward fusion of international tourism, commercial enterprise, and alpinism.[586] Rumors were that the Mountaineering Federation even lost money on the camps. Yet, it was not the mere profit that counted, but the fact that the visitors paid in convertible currency that the Soviet climbers dearly needed for their own expeditions abroad.[587]

Financial resources were mainly allocated to Olympic sports in which the Soviet Union could prove its superiority in an international arena. According to Doug Scott, the camp's "purpose was to foster international relations amongst climbers but there was also a hidden agenda: to persuade the International Olympic Committee to allow high-altitude climbing to become an Olympic event. Whenever this proposal was voiced at the camp meetings it was generally laughed out of court—the idea for most visiting climbers was anathema."[588] The

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[585] In 1974, $750 corresponded to approximately $3,500.

[586] See for example DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 25, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[587] Ronnie Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir, July/August 1974: Some Impressions of Soviet Mountaineering Attitudes," *Alpine Journal* (1975): 88. This was also confirmed by Enn Saar, interview by the author, 8 May 2014. Arlene Blum even guessed that her entire participation was based on the non-convertibility of the ruble. Once she wired her participation fee to Moscow, she assumed, the organizers had no chance to refund her money and comply with the demand of the Americans to allow only "officially selected" US citizens in the camp. Arlene Blum, interview by the author, Berkeley, CA, 17 March 2014. If the reason behind the camps was to truly collect hard currencies, it is unlikely that the Soviet Mountaineering Federation exchanged the dollars for rubles. In 1980, a major conflict unfolded between the Swiss Alpine Club, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, and two Swiss mountaineers who canceled their participation prior to departing for the Pamir 1979 Camp but received only half of their fees back. The reluctance of the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, represented by Monastyrskii, to credit the full amount might have been rooted in the difficulty of wiring dollars abroad. See letter exchange between Perrier and Monastryrskii, 1980, GA SAC 1676, Burgerbibliothek, Berne.

[588] Doug Scott, "Ego Trips," British Mountaineering Council, posted 13 Dec 2011, https://www.thebmc.co.uk/doug-scott-ego-trips.

commercialization of the camp and the short-term interest of collecting hard currency however collided with the long-term vision of turning mountaineering into an Olympic sport. Although the camps were conceived as a world summit of first class mountaineers, a "world gathering of climbers…to share in the celebration of climbing a great symbol of their culture and sport, Peak Lenin", separate agreements with travel agencies that provided participants willing to pay the fees independently of their climbing abilities irritated the more experienced climbers.[589] The official brochure seemed to call upon individuals, yet there seemed to have been agreements with commercial tourist providers. A large Austrian team for example did not consist of experienced mountaineers but was in fact a commercial group of hikers brought by a savvy Austrian tour-guide.

The fusion of a cultural diplomatic mission and a touristic enterprise partly explained the obscure process of who was invited. Despite the term "International Mountaineering Camp," the IMC of 1974 was neither a microcosm of the climbing world nor an East-West summit of mountaineers. Equal access was not given and only selected Western groups were invited to the camp. "One thinks one knows the meaning of the word 'international,'" wrote the German Walter Welsch, member of the German Alpine Club delegation, "Binational means, in terms of nations, reciprocal; multinational, multilateral; pan-national means all-inclusive. International is a statistically random selection of the pan-national category. That means, that all nations should have access to an international meeting; without the condition though that all are presented."[590] The division between East and West was disappointing to the Germans who hoped to have an

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[589] For "a world gathering" see Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 18.

[590] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 25, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

exchange with climbers who knew the Caucasus well "but could only dream of the mountains of the world."[591] Consequently, the participants noted in the "book of complaints" that next time, climbers from Eastern Europe, and perhaps even the Third World, should also be invited.

A few groups of East European climbers were present in the area that summer, yet they did not form part of the International Mountaineering Camp. A group of Polish mountaineers camped on the other side of the river together with alpinists from Novosibirsk with whom they had climbed since the late 1960s. When the group made it to Edelweiss Glade, they were told, "here are the foreigners, you camp somewhere further so that we don't see you at all, go away." Valerii Menshikov, the president of the academic alpine club of Novosibirsk, remembered: "For us, the situation was a bit strange. We moved to the side, there was also the camp of guys from Cheliabinsk and then us with the Poles. In principle, we weren't offended, well…we protested a bit…But what difference did it make for us? We moved the camp further on."[592] Although or perhaps because Polish climbers were the strongest mountaineers in the socialist bloc and even a founding member of the International Mountaineering Federation, the IMC was explicitly a Soviet-Western affair.

The opening ceremony, too, stood in the tradition of an internationalism that was not geared towards the abolition of the state but rather towards the creation of a global arena to celebrate it.[593] Since the Soviet Union had joined the Olympic movement with its debut at the

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[591] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 25, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[592] [Nam skazali: "tut inostrantsy, a vy vstavayte podal'she, chtoby my vas voobshche ne videli, uydite podal'she." Dlya nas eta situatsiia byla nemnogo dikovata. My otoshli v storonu, tam stoial lager' rebiat iz Cheliabinska i my s poliakami. V printsipe, my ne obidelis', tak ... nemnogo pokrivilis' ... A chto nam s etogo? Vstali lagerem otdel'no.] Valerii Menshikov, interview by the author, Moscow, 21 June 2014.

[593] See Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 39.

summer games in Helsinki in 1952, it had staunchly defended the ceremonial acts of unfurling the flags, singing the national anthems, and marching in uniforms. Attempts to abolish these rituals, established during the so-called Nazi Games in Munich in 1936, were labeled as a subversive act of "cosmopolitanism."[594] Sport internationalism did not mean the dissolution of national borders but their celebration.[595] The utmost symbol of the geopolitical performance, the planting of the flag, was morphed into a quasi-Olympic ceremony each year the camps were held.

Already the *al'pinada* in 1969, when the attending countries were still limited to a handful Western countries, was celebrated as if the United Nations of Mountaineers had come together. "The year is 1969. […]. As soon as July 14, above the camp spread out here, flags have been raised by the countries taking part in the international assembly of mountaineers, [sic]" recounted Anatolii Ovchinnikov the events.[596] In gathering the world's foremost mountaineering nations years later in the Pamirs, lining them up in a row and asking them to run up their banners on poles next to each other, mountaineering was symbolically internationalized along the lines of competitive disciplines. Scott shared a similar impression: "The opening ceremony, with flag raising and other nationalistic trappings [had] much in common with the Olympic Games."[597]

The participants of the camps met the selective internationalism celebrated by the Soviet organizers with a certain degree of resistance. According to the Germans, the participants in the International Mountaineering Camp expected to exchange ideas with participants from other

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[594] Peppard and Riordan, *Playing Politics*, 72.

[595] See in detail Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, chapter 2.

[596] Ovtchinnikov, "International Pamir Climbers [1972]," 148.

[597] Doug K. Scott, *Himalayan Climber: A Lifetime's Quest to the World's Greater Ranges* (London: Diadem Books, 1992), 67.

countries and to get to know them better. They wanted to confirm their own mountaineering abilities in climbing a 7000m peak. In addition to demonstrating what they already knew, the hoped to learn from others, "talk with (national) [sic] people, lift a little of the secret of a foreign country, feel the thrill of making something inaccessible accessible, see things hitherto unseen, and enjoy."[598] Thus the individual experience, rather than a universal grand vision for mountaineering as a sport, attracted Western climbers to the Pamirs. Rather disinterested in mountaineering as a political project, most of the groups felt uneasy during the opening ceremony, but nobody expressed this discomfort as clearly as the British group, consisting of the English and Scottish contingents. "'Send us your leader to haul up your flag at the opening ceremony," the English group was asked upon arrival. "That really stopped us in our tracks. We explained that we had no leader or flag and had no time for nationalistic ceremonies at mountaineering events."[599] After all, they had planned a daunting new route in alpine style, i.e. light and fast, on the South-East face of Pik Lenin. The English team was not too shy to demonstrate their lack of commitment to celebrating what they perceived as a nationalist trapping. In their views, they were all leaders. In order to solve the problem while at the same time mocking the Soviet request, every day they appointed someone else as a leader.[600] When it was their turn to raise the flag, the English-Scottish group seized the opportunity. Instead of the

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[598] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 24, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[599] Scott, *Himalayan Climber*, 61.

[600] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 162. John Roskelley, interview by the author, 07 February 2014.

Union Jack, a piece of lacy women's lingerie soon flapped next to the other banners in the wind, the five Englishmen and four Scots saluting solemnly.[601]

Whether by cosmopolitan provocation or subversive prank, the British resisted the internationalization of mountaineering as a sport. Surely, their connections to the Soviets were already well established and they had less to lose than other groups, but also other groups voiced criticism. The Soviet officials were not amused. Despite glossing over the incident, they feared that not only their dignity was at stake in the general laughter it provoked, but also their conceptualization of international alpinism. The opening ceremony ran its course and the Russian and Kyrgyz officials gave their speeches. But protocol was soon to be challenged again. Order turned into chaos the minute the first speaker raised his voice and everyone pulled out a camera and tried to secure the best spot in front of the podium. "It was a pretty picture, but not at all ceremonial and the 'Head of the Department of the Alpinism in the Ministry for Sport and Culture' observed the tumult bewildered," a German participant remembered.[602] Decorum was only reinstated when at night invisible hands replaced the lingerie with the proper piece of cloth: a Union Jack.

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[601] Roskelley remembered it to be a pair of black panties, Heidi Lüdi remembered a red bra belonging to her team mate Margaret Münkle. Roskelley, *Stories off the Wall*, 82. Heidi Lüdi, interview by author, 02 February 2014.

[602] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 15, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

Figure 4: V. Abalakov speaking at the IMC Opening Ceremony. Credit: Eva Isenschmid/Photograph Collection Alpines Museum der Schweiz.

In turning Edelweiss Glade into a quasi-Olympic space, the site was deprived of its local identity. The Soviet Union was the host, not the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. The cultural ambassadors of Soviet central power at the camp were all Russians, although Kyrgyz representatives were present at the opening ceremony and provided part of the camp staff, their role was peripheral. Dressed in Western suits and hats, they were tokens of the Sovietization of Central Asia, and yet they visibly stood apart from the Soviet mountaineering hosts who sported puffy down jackets (Figure 4). During a banquet that was held for the leaders of the national groups, hosted by a notable Kyrgyz widow, the Soviet officials celebrated the civilizing mission with many toasts. Genia Gippenreiter, asking if the Kyrgyz lived well, received in response a "flow of responses animated by admirable dialectical swaying" as the French noted with irony. "Are you living well?" "Before, we were poor, nomads, illiterate, and sick. Today, we have

doctors, schools, etc…"[603] Gippenreiter's question served as a reference to the larger Soviet civilizing mission. During the early years of the *alp'lagery*, Maurer argued, the camps served "as cultural outposts-replicating the Stalinist power-relation of center and periphery."[604] In the 1920s and 1930s, mountaineering was used as part of the mission to civilize the Soviet periphery by introducing "modern" attitudes towards the body and nature; its target, that is, was specifically local populations. After the Second World War, in contrast, and certainly by the time the mountaineers arrived in 1974, no further attempts were made to include locals in the project of *al'pinism*.[605] Although the interaction of the foreign guests with the local population was characterized by reciprocal curiosity and willingness to share, the Kyrgyz herdsmen who had pitched their yurts around the camp remained extras on a Soviet set.

Negotiating Differences

Even if foreign mountaineers met the celebration of official internationalism with suspicion, there were other dynamics at work that created a certain level of cohesion. As Maurer argues, the mostly academic Soviet postwar climbing community was "a network of the like-minded, a lifestyle or, as later Soviet climbers would call it, an *obraz zhizni*, with its own rituals, jargon, buttons and puns, jokes, folklore and songs, but also certain values, 'ethics' and discourses."[606] Despite differences in the practices of mountaineering and the organization of the sport, it was

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[603] Valla and Zuanon, *Pamir: Escalade d'un 7000*, 59.

[604] Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 151.

[605] "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 151.

[606] "An Academic Escape to the Periphery? The Social and Cultural Milieu of Soviet Mountaineering from the 1920s to the 1960s," in *Euphoria and Exhaustion: Modern Sport in Soviet Culture and Society* (Frankfurt a.M. : Campus, 2010), 168. My emphasis.

through this *obraz zhizni* that climbers from the West could identify so well with their Soviet hosts. Mountaineering was a life choice, no matter if one's playground were the Japanese Alps, the Rocky Mountains, or the Caucasus. Language barriers remained a major obstacle to socialization with the Russian climbers, yet bonds were nonetheless formed with a few of the seasoned Soviet mountaineers. "The understanding and feeling of friendship came out of a sense of respect and an intuitive sense of just plain liking that transcended national styles and philosophies" and even language, noted Craig.[607]

Class background was another factor that contributed to cohesion. Education and social background, hence, provided at least a rough common denominator on the Edelweiss Glade. Mountaineering was a life choice traditionally taken overwhelmingly by members of the educated middle class both in the Soviet Union and in the West.[608] Whether it was with Evgenii Gippenreiter, of noble descent and highly educated scientist, or Mikhail Monastyrskii, the stern-looking Jewish psychiatrist from Moscow who ran the camp with utmost dedication, the foreign visitors mingled with a very particular group of people who were accustomed conversing in many languages and interacting with foreigners. Among all professional groups within the Soviet Union, scientists had the most distinct pro-Western attitude and were also regarded as most open to change.[609] The academic pedigree of the guests matched those of the Soviet hosts. "And if a higher education is still not grounds for calling an athlete an intellectual, then the fact that the

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[607] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 69.

[608] After failed attempts to bring the working class to the mountains, postwar climbing society consisted overwhelmingly of students, academics and white collar workers. In the 1960s, however, increasing wages and vacation time lured more non-academics back into the sport. The equivalent to the European alpine club, a classic stronghold of the (petty) bourgeoisie, were the Soviet climbing clubs that were initially formed at showcase industrial plants, large universities, and the *doma uchenikh*. See in detail Maurer, "An Academic Escape to the Periphery?," 165-67; "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation."

[609] Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War*, 65.

overwhelming majority of climbers have a higher education gives one the right to call mountaineering the sport of the intelligentsia," Soviet climber Shataev remarked.[610] The French team from Grenoble, for example, included a political scientist, an economist, a professor of English, and medical doctors.[611] The Japanese climbers were a mixed group from the Osaka University of Foreign Studies and the Niigata University Alpine Club. The American Alpine Club was known to be a club of academics; the German Alpine Club had a broader social base but its history was nonetheless deeply bourgeois.

In the context of the International Mountaineering Camp, different ideas about the authority of leaders and autonomy of climbers formed a fault line. If climbing cultures did not vary greatly between Soviet and Western climbers, differences in style were nonetheless important for the self-perception of the climbers. Competing ideas about how mountains are to be climbed have structured mountaineering discourses since the very beginning. Assumptions of "proper style," according to literary scholar Julie Rak, included a shared, highly gendered, set of ideas regarding male strength, leadership, and community.[612] None of the visitors were allowed to climb together with Russian mountaineers—a rule that indicated the limits of the Soviet dedication to a truly international experience.[613] Following Soviet practices, each national group was assigned a Soviet Master of Sport who acted as an advisor and had to approve the routes. The Soviet approach was to have a Trainers' Council assess the climbing capabilities of the foreign climbers and, based on these observations, decide if the climbers were prepared well

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[610] Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 14.

[611] See the introduction of team members in Valla and Zuanon, *Pamir: Escalade d'un 7000*, 20-22.

[612] Rak, "Social Climbing on Annapurna," 116-17.

[613] Arlene Blum, interview by the author, Berkeley, CA, 17 February 2014.

enough for the goals they had selected. For Anatolii Ovtchinnikov, it was a "strange anomaly" that it was a custom among the foreign climbers to leave it up to the participant if he wanted to join the team for a specific ascent. Blum "was irritated by this micromanagement and wondered if having others tell us what to do actually increased our security or if it made us less sensitive to the very real dangers of terrain and weather one always faces in the high mountains."[614] According to her, the organizers tried to "monitor" or even "control" all aspects her group's climb for their "greater safety" and even more so as the advisor seemed to doubt the abilities of the four women.

Occasional frustrations aside, relations between participants and camp organizers were on the whole extraordinarily good. In daily practice the Soviet officials proved to be more flexible than initially assumed. They willingly granted the groups free rein in deciding routes, approaches, and equipment. Both the teams of the German Alpine Club and the Austrian Alpine Club confirmed that despite early threats to intervene in route planning out of safety concerns, the camp authorities did not restrict them in any way. The Russian mountaineers were "kind fellows who never imposed their function as supervisors."[615] The requirement that later participants who selected demanding routes be redirected to two easy standard routes up Pik Lenin emerged from evolving events, and was not caused by the principled unwillingness of the camp officials to grant permissions for "pioneer climbing." The Soviet bureaucratic approach to

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[614] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 158.

[615] Österreichischer Alpenklub, Internationales Alpinistenlager Pamir 1974, p. 1. Bolinder Collection, box 2. American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

mountaineering either succumbed to practicability or to the respect the Masters of Sports had for their foreign colleagues.[616]

Gippenreiter and Monastyrskii's efforts of informal cultural diplomacy were crucial in raising the reputation of Soviet alpinism. Spatially removed from the dense network of state control the camp allowed a certain degree of intimate engagements between visitors and hosts. The officials who were in charge of the camp belonged to the group of "dedicated, professional sports administrators" that Jenifer Parks has excluded from the stereotypical category of the corrupt, inefficient and lazy Soviet bureaucrat.[617] Despite Monastyrskii's reserved manners, the participants viewed him as a highly likable, sympathetic person who was well versed in English literature.[618] "He was a remarkable combination of a man of action, an able but unobtrusive administrator, and a thoughtful, almost poetic spirit," said Craig of the man to whom he became closest during the summer of 1974.[619] The chairman of the Council of Trainers was the Soviet legend Vitalij Abalakov—furrowed face, protruding ears, a knitted cap on his bald head. In 1934, he made the first Soviet ascent of Pik Lenin. Having survived the Stalinist purges, despite being accused of "open public propaganda of western mountaineering techniques," he was also highly esteemed by Western mountaineers.[620]

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[616] The requirement that later participants who selected demanding routes be redirected to two easy standard routes up Pik Lenin emerged from evolving events, and was not caused by the principled unwillingness of the camp officials to grant permissions for "pioneer climbing."

[617] See Parks, "Red Sport, Red Tape," 12.

[618] Heidi Lüdi, interview by the author, 02 February 2014, Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," 300.

[619] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 69.

[620] For the extensive purges among Soviet mountaineers see Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*, 194-97.

This human factor is what made the experience of the foreign visitors to the Pamirs so radically different from that of outsiders who came to the Soviet Union on tours organized by Intourist. Christopher Wren, noticing the apparent contrast with "the arrogant indifference of the Soviet travel agency," suggested to one of the officials that he set up a similar camp to "teach manners to Intourist officials;" the joke yet was lost on his recipient.[621] The camp staff, which was comprised mostly of students, received extraordinary praise from the participants.[622] A lack of decorum and appreciation of cultural norms was more often to be found on the side of the participants. The individualistic characters of the Western climbers were met with a Soviet form of "mountaineer's *kul'turnost*" that occasionally overwhelmed them, although Craig remarked that even the rogues were inspired by the Soviet hosts to show a "rare degree of tact and courtesy."[623]

Surprisingly more problematic than the East-West relations were the relations between the various national teams, which challenged the attempts by the Soviets to create an atmosphere of international friendship and peaceful coexistence. Blum soon realized that neither her travels nor her membership of an international women's club, nor even the single-sex composition of her team protected her from cultural misunderstandings. "I certainly hadn't understood what it would be like to live and climb with people who came from a different culture and spoke a different language."[624] Her team-members mostly spoke German with each other and she felt left

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[621] Christopher Wren, "A Mountaineer's Journal: How U.S. Team in Soviet Battled Storms and Death," *Special to the New York Times*, 16 August 1974.

[622] See for example the report of the Austrian Alpine Club team, "Internationales Alpinistenlager Pamir 1974," Bolinder Collection, box 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[623] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*.

[624] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 159.

out. Different approaches to cleanliness alienated her from the other three women. "I watched in amazement as they took off their clothes and piled them next to the inflatable washtub, stacked up more clothes from inside the tent, and laid out their shampoo, cream rinse, laundry detergent, and clothespins…[625] The Scotts corroborated the Swiss concern with hygiene, noting with amusement that they were constantly washing clothes in the "primitive wood and canvas shower."[626] Quoting Chris Bonnington's observation that cleanliness is "one of the big differences between climbers and ordinary mortals, for the climbers rarely washed either themselves or their clothes," Julie Rak argues that mountaineers of the countercultural era in the 1960s and 1970s associated cleanliness on the mountain as an antidote to what she terms "mountain masculinity."

Overlapping identities of gender, nationality, and alpinist cultures rendered the community of mountaineers anything but homogeneous. In Blum's account, however, not gender but nationality was the explanatory factor: "As I retrieved my socks [which the Swiss women tossed out of the tent], mortified, I wondered if Heidi had given any thought to what it would mean to have an American on her team."[627] Bickering over smelly socks, the grandiosity to which the Soviets aspired was lost to the Western visitors. Not all visitors were enthusiastic about being part of an international crowd. It was evident that their objectives were not to merrily celebrate the "friendship of the nations," but to climb with their national teams. For some, the camp was simply a place that provided the necessary infrastructure, not more and not less. For others, such as the Scottish mountaineer Alan North, there was more to it: "There is an

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[625] *Breaking Trail*, 159.

[626] Alan North, "Taking a Peak at Lenin," *The Guardian*, 30 September 1974.

[627] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 159.

international spirit in the air—although not greatly fostered by the Soviet preoccupation with protocol and flag-raising ceremonies. It is the babble of many languages; the new people to meet and talk with on the trail up to the glacier. The exchange of foods and humour displays a common purpose and a lively optimism. We are totally isolated from the rest of the world."[628] When cultural expectations around gender, privacy, and hygiene became matters of discontent, the microcosm of the camp revealed that fault lines did not necessarily follow the Iron Curtain, but that relations among Western nations were equally difficult.

Lenin Revolts

Finally, after a few days of acclimatization climbs, it was time to tackle the larger objectives. Once all official ceremonies were concluded and the last piece of luggage had made its way from Osh via truck to the camp, the participants were eager to scale the heights. Pik Lenin was known to be the tamest of the four Soviet peaks that reached 7000m, a "snowy hill" in the words of Heidi Lüdi.[629] Vladimir Shataev compared the ascent to a restaurant visit in what was then the world's highest building, a TV tower in Moscow: "We would ascend to seven kilometers into the sky without doubting the outcome, as assured as if we had been going to Seventh Heaven in Ostankino."[630] While in Bob Craig's words the stronger American and European climbers "had not come to make a ceremonial gesture on a Soviet national shrine—that is merely to climb a standard route on Peak Lenin," the easier routes on Pik Lenin still constituted an ambitious goal for other camp participants—any mountaineering endeavor at this altitude was physically

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[628] Alan North, "Taking a Peak at Lenin," *The Guardian*, 30 September 1974.

[629] Heidi Lüdi, interview by the author, 02 February 2014.

[630] Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 126.

demanding.[631] Two classic routes led up from Lenin glacier onto the north face. The first led across Pik Razdel'naia up the northwest ridge; the second, called the Lipkin route, followed the northeast ridge. Both routes required several intermediate camps, but although they were known to be strenuous, they were not considered particularly dangerous.

Yet in the summer of 1974, Pik Lenin revolted against its docile reputation. The disaster that occurred on the slopes of the Soviet Union's favorite peak and its nearby faces brought together the diverse members of the camp in an unexpected and tragic way. It pushed the mountaineers out of their comfort zone and made them interact as equals, allowing for inter-personal contact that the climbers experienced as more authentic than the ceremonial performance of internationalism organized by the Soviets. Studies of the sociology of disasters have shown that despite chaos and destruction natural catastrophes regularly unify societies: they create confusion but also social integration.[632] Similar dynamics occurred on the slopes of Pik Lenin and in basecamp. When the Soviet officials lost control of the environment, political agendas, national prejudices, and competitive attitudes made space for new forms of interaction.

The weather turned bad a week after the participants started their approach to Lenin. Rain, thunderstorm, hail, snow: the sky delivered all kinds of precipitation. On July 25, snow fell heavy during the night. Tents collapsed under the burden. Then the earth started shaking. Huge tremors were vibrating up the glaciers, causing massive avalanches. Roars thundered through the night when Bob Craig, Gary Ullin, John Marts and John Roskelley awoke in their tents on the north face of Pik XIX c'ezda KPSS, the Peak of the 19th Party Congress, also known as Peak Nineteen. They had negotiated this alternate route in order to satisfy their demands for a

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[631] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 46.

[632] David Alexander, *Natural Disasters* (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1993).

technical first ascent. For Ullin, the mountain named after the last party congress Stalin had presided over would also be his final destination. Hundreds of tons of snow rumbled down the slope, burying the young airline pilot alive in his tent. Those who survived the night rushed down the mountain the next morning. Doug Scott's team which was on the way to the south face of Lenin via the Krylenko pass, also in order to avoid the standard routes, had no other choice but to retreat. Some of the English climbers were already suffering from altitude sickness. Hurrying down, in constant fear of further avalanches, they passed the location of the intermediate camp site of two of the American teams, covered by heaps of snow. It was impossible to tell whether only equipment or also human beings were buried under the heaps of snow. After hours of agonizing descent, they ran into Al Steck and Mike Yokell whom they had presumed dead. Miraculously, all seven American climbers had survived.[633]

Meanwhile, in the mud-soaked base camp, no one knew what had transpired on the faces of Lenin and Peak Nineteen. Collapsed tents were re-erected; the Japanese felt jolly enough to build a snowman.[634] But worry and distress took over when the Americans radioed in to report Ullin's death. An international rescue team was dispatched, but the danger of avalanches was distressing. For the three on Peak Nineteen, it took three agonizing days to retreat back to base camp.[635] When these three Americans met the rescuers half way, embraces were exchanged among strangers. "[T]here was a confusion of many tongues echoing along the glacial corridor. French, German, Russian, and Dutch. We had, more by chance of a mountaineering emergency

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[633] For the account of the British team see Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin." "Storm on Peak Lenin."; Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir." Ronnie Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir, July/August 1974: Some Impressions of Soviet Mountaineering Attitudes," *Alpine Journal* (1975): 88.

[634] Alan North, "Taking a Peak at Lenin," *The Guardian*, 30 September 1974.

[635] See for details Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 145-65.

than design, become a truly international gathering."[636] The authority of the Soviet camp officials was re-negotiated: out of necessity, the national groups split up and formed rescue missions together with Russian climbers.

On the other side of the mountain, another tragedy had unfolded on July 27, news of which reached the International Mountaineering Camp only partially. An Estonian team, traveling independent of the IMC, had approached the mountain from a basecamp on Lenin's south side. Five of them, all experienced climbers, had weathered out the storm and almost reached the summit. Their team members who had formed a second rope-team that had set out to climb the easy standard route via the Krylenko pass had already returned to base camp when Enn Saar and his team were still on the face. The easy descent via the standard route not far ahead, Saar's rope team was separated from their goal only by a gradual snow slope when a snow slab suddenly broke loose and swept Erik Reino, Tõnu Tennisson, and Priit Vürst into the abyss of a crevasse. For the two survivors, Enn Saar and Jaak Sumeri, an agonizing four-day descent into base camp began, their only provisions being tea and a single small sausage.[637]

On the Edelweiss Glade, the details of all this were unknown. In fact, the names of the Estonians and the correct death count never became known to the visitors.[638] Still mourning Ullin's death, the American team decided to reshuffle their groups and continue climbing. However tragic, death was, after all, an accepted hazard of mountaineering.[639] Chris Wren, Al

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[636] *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 160.

[637] "Pamiris 1974. Aastal," *Spordileht* Nr. 149/150, 20 December 1974.

[638] I am indebted to Kristo Nurmis for discovering that Enn Saar and Jaak Sumeri survived. All sources I consulted reported all five Estonians dead.

[639] For reflections on risk, death and mountaineering, see for example David Robert's essay *Moments of Doubt*, first published in *Outside* in 1980, David Roberts, *Moments of Doubt and Other Mountaineering Writings* (Seattle: Mountaineers Books, 1986).

Steck, and Jock Glidden decided to attempt Lenin via a buttress of the northeast ridge; Roskelley and Marts decided to finish Peak Nineteen, despite attempts from the camp organizers to bar them from a second attempt. In the wake of the tragic events, Soviet authority had been compromised. The Americans later justified the decision by saying they owed it to their dead companion.[640] Alltogether, more than fifty climbers were back on the mountain for a summit bid via the two standard routes, Lipkin Ridge and Razdel'naia. Soviet mass alpinism had left its mark on a summit that resembled a souvenir shop; Lenin awaited the summiteers in multiple reincarnations that previous climbers had brought up: busts in all sizes, pictures, plaques.[641]

But Lenin had not spoken the last word. The earthquake's aftershocks continued to threaten further avalanches. On August 5, the base camp was alerted per radio that a violent storm was advancing. In the morning, Arlene Blum left Camp III on Lenin to make her way up to the summit. Blum wanted to go fast and light, while the two Swiss Heidi Lüdi and Eva Kurz decided to pack supplies and prepare for a night higher up.[642] A Russian climber had alerted them about the predicted weather change. Yet danger didn't seem imminent; the sun treacherously promised safety. The storm caught Blum before she reached the summit and she decided to turn around. Heading down, the American Jed Williamson joined her; he, too, had not made it to the summit. For the two Swiss, retreat was too late. Heidi Lüdi suffered from severe frostbite. After hours of delirium, her climbing partner Eva Kurz died from cerebral edema and

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[640] Craig, *Storm & Sorrow in the High Pamirs*, 166-67.

[641] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 21, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[642] The Swiss-American women's team had been haunted by bad luck. Margaret had given up early in the course, Eva injured her rib when falling over loose rock.

hypothermia. The technically demanding attempt of the Bavarian, Sepp Schwanker, American, Peter Lev, and the Frenchman, François Valla to evacuate her had proven to be futile.

While the Soviet celebration of internationalism alienated rather than inspired the international climbers, the shared experience of death and danger created bonds among them that broke down mutual distrust. Having returned to Camp III, the climbers, including Blum, could not proceed further in the storm and hunkered down in the few available tents. Initially, the Russians supplied brown bread and caviar, but as the storm continued, their visits ceased. When the storm abated on the third day, most of the climbers who had weathered out the storm made their way down to Camp II. Another cold night had to be endured. Tents were blown away; cramped in the remaining ones a new intimacy among the international climbers unfolded. “Initially, I’d felt shy and removed from these elite climbers from Austria, Holland, Russia, and Germany. After weathering the terrible storm and tragedies together, there was a bond of friendship between us. I felt part of a caring international family of climbers,” Blum recalled.[643]

The Soviet women’s team was still in utmost danger. Despite a radio call from basecamp that ordered them to retreat, the eight mountaineers had decided to push through with their plans and camp on the summit on the night of August 5. There, the storm unfolded in its entire strength. The old-fashioned tents offered little resistance to the elements; the wooden poles broke like matches. The first woman fell ill—exhaustion and exposure were deadly at these altitudes. In the morning of August 6, the group attempted to descend via the Lipkin Ridge. Taking the sick woman with them, they did not get far. One after the other fell sick. By the evening, only five of the women were still alive. Despite orders to retreat, the others refused to leave behind

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[643] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 176.

their sick team members. "About the entire event there was a fearful logic," recounted Paul Nunn.

Meanwhile at base camp, the Soviet organizers were torn between handling the crisis on their own and allowing international rescue teams to venture out. Nobody had ever experienced a storm of this magnitude. The pressure of having dozens of mountaineers still on the slopes of Lenin finally convinced them to accept the help of the camp participants. In the morning of August 7, an international group headed out into the wind and rain towards Lenin, setting up camp in the evening. Desperate radio calls came from its summit. At base camp, Gippenreiter and guests listened to the women perishing, one by one. "Another has died. We cannot go through another night. I do not have the strength to hold down the transmitter button." It was Elvira Shataeva's voice. The radio operator could not bear it anymore. Reduced to tears he dropped the radio and left.[644]

On August 8, the sun came out. German mountaineer Franz Neubauer noted in his diary: "Beautiful clear weather. Snow plumes, kilometers long, above the peaks. Why didn't the weather turn one day earlier? Everything looks calm and harmless."[645] Wren, Steck, and Glidden, who waited out the storm halfway up the mountain, trudged their way to the summit, linking up with a group of six Japanese who had equally endured the storm by bivouacking at 6,000m and had already located the Soviet women. Accompanying the Americans back to the point where they had found the women, communication problems did not allow the Japanese to prepare the Americans for what they would witness further up the slope. Just below the summit

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[644] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 28, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[645] Franz Neubauer, DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974 Tagebuch, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

they found Elvira Shataeva's body first, laying frozen "so peacefully across the packed snow that at first we assumed she was resting."[646] Six other bodies, lined up in the snow a few hundred feet apart, were found on the summit slope. The eighth corpse, however, was nowhere to be found. As soon as Elvira's husband Vladimir Shataev learned about the events, he returned to basecamp and made his way up the mountain through deep snow. If there was one body missing, Shataev thought, maybe there is a chance… But his hopes were disappointed. The dead body of the missing woman would be found buried in the tent underneath another corpse, unnoticed by the Americans and Japanese. Vladimir approached the first body. "Elvira Shataeva…With her feet to the south…" he noted into his tape recorder.[647]

"They died because of the weather, not because they were women."

Tremendous sadness hung over the Glade of the Edelweiss when on August 9 a ceremony was held in honor of the dead whose number was thought to have reached fifteen with all five Estonians assumed dead. As much as death and disaster formed part of a mountaineer's life, the tragedy that the participants of the International Mountaineering Camp witnessed was beyond comparison. The intensity of camp life, the scale of disaster, and the number of deaths on the mountain surpassed everyone's previous experiences. Though death and disaster had always been an integral part of mountaineering since the establishment of the sport in the middle of the nineteenth century, changing perceptions of risk had pushed the limits of what was regarded as acceptable further and further. If deaths occurred, they were mourned but ultimately understood as an accepted part of the risks of mountaineering.

[646] Christopher Wren, "8 Soviet Women Climbers Killed by Storm in Lenin Peak Ascent," *New York Times*, 13 Aug 1974.

[647] Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 126, 92.

For the Soviets nature was the clear culprit: the Soviet women succumbed to the same forces that had overwhelmed Eva Isenschmid. An unofficial Soviet commission that investigated the disaster concluded that "extremely complex meteorological conditions that arose suddenly, the hurricane winds with snow, the sharp drop in temperature and atmospheric pressure, the lack of visibility" were the main reasons for the accident.[648] "They died because of the weather, not because they were women," remarked a Soviet climber.[649] However, many of the foreign climbers thought that the case of the Soviet women differed—that, as the Scottish climbers said, these deaths were different to the other fatalities as they could have been averted—in contrast for example to the avalanche that hit the American climbers.

Western climbers saw the women's accident as a failure of the Soviet system. Nature was not to blame, they argued, but inefficiency and ambition paired with a false confidence afforded by the control measures of the Soviet mountaineering culture. For Walter Welsch, it was "a lack of technique, poor equipment, ambition, bad luck."[650] In the same vain, Jock Glidden assumed it was a tactical mistake, suggesting that the women failed to take seriously enough the potential severity of the summit storm at 23,000 feet and the insufficiency of their single walled pup-tents and clothing and perhaps were too determined to set back as little as possible a pre-arranged mountaineering itinerary."[651]

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[648] *Degrees of Difficulty*, 171. See also "8 Climbers' Deaths Now Acknowledged By the Soviet Press," *Special to the New York Times,* 14 Aug 1974.

[649] Wren, "A Mountaineer's Journal," 4.

[650] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 28, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich. See also Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," 314.

[651] John Roskelley et al., "USA-USSR Pamirs Expedition," *American Alpine Journal* 20, no. 1 (1975): 80.

While Western alpinists in general were not spared by bad luck, inadequate climbing skills, and over-ambition, the question of poor equipment touched upon a major Cold War sensibility: the availability of consumer goods. Western climbers unanimously agreed that the poor equipment was a recipe for disaster. In the capitalist countries, purveyors of mountaineering equipment engineered constantly evolving gear that allowed climbers to endure environmental forces. At the very first encounter with Elvira in the mess tent, Blum noticed not only the ambition in her face but also "the old-fashioned Soviet equipment: cotton tents with button closures, wooden tent poles, boots with nails on the bottom."[652] An exhibition item in the alpine museums of the West, hobnailed boots were still a sought-after commodity in the Soviet Union.[653] The Western mountaineers argued that the storm could have been survived with advanced equipment that was available in the West.

Substantial shortcomings in equipment, in keeping with the generally deficient state of consumer goods in the Soviet Union, put the climbers in a risky situation. Asked about Soviet equipment, Valerii Menshikov remembered: "Everything was heavy. Whether the anoraks or down jackets, they all got soaked and were heavy." Avoiding the Soviet economics of distribution, Soviet mountaineers made their own equipment whenever possible. In Moscow, "entire brigades" of wives of alpinists sewed clothing following patterns and knitted socks.[654] Mountaineers traded rare goods on the black market, willing to pay double the state price for coveted ice axes. Not even the rescue service of the Central Council on Tourism and Excursions

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[652] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 157.

[653] While rubber Vibram soles were standards in the West since the end of the war, Soviet mountaineers and hikers still wore hobnailed boots that needed frequent repairs and were hence not carried by rental shops. S. Mindelevich, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 15 November 1977.

[654] Valerii Menshikov, interview by the author, Moscow, 21 June 2014.

was sufficiently equipped.[655] Three years after the incident, the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* even headlined: "A wise person doesn't go into the mountains with the mountaineering gear produced by some of our enterprises."

The difference between Western and Soviet mountaineering equipment was a matter of life and death for the individual but also stood in for the larger failures of the Soviet system. Consumerism, as historians have increasingly pointed out, played a central part in the decline of the Soviet Union.[656] Soviet mountaineers did not have to travel to the West or meet Western alpinists to be confronted with the disjunction of Soviet superiority propaganda and reality. Even among the climbers from the Eastern bloc, tremendous differences existed in terms of equipment. Since the end of the Second World War, Poland had served as a vehicle for Western ideas and goods—including mountaineering equipment.[657] Compared to the Soviets, Polish climbers were much better equipped. Good relations with French alpinists secured them access to French ropes and boots.[658] Material inequality and a perceived sense of "backwardness" were not conducive to the project of cultural diplomacy if it meant that the hosts' team was doomed to die while the better basecamp equipment was reserved for the guests who, in addition, had brought their own

[655] Criticizing the planning organizations for treating the production of hiking and climbing gear as secondary, Mindelevich saw the solution in better state planning and called for a coordinating council to organize the production of outdoor-recreation goods. Glavsportprom, the main administration for the sporting goods industry, had only little capacities and no oversight of external factories. Glavsport still exists and produces various sporting goods from chessmen to carabiners and harnesses.S. Mindelevich, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 15 November 1977.

[656] For an overview of consumerism in the Cold War see Emily S. Rosenberg, "Consumer Capitalism and the End of the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[657] For Polish traffic of Western ideas and goods, see in brief Zubok, "Introduction," 6.

[658] The Soviets envied the Poles for their waterproof boots, their carabiners with a release system, and their gas stoves. The Soviet climbers had only kerosene stoves that were dangerous and often failed, leaving them without hot food. While the Polish climbers wore polyurethane helmets from the West, Menshikov and his friends used heavy construction helmets instead that lacked adequate strength. Valerii Menshikov, interview by the author, Moscow, 21 June 2014.

gear for the ascent. Rather than indulging in a sense of superiority, the Western climbers felt pity for their fellow Soviet mountaineers.[659]

While short on technical clothing, bivouac gear, and boots, the Soviet mountaineers placed immense trust in technology to rescue them in case of emergency. While standard practice among Soviet mountaineers, constant radio contact made at certain "control times" was not a practice that was common among Western climbers. Yet the two components of mountain rescue that Soviet mountaineers praised most ardently as forms of progress—air rescue and radio contact—also failed miserably.[660] “If there was something that didn’t work, it was the radios. Simply didn’t,”[661] remembered Heidi Luedi. The Soviets pioneered the use of two-way radio stations in the 1930s—these serving not only as a safety precaution but also as a method of control over mountaineers.[662] The verdict of the Western climbers however was univocal. Pointing to a similar reliance on radio equipment for emergency cases by the Denali Park Service in the US, Scott held that “these radios not only lull climbers into a false sense of security, but when an actual crisis develops a rescue is often difficult or impossible. On these big mountains, indeed on any mountains, the emphasis should always be on individual responsibility.” What he called into question—since it was through the radio that Shataeva received the order to return—was less the relationship between leader and basecamp, than her relationship to the members of

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[659] There was one Soviet piece equipment that was highly coveted among Western mountaineers: titanium ice screws. For the scientists, titanium was easy to get from the universities’ workshops, even crampons were made from the precious metal. Valerii Menshikov, interview by the author, Moscow, 21 June 2014.

[660] Satulovski for examples praises the “technological achievements” in mountaineering, radio contact and airplane support systems. Satulovski, n.d., Flugzeugunterstuetzung fuer Bergsteiger in der UdSSR, DAV DOK 2 SG/95/3. Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[661] [“Was sicher nicht funktioniert hat, das waren die Funkgeräte, die wir bekommen haben. Einfach nichts.”] Heidi Luedi, interview by the author, 02 February 2014.

[662] Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 149.

the expedition. Whether "individual responsibility" entailed the right to leave a sick team member behind to save one's own or other people's lives was also an unresolved issue among Western climbers.

Nonetheless, the response on the ground was also a point of concern among Westerners. The Germans voiced criticism of the inefficient rescue measures and lack of knowledge in mountain rescue. Would help from base camp have saved the Estonians who independently climbed on the other side of Lenin, Richards wondered? The answer was uncertain, but those not part of the International Mountaineering Camp had to organize their own rescue efforts, since the "Soviet rescue allocation had responsibility to our camp alone."[663] Doug Scott wondered about the use of air rescue. "When we got back to Base the closing celebrations were already under way with visiting dignitaries in attendance. Slowly it dawned on us that the helicopters that would have speeded our rescue attempts had been held to ship in these worthies. It left an unpleasant taste."[664] His team member Paul Nunn, however doubted that helicopters could have prevented the disaster. High winds and poor visibility would have rendered any help from air nearly impossible.[665]

Welsch was addressing one of the fundamental shortcomings of Soviet mountaineering: "You cannot always substitute deficits with toughness."[666] As discussed in the previous chapter, Soviet attitudes towards competitive alpinism had found nothing more than alienation in the Western climbing world. In his introduction to Paul Nunn's 1974 account, the Scottish

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[663] Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir," 88.

[664] Scott, *Himalayan Climber*, 61.

[665] Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," 315.

[666] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 28, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

mountaineer Hamish MacInnes, who did not participate in the 1974 expedition but had climbed in the Caucasus before, conveyed the ambiguity of the Soviet approach. He was confounded by the combination of safety measures like fixed times to communicate with the basecamp, medical examination, and obligatory route approval procedures, and the "Russian's press-on-regardless policy, which advocated that the objective, i.e. the summit, should always be reached." He remembered that in 1965, he was reprimanded by Soviet mountaineers for retreating from an ascent in the interest of safety. "The Soviet approach to climbing insists not unreasonably on the unity and cohesion of the party."[667] In this case, the women were torn between following the orders from base camp and the collective responsibility not to leave anyone behind. Was this a a due paid to Soviet collectivism or was there another explanatory factor?

In the writings of Vladmir Shataev, who lost his wife on Lenin, the interpretation of the accident went beyond technical questions. He himself had been convinced of the ability of all-female team, though his friend, Master of Sports Dainys Maskaukas, argued that there was an inherent danger in the dedication of the women to their discipline. "Here then is my worry," Dainys explained, "that they are taking on too much. I'm afraid that they are trying so hard that they are developing not discipline, but obedience-discipline without initiative and without independence."[668] His critique was not very different from the prejudices Arlene Blum had to face back home—women tried too hard because they had to prove themselves.[669] Although the

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[667] Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," 314.

[668] Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 170.

[669] For gender and mountaineering see Wirz, *Gipfelstürmerinnen*; Günther, *Alpine Quergänge*. Traditionally staunchly masculine, the mountaineering community left little space for women on the mountain. Most of the European alpine clubs had admitted women into their ranks since their founding, yet high altitude mountaineering remained dominated by men. In the Soviet Union, female participation in climbing activities rose substantially during the 1930s. By 1940, almost twenty percent of the mountaineers were women. See Maurer, "Al'pinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation," 157.

militarization of alpinism in the 1940s was countered with post-war conditions that proved beneficial for female mountaineers, such as the slow demobilization, postwar discourses brought Soviet alpinism closer to its Western bourgeois-misogynist counterpart than ever before.

Scholars have alluded to the ambivalent gender ideals in the Brezhnev era and attempted to unpack the contemporary concept of *zhenstvennost* (feminity) as a redefinition of the female heroine. The classic ideal of the female heroine was no longer sufficient for the Soviet woman. Traditional ideals of "womanly traits", such as a good character, modesty, and a leading role as a mother and house wife were added to the image of the ideal Soviet woman.[670] Thus, the Breshnev era challenged equality among sportsmen: in the 1970s, a growing official notion regarded the female body as suited only for disciplines like gymnastics, figure skating, athletics, and certain team sports, while the participation of women in soccer and wrestling was officially discouraged.[671] At the same time, international mountaineering saw the advent of "gender radicals," as Sherry Ortner labeled those women who entered the highly masculine world of Himalayan mountaineering, Arlene Blum being one of them.[672] The social movements of the seventies were, as Ortner points out, highly complex and not always consistent. They were games of "liberation" but liberation from and for different things.[673] In the Soviet case, the "gender radicalism" of the all-Soviet team happened in negotiation with the particularities of Soviet gender ideals.

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[670] For the concept of *zhenstvennost* see Anke Hilbrenner, "Soviet Women in Sports in the Breshnev Years: The Female Body and Soviet Modernism," in *Euphoria and Exhaustion: Modern Sport in Soviet Culture and Society*, ed. Nikolaus Katzer, Sandra Budy, and Alexandra Kohring (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2008).

[671] Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 320-21.

[672] Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*, 217.

[673] *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*, 218.

The self-constructed image of the Soviet all-women team, led by Elvira Shataeva, clearly tried to live up to the expectations of *zhenstvennost*. In accord with an ideal that left no room for weakness, the women had ambitious plans: to climb Pik Lenin via the Lipkin ridge and ascend the Northwest ridge over Pik Razdel'naia back to Camp I. The reward for the exhausting endeavor would be the first all-women ascent of Lenin and the first ever traverse of the 7000-meter peak. At the same time, Elvira Shataeva continued to stress her belief in a female version of mountaineering: "Pants are good, a dress is bad. But we will remain in a dress. We will not start trying to imitate men; we will not try to compete. We will create our own style of climbing—a feminine one, since we don't have to and can't walk the way men walk."[674]

Whether or not she truly believed in a feminine form of mountaineering, figuratively expressed as "climbing in dresses," with this statement she attempted to pre-empt critique of women's participation in the sport. Her husband Vladimir Shataev confirmed the challenge she and other female climbers faced: "Some in the Soviet Union think mountain climbing is not for women because it will make them coarse, but people cited Elvira as an example of femininity. Some of my journalist friends called her the fairy of the mountains."[675] Thanks to her stunning beauty, Elvira thus provided a credible image of a female athlete that corresponded to the image of *zhenstvennost*.[676]

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[674] Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 177.

[675] Christopher Wren, "Burial on Soviet Peak: A Husband's Tribute," *New York Times*, 25 Sep 1974.

[676] The ambivalence and special status of the women's team was also reflected in their playful organization of the camp space. The women arrived a few days before the foreign guests in the camp. Some of them knew each other from previous climbs, some saw each other for the first time. Putting up camp across the river where the East European groups were located, they built a symbolic fortress wall around their tents. A dotted line of white stones marked their territory. When Elvira's husband arrived at the camp, he and his companion Dainyus were playfully stopped by one of the women acting as a "guard," entry of the two men required a written "application." However playful and ironic, this episode documents the special standing of the all-women team. See Shataev, *Degrees of Difficulty*, 166-7.

Vladimir retrieved the body of his wife and of the other women from the mountain face a year after the accident. Around one hundred mountaineers, some unknown to him, asked to participate in the mission. Shataev wondered why, as there was no summit to gain, but he came to the conclusion that "they were not strangers, but my own kind. They were mountaineers. It was very important to them to acknowledge this fraternal closeness, to reaffirm it."[677] Fraternity and the "brotherhood of the rope" were thus once again a concept that envisioned mountaineers as a group of male comrades.[678] As a consequence of the tragic event, the Soviet Mountaineering Federation forbade all-women teams, although no official debate about the tragedy and the role of women in climbing arose in the Soviet Union, and the major newspapers remained silent on the events of the summer.

After this Bleak Summer

Ten dead climbers, not counting the three Estonians, did not fit into the Soviet dream of an Olympia of Mountaineers. The Soviet mountaineering officials would have preferred to cover up the accident, but due to the many international witnesses, this was not possible. Gippenreiter was displeased with Christopher Wren, who disclosed the death of the women in the *New York Times*; Lenin turned out to be the last mountain in the Soviet Union that Wren climbed.[679] The Soviet news agency, TASS, had to acknowledge the death of the women after Wren's article, but claimed that the women were left without warm clothing as the storm had swept away their

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[677] *Degrees of Difficulty*, 193.

[678] See Rak, "Social Climbing on Annapurna," 117-18.

[679] Christopher Wren, email to the author, 14 April 2014.

equipment, although the Americans found them fully clothed.[680] Elvira Shataeva had wanted to conduct the climb under the premise that "the quieter you walk, the further you get." Having refused any pre-trip interviews, her caution sadly facilitated the Soviet silence after her death until the publication of her husband's memoirs in 1977—aided, as historian Erika Monahan has argued, by the underdeveloped nature of Soviet feminist discourse.[681]

Yet, despite the calamitous outcome of the first International Pamir Camp, the meeting on the Edelweiss Glade became a recurring event in the mountaineering world. Death and disaster did not prevent efforts to turn the snow-capped summits of the Pamirs, so long unmapped, into prime meeting points of East and West. Upon returning from his pre-expedition visit to Moscow, Schoening had attempted to explain the rationale behind the Soviet concerns for security to his team members: "A tragedy during the Camp could seriously jeopardize their efforts to organize future camps and climbs in the area however."[682]

The tragedy that unfolded in the summer of 1974 was greater than anyone could have anticipated. Yet Schoening's concerns proved to be unwarranted. Cultural diplomacy, as has been argued, is most successful if, first, the agents are largely separate from a political agenda and, second, if the process is interactive.[683] In 1974, the storm set an end to political posing and enabled spontaneous interactions among visitors and hosts in a way that was unplanned by the camp organizers, yet it was to their advantage. Most of the participants retained the will to climb.

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[680] The article cites from the TASS account. "8 Climbers' Deaths Now Acknowledged By the Soviet Press.""8 Climbers' Deaths Now Acknowledged By the Soviet Press," *Special to the New York Times*, 14 Aug 1974.

[681] Erika Monahan, "Peak Lenin, 1974 Feminism, Mountaineering and the Kollektiv" (unpublished paper, Stanford University, 2002), 6.

[682] Schoening to expedition members, 08 April 1974, p. 2, Charles Evans Papers, series 4, folder 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

[683] Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, 24.

"If one survived that bleak summer and the will to climb remained, what was there in the world that would destroy it?" asked Paul Nunn.[684] Mountaineers felt part of a community, yet this bonding was not achieved through the camp organizers' symbolic celebration of mountaineering as an international pursuit, but through the universal experience of death and fear brought about by a natural catastrophe.

While the Soviet Mountaineering Federation never succeeded in creating enthusiasm for the "international camp spirit" and its particular way of celebrating internationalism, more and more climbers from the West and also Eastern bloc countries climbed in the Soviet Union in the years after. Affordable prices and the never-ending attraction of Pik Lenin lured old and new guests to the Pamir highlands. The camp's infrastructure continually improved. Two years after the disaster, an Austrian team of twenty people returned and was delighted to find the *Pamirka* tents substituted by modern frame tents; stone-built barracks now provided spaces for gatherings. The cheerful disposition of the camp staff, still mostly scientists or students, remained.[685] Monastyrskii traveled to Switzerland in 1979 to foster relationships between Soviet and Swiss climbers, while Gippenreiter kept in contact with the Americans.

Only recently, historians have turned to discussing the impact of private encounters of Western travelers within the Soviet Union on the ideological thought worlds of the Cold War and the erosion of Soviet power. The summer of 1974 evidently lead to a softening of ideologically-charged opinions of the other. While neither the Soviet press nor mountaineering journals carried further articles or obituaries, the tragedy motivated many Western climbers to publish their

[684] Nunn, "Storm on Peak Lenin," 316.

[685] "Zum höchsten Berg der Sowjetunion," [1976], Bolinder Collection, box 2, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

personal accounts of the events—never would any other climbing event in the Soviet Union garner so much attention while conveying respect for the Soviet colleagues: “Any Cold War stereotypes I might have harbored about the Soviets being our enemy had been dispelled by their generosity and openness during these terrible days of mourning for Eva and fear for ourselves,” remembered Arlene Blum in her autobiography.[686] “We learned to know the Soviet mountaineers as people who accept us without any prejudice as climbing partners [Bergkameraden] and I may claim that friendships have been built that are more than superficial,” wrote the Germans.[687] The British climber Richards, too, confirmed in the *Alpine Journal* that personal contacts superseded the differences in attitudes towards mountaineering: “Shared experiences helped us to a better understanding of our different points of view and to recognize the common call of the mountains. This is a choice open to and responded to by us all.”[688]

These thoughts were shared by the Soviets. In a letter to Craig, Gippenreiter expressed the bonds that were formed in the summer of storm. "The time goes on but the recollections of the days spent together in joy and sorrow are fresh in our memory. Even now I can hear the first signal of SOS from your party: ‘We are in trouble, we are in trouble…’”[689] The Americans’ mission to develop lasting relationships with Soviet climbers was accomplished. Soviet climbers visited the US in 1975 and 1977, US teams climbed in the Pamirs in 1976 and 1977. Rick Sylvester, part of the 1977 exchange, wrote of “facing danger and living in the most intimate

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[686] Blum, *Breaking Trail*, 174.

[687] DAV Pamir Fahrt 1974, Offizieller Bericht, p. 28, DAV EXP 1 SG/255, Historisches Alpenarchiv, DAV, Munich.

[688] Richards, "International Meet to Transalai Pamir," 93.

[689] Gippenreiter to Craig, 12 November 1974, Charles Evans Papers, series 5, folder 5, American Alpine Club Library, Golden, Colorado.

conditions with people whom all your life you had pictured as the vile, less-than-human arch enemy" as the most valuable experience of climbing the Soviet Union: "The rare opportunity to smash through all the clichés, all the propaganda, all the preconceived notions formed through indirect experience […] Now when I think of the USSR, concrete images so alien to the common stereotypes come to mind. Positive images. Terrain. Rushing torrents. Glaciers. Rocks and peaks. Cities.[…]"[690] In 1974, the Pamir Mountains had turned into a meeting space that resisted official attempts to control interactions between mountaineers from East and West. Instead, the International Mountaineering Camp offered an unsurpassed opportunity for citizen diplomacy that broke down ideological lines in the wake of a shared disaster.

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[690] Rick Sylvester, "From Russia, With Luck," *American Alpine Journal* 22, no. 1 (1979): 68.

CONCLUSION

Mountaineering, this dissertation has shown, provided a framework for Europeans not only to advance nationalist agendas, but also to interact with each other and negotiate common interests across changing political fault lines. In the nineteenth century, alpine clubs were formed as networks of knowledge. Despite the oftentimes outspoken nationalist agenda of alpine clubs, the nature of mountaineering and the pursuit of knowledge inspired a particular form of internationalism which was grounded in the belief that cross-national exchange is conducive to the activity of mountaineering, and that certain themes, issues, and problems relating to mountains require cross-border exchange or even a permanent international organization.

Three periods of alpine internationalism can be distinguished. Publication networks and international congresses inspired by scientific internationalism constituted the first period of alpine internationalism, which was spearheaded by the French Alpine Club. This period concluded with the International Alpine Congress of the Allied Nations in 1920. The second wave of alpine internationalism emerged in the second half of the 1920s and was promoted by the alpine clubs of the newly sovereign states of East Central Europe. Carpathian internationalism reflected East Central European efforts to assert political sovereignty and govern a formerly shared imperial space across newly established state borders. This period culminated in the creation of a permanent institution, the UIAA, in 1932.

In the Cold War, mountaineering continued to act as a globalizing force, although the internationalism that carried the UIAA became shaped by the ideological prerogatives of the time. Yet practices and values of mountaineering were universal enough to sustain an imagined global community of climbers despite geographic and political isolation. Furthermore, the quest for first ascents in high altitude relied on sharing geographical spaces that offered potential for

new routes, such as the Caucasus and the Pamir mountains. Mountaineering opened up access to otherwise closed areas of the world during this era, provided travel opportunities that would otherwise be restricted, and fostered cooperation and friendship in politically hostile environments.

The mid-1970s opened up a new chapter of relations between mountaineers of East and West. However, their interactions remained not unaffected by the changing international climate. In 1978, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and relations turned temporarily sour. Mikhail Monastyrskii and Evgenii Gippenreiter were unable to receive US visas for a visit organized by the American Alpine Club; the year after, a planned visit to the Soviet Union by American climbers was canceled without explanation.[691] In 1980, the year of the boycott of the Moscow Olympics, the British Mountaineering Council announced that it would not participate in any climbing camps in the Soviet Union in light of the events in Afghanistan.[692]

Yet despite these backlashes, international climbers kept on scaling the peaks of Soviet mountain ranges. Including visitors to the Caucasus and the Kazakh Altai range, more than one thousand foreign climbers visited the Soviet Union in 1987, motivating the Soviets to construct new camps in the Tien Shan at Khan Tengri and Pik Pobedy.[693] From the Brezhnev era until the end of the Soviet Union, the International Mountaineering Camps turned the Pamirs and the Caucasus into globalized spaces—microcosms of Cold War interactions—providing opportunities for intimate East-West encounters that oscillated between the freedom of the hills and the Soviet desire for controlled interaction.

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[691] Bossus to Henriot, 14 September 1978, folder "Russia/Bulgaria," UIAA, Berne.

[692] BMC committee meeting no. 199, 25 April 1980, British Mountaineering Council, Manchester.

[693] Jósef Nyka, "Pamir 1987," *Alpine Journal* 93 (1988): 260.

The appropriation of high spaces into a global system of knowledge, risk, and leisure is an ongoing process and both Russian and East Central Europeans remain important players. On May 9, 2017, the *New York Times* featured a long article accompanied by magnificent photographs of Polish climbers in the Tatras.[694] It presented the story of climbing under Communism, the accomplishments of Polish climbers in the Himalayas, and their dream to climb K2, the world's second highest and deadliest mountain, in winter—a feat that no climber has ever achieved. While the origins of Polish high altitude winter climbing date back the 1970s, in 2017, the daredevil plan of a winter ascent of K2 had earned Polish climbers a prominently placed story in one of America's largest news outlets.[695] Mountaineering has come a long way from an obscure activity in the nineteenth century to a commodified and globalized phenomenon in the twenty-first century—and East Central European climbers continue to claim a place at the center of this story.

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[694] Michael Powell, "Scaling the World's Most Lethal Mountain, in the Dead of Winter," *New York Times*, 9 May 2017. Online at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/sports/polish-climbers-to-scale-deadly-k2-peak-in-winter.html.

[695] For Polish Himalayan climbing, see Bernadette McDonald, *Freedom Climbers* (Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain Books).

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