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ARTICLE

Between the Czech Krkonoše and the German Riesengebirge: Nationalism and Tourism in the Giant Mountains, 1880s–1930s

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Abstract

The article deals with Czech and German nationalist discourses and practices in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they relate to tourism in the Krkonoše/Riesengebirge, the highest Central European mountain range between the Alps and Scandinavia. It will discuss the discourses developed in relation to mountain tourism and nationalism (metaphors of battlefields, wedges, walls, gates, and bastions), different symbolical cores of mountains, and practices of tourist and nationalist organizations (tourist trails and markings, excursions, the ownership of mountains huts, languages used, memorials, and the construction of roads). It will examine how these discourses and practices changed from the first Czech-German ethnic conflicts in the 1800s until the end of interwar Czechoslovakia. Finally, it will discuss the Czech culture of defeat in the shadow of the Munich Agreement, which meant the occupation of the Giant Mountains by Nazi Germany.

Keywords: Giant Mountains; nationalism; tourism; Czechs; Germans

Historiography has so far largely neglected the Giant Mountains, mainly because they had a relatively small significance on the mental map of Central Europeans due to their relatively small size and to human settlement starting only in the 16th century. Overshadowed by the Alps, the Giant Mountains had only limited importance on the German mental map and in the cultural memory of the 19th century. Only the fictional mountain spirit Rübezahl was popular among Germans. The Giant Mountains were also less important for Czechs because there are other important mountains in the Czech lands, as the whole of Bohemia is surrounded by mountain ranges, some of them larger than the Giant Mountains and with histories reaching back to the medieval period (Šumava/Böhmerwald). Furthermore, the Giant Mountains have been clearly occupied by German-speaking inhabitants since their 16th century settlement. In the 19th century, the Czech-German language boundary was situated 5–15 km from the main mountain range (see figure 1); consequently, many Czechs did not consider the mountains to be of a Czech character at all. At that period of time, several other mountains became Czech national symbols, especially the peaks Říp and Blaník, situated in the middle of Bohemia (Maur 2006), while Sněžka/Schneekoppe, the highest Czech mountain (1,602 m), never played a similar role. The River Labe/Elbe, which springs from the Giant Mountains, was incomparably less important in the Czech cultural memory than the Moldau/Vltava River, which is longer in Bohemia, wider, and flows through Prague. In the foothills of the Giant Mountains, no Czech ethnographic group with typical folklore and strong historical narratives was present, as the Chods were in Šumava. Prior to 1945, the Giant Mountains were of no importance to the Poles, who had Tatra as their national symbol, and the Polish-German language boundary was about 150 km away.[1]

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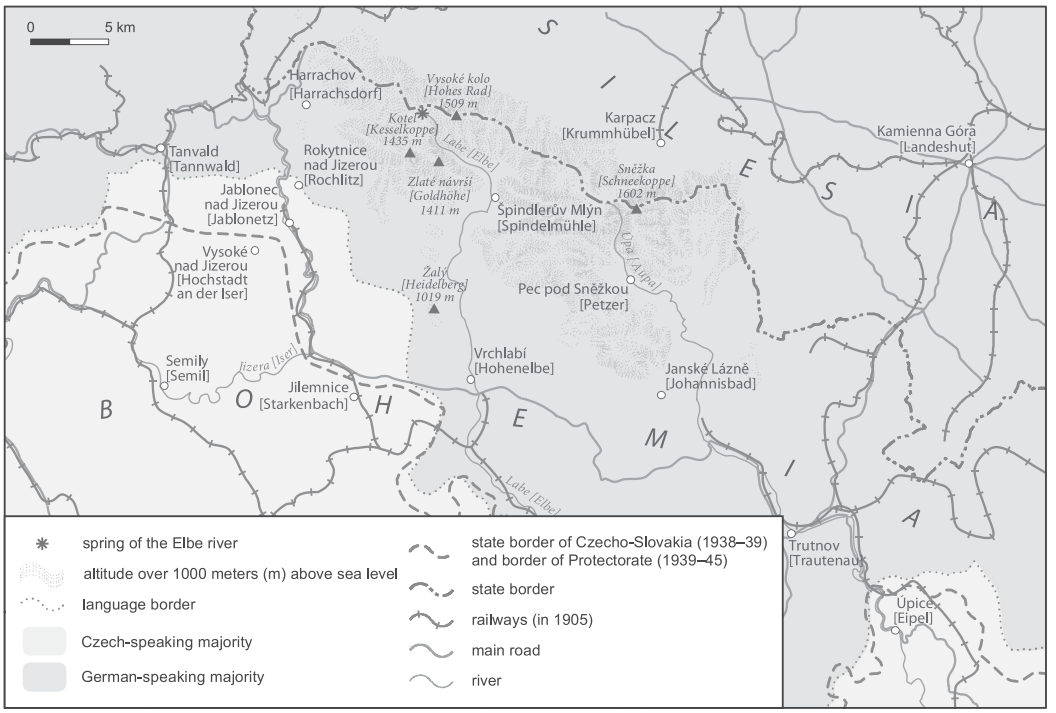

Figure 1. The Giant Mountains around 1900.

What makes the Giant Mountains important for Central European history, besides the altitude, was the fact they belonged to two countries. The state border has existed here since 1742, when the Habsburg Monarchy lost Silesia in a war with Prussia. The state border not only served as a dividing place but also as a zone of contact. The fact that the Giant Mountains were situated on the territory of two countries offers a possibility to compare the two areas. Even though the northern Silesian region of the mountains took up less territory – it was about 10 times smaller than the southern, Bohemian region – it was more important for the Kingdom of Prussia than the southern part was for Austria. Sněžka was the highest mountain in Prussia, which, until 1870, was the most powerful German state. When the King of Prussia became the emperor of Germany, the Alps became its highest mountains. In the foothills of the Giant Mountains, on the Silesian side, there were many frequently visited spas, and the relative proximity of cities such as Wrocław (Breslau) or Berlin made the mountains an attractive place for holidays beginning in the mid-19th century, due to the railway connection. It also seems that the economic development of this part of Silesia, which influenced the onset of mass tourism, was somewhat more dynamic than in the Czech lands. By *tourism*, in the following text, I refer to all leisure-time activities related to visitors experiencing the mountains (e.g., staying in hotels, hiking, skiing, eating in mountain huts).

From the perspective of Vienna or Prague, the Giant Mountains were not as attractive for tourism as they were from the perspective of Berlin or Breslau, as the mountains were in competition with the Alps, to which Czech tourists also liked to go on trips, especially to the Slavic-speaking parts. In the 19th century, Czech tourists also undoubtedly preferred to go on holiday in areas of natural beauty within the Czech-speaking territory, such as the Bohemian Paradise or the Beroun region. At that time, the southern side of the Giant Mountains was a popular tourist place mainly for Czech Germans and Germans from Prussia, who came across the border.

As a side effect of the economic and political rise of the Czech ethnic group and the outbreak of Czech-German conflicts in the 1880s (Wingfield 2007, 17–78), Czech elites paid increasing

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attention to the mountain range. The symbolic significance of the Giant Mountains as the highest mountain range, as well as their tourist attractiveness and their relatively close proximity to the language boundary, motivated Czech national activists to spread their influence there by visiting, describing, and giving a Czech name to each place in them, spreading the Czech language, promoting ethnic Czech tourism, and later on starting entrepreneurial activities. At first, the local Germans and incoming German tourists ignored these efforts, but they gradually adopted nationalist attitudes as well. Since the 1890s, the ethnic conflict over the Czech side of the Giant Mountains and their foothills has flared up, taking place in many areas of public life. While Czech-German conflicts occurred all around the language boundary, especially in the industrializing cities of North Bohemia, due to strong Czech labor migration, the conflicts over the mountains existed to this extent only in the Giant Mountains. This contrasted with developments on the Prussian side, where no ethnic minorities were present and the mountains served mainly as an apolitical tourist destination (Przerwa 2005).

After 1918, the southern side of the mountains became part of the Czechoslovak Republic, further strengthening the influence of the Czech ethnic group. After the fall of interwar Czechoslovakia in 1938 and the annexation of the Giant Mountains by the Third Reich, the mountains were unified within one state for the first time since 1741, and Czech traces were quickly wiped out. The year 1945 brought retreat and the expulsion of Germans from both sides of the mountains, which became the part of renewed Poland and Czechoslovakia, and Czech and Polish ethnic groups settled here (Hartwich 2012).

This article will try to show the importance of a local perspective for understanding the dynamics of Czech-German conflicts in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century. It will discuss the narratives developed around the mountains and which forms the ethnic conflicts took in a place where the modern mass tourism developed. Although Czech-German conflicts are well researched, this article will aim to turn the attention to its less examined fields: the landscape areas, which are considered as peaceful in contrast to conflict-ridden cities. It will compare different fields of ethnic conflicts in the mountains, discuss their changes over time, and compare the ethnic issues of the Giant Mountains with other Central European mountains. The following text is more concentrated on the Czech perspective; however, it also brings into play the German perspective, which will be the focus of further research.

A number of studies have addressed the clashes between Czech and German nationalists on the language boundary, but most of them did not cross the horizon of local history (Řeháček 2002; Řeháček 2008; Rejchrt 2002). Other studies dealt with conflicts throughout the Czech lands, but they lacked a sense of micro-perspective (Jaworski 1977; Křen 1990; Kural 1993; Majewski 2007). Conflicts in the regions were, from this perspective, interpreted as derived from conflicts at the central level in Vienna or Prague. Studies by others plausibly combine a micro-historical analysis with a broader view (Cornwall 1994; Kyogoku 2003; King 2005; Judson 2006). However, these authors focused on the urban areas of Bohemia and Moravia. A perspective analyzing the relationship between Czech/Moravian mountain tourism and nationalism has so far only been developed by Martin Pelc (2013, 2014), whose research was inspired by the well-established research on relations between Italians and Austrian Germans in the Alps (see Wedekind 2012, 2012). The Giant Mountains were never the subject of English-language historiography, as mainly German, Czech, or Polish local scholars dealt with them. Social sciences generally did not deal much with mountains; however, the multidisciplinary field of Mountain Studies has experienced a certain boom in the last decades, mainly as part of environmental history (Bätzing 1984; Beltran and Vacarro 2010; Armiero 2011; Debarbieux and Rudaz 2015). Mountains, together with rivers and seas, represent today a plausible alternative to writing about smaller geographic units such as communes or regions.

The attractiveness of the topic is given by the richness of the sources: mainly the publications of local associations of tourists and conservationists, magazines, and yearbooks, which focused on European mountains in the second half of the 19th century. Also their sources, existing in local

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archives, offer rich information. In the case of the Giant Mountains, it is primarily the section of the Austrian Mountain Association (Österreichischer Gebirgsverein) established in 1880, which became independent under the name Austrian Giant Mountain Association (Österreichischer Riesengebirgsverein) in 1884. On the Czech side, it was the Czech Tourist Club (Klub českých turistů), founded in 1888, whose first branch in the Giant Mountains was established in 1899 (the organization was renamed the Czechoslovak Tourist Club in 1918).[2] The second important source consists of numerous tourist guidebooks and travelogues and reports (Dobeš 1884; Durych 1897; Kafka 1897; Kurz 1899; Kubišta 1910). Third are the publications by nationalist organizations and political parties active in the mountains – e.g., from the Czech side, the National Unity of North Bohemia (Národní jednota severočeská) – and sometimes their archival funds have survived.[3] Other information can be found in the regional press, which of course focuses mainly on cities but sometimes also deals with surrounding mountains.

The Birth of the Conflicts

To understand the nationalist conflicts in the Giant Mountains, it is necessary to remember that they existed in the context of Czech-German ethnic conflicts in urban areas at the foothills alongside the whole language boundary and in the ethnically mixed capitals of Prague and Brno. The first Czech-German conflicts started to occur during the 1870s when the Czech political elites became more assertive in their demands for ethnic rights, particularly with school policy. Since the early 1880s, the conflicts took occasionally violent forms and escalated during 1897 in street riots in Prague as a result of Czech-German clashes in the Austrian parliament on language issues. Although the situation somewhat relaxed later on, acts of violence appeared repeatedly until World War I.

Until the 1880s, we have no evidence of Czech-German conflicts in this region. Czech-language descriptions of the Giant Mountains are free of national animosity. The Czech language guidebook *Picturesque Travels in Bohemia* depicts the German neighbors in a neutral tone. According to the author, singing Czech visitors were greeted by German tourists (Černík 1883, 46). The descriptions of the locals in the Giant Mountains do not mention their ethnicity (ibid., 42). The author of an 1884 travelogue of the Giant Mountains, Jan Dobeš, expresses no national animosity. A visit to the Giant Mountains was not considered by him to be a patriotic duty, and he even labelled the local German dialect as "very pleasant to hear" (Dobeš 1884, 23). In this decade, we also have evidence of joint Czech-German activities that were later unimaginable – e.g., the local Austrian Mountain Association (Östereichischer Gebirgsverein) was established in 1880 by Czechs and Germans. In 1892, representatives of Czech and German tourist associations attended the opening of the lookout tower on the hill Žalý/Heidelberg. Speeches were in German and Czech, and the lookout tower was named neutrally after Austrian Emperor Franz Josef (Luštinec and Karpaš 2002, 80). A few years later, such a celebration would hardly be conceivable.

The first urban clashes in the region were recorded in 1885 in the Czech-German town Dvůr Králové. The conflicts in the foothills were most often about schools, the presence of both languages in public spaces (church sermons, names of shops), or the economy (ownership, consumer practices). In the analyzed regions, the conflicts took place mainly in towns with a German majority: Vrchlabí/Hohenelbe, Trutnov/Trautenau, and Rokytnice nad Jizerou/Rochlitz. In all cases, the Czech minorities were constituted here from the beginning of industrialization and demanded language rights. Near the mountains, there was only one town with a Czech majority and a significant German minority, Jablonec nad Jizerou/ Jablonetz, where several conflicts also took place. The same as they did in ethnically mixed cities, nationalist clashes also broke out in several villages located on the language border. They most often took the form of street riots that did not cause any deaths and mainly involved broken windows or noses. The loss of human lives occurred only after 1918, when the Czechoslovak Army seized German-speaking areas, and in late 1930, during clashes between the Czechoslovak Army and Nazi terrorists. The Czech-German

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coexistence was not much affected by the Jewish minority, which was small in the Giant Mountains, with the exception of Trutnov, where a community of about three hundred people (i.e., 2–3% of the population) lived during the period under review (Wlaschek 1991, 27–29, 35–38). Even though the number was small, Czech nationalists used to call this city "German-Jewish," perhaps due to the visibility of Jews in public space (Jewish names in shops and other trades). Anti-Semitism helped Czech nationalists mobilize the public against the Germans.

The first evidence of increasing nationalism in mountain tourism can be found in a travelogue of the Giant Mountains published in 1897 by Václav Durych, who describes visiting the mountains as being a national duty for Czechs and brings a number of negative descriptions of local Germans. Unlike the aforementioned Jan Dobeš, he considered the local German dialect to be bizarre and incomprehensible (Durych 1897, 80). He contrasts the Germans from Silesia (whom he finds sympathetic, due to their alleged Slavic roots) with Czech Germans (known for their rude behavior) (ibid., 24). He also expresses admiration for the development of tourist facilities on the Silesian side of the Giant Mountains compared to Austrian slowness (ibid.), and he compares the pleasant atmosphere in German mountain huts with the pubs and cafes of Czech cities, filled with smoke and quarrels (ibid., 158).

German guidebooks from this time do not mention the existence of Czechs in connection with the Giant Mountains at all. Their authors are mostly from the German empire and not from the German minority of Bohemia. They focus equally on the northern and southern sides of the mountains, but the Czechs are, for them, unimportant. Even if there are Czech minorities in towns on the southern side of mountains, their presence in German guidebook sources is often omitted and this did not change even during the interwar period. For example, the representative book on Trutnov, published by the local municipal administration in 1930, almost completely neglects the local Czech minority (Stein 1930, 20), which at that time reached 13% of the population (Laube 1938, 46) and for three decades had maintained their own cultural center in a representative building (the so-called National House/Národní dům) and high school (gymnasium), established after 1918 with Czech as the language of instruction.

Durych's nationalist call to visit the Giant Mountains from 1897 (Durych 1897, 5) was echoed soon by a number of other tourist guidebooks and newspaper articles. Tourists were asked to support local Czech people: they should talk to Czech peasants during their visits, look for accommodations in Czech hotels, and dine in Czech restaurants. One Czech author even published in 1912 a booklet titled *Tourist Act*, asking, among other things, the tourist to "use his language in all circumstances," to write in visitors' books in Czech, to visit Czech minorities, and to controvert the false reports "disseminated about us by our enemies abroad" (Blahoslav 1912, 44–45; see also Fastr 1911, 10). Tourist literature, however, is quite reserved in describing Germans, and Durych is the only exception.

Metaphors of Mountains

The symbolism of the Giant Mountains has been an important part of Czech public discourse since the 1890s. It was mainly a metaphor of the mountains as a wall against external threats, sometimes characterized as simply as an "onslaught," sometimes as a "roaring ocean," "flood," or "claw" threatening to take everything. Durych called the Giant Mountains "the impregnable wall of our country against Germany" (ibid., 158). This metaphor was used throughout the period. For example, in 1937 an author spoke about the mountains whose "masses defiantly put their foreheads against the alien onslaught" (Laube 1938, 70). With this metaphor, it did not matter that the Germans also inhabited a large part of the territory located in front of this wall. Sometimes, however, this metaphor is also taken negatively as a wall that failed, as it did not protect the land from the penetration of Germans (Kropáček 1923, 37). On the contrary, in the writings of Czech Germans, the Giant Mountains are not perceived as a wall but as a bridge between Czech Germans and Silesian Germans. The Czech settlement reaching the state

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border near Harrachov/Harrachsdorf is considered a wedge driven into a German oak (Jirasek 1915, 1009).

In addition to the wall metaphor, Czech national activists most often used the metaphor of the Giant Mountains as a battlefield that needs to be conquered (*Trutnovský věstník* 1910a). For example, the local writer Josef Šír called his short story dealing with the territory *On the Battle Line* (Šír 1938). Because the Czech nationalists believed the myth of original Czech settlement of the Giant Mountains, the battle is part of a Czech reacquisition of the region (Durych 1897, 2).[4] However, it is not specified whether the reacquisition of lost regions will be done by the assimilation or expulsion of local Germans or by the immigration of Czechs, or simply by gaining economic and cultural influence.

Other metaphors are related to battlefield imagery: A teacher from Vrchlabí, Robert Turka (1882–1934), who was considered in the years before World War I to be the main representative of the local Czech minority, was characterized as a "leader and defender" who "fought a number of victorious battles" (*Věstník krkonošský* 1913b). Sometimes, the inhabitants of hilly areas under the Giant Mountains (Podkrkonoší) are described by Prague authors in a romantic way as the guardians of the whole nation, such as the Chods from Šumava/Böhmerwald. The writer Božena Viková-Kunětická, for example, wrote suggestively in her book, aptly titled *The Conquest of the North*: "Someone up there is facing the enemy. Someone there is responsible for the security of our territory. Someone has been on guard, day and night, for years and centuries" (Viková-Kunětická 1912, 37). Living on the border is therefore not like living inland, and every Czech here has to fulfil the almost military-like duties of protecting the border.

From the Czech perspective, there was also a metaphor of the exclusive gates to the Giant Mountains, which was used for ethnically Czech towns, from which it is appropriate to begin the trips. Starting a visit from Vrchlabí or Trutnov, which were in fact the most suitable but had German majorities, was considered unpatriotic in the Czech guidebooks before 1914. A true Czech shall start the trips to the mountains from Jilemnice/Starkenbach and other two towns, which are ethnically Czech, even though they lie at a greater distance from the mountain ridges than the two cities mentioned above (Durych 1897, 2; Buchar 1911, 8).

A particular place on the mental map of Czech nationalists was the town Vysoké nad Jizerou/Hochstadt an der Iser, which was metaphorically labelled a bastion in the wall. Although it was not recommended as a starting point to the mountains, since it was separated from them by a deep valley of the River Jizera/Iser, it was considered to be the most symbolically significant Czech-speaking town in the region, due to it being situated at a rough altitude of 700 meters, on the top of a hill; moreover, it boasted the title of "northernmost purely Czech town" as no other Czech urban settlement was to be found north of it. The symbolism of the town was embodied by the statue of Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821–1856), a Czech poet and journalist persecuted by Austrian authorities, unveiled here in 1891, when most Czech towns still had no monuments of personalities from the national pantheon. The statue of Havlíček Borovský is located in a city park with a view of the Giant Mountains, and his hand points towards the parts of mountains known as the Czech "wedge" near Harrachov, as if instructing a war campaign. In the words of Václav Durych, "The hand of a fearless journalist is heading north to the Novosvětský pass, and the whole statue seems to thunder with the manifestation of the whole nationally conscious and truly brave Vysoké region: "'Promise us, command us, we will never give up our rights!' [famous quote by Borovský, SH] and the whole district is our national guardhouse in the true sense of the word. All around, the German ocean swirls and storms, breaking and tearing, but the bastion of the Vysoké district is like an iron rock. A white-red banner [Czech flag, SH] is firmly embedded in it" (Durych 1897, 36).

The metaphor of Vysoké as a bastion of the Czech nation was repeated fifty years later, in 1937, when another author wrote: "As a guardian's fireplace, the white houses of Vysoké shine in the distance, the town of Kramář, the town of *Patriots under the snow*" (Laube 1938, 71). With these words, he refers to two symbols of the Czech interwar nationalism: Karel Kramář (1860–1937), the leader of the right-wing nationalist party National Democrats, who was born and lived occasionally

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in his villa here. *Patriots under the Snow*, a novel by Karel Václav Rais (Rais 1894), a famous Czech writer, was about the difficult fate of Czech teachers in the region. Obviously, Vysoké held a special position on the mental map of Czech nationalism, even during the interwar period, although several other industrializing urban areas situated north of Vysoké – and bigger than it – had a Czech ethnic majority at that time.

In describing the Giant Mountains, the Czech tourist guidebooks had to reflect in some way the fact that the majority of its inhabitants were Germans. They claimed that the Germanization of the mountains was only a recent phenomenon and they tried to portray the mountains as ethnically mixed (Kamenický 1925, 23). To make this convincing, the guidebooks did not start with highest parts of mountains, as the tourist guidebooks generally do, but they described the foothills first, and only the final chapters dealt with actual mountains (e.g., the chapter on "ethnic conditions in the Giant Mountains" in Kamenický's guidebook begins with a description of the "foothills," where it depicts the local population as ethnically mixed). Some Czech guidebooks also record the national statistics for the described municipalities. Towns with a German majority were generally depicted in a neutral way. Only with Durych do we find negative descriptions and recommendations to avoid them: He said that Janské lázně/Johannisbad was foreign to the Czechs, the same as Trutnov, which according to him was "Jewish-national" (Durych 1897, 77–78) and "a curiosity of German eccentricity" (ibid., 10).[5]

The negative descriptions of the German towns in the foothills can be found mainly in the local press. Vrchlabí and Rokytnice/Rochlitz were characterized as unsafe places for Czech tourists before 1914. One should not leave the train in Rokytnice nad Jizerou, where "a year ago Czech pupils returning from a trip were beaten" (*Trutnovský věstník* 1910b). The same was said of Spindlermühle/Špindlerův mlýn. The visitors' book from Martin Hut, the only establishment owned by a Czech in the mountains before 1918, states that "If you are a real Czech, do not accommodate in Spindle, you will always fall victim to German swindle" (Flégl 1967, 15).

Czech recommendations to avoid certain places disappeared after 1918. A guidebook from 1921 stated that "a visit to the Trutnov National House is more than necessary" (Kubišta 1921, 64). Also, descriptions of Vrchlabí changed in the interwar period. In 1938, one could read in a publication on local nationalities: "Upon entering the town from the train station, we are greeted on the right by the only border guardian publishing house [the only local Czech-language publisher in the region, SH] of Josef Krbal, opposite the Czech restaurant (owned by the Czechoslovak Tourist Club), the monument of Sokol leader Miroslav Tyrš [Sokol was a Czech nationalist mass sport association, SH] and the villa of the Czech factory owner Menčík. Three rare names: Border guardian publisher, a mass sport association, and a Czech factory owner who fought against foreign superiority for decades, honestly and victoriously" (Laube 1938, 48).

Even after 1918, however, the Czech influence remained marginal in the largest tourist resort in the Giant Mountains, Spindlermühle, which was situated even deeper in the mountains than Trutnov and Vrchlabí. At the beginning of the 1930s, more than half of all visitors to the mountains were accommodated there, followed by another almost purely ethnically German resort, Pec pod Sněžkou/Petzer. Despite the predominant German ownership in these centers, many Czechs were among their visitors (*Zprávy* 1936a, 673). In Spindlermühle, we have data from 1931 and 1932 indicating that 40% of visitors were from Prague (Šolc 1934, 148); therefore, they were most likely ethnic Czechs. The growing number of Czechoslovak citizens among visitors is shown by the preserved statistics from 1926 to 1937 from another resort, Janské Lázně, according to which foreigners slightly prevailed over domestic guests until 1932, but then Czechoslovak guests, among whom we can assume a large part were Czechs, significantly prevailed (*Zprávy* 1936b, 30; *Zprávy* 1937, 90; *Zprávy* 1938, 210).

Conflicts about Huts and Roads

Nationalist activists considered mountain huts to be important strategic points. Prior to 1918, Czech entrepreneurs owned or rented only a few hotels and buildings throughout the mountains.

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Even in these few cases, they had to do their business bilingually, as the exclusive focus on Czech clients could not pay off. The Czech Tourist Club could not compete with German tourist associations in the ownership of tourist facilities prior to 1914, not only in the Giant Mountains but also in the whole Czech lands. For example, in 1918, the Czechoslovak Tourist Club owned only eight huts and six lookout towers in the Czech lands, and none of them were in the Giant Mountains, while German associations owned dozens of such facilities (Pelc 2009, 287). Due to these conditions, prior to 1914, Czech tourist guidebooks and the daily press published the names of hotels and huts that were friendly towards Czechs.

We did not find any cases of German hotels refusing to accommodate Czech tourists due to their ethnicity prior to 1914. The only exceptions were mountain youth hostels, owned by German nationalist associations for youth tourism, which, according to their own statutes, were only allowed to accommodate German students until 1918 (this measure was probably in force since 1898) (Bartoš 2001, 120). While Czech tourists could not demand Czech service and Czech inscriptions in the huts prior to 1914, they criticized their owners in the press, saying that they worshipped the German Empire and Emperor Wilhelm, although the huts were located in Austria and Franz Joseph was its emperor (Durych 1897, 87).

Only after 1918 was the Czechoslovak Tourist Club able to surpass the German tourist organization in the ownership of tourist buildings (huts, watch towers), mainly thanks to strong support from the state. Now it made sense to appeal to Czech tourists: "Do not visit a hut where the Czech is not a welcomed guest and where the owner cannot even guarantee your personal safety" (*Naše menšiny* 1920, 19). The nationalist press celebrated the opening of each Czech hut. One good example was the hut Výrovka, built in 1927 by the Czechoslovak Army (*Naše menšiny* 1927, 224). Although it was always claimed that Czech huts would be cheaper than existing German huts, the reality was often the opposite. In 1931, there were complaints that Czech huts were so expensive that Czech tourists would have to visit the German huts (*Naše menšiny* 1931, 41). On the contrary, activists from Riesengebirgsverein, which was renamed after 1918 from Austrian to German (*Deutscher Riesengebirgsverien*),[6] complained that the Výrovka hut was subsidized by the state (*Jahrbuch* 1927, 11). All in all, in the Giant Mountains the German owners dominated. In 1934, it was recorded that out of 45 hotels in Spindlermühle, only 3 had Czech ownership (*Naše menšiny* 1934c, 122). A similar situation was in Janské Lázně and in Pec pod Sněžkou.

The construction of roads and trails was another source of ethnic conflict. The first such case is recorded in 1895, when the new road connecting the Czech-speaking Benecko with the German-speaking Vrchlabí was opened. Czech nationalists argued that the intention of the constructors was not economic development but the nationalist ambitions to tie the Czech village to the German town and turn it away from the Czech Jilemnice, which until then had been the closest town to the inhabitants of Benecko (Šubrt 1910, 189). In the mid-1930s, the most important Czech project was the construction of the so-called Masaryk Road. It was understood as a new Czech gateway to the mountains. The project included firstly the renovation of 13 km of road that was built at the end of the 19th century by Count Harrach, leading from the town of Jilemnice to the foothills of the main mountain range, and secondly the construction of a 10 km section leading to the Zlaté návrší/Goldhöhe (1,411 m). Nationalists understood the road, planned since 1930, as an important factor in strengthening the Czech influence in the Giant Mountains: Czech-owned mountain huts would import food from ethnic Czech areas, and more Czech tourists would visit the mountain ridges. It was expected that Jilemnice would again become a starting point to the Giant Mountains, just as it was before the introduction of buses in the early 1920s, which brought the tourists (arriving by train to Vrchlabí and Trutnov) to Špindlerův mlýn and Pec, places situated deep in the mountains and previously hard to access. The road was also considered by Czech journalists to be a right response to the project of building the so-called Sudeten road on the German/Silesian side of the Giant Mountains starting in 1934, which was to bring car traffic to the Giant Mountains from the city Zittau (Flégl 1965, 13). The nationalist sense of the project is evident in the celebratory speeches by Czech politicians at its opening in 1936: "Our iron will get stronger here. We will not give up the soil,

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which belongs to us. Here in the middle of the mountains, our proud chest is rising up and telling us, we did not receive our freedom from the grace of foreign powers and only we alone can decide about it" (*Naše menšiny* 1936a, 143).

At the lower beginning of the road, a ten-ton boulder with a memorial plaque of President Masaryk was installed, brought for this purpose from the border (*Krkonošský obzor* 1936b). A hut with a capacity of 80 rooms was planned on the top of the Zlaté návrší. The hut was supposed to be named after Antonín Švehla, Czechoslovak prime minister and right-wing politician. However, a critique of the planned location soon occurred, as the part of mountain belonged under the administration of the German-speaking village of Bedřichov/Friedrichsthal, where all taxes would flow. Therefore, another suitable place located in the cadaster of the Czech municipality was to be searched so that "this economic and ethnic defect would be eliminated" (*Naše menšiny* 1936c, 160). However, no Czech municipality had such an attractive area within its cadaster, and eventually it was decided that the hut would be built on Zlaté návrší (Rychlovský 1931, 6). The hut was also supposed to be a part of border fortifications; its basement was planned to be built with massive stones with loopholes for machineguns. Nevertheless, the project was postponed for military/political reasons in the spring of 1938 and never realized. Another related project was the cable car leading to the planned hut. These plans also did not materialize, and the only cable car in mountains was to Černá hora/Schwarzenberg from Johannisbad at that time, put into operation in 1928, lying deep in German-speaking territory and built by a German businessman.

Symbolic Cores, Collective Memory, and Language

The weakness of Czech nationalist efforts to gain influence in the Giant Mountains also resulted from the fact that the most prestigious parts around the highest mountain, Sněžka (1,602 m), were situated too deeply in German territory. While the symbolic core of the mountains was clearly Sněžka for Germans from both sides of the border (its silhouette is ubiquitous in German-language publications), the Czechs had to search for another symbolic core. In Czech tourist guidebooks published prior to 1914, the symbolic core was clearly the Žalý Hill (1,019 m), which certainly could not compete with the main ridge of the Giant Mountains but, most importantly, laid in the immediate vicinity of the Czech-speaking village of Benecko. Czech guidebooks at the time paid even more attention to this hill than to Sněžka, and when the hut on the top of the hill burned down in 1900, German arsonists were immediately speculated to be the culprits (Koláček 2015, 65). After 1918, when the Czech influence increased in the mountains, Žalý, as a symbol, was silently abandoned and replaced by the mountain Kotel/Kesselkoppe (1,435 m), lying deeper in mountains and forming one massive mountain with the above-mentioned Zlaté návrší. A tourist guide published in 1938 contrasted this "Czech" mountain with the "Germanizing" Sněžka (Laube 1938, 70). In the case of Kotel, one could say that a Czech settlement also reached the southern part of the hill. It was the hamlet of Rezek, with 27 Czech inhabitants counted in 1930 (Kubát 1982, 15), situated 5 km away from the top of the hill. For these reasons, the Rezek hamlet was probably excluded by the authorities from the administration of the German-speaking village of Vítkovice/Witkowitz after 1918 and went under the administration of the more distant but ethnically Czech village of Horní Dušnice (*Statistický* 1934, 440). In this way, the ethnically Czech municipalities finally touched the main range of the Giant Mountains.

To support the idea that the Giant Mountains and their foothills belonged to the Czech ethnic group, a historical narrative was constructed, emphasizing the original Slavic settlement of the area and the role of Czechs in mountain colonization. This historical narrative used, rather contradictorily, the image of the Germans as an eternal enemy (*odvěký nepřítel*) and the image of friendly coexistence with the Germans in the past, which was destroyed only recently by German nationalists (Durych 1897, 6). The authors of the local history publication *A Thousand Years on Guard* (Zeman, Vaníček 1939) believed that the foothills of the Giant Mountains had been inhabited by a Slavic element since prehistoric times and that the local inhabitants, like the Chods in southwestern

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Bohemia, had the task of protecting their homeland (ibid., 96). As part of the narratives about the prehistoric Slavic settlement of the area, it was assumed that a pagan ritual place (*božiště*) existed on Žalý Hill and that the nearby village of Kněžice (*Kněz* = priest in Czech) was once a seat of "pagan priests" (Janda 1909, 1). In the Czech nationalist environment, there were no attempts to appropriate the legendary spirit of the Giant Mountains, Rübezahl (*Krakonoš* in Czech), and to declare him a deity of the ancient Slavs. On the contrary, the German nationalist authors saw the origin of Rübezahl in Old Germanic mythology, and this theory supported German narratives about the uninterrupted Germanic settlements of the Czech lands since the 1st century AD (Pelzer 1918, 37).

Czech national activists also tried to create their own names for various places in the Giant Mountains as early as the beginning of the 19th century, when only German versions existed. Until the 1830s, there were several competing versions of Czech names, even for the most well-known places in the mountains. The Czech versions which exist today – Krkonoše (Giant mountains), Sněžka (Schneekoppe), Krakonoš (Rübezahl) – stabilized only at that time. The names of less principal places were disputed until the 1940s between so-called language romantics and pragmatists. The romantics preferred to "discover" and use the old Czech names, and if the names were unavailable, they tried to create them, taking only slight inspiration from German names. They insisted on their usage, even if they sounded clumsy (Aleš 1908, 18), and criticized the pragmatists for simply copying the German. The pragmatists made fun of the romantics, arguing that it was necessary to have names that did not try to pretend to be historical. One of the pragmatists, the historian J. V. Šimák, argued that it was nonsense to claim that the German Löwengrund (today's Lví důl, which is a modern translation of the German version) was once called Lověn and that Rosenberg (today's Růžová hora) was once Rožen (Šimák 1908, 132). Obviously, in most cases the versions proposed by the pragmatists prevailed.

After 1918, the Czech authorities ordered the renaming of some roads and other objects named after the Habsburg family and other German-Austrian personalities. A Czech nationalist newspaper wrote in 1919, "In the Czechoslovak Republic, it is unacceptable for us to walk on Emperor Franz Joseph's road in the Giant Mountains, and also nobody will provoke us with the names Weberweg and Rossegerweg" (*Národní listy* 1919). When the Riesengebirgsverein suggested in response that the trail of Emperor Franz Josef should be renamed after the chairman of the association, the businessman Guido Rotter (1860–1940), the Czechoslovak authorities did not allow it and enforced the neutral name of Krakonoš/Rübezahl (*Jahrbuch* 1932, 9).

The new Czechoslovak state also ordered the use of the Czech language in all huts in the Giant Mountains, together with German. Having a Czech-speaking staff, a Czech version of the menu, and a Czech guestbook became the duty for all German hotels, and the tourist guidebooks even recommended that if Czech guests did not find this, they should complain to the owner, or even inform the headquarters of the Czechoslovak Tourist Club and local authorities (Ambrož 1935, 59). The author of the 1921 guide, local national activist Jan Buchar, considered this to be better than arguing with "servants," which "could turn into unpleasant disputes and quarrels" (*Stopa* 1911, 5–6). Another guide from 1925 wrote explicitly about the "duty of the Czech tourist" to speak with the owners, tenants, and staff of huts only in Czech, even if he or she knows the German language; this is necessary in order to show the national self-confidence as well as to demonstrate the numbers of Czechs visiting the Giant Mountains and to "refute the German claim that a knowledge of Czech is unnecessary because Czech tourists can speak German" (Kamenický 1925, 22). But not all of the Czech authors supported the usage of Czech at all costs: The factory owner and later mayor of the city of Hradec Králové, Jan Pilňáček, asked whether it was necessary to complain if there was no Czech menu in a restaurant, or if the staff did not understand Czech: "We do not think that by causing quarrels we will strengthen our cause. Gentlemanly behaviour is necessary" (Pilňáček 1920, 3). Another author also recommended tolerance in 1928 (*Východočeský republikán* 1928). Especially in the liberal press, we also find recognition of the professionalism of German hoteliers and the cleanliness of the facilities. In 1931, a liberal newspaper characterized the coexistence of both ethnicities on the ridges of the Giant Mountains as correct and "without insults" (Rychlovský 1931,

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6). According to him, this was because there were no drunks or vagabonds "so here there is perfect safety." Thus, "we are on the best path to soon make the Giant Mountains the Alps in a pocket edition" [meaning tourist friendly and ethnically tolerant, SH] (ibid.).

Only a few years later, in 1934, the feeling of security disappeared. The author of an illustrated weekly sadly stated that Czechs were afraid to greet each other in Czech in the mountains, and the predominance of Germans, especially those from the Third Reich, was overwhelming: "They are on the roads, in huts all over the ridges. Everywhere you see a swastika on the sleeves. Their rucksacks are perfectly adjusted according to military regulations. They go on skis through ridges – in groups of ten or more – and fill the huts well below the borders [on the Czechoslovak side, SH] with their shouting and awareness of numerical predominance" (Pecháček 1934, 2). The writer and teacher Luisa Šebestová also mentions in her memoirs that after 1934, when she met, for the first time, men dressed in SA uniforms on the mountain ridges during class trips, she and her pupils no longer dared to sing the Czech national anthem "Where is my home" (*Kde domov můj*) on top of Sněžka (Laube 1938, 151).

Tourist Signs and Winter Sports

Tourist signs were another place of ethnic clashes. The first tourist trail in the Giant Mountains was opened in 1879 on the estate of Count Jan Harrach (1828–1909), who was sympathetic to the Czech national movement. The trail led to the spring of the River Elbe, and inscriptions were in both languages. Even Harrach's clerks were obliged to use Czech as a language in the workplace, although the estate was located mostly in German-speaking territory (Ořovský 1932, 13). In the eastern, highest part of the mountain range, which belonged to the aristocratic Czernin-Morzin family, the roads were marked by Riesengebirgsverein, which used only German. Prior to 1914, we have recorded cases of the destruction of Czech columns by the German nationalists on the Harrach estate, while Czech nationalists did not dare to commit similar acts on the Czernin Morzin estate. Members of the Czech Tourist Club responded to the vandalizing of wooden signs by replacing them with stone pyramids. In 1911, two young Germans even tried to destroy one stone pyramid with dynamite. Both perpetrators were detained by a Czech gendarme and brought to justice (Jirásko 1973, 9).

German nationalists were infuriated not only by Czech inscriptions but also by the chosen colors. Since 1888, the Czech Tourist Club has used tourist markings in the form of two white stripes with a red stripe between them. It resembled the Czech flag, and the Germans understood it as a violation of their territory. On the contrary, the Czech nationalists cleverly argued that the choice of colors had nothing to do with the national flag but was chosen because of its optimal visibility. Also the German tourist signs were slightly nationally connoted, as the stripes were in red and yellow. The third color on the German flag, black, was of course unsuitable for use.

After 1918, the Czechoslovak authorities and associations urged the Riesengebirgsverein to replace the German signs with bilingual ones. The Czechoslovak state nationalized the border forests in the early 1920s and the administration of tourist rails was entrusted to the Czechoslovak Tourist Club. The Riesengebirgsverein opposed it, and its yearbook extensively describes the disputes and the long negotiations (*Jahrbuch* 1926, 9). Finally, both associations agreed to share the administration of tourist rails and to make them bilingual. Later on, it was agreed to preserve the German colors (red and yellow) in the markings (*Jahrbuch* 1928, 11). Riesengebirgsverein made the exclusively German signs bilingual only very slowly, which its leaders justified by the lack of subsidies from the state. Furthermore, some local branches of the Riesengebirgsverein continued to use only German signposts (*Jahrbuch* 1932, 8). Other local branches even gave up the old stripe marks in the 1930s and experimented with the diamond marks used in Bavaria in the Alps (diamonds form the Bavarian emblem), which infuriated Czech tourist organizations. In 1932, we read in German sources about another conflict, namely one over whether the German parts of inscriptions could be written in Fraktur calligraphy, and there were instances when Czech

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authorities removed such a sign (*Jahrbuch* 1933, 7). Even in 1936, the Czech nationalist press complained that the Riesengebirgsverein was not fulfilling its agreement with the Czechoslovak Tourist Club on bilingual signage (*Naše menšiny* 1936b, 80). The Riesengebirgsverein, on the contrary, complained about the alleged neglect of the markings and maintenance of the trails administered by the Czechoslovak Tourist Club (*Jahrbuch* 1933, 9). After 1935, it complained about the installation of various signs, indicating the ban on entry and on photographing certain areas in connection with the construction of border fortifications and the bans on publishing German maps or photographs from the Giant Mountains (*Jahrbuch* 1936, 19).

An attempt to solve the language disputes in tourist signs was a project of so-called silent signs by painter Kamil Vladislav Muttich, created in 1923. He proposed several dozens of symbols in the form of red-painted metal sheets half a meter wide and high. The signs were very visible, even at great distances, and their shape, unlike the inscriptions, did not disappear in the snow and was nationally neutral. The weakness of the system was that skiers and tourists had to be equipped with a device clarifying the meaning of these marks.

National disputes have also manifested themselves in winter sports since the 1890s. Soon after the introduction of skiing in the Giant Mountains, Czech and German ski associations were formed. The ski races organized by them were often called international, which meant they were open to citizens of other countries. Nevertheless, skiers from other ethnicities had to sometimes participate incognito to avoid the risk of being excluded from their national sports association. For example, the so-called International Ski Race – organized by Czech ski associations in 1913, in which two Czech skiers, Bohumil Hanč and Václav Vrbata, lost their lives – was attended by one German from the German empire (Rampa 1993, 50) and two Austrian Germans, one of whom decided to compete under the pseudonym (ibid., 52). Two dozen competitors were ethnic Czechs. It was reported afterwards in the Czech press that it was an ambition to win over the German competitors that led Hanč to overestimate his strength: "When, exhausted by a persistent struggle with the snowstorm, it was proposed to him not to run further, he cried out: 'I will bring victory to the Czechs even if it costs me my life.' He won and he died honestly" (*Věstník krkonošský* 1913a).

Festivities, Group Trips, and Monuments

Compared to cities, there were few festivals in the mountains articulating the nationalist agenda. The first example of such an event was the German consecration of the spring of the Elbe in 1884, in memory of two hundred years since its first consecration by the bishop from the city of Hradec Králové. During this act, the catholic dean from Vrchlabí allegedly proclaimed the glory of Germany's alliance with Austria, whose metaphor was that the Elbe flowed through both countries (*Oslava* 1934, 8). Prior to 1914, Czech nationalist organizations considered themselves not strong enough to organize a similar festival in the mountains. Only in 1934 did the Czech national activists dare to organize a mass celebration in the core of the mountains on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the consecration of the spring of the Elbe. The celebration openly stated that its goal was "to manifest for the Czech character of the Giant Mountains" (*Naše menšiny* 1934a). The consecration of the Elbe in the 17th century was interpreted here as supporting the idea that the Giant Mountains belonged to the Czech lands. One week later, German associations also organized their own celebration in the presence of participants from both sides of the border. The Czech nationalist press described it as "strongly religious," without national flags, in contrast to the Czech manifestation (*Naše menšiny* 1934b, 145). During the interwar period, there were also several attempts at joint Czech-German actions in the Giant Mountains. The Social Democrats and the Communists held several international workers rallies on the mountain ridges in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Although Czech national activists did not have the courage to organize mass festivities in the mountains before 1918, they had organized group trips since the 1890s. Their main proponent was the teacher Jan Buchar (1859–1932), leader of local branch of the Czech Tourist Club. Participants

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at the excursion, mostly dressed in Sokol costumes and carrying banners, went to the mountains usually as a group of several dozen participants. Such a trip was an opportunity to demand usage of Czech, listen to patriotic lectures, or write declarations and verses in guest books in huts. Buchar's trips to the Giant Mountains were so popular at the beginning of the century that there was a waiting list for them. The local journal recommended in 1911 a visit to the Giant Mountains only under Buchar's guidance: "If you don't have to, don't go to the Giant Mountains alone; otherwise you will get lost in the numbers of German tourists… If you go with Buchar's expedition, you will gain a lot, because he and his 50-to-60-member expeditions are respected everywhere" (*Trutnovský věstník* 1911). As one of the participants described the trip, "On the ridge of the Giant Mountains, when fifty members of the expedition made a circle around Buchar and he shows the border line with his hand and starts to talk about what belongs to 'them' and what to 'us,' he forgets he is a sportsman and turns into a passionate border guardian who would spill the last drop of his blood for every Czech inch" (*Buchar* 1910–1911, 58). Buchar always used the visits of the monument of Emperor Wilhelm situated right behind the border of the German Empire on the mountain ridge in Vysoké Kolo/Hohes Rad (1,509 m) to warn against German aggression. Of course, the German press described his group as "Czech agitators dressed up like tourists," (*Deutsche*, 1903).

An important part of the group trips was the choir singing: "When in the evening in a mountain hotel 14 to 15 hundred meters above the sea, fifty, sixty Czechs sing their songs, the present Germans are silenced … Here immediately a mysterious spark comes into the audience, forcing you to sing 'Where is My Home' [the Czech national anthem, SH] not enthusiastic from the beer… but proudly from lungs filled with clean mountain air" (*Buchar* 1910–1911, 59). Choral singing in the mountains seems to be a kind of secular mass: "Here in the mountains the whole Czech credo is given into it, the whole Czech self" (*Trutnovský věstník* 1911). Beautiful Czech singing allegedly opens the hearts of Germans, who stop talking and reward the singers with applause. According to a report from 1911, after the Czech singing, "talks starts with the present Germans about the possibilities of reconciliation between the two tribes" (*Trutnovský věstník* 1911).

Nevertheless, singing could also cause conflict. There are some songs that can infuriate the other ethnicity. Czechs were provoked by the German "Wacht am Rhein," the couplet "Servus Březina," or the so-called "Wolf's March," named after Karel Hermann Wolf (1862–1941), the nationalist member of the Parliament for Trutnov from 1897–1918 (*Trutnovský věstník* 1904, 3). The custom of the Germans to imitate alpine yodeling in the Giant Mountains also caused outrage among nationally minded Czechs. "Do not disturb us with the Tyrolean manners" (*Krkonošský obzor* 1936a) wrote a nationalist journal in 1936. Germans were, on the contrary, provoked by song the "Hej, Slované" / "Hey, Slavs," nicknamed by them "Thunder and Hell" (*hrom a peklo*).

Unlike the Germans from the Giant Mountains, the local Czechs never created any famous local song. This suggests that the common identity of Czechs living in the Giant Mountains or in their foothills was weaker than the identity of local Germans. The song "Riesengebirgslied" ("Giant Mountain Song"), written by two teachers shortly after 1914, quickly became a sort of anthem of local Germans. Due to its nationalist refrain, "Dear Giant mountains, German mountains, my dear homeland," its usage was banned by authorities during interwar Czechoslovakia. After 1945, verses expressing the faith in returning to the old homeland were added, and the song is still known in the groups of expelled Germans from the region (Hampel 1950). No Czech nationalist song about the Giant Mountains has ever been written –only several poems published after the Munich Agreement in 1938 lamenting the lost mountains (Stýblo 1938a, 13).

The construction of nationalist monuments was a relatively infrequent practice in the mountains, in contrast to urban spaces. The memorials appeared in the mountains rather in a modest form as memorial plaques dedicated to local figures, but of course they were associated with either the Czech or German ethnic group. The Riesengebirgsverein constructed monuments since the 1880s. The oldest German monument, revealed in 1888 – the aforementioned stone mound built in

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honor of Emperor Wilhelm in Vysoké Kolo/Hohes Rad – was also the only monument in the Giant Mountains related to the national, rather than local, topics. It was five meters high and decorated with a bronze relief of the emperor, a German cross, and the capital letter *W*. The monument was devastated after 1945, although the massive stone mound has been preserved to this day. The best-known German mountain monuments in the southern part of the mountains was a memorial plaque dedicated to the owner of a paper mill – a patron of Riesengebirgsverein and founder of the hiking trails, Count Prosper Piette von Rivage (1846–1928) – at the Elbe spring, unveiled in 1891. Although he was of French origin and was conciliatory in national affairs, he became an important symbol for the German minority, and after his death he was called the "father of the Giant Mountains" (Reil 1996, 19).

The first Czech monuments were unveiled much later: The first was the mound of the dead skiers Hanč and Vrbata on the Zlaté návrší (unveiled in 1923). The second was related to a nationwide issue: It was the memorial plaque on Šeřín Hill (1,036 m) of Czech right-wing nationalist politician and minister of finance, Alois Rašín, who was assassinated by an anarchist in 1923. And the third was a small memorial stone of the head of the Czech press agency, who died in a snowstorm in 1929. An article in *Lidové noviny* from 1931 gratefully mentions that "no one has dared to harm them yet" (Rychlovský 1931, 6). Although numerous monuments of the first Czechoslovak president T. G. Masaryk were revealed in Czech cities (most of them even during his lifetime), the Czech authorities did not dare to build such a monument in the mountains. The last such Czech monument was Buchar's plaque at the spring of Elbe, unveiled in 1931 (Šolc 1932, 127). The plaque stood opposite to the Plaque of Piette von Rivage, and also Buchar was called at the end of his life the "King of the Czech Giant Mountains" (*Naše menšiny* 1929, 196). None of these monuments survived beyond 1938.

Czech Culture of Defeat in 1938

The expansion of Nazi movement among the Czechoslovak Germans and its culmination in a series of terrorist attacks in the year 1938 had a very negative effect on tourism in the mountains. There were several armed clashes between the Czechoslovak Armed Forces and Nazi terrorists, and several mountain huts were burned. Although we do not have data on the visitors in the mountains from 1937 to 1938, we can assume there was a significant decline. Furthermore, it was forbidden since 1935 to access parts of mountains where the Czechoslovak fortifications were built. The publication of the Giant Mountains Club (Riesengebirgsverein in German) shortly after the annexation of the Sudetenland by Nazi Germany in October 1938 not only expressed enthusiasm for unification, but also emphasized the environmental and aesthetic damages in recent years by army fortifications and by various Czech tourist facilities. As a part of environmental renewal, the top parts of the mountains were declared a nature reserve by the German administration, and walking outside the marked paths was forbidden (*Jahrbuch* 1939, 83). The Riesengebirgsverein asked the government for subsidies because of necessary environmental renovations, the planned replacement of bilingual tourist signs, and the introduction of German "diamond" signs (ibid., 82), but it remains unknown whether it was really implemented during the war years. The association also declared ambitions to attract new tourists from the Third Reich, as the absence of Czech visitors hit the mountain resorts in the winter of 1938–1939 seriously. In order to increase the numbers of tourists from Germany, a temporary road between Spindlermühle and the Silesian Oberhain (now Przesieka) was constructed in the spring of 1939, through which cars and light buses could pass (*Trautenauer Rundschau* 1939). Plans for constructing a larger road were not realized during the war, and the road was closed after 1945.

Shortly after the Munich Agreement, it seemed the Czech-German rivalry on the Giant Mountains was finally decided in favor of the latter, and Czech national activists went into a deep depression. Jindřich M. Vlček (1880–1940) – the publisher of a nationalist magazine, the mayor of

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the town of Malé Svatoňovice, and a factory owner – expressed his bitter sorrow in which he combined his class and nationalist attitudes:

> How we celebrated every new committee of National Unities, Sokol, or other associations. The day of glory was the opening of each new Czech border school [minority school, SH], each new National House, etc. However, we were most pleased with every economic success. We rejoiced every newly acquired cottage, every field, and if we managed to get the whole farms and estates, whole forest districts and factories into Czech hands… And today all the enthusiastic, tireless, and devoted work for decades by thousands of border activists and our National Defence unities is in vain. Today all its beautiful results are gone. (Vlček 1938, 130)

Despite the overall pessimistic tone, he expressed the hope in the future revenge. Also, the local poet M. B. Stýblo did not believe that the loss of the Giant Mountains would be forever: "My Giant Mountains, my native mountains! / Mystical Sněžka calling to the distance, where are frontier brothers / guarding your forests, where is the border guard who died for you /… but there will be the day belonging again to – us!" (Stýblo 1938b, 1).

The Czechoslovak Tourist Club recommended after September 1938 reorienting the attention to the part of the Giant Mountains which remained in Czechoslovakia (*Naše hranice* 1938b, 158), the hilly surroundings of Vysoké nad Jizerou (about 700 m above sea level). They argued it was necessary to make from several hills a tiny version of the Giant Mountains. According to the local press, Vysoké was really overcrowded during the winter season 1938–1939 (*Krkonošský obzor* 1939b) and local entrepreneurs were pleased. However, there were also Czechs who remained in the Giant Mountains. Although all state officials had to leave, Czech minority schools in municipalities with a German majority were closed, and the mountain huts and hotels expropriated, many Czechs, particularly workers and peasants, were nevertheless allowed to stay in occupied areas. Most importantly, this was the case of 20 occupied Czech-speaking villages located on the left bank of the River Jizera/Iser (*Naše hranice* 1938a, 149). The annexing of this territory was motivated by the need to have the transport connection between the west and the east of the occupied Sudetenland. This area, with 9,111 Czechs and 114 Germans, represented one of the largest annexes of the Czech-inhabited territories by Nazi Germany after the Munich Agreement.

The local Czech discourse was characterized by the hope that the terror regime of local Nazi bands would be over after the arrival of the Wehrmacht, which would reintroduce law and order (*Krkonošský obzor* 1938a; *Krkonošský obzor* 1938b). After its arrival, the Czech press expressed with some admiration that in the occupied parts, people began to respect the road regulations, which used to be a mess during the Czechoslovak Republic (*Krkonošský obzor* 1938c). There were also optimistic voices that the Czechs in the Third Reich would be granted minority rights in education or culture and the Sokol would be allowed to continue its activities. However, the optimistic voices were silenced after the closure of a Czech grammar school in Trutnov and many Czech elementary schools in the occupied territory.

Until the spring of 1939, unrealistic dreams of returning some of the lost territory to Czechoslovakia also persisted. These hopes were related to the activities of the Boundary Commission, whose duty it was to mark the precise course of the new boundary. The local Czech press expected that the commission would discover the real ethnic ratios and that the Czech-speaking villages would be handed over to Czechoslovakia (*Krkonošský obzor* 1938d; Václavík 1939, 1). Others hoped that after the planned highway in Sudetenland was finished, the Czech-speaking villages lying on the current main road would be given back as useless for the Third Reich (*Krkonošský obzor* 1939a). However, these plans never materialized and almost nothing was given back to Czechoslovakia in the months after the Munich Agreement. The situation, to some extent, relaxed after March 1939, when the rest of the Czech lands were occupied by Nazi Germany. The Czechs from occupied areas even became somewhat privileged over their compatriots from the Protectorate of Bohemia and

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Moravia, because they could, as citizens of the Third Reich, use the advantageous exchange ratio between the German mark and Protectorate crown in their favor.

Conclusion

The mountains, as an area of modern tourism, represent a specific place in ethnic conflicts. It is clear that it was the symbolic significance of the Giant Mountains as the highest mountains in the Czech lands, combined with their tourist attractiveness, which motivated Czech nationalist activists to strive for influence in the area. The dynamics of the conflicts were also given by the fact that the Czech ethnic group showed stronger demographic growth in the region, especially around the industrial town of Turnov. The following table nevertheless shows that, despite decades of national disputes, there were no principal changes in the numerical ratio of the two ethnicities until the 1930s (see table 1).

In the described conflicts, Czech national activists appear as a more dynamic force which, at the time of the Austrian monarchy, was more eager to change the existing situation, while the German national activists were in principle trying to preserve the status quo. This did not change even after 1918, when Czech national activists continued in their efforts, while German activists remained in a defensive position of defeated minority and gained new momentum only after the Nazis came to power in Germany. Unlike the German national movement, the Czech national movement had a clear national-political program to gain control of Bohemia and Moravia, within the country's historical borders. On the other hand, German nationalists aimed to preserve the course of the language boundary and to either turn the German-speaking areas into autonomous regions within the Austrian monarchy/Czechoslovakia, or to unify them with all Germans in one country.

A complicated question is as follows: how frequent were nationalist attitudes prevalent within both ethnic groups? This is difficult to reconstruct, as we mainly have the records of nationalists, while the voices of those speaking for reconciliation or those who did not care about ethnic issues were rather marginal. Obviously, some personalities from the local aristocracy (e.g., Harrach, Prosper Piette) were trying to be conciliatory and supported bilingualism. We also have records that the lowest classes of society were most likely to send their children to other ethnic schools for material benefits. Also, the Social Democratic Party, which gained important positions among industrial workers after 1900, was conciliatory in terms of ethnicities; however, it was not spared nationalism, and it disintegrated into national sections in 1905. It should also be mentioned that Czech and German social democracy was somewhat weaker on the language boundary. The conciliatory attitude can also be found after 1921 in the Czechoslovak Communist Party and by social democrats. We can also expect conciliatory attitudes in mixed Czech-German families and among local Jews; however, each group made up only 1 or 2 percent of the population. The hard-line nationalistic attitudes seem to be concentrated among the intelligentsia of both nations, particularly the teachers, or some local entrepreneurs, who used nationalism as a tool in their profit-making. On the other hand, the catholic clergy seems to have had a rather neutral attitude. There was, however, no organization active at the time aiming to promote mutual Czech-German reconciliation.

Table 1. The ratio of the Czech ethnic group in the Giant Mountains and in Czech lands (in %)

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1921	1930
District Trutnov/Trautenau	18.6	18.2	20.2	22.3	26.4	29.1
District Vrchlabí/Hohenelbe	3.8	2.1	2.7	3.4	8.4	8.9
District Jilemnice/Starkenbach	75.1	75.6	76.2	77.9	79.9	79.9
Czech lands	62.5	62.4	62.4	62.9	67.7	68.8

Source: Laube 1938 44, 46; Häufler 1970, 5.

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A comparison of fields of conflict before and after 1918 shows that some were permanent and others were changing. While prior to 1914, organized, collective Czech excursions into the Giant Mountains were important events, after 1918 they lost popularity as an old-fashioned activity, and Czechs began visiting the mountains on their own, rather than as part of an organized group. At that time, Czechs could start to compete in business, or they could, with the help of the state, fight to create bilingual tourist signs, organize mass festivals, or construct memorials in the mountains. While prior to 1914, Czech tourism did not dare to expand into the heart of the mountains, after 1918 it became more self-confident. While prior to 1914, the Czech and German influence in the Giant Mountains depended on the activities of local nationalist groups or philanthropists and the state was rather neutral, after 1918 the Czechoslovak state apparatus clearly supported the Czech ethnicity through official regulations, the opening of minority schools, and the military-funded construction of mountain huts, cultural centers (national houses), and roads. On the other hand, the dominance of the German capital continued until the 1940s.

If we compare the birth of tourism in mountainous areas of Europe during the 19th century, two places of its origin can be identified: Scotland and the Alps. Scotland – part of the United Kingdom, a leading power of Europe at that time (not only in industrialization but also in modern tourism) – was probably the first region transformed in the first half of the century

from the destination of visits by curious aristocrats and *hommes de lettres* to an area of mass visits. After being connected with England by rail in the 1840s, Scotland was soon characterized as overcrowded (Grenier 2005, 77). It also soon became a place of Scottish and English nationalist narratives and imagination (ibid., 93–125). However, the language issue did not play a pivotal role here, and Scottish nationalists were largely native English speakers. Many Englishmen, as admirers of Scottish history, did not dispute the unity of Scotland, and significant ethnic conflicts did not occur. Mountain associations were officially called Scottish, but the English language predominated and English activists had no reason to establish alternative groups.

Another place of modern UK tourism, Wales, was somewhat different: The language issue here was more contested. The number of Welsh speakers was higher than speakers of Gaelic in Scotland, and the language boundary between English and Welsh was partly fortified by mountains. However, the Welsh national movement was weaker than the Scottish movement because of the lack of elites. No attempts to establish the Welsh mountain associations or to pursue the Welsh language in the mountains appeared. The numerous Welsh speakers were mainly from lower classes, with no interest in middle-class tourism (Pitchford 2008, 21–26). Middle classes and elites living in Wales identified with England, in contrast to their Scottish counterparts, and had no interests in making the mountains ethnically Welsh.

The ethnic conflicts connected to the mountains and tourism are therefore to be found more intensively in Central Europe, firstly in the Alps, the cradle of European tourism but also a place of territorial and nationalist conflicts. While multi-ethnic Switzerland remained untouched by them and the French Alps were ethnically homogenous, the conflicts arose in the Habsburg Empire. The disputes of Austria with unified Italy about the location of the state border and about language politics in South Tyrol belonging to Austria (see Wedekind 2014) occurred since the 1870s, somewhat earlier than in the Giant Mountains. Later on, the conflicts between Slovenians and Austrians about tourism in Crain and Carniola appeared (Batagelj 2010). Both parts of Alps were marked by the separate existence of ethnically different mountain associations and by conflicts about the ownerships of mountain huts and about inscriptions on tourist signs (Peniston-Bird, Rohkrämer, and Schulz 2010, 152), as we know from the Giant Mountains. The Italian speakers made up about 40 percent of the Tyrolean population, constituting a majority in the south of the region, and they were massively supported by tourist associations from Italy. The region of Carniola had a clear Slovene majority, and Austrians were only in the upper classes, but the position of Austrians in the economy and state administrations made them important in the development of tourism. The Slovene activists were nevertheless capable adversaries. They did not possess a historical tradition comparable to that of the Scots or the

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Czechs, but their ethnic consciousness and level of modernization (literacy) was higher than in the case of the Welsh or the Slovaks.

Another place of modern mountain tourism where ethnic conflicts appeared were the Vosges Mountains, situated in the French-German borderlands, which became part of the Wilhelmine Empire after the French defeat in 1870. The region was overwhelmingly German speaking, but there was also a French minority living in the mountains. Furthermore, local German speakers identified with Catholic France rather than with the "Protestant" German Empire. Activists loyal to France, perceiving the region as only temporarily lost, aimed to preserve its French character for future re-annexation (Riederer 2007). After 1870, German nationalist activists saw the germanization of the mountains as an important task of tourist organizations (Dreyfus 2006). But due to the lack of a strong ethnic identity among the local German speakers, the germanization of the mountains had to be organized from other parts of the German Empire. These attempts, nevertheless, did not prove to be very successful, because a network of ethnically indifferent organizations already existed in the mountains (Fuchs and Stump 2013, 108).

The Carpathians, the second largest mountain range of Central Europe, are a special case. The Hungarian and German languages predominated in tourism and mountain associations active here (Holec 2014, 253, 258), contrasting strongly with the Slavic and Romanian majority of the local inhabitants. This situation mirrored the ethnic situation in the country, where the Hungarian elites living in the urban areas ruled over the Slavic and Romanian majorities and the usage of non-Hungarian languages was not supported by the government. The position of the German language was supported by the fact that the German-speaking population made an important language island in the heart of Carpathians. The mountains experienced a strong development in tourism in the last decades before the war, although with some delay after the Alps (Hoenig 2013), and the mountains also became a focal point of embryotic national movements (Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian), none of which gained any significant influence here compared to the Czechs or Slovenes.

After 1914, the mountains of continental Europe were often the stage of military conflict. The Austrian-Italian Alps, the Carpathians, and the Vosges were places of military operations during World War I, which further increased their position in national identity and memory (Armiero 2011, 87–108). After 1918, shifts of state borders, plebiscites, and changes in property and official languages occurred. Some mountains were annexed by the victorious powers after 1918 (the Vosges from Germany to France, the South Tyrolean Alps from Austria to Italy, the Carpathians from Austria to Romania), while others became parts of new states (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia). The formerly Hungarian Carpathians were quickly de-Hungarized after 1918 by Czechoslovak and Romanian authorities. The possibilities of local Hungarian and German activists to defend their cultural traditions and political influence were much smaller than the possibilities for German activists in places where they had a majority of the population, such as the Giant Mountains or the South Tyrolean Alps. After 1918, the new language policy and changes in ownership of forests and tourist facilities in the Giant Mountains and South Tyrolean Alps seem, in one respect, to be more radical compared to all of the above-mentioned places experiencing the breakups of empires: In no other European mountains during the interwar years was there such a difference between the ethnicity of their inhabitants and the policies pursued by the state authorities.

Based on our knowledge of the above-mentioned cases, we can see several specifics of the Giant Mountains from the European perspective. First of all, the mountains can be labelled a nature park rather than real wilderness, such as the Alps or the Carpathians. They were most similar in size and altitudes to the Franco-German Vosges. While in other cases the historical regions were largely covered by mountains (Wales, Tyrol, Carinthia, Carniola), the Giant Mountains comprise only a fraction of Bohemia's area. Due to this, the Giant Mountains, like the Vosges, did not become a national symbol as the Alps did for Austria and Italy, or as the Carpathians did for Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia; they were instead important only on a regional level.

Although the Giant Mountains were relatively small, the intensity of ethnic conflicts there after 1900 resembles the intensity of ethnic conflict in the South Tyrolean Alps. Several reasons for this

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can be mentioned: After the 1890s, the Czech-German ethnic conflicts were becoming one of the most intensive in Central Europe. Both the Czech and German ethnic groups were modern in terms of culture and economy and were able to efficiently organize ethnic tourism (in contrast to the Slovaks or the Welsh). Czech images of the mountains as a natural and historical border, related metaphors of the rampart, and the fact that they were the highest peaks in Bohemia – this all made them important to Czech activists. On the other hand, the Austrian Riesengebirsverein was not only motivated by the Czech efforts but was supported and motivated by the more important Silesian Riesengebirgsverein.

The situation of South Tyrol is most similar to the Giant Mountains also in terms of ethnic compositions and state borders. In both cases, the language boundary differed from the "natural" (from the Italian point of view) or natural/historical border (from the Czech point of view). In both cases, the German/Austrian national activists preferred the ethnic line, while Czech and Italian activists preferred the "natural"/historical border. The main difference was the existence of the independent state of Italy since the 1860s. Italian nationalists considered the fact that South Tyrol was not annexed by Italy during the unification of 1859–1866 as a shame. They never gave up plans to annex it, and they succeeded after 1918. German nationalists from the Giant Mountains (and the whole Sudetenland) had attempted since the 1860s to secede from Bohemia; they dreamt of having autonomous status within the Habsburg Empire, and of secession to Germany after 1918, but they succeeded only temporarily in the period 1938–1945. Altogether, the Bohemian part of the Giant Mountains, with the South Tyrolean Alps, are the European mountains that experienced perhaps the most intensive ethnic conflicts during the first half of the 20th century. These conflicts had, however, different endings: South Tyrol succeeded in settling it down after 1945 and making the mountains bilingual, whereas the conflicts in the Giant Mountains ended with the violent expulsion of Germans.

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Notes

1 According to Vladimír Macura, the Tatra Mountains have an extraordinary importance for Slovaks, who almost identify the whole country with them. On the contrary, Czechs used as their symbols primarily places of culture (Prague, Prague Castle, Charles Bridge) but not so much places of nature (e.g., the Vltava River, Říp Hill). (Macura 1995, 141). For more on the symbolic place of Tatra in Slovaka culture, see Nábělková 2018, Hoenig 2013.

2 See Fond *Kub českých turistů* (National Archive Czech Republic), *Národní jednota severočeská*, (National Archive Czech Republic), *Ústřední správa Harrachů* (State Regional Archive in Zámrsk), *Rakouský krkonošský spolek* (State District Archive Trutnov), *Klub českých turistů odbor Jilemnice* (State District Archive Semily).

3 Fond *Národní jednota severočeská* (National Archive Czech Republic).

4 Similarly, the map of the Czech-German language boundary, published by the Czech Museum in Žatec in 1935, bore the slogan: "You can change this map with every crown dedicated to national defense units" (Říha 1935).

5 Surprisingly, he does not mention the existence of the local Czech minority, which published its own journal and was planning the opening of the National House at the time he wrote his guidebook.

6 We should not confuse it with the Deutscher Riesengebirgsverein, which existed from 1880 to 1945 on the Silesian side of the mountains. Both groups, Austrian and German, cooperated

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closely and even attempted unification after 1918, which was probibited by Czech authorities. The Riesengebirgsverein on the Silesian side of border had a membership several times more numerous than the Riesengebirgsverein on the Bohemian side of border and was wealthier as well. The groups were unified in 1938 after the annexation of the Sudetenland.

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