

perature dropped. Banks, Kämpfe, Ang Phurba and Fischbach looked back from the former site of the Ridge Camp at five P.M. and saw the others descending the steep section of the southeast ridge. At the base of the steep section Genet ran out of oxygen; he expressed a strong desire to bivouac and refused to descend. Sundare and Hannelore Schmatz stayed with him and Jangbo continued to descend to the South Col, arriving at 9:30. Because the snow was soft, no suitable shelter could be prepared and the night was spent in high winds and extreme cold at 8400 meters (27,560 feet). In the morning Genet was dead. Sundare and Hannelore began the descent. Very early in the morning of October 3 six Sherpas left Camp III with oxygen and supplies for a rescue. Nawang Tensing arrived at the South Col at 8:30 and with Fischbach began ascending towards the two descending persons, now visible. When they reached Sundare, he told them that Hannelore Schmatz had collapsed and died shortly before. Sundare was in critical condition and was evacuated with oxygen and medical care to Camp II and on the 5th to Base Camp.

GERHARD SCHMATZ, *Deutscher Alpenverein*

Lhotse. The world's fourth-highest peak, 27,923-foot Lhotse, was first climbed by Swiss in 1956 and then by Germans in 1977. Our Austrian expedition was the third to ascend this difficult 8000er. Led by Erich Vanis, we were Hans Ladreiter, Ivan Exnar, Rainer Göschl, Hanns Schell, Ruth Steinmann, Peter Schier, Bruno Klausbruckner, Dr. Wolfgang Schindler and I. The closing of the Iranian frontier forced us to send four tons of gear at great cost by air instead of by truck. We flew as far as Lukla but moved on slowly in order to acclimatize and did not get to Base Camp at 17,725 feet beside the Yugoslavian Everest expedition until March 27. We secured the Khumbu Icefall in a record five days. Camps I (19,850 feet) and II (21,825 feet) were soon in the Western Cwm. Then began a hard time for our 16 Sherpas moving supplies to Camp II. Meanwhile the sahibs fixed ropes up Lhotse's west slope to Camp III at 23,950 feet. Camp IV was set up and stocked by the Sherpas alone at 25,750 feet. By the beginning of May we were ready for the summit try. Klausbruckner, Schier, Exnar, Ladreiter and I on May 3 headed up from Camp III, testing our oxygen outfits. A drifted-over two-man tent stood at Camp IV. It was hard work to free it and to make a second tent platform. That night it blew so hard under a clear sky that we feared for the tents. Toward morning the others' tent ripped to shreds. Since a summit attempt in such an icy wind was unthinkable, Klausbruckner, Schier and Exnar descended to Camp II while Ladreiter and I endured a second and then a third night, the latter without oxygen in order to spare it. On the morning of May 5 the strong wind shifted from northwest to southwest. We prepared to descend but at nine o'clock the wind stopped. We decided

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Photo by Wolfgang Axt

**Khumbu Icefall with Everest (left)
and Lhotse.**



on a summit attempt. We were off at 10:30, each with two oxygen cylinders. On wind crust we made good progress up the steep slope, feeling fit despite the three nights in Camp IV. At 26,250 feet we reached the steep couloir that cuts through the summit cliffs and lies at about a 50° angle. This was not ice but firm snow. Halfway up, just before the crux, we each left an oxygen cylinder. Then the couloir narrowed and steepened; it was smooth rock and for 150 feet we had tricky rock climbing on crampons. About 150 feet below the summit I suddenly felt terribly weak and had to drive myself to go on. On the top I was horrified to find that my oxygen was all gone, the cause of my sudden weakness. Ladreiter's was also finished. It was five P.M. The weather was glorious except for clouds to the east. The descent was a struggle. The wind picked up and stung our faces like needles. Because of the steep angle and the lack of oxygen, we had to belay down the whole couloir. Night came on but we continued in the moonlight. Tears froze in our eyes. We estimated the temperature at —40°. Exhausted, we reached Camp IV at 1:30 A.M. In the tent we discovered we had frozen faces, hands and feet. The rest of the descent was a torture. After our arrival in Base Camp, the doctor decided on a helicopter evacuation. Ladreiter has lost several fingers on his right hand and six toes. I have lost all my toes. On May 10 a second pair, Klausbruckner and Exnar, reached the summit.

WOLFGANG AXT, *Österreichischer Alpenverein*

Lhotse, Polish Ascent. An expedition from Gliwice was the fourth to climb Lhotse (27,923 feet), following the original route and establishing the regular number of high camps. Three parties got to the top, including one oxygenless one, Andrzej Czok and Jerzy Kukuczka, on October 4. On the same day the peak was also climbed by Zygmunt Andrzej Heinrich and Janusz Skorek. Five days later, on October 9, the summit was reached by Janusz Baranek, the leader Adam Bilczewski, Stanisław Cholewa and Robert Niklas. The latter is a West German who has lived in the Polish Tatra Mountains.

MAREK BRNIAK, *Klub Wysokogórski, Kraków, Poland*

Kusum Kangguru and Nuptse. A plan emerged to climb several peaks that would not only offer interesting climbing but would also enable the members to acclimatize sufficiently to tackle Everest in alpine style. Georges Bettembourg (French), Michael Covington (American) and I (British) planned to climb Kusum Kangguru, whilst Alan Rouse and Brian Hall were busy on the British Kangtega Expedition. All five climbers arranged to meet up at Everest Base Camp around October 10 to 15