

through Chile and into this vast ocean. To the north and south the Andes stretched forever. In the east, Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre dominated the skyline. Sulphur fumes made our stay inhospitable. More vents poured out smoke and the mountain was coming to life. Cerro Lautaro was annoyed with these tiny figures that had dared to penetrate its mantle of ice and fire. Two days later we skied across to Cerro Mimosa, which had sulphur fumes pouring out near the top. The next day we started the return journey south toward the Viedma Glacier and eventually Lago Viedma. Knowing about the notorious Patagonian wind, we had a "reserve" parachute to pull the sledges back across the icecap. Although the winds were in fact quite gentle, they pulled the two sledges and the climbers along at a steady 15 knots for 40 miles before the wind dropped in the afternoon. By then we were at the back of Cerro Torre.

LEO DICKINSON, *Alpine Climbing Group*

Paine Towers, East Face of the Central Tower. A South African expedition was in the field from November 1973 to January 1974. Paul Fatti, leader, Roger Fuggle, Michael Scott, Merv Prior, Richard Smithers and the American Arthur McGeer climbed the east face of the Central Tower via the huge dihedral that runs up the right side of the face, which is 4500 feet high.

GREGORY MOSELEY, *South African Alpine Club*

Patagonia, An Early Assessment of the 1974 Season. (This letter was written on February 8, 1974. Since no detailed information is available as we go to press, we have included this incomplete report.—*Editor*.) Yesterday Carlos Comesaña arrived from the south with extraordinary news: the Italians have climbed Cerro Torre from the west. Comesaña got the news from Don Whillans, whose Anglo-American group is attempting Torre Egger, the second highest tower of the same massif. The Italians are from Lecco and are led by Casimiro Ferrari. They further number eleven (Pierlorenzo Acquistapace, Gigi Alippi, Mario Conti, Daniele Chiappa, Giuseppe Lafranconi, Ernesto Panzeri, Claudio Corti, Dr. Sandro Liati, Giuseppe Negri, Angelo Zoia and Mimmo Lanzetta). They made the ascent* January 13. No other expeditions seem to have

* Ferrari, Chiappa, Conti and Negri reached the top. From the "cap", high point in 1970 and a prominent point separated from the main tower, they descended, slabbled around the principal pyramid and climbed up a rock arête and at times an ice couloir. Thus they reached a 150-foot ice and snow wall, above which is the cauliflower-like first balcony. Vertical and overhanging ice steps led diagonally upwards until they reached the summit point above the great roof on the south. (A later communication from Sr. Arko.)