

a reply to buxton

In the last issue of the *Journal*, Bill Buxton wrote a detailed review of Richard Sale's book, *On Top of the World*, chronicling the 1957 first ascent of Broad Peak. Buxton's review, which went well beyond Sale's book in its critical assessment of Kurt Diemberger's role on the expedition, encouraged the following letter from Diemberger.

To be fair to Diemberger, Buxton and the *CAJ*, some questions that Diemberger addresses in his letter need to be clarified.

Diemberger mentions that the *CAJ* published "the next-to-last" version of Buxton's review and the review did not include a full length bibliography.

Both these points are true, but both also have pragmatic explanations. Following correspondence with Diemberger, Buxton submitted revisions well after the review had been laid out, and some of the micro-changes were not caught in the printed version.

The decision to not include Buxton's extensive bibliography was even more pragmatic: doing so would have added another three pages to a piece which was by far the longest entry that year.

I apologize if my editorial decisions aggravated the disputes between the parties, but the finer points – and the gravity – of their disagreements were not as clear to an outsider as they are to either Diemberger or Buxton.

As for not contacting Mr. Diemberger, this was a book review, not an investigative piece, and I felt Mr. Buxton was entitled to his opinion, just as I feel Mr. Diemberger is entitled to the following reply without having it "approved" by Buxton:

Thank you for your letter of June 16, 2006, and for sending me the latest *Canadian Alpine Journal*, which arrived by surface only a few days ago. As it was promised to us by Bill Buxton, whose essay on the Broad Peak expedition 1957 (and review of Richard Sale's book) caused a lot of work to a number of people, including myself and Helge Bieber (the chairman of my Austrian Alpine Club's OAV-Sektion Reichenstein), we had expected to receive it directly from him earlier, already by the end of June.

Whilst I want to thank you again for your kind idea I cannot help to focus your

attention to the fact, that the essay which appeared in your centennial edition is only the last-but-one version of Buxton's work... He himself published a different final version (as well as this one) on his website, telling us the first one did not make it into print. Having agreed after a long "tug of war" (roughly two months before the journal's appearance) to eliminate one of the worst flaws in this essay, namely that I, Kurt Diemberger, broke a contract regarding Sale's book *On top of the World* (which I did not) finding now the wrong version printed in your journal, has taken aback also John Cleare, whom I rang today! Because according to John Cleare I did the right thing and there was no contract, but simply an offer! I am surprised that your editor, realizing the delicate matter, did not find it necessary to contact me...

There are other flaws, but Buxton ignored objections which did not fit into his frame and the essay might have grown beyond measure. Matters for the future... At any rate your *Alpine Journal* editors are very welcome to compare reports about things that happened 1957 with the text of chapters of my Omnibus at the Whyte Museum's library and no less with the new 2005 edition of Hermann Buhl's book, now including his diaries even who does not speak German, can realize at a glance, that in spite of assertions at the Banff presentation of Sale's book, nobody did steal them.

Regarding once more the last-but-one version of the said "review" in your journal, the Wintersteller website is not the "official" one of our expedition – and Buxton did justly correct that! (Mrs. Eugenie Buhl's and my own opinions are not within this website). And a last remark concerning the above "review": if one knows the various quoted books already, one is fine, but there is no complete bibliography and thus nobody is given the chance to compare your Toronto patron's essay with the thoughtful and balanced essay about "The Revision of History" by Samantha Sacks, Toronto.

Sincerely, with best wishes, Kurt Diemberger

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AUTHOR SCANU IS WELL-TRAVELLED IN recent years in the Central Andes and Puna of Argentina; just go to the last half-dozen *American Alpine Journals* to read