

# A big leaning wall—Cima Ovest in photos

Doug Scott

As we started on the Rudolf-Baur route, two Yugoslavians were tackling the most serious pitch of the Swiss-Italian 1959 route, 200 ft to our left [43]. I knew exactly how I would feel in that situation, with the number of pegs diminishing as the second moves up . . .

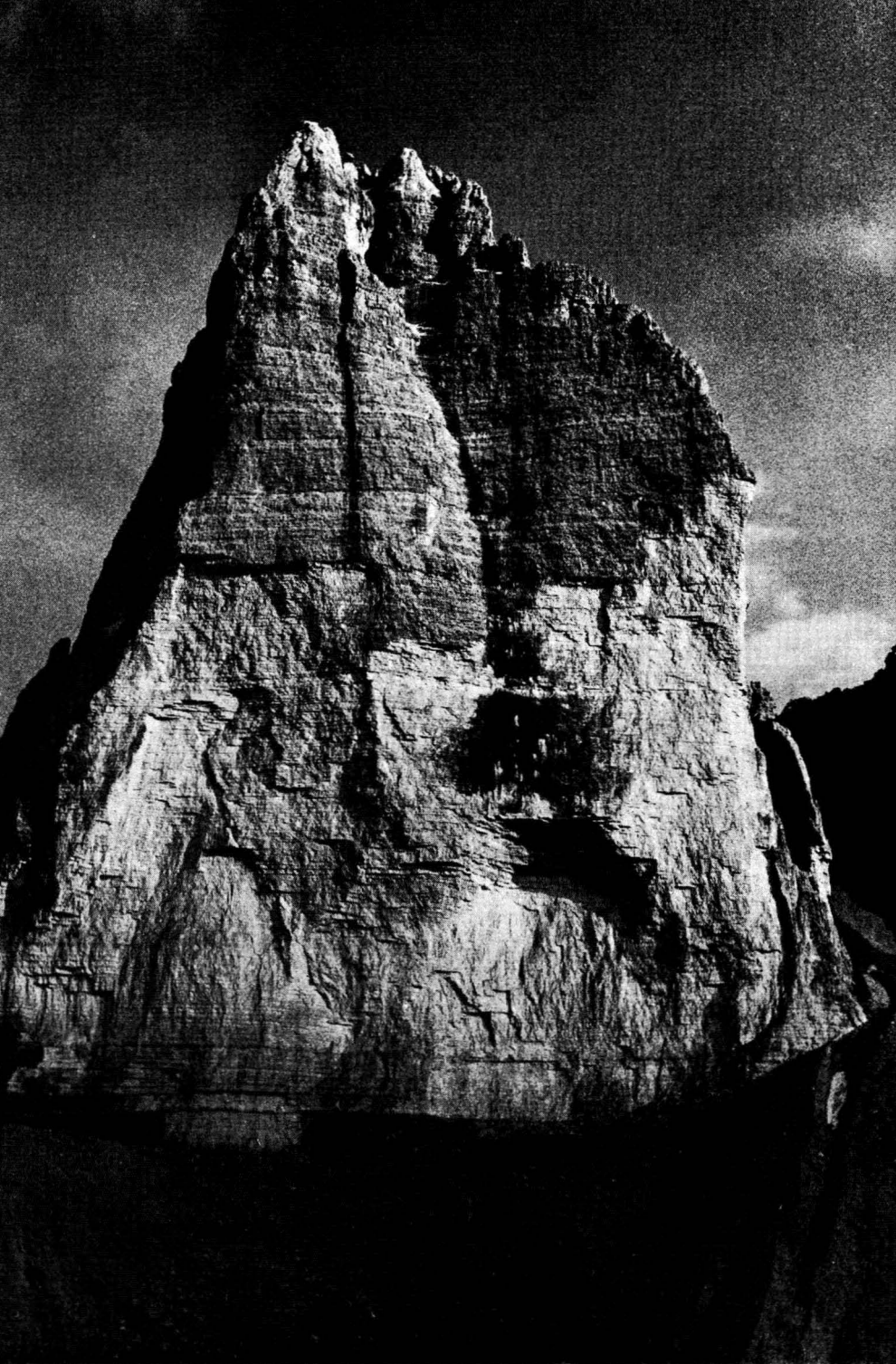
Our own problems were no less, however, on this the most committing of the five extremely difficult climbs on the overhanging lower half of this North wall. It was important to stay cool as security diminished, and adjust to the overhanging wall as we had earlier to the vertical crags back home. When we had rationalised our situation we could take time off to admire the great North wall with its line of pegs leading up sinuous cracks, across blank spaces, and round overhangs rearing out above. We felt ourselves against a vast complex of rock architecture, competing for a place in space above and beyond.

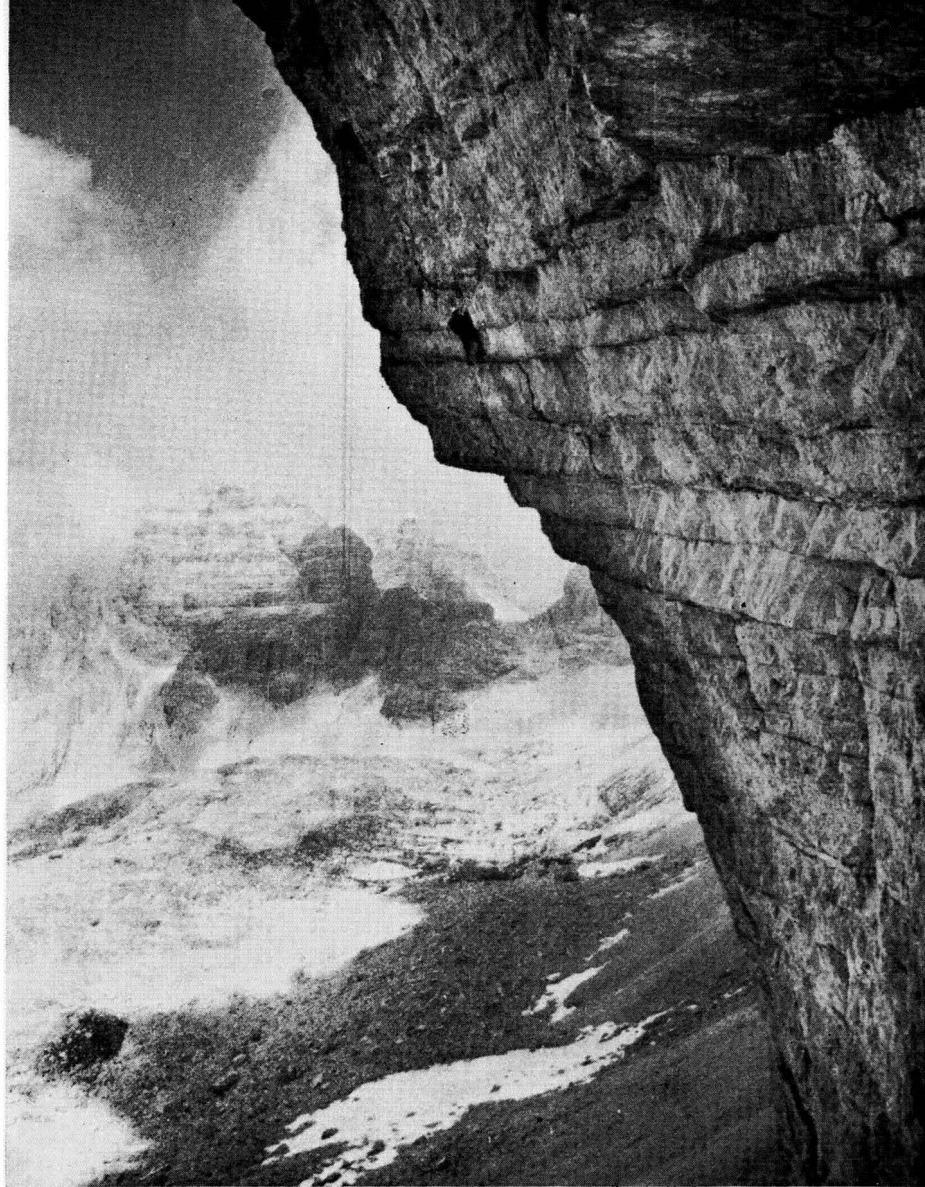
After about 600 ft we reached the crux—the huge dominating roof [44]. The second arrives, confident, to take over the stance, but wave after wave of fearful thoughts crowd into his mind as he contemplates the possibility of swinging away into space off the roof. Moreover, he has the time to appreciate the exposure [46].

Nervous tension mounts and the leader stitches himself on wrong; the rope jams and the second is accused of sleeping.

But a few sane words from the stance and the leader sorts himself out, keeping the ropes running free, taking the strain off his arms and back with cow's tails from his chest and waist; now puts in the gear with an economy of effort and thinking, not fumbling with clips and slings. Moving off with a certain rhythm, the leader finds his fingers are no longer knotting up with cramp, and retreat (if it were possible) is rejected and strangulation (quite possible!) avoided.

There are no valley noises heard high up on the Cima Ovest; there is no wind roaring across the face; but there are noises—the inner sounds of throbbing blood vessels and hard breathing. It emphasises the climber's solitude [45]. He really is alone leading on a roof like this. His mind works overtime wrestling with the next series of moves, the eye is drawn inexorably to each bolt, which is examined, accepted and used; clips, tapes, ladders, cow's tails and rope follow one another with monotonous regularity across the inverted horizontal. His mind is cocooned against all other thoughts; whilst he has the protecting company of the rope it is far away from his mind. It is then a tussle between the climber and the rock above and beyond.





43 *A crux pitch on the Swiss-Italian 1959 route from 200 ft up on the Rudolf-Baur route, to its right. This and next photo: Doug Scott*

42 *The North face of the Cima Ovest di Lavaredo* The Rudolf-Baur route takes direct the huge overhang right of centre in the lower half of the face (directly above the arrow) and then goes up the black wall above to reach the Kasperek Ledge and the classic route. Photo: Leo Dickinson



44 *Scott crossing the 120 ft roof, with Upton belayed on the wall* Photo: Ted Wells





45 *'The leader really is alone leading on a roof like this ...'* Doug Scott moves out under the first part of the 120 ft overhang. 135 ft of climbing lead to a belay in étriers on the lip. Photo: Jeff Upton

46 *The second 'has the time to be able to appreciate the exposure ...'* Jeff Upton at the stance below the roof. Photo: Doug Scott



His mind has turned inwards; he gives himself completely; he needs only himself at the critical time of sorting out the moves ahead, and it is for these reasons that hard serious climbs have so much appeal.

Meanwhile, his own attempt at the roof looms large in the second's mind and it is with relief that he leaves the cramped stance to become just as absorbed with the roof as his leader had been.

**SUMMARY** Dolomites, Cima Ovest di Lavaredo, Rudolf-Baur route. First British ascent. 26 July 1969. D. Scott, J. Upton, T. Wells. ED. Fifteen hours to Kasperek Ledge. Technical note p 146.

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Scott had two cameras—one colour, the other black and white—which were passed from the roof to Upton and then down to Wells. Discussion of *f* stops, shutter speeds and depth of field followed, as the latter had never handled a camera before!