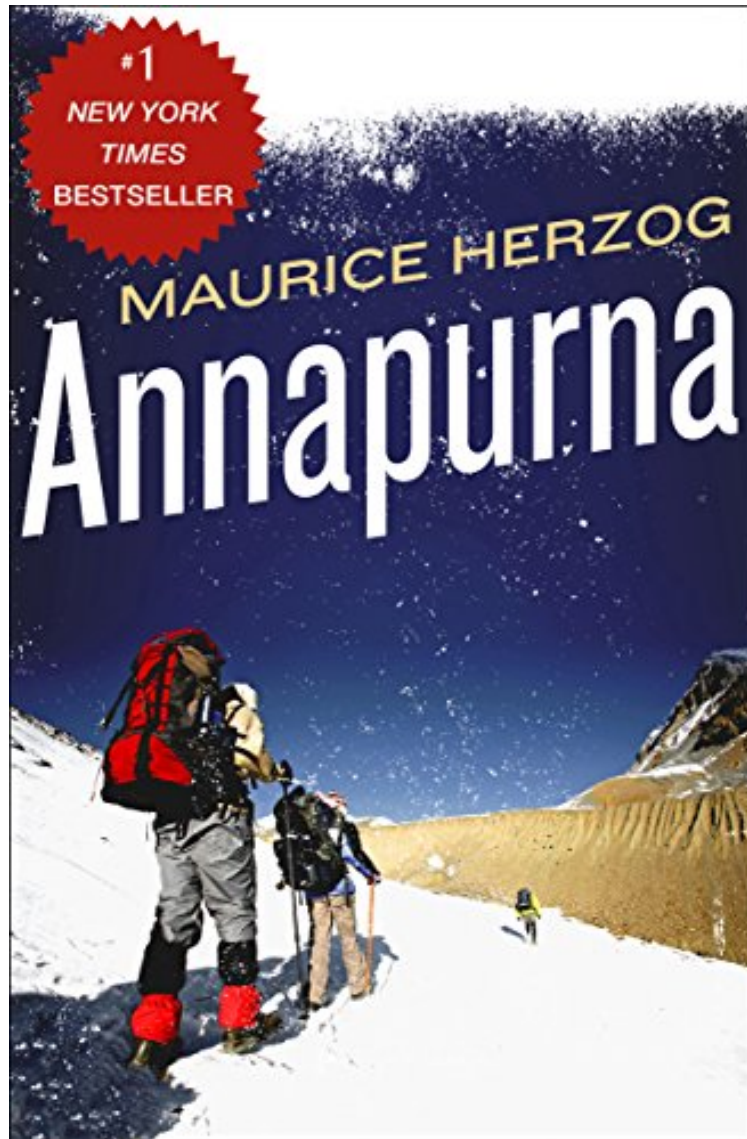


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Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8,000-Meter Peak (English Edition)

Von Maurice Herzog

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Von Maurice Herzog : Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8,000-Meter Peak (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8,000-Meter Peak (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
EXTREME ADVENTURE FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE...Von lawyerauThis book is a romanticized, sanitized

account of the 1950 French expedition to the Himalayas by its so called leader, Maurice Herzog. It is a book that is reflective of the times in which it was written. Still, it should be a must read for anyone who is interested in high altitude climbing. I first read this book in the early 1960s as a young teenager. I recall being enthralled by it and amazed at the hardships the climbers endured to bring glory to France. In reading it again as an adult, I find myself still enthralled, but more attuned to the fact that it is written in a somewhat self-serving style. The book itself chronicles the attempt by the French to climb an 8,000 meter peak in the Himalayas. They had two alternatives: Dhaulagiri and Annapurna. In those days, the Himalayas were largely uncharted and any topographical maps that existed at the time proved to be largely incorrect. So, the French expedition spent a large portion of their time in reconnaissance. Not only were they there to climb the mountain, they had to find a way to get to it and then map out a route on the unknown terrain to the summit. Ultimately, they chose to climb Annapurna. In reading this book, one must remember that the climb took place without the sophisticated equipment or protective clothing available today. This was before gortex and freeze-dried foods. This climb was made before Nepal or climbing the Himalayas became a major tourist attraction. The conditions for travellers were extremely primitive and difficult under the best of circumstances. When the expedition finally finds a route to Annapurna, the reader almost feels like cheering for them. When they start to climb, one senses that, in comparison to latter day expeditions, they are not so well equipped or savvy about the dangers one can encounter during a high altitude climb or the risks in doing it without supplemental oxygen, as they did. Then one realizes that they were pioneers. They were paving the way for others. The climb to the summit by Maurice Herzog and his partner, Louis Lachenal, is interesting, but it is their harrowing descent and return to civilization which is riveting. The two summiteers begin their descent but run into difficulties. They are fortunate to encounter two of their fellow climbers, Lionel Terray and Gaston Rebuffat, who are contemplating their own summit assault but, instead, choose to aid their comrades in the descent, foregoing their own quest for the summit. The travails which the climbers encounter on the descent would have finished off less hardy souls. Maurice Herzog loses his gloves during the descent and has no spare pair. One of them falls into a crevasse which, believe it or not, turns out to be a good thing. They are caught in an avalanche. They get lost in a storm. They become frostbitten and two of them, are, ultimately, forced to endure amputations. The medical treatment they received by the expedition doctor is unbelievable and almost primitive. Employing treatments for frostbite that have since fallen onto disrepute (excruciatingly painful arterial injections, for example), the doctor is almost frightening, at times. The reader cannot help but feel pity for the suffering the injured climbers endured: maggot ridden flesh, amputations without anaesthesia, and lack of proper medical care for a protracted period of time. The heroics of some of the Sherpas, as on most expeditions, go largely unsung. One must, however, pause to reflect on the fact that as this all took place before airlifts were available, the injured climbers had to be carried. Their exodus back to the frontier took about five weeks. Who carried them down the mountain, over the moraines, on makeshift bridges over flooded, raging rivers, through dense jungle? Who else but the Sherpas. What thanks did they get? None, as usual. Anyway, when the expedition finally return to France, Maurice Herzog is lauded as a national hero by the French. He becomes the media darling. The other three climbers, as are the rest of those on the expedition, are largely ignored and forgotten. Therein lies the tale. If you want to know how this polarization came about, I highly recommend that you also read 'True Summit' by David Roberts. It gives you the inside scoop about the expedition and how things really were. Notwithstanding its idealization, romanticism, and everything is hunky-dory routine, Herzog's book is still a must read for all climbing enthusiasts.

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2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Lachenal, Terray, Rebuffat -- the Real Heroes of Annapurna Von Ein Kunde I wish I could give this book negative stars! Herzog's self-serving account of the Annapurna expedition has dominated a generation of climbing lore but it does not tell the real story. If you are considering reading this book, please find and read the accounts of the other Annapurna expedition members: legendary mountain guides Lionel Terray and Gaston Rebuffat and especially Louis Lachenal, "the panther of the snows," who was recognized (despite being crippled on Annapurna at only 28) as the most brilliant mountaineer of his generation. Herzog was the least technically able member of the two lead ropes on Annapurna and the only amateur, but he was selected as the expedition leader by the organizers (i.e., financial backers). Before they left France, Herzog made the other climbers sign an oath of silence that they would not speak or write about Annapurna for five years after their return. The result: Herzog's lionization as the "Great White Chief" of the expedition--and, worst of all, Herzog's dastardly attempts to put down and silence Lachenal, who sacrificed his own feet to get Herzog to the summit and bring him off the mountain alive. Herzog's account of the expedition in Annapurna played to the French public's need for heroes in the post-war era and established Herzog as a national idol (Rebuffat would later write disgustedly about Herzog's "miserable pedestal"). But Herzog told a nationalistic fairy tale that ignored the serious conflicts among the team members and the fact that (Rebuffat again): "Lachenal was the guide [on Annapurna], and Herzog the client." When Lachenal died in 1955, only months before the end of Herzog's gag order, he was preparing to publish his own journals of the expedition ("Carnets du Vertige"). Herzog got control of the manuscript after Lachenal's death (another ugly story) and published a heavily edited posthumous version omitting all the parts that conflicted with Herzog's original account. Now, Lachenal's unedited journals have finally been published--and they are shaking up the climbing world by revealing the not-so-inspiring story of Annapurna that the other team members hinted at all along. Lachenal's account makes clear that Herzog was delirious and totally disoriented long before they summited. It also describes Herzog's insane obsession with taking photos on the summit (all of Herzog naturally!) despite Lachenal's warnings that they were getting more and more frostbitten, a storm was coming, and every second made it less likely they would get down alive. Most poignantly, Lachenal explains that he knew on the way up neither he nor Herzog were in fit shape to continue, but that Herzog refused to turn back. Lachenal went on to the summit, "though I knew it would cost me," because he also knew Herzog could never get down alive without him -- a pure and total sacrifice which had nothing to do with ambition and self-aggrandisement but was, in Lachenal's own words, "an affair of the rope." Everyone who wants to know the real story of Annapurna should read Lachenal's journals -- and also Lionel Terray's wonderful book "Conquistadors of the Useless." Terray, who went on to conquer Makalu, the Fitzroy and other great peaks, gives perhaps the most knowledgeable and objective account of the Annapurna expedition. He also tells the unforgettable story of the Lachenal-Terray rope -- the most famous climbing team of their generation -- from their brilliant ascents in the Alps, to the nightmarish retreat from Annapurna (where Terray gave up his own boots in a desperate attempt to save Lachenal's feet from amputation), to the travesty of their "victorious" return to France with Terray carrying the mutilated Lachenal in his arms. Terray's heartbreaking homage to Lachenal--"the eagle whose wings were clipped on Annapurna"--gives a true picture of what the "friendship of the rope" is all about, from a legendary mountaineer who was ready to give his life for it every time he roped up. So read them all -- Terray, Lachenal, Rebuffat, Herzog. Then

make up your mind who YOU believe -- and who the real heroes of Annapurna were.

Kurzbeschreibung One of Sports Illustrated's Top 100 Sports Books of All Time: A gripping firsthand account of one of the most daring climbing expeditions in history. Annapurna I is the name given to the 8,100-meter mountain that ranks among the most forbidding in the Himalayan chain. Dangerous not just for its extreme height but for a long and treacherous approach, its summit proved unreachable until 1950, when a group of French mountaineers made a mad dash for its peak. They became the first men to accomplish the feat, doing so without oxygen tanks or any of the modern equipment that contemporary climbers use. The adventure nearly cost them their lives. Maurice Herzog dictated this firsthand account of the remarkable trek from a hospital bed as he recovered from injuries sustained during the climb. An instant bestseller, it remains one of the most famous mountaineering books of all time, and an enduring testament to the power of the human spirit.