

## EUROPE

*Rassemblement International, Chamonix.* The *Fédération Française de la Montagne*, governing body for the official aspects of mountaineering in France, organized for this past summer, an international meeting of mountaineers. The most prominent climbing organizations in each of several countries was asked to send two mountaineers to attend the meeting. This *Rassemblement International* was held in Chamonix from July 15 to August 1. The climbers who attended were given rooms at the Ecole Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme and fed there on the days they were not in the mountains. The American Alpine Club was represented by David Sowles and Rowland Tabor. There were also two climbers from England, Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, Japan, Austria, West Germany, The Netherlands, and three from Spain. The French provided several representatives, whose position was one of advice and assistance as well as camaraderie. The purpose behind the *Rassemblement* seems to have been simply to foster good will among mountaineers, and, hopefully, to try to stimulate similar further meetings to be held each year in a different country. The idea is a fine one, though the difficulties involved in arranging a like activity in the U.S.A. seem insurmountable.

Though overall supervision of the *Rassemblement* was the responsibility of Jean Franco, Secretary of the FFM and Directeur of the Ecole Nationale, direct control was handled by André Contamine, an instructor at the Ecole. Contamine is probably very little known in the United States, though at one time he was as fine a guide and mountaineer as either Rébuffat or Lachenal. M. Contamine would schedule a discussion of objectives. When the various groups had indicated the climbs they wanted to do, he would coordinate these, suggest possible ascents to those who were undecided and finally arrange food and sufficient space at the appropriate huts. The food to be carried up to the huts, as well as the tickets for the *télépherique* or the cog railway, were distributed just before departure. There was little for the climbers to do but climb. On the whole the group was a young one. The average age was probably in the middle twenties. The finest climb was certainly the Grandes Jorasses by the north spur of the Pointe Walker, done by the Poles with one bivouac. The representatives of the A.A.C. contented themselves with the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon, a traverse of the Aiguilles Mummery and Ravenel, l'Evêque, the north ridge-northeast face of the Aiguille de Géant, and the Frontier Ridge of Mount Blanc. Because of the various language barriers, there was not quite as much mixing of nationalities as there might have been. But notwithstanding these barriers,

polyglot parties went out, friends were made, invitations to climb in various countries were given and accepted, and the FFM had real cause to be proud of their *Rassemblement*.

DAVID A. SOWLES

## ASIA

### *Nepal*

*Mukut Himal and Kanjiroba Himal.* The 1959 American Himalayan Expedition returned to Kathmandu on November 30, after a successful trip of two-and-a-half months into the area north and west of Dhaulagiri, in central Western Nepal. The group consisted of four American climbers, John Humphreys, Caspar Cronk, Dr. Fred Dunn and John Noxon; four Sherpas (under Sirdar Ang Dawa); and a Nepali liaison officer, Manik Tuladhar.

The party met its group of Sherpas at the Nautanwa railhead on the Indian border and walked for three weeks across Nepal to reach its area of operations, using successively porters, mules and yaks for transport. The route mainly followed the course of the Kali Gandaki river, which cuts through the main range between Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, until it branched off to the west about 15 miles south of the Tibetan border. We crossed three high passes (the highest, 18,600 feet) with a yak train and set up base of operations in the heart of the Mukut Himal, just north of Dhaulagiri II, on October 14. After the end of the heavy monsoon storms on October 7, the weather was with very few exceptions uniformly clear; a total of about 70 hours of precipitation were recorded during the next 63 days.

From this first Base Camp, the party made a concerted effort to climb the highest Mukut Himal peak, about 21,900 feet in height, in the process climbing a subsidiary peak of about 20,300 feet. The final attempt on the higher summit was made by Dunn, Noxon and Cronk, while I was recovering below from a short bout with pneumonia. They were not successful because of cornices encountered several hundred feet below the top in the midst of a snowstorm. Some expedition scientific work was also begun while in this area, in the form of preliminary theodolite triangulation, a geological collection and a small high-altitude botanical collection.

Another week of traveling to the west and north up the Barbung Khola valley brought us below a 17,400-foot pass leading west into the Kanjiroba Himal, an area as yet unvisited by mountaineers. Slowness and expense of transport and uncertainty about the onset of winter storms contributed to

the decision to stop and set up a second Base Camp near this pass, rather than push further into the new country. From here four nearby peaks were climbed, none over 19,000 feet (despite the map) and none requiring the use of a rope. Survey stations were set up on two of these summits, as well as on the pass, and the Kern DKM1 theodolite was put to good use. Excellent views of all peaks of the Dhaulagiri Himal provided the control for this work.

The return journey began on November 8, with the wind and cold, even at the 18,000-foot level, beginning to be distinctly unpleasant despite completely clear skies. The party returned by a different pass system, well known to the yak drivers, but not hinted at by either the best map currently available or the few existing reports of travel in this region. In general it was found that the Survey of India map is (not surprisingly) highly inaccurate in detail in the high mountain areas, although the large valleys and major trade routes are correctly shown. With the data obtained on this expedition it should be possible to construct a much improved map of about 200 square miles of this country, together with some general conclusions concerning its geological background.

(A complete report, including a map and a summary of the results of all scientific work done, will be published in the next issue of the *A.A.J.*)

JOHN S. HUMPHREYS

*Preliminary Scientific Report of the 1959 American Himalayan Expedition.* The scientific aims of the party included surveying of the inaccurately mapped area of central Nepal that was visited and reconnaissance geology and glaciology. Since the expedition was almost continually moving, it was possible to make only very brief investigations in the areas visited.

The most important work, from a mountaineer's point of view, was the surveying. Using a Kern DKM-1, 10-second theodolite, the party triangulated the locations of the major peaks in the region north of Dhaulagiri, between the Kali Gandaki and the Kanjiroba Himal. Several short baselines were measured, and elevations will be calculated using Dhaulagiri I and II as a base. Since these peaks have been surveyed from the south by the Survey of India, they will also be used to connect the expedition's map with the Survey of India maps. Observations of the sun were made to determine proper latitude and longitude. Many black and white photographs were taken to help fill in some of the topographic detail. The expedition map will, it is hoped, be compiled during the coming year.

The most important geologic finds were collections of fossils from several new localities. Rough sketches of the geologic structure were also

made. It will be at least a year before the study of the geologic data is completed, including the identification and dating of the fossils collected.

Many features related to the glacial history of the area were recorded, including a study of a group of recessional moraines formed by one of the smaller glaciers. Some of the planned glaciology studies had to be omitted because of bad weather at the only time when the party was high enough to make the proposed temperature and accumulation studies.

The scientific work of the expedition was greatly aided by a grant from the Gilkie Fund of the American Alpine Club.

CASPAR CRONK

*Cho Oyu.* The International Women's Expedition, which was attempting the third ascent of Cho Oyu (26,867 feet), met with tragedy, resulting in the death of the Belgian, Claudine van der Stratten, of two Sherpas and of the leader Claude Kogan, the petite French climber who held the women's world altitude record and made numerous first ascents in the Himalaya, Andes, and elsewhere. The group reached Base Camp (18,350 feet) on September 14 and despite the unsettled weather following the monsoon, in the next two weeks set up Camp I (19,700 feet), Camp II (21,000 feet), an intermediate camp (21,650 feet) and Camp III (22,300 feet). On October 1, Claude Kogan, Claudine van der Stratten and the Sherpa Ang Norbu were established at Camp IV (23,300 feet). The weather turned both bad and warm. The next day, while the lower camps were being evacuated, the Sherpa Sirdar Wongdi and Chhowang tried to climb to the high camp but were buried by an avalanche a little above Camp III. After a two hour struggle Wongdi freed himself but could not rescue his companion. Although the weather began to clear on the 4th, it was not until October 11 that Dorothy Gravina, English, and Jeanne Franco, French, could reach the site of Camp IV. They had already days before seen through field glasses that the camp had been swept by an avalanche. On the spot they could find no traces of their companions. The other members of the party included Margaret Darvall and Eileen Healey, English; Micheline Rambaud and Colette LeBret, French; Loulou Boulaz, Swiss and Nima and Pem-Pem, Tenzing's daughters and his niece Dhoma.

*Jannu.* A strong French party, led by Jean Franco and composed of Lionel Terray, Jean Bouvier, Pierre Leroux, Maurice Lenoir, Robert Paragot, Guido Magnone, René Desmaison, P. Dreux, J.-M. Freulon and Dr. J. Lartzien, failed to climb Jannu (25,294 feet), which straddles the border of Sikkim and Nepal. They ascended the Tamar valley to the Yamatari

Glacier, intending to try the route up the "Pear" ridge reconnoitered by the 1957 French expedition. After this whole route was swept by a huge avalanche in mid-April just after their arrival, they abandoned it in favor of a much longer one along a ridge south of Jannu. From Base Camp, which they had established on April 4 at 14,600 feet, they set up Camp I at 15,750 feet and continued up an easy glacier to Camp II at 17,700 feet. A rock gully, snow ridge, glacier and a mixed rock and snow slope, where 650 feet of rope were fixed, led to Camp III (19,000 feet). The route became extremely difficult above there, and over a mile of rope was fixed. Some ice couloirs were of more than 60°. Camp IV (21,000 feet) lay below the "Buffer Head" (Tête du Butoir) and the "Lacework Ridge" (l'Arête de la Dentelle), an extraordinarily difficult ice ridge. They established Camp V (22,650 feet) on the plateau of the Throne on May 9. The next day Terray, Bouvier, Desmaison and Leroux climbed a 1000-foot ice slope and nearly vertical rocks above it to reach the south ridge at 24,000 feet, but the extremely difficult ascent took them all day. On May 11 Franco, Magnone, Paragot, Lenoir and the Sherpa Wongdi climbed this same slope. The latter two returned below but the first three established Camp VI there. That night Franco discovered that he was snowblind, a condition that persisted even during their descent two days latter. Magnone and Paragot climbed upwards all day from Camp VI but ascended only about 250 feet. No further attempts were made, the climb being judged too risky. The weather had been generally unfavorable throughout.

*Dhaulagiri.* Under the leadership of Fritz Moravec, an Austrian expedition did not succeed in climbing Dhaulagiri (26,795 feet), the highest yet unascended mountain in the world. The expedition reconnoitered for the first time the northeast ridge above the northeast col, a route which they feel is much safer than the much tried north face-west ridge route. The climbing difficulties are on ice rather than on rock and the upper portion of the mountain is obviously easier. From Base Camp (14,750 feet) on the Mayangdi Kholā Glacier they bypassed an icefall to pitch Camp I (17,000 feet) half way up to the northeast col and Camp II (18,700 feet) on it. On April 21 they established Camp III (20,175 feet) and three days later Camp IV (21,325 feet) on the ridge. On April 29, while strolling near Camp II, Heinrich Roiss fell into a crevasse and died before he could be extricated. Despite the accident and although the weather was deteriorating, they continued upwards, but it was only on May 22 that they established Camp V (23,000 feet). On May 25 Karl Prein and Pasang Dawa Lama made a summit attempt from Camp VI (24,250 feet), but wind and

weather prevented their climbing higher than 25,250 feet. Attempts on the two following days were equally unsuccessful. Other members of the party were Erich Vanis, Hans Retay, Othmar Kucera, Dr. Wilfred Wehle and Stefan Pauer.

*Various Himalayan Climbs.* Dr. Herbert Tichy spent over half a year in 1959 in the Himalaya, where he climbed no less than seven unnamed peaks that averaged 23,000 feet. He visited the Japanese in their camp in the Langtang Himal in Nepal. He was first in Pakistan, in Dir, Chitral and Swat, and then in India and Nepal. No real details are yet available.

*Ama Dablam.* Tragedy struck the British party led by J. H. Emlyn Jones just as it seemed as if they would successfully make the first ascent of incredibly difficult Ama Dablam (22,500 feet). The group had climbed the hardest part of the northeast ridge, largely through the efforts of Michael J. Harris and George J. Fraser. On May 21 this pair left their high camp at about 21,000 feet, and while the others watched, climbed a large ice tower across which they had already cut steps the day before. They disappeared from view towards the easier summit slopes never to be seen again. Other members of the party were Mrs. Nea Morin, F. S. Jackson and E. A. Wrangham.

*Slick Yeti Expedition.* Another expedition sponsored by Tom Slick and led by Peter Byrne spent several months in Nepal fruitlessly searching for Yeti.

### **India**

*Banderpunch I (Black Peak), Garhwal.* On June 7 three members of the Indian Army Regiment of Artillery's team and one Sherpa stood on the summit of Banderpunch I (20,956 feet), commonly called the Black Peak. (First ascent, June 7, 1955 by J. T. M. Gibson and two Sherpas—*Editor.*) We were very fortunate with the weather, and the *Mountain Gods* were so kind that the feat was repeated again on June 8 by three other members and one Sherpa. Only one of us failed to reach the summit because of high altitude. The party consisted of Captains M. S. Joshi, K. N. Thadani and T. Ao, of Lieutenants Y. K. Yadav, O. P. Manchanda and B. L. Bhatt and of me. I selected two Sherpas, Thendup and Phurba Lobsang, both highly proficient and skilled technically besides being excellent companions on the mountain. Last year they had accompanied me to Cho Oyu. On June 3 we left Base Camp at 12,000 feet above the Tons River for Camp I

(16,500 feet), which had been stocked with essential supplies for 12 days. First we traversed the steep hillside, occasionally crossing snow and ice in the gullies. Then we trudged along the lateral moraine until we reached our camp on the right bank of the Banderpunch Glacier, just short of the snowline. According to plan, Party B set out early to establish Camp II just below the final summit ridge. They returned in the evening worn-out and with altitude headaches but optimistic about being able to make the climb from that camp to the summit. On the other hand, I knew by experience that heights and distances are very often misjudged in the Himalayas. June 3 dawned fine and Party A moved up. Five hours of grueling hard work, traversing up a very steep slope cut by snow and ice gulleys and then through soft snow and occasional patches of hard ice brought us to Camp II. I was not happy about its location as from this very site I had in 1955 attempted the mountain but had failed, completely worn-out by bad snow conditions 600 feet short of the summit. We therefore shouldered as much as 60 pounds each. After an hour and a half's slow and careful climb along the ridge, which involved some step-cutting, we established Camp II at 19,000 feet, just below the summit ridge and 2000 feet below the top. June 7 dawned clear and fine. At 4 A.M. the stove was lit and an odd, revolting mixture of ovaltine and tsampa was swallowed. We crumpled and left Camp II at 5:30, roped in two pairs and wearing all available clothing. After two hours of steady, rhythmic climbing, we were on the final exposed and windy ridge. Blowing snow lashed us. We ascended one false summit after another, hoping that the next one would be the last. By now we were above the surrounding peaks. After a steep ascent we suddenly reached the summit, knife-edged and with a corniced face. On both days the Sherpas reached the actual summit first on my instructions to give credit to the work done by the Sherpas in the Himalayas. They serve well and faithfully. Offerings of food were made to the *Mountain Gods*, an old mountain custom. I took two quick photographs of the party and the Regiment of Artillery flag in colour and black and white. We spent 15 minutes on the summit. A rapid descent was made to get away from the gathering mountain fury indicated by ominous clouds. Care was taken at steep ice traverses and crevasses. On arrival at Camp II we were greeted, hugged and congratulated by Party B. We gulped mugs of lime juice and chocolate, rested and departed at a painfully slow pace for Camp I. Next day I could observe from Camp I four black figures on the final ridge, making slow but good progress. The first pair got to the summit at 10:30 A.M. and the second, two hours later.

CAPTAIN JAGJIT SINGH, *Indian Army, Himalayan Club*

*Second Ascent of Nanda Kot.* An all-Naval expedition, consisting of Instr. Lt. M. S. Kohli, leader, Surgeon Lt. Y. C. Sharma, A. S. Pabreja, K. P. Sharma, and D. B. Ambastha, left Delhi on April 27. Sirdar Ang Tsering and Da Temba accompanied the party as high-altitude Sherpas. Passing through Tanakpur, Pithoragarh, Askote, Baram, Seraghat, Mansyari and Martoli, we established Base Camp at Narspanpati on May 7 at 13,500 feet. Following a new route through the junction of the Lwanl and Kuchela Glaciers, we established Advanced Base Camp (15,500 feet) on May 10 and Camp I (17,600 feet) on May 13. The camp site was safe, but the route to it passed through a difficult icefall and knee-deep soft snow. The next seven days it snowed and blew. Camp II was established on May 19 at 18,700 feet. The route from Camp II to Camp III was most difficult, a 100-foot ice wall and a steep gully full of soft snow being the chief obstacles. After four days of hard work in which we fixed 600 feet of rope, the party established Camp III (20,000 feet). An attempt to climb to the summit was made on May 24, but the party withdrew because of a strong blizzard. The next day, May 25, the weather was fine. K. P. Sharma and I left camp at 5 A.M. and reached the summit of the dome (21,900 feet) at 10 A.M. From there the route passed along a very steep ridge which fell sheer to the snout of the Nanda Kot Glacier, 5000 feet below. After three hours of strenuous and dangerous climbing, we set foot on the corniced summit of Nanda Kot (22,510 feet) at 2:20 P.M.

M. S. KOHLI, *Instr. Lt., Indian Navy*

### **Pakistan**

*Minapin.* The German Karakoram Expedition 1959, composed of Hans Jochen Schneider, leader, Gerhard Klammert, Hans Baumert, Rudolf Bardolej, Dr. Hermann Berger, Fritz Lobbichler, Erwin Stocker, Dr. Gottfried Neureuther and Willi Bogner, had hoped to carry out an extensive glaciological-geophysical program in the Batura region. When permission was refused, they turned their efforts south of the Hunza valley into the Rakaposhi-Minapin area. On June 9 Erwin Stocker and a porter reached an 18,000-foot col north of Minapin (23,861 feet), where a British party had failed in 1958 (*A.A.J.*, 11:2, p. 331). A week's bad weather drove them back. On June 22 Bardolej and the porter, Kabul climbed from Camp III placed 1000 feet above the col. Wind and the porter's physical condition forced them back after they had apparently surmounted the climbing difficulties from a point less than 1000 feet from the summit. (This peak is sometimes called "Diran.") Meanwhile the scientists explored neighboring regions. In early August the expedition lent its efforts to the futile rescue of the ill-fated Batura Muztagh party.



*Batura Muztagh.* The Englishmen, Dr. Keith Warburton, leader, Harry Stephenson and Richard Knight and the Germans, Martin Günnel and Albert Hirschbichler, were last seen alive on June 23 in their Camp III (18,500 feet) in a difficult icefall above the Batura Glacier when they were left there by glaciologist John Edwards and Pakistani liaison officer Sherjan. The climbers were attempting the nameless 25,540-foot peak, the highest in the Batura Muztagh. Heavy snow and avalanches probably caused their deaths. Attempts to reach them made by Edwards and Sherjan in late July and afterwards by Pakistani Army units and the German expedition were thwarted by snow and avalanches. They found it impossible to return even to Camp III because of the condition of the icefall.

*Disteghil Sar.* A Swiss expedition was unable to ascend Disteghil Sar (25,868 feet). The leader, Raymond Lambert, was accompanied by his wife Annette, Marcel Bize, Claude Asper, Charles Jaquet, Italo Gamboni, Dr. Robert Marty, Mario Grossi and André Kern. After reaching Base Camp (14,750 feet) at the foot of the south face, the threat of avalanches made them give up their plans of following the route up that face attempted by the British in 1957 (*A.A.J.*, 1958, 11:1, p. 123). They decided on the longer but less dangerous southeast ridge. On June 12 they established Camp I in a snow col at 17,225 feet and the next day placed Camp II at 19,500 feet. Jaquet and Asper were slightly hurt by falling ice chunks between these camps. After reaching 23,000 feet on reconnaissance towards a proposed Camp IV and climbing a 21,325-foot peak near Camp III, on July 3 they were struck by bad weather. Camp III was evacuated on July 6 and Camp II two days later. When it became apparent that avalanches and other dangers would make the ascent too hazardous, the attempt was given up.

*Kanjut Sar.* An Italian expedition under the leadership of Guido Monzino climbed Kanjut Sar (25,460 feet) by its southern side. This peak rises above a tributary of the Hispar Glacier. Eight guides from Valtournanche, Jean Bich, Pierino and Pacifico Pession, Marcello and Leonardo Carrel, Camillo Pellissier, Lino Tamone and Marcello Lombard, took part, as well as Lorenzo Marimonti, Dr. Piero Nava and Dr. Paolo Cerretelli. After establishing three camps, a great snowfall in the first week of July drove them back to Base Camp. A porter fell on this retreat and died later. After the storm they continued to advance camps until Camp VI was established at about 23,000 feet. From there, on July 19, Jean Bich and Camillo Pellissier started for the summit. Bich had to return, exhausted

and with frozen hands, but Pellissier continued up a long snow and ice couloir to the summit ridge, some 200 feet below the top, and thence climbed to the highest point.

*Saraghrar.* An Italian expedition led by Fosco Maraini made the first ascent of Saraghrar (24,110 feet) in Chitral. In August Franco Alletto, Gianfranco Castelli, Paolo Consiglio, and Carlo Pinelli climbed to the summit from Camp V at 21,650 feet. This peak was attempted by a British party in 1958. (See *A.A.J.*, 1959, 11:2, pp. 330-331.)

### *Afghanistan*

*Hindu Kush.* A small German expedition, led by Harald Biller and composed of his wife Alma, Theo Stöckinger and Hans Vogel, traveled by road from Europe to the Panshir valley in the Hindu Kush, north of Kabul. Continuing from the end of the road on foot, they ascended a side valley where on June 21 they made the first ascent of Dashtribat (17,225 feet) and on June 23 of more difficult Galamastan (17,400 feet). The group ascended the Panshir valley to its head and camped near the top of the Anjuman Pass. On July 27 they climbed a 17,000-foot peak which they named "Mörsamir." This mountain, on which they found some extremely difficult rock and ice climbing, had been previously attempted by French, English and American climbers.

### *U.S.S.R. and China*

*Pamirs.* The Russians report the establishment of a glaciological-meteorological station at 23,000 feet in the Fedchenko region. They also announce the first ascent of Voroshilov (21,870 feet) by an 11-man expedition.

On July 7 a group of 33 Chinese, 25 men and eight women, reached the summit of Muztagh Ata (24,388 feet), a second ascent. Although the Chinese claim that this is a new altitude record for women, it must be remembered that the late Madame Claude Kogan reached 25,250 feet in October, 1954 on Cho Oyu.

## MISCELLANEOUS

*Stainings Alps, East Greenland.* Hans Gsellmann returned in July with an Austrian expedition to the southern Stainings Alps, south of the region where his expedition had operated in 1957. The group made 21 first ascents in Kong Christian IX's Land on the rugged coast between Sermilikfjord

and Kund Rasmussenland, where summits rise to 12,000 feet. Other members of the expedition were Mathias Koglbauer, Otto Krajnc, Sepp Weber, Hans Hutegger, Sepp Moosbrugger and the Swede Gillis Billing.

*Antarctic.* The only ascent made by the Argentine glaciological expedition from Belgrano Base was that of the nunatak called "Pantera" (Panther) by the Argentines in the Moltke Nunatak Group. The climb was made on November 28, 1958 by Dinko Bertoneclj, César Lisignoli and Claro Omar Mejias. They climbed a 1350-foot ice-wall, which makes up the edge of the antarctic continent. The climb was of moderate difficulty, requiring cutting steps throughout and ice pitons on one part.

VOJSLAV ARKO, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*Ruwenzori, Africa.* Piero Ghiglione celebrated his 77th birthday by making the first ascent of the west face of the Punta Alexandra (16,725 feet) in the Ruwenzori group. On this climb, which took place on January 25, 1960, the Italian veteran was accompanied by Carlo Mauri and Bruno Ferrario.

