

me. After only two days' march from Rampur, we got to Base Camp at 11,800 feet in the first week of August. We had only twelve 55-pound loads, of which five were of food for six weeks. We attempted the Austrian route of 1976 of Hanns Schell on the Rupal Face. Camp I was at 16,400 feet, where we spent some time to acclimatize. From there we climbed with much rockfall a couloir to Camp II at 19,700 feet. The weather deteriorated and we descended to Base Camp, where we found Yannick Seigneur's 14-man French expedition. Fraga and I ascended to Camp II to await good weather and were later joined there by Seigneur and Patrick Bérault. Together we climbed the next day to 23,000 feet and set up Camp III. We had hoped for another camp at 25,600 feet but during the night Bérault fell victim to high-altitude disease. In the morning he could not even sit up. We dragged him in his sleeping bag to 19,700 feet, more dead than alive. Other French assisted in his evacuation the next day. Bad weather and lack of time prevented Fraga and me from trying again. The French persisted for four weeks more but got only to 23,000 feet.

REINHARD KARL, *Deutscher Alpenverein*

## China

*Mount Everest (Qomolungma), Northeast Ridge and North Face.* The Japanese Alpine Club's Qomolungma Expedition was composed of 39 members, including 13 press and television people. It was led by Hyoriko Watanabe. They established Base Camp on May 5 at the tongue of the Rongbuk Glacier at 16,900 feet. They then divided into two teams. *Northeast Ridge Team:* This 12-man team was led by Yoshio Hamono. They established Camps I and II at 18,050 and 19,700 feet on the East Rongbuk Glacier on March 16 and 17. Advanced Base was placed on March 22 at the head of the East Rongbuk at 21,325 feet and Camp IV on March 25 on the North Col at 23,000 feet. Soft snow and high winds slowed progress above the North Col. Camp V was established at 24,950 feet on April 6. Winds collapsed the tents there on the 15th. Camp VI was placed at 26,275 feet on May 1 and Camp VII at only 27,075 feet the next day. It had been hoped to establish the highest camp at 28,200 feet. Yasuo Kato and Susumu Nakamura set out from Advanced Base on April 29 on the summit climb. They left Camp VII on May 3, supported to the Second Step at 28,225 feet by Shoji Nakamura and Toichiro Mitani. Susumu Nakamura carried a 50-pound load including a television camera but gave up at 28,700 feet from extreme exhaustion. Kato climbed the remaining 325 feet alone, arriving at the summit at 4:55 P.M. He thus became the first person to climb Mount Everest from both Nepal and Tibet, having made the climb from the South Col in October of 1973. Both Kato and Nakamura were forced to bivouac without oxygen in separate places near the Second Step. Luckily, they got together the next

morning and reached Camp VI with only slight cold injuries. *North Face Team*: A second 12-man team was led by Hideki Miyashita. Camp I was pitched on the Central Rongbuk Glacier at 18,500 feet on March 9 and Advanced Base at the head of that glacier at 20,175 feet on March 24. Though there were pitches of up to 60° on the lower face, they pitched Camp III at 22,650 feet on April 4 and Camp IV at 25,250 feet on April 18 without undue difficulties. They continued up through the Hornbein Couloir near the top of which they pitched Camp V at 27,000 feet on April 25. Rope was fixed up the entire face and on up to 27,725 feet. On May 2 the first attack team, Tsuneo Shigehiro, Takashi Ozaki and Shohei Wada, started for the summit, but they had to give up at 28,150 feet because of heavy snow covering the ice face. On the same day the second team, Toshiaki Kobayashi and Akira Ube, were moving up to replace the first team at Camp V. They were caught by an avalanche near the bottom of the Hornbein Couloir and Ube was swept away. His body was found at the bottom of the face the next day. The North Face team assembled again at Advanced Base Camp to prepare for another attempt. On May 10 Shigehiro and Ozaki left Camp V at 6:20. After leaving the couloir, they traversed the upper snowfield to the right side and selected a route along the rocks of the west ridge. Although the weather was fine and not very windy, the ascent was much more difficult than they had expected and snow from a heavy fall on the previous day bothered them very much. They ran out of oxygen about four hours below the summit. Shigehiro reached the top at 4:50 P.M. and Ozaki at 5:02. They bivouacked an hour below the summit and came back to Camp V before noon on the following day without injuries.

SADAO TAMBE, *Japan Mountaineering Association*

*Mount Everest, Solo, by the Great Couloir.* From the Tibetan side on August 20 at three P.M. Reinhold Messner became the first person to make the entire ascent of Mount Everest solo and the second non-Sherpa to climb the mountain by two different routes. (Yasuo Kato beat him by only a few months.) He made the climb in only three days without oxygen and during the monsoon. After a six-week acclimatizing period, he and his Canadian girl friend, Nena Ritchie, ascended from 16,750-foot Base Camp to Advanced Base at 21,325 feet. Two weeks of relatively good weather with high winds had reduced the new snow on the peak. On August 18 he set out at five A.M. with a 33-pound pack, which included a three-pound tent. Despite falling into a crevasse, he reached the North Col at nine A.M. and continued on to camp at 25,600 feet. From there he left the northeast ridge and crossed to the Great Couloir, where in 1924 Norton had reached an altitude of 28,125 feet. Although the weather seemed to be worsening, he got to a point some 200 feet left of the couloir at 27,000 feet, where at three P.M. he bivouacked, too tired

to remove his boots. On the 20th he climbed with only ice-ax and camera. He ascended the couloir and joined the northeast ridge near where vertical rock (the Second Step?) barred the route. He turned this on the left and went on to the summit. The descent took him 20 hours.

*Qomolungma (Everest) Reconnaissance.* Our objective during April was to take stock of the technical and material problems we would have to solve for the expedition of our military high-mountain group to Qomolungma (Everest) in the spring of 1981 and especially to determine by what route we would try to reach the summit. The Tibetan slopes of the mountain water two valleys, the Kama and the Rongbuk, which drain into the Arun in Nepal. The Kama valley gives access to the east face and the Kangchung Glacier. The Rongbuk allows approaches to the northeast slopes and the northwest face. From Lhasa we traveled to Karta by truck and jeep. To reach the lush Kama valley and the east face we then had to cross the 16,000-foot Shago La, still under deep snow, two difficult days on foot. The 10,000-foot-high east face is majestic. Its ascent would not be so much technically difficult as doubtful because of avalanche dangers. The Rongbuk valley is a contrast because of its aridity. Vehicles may reach 17,000 feet. This was the route of the British expeditions before the second World War, and climbed successfully by the Chinese and, while we were there, by the Japanese. By that route we shall attempt to reach the summit next spring.

JEAN-CLAUDE MARMIER, *Captain, French Army*

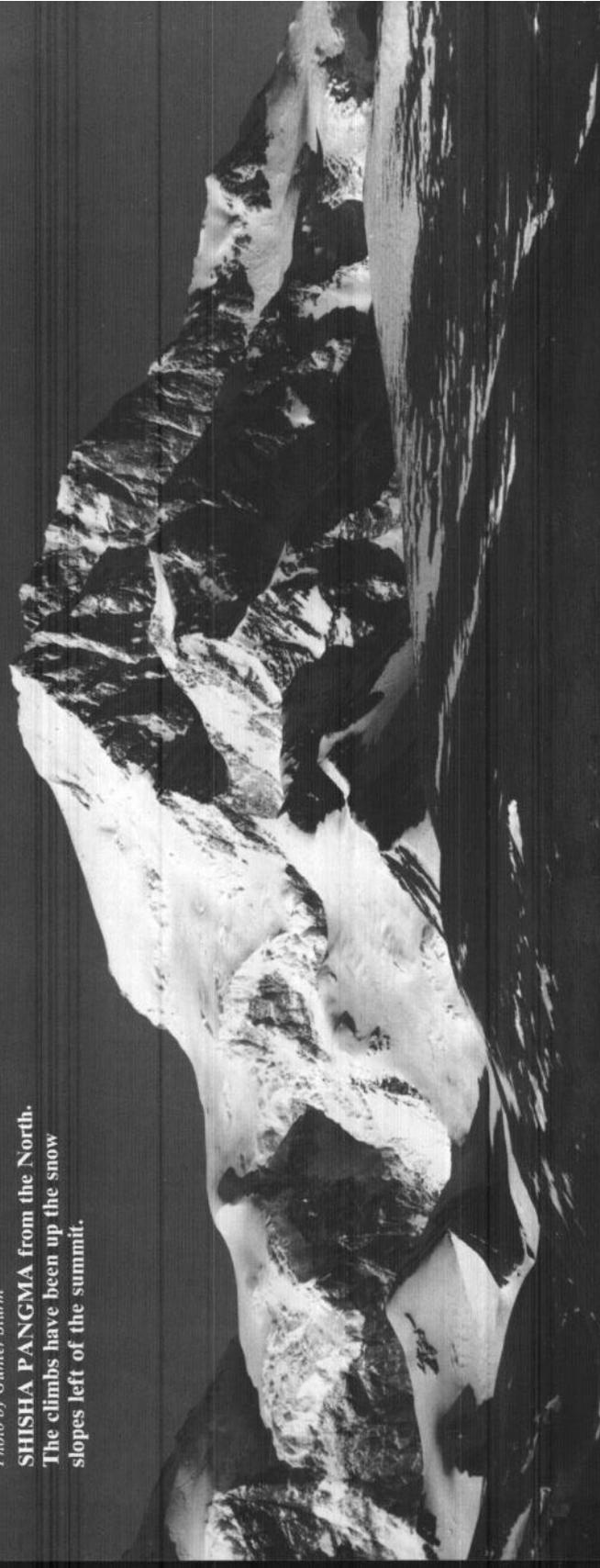
*Mount Everest, East (Kangchung) Face Reconnaissance.* In late October I flew from Chengdu to Lhasa to reconnoiter the approaches and routes on the east side of Everest in preparation for the 1981 American Everest Expedition. Accompanied by liaison officer Cheng Rong Chan and interpreter Tsao Hong Juen, I traveled by road to Karta and by foot over the Shago La to the Kama valley. We were accompanied by three yaks and two drivers from the Karta Commune's 5th Production Brigade as far as the site of the high camp of the French Army reconnaissance party. From there I ascended alone up the north side of the Kangchung Glacier to the massive east face of Everest. After observing conditions and photographing routes, I descended the glacier and returned to Karta by way of the Langma La. (See *Mount Everest Reconnaissance, 1921* by Howard Bury for detailed description and maps.

ANDREW C. HARVARD

*Shisha Pangma, Second Ascent.* An expedition of the German Alpine Club's Mountain and Ski School was led by Dr. Manfred Abelein and Günter Sturm and further composed of Manfred Sturm, Fritz Zintl, Michael Dacher, Otto Wiedemann, Sigfried Hupfauer, Dr. Wolfgang

*Photo by Günter Sturm*

**SHISHA PANGMA** from the North.  
The climbs have been up the snow  
slopes left of the summit.



Schaffert and Erich Reismüller. They followed the Chinese first-ascent route up the northeast buttress. On May 7 Dacher, Schaffert, G. Sturm and Zintl reached the summit (8046 meters, 26,398 feet). On May 12 Hupfauer and M. Sturm climbed to the top. Dacher, G. Sturm and Zintl made an attempt on the steep, difficult north face, but got only to 24,600 feet when they ran out of time. On May 16 a 7150-meter (23,458-foot) peak west of Shisha Pangma was climbed and descended on skis via its north slope.

*Shisha Pangma.* The Naturfreunde Expedition consisted of Hans Mautner, *leader*, Dr. Paul Alf, Thaddäus Dowbenka, Roman Findl, Egon Obojes, Karl Ölmüller, Kurt Pokos and Ewald Putz. Base Camp was established on September 18 at 16,850 feet. Camps I, II, III and IV were placed at 18,050, 19,000, 20,675 and 23,075 feet on September 20, 23, 24 and October 1 respectively. Our climbers followed the Chinese first-ascent route to Camp IV. On the summit slopes they went farther east and then climbed straight to the northeast ridge, which they followed to the top. On October 13 all but Pokos and Ölmüller set out from Camp IV. Putz and Obojes went ahead of the others, reaching the summit (8012 meters, 26,288 feet) at five P.M. As they descended, they found Dr. Alf alone, 500 feet below the top. They tried to persuade him to turn back, but he insisted on going on to the foresummit. At dusk, still 2000 feet above camp, they looked back and saw him descending. Minutes later they heard him shout that he had slipped and fallen. In the night they could not find him. At dawn the next day Findl found him unconscious in the snow without gloves. He had crept further in the night and fallen again. He had broken both ankles and several ribs. His fingers were frozen. It took four days to carry him down to Base Camp, whence he was taken by jeep to Lhasa for a flight to the hospital in Austria.

FRITZ MORAVEC, *Naturfreunde, Austria*

*Gongga Shan (Minya Konka) from the South.* The objective of our expedition was to find and climb a new route on the south face of Gongga Shan (24,891 feet, 7587 meters). The climbing in China consisted of Dr. Lance Owens, Henry Barber, Gary Bocarde, Louis Reichardt, Jed Williamson and me as leader. We were accompanied by Chang Xian, liaison officer, Liu Xikang and Sun Haitao, all from the Chinese Mountaineering Association. Terris Moore, Bob Bates, Adams Carter and Nick Clinch participated in the organization of the expedition. Permission was granted for this climb by the People's Republic of China in March 1980. Bates and Owens went to Beijing in April to negotiate and sign the protocol governing our permission to climb. While I assembled the team, Owens ably organized the complex logistics required to meet

PLATE 84

*Photo by Andrew C. Harvard*

**GONGGA SHAN.** The Mountain Travel group hoped to climb the left ridge. The American Alpine Club party were trying a route on the right.



the detailed specifications of the protocol. We left the United States on September 8, arriving in Beijing on September 13, after a Hong Kong stopover. We traveled by train to Chengdu, then by truck and bus to Lubai Xian. The road does not follow the 1932 party of Moore, Emmons, Burdsall and Young, but it traverses roughly the same ground. From Lubai Xian we walked for three days, supported by a train of horses, to reach the site of the Gongga Gomba at 12,500 feet. The once beautiful monastery has been in ruins since the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s. There we established Base Camp, later shared by the Mountain Travel USA party, which arrived in the area to conduct a commercial trekking operation and to film an attempt to repeat the 1932 first-ascent route. Relations between the two parties were carried out in a spirit of mutual cooperation. In consistently bad weather we spent nineteen days ferrying loads up the south side of the Greater Minya Konka Glacier and then probing the icefall and south face. Camps were established and occupied at 14,925 and 17,050 feet. From the higher camp Bocarde, Barber and I made several probes for a safe route through the icefall to the upper southwest face of Gongga Shan, only to be turned back on each probe by local objective danger in the complex and highly active icefall. A final unsuccessful probe by all members on October 10 led to a decision to abandon the route through the icefall and seek the upper face by a longer route starting farther back down the glacier. Avalanches then chased Reichardt, Williamson, Bocarde and Barber off the central portion of the lower south face. A high point on the western edge of the lower south face at 20,750 feet was reached on October 12 by Reichardt, Williamson and me, but the ridge above was a complex of cornices. It proved a dead end from the perspective of logistics and time. The bad weather continued, leaving the lower south face too dangerous to climb this year. We abandoned our attempt on the night of October 13 and after clearing our camps, descended in time to assist the Mountain Travel party in the final stages of their evacuation. Although we did not reach the summit from the south this year, I doubt that any of us consider the route impossible. Heavy snowfall and cold weather might improve the icefall in any given premonsoon season. In the suitable weather which normally follows the monsoon the central portion of the lower south face will be an excellent climb. (See *Die Grossen Kalten Berge von Szetschuan* by Eduard Imhof, Zürich: Orell Füssli Verlag, 1974 for maps and detailed area descriptions. An American translation by Katrina Moore is in press to be published by the American Alpine Club.)

ANDREW C. HARVARD

*Gongga Shan Tragedy.* 1980 was the year China opened to American mountaineering: there were three expeditions, and a number of recon-

*Photo by Ted Williamson*

The lower South Face of Gongga Shan. Routes attempted from right to left; icefall; ridge above snow cone; ridge from center diagonally left.



naissances for future expeditions. In addition to the successful ski ascent of Mustagh Ata, the People's Republic gave two permits for simultaneous attempts on what is now called Gongga Shan, previously called Minya Konka (7587 meters, 24,891 feet), located in western Szechwan but in an area culturally and geographically eastern Tibet. One permit was issued to Lance Owens; the other to Leo Lebon, head of Mountain Travel. It was Lebon's original intention to offer his company's clients a chance to join the expedition. The fees, however, requested by the Chinese for services such as organizing food and transportation, and supplying liaison officer and interpreter (to name only a few of the major budget headings) were astronomical, and caused Lebon to reconsider. He decided to invite several well-known climbers to join the team, then try to sell coverage of the expedition to the media. The final team consisted of: Al Read, leader; Yvon Chouinard, Harry Frishman, Kim Schmitz, Jack Turner and me, climbers; Dick Long, climber and doctor; Jeff Foott, Edgar Boyles, Peter Pilafian, Jonathan Wright, camera crew; William Pryor, William Little, Clark McDonald, Mountain Travel clients and climbers; and finally, Leo Lebon came along as observer and climber. We had been given permission to attempt the northwest ridge, the same route climbed in 1932 by the Harvard team, while Owens' group was given the west spur. We traveled one week behind them and used the same transportation: train from Beijing to Chengdu, mini-bus to an outpost in eastern Tibet called Liu Baxiang, then by horse and foot, for three days, to Base Camp in the ruins of the former Gongga Gumpa Monastery, where we arrived October 6. The next day we established an Advanced Base Camp at the foot of a long 5000-foot buttress that leads to the crest of the main ridge, at a point north of the col where the principal northwest ridge descends from the summit. On October 8 we began scouting a route to Camp I, and the camp was established at 18,000 feet on October 10. Four of us—Schmitz, Chouinard, Wright and me—were in a position a few days later to continue the route to Camp II. It snowed on the evening of October 12, but in the morning the clouds were scattered, and we decided to try to reach the new camp. Snow conditions were questionable, but with a cloud cover we thought they would remain stable long enough to let us reach Camp II, deposit our loads and get back down. We didn't realize the slope above, and to the side, of our tents at Camp I was in the sun most of the afternoon and ripe for avalanche. On the descent, just above Camp I, we decided to glissade the remaining 100 yards to the tents. As soon as we got going, one behind the other, we recognized our mistake: we had overloaded an extremely unstable slope, and in a flash it exploded, erupted around us as if there had been a charge set underneath. There was no way to arrest; we were caught in a massive sea of ice. I remember flying over a 60-foot cliff, then being buried for some time, finally popping up, and "swimming" as hard as I could to stay on top. Finally it stopped; we had traveled about 1500 vertical feet. Yvon was in front of me, with

PLATE 86

*Photo by Jed Williamson*

**Site of Accident on Gongga Shan.  
Camp I was at top of black triangle on  
the right. The avalanche swept them  
down the snow to the right.**



cracked ribs, Kim behind, with broken ribs and two cracked vertebrae, Jonathan next to me with, apparently, a broken neck. I was somehow only bruised. Jonathan died in a half hour. We evacuated Yvon and Kim, but it was a long ordeal, especially for Kim. He found strength, with an ensolite pad wrapped tightly around his chest, to walk much of the distance back to Liu Baxiang; he was carried, or rode a horse, the rest of the way. Jonathan, who was 28, is survived by his wife, Geri, and a beautiful two-year-old daughter, Asia, namesake of his home away from home.

RICK RIDGEWAY

*Kongur Reconnaissance, Sinkiang (Xinjiang), Western China.* Mike Ward, Al Rouse and I flew to Urumchi, accompanied by our liaison officer, Liu Da Yi. After a visit to the Heavenly Lake in the Tien Shan Mountains, we left Urumchi on June 7 and flew to Kashgar. On June 10 we left Kashgar by road and travelled south through several oases on the western rim of the great Takla Makan Desert that occupies the Tarim Basin to the Karakul Lakes. Immediately to the south lay Mustagh Ata and to the north Kongur (7719 meters, 25,325 feet) and its satellite Kongur Tiubie (7595 meters, 24,920 feet). We rested here for two days before hiring yaks to transport our baggage to Base Camp below the southwest slopes of Kongur. We established camp at 14,500 feet on the west side of the extensive Koxsel Glacier. We determined to investigate the mountains to the southeast to obtain views of the upper part of the complex massif. Taking a week's food, we crossed the Koxsel and in three days reached an 18,000-foot col. Two days later Rouse and I made the first ascent of "Sarakyaguqi Peak" (20,400 feet; named by us after the nomadic settlement at the bottom of the valley) by its north ridge. Returning to Base Camp, Rouse tripped and broke his ankle while crossing easy slopes. Unable to move, he and Mike spent three hungry days while I returned to Base Camp to arrange animal transport. In attempting to cross the Konsiver River with Liu Da Yi, we were swept away and nearly drowned. By a strange mixture of camel, yak and donkey, the whole party was able to return to Base Camp on June 24. On June 27 Ward and I decided to explore the head of the Koxsel Glacier. After passing through a heavily crevassed region, we emerged into an extensive snow basin and established camp at 18,150 feet on the 28th. The following day we reached the Koxsel Col at 19,000 feet. We concluded that there was a feasible route to the summit of Kongur from the Koxsel Glacier. The spur, descending from the main Kongur-Kongur Tiubie ridge and some three miles west of Kongur, appeared to offer a relatively safe approach to the ridge at 23,000 feet. From the Karakol Lakes we drove to Gez on the north side of Kongur to continue our reconnaissance. Ward and I climbed several thousand feet up a hillside north of Gez to get a good overall view of the north side of Kongur as well as the Kongur-

Kongur Tiubie ridge. We left Gez on July 7 using camels for transport and the following day established a Base Camp by the Kirghiz summer village of Tugnuk Kunush at 12,500 feet. Ward and I made the first ascent of Karataash Peak (17,850 feet), north of Kongur, on July 11. The north side has a possible but difficult route, clearly more problematic than that on the south. We left Gez for Kashgar on July 20, having decided to attempt Kongur next year from the southwest via the Koksai Glacier.

CHRISTIAN BONINGTON

## USSR

*Soviet Climbs in the Pamir, 1979.* Despite generally bad weather in the Pamir in the summer of 1979, a great many remarkable new climbs were made. A Moscow group, V. Neverotin, V. Boshukov, B. Ermakov, V. Putrin and V. Puchkov, from July 21 to 31, 1979 climbed the previously much attempted 6750-foot-high southwest face of the west shoulder of Pik Kommunizma (7482 meters, 24,648 feet) from the Beliaev Glacier. They placed 164 rock and 23 ice pitons. Pik Moskova (6785 meters, 22,260 feet) was climbed by its 8200-foot southeast face from August 12 to 19 by seven Georgians led by O. Khazaradse. A 1000-foot icefall led to a 3500-foot 60° ice slope. Above this rose a steep rock face, the last 1000 feet of which were nearly vertical. They placed 152 rock and 46 ice pitons and five bolts. Ten climbers from Alma Ata, led by E. Ilyinski, climbed the 6250-foot southwest face of Pik Rossiya (6825 meters, 22,392 feet). They were on the face from July 31 to August 9 but had to halt for three days because of a storm. Two new routes were done on Pik Abalakov (6446 meters, 21,149 feet): the 7500-foot north face from July 27 to August 1 by four climbers from Moscow led by W. Kavunenko and the 7350-foot northwest face from July 31 to August 5. The second group placed 206 rock and 14 ice pitons. Three routes were done on Pik Revolution (6974 meters, 22,881 feet). From July 25 to August 4 eight climbers from Leningrad, led by D. Tchunovkin, climbed the 5250-foot north face. They had to wait out a four-day storm in the upper part of the wall. The 5000-foot northwest face was climbed from July 29 to August 4 by Ukrainians V. Tchrevko, V. Palamarchuk, M. Masorchuk, V. Foresetian, V. Golovenko and A. Trazevich. From July 28 to August 5 five climbers from Tashkent, led by A. Putizev, climbed the 2400-foot north-northwest face, largely on aid, placing 200 pitons and 14 bolts. In the Darva Range the 6400-foot north face of Pik Arnavad (6083 meters, 19,958 feet) was ascended by five climbers from Tadzhikistan, led by O. Kapitanov, from August 3 to 12. They placed 179 rock and 134 ice pitons. During 15 days at the end of July eight climbers from Kazakhstan, led by W. Sedelnikov, climbed the 5000-foot southeast face of Pik Komakademiya (6439 meters, 22,126 feet).

They placed 300 rock and 30 ice pitons and 25 bolts. They were trapped by a storm for six days less than 1000 feet from the summit. The 3300-foot east face of Pik Tadzhijskaya University (6183 meters, 20,286 feet) was climbed by two groups. Five Georgians, led by G. Kartvelishvili, made the ascent from July 21 to August 2 with 253 pitons and 38 bolts. They sat out a five-day storm in slings and hammocks. At the same time Leningraders, led by Solonikov, climbed a route some 500 feet to the left, using 347 pitons and 16 bolts. More details, photos and other climbs are noted in *Alpinismus* of May 1980 on pages 66 to 68.

