

One useful, final section of the book is a list of climbing terms with equivalents in several languages: English, Spanish, German, French and Italian. This will assist the climber with less than a fluent command of Spanish.

Some features of the book design are unfortunate. There is no pocket provided for the maps. In fact, if they are slipped within the covers they will soon break the binding. Major sections do not start with a new page, presumably for economy; yet the abbreviations are duplicated, both on pages 53 and 54 and again on pages 131 and 132. Some aspects of proof reading were apparently shortcut; witness the typographical errors, inconsistent bibliographical reference style, Quechua transliterations and peak names (Nevado Huandoy on page 79 and Huandoy Norte on page 142); and an error in the references (number 41, page 135, is Part II, not Part 1).

Ricker is most generous with acknowledgements, an admirable quality that more authors should emulate. Perhaps the length of this list of contributions is yet another indication of the magnitude of John Ricker's labors.

In summary, a mountain range which has attained a position of first rank in world-wide mountaineering interest deserves an adequate, up-to-date treatise to delineate the individual peaks, their difficulties, their histories, and their routes. This John Ricker has done in splendid fashion for the Cordillera Blanca, one of the finest ranges in the world for snow-and-ice mountaineers. The book can clearly be recommended as a near necessity for both the first-time Peruvian climber as well as the Andean veteran. The defects which a careful reviewer is obliged to mention are in sum minor, and the route descriptions, the photographs, and the maps will contribute greatly in making the visiting climber's stay in Peru more efficient and enjoyable, minimizing lost time and maximizing his hours on the high peaks of the Andes.

LEIGH N. ORTENBURGER

Storm and Sorrow in the High Pamirs, by Robert W. Craig. Seattle: The Mountaineers, with the American Alpine Club, 1977. 176 pages, 56 color photos; maps and sketches, paperbound. \$6.95.

This is a truly sad and chilling book. Grief and pathos burst from its covers. It is an account of the 1974 American Pamirs/USSR Expedition. So much death and fear and so concentrated in place and time has never been recorded in climbing history. Over a period of a few weeks, earthquakes set off avalanches that killed one American, nine of the finest women climbers in Russia and five Estonian mountaineers—truly a horror show that numbs the mind where it does not bring one close

to tears; the bummer to end all bummers. Perhaps it comes to us so tardy because of the anguish of its creation, which probably required a dogged, not too "sensitive" type like Bob Craig to write.

Things went very wrong from the beginning: the Americans got paranoid about Russian bureaucracy, which had deceived them, and were appalled when they found that instead of being treated as an elite group of top-notch mountaineers (which most of the party were) they were corralled into an international jamboree along with dozens of mere hikers and amateurs of every nationality under the sun. They were regimented, they were jittery from the Kafkaesque mysteries of Russian officials and their endemic ambiguities, and they couldn't bail out either. These early chapters of the book are lugubrious and often sluggish.

When the action takes us into the mountains, there's a quickening sense of life and excitement. Suddenly the author and his friends aren't wondering aloud what they are doing living in a nightmare. They're climbing. Craig's normally pedestrian prose drops away. He's capable of a passage like this. "Good ice climbers on demanding leads, moving with grace and rhythm though heavily laden, encumbered by gear and exposure, are not unlike the best powder-snow skiers; pushing the limits of snow and slope in a sort of high-angle dance form, they seem to stop time in the transformation of steepness into a kind of sculpture that vanishes even as it is created." But then the joy is snuffed out. The Western climber, Gary Ullin, dies in an avalanche that sweeps into his tent while he sleeps. More avalanches rattle and tumble and groan, hiss and roil throughout his narrative. The casualties mount up. The Estonians pass away. The last quavering, heartbreaking words over the radio from the last dying Russian woman: "Now we are two. And now we will all die. We are very sorry. We tried but we could not . . . Please forgive us. We love you. Goodbye."

Something of the scale of this tragedy seems to have touched upon the memory of Gary Ullin. Unfortunately for the book that is in part a dedication to Ullin, the author did not know him at all well, although they climbed together before Ullin's death. Very little of the character of the man comes through. Yet after enduring the storm and the sorrow—even second hand in the proverbial armchair—one begins to understand why the death of this one climber seemed, for a moment, to take on a special collective significance in the U.S.; as if in mourning him, we mourned and feared something larger, a nameless and yet terrible retribution that stalked the Pamir hills that summer.

Generally, failure in mountaineering is about as uninteresting as failure anywhere else. The failures on this voyage, more or less continuous, are only a little redeemed by a memorial U.S. ascent of Peak Nineteen. Massive politically inspired expeditions of this sort—climbers were picked, in part, for proportionate geographical representation—are seldom, one

suspects, the catalysts of joy or the occasion for an individual sense of triumph. They should be judged by the friendship, the atmosphere they generate. And as Bob Craig's account makes it bitterly clear, all that these climbers took back home with them were memories of fear and loathing. As you'll have gathered, this is a tough book to read—emotionally demanding, sometimes tedious. But because of the freakish scale, the sheer awesomeness of the disaster, it would be read widely by any climber who wants to understand in his heart the true risks of the game he plays.

JOHN THACKRAY

Climbing Ice, by Yvon Chouinard. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books in association with the American Alpine Club. 192pp. 175 black and white photos. 16 pages of color photos. Price: \$15.00 cloth; \$9.95 paper. 1978.

To climb intelligently today one must come to terms with the mosaic of systems which makes up modern ice climbing. With this book, Yvon Chouinard tells us how. Clearly a leading forerunner of contemporary rock and ice climbing and consistently prophetic in his approach to both, he now gives us a book that captures all of the grace of climbing ice while demonstrating the force and breadth of its current revolution.

Within a skillful layout he has managed to combine his personality and sensitivity with his experience of ice climbing to give us a highly informative book. The photographs, aside from their instructional purpose, are spectacular and beautiful. The writing is of the same calibre, again being twofold in its result. The style is that of a handbook interspersed with personal anecdotes which often brings to light a specific point, but, more importantly, gives us an insight into what Chouinard's world of climbing is really all about.

The first chapter provides a precise and yet thoughtfully, realistic view of ice climbing's history. From this as a basis, he begins by giving us efficient instructions and photographs of how to deal with low-angle snow and ice and throughout the course of four chapters progresses to vertical and overhanging ice. A variety of techniques are presented with some helpful advice on each. Not to stop short, he reaches further and provides the information needed to cope with the rock and mountains where ice is found.

A major theme of the book, and inherent within the title itself, is simplicity and versatility. Again, Chouinard rings home this theme in his chapter about equipment. In a day with so many ice tools on the market, one questions if a golf bag would be more suitable than a rucksack. The answer to this and many other problems are handled plainly from experience.