

Pik Kommunizma. Our 11-member team was composed of Scott Fisher, leader, Wes Krause, Stacey Allison, George Schunk, Brad Udall, Steve Manfredo, Mike Carr, Liz Nichol, Maggie Fox, George Kahrl, and me. Leaving Moscow at midnight, we arrived at the Achik-Tash Base on July 12 after 7 hours of flying and a 4-hour bus ride. After two days at Achik-Tash, acclimatizing, being issued the unique Soviet mountain rations, meeting with the International climbing directors, and overcoming jet lag, we were helicoptered in two loads to the Moskvin Base. Turning our attention to the Borodkin route, we established Camp I (17,000 feet) on July 17, Camp II (19,800 feet) on July 19 on the Pamir Ice Plateau, and sat out an unusual week-long storm before moving to Camp III (21,600 feet) on July 26, and Camp IV (23,100 feet) near the summit of Dushanbe Peak on July 27. The next day Fisher, Krause, Allison, Schunk and I reached the 7,483-meter (24,550-foot) summit; it is worth noting that Stacey Allison may be the first American woman to have climbed Pik Kommunizma. Tragically, Steve Manfredo died two days later on July 30 at 15,500 feet from complications related to the pulmonary edema he contracted at Camp IV the night of July 27.

MARK UDALL

Ak-Su, Turkestan Range, Kirgiz SSR. Our group of 16 climbers from the Alpine Club of the Natural Science Faculty of Charles University of Prag spent 15 exciting days at the beginning of July in the Ak-Su region on the northern slopes of the Turkestan Range. (Ak-Su means "white water" in the Kirgiz language.) We flew to Oach and then traveled by bus via Leninabad and Isfana. The climbing base at 2800 meters was reached by truck. The region surprised us with its rich vegetation, fantastic rock-climbing possibilities and unbelievable beauty. The upper Ak-Su valley is a fascinating amphitheater with 1000-meter perpendicular walls of hard, solid, excellent granite. The Soviets have climbed there only for the past three years and so most of the faces have only one or two routes. The most thrilling is a wall of Ak-Su Skalnoye ("Rocky Ak-Su") which rises from 3500 to 5200 meters above a moraine-covered glacier. Pik Aleksandra Bloka (5229 meters) is an astonishing mountain resembling Fitz Roy by its shape, dimensions and sheerness, but fortunately not by its climate. The other big walls are on Admiralitek, Petrogradek and Bolshoy Iskander. During our stay, we, the first foreigners there, climbed Maliy, Bolshoy Iskander, Aktiubek, Aleksandre Bloka and the highest mountain in the region, Ak-Su Glavnoye (5355 meters 17,569 feet). Although we had not been given permission for new routes on the big walls, a strong team of Čermák, Hlaváček, Kamler, Reif and Polák tried a new one in the middle of the 1700-meter-high wall of Ak-Su Skalnoye. They reached about two thirds of the way up when Kamler was hit by a falling rock and badly injured his hip. Rappelling down 27 pitches was hard and took two days. We had great respect for the injured man as well as for his partners. The accident saved us from problems we would otherwise have had from the authorities for this unallowed ascent. Except for Kamler's injury, our

doctor had to cure frequent diarrhea, our leader Petr Brzak's pneumonia and an untypical injury when Hlavaček was badly bitten by an identified dog of the Kirgiz shepherds and had to be sent back to Prag to have rabies inoculations. Although the Ak-Su mountains do not reach the altitudes of the 7000-meter Pamirs farther to the east, it is a most attractive climbing area. Thanks to warm, stable, sunny weather, the lack of snow, relatively short approaches and particularly because of the quality of the granite, it can be considered one of the best rock-climbing areas not only in the USSR but all over the world. Its walls compare favorably with any in the Alps, Verdon and even Yosemite. The area surrounding 5300-meter Sabakch, which we could see to the west, promises to be equally attractive.

VLADIMÍR WEIGNER, *Czechoslovakia*

AUSTRALASIA

Irian Jaya

Carstensz Pyramid, Irian Jaya (New Guinea). This is the highest peak (5030 meters, 16,503 feet or 4884 meters, 15,023 feet) in Australasia. We pursued it as a part of Pat Morrow's successful quest to climb the highest mountain on all seven continents. Access was complicated by the existence of Papuan nationalist rebel activity in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya. No foreign climbing parties have received permission to climb Carstensz for some years. After 17 months of negotiation between Canada's External Affairs Department, Indonesia's Department of Social Cultural Affairs and the Indonesian Army, permission was obtained for a joint trip with the Mapala Club of the University of Indonesia. We flew to the transmigration settlement of Timika, traveled by Jeep to the mining town of Tembagapura at 6500 feet. There we added ten Moni and Dani porters and five local soldiers and proceeded up the aerial tramway to the Freeport Indonesia copper mine. We established camp at the foot of the Meren Glacier and then moved to the base of Carstensz in the Yellow Valley (13,500 feet). Carstensz resembles a giant rock flake of prickly limestone. We proceeded up the north face along Heinrich Harrer's 1962 first-ascent route. After three roped pitches and a scramble up a gully, we reached the knife-edged ridge. Working through notches, using three rappels and climbing out on the south face with moves up to 5.8, we reached the summit at 1:15 P.M. on May 7. The slow descent repeated the ridge line rappels and finished with three rappels after dark. The party consisted of Canadian Pat Morrow and his wife Baiba Morrow, Indonesians Adi Seno and Titus Pramono, and me.

STEPHEN FOSSETT