



*Slesova (left) and the "Wall of Dykes," showing 1. The Last Laugh (Parnell-Pretty, 1999). 2. The Great Game (Pritchard-Green, 1997). 3. The Philosopher's Stone (Arran-Arran, 1999). IAN PARNELL*

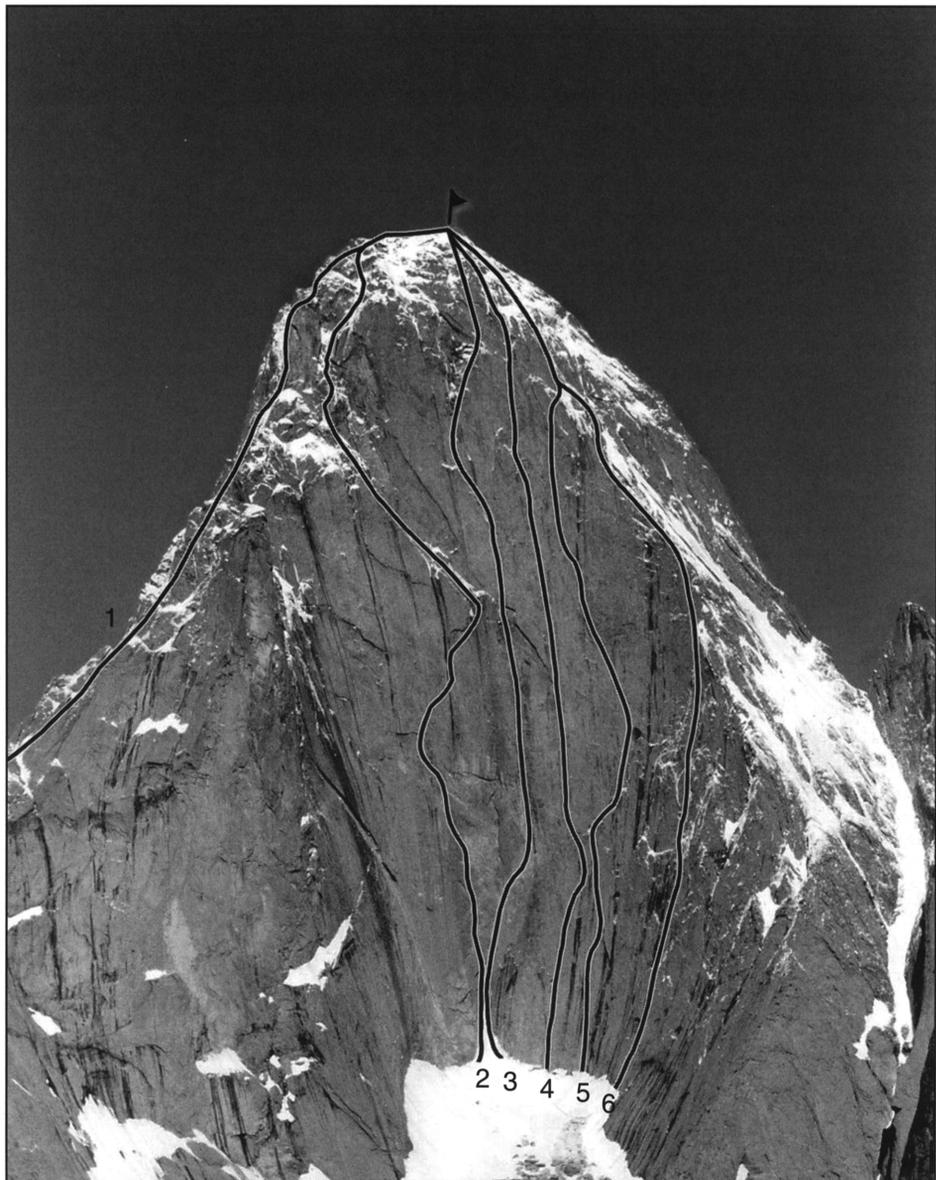
upper section of *Black Magic* (Harvey-Donahue, 1997) and *The Last Laugh* (5.12a, 750m), just to the right of the waterfall on the left-hand side of the "Wall of Dykes."

After Mark departed early due to illness, I free soloed *The Isolationist* (5.10, 1300m) on the east face of Kotin in five hours of climbing (13 hours camp-to-camp). For the nine first ascents, we placed a total of four pegs and one hand-drilled bolt, a contrast to many of the recent routes by European visitors. The team eventually departed on September 1, a week earlier than planned, due to an invasion by Taliban guerillas from Afghanistan who kidnapped a Japanese party trekking in the area.

IAN PARNELL, *United Kingdom*

*Peak 4810, East Face, New Route.* Alexander Pogorelov and Vitaly Polohov from Rostov-on-Don established a new route (6B, 1100m) on the east face of Peak 4810, fixing the initial pitches of the route from August 4-11, then climbing it from August 14-22. All four routes on the east face of 4810 (Vedernikov, 1989; Sitnik, 1989; Klionov, 1993; Odintsov, 1995) are on the right-hand side of the face. The Pogorelov Route takes a line close to the center of the face.

While we were preparing the route, we noticed that the most dangerous part of the face is



*The east face of 4810, showing 1. Southeast Ridge. 2. A. Pogorelov (6B, 1999). 3. A. Odintsov (6B, 1995). 4. A. Klionov (6B, 1995). 5. M. Sitnik (6B, 1989). 6. V. Vedernikov (6A, 1989).*

IVAN SAMOYLENKO

on the left-hand side, where the face is not as steep and there are some shelves with snow. Snow melting on these shelves results in stone fall. We spent several days scoping the face with binoculars, looking for a possible route with the maximum number of cracks but without success. We decided to start in the center of the east face in an inside corner, then move left from the overhanging rocks traversing toward a series of roofs. It was very inconvenient

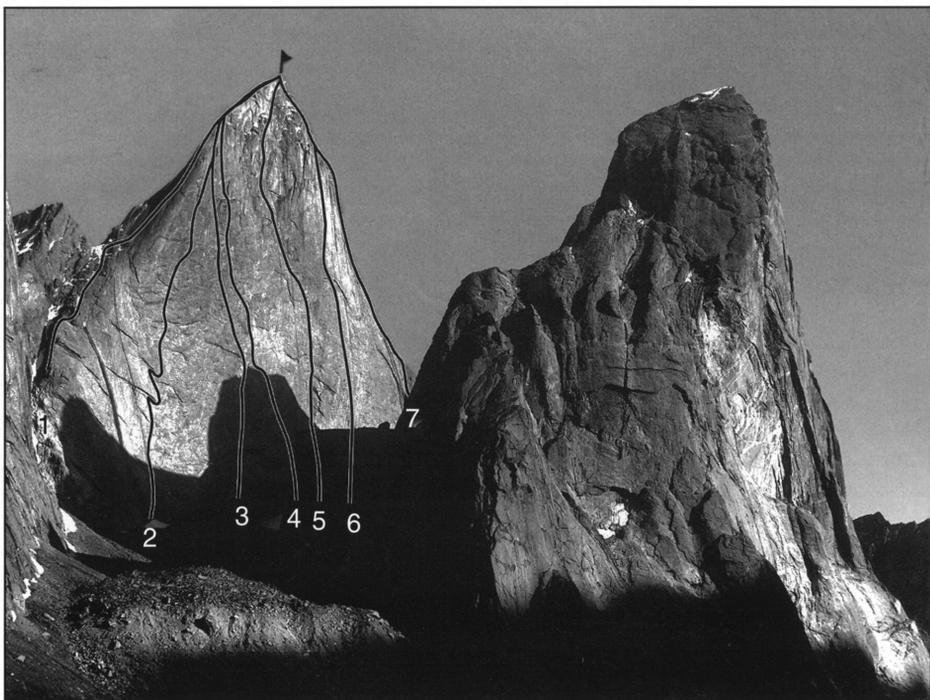
to fix rope diagonally in the overhanging part, but it was the only hope to climb the route. In the upper part, overhanging rock protected us from rock fall.

Andrew Zavgorodniy and Anatoliy Popov helped fix the initial pitches. After fixing 350 meters (seven pitches), we experienced two days of extremely bad weather with snowfall. For this reason, we came down, as we did not think it would be possible to climb this face in such conditions. The first part of the route is a combination of vertical and overhanging rock with only a few cracks. We used a lot of skyhooks. It was difficult climbing (VI, A3-A4). The second part of the route was climbed free (IV-VI). In the lower part at the edge of the inside corner and face there were very loose rocks—too loose to use skyhooks or get good gear. We had to move the loose rocks before we could get any protection.

As with the two previous years, the weather was very unsettled. During our climb, it rained every day in the afternoon, after which the entire face was covered with verglas. When the sunshine warmed the face, the ice would fall down. We spent nine nights on the route (one night during fixing). On August 22 at 6 p.m., we reached the ridge. By this point, there were no longer any climbers in either the Ak-Su or Kara-Su valleys.

ALEXANDER POGORELOV, *Russia*

*Asan, Stars and Stripes Forever, and 4810, West Face.* Roxanna Brock and Brian McCray brought home the bronze, placing third in the International Mountaineering Trophy big wall climbing competition. The event, hosted by the Russian Mountaineering Federation from July



*The north and west faces of 4810 and Asan. Routes on 4810 are as follows: 1. M. Sitnik (descent route) (5B, 1986) 2. A. Kritsuk (6A, 1988). 3. V. Igolkin (6A, 1990). 4. A. Rusiaev (6A, 1988). 5. A. Voronov (6A, 1988). 6. G. Kopejka (6A, 1988). 7. S. Ovcharenko (6A, 1988). SERGEI KOVALOV*