

Indus Kohistan is almost entirely unknown. There, it is possible to find the odd corner where the Westerner is still a stranger and where the people and their way of life seem to belong to a former age; and where unsuspected valleys and mountains lie, waiting to be explored and climbed. Falak Ser (19,415 feet) first climbed by Tyndale-Biscoe and A. Berry in 1957 (see *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, 1958) had always been regarded as the highest mountain in the area. Travelling south of this mountain and crossing the Paloga divide, I entered Kandia (Indus Kohistan) and discovered a quite unsuspected group called locally the Siri Dara. They comprise over a dozen peaks rising from a 15-square-mile plateau at about 15,000 feet. The height of the peaks appeared to be from 18,500 to over 20,000 feet. Unfortunately I did not have the time to overcome the main obstacle barring entry to the plateau, an icefall 4500 feet high and about four miles wide, one of the most impressive I have seen. There is a wealth of surveying and climbing to be done. From a 17,000-foot peak, situated about seven miles northeast of the Siri Dara along the Swat-Kandia divide, I was able to study the group in perspective; and I could see that my route up the icefall had fallen about 500 feet short of the plateau. Indus Kohistan, which contains some of the wildest and most rugged country through which I have travelled, contrasts sharply with the verdant and fertile valleys of Swat. We returned to Swat by a short glacial route over a 15,000-foot pass from Kandia, locally called the Shohu Dara. As the journey was made mostly through Pathan tribal territory, an armed escort was provided. The porters, many of whom were militiamen, were cheerful, honest and tough; by virtue of their severe winters they are not afraid of snow and ice.

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Theri Sar. Professor Ardito Desio led a geological expedition to the Hunza valley and Skardu area. Dr. Ercole Martina made the first ascent of Theri Sar (16,568 feet) by the north wall. The mountain was reached from Misgar village and Barah valley. (N. 36°45'30"—E. 74°46'00".)

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Afghanistan

Mandaras Ku, Hindu Kush. During August and September a Franco-Polish expedition explored a valley of the Hindu Kush previously untouched by climbers. They made the first ascent of three 20,000-foot peaks and one of more than 23,000 feet, Mandaras Ku. The French members of the party were J. Brunaud, M. Ginat, T. Langevin and F. Moreau.