

South Col. Another rest day was caused by stormy weather. On October 14, Giner, López, Bohigas, Ang Nima and Nima Rita reached the summit at 12:45 P.M. This was the third Spanish ascent of Everest. For Ang Nima this was his fifth ascent of Everest without supplementary oxygen. The descent, however, was an ordeal. Martínez had been suffering from the altitude and they had left him on the South Summit with all of their remaining oxygen. When they returned, he was blind and lapsing in and out of consciousness. They fashioned a kind of basket from rope, which they used to drag him to the South Col where the Americans gave permission to use their oxygen. The next day, they began to drag him toward Camp III. Americans Dr. Steve Ruoss and John Petroske were ascending, hoping to make a summit climb. They gave up and Martínez was carried down to Camp II, while all expeditions did everything possible to help. Aided by an experimental pressure bag, Dr. Ruoss and Petroske nursed him for 48 hours without sleeping at all. Finally 20 climbers from all expeditions carried him down the Khumbu Icefall to Base Camp. He and frostbitten Giner were evacuated by helicopter.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Taternik, Poland*

*Slovak Lhotse and Everest Ascents and Tragedy.* Slovak and New Zealand climbers climbed under the same permission, but it seems that both groups acted quite independently of each other. The New Zealand group's activities are covered separately below. They had permission for Lhotse and the then still unrepeatd British route on the southwest face of Everest. The Slovak team was composed of leader Ivan Fiala, Dušan Becík, Peter Božík, Jaroslav Jaško, Jozef Just, Jaroslav Oršula and Dr. Milan Skladaný. They used the route prepared by the South Koreans and French through the Khumbu Icefall and then established Camp III at 7250 meters. After a period of bad weather, the Slovaks left Base Camp on September 21. On September 27, Becík and Just set out from Camp III and after seven hours reached 8050 meters where they bivouacked for four hours. During the night and very early on September 28, they climbed by moonlight and reached the summit of Lhotse at daybreak. The ascent was completed without supplementary oxygen. They then turned to the southwest face of Everest, which they hoped to climb alpine-style in two or three days and descend via the South Col. The first attempt started on October 7 but failed at Camp II at 6400 meters in bad weather. On October 12, Becík, Božík, Just and Jaško left Base Camp and again reached Camp II. Strong winds prevented departure the next day, but on October 14, they started on the British route at three A.M., reaching 8100 meters that afternoon. On October 15, they had a nasty surprise. It took them the whole day to climb the chimney in the rock band, which was much more difficult than expected. They spent that night above the rock band at 8400 meters. On October 16, they completed the long, rising snow traverse to the right. Becík had lost his strength and progress was slow. The last bivouac was at 8600 meters below the South Summit. The team was so exhausted that on October 17 only Just went on to the summit, which he reached

at 1:40 P.M. They began the descent towards the South Col. At four o'clock, Just reported by radio that he had joined Becík and Jaško and that the latter was lethargic and did not want to descend. At 5:30, he reported that they were all together but still at 8300 meters. They were showing signs of altitude sickness and were having trouble with their eyesight. This was the last radio contact. Americans on the col an hour later could see the entire route, but they saw no one. Visibility was good. The wind became stronger and stronger. By eleven P.M., it was blowing between 120 and 150 kilometers per hour. The Slovaks were never seen again. This dramatic tragedy shows that oxygenless assaults on the world's highest mountains have their limits.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Tatarnik, Poland*

*New Zealanders on Everest.* New Zealanders Rob Hall, Gary Ball, Bill Atkinson and Lydia Bradey were nominally part of the Slovak expedition mentioned above. They reached 8100 meters on the south buttress. Lydia Bradey split off from the expedition and made an illegal foray onto the South Col route. On October 14, Miss Bradey claims that she made the first ascent of Everest by a woman without artificial oxygen. She said she did not have a watch to tell her what time it was and her camera was frozen. Grave doubts have been expressed by her teammates, who left the mountain on October 14, and by Spanish climbers, who met her near the South Summit and later on the South Col. The Spaniards say they encountered Miss Bradey below the South Summit as she was moving up very slowly on her hands and knees. She says that she was on her feet and going reasonably well. The timing given by her and by the Spaniards are rather different. The Spanish timing, if correct, would mean that she could not have gotten all the way to the summit. "I was resting below the South Summit, day-dreaming," acknowledges Miss Bradey, "but then I realized I was losing a lot of time and moved on again." Her case is made more complicated by the fact that she was on a route for which she and her team had not received permission. She can be banned from entering Nepal for up to ten years. The leadership can also be punished in this way. Perhaps to lessen the length of the ban she fears she may receive, Miss Bradey gave a written statement to the Nepalese government in which she said she may have confused the South Summit with the main one.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Everest Attempt, Tragedy and Winter Ascent of Lhotse.* Our joint Belgian-Polish expedition arrived in Nepal in October. We invited Polish climbers Andrzej Zawada, Krzysztof Wielicki and Leszek Cichy to accompany us as advisers. It took a couple of weeks to build up Base Camp and work a way through the dangerous Khumbu Icefall. Unfortunately I developed a persistent dry cough and rattle in the lungs and had to separate from the team. Dr. M. Vreugde took over the leadership. Several times the climbers had to postpone the