

*Lhotse South Face Tragedy.* Although two expeditions from Katowice, Poland had already tried this tremendous wall, both times they had lacked luck—one or two windless days when the attacking teams were high. This year we managed to organize a team strong enough to climb the face. Our expedition was composed of Jerzy Kukuczka, leader, Ryszard Pawłowski, Maciej Pawlikowski, Przemysław Piasecki, Tomasz Kopyś, Michał Kulej, Elżbieta Piętak, Witold Oklek, Leszek Czech and me, Poles, Frenchman Yves Ballu, Swiss Fulvio Mariani and Italian Floriano Castelnovo. Our plan was to fix rope to Camp II while climbers acclimatized on neighboring 6000ers and on the normal route on Lhotse. The climbers on Lhotse's normal route would also establish a camp at 7400 meters to protect the descent from the summit. However, nature changed our ambitious plans as the monsoon lasted until the first days of October. There was no alternative but to try only the Polish route on the south face of Lhotse. Luckily we had several kilometers of rope which were carefully fixed on the wall. Camps I, II, III, IV, V and VI were placed at 5800, 6200, 6800, 7100, 7450 and 7800 meters on September 13, 18, 28, October 5, 8 and 21. During the whole period while the rope was being fixed, the weather was bad and there was a great danger of avalanches. The climbers suffered from the high moisture and sharp cold, and most had painful coughs. Not until October 5 did the weather improve enough pitch the higher camps. As traditionally is the case, in the middle of October strong winds blew in from Tibet. On October 18 Kukuczka and Pawłowski set out from Base Camp hoping to reach the summit. The next day, the wind stopped blowing. Taking advantage of the good weather, they reached Camp VI on October 21. On the following day, they continued, bivouacking first at 8000 and then at 8300 meters. The weather was still excellent. Just after sunrise on the 23rd, Kukuczka began to climb toward the ridge crest which he could already see. Just as he was about to reach it on the final obstacle, he suddenly fell off. The rope could not hold the fall of more than 100 meters and broke and he fell the whole length of the face to his death. Pawłowski could not inform Base Camp about the accident because Kukuczka had the radio in his rucksack. He spent the night on a rock ledge at 8100 meters. The next day he met the support team of Kopyś and Pawlikowski. All three returned to Base Camp on October 26.

RYSZARD WARECKI, *Klub Wysokogórski Katowice, Poland*

*Lhotse.* A two-man Korean expedition completed the 20th ascent of Lhotse. Leader Heo Young-Ho reached the summit via the west face on October 14.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Lhotse South Face, Solo Winter Attempts.* There were two separate unsuccessful attempts made by Frenchmen to climb the south face of Lhotse in winter. On November 29, Marc Batard reached 7000 meters before giving up. Accompanied by Catalán Enric Lucas, Christophe Profit reached 6700 meters on December 18, but after two bivouacs there, the pair had to descend in bad