

USSR

Pik Lenina, Second Winter Ascent. Our expedition was led by Lenonid A. Troshchinenko and consisted of 24 people. Deputy leader was Aleksandr Glushkovski and I was leader of the support team. After leaving Leningrad on January 13, we arrived at Achiktash on the 19th and made Advance Base the next day on the glacier at 4200 meters. We followed the Arkin route on the center of the north face. Camps I and II were placed in snow holes at 5400 and 6100 meters on January 25 and 28. Up to 6900 meters we fixed the route with 4000 meters of rope. In the upper part we climbed the left side. The summit teams were made up of 11 men each. On February 3, Aleksey Koren and Semyon Yastrebov reached the summit (7134 meters, 23,406 feet). The rest were driven back by -35°C temperatures, storm and snowfall. The next day, the weather was better and nine gained the summit: Troshchinenko, Glushkovski, Aleksey Dorfeyev, Mikhail Mozhayev, Viktor Ivanov, Andrey Tsekoyev, Avoz Mirzuyev, Aleksey Gumenuk and Petko Totev; the latter was a guest from Bulgaria. Both teams reached Base Camp on February 6. This was the second winter ascent of Pik Lenina, but we made a variant in the upper part. The first winter ascent was in 1988 (AAJ, 1989, p. 294.)

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Pik Lenina, Third Winter Ascent. In February, only a few days after the second winter ascent, an independently operating light-weight Moscow team made the third winter ascent of Pik Lenina. They used snow caves in crevasses at 4800, 5800 and 6100 meters along the Arkin route on the 3000-meter-high north face. Ropes fixed by the Leningrad expedition were used. On the summit day, they had to climb 1000 vertical meters. It was very cold and it stormed heavily, especially in the summit area. At 7000 meters, C. Chepchev had to withdraw because of developing frostbite. The other two, A. Brattsev and I. Razuvayev, reached the top at four P.M. The pair was back in their ice cave at 6100 meters late in the night. The completion of the ascent in wintry conditions by a small team of mountaineers is something new in Soviet expeditions practice.

JÓSEF NYKA, *Editor, Tatarnik, Poland*

Pik Lenina Tragedy and Attempt. Ken Nolan, Jean Aschenbrenner, Dan Smith, Canadian Ian McLagen and I attempted to climb Pik Lenina by the standard northwest ridge in July. We were participating in the Soviet International Mountaineering Camp in the Pamirs, held annually since 1974. Particularly cold and snowy weather prevented our departure from Base Camp. We finally occupied Camp I on July 13. That evening, an earthquake with its epicenter in Afghanistan dislodged séracs that swept Camp II. The resulting avalanche killed 43 of the 45 climbers in that camp, probably the greatest

number of fatalities in a single mountaineering accident in history. The dead included 23 members of the Leningrad Climbing Club led by Leonid Troshchenko, 4 other Soviets, 2 Swiss, 1 Spaniard, 6 Czechoslovaks, 3 Israelis and 1 Italian. The two survivors, a Russian and a Slovak, were helped down the following day. Another top Leningrad mountaineer, Vladimir Balyberdin, saved his life deciding at the last minute to move with some friends to Camp III. A group of six English climbers, led by Mark Miller, escaped by establishing their bivouac some distance from the main camp. Lengthy and dangerous rescue efforts failed to yield any other survivors. After several days, the Soviets again allowed attempts on the mountain. We occupied a relocated Camp II at the base of the ridge of Pik Razdelny at 5500 meters on July 18. Camp III on the saddle between Pik Razdelny and Lenina was reached on July 21. After two days of high winds and snow, the attempt was abandoned. The early season weather made climbing dangerous and took the lives of five more climbers while we were in the Pamirs.

CHARLES HUSS, M.D.

Elbrus Tragedy. From May 2 to 4, a terrible storm with high winds and frigid temperatures struck the highest peak of the Caucasus. Dozens of mountaineers and alpine skiers were caught in the summit area. About 20 climbers perished in the storm.

Pik Korzhenevskoy and Pik Kommunizma. From Moscow, Tom Dyer, Ed Hirschowitz, Matt Koehler, Dave Rhude, Peter Stock and I on July 12 endured a four-hour flight and an eight-hour bus ride to the Achik Tash Base Camp. We left Achik Tash on July 14 by helicopter for the Moskvina Base Camp. Before leaving, we learned of the sérac fall on Pik Lenina which killed 40 climbers. On July 19, we started up Pik Korzhenevskoy (7105 meters, 23,3110 feet), establishing camps at 4700, 6100 and 6300 meters. Unfortunately Hirschowitz was stricken with cerebral edema at Camp III on July 23 and descended with Koehler and Stock to Camp I. On July 24, Dyer, Rhude and I left Camp IV for the summit at ten A.M. via the south ridge (Tsetlin's route). We summited around three o'clock. We descended to Camp I on the 25th and met Stock and Koehler on the way up. Shortly thereafter, Koehler lost peripheral vision and developed double vision, forcing him to turn back. Stock then teamed up with a Frenchman and summited on July 27. On July 28, I left with three Swedes, Jerker Fredholm, Lars Cronlund and Rickard Strand, for Pik Kommunizma (7483 meters, 24,550 feet). Following Borodkin's route from the northeast, we established camps at 5800, 6600 and 6900 meters, the last on the summit of Dushanbe on July 31 on July 31. On August 1, Fredholm, Cronlund, Strand and I summited on Pik Kommunizma in shirt-sleeve weather and descended to the Pamir Ice Plateau at 6100 meters and the following day to the Moskvina Base Camp.

LARRY G. HALL