

ridge of Gurudongmar, several small peaks received first ascents (Gurung, 5691 meters, a small subsidiary peak of Gurudongmar, and Pt. 5350m on one of the outlying ridges of Chombu, both by Bartlett and Griffin), while Freeman-Attwood, Novak and Scott crossed the Sebu La and were surprised by its difficulty, which they attributed to glacier recession (a rappel was necessary on the west flank). On October 15 and after a previous reconnaissance, Bartlett, Bowen, Freeman-Attwood, Griffin, Novak, Sandhu and Scott made the first ascent of Chombu East (5745 m). Their route followed steep and somewhat avalanche-prone slopes to a col between the Central and Main summits, then traversed the sharp north ridge to the highest point. This ridge, at first a corniced edge, gave way to a narrow snowed-up rock crest, with the exposed crux reserved for a steep and precarious climb out of a notch shortly before the summit. Interest was maintained throughout by the very early arrival of a full-blown blizzard with heavy snow and high winds.

The team were now set for their main objective and, having found the most feasible access to Chombu, reached the northeast ridge at ca. 5800 meters but were prevented from advancing further by the large quantities of (often thigh-deep) unconsolidated and avalanche-prone snow. In the vain hope that conditions might improve with time and better weather, the team turned their attention to the south ridge of Gurudongmar, where they felt the snow would be in a more climbable condition. However, persistent bad weather lasting more or less to the final days of the month put an end to the expedition.

Subsequently, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation decided to open the region to any mountaineering expedition and have now advertised the fact accordingly. Prospective parties have plenty of enticing objectives from which to choose (including several virgin 7000-meter peaks) and an opportunity to travel in a very beautiful and little known part of the Himalaya, but they will continue to be subjected to the whims of Indian military commanders in Sikkim, who could easily deny access at the last moment.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Alpine Climbing Group*

HIMACHEL PRADESH

Mulkilà IX, North Face. The Lahul 1995 expedition was organized by the alpinism school Bruno Dodi of the Piacenza department of the Italian Alpine Club to celebrate its 25th anniversary. The adventure started July 28 and finished August 26, 1995. The team was composed of Lucio Calderone, Leader; Gian Franco Pecorari, Vice-Leader; Giuseppe Barani, Andrea Bernizzoni, Lino Facchini, Mauro Farina, Giovanni Nicelli, Roberto Merli, Roberto Valdemi, Instructors; Albert Brizi, Doctor; and Arturo Caccico, Psychologist. The chosen zone was the Lahul, a district of the region of the Himachal Pradesh, India, where the mountainous group of Mulkilà is situated. It's not very well-known to climbers because it doesn't include high or famous mountains, but it offers big alpine possibilities for those keen on mountains.

The original aim was to climb the obvious spur in the center of the north face of Mulkilà VI (a.k.a. Taragiri, 6182 m). Access to the high valley of Lahul was made by pullman from New Delhi passing through Manali and the Rotang Pass as far as Darcha; and then, on foot, the team reascended the Milang Valley, and then the one of Mulkilà. Bad weather in the first 10 days of August, difficulties with the transport of materials to Base Camp (which was established at 4100 meters at the beginning of the Mulkilà Glacier) and a shortage of porters caused the waste of precious days. Heavy snows above 4800 meters delayed the approach to the selected mountain and caused extreme avalanche danger on the high part of the north face. Given these circumstances, the expedition was obliged to change its original aim, and the attention of the team was moved



Mulkilā IX (5736 m), showing line of ascent. Lucio Calderone

to the spur of rock in the left of the north face of Mulkilā IX (5736 m).

The ascent was made in one day, without intermediate camps, starting at midnight, August 15, from Camp I (4800 m) on the Taragiri Glacier and returning to the same camp at 10 p.m. The ascent was made by nine instructors and the doctor. At 1:30 p.m., six of them (Gian Franco, Roberto M., Roberto V., Mauro, Andrea and Albert) arrived on the summit. The other four (Lucio, Lino, Giovanni and Giuseppe) arrived on the top of the spur at 5400 meters and opted to go down, preparing the anchors for the several double-rope rappels along the way.

The wide north face is delineated on the left by a big 500-meter triangular-shaped spur of rock. On the summit there is a secondary crest which is not very accentuated that leads to the watershed crest that brings one to the top of the mountain. The route began on the right-hand side of the spur with three pitches of ice (55°). We then moved to the left of broken rocks for 50 meters to reach the base of a snowfield that we ascended for three more pitches (120 meters, 65°) to its end at 5200 meters. Next we carried on along the crest that delineates the spur on the right, moving over steps of friable rock (IV) to 5400 meters. Then the way became easier on snow toward the terminal rocks that we skirted on the right as far as the crest that guided us to the top of the mountain. The face is 800 meters, and the route is 1200 meters long.

LUCIO CALDERONE, *Club Alpino Italiano*

Miyar Nala Area, Various Ascents. In this part of Great Himalayan Range there are a lot of unclimbed and unnamed peaks with heights between 5500 and 6500 meters. Four virgin peaks were climbed during two different Italian expeditions in 1992 and 1996. In September, 1992, Massimo Marcheggiani, Leone Di Vincenzo and Alberto Miele climbed two peaks. The first