

Suganbashi, East Face. Sixth place in the Russian Climbing Championships was the team from North Osetin (S. Egorini, leader, I. Afanacev, V. Ivanov) which climbed the right side of the east face of Suganbashi (6A) in the Suran range of the Caucasus. It's interesting to note that the team found descent slings from the K. Khamitsayev team, which was awarded sixth place in the competitions for a route in the winter of 1996. This made it appear that the K. Khamitsayev team did not complete the route.

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TADJIKISTAN

Muzkol Area, Various Ascents. It was reported that the British-based company, EWP, led two trips into the Muzkol, a group of high summits in the southeastern corner of the Pamir. The first took place in 1996, when a team made ascents of five unclimbed summits. In August, 1997, a second EWP expedition of seven U.K. climbers, together with seven Russian guides, climbers and staff, visited the area, making a number of other ascents. The activities began on August 12, when, from a bivy at ca.4650 meters, Peter Bournell, Mark Dancy, Chris Mockett, Dominic and Suzanne Reid, Colin Sprang and Andrew Wielochowski climbed easy snow and ice slopes (2A) to the 5660-meter summit of Salters Peak. On August 15, Bournell, Dancy, Wielochowski, Domenic Reid, Andrej Paschin and Sergei Semiletkin climbed Muzkolski (5895m) via the northeast ridge (3A). Meanwhile, Sasha Bolotov, Igor Gavrilov and Valera Morozov walked up the Zartoshkol Valley to the north, bivying at ca.5100 meters. From there, Gavrilov climbed North Muzkol (6129m) via the center of the southeast-facing snow slopes, which was repeated the next day by an easier line (3A) closer to the east ridge by Bolotov.

On August 18, Sprang and Paschin climbed Panorama (5929m) from the west (3A). Bolotov, Gavrilov, Semiletkin and Wielochowski climbed Fay's Peak (6115m) via an easy glacier to the west face to the northwest ridge in four hours, giving the route a grade of 5A. On August 21, Edward Kapitsa climbed Odinakaya (5687m) via easy snow slopes on the west. (*High Mountain Sports* 182)

KYRGYZSTAN

PAMIR-ALAI

Lailak Region

Rocky Ak-Su, North Face, Various Ascents. Out of the six teams that entered the Technical Class of the Russian Mountaineering Championships, four decided to climb the north face of Rocky Ak-Su (5217m) in the Lailak region of the Pamir Alai. The champion team was the Cverdlov Sports Club (A. Klenov, leader, A. Vedenchuk, M. Dzvi, I. Nefedov, V. Starov, S. Tarasov). They climbed the route in ten days from Aug. 5-14; the ascent involved 104 hours of climbing. They attempted to move as close to the central wall as possible and to improve on the achievement of previous climbers. They used natural pro on their ascent of the Nose near the north cornice and the overhanging section, which they free climbed, using as little aid as possible. To climb the smooth "mirrors" in the middle of the ascent, the team used sky-hooks. After all the cracks filled with ice, it was necessary for them to clear for anchors constantly. The route was constantly in shadow and this played on the psyche; only the Nose



became bright late in the evening. Because of this, on the icy sections of the descent, it was very difficult for the climbers.

The Competition prize went to Perm's Sports team (A. Shabpovich, leader, U. Zhizhin, A. Mochalov, V. Puchnin, S. Smirnov, N. Rilov), which climbed the Shabalin route by way of the Nose from August 7-16 in 93 hours. It was the second ascent of the route's upper section. Before the ascent, the team waited three days for the snow to stop. All the nights out were organized under cornices or on overhanging walls on portaledge. A safety loop went through the inside of the tent and their helmets were not removed. They worked on the route from day-break (7 a.m.) to sunset (9 p.m.).

The Bronze medal was given to the Kirov team (A. Antonov, leader, I. Tukhvatylin, P. Shabalin), which climbed a new variant on the upper part of the ascent that they called the *Cold Corner* (6A). They made their ascent from July 29-August 5 in 65 hours. Not once during the time of the ascent did the sun illuminate the route. This was the character of the *Cold Corner* and created problems as far as movement and the setting up of anchors.

The 5th place team from Krasnayarsk (N. Kuzhetsov, leader, V. Alexandrov, N. Zakharov, A. Savinich, U. Stepanov, S. Surobegni) climbed the L. Troshinenko route from August 19-22 in 39 hours to the summit of Rocky Ak-Su.

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The Peaks of the Lailak Ak-Su Valley. While there has been a recent surge in publicity about the Karavshin Ak-Su Valley, fewer American climbers are aware of the alpine rock walls of the Lailak Ak-Su Valley. We here print a number of photos of the Lailak Ak-Su Valley and encourage climbers to consider this area for future climbing trips as well. As with the Karavshin region, the Lailak Ak-Su region has seen considerable development by local climbers, but adventures will undoubtedly still be discovered by the industrious. Further reading may be found on pages 26-36 of the 1992 AAJ in an article that encompasses peaks in both the Lailak and Karavshin areas.

