

Peak Nazarbaev, Mass Ascent. On July 6, our party of about 300 made the first ascent of Peak Nazarbaev (4376m) in the Zailiysky Alatau range above the city of Almaty. Peak Nazarbaev had not been climbed because it had not existed prior to July 6, when it was renamed after Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbaev on the occasion of his birthday. The previous name had been Peak Komsomola (Peak of the Communist Youth League).

The Kazakhstani Army Sports Club provided excellent support for the climb. The chairlift began before dawn to carry everyone up to 3100 meters. It was just as well that only about 300 of the expected 1,500 climbers appeared, because it took the single-chair chairlift a while to get everyone up. Five minutes up the trail from the top of the chairlift, doctors had set up a M.A.S.H.-like medical tent and several tables to check each participant's pulse and blood pressure. After getting medical clearance, everyone set off up the glacier.

For the first few miles, a hundred helmeted soldiers from the Kazakhstani Army led the way. The route was hard to miss because men in bright orange coveralls were posted every 200 feet to offer assistance. For the last 150 meters below the summit, members of the recently returned Kazakhstani Everest expedition had fixed two sets of ropes to allow for travel in each direction. Except for a bottleneck at the bottom of the ropes, the system worked well and nearly everyone reached the top. Given the right conditions, both meteorological and political, many other first ascent possibilities (perhaps Peaks Lenin and Communism) in the former Soviet Union await.

STEVE BAIN

SIBERIA

ALTAI MOUNTAINS

NORTHERN CHUISKY RANGE

Maashey, Northwest Wall, Bydonov Route. The Rubtsov Mountain Club (D. Sergeev, leader, E. Vinnikov, A. Drakie) made an ascent of Maashey (4173m) via the P. Bydonov route on the northwest wall from July 31-August 1 in 24 hours of climbing. The ascent earned them sixth place in the Russian Mountaineering Championships.

VLADIMIR SHATAEV, *Russian Mountaineering Federation*

Maashey Valley, Various Ascents. The Altai mountains straddle the border area of Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China. Much of the mountaineering interest in the range lies within Russia—broadly speaking, in southwest Siberia, or more precisely in the Altai Republic. The Siberian Altai is probably best known for the Katun Range, and in particular the Ak-Kem wall of Bielukha (4506m). This area has been visited by a number of British parties (including the author's in 1990); it was also, for a number of years, the site of one of the established base camps characteristic of the Russian mountaineering scene.

Some 80 kilometers east-northeast of Bielukha lies the Northern Chuisky Range. This range, like the Katun Range, had a Russian camp for many years in the Ak-Tru valley. The Ak-Tru camp has easier access than the Ak-Kem, and perhaps for this reason remains very popular with local climbers. Despite this, it has still received little attention from foreign parties. Curiously, it lies somewhat east of the highest part of the range and, characteristically, other areas have received much less attention from mountaineers despite being well frequented by trekking parties.