

Irkutsk province—and a lack of rescue facilities. Nevertheless, we are sure that the tough and enthusiastic Siberian climbers will soon make their mark in the climbing world.

Eugene Gippenreiter

Hindu Kush

Tirich Mir, 25,263 ft, fourth ascent 1969: Army expedition Day, Owens and Summerton reached summit by South face, 21 July. Day, Summerton and Anderson also did first ascent of Little Tirich, 20,869 ft, on 5 July. Ausher (Owir 1), 17,333 ft, also climbed. Article p 79.



90 *Tirich Mir from Istor-o-Nal* Photo: J-M. Anglada. See also [55]

Tirich Mir: Japanese attempt from north 1969 Fukuoka Mountaineering Association. This must have been one of the largest expeditions to go to Chitral, seventeen Japanese with 208 porters and ninety-three baggage animals. Permission to attempt Tirich Mir from the south was not received but from the Upper Tirich glacier three attempts were made by the Czech route, four of the party reaching a height of 7620 m. T. Nagai was injured and had to be brought down to the valley, the expedition was then abandoned.

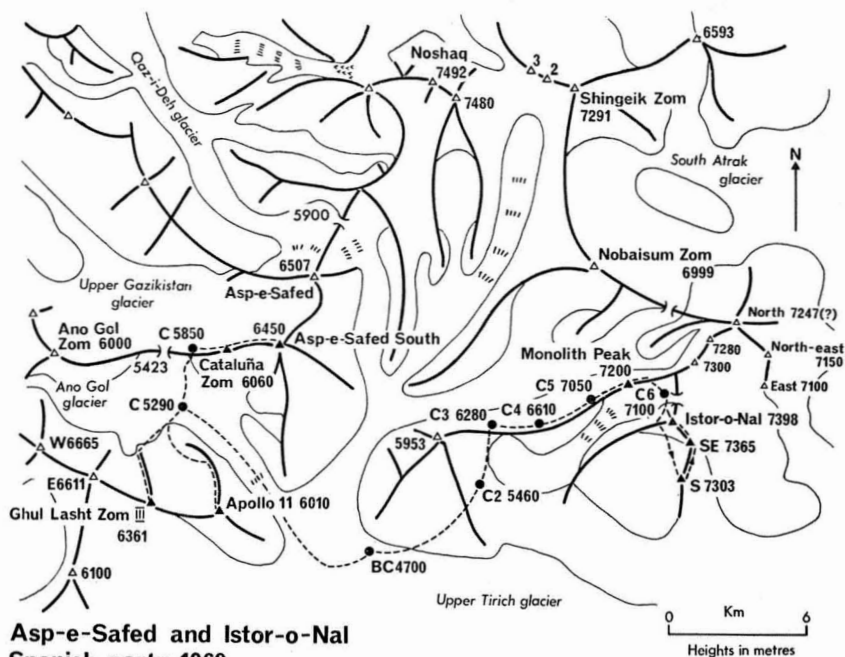
Upper Tirich glacier, two first ascents 1969: Italian expedition E. Barbero, G. Bertero, F. Corsini, P. Giraudi, R. Varvelli (leader). Little Dir Gol Zom, 6550 m, was climbed for the first time on 8 August by Giraudi. Two days earlier Barbero, Giraudi and Varvelli had repeated the ascent of Dir Gol Zom, 6778 m. Giraudi also made the first ascent of Wife Peak, c 6000 m, on 29 July.

Istor-o-Nal, first ascent of South, South-east and Main summits 1969: Spanish party Club Montañas Barcelones expedition. J. M. Anglada (leader), J. Cerda, E. Civis, J. Pons, G. Roca. On 19 July Base Camp was established at Babu Kapoun, 4700 m, on a moraine at the junction of the Upper Tirich and Noshag glaciers—a delightful spot with plenty of sun, grass, and even flowers. Four high-altitude porters from the village of Shagrom accompanied the party.

On 23 July a camp was placed at 5300 m in the Ano Gol cirque, and on 26 July the party, with the exception of Cerda, climbed a peak christened Apollo XI Zom, 6010 m. Two days later they climbed Ghul Lasht Zom III, 6361 m.

A second camp was then established at 5850 m, and from here, on 31 July, the whole party made the ascents of Cataluña Zom, 6060 m, and—less Roca—Asp-e-Safed South, 6450 m.

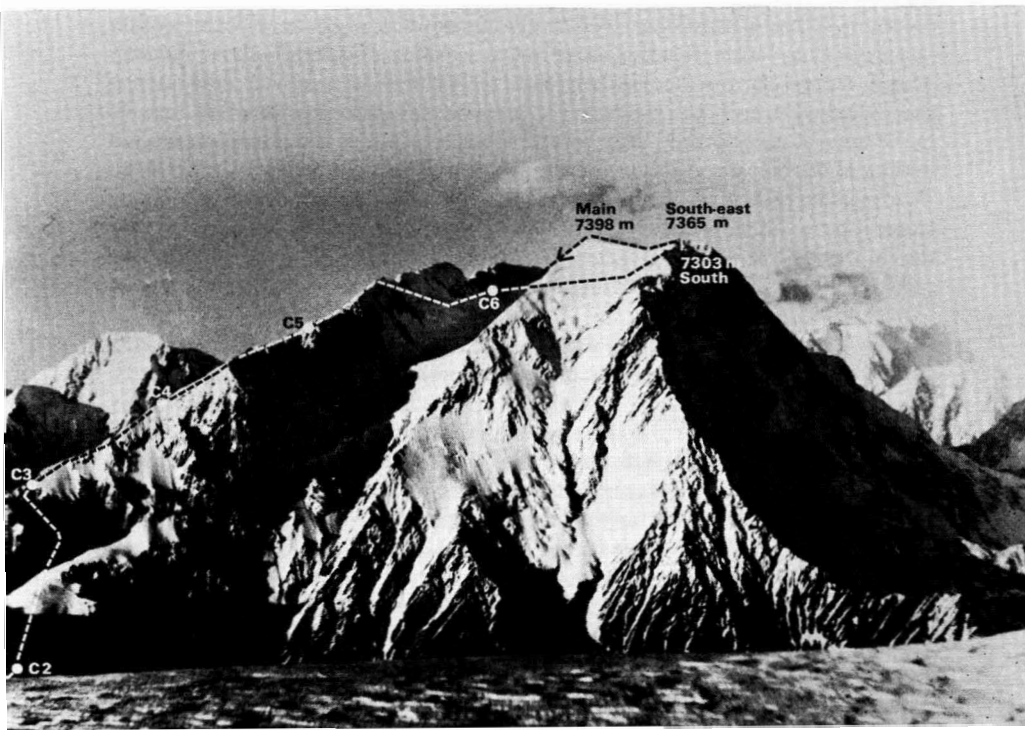
The chief aim of the expedition was Istor-o-Nal; its South and South-east peaks were still virgin. The peak was thought to have been climbed by an American expedition in 1955 (*A. J.* 61 202) but from information supplied by them it appears that they did not reach the highest point but only a secondary peak on the ridge leading from the so-called Rock Pinnacle to Istor-o-Nal North (see below). To reach the highest summit we had to leave this ridge and, after traversing the Rock Pinnacle, descend to a col at 7100 m, which separates it from the main Istor-o-Nal peaks [92]. We made, therefore, first ascents of the South 7303 m, South-east 7365 m, and Main 7389 m (7403 Gruber) summits of Istor-o-Nal. Our highest camp was at 7100 m and from here the party, less Roca, climbed the three summits on 12 August. **J-M. Anglada**



**Asp-e-Safed and Istor-o-Nal
Spanish party 1969**

01 *Istor-o-Nal* area 1969 showing the activities of the Spanish expedition. Map based on material supplied by J. M. Anglada

02 *Istor-o-Nal* from Tirich Nord, showing the route taken by the 1969 Spanish expedition. Photo: H. Handler, 1965



Istor-o-Nal: amendment of earlier reports As regards the Spanish claim to the first ascent of Istor-o-Nal, above, I should note two important facts about our 1955 climb (*A.J.* 61 202):

- 1) When we reached the 'summit' of Istor-o-Nal there was a substantial cloud cover over parts of the adjacent terrain. I cannot discount the possibility that an unexpected summit massif, separated from the point on which we stood by a large depression in the ridge, was capriciously covered by clouds.
- 2) We have no photographs of the last day's climb. Shortly afterwards, one set was stolen from my car and a second set was lost by Eastman Kodak.

The gist of Anglada's argument is that, in order to reach the main summit, it was necessary to descend from a South-west ridge and strike South-east, descending some 100 m to an intervening col *en route*. I suspect he has noted that our account of the climb has no record of such a descent. Indeed, I do not recall following such a route.

There is a possible sequence of events which suggests that Anglada's interpretation is correct. The South-west ridge emerged on a plateau sloping off to the North-west. We worked our way up the plateau, the crest of which was to our right. When we finally arrived on the 'summit' it might have been our first opportunity to look across this ridge in the direction of a detached true summit massif, separated from the South-west ridge by a wide, broad col. I must assume this detached massif was concealed by clouds; otherwise our position relative to the main summit should have been obvious. Of course, at the time we had no inkling of the complications of the summit topography referred to by Anglada. The existing maps were not detailed enough to indicate more than a single summit pyramid. A previous expedition, whose route we followed, were under the impression (shared by us) that the summit lay at the far end of the sloping plateau. They reached an intermediate point along that plateau route.

In view of the new information provided by Anglada I would be gladly willing to credit him with the first ascent of the main summit of Istor-o-Nal.

Thomas A. Mutch

It is evident from the reports above that the Barcelona party have made the first ascent of the highest summit of Istor-o-Nal. The American party of 1955 had their view ruined by the substantial cloud cover and this led to their mistaken belief that they were on the highest point.

The report in *A.J.* 74 296 that the Japanese Women's expedition of 1968 had made the second ascent of Istor-o-Nal is incorrect since it now appears that the

highest point reached by this expedition was a snow summit 100 m beyond and 50 m higher than the Monolith (Rock Pinnacle).

Noroghi Kuh glacier, first ascent of Muhi Zom, 6441 m, 1969 Sanin branch of the Japanese Alpine Club expedition. S. Fujii (leader) G. Funakoshi, K. Hiroe, T. Inoue. Fujii and Hiroe reached the summit on 27 July, followed by the others on the next day.

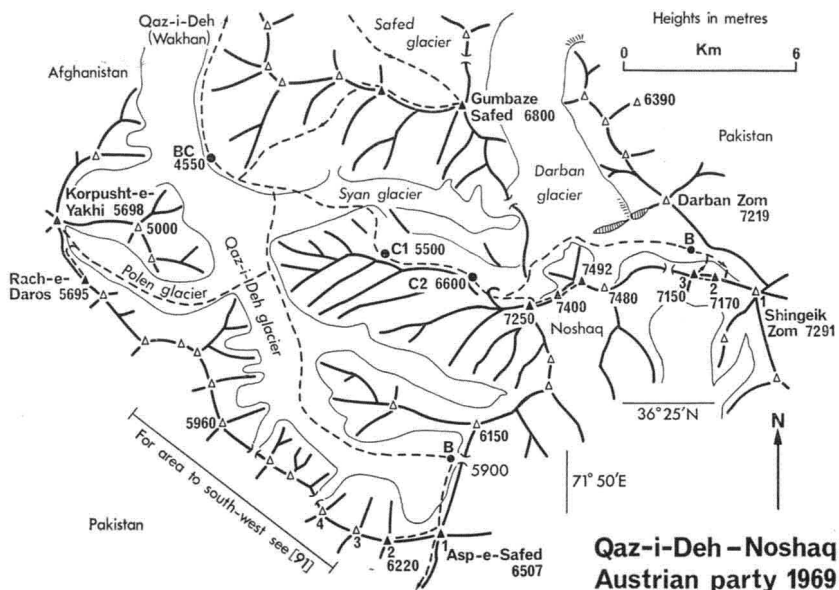
Chi Gari glacier: Austrian party's first ascents 1969 Rudolf and Helger Lindner made the first ascents of Rahozone Zom Nord, 6502 m (Wala 398), and Rahozone Zom Sud, 6535 m, on 4 and 6 August. Two unnamed four-thousanders between the Chi Gari and Anoshal glaciers were climbed for the first time, and also a number of other unnamed peaks in the region of the Anoshah Pass and Shah Gol glacier.

South Atrak Zom Dr A. Diemberger writes: 'With reference to *A.J.* 74 197, the peak on the South Udren glacier (Wala 104:6241 m) was incorrectly named by the Japanese expedition. South Atrak is the *old* name for the South Udren glacier. According to Dr Gerald Gruber the name 'Atrak' for the glacier in the Udren Gol is a cartographer's error and does not conform to the local usage. The Trübswetter expedition of 1966 (*A.J.* 72 85) called the South Udren glacier—according to local usage—the Nobaisum glacier. The peak which towered in the background (Wala 101:7070 m) was christened Nobaisum Zom in 1967.' It may be worth pointing out that so long ago as 1935 Schomberg was using the name 'Udren' in his article in *A.J.* 48 302, though 'Atrak' was used on the contemporary S of I maps.

Panorama from Udren Zom See [75].

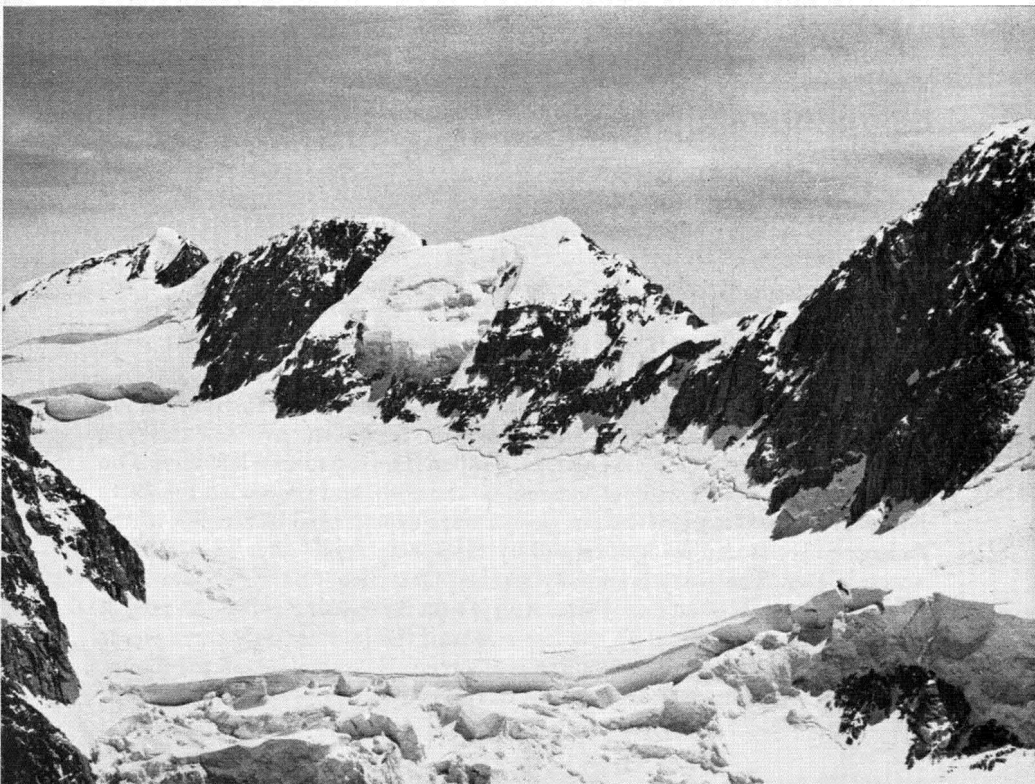
WAKHAN

Noshaq group, Qazi Deh, Austrian first ascents 1969 Austrian Hindu Kush expedition. Ambros Aichhorn, Anton Aichhorn, W. Axt (leader), G. Brenner, U. Ertl, O. Kollreider, H. Müller. The expedition left Vienna on 7 July, reached Kabul without incident on the 20th, and proceeded thence to Kunduz. From this point serious delays were experienced as a result of the damage to roads and bridges caused by the spring floods after an unusually severe winter. The party eventually reached Qazi Deh, and three days later, on 4 August, established Base Camp at 4550 m at the foot of Noshaq. As a result of the delays encountered on the last stages of the journey only three weeks were left for climbing instead of five as planned. Nevertheless, all the mountaineering objectives were achieved in this short time.



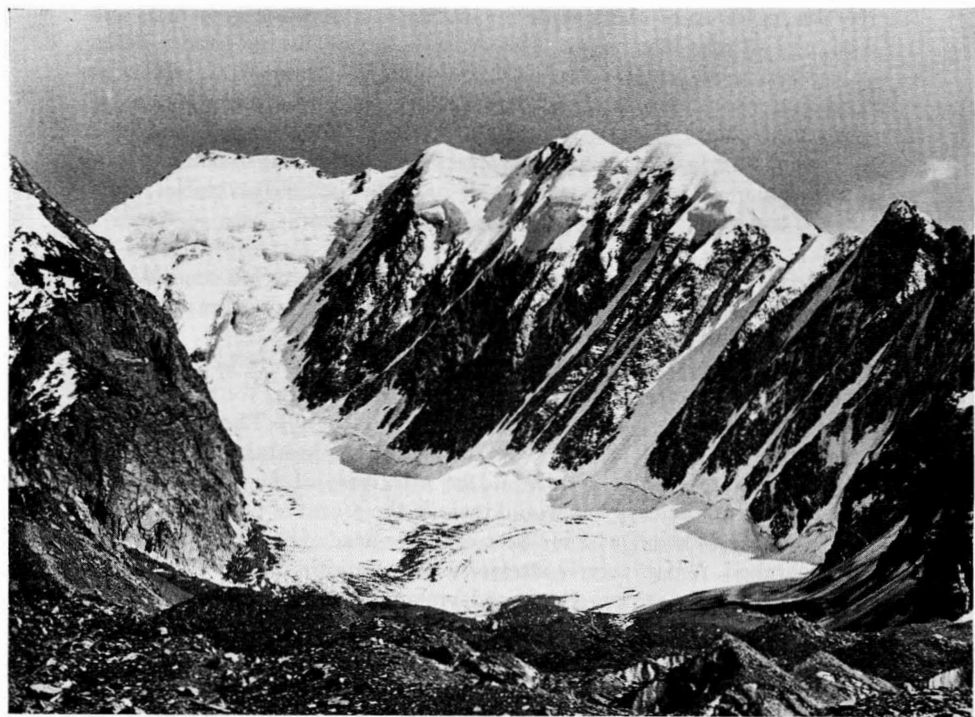
93 *Qaz-i-Deh and Noshaq area* showing the activities of the 1969 Austrian party. The heights given to Shingeik Zom 11 and 111 (provisional names) were measured by aneroid. Map based on material supplied by Wolfgang Axt and related to Wala and Gruber observations.

94 *View south-westwards from Gumbaze Safed showing from left to right Shingeik Zom I, II and III, and the East ridge of Noshaq.* See [93] for position and heights. This and following photos: Wolfgang Axt





95 North face of Noshaq from Gumbaze Safed Continuation rightwards from [94]



96 *Asp-e-Safed* group From left to right Asp-e-Safed I, II, III and IV. See [93] for location

Korpusht-e-Yakhi, 5698 m, was climbed by the normal route on 6 August by Axt, Brenner and Ertl. Three days later the Aichhorn brothers, Ertl and Müller made the second ascent of Asp-e-Safed I, 6450 m, by way of the North face. On 10 August three successes were achieved. Anton Aichhorn, Ertl and Müller made the first ascent of Asp-e-Safed II, 6220 m, by the East arête and Ambros Aichhorn made the second ascent of Asp-e-Safed South, 6340 m, and the first by the North arête. The Barcelona expedition (see above) had made the first ascent of this peak ten days earlier. On this same day Axt and Brenner made the ascent of Gumbaz-e-Safed, 6800 m, by the North-west face, 2000 m in height; descent by the West ridge and South face with three bivouacs.

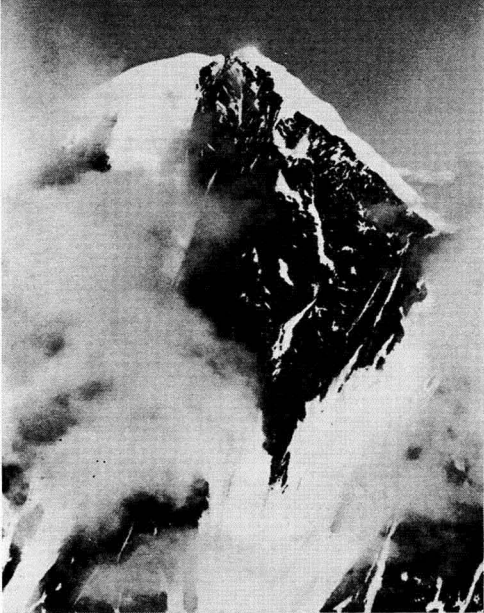
Rach-e-Daros, 5695 m, was climbed on 12 August by Anton Aichhorn and Ertl, and a week later Axt, Ertl and Müller reached the West (7250 m) and highest (7492 m) summits of Noshaq. The ascent was made by the so-called Austrian Spur with only two camps, at 5500 m and 6600 m. Three camps had been required on previous ascents (*A.J.* 66 235, 69 124 and 72 123). The following day the Aichhorn brothers made the first ascents of Shingeik Zom II and III, both c 7150–7200 m in height. They were the last unclimbed 7000 m peaks of the Noshaq group, and lie between Noshaq East and Shingeik Zom I. Being on Pakistan territory they could only be reached by a somewhat involved route from our Base Camp. The party climbed Noshaq West spur to a height of nearly 7000 m and then made a dangerous traverse below the northern precipices of Noshaq¹ to reach the uppermost basin of the Darban glacier, from whence the two virgin summits were climbed in one day.

The weather was good throughout our stay in the mountains but on 8 August we experienced an earthquake which set off ice and stone avalanches all around us and we were lucky to have escaped disaster.

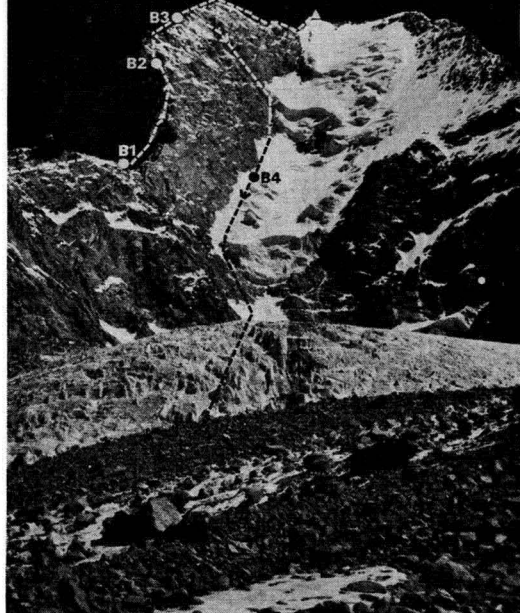
There are still a number of unsolved problems in this area; for example, an east-west traverse of Noshaq; and its 800 m North face [95]. The South ridge of Gumbaz-e-Safed [97], like a gigantic Biancograt, has not been climbed and another rewarding objective would be a traverse of Asp-e-Safed IV–I [96]; this would not be easy but would include the ascent of two virgin peaks. To the best of my knowledge M 6 (c 6200 m) at the head of the Mandaras valley is still unclimbed. A particularly attractive aim would be in the Sad-Istragh group where the peaks are largely of a red-brown granite, similar to that of the Mont Blanc range, and would offer splendid climbing. There are four summits over 5800 m here, of which up till now only one has been climbed, by a Polish party.

Wolfgang Axt

¹ It was on this traverse that the Polish climber J. Potocki was killed in 1966. See [101] and *A.J.* 72 123.



97 *Gumbaze Safed from the West spur of Noshaq with the unclimbed South ridge on the right*



98 *Kishmi Khan, 6760 m, showing the South-south-west buttress (left) and the South face. The French Pyrenean party went up the buttress and down the face (see over)*

Qazi Deh, American-Austrian expedition 1969 G. Barnes, P. Goessmann, R. Hechtel (leader), M. Kosi, Alice Liska, D. Liska, D. Morton. This party made two ascents of Kharposhte Yakhi, 5698 m, and D. Liska and Morton repeated the ascent of Rakhe Daroz, 5690 m. Seven members of the party, in two groups and including Alice Liska, reached the West Peak and also the highest summit of Noshaq, 7492 m. This appears to be the third highest summit to have been reached by a woman—the higher ones being Qungur 1, 7595 m (see p 202 below) and Muztagh Ata, 7546 m (see *A.J.* 64 258). D. Liska and Morton made the first ascent of Koh Sang, 5550 m, south-east of Kharposhte Yakhi, on 18 August.

First ascent of M7 and new route on Kishmi-Khan 1969 French Pyrenean expedition. L. Audoubert and J. Dabos (leaders), Marie-Denise Dabos, G. Panozzo, A. Pradal, G. Rouch, Monique Rouch. On 10 July Base Camp was established in the Mandaras valley at 4230 m between Koh-e-Mandaras and the buttress descending from Peak 147 of the Wala map.

In order to get acclimatised we decided to attempt the unclimbed M7 by its North arête; from the Base Camp it looked an easy and attractive climb. We put our first camp at 5000 m and a second at 5500 m on the col between M6 and M7. We then realised that we should need a few more pitons, so went down to Camp I for two days. While we were there it snowed. The party (Audoubert, Panozzo, Pradal and Monique Rouch) finally reached the summit, 6224 m, on 21 July after three days climbing. The ascent was fairly easy; on the first half of the route we climbed rocks, III–IV, and then followed the snowy arête.



99 *M7* 6224 m: North arête from Camp I—the route of the first ascent

A week later we started for Kishmi Khan, 6760 m. The first camp was pleasantly situated on a plateau with a marvellous view of Noshaq. To reach the foot of the South-south-west buttress we spent a day climbing a long arête to a col at 5700 m. The face leading to the buttress was too steep and icy to climb direct. We could see from the col that it would be very difficult to find a bivouac site roomy enough for four people, so Monique Rouch and Panozzo went down to Camp I, leaving Audoubert and Pradal to continue the climb. The ascent took four days with bivouacs at 5900 m, 6200 m and 6400 m; we reached the summit on 1st August. The climbing was difficult, IV+ throughout, and even AI. Descent by the South face with one bivouac. This was the first ascent by the South-south-west buttress. We left for home on 10 August.

Louis Audoubert

First ascent of Peak 141, 5400 m, Mandaras glacier, 1969 Franco-Swiss expedition. J. J. Asper, R. Bretton, R. Dittert, F. Dombre, R. Grosclaude, R. Habersaat, W. Tschan. On 19 July we left Qasi Deh with thirty porters and after two days march established Base Camp at 4200 m on the right bank of the Mandaras glacier. (For map see *A.J.* 71 203.)

After a day's reconnaissance and two days load-carrying Camp I was set up at 5000 m. On 27 July Asper, Dombre, and Tschan reached, without undue difficulty, the summit of Peak 141 (5400 m by altimeter) of J. Wala's map. Both camps were then evacuated and the party was back at Qasi Deh on 1 August.

We wanted to penetrate further into the Wakhan but the authorities stated that the district was not open in 1969; nevertheless, several expeditions went beyond Qasi Dah (see above).

In 1969 the road between Kunduz and Iskashim was very bad and the journey took us three days, thus costing us valuable time. We had first thought of going up the Qasi Deh valley, but finally preferred the Mandaras valley. I think this was a mistake. The mountains were too high and too difficult for a light and rather elderly expedition with only ten days available for climbing (we left Geneva on 11 July and arrived back on 17 August). The peak climbed is not very important compared to its neighbours (Koh-i-Mandaras, Koh-i-Nadir and Keshnikhan), yet this first ascent gave us great satisfaction.

We hired a bus from Kabul to Qasi Deh, where it waited for us to ensure our return journey. There were two other expeditions in the area so charges were rather inflated. We paid our porters 250 afghanis for the journey to Base Camp and back (two days) with loads of twenty-five kilos. The charge for a horse was 100 afghanis per day. We also took up a sheep, which we killed at Base Camp.

René Dittert

Shakhaur,¹ 7116 m (?), first ascent of North buttress 1969 French expedition. Mme I. Agresti, H. Agresti, R. Dietz, J-P. Frésafond, P. Gendre, R. Gillot, C. Jager, B. Mathieu, J-P. Paris (leader), J. Soubis, R. Thomas, Dr F. Magnin. The first ascent of Shakhaur was made in 1964 by the Austrians G. Gruber and R. Pischinger, by an easier route from Chitral (*Mountain World*, 1964-5 36). In October 1963 a Polish party had made an attempt on the North buttress, but they were too late in the season and they only reached a height of about 6000 m (*A.J.* 71 210, *O.A.Z.* 1335 75 and *Taternik* 1965 1-2 32, 51). See map at *A.J.* 71 203 for location.

Our party of twelve reached Kabul by air at the end of July, our baggage having gone overland by lorry. We established our Base Camp at 4300 m near the West foot of the North buttress.

On 7 August the assault began. Gendre, Jager and Paris attacked the buttress by its West slope and installed nearly 500 m of fixed ropes. Next day Agresti, Dietz, Frésafond and Mathieu fixed another 500 m of rope and found a suitable site for Camp 1 at 5400 m. It was apparent, however, that the route taken on these two days was not very safe and was particularly dangerous in the afternoon when torrents of water and stones swept down along the fixed ropes. The crest of the buttress afforded a better route; new fixed ropes were put in place and on the 9th a height of 4950 m had been attained. The 1000 m of rope previously fixed on the original route were taken down.

¹ This spelling has been retained pending an eventual final agreement on this and other spellings such as Shachaur, Shakhauer, Shakhawr, found from time to time.



100 *Shakhaur*, 7116 m (?), from the north showing the line of the French first ascent of the North buttress. This and next photo: Henri Agresti

Camp 2 was established at 5700 m on 12 August and the work of supplying the camps went on. Above Camp 2 the route through the séracs had to be made safe. Dietz, Jager, Mathieu and Paris continued this work up to 6050 m and found a suitable route; by the 14th the way to the summit was open. The four, with Gendre and Soubis, spent that night at Camp 2 and next day pitched Camp 3 at 6400 m. After an unpleasant night they set out for the summit on 16 August but, tired and short of equipment, they gave up the attempt only 50 m above Camp 3 and went down to Base the same day. Two days later H. and I. Agresti fixed 300 m of rope above Camp 3 and reached a height of 6650 m before returning to camp. Finally, after a day of bad weather, H. and I. Agresti, Jager and Mathieu left Camp 3 for the summit on 20 August, but I. Agresti had to give up after climbing some 50 m beyond the camp. The other three went on and after passing over the *antécime* attained the summit. The altimeter registered 6850 m and the height of 7116 m seems definitely too high, as also is the case with other peaks in the same area formerly thought to be seven-thousanders, such as Kishmi-Khan and Nadir Shah.¹

¹ This question was discussed fully by Dr Gruber in *A.J.* 72 9 who put Kishmi-Khan at 6760 m and Nadir Shah at 6814 m, but left Shakhaur a seven-thousander, at 7084 m.

Two days later Gendre, Paris, Soubis and Thomas reached the summit and went down to Camp 2 the same evening. Dietz and Frésafond made an attempt on the 23rd, but owing to thick fog were unable to go beyond the *antécime*. The whole party was back at Base Camp on 24 August.

Without ever being of extreme difficulty, the buttress was quite steep and there were some difficult sections, in particular the great wall below Camp 1, some steep little pitches between Camps 1 and 2, the séracs interspersed with steep walls between Camps 2 and 3, and the final pitches above Camp 3.

The general angle of the wall was seldom less than 40° , but in places exceeded 70° . Crampons were worn throughout the ascent, even on the few rocky slopes at the base of the buttress; above Camp 3, below the *antécime*, there was very little snow, but many stony slopes.

About 3000 m of fixed ropes were left on the pillar, as it would have taken a week to recover them. It is quite possible to climb the pillar without fixed ropes, but they are very useful for the descent. If a support party climbed Shakhaur from the Chitral side, or by the western ridge from Nadir Shah, it would be possible for a very strong and well acclimatised main party to do the North pillar Alpine-style in four to six days and use their tracks and camps for the descent, in the way that the Russians do in the Pamirs.

We only suffered from cold near the summit. Camps 1 and 2 were comfortable enough but suitable camp sites were virtually non-existent between Camp 2 and the summit of the buttress—Camp 3 had to be made by digging out a site in a crevasse at the foot of a rocky arête which descends from the summit.

Henri Agresti

Pegish valley, first ascents of Pt 6096 m 1969 Gifu University party (leader Y. Hirabayashi). On 8 August T. Kotoo and Suzuki left camp at 5.40am and climbed both summits of Pt 6096 m (Wala 306). The ascent of Kohe Farzand, 6196 m (Wala 308) was repeated.

Ishmurg valley, 1969 Hiroshima University Medical Dept Alpine Club. K. Doishikawa, T. Hirai (leader), I. Sugimura, H. Yahata. The party visited the Chapdarra, a westerly side-valley of the Ishmurg valley, and made the ascent by a new route of Pt 6390 m (Wala 354).

Khandut and nearby valleys: Polish expedition 1968 The Fifth Polish Hindu Kush expedition, led by Waldemar Olech and comprising eight other Poles and three Italians, visited first the Khandut valley (see *A.J.* 74 210-6). Here climbs were made of Pts 351/1 and 351/2 Wala, 5670 m and 5680 m.



101 *View south-west from Shakhaur, towards Noshaq* See also [73] and [93].
The cross marks the approximate place where in 1966 an avalanche fell from the North face of Noshaq, carrying away the Polish climber J. Potocki

The party then turned their attention to the Yamit valley, where Pt 6450 m (Wala 321), Lunkho-i-Maghreb, was climbed for the first time on 11 August by F. Nusdeo, G. Oppio, A. Pizzocolo, W. Strupczewski and S. Wojnarski. The Austrians climbed the North-east summit on 10 August, and this was repeated by the Poles on 20 August. The same day others in the party made the second ascent of the West summit of Lunkho-i-Dosare, 6902 m. Pt 6185 m, 308 Wala, also fell and was christened Kohe Farzand; it was climbed for the first time on 24 August by W. Olech, R. Palczewski, Z. Pawlowski and W. Skubicz.

Olech and two companions also paid a visit to the Qala Panja valley and on the homeward journey visited the Urgunt-i-Payan valley, and on 13 September made a second ascent of the Swiss route on Urgunt (formerly Urgend, 7038 m Gruber). The climb required two bivouacs and whilst not difficult was made in extremely bad weather and constant danger from avalanches. Eiselin's flag and summit notice were found. (Source: *O.A.Z.* 1366 103.)

Khwaja Muhammad group and Khandut valley, Austrian party 1969
Österr. Touristenklub expedition. M. Dobias, Eva Köckeis, A. Schmölz, W. K. Stangl (leader). On 19 July Dobias and Schmölz made the first ascent of Köhe

Khandut, 5541 m, and on the same day Köckeis that of Kohe Ghor, 4805 m. The expedition then moved on to the Central Hindu Kush and Khwaja Muhammad group, climbing Kohe Ka Laghn, 5712 m, by a new route. Dobias and Schmölz made the first ascent of Kohe Sare Madan, 5721 m, on 7 August. Two days later Köckeis and Stangl made first ascents of Kohe Parwara Khord, 5525 m, and K. P. Kalan, 5625 m.

Koh-i-Mina 6435 m attempted by the 1968 Scottish expedition (*A.J.* 74 212), is now known as Kohe Dusti; the original name was given by the Czech expedition, members of which made the first ascent of the North Peak (6380 m) in 1965 (*O.A.Z.* 1351 6). We understand that the Afghan authorities did not confirm the name chosen by the Czechs.

Lunkho summits: history of ascents A note on the history of these peaks may serve to clear away some misunderstandings.

The most easterly of the two, Lunkho-i-Harvar, 6895 m (Gruber), has four summits. The East and East Central Peaks were both climbed for the first time on 5 August 1967 by M. Suzuki and S. Tanaka of a Japanese expedition. The first ascents of the West Central and West Peaks were made on 13 August 1968 by F. Grimmlinger, C. van der Hecken, F. Hintermayer, G. Pressl (Austrians) and, as reported in *A.J.* 74 213, the Yugoslavs Belak and Sazonov. Other members of the party repeated the ascent four days later.

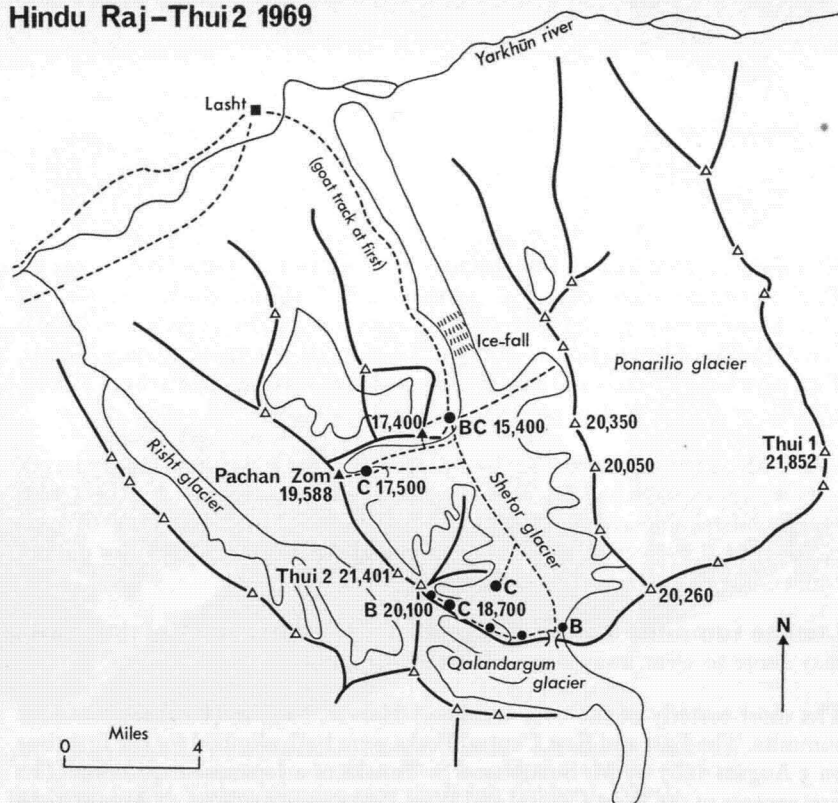
Lunkho-i-Dosare, 6902 m (Gruber), has two summits only, of which the Western is the higher. Both summits were climbed first on 4 August 1968 by Grimmlinger, G. Haberl and E. Koblmüller (Austrians) and Draslar and Stupnik (Yugoslavs). The second ascent of the West Peak was made by a Polish party on 20 August, by a very difficult route on the North-west ridge (*O.A.Z.* 1366 103).

There is a third, and considerably lower, Lunkho peak, Lunkho-i-Kuchek, 6354 m, some distance to the east of Lunkho-i-Harvar, but this is at present unclimbed.

HINDU RAJ

Koyo Zom, second ascent 1969 A Tokyo Alpinist Club party climbed Koyo Zom, 6889 m, on 21 July, and found on the summit a note left by the Austrian party who made the first ascent in 1968 (*A.J.* 74 217).

Attempt on Thui II from Shetor glacier 1969 British Hindu Raj expedition. R. J. Collister, R. J. Isherwood (leader), Colin H. Taylor, Chris Wood; Major Munawar Khan, Army Service Corps (liaison officer).



102 Thui 2 area, Hindu Raj showing the activities of the 1969 British party. From material supplied by Colin Taylor

Our planning was greatly helped by Dr Gruber's article and panorama in *A.J.* 73 55 (subsequently corrected in *A.J.* 74 216). Although the highest summit, Koyo Zom, 6889 m, was climbed in 1968 (*A.J.* 74 217), the two other principal peaks, Thui I (6662 m) and Thui II (6524 m) were unclimbed. A third peak, Thui Zom (6158 m) came to notice in the report of a small Japanese party as having a North face 'more impressive than the Grandes Jorasses'.

We drove to Rawalpindi (p 276) and as a result of various difficulties over permission, etc., reached Lasht on 31 July, about two weeks later than expected. Only Rob was fit to climb immediately, as the rest of us, on account of very badly blistered feet, had completed the journey on horseback, a harrowing experience for the uninitiated on the steep zig-zags above the Yarkhun river. At this stage, we still had not seen Thui II, but a three-mile detour up the main valley gave an excellent view. It seemed to live up to Gruber's description of it as the finest isolated peak in the area.

Rob began a reconnaissance and found an excellent route up the West flank of the Shetor glacier to by-pass its big lower ice-fall. Porters were hired and in a few days we had established our Base Camp on a lateral moraine above the

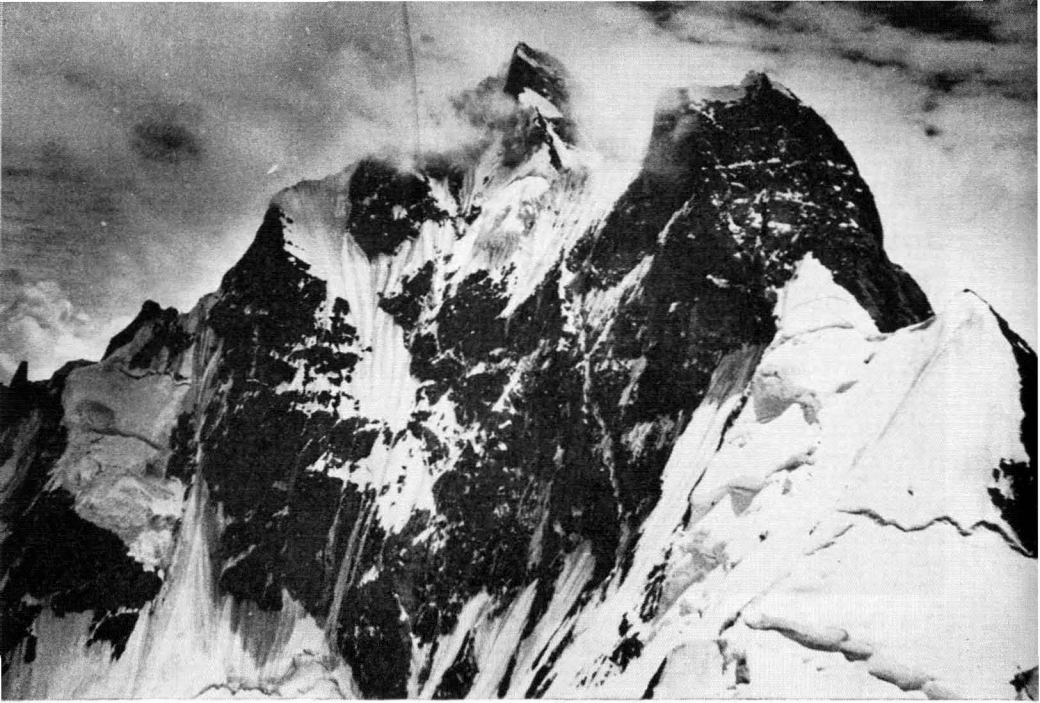


103 *Pachan Zom* c 19,588 ft to the north-west of Thui 2. The route of the first ascent was by the central snow ridge

ice-fall at 15,000 ft—all, that is, apart from Munawar, who preferred to remain in Lasht. Load-carrying was completed by Chris and myself, while Rob and Colin explored the north side of the mountain and made a brief trip up the Shetor glacier to the col at the head. They climbed two peaks, one, which was tentatively named *Pachan Zom* (5974 m), was a striking snow-summit [103]; but at the same time they established that there was no reasonable route for a small party on this the northern side of Thui II. Chris and I, meanwhile, went up to the head of the Shetor glacier to look for an approach from the south or east. The South-east ridge seemed to provide a reasonable route, mostly on rock but not too steep, but the approaches to it were difficult to see. To get a better view we climbed two small peaks from a bivouac at 17,000 ft and, after struggling with waist-deep soft snow and crevasses situated surprisingly on the crests of corniced ridges, we were able to sort things out. There was clearly a route, threading through a system of bergschrunds to a snow-plateau below the South-east ridge.

Back at the Moraine camp, we made plans. We hoped to put a camp on the snow plateau, at about 18,000 ft, and from there to climb the peak and return with one, or possibly two, bivouacs at a group of gendarmes just over half way up the ridge. After a rest day we set out with enormous loads for a single carry, in two days, to the snow-plateau. On the second day the route was made through the bergschrunds; we were able to climb inside the lower lip of one schrund, and we surprised ourselves by reaching the plateau without using any fixed rope.

We set up camp in a superb position with a view north toward the Pamirs, east to three fine un-named summits on the Shetor-Ponarilio watershed, and further



104-5 *Views south from the summit of Pachan Zom* The photo above shows Thui 2, with the North-west ridge leading to the summit; the attempt was made from the other side, by the South-east ridge (see [106]). In the photo opposite, the ridge in the left foreground is the South-east ridge of Pachan Zom, while the Rishit Gol is in the right foreground, with unnamed and unclimbed peaks behind

to the bulk of Thui I, and south to Thui Zom. This peak showed a very impressive North face—it too lived up to what we had read about it. We saw no obvious route from this side. Thui Zom would make a fine objective and there are many other fierce-looking unclimbed peaks between 18,000 and 21,000 ft in the area.

Heavy cloud built up that evening and we woke next day to several inches of fresh snow and a white-out. We had heard that the weather often deteriorated in mid-August, and it was now the 19th. The weather remained bad for two days and we were glad to have some reading-matter, but on the 21st we woke to a very fine, cold morning. For the first and only time we saw the Rakaposhi group far away to the east.

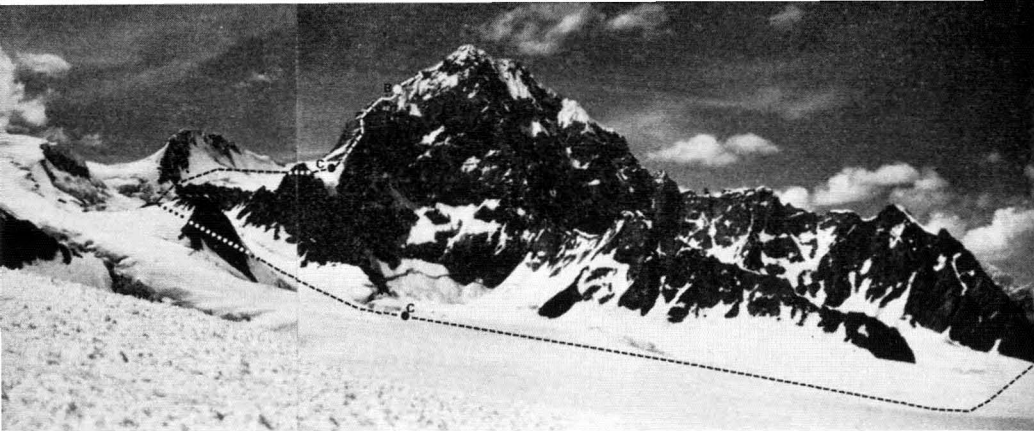
We set out with duvets, sleeping-bags, bivouac sacs and food to last two days. With limited climbing gear our sacs weighed around thirty pounds. A slope of snow-ice, fairly steep but made easy by the peculiar snow-fences of the Hindu Kush led us to the rock ridge, which, from our camp, had looked very short and easy-angled. The rock was superb granite, though often covered in debris. We soon found that the scale was bigger than we had thought. Some sections were steep and single out-of-balance moves were very strenuous. One pitch in the lower section needed a peg; this and the following pitch were probably IV.



Above here the ridge steepened, but Colin, in the lead, had seen a line to the left of the crest. He traversed out on to a nose, in a superb position, and the next pitch took me up a fine series of flakes to by-pass the steep section.

The ridge eased off, and just after lunch-time we reached the gendarmes, impressive 50 ft granite monoliths. We could now see to the south-west, where an ugly black cloud was approaching. Colin and I, ahead of the others, left our bivouac gear and went on. After an ice pitch leading up to the gap between two gendarmes and a short descent on the other side, two more pitches led to a point from which the way ahead was fairly clear; mostly snow and snow-ice to the summit ridge, which itself looked fairly straightforward. We were clearly above most of the difficulties, but, unfortunately, it was far too late to reach the summit that day. We descended to rejoin the others and choose a bivouac site.

At the foot of the two gendarmes was a flat area of ice, big enough for a tent if we had had one. This was an adequately sheltered site, but Colin and I were lucky. A little lower down a narrow snow passage between two blocks had collapsed and gave entry to a little cave. Fifteen feet down was a good niche for



106 *Thui 2 from the east* Taken from the Col between the Shetor and Qalandar glaciers. This and next photo: Rob Collister

two, with stones to sit on. We were the first in; Rob and Chris decided there was not room for four and spent the night on the ice platform.

We all had a reasonably good night: I took a sleeping pill and had some weird dreams. Next morning we emerged to fresh snow, a dark grey sky and no option but to go down. We were aware that we were not likely to get another chance. The descent, ending in a series of abseils down the snow-covered rocks, took most of the day and the next day, still in bad weather and mindful of avalanches, we descended the bergschrunds. Chris fell into three of these in succession, happily without serious consequences.

The glacier was in heavy cloud and route-finding was difficult. Many times the leading man put a leg through, but we were lucky this glacier seemed to have very few big crevasses above its lower ice-fall. Just before we reached the moraine camp the cloud lifted to show Koh-i-Baba-Tangi and the other peaks above the Oxus transformed into a Christmas-card view. It seemed that winter had come.

We had just time for another attempt provided the weather cleared, but after some false starts it settled into a monotony of dark clouds and snow showers. We packed up camp and descended to Lasht, where surprises awaited us. We discovered that our permission had been withdrawn two weeks previously and that at any moment an official investigation could be expected from the Pakistan Government. This was in fact carried out by a Colonel of the Chitral Scouts, a very friendly and impartial man; we heard no more of it subsequently.

We returned to Rawalpindi on 12 September, and after a remarkable series of events, during which we were formally de-briefed, given verbal clearance to leave Pakistan, stopped at the Khyber Pass frontier, and delayed a further nine days in Rawalpindi, we eventually left for home.

Dick Isherwood