Pamir 1987

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The Soviet International Climbing Camps in the Pamir, which have been running since 1974, are an excellent school of high-altitude climbing for people from different countries. The main camp is on the Achik Tash meadow and has two sub-camps on the Moskwin and Fortambek glaciers. The popularity of the camps is increasing: in the last season more than 450 mountaineers from 18 countries (including Australia and New Zealand) participated, most of them from Bulgaria (116). Americans climbed in four or five different groups. Unfortunately, they met with very bad weather: low temperature, winds, only few days without rain or snowfall.

During the rare spells of better weather ascents of all three 7000ers were completed: Pik Lenina (7134m), Pik Korzhenevskoy (7105m) and Pik Kommunizma (7483m). Pavel Bogdanov, 17 years old, became the youngest boy to climb a Soviet 7000er. Several female ascents were also made. A Bulgarian party climbed a virgin 5000er (5684m), north-east from Pik Korzhenevskoy, and gave it the name of their national hero, Vasil Levsky. A French team ski'd down from Pik Lenina via the Lipkin Cliffs. A Czechoslovak completed an acrobatic ski descent of Pik Kommunizma. Aside from the international camps, numerous Soviet teams climbed in the Pamir. A very strong party, including three women, trained for the 1989 Kangchenjunga traverse. Unhappily, because of severe conditions, there were numerous accidents. Todor Batkov from Bulgaria writes, 'only during our stay there were 13 deaths in the area'. The greatest tragedies occurred on Pik Kommunizma, where five Soviet climbers were killed in an avalanche, and on Pik Klary Zetkin, where four Soviet mountaineers died in the same way, among them the member of the 1982 Everest expedition, Vladimir Moskalcov.

Other international climbing camps are running in the Caucasus, the Altai (at the foot of Bielukha), and near Alma Ata. During 1987 (winter and summer) more than 1000 foreign mountaineers participated. The 'Sovalptur' which is organizing the camps is considering the possibility of starting a new centre, in the Tien Shan at the foot of Khan Tengri (6995m) and Pik Pobedy (7439m).