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JAN AND HERB CONN

NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 34, Number 10

October 1979

MS MEMBERS SURVIVE YERUPAJÁ

by Don McIntyre

The Cordillera de Huayuash, less than 20 miles long, contains some of the most spectacularly difficult peaks in Peru. The dominating summit of the range is Yerupajá (21,769'). During the month of July, Leo Slaggie, John Serocki, and myself joined by "New Yorker" Romanas Sedlickas and "Tennessee-boy" Charlie Frye, attempted to scale this mountain.

On the afternoon of June 30, we left Lima in a heavily laden VW minibus. After a long 10-hour drive through the desolate and arid coastal regions, we slowly climbed into the valleys of the Cordillera Negra. The highway, a relatively good dirt and gravel road, finally took one of its many tolls on our bus, which broke down for the final time at Canococha Pass (4020meters). We were forced to camp by the roadside for the night, which caused us all to get altitude sickness after having come from sealevel (Lima) to almost 14,000' on the same day.

The driver repaired the vehicle in the morning, and we dropped down the mountain road to Chiquian. To the southeast the whole Cordillera de Huayuash jutted

abruptly heavenwards, while to the north loomed the peaks of the Cordillera Blanca. We spent the next two days in Chiquian bargaining over the cost of our "bestias" -pack animals- and acclimatizing to the 11,000' altitude. On July 3, with 15 heavily laden donkeys and one horse, we left Chiquian and followed the trail, which wound steeply down to the Rio Chiquian, continued downstream through a fantastic gorge, crossed a crude log and mud bridge, and then alternately climbed and descended beside the Rio Llamac.

We spent the night in an open-air pig market in the small Indian town of Llamac. After a fitful night enlivened by the eerie music of the drunken Indians, we set off for Lake Jahuacocha. The trail was uphill, and after a long eight hours, we camped at the eastern end of the lake at an altitude of 4066 meters. Behind camp lay Solterahanca, a glacial lake surrounded by moraines, and above it rose the steep ice cliffs of Rondoy down which avalanches continually thundered. Adjacent to Rondoy on the south stood the impossible Jirishanca, followed by Yerupajá Chico and then, tower-

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