In 1928 the interdisciplinary German-Russian Alay/Pamir Expedition took place. It was a milestone in the German-Russian scientific collaboration including specialists in geology, physical and cultural geography, photogrammetry and mountaineering. One of the outstanding results was the first detailed topographic map of the high mountain ecosystems of the Northern Pamir and Alay prepared by Richard Finsterwalder from the Technical University in Munich.

It is the aim of this symposium to bring together geoscientists working and interested in the Central Asian Mountains of the Pamir, Tienshan, Hindukush, Karakorum, Kunlun, as well as in the surrounding basins (for example Lake Aral, Tarim) in order to obtain an overview over the state of knowledge concerning the Late Quaternary landscape evolution, climate change and its possible effects on land use systems and the socio-economic development in these ecologically highly sensitive mountain ecosystems. This seems particularly important because the region lies at the transition zone between two large-scale atmospheric circulation systems, the mid-latitude Westerlies and the Indian Summer Monsoon, each with varying intensities in the past. The Russian literature is partly not accessible, but since about two decades foreign scientists started to work in Central Asia, and a comparison of the new and previous findings seems promising. The political and socio-economic changes during the last two decades have drastically changed the land use systems and the pressure on the natural resources. Given the current climate change scenarios, it is important to investigate future options for sustainable socio-economic development and eco-management. We hope to foster interdisciplinary discussions and promote project-related ideas concerning research projects on climate and landscape history, as well as socio-economic development.

Time: 3th and 4th week of August 2008

Location: Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Osh (Kirgistan) and Dushanbe (Tajikistan)

Topics of the symposium:
- glacier fluctuations during the Quaternary
- palynological results
- lake level fluctuations and lake sediment studies
- loess chronology
- ice core studies
- glacier volume estimates and water discharge
- land use in lowlands and mountains: climatic and environmenta}l constraints (past, present, future)
- natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes)
- nature protection, (eco)tourism

Climate Change and Landscape Evolution
in the Central Asian Mountains and the Surrounding Basins: Past, Present and Future

Symposium and fieldtrip
in memory of the 80th anniversary of the German-Russian Alay/ Pamir Expedition in 1928
Preliminary Schedule

Day 1: Symposium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (lecture hall of the Goethe Institute)
Day 2: Organized trip through the Fergana Valley from Tashkent to Dustlik, then bus to Osh, Kirgistan
Day 3: Symposium at the University of Osh
Day 4: Start of organized field trip with jeeps along the Pamir Highway (restricted number of participants), first day from Osh to Sarytash
Transportation back to Tashkent is organized for participants who don’t join the field trip
Day 5: Sarytash – Karakul
Day 6: Karakul – Murgab
Day 7: Excursion around Murgab (guided by Kreutzmann)
Day 8: Murgab – Alichur, excursion around Alichur (guided by R.Zech and I Röhringer)
Day 9: Alichur – Bulunkul, excursion to Lake Yashilkul (guided by R. Zech and Röhringer)
Day 10: Bulunkul – Jilandi (stay overnight at thermal bath)
Day 11: Jilandi – Khorog (visit of the Botanical Garden, guided by Aknazorov)
Day 12: Khorog – Kalaykhumb
Day 13: Kalaykhumb - Kulyab (visit of loess profiles near Kulyab, guided by Sosin)
Day 14: Kulyab – Dushanbe
Day 15: Final symposium in Dushanbe

Travel arrangement to Tashkent and back home from Tashkent and Dushanbe, respectively, as well as accommodation in Tashkent and Dushanbe need to be arranged by the participants (we will recommend various options in a later circular). Accommodation in Osh and during the field trip will be organized. Costs for participation at the symposium in Tashkent and Osh (including bus transfer to and back from Osh, as well as accommodation in yurts) and costs for the symposium in Dushanbe and the field trip over the Pamir Highway (additionally including accommodation, food and transportation during the field trip) will be published next week. We are currently trying to get financial support to cover parts of these costs, as well as funding for individuals who require support for their travel arrangements. Note that visas are required for Uzbekistan, Kirgistan and Tajikistan and we will prepare letters of invitation. Costs will be ~50 US$ for each country. Additionally, the special permissions to visit the Pamir cost 20 US$.

Conference language is English and Russian with translation in English

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Please contact W. Zech to state your interest in participating the symposium and/or the field trip over the Pamir Highway. An one page abstract for an oral presentation or for the poster session should be sent before 1st of April 2008.
Next circular will be available 10th of May.
Please forward this circular to colleagues and students.