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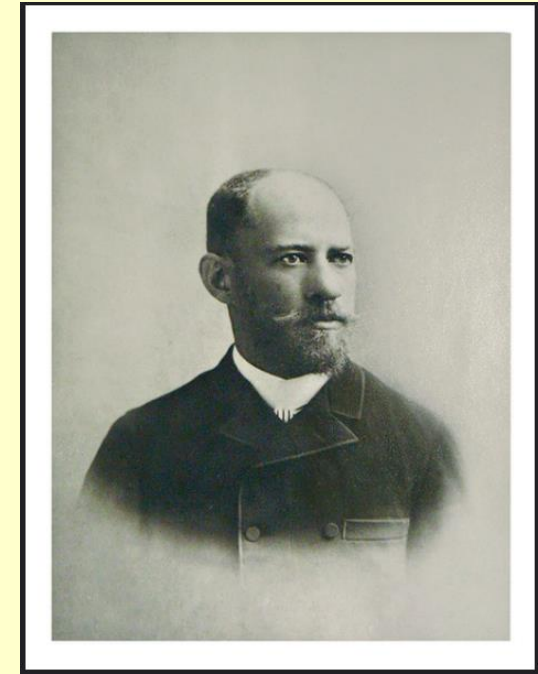
**The vision of the Romanian Iulius Popper
regarding the research of Antarctica
during his residence in Argentina
(1886-1893)**

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Who was Iulius Popper?

- a Romanian- born Argentine engineer, explorer, and entrepreneur
- additionally, an astronomer, a linguist – a man of all talents
- a geographer and cartographer as he was a member of The Argentinian Institute of Geography and a corresponding member of The Royal Society of Geography in Bucharest, Romania
- he received an engineering degree in Paris
- he developed gold mining activities as well as plans for mapping, colonization and civic organization of Argentine (Tierra del Fuego), for which he issued his own stamps and coins



Iulius Popper (1857 - 1893)
“The Romanian conquistador of Argentina”



Local stamp



Gold coin

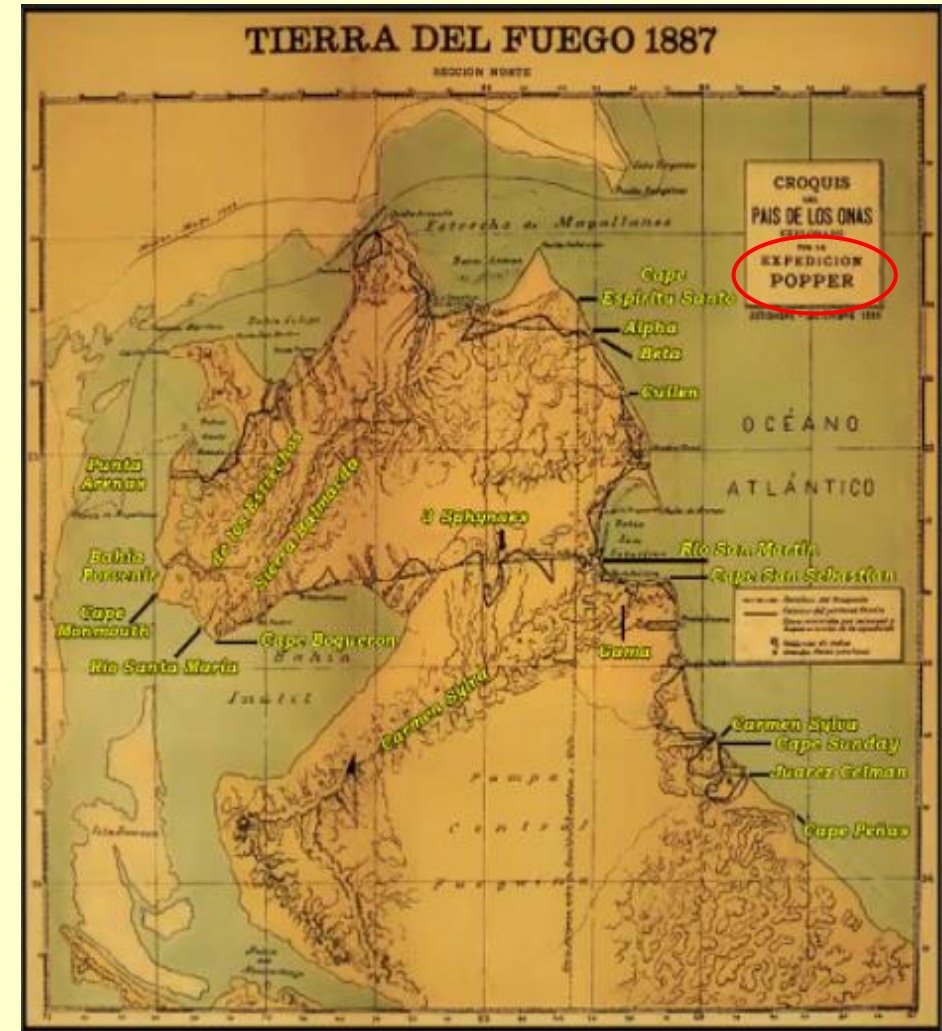
1. Bernard D. Ansel *European Adventurer in Tierra del Fuego: Julio Popper*, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 89-110, 1970

2. John R. Spears *The Gold Diggings of Cape Horn: A study of Life in Tierra Del Fuego and Patagonia*, pp.9-10, 1895

The activities of Iulius Popper

- **1886** – the first explorer who crossed the northern part of Tierra del Fuego during the “Expedition Popper”
- **1887** – he hold public lectures concerning his expedition to Argentine Geographical Institute, including geographic and ethnographic studies in Tierra del Fuego. To some of the explored places he gave Romanian names, such as: Carmen Sylva, Ureche and Sinaia.
- **1888** – he set out to explore the south-eastern area of Tierra del Fuego as well as Antarctic and subantarctic regions

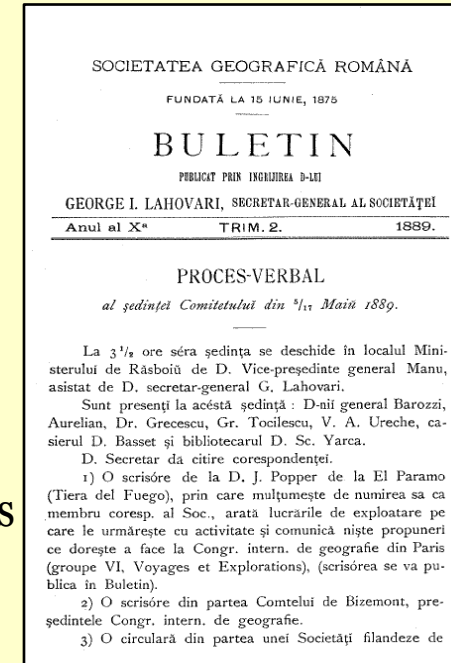
Bernard D. Ansel *European Adventurer in Tierra del Fuego: Julio Popper*, The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 89-110, 1970



The map of the land explored by Iulius Popper

The Antarctic dream

- **1888** – Popper addressed a memorandum and a map of the itinerary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Argentina, which was approved by the Government
 - he included in his plan the idea of establishing fish markets and research stations
- **1889** – Popper revealed a brilliant plan for exploring the South regions to the Romanian Geographic Society
 - he expressed his interest for the exploration of the Antarctic region and austral seas, emphasizing the significant role of the research in those areas for geographic sciences
 - he highlighted the possibility to use well equipped ships to navigate to South areas as fishing ships more often crossed the parallel of 60° South
 - he considered that merging the itinerary of fishing ships and the interest of the passionate young scientists for unexplored areas will be beneficial to science.



En considérant le but de cette réunion, je suppose que parmi les différentes questions d'intérêt géographique, la région antarctique et les mers australes, restées relativement occultes aux investigations récentes, formeront plus d'une fois le thème de la discussion.

Les difficultés qui s'opposent à l'exploration de ces régions ainsi que les bénéfices qui résulteraient aux sciences géographiques de leur plus ample connaissance, me font surgir une idée qui à mon avis ne mérite pas d'être prise en considération, et quoique manquant tout-à-fait de l'élaboration qu'elle exige, je ne vacille pas de vous la communiquer telle comme je viens de la concevoir.

La rareté des nouvelles qui nous arrivent d'au delà du parallèle 60° S., n'est pas due au manque de navires qui croisent par ces latitudes; bien au contraire, tous les ans, pendant l'été antarctique, les mers du sud sont parcourues par des voiliers bien conditionnés qui se dédient à la pêche de la baleine et principalement à la chasse du phoque ou du loup marin. Cette industrie les mène chaque fois envers des points différents, à la recherche d'endroits qui n'ont pas encore été fréquentés et qui par conséquent promettent d'être plus avantageux. Bien souvent, emportés par les tempêtes et les courants marins, ils se voient entraînés envers des endroits jamais visités, incon-

D'autre part il y a des hommes qui se dédient assidûment aux investigations scientifiques et dont la plus grande compensation est celle qu'ils trouvent dans la satisfaction que seule la science peut procurer. Il y a des jeunes gens qui doués de l'éducation nécessaire, cherchent un terrain pour faire valoir en pratique leurs connaissances, et des hommes instruits qui n'hésiteraient pas un instant d'accepter toute occasion qui leur servirait à s'éclairer, à même temps, que de contribuer au progrès des sciences.

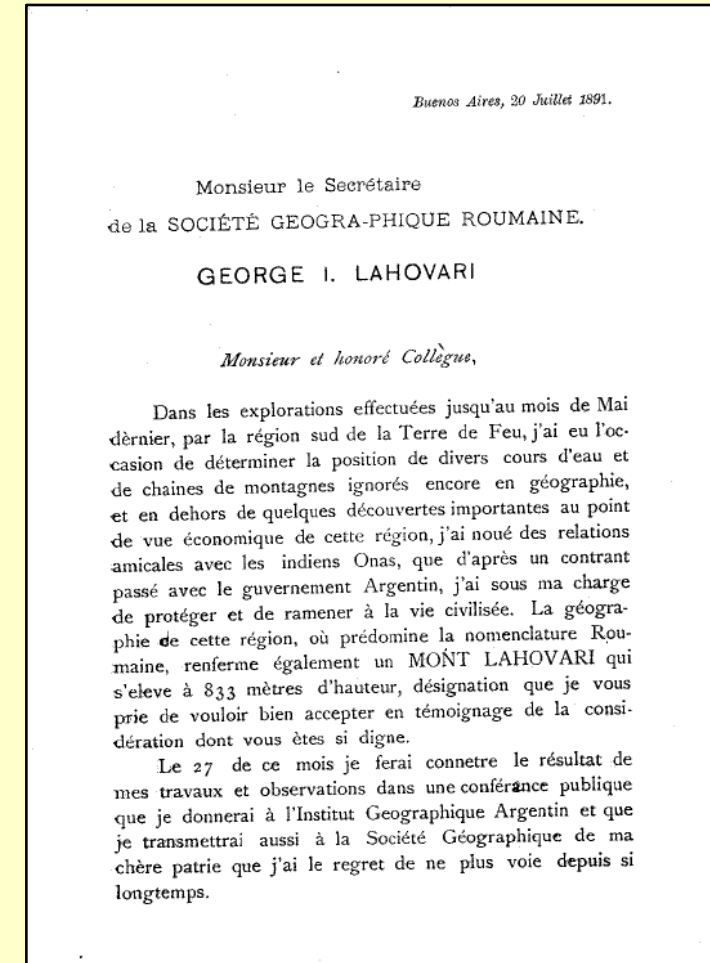
Voici deux éléments hétérogènes dont la fusion produirait des bénéfices indiscutables et je ne crois pas que cette opération soit difficile à effectuer.

Les capitaines des bateaux-pêcheurs, admettront des passagers toutes les fois qu'ils reçoivent l'indemnisation équivalente, et la personne désireuse d'explorer des régions

Fragments of Popper's letter to the General Secretary G.I. Lahovari of Romanian Geographic Society "Buletinul S.G.R." trim II/1889

The unfulfilled dream ...

- **1890 – 1891** – Popper explored a few islands in the South-East of the Fuegian archipelago
 - he made public his observations and results within Geographic Society of Argentina
 - he informed the Romanian Geographic Society about his explorations in the South region
- **1892** – Popper's letter to the general secretary G.I. Lahovari of Romanian Geographic Society published in the *Bulet. Geogr. Trim. I., 1892, pg. 31-34*
- **1893** – **“El Explorador” ship was waiting for I. Popper in port Boca, Buenos Aires, to start the journey to Antarctica. Unfortunately, the same day Popper surprisingly died.**
 - according to Professor Boleslao Lewin, 2 ships (“El Explorador” & “El Griguito”) were waiting for Popper and both were his property.
 - the preparations for an expedition to Antarctica had been already planned as the crew members were designated, such as the captain Carl Jansen, a connoisseur of the South seas, as well as the naturalist Bruno Ansero and other members, carefully selected for the expedition.



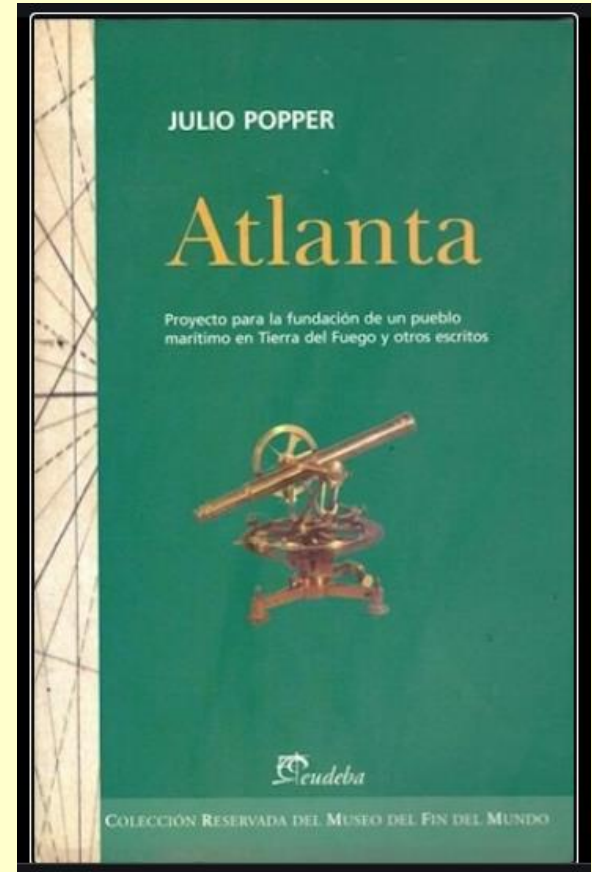
A fragment of Popper's letter to the General Secretary G.I. Lahovari of Romanian Geographic Society, “Buletinul S.G.R.” trim I/1892

The itinerary “Popper 1888”

- After Popper’s death a map was found among his documents, which represented the map of the entire Antarctic and subantarctic areas – a white spot with inscription “Región inexplorada. Polo Sud”.
- On the map was precisely lined the itinerary of an expedition, starting from the South of Tierra del Fuego archipelago, reaching the South Shetland Islands, then returning to the starting point.
- The itinerary had an unequivocal inscription “Popper 1888”.
- Popper’s notes were preserved in the Archive of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Argentina, “Archivo General de la nacion” and also, described in the biographic work written by Professor Boleslao Lewin.

Atlanta – the largest maritime centre

- In 1893, two months before Popper's death, he had been printing booklets entitled **“Atlanta. Project for creation of a maritime centre on the Atlantic coast of Tierra del Fuego”**.
- The project envisaged the construction of a large maritime centre on the East coast of (Tierra del Fuego) Big Island in order to fully enhance the value of natural wealth of Tierra del Fuego, as well as its close and far regions.
- Based on judicious studies, Popper planned the construction of Atlanta in the bay of San Sebastien.
- In the project was also included the idea of bringing to Atlanta products from markets organized in the South Shetland archipelago.
- In the vision of Popper, Atlanta as a valuable economic centre of the region, could stimulate the prosperity and blooming of the entire Fuegian archipelago.
- The launch of the Atlanta project was prepared by Popper through several articles that he had previously published in newspapers, for example “La Prensa” in 11.04.1892.



The visions of Iulius Popper in the context of the Antarctic Treaty

Iulius Popper had a pioneering vision on the organization of Antarctic exploration and research expeditions based on international cooperation.

“ ... The societies interested in these explorations would designate the person or persons who, following a competency examination, intend to undertake such a journey, and would facilitate the obtaining of the necessary tools and equipment, and at the same time the travel costs for passengers, which will certainly not be too high. Upon returning from the trip, the explorer will present to the society that facilitated his means to undertake the journey, his report, observations and collections ...” *A fragment of Popper's letter to the General Secretary G.I. Lahovari of Romanian Geographic Society, “Buletinul S.G.R.” trim II/1889*

In respect to the Antarctic Treaty, recent ATCM meetings insisted on the international cooperation by facilitating the access of countries without Antarctic infrastructure to the infrastructure of countries with developed infrastructure (several Antarctic stations or icebreaker type ships), in the same time minimizing the impact on the environment by reducing the number of parallel unilateral researches (on the same topic) in the field. Thus, the recent Romanian Antarctic expeditions are examples of international cooperation (with Russia, China, Australia - Memorandum of understanding, Korea, Argentina).

“... Although the obstacles to this idea would not be too great, neither the individual nor society, but an international congress like this in preparation could apply this idea in a fertile manner. This is, in a few words, what, in my opinion, deserves to be drafted and submitted to congressional deliberation. ...” *A fragment of Popper's letter to the General Secretary G.I. Lahovari of Romanian Geographic Society, “Buletinul S.G.R.” trim II/1889*

Conclusions

- Iulius Popper was an engineer of rare attainments, an excellent explorer and a pioneering visionary.
- For the first time, he explored the land of Tierra del Fuego developing not only the gold mining activities, but also he studied ethnography and geography of the area.
- Iulius Popper expressed his interest also in the pure scientific exploration of the Antarctic and subantarctic area in a letter sent to the Romanian Geography Society.
- In 1888, Popper set out the expedition to the extreme South, but later in 1892, he passed away in the same day when the journey to Antarctica would have started.
- Definitely, Iulius Popper was a visionary anticipating the organization of the research expeditions based on international collaborations.