

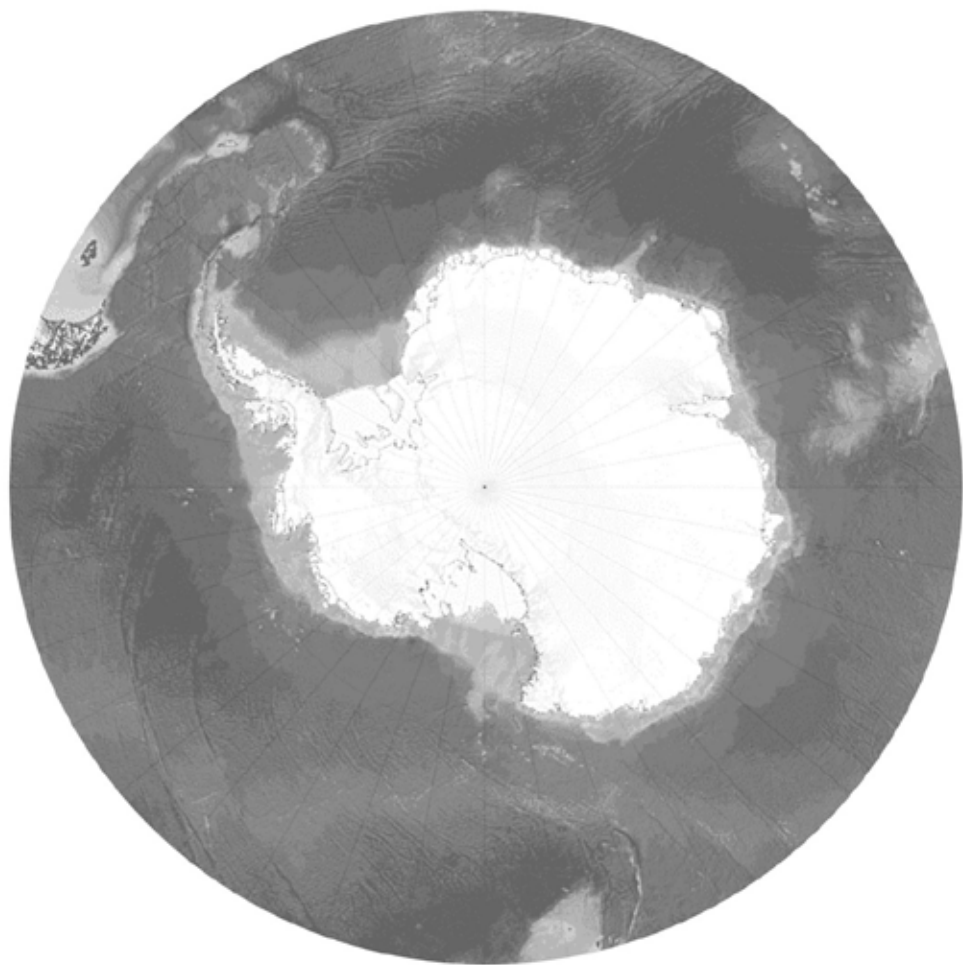


ANTARTICA in the 1950s.

Perspectives from the Southern Cone

EDICIÓN BILINGÜE

CONSUELO LEÓN, MAURICIO JARA Y NELSON LLANOS
EDITORES



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ISBN: 978-956-404-940-3

LW EDITORIAL
Fundación Valle Hermoso
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HECHO EN CHILE
2021

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PRESENTATION

The main motivation behind this book was the need to spread and recognize our Latin American Antarctic history in the period prior to the signing of the Washington Treaty of 1959. In this regard, it is quite understandable that, due to our Latin American imprint, it is more common for us to focus on our national Antarctic pioneers rather than to try to understand our Antarctic behavior -as a whole- in broader international contexts: regional, hemispheric, and global.

However, to understand and assess Latin American Antarctic behavior in that complex decade of reconstruction and Cold War, it is important to reflect from the perspective of our realities and possibilities, as they were perceived at that time. Possibly, at the beginning of our study, we felt that we could know something about those issues; but also that, through some intellectual and imaginative effort, we could relate some historical events and reconstruct the real meaning of many of the decisions that were adopted at that time.

Thus, we undertook to take another step in our task of recreating Latin American Antarctic history, reflecting now -from our respective national visions- about what happened during the 1950s. Those were difficult years, since it was essential to readjust the economy of our countries and our political alliances in an interna-

tional scenario that was completely different from the one that existed before World War II.

Scholars of different nationalities contributed to this effort and approached their analysis from different perspectives. Thus, the first group of contributions are of a testimonial nature. They delve into how “being an Antarctic person” was understood from the frozen continent itself, that is, at the level of daily life, considering the small but essential tasks of every day, as well as the decisions and personal friendships forged in Antarctica. The chapters by Anelio Aguayo; Tamara Culleton and Valeria Trezza; and Mary Tahan show us the decade from the perspective of young “Antarctic people” from different countries. Some of them kept their friendship for many years after leaving the austral region.

A second group focused on the account and analysis of the Argentine perspective. Eugenio Facchin provides a detailed and complete account of the Antarctic campaigns; the creation of detachments and bases; and Hernán Pujato’s initiative to plan an expedition to the South Pole. This detailed contribution serves to understand and relate the chapter by Carlos Vairo, who analyzes the interest in setting up operational bases south of the polar circle and reaching the pole by land, recounting the first wintering at the Esperanza base, as well as the existing relations with the Chilean base O’Higgins. In turn, Pablo Fontana develops a more political view about the creation of the San Martín base, south of the polar circle; the handling of the different incidents that occurred with the British in the middle of the decade; and the negotiation stage prior to the Treaty of Washington. A complementary view is provided by Lydia Gómez, who reflects on the scarce information provided by four newspapers -two national and two provincial- about the International Geophysical Year, a scientific-political event that marked the future of Antarctica. Thus, the Argentine perspective recreates a complete picture of its Antarctic activities, including as well, topics such as the strength and conviction of its leaders; the complex relationship with the British authorities in the Malvinas; and the lack of journalistic interest in keeping public opinion informed.

Thirdly, we analyze Uruguay -a nation always linked to whaling and activities in the southern seas- but whose internal politics, as in other Latin American countries, limited its possibilities of carrying out its national aspirations and participating more actively in the negotiation process in Washington, as Waldemar Fontes points out.

The following group focuses on Chilean Antarctic actions from different perspectives. Consuelo León refers to how bipolarity and the changing Anglo-Saxon attitude meant, in the end, serious limitations to the national Antarctic endeavor; just as Antarctic policy suffered a perceptible weakening at the end of the decade by excluding public opinion,

scientists and the armed forces from what was happening in the negotiations in Washington. Mauricio Jara and Pablo Mancilla provide a complete overview of the debates and positions that took place in the National Congress regarding the financing of such activities, the Antarctic Statute, and the international agreements related to Antarctica, especially the 1959 Treaty. On the other hand, Luis Valentín Ferrada analyzes the controversy before the International Court of Justice over the Antarctic domain, in the middle of the decade under study; an issue in which both Argentina and Chile acted with certain concordance, and which serves to recall the extension of the British claim, since at that time it only referred to coastal sectors, useful for whalers. Nelson Llanos exposes the contribution of a Chilean diplomat to the understanding of the Antarctic question: despite the misunderstandings he suffered, he accurately reported on the weakening of the British Empire, the ambitions of the powers for the white continent, the real underlying objectives behind the paraphernalia of the AGI, and on the remote possibility of having a coordinated action with Australia. As a whole, these works make evident the existing limitations to appreciate the evolution of the international context during the decade, and therefore, the weakness of the agreements that could be reached. They also analyze the contribution of the legislative power, the diplomatic service, and the complexity of the legal aspects when facing the Antarctic issue.

Although, chronologically, it is not part of the decade under study, this book includes a chapter by Marcos Aravena-Cuevas. This represents our permanent effort to open spaces for young scholars. This contribution is limited to the field of Antarctic literature, and analyzes the contemporary writer Benjamin Labatut, who uses the frozen continent as a valid metaphor to expose a process of overcoming the anguish and horror of emptiness.

Along with thanking every one of the authors for their contributions, and also, in a special way, Guido Olivares, we would like to end with two comments: The first one, is related to the fact that we are still taking the first steps towards the construction of a complete Latin American Antarctic history of the 1950s. Even so, these pages demonstrate the similarity of the challenges and issues we faced, and even a congruence in the answers we have given. In this sense, this work has allowed us to advance with seriousness and solidity in little-studied academic terrain.

The second comment is about the cover of this book: there have been many comments -favorable and critical- about it, and therefore, we take advantage of these lines to indicate that it is the work of the Magellanic painter Andrea Araneda, who has accompanied us in several Latin American Antarctic Historians Meetings and -in our opinion- represents very well how confusing, attractive, and disconcerting the 1950s were.

Indeed, in that period, women acquired greater visibility, but they only seemed to represent the glamour and comfortable life that, at that time, many aspired to have. Decisions, however, were made by the rulers of the great powers, and even by rebellious leaders such as Fidel Castro, Carlos Ibáñez and Juan Domingo Perón. It is for this reason that in this cover it is difficult to visualize and identify the Antarctic theme, since that period was marked by socioeconomic problems, while Antarctica seemed to consist only of expeditions, a silent presence on the frozen continent, and the constant difficulty that our societies and ruling elites had in truly appreciating what was at stake.

Recreo, Viña del Mar
Diciembre 2021

MY ANTARCTIC CHRISTENING

Anelio Aguayo Lobo

Introduction

In my years as a university student, from 1953-1957 at the School of Veterinary Medicine, College of Livestock Sciences and Veterinary Medicine at Universidad de Chile, I met Dr Guillermo Mann F., director of the Institute of Zoological Research at the same University, and diplomat Oscar Pinochet de la Barra from the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during a visit they made to our college, at the invitation of Dean and Professor Hugo K. Sievers. Subsequently, during a study visit to Viña del Mar, I met Dr Parmenio Yáñez A., director of the then Universidad de Chile Marine Biology Station (Montemar), and fisheries engineer Juan Lenguerich of the same institution. Today this Station is part of the Universidad de Valparaíso College of Ocean Sciences and Marine Resources.

Towards the end of 1957 –when I had been working for a few months at Montemar as a Zoology assistant– I heard through Professor Dr Parmenio Yáñez that academic and logistic activities for the 1957-1958 International Geophysical Year (IGY) were being held that same year. I also met Dr Yáñez himself, who had taken part in the 1st Chilean Antarctic Expedition together with Oscar Pinochet de la Barra, Dr Guillermo Mann F., and the assistant of Dr

Humberto Fuenzalida V. of Universidad de Chile¹, Prof. Carlos Oliver S. of Universidad de Concepción, Francisco Coloane C., architect Julio Ripamonti B., engineer Juan Lenguerich N., medical physician Arturo Larraín, and Prof. Humberto Barrera V., all known as the “Antarctic Research Pioneers”. During this first expedition (1946-1947) the first Chilean base was built on Greenwich Island and called “*Base Soberanía*” and later “Arturo Prat Chacón Base”, managed by the Chilean Navy. Today we know the 1957-1958 International Geophysical Year was one of the most important Antarctic scientific events of the 20th Century, and one of the most significant historical events for the subsequent signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959².

1957-1958 International Geophysical Year (IGY)

The (1957-1958) International Geophysical Year was preceded by the 1882-1883 and 1932-1933 Polar Years, and was supported by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) formed in 1931, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) that since 1850 was the authority in meteorology, climatology, and hydrology, and whose disciplines required support by geophysics.³ Organization of the 1957-1958 IGY was tainted –as every Antarctic meeting– by political and strategic aspects as well as the pursuit of positioning within world order, and hence the position of Chile during those Cold War years was to ensure actions carried out were predominantly scientific, so as to prevent them from extending onto matters more political, legal or of sovereignty.⁴

The Chilean delegation at these preparatory meetings comprised Chilean Ambassador to France, Juan Bautista Rossetti, Sea Captain Raúl Koegel, Lieutenant Colonel Luis Reyes, and Óscar Pinochet de la Barra. As to be expected, Chilean Antarctic scientific studies at the 1957-1958 IGY were modest, due among other reasons to the lack of Antarctic researchers in those years and the unfortunate fire at the recently built (1957) scientific laboratory

¹ Faced by the impossibility of taking part in the first expedition to the Antarctic, professor Humberto Fuenzalida Villegas managed to have his assistant and student of History and Geography Eusebio Flores Silva included in the mission, and to whom he entrusted the mission of “observing, taking notes, and collecting all data and samples of geographical interest and useful for subsequent study. Cf. Flores Silva, Eusebio. *Anotaciones Geográficas de la Antártica Chilena*. 1947. *Clio* Vol. 14 Santiago. Chile. 19-20: 74-85

² Cf. Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. 1976. *La Antártica Chilena*. 4^a Edición, Santiago: Ed. Andrés Bello.

³ Cf. Anelio Aguayo Lobo. “El Año Geofísico Internacional y su importancia para el desarrollo de la Ciencia Antártica Chilena”, en: M. Jara Fernández y P. Mancilla González (Eds.). *El Año Geofísico Internacional en la Perspectiva Historia Chilena, 1954-1958*. Valparaíso: Editorial Puntángel, 2012.

⁴ Cf. Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. 1976. *La Antártica Chilena*. 4^a Edición, Santiago: Ed. Andrés Bello.

called Luis Riso Patrón, alongside the Bernardo O Higgins Base at Covadonga anchorage, managed by the Chilean Army and built for carrying out geodesic and seismology studies during the International Geophysical Year.

One of the main outcomes of IGY scientific cooperation was the agreement to be part of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), in the purview of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in 1958, aiming to encourage and coordinate future scientific research in the continent, especially multi and inter-disciplinary research.

Antarctic Treaty (AT)

One year after conclusion of the IGY, in 1959, the United States hosted a conference of the 12 Antarctic countries –Chile included, as an Antarctic territory claiming country. In this way, and at the initiative of the US government, the Antarctic Treaty System was formed in 1959, entering into force in 1961. This public international law instrument ensured the freedom of scientific research in the Antarctic; froze territorial claims in the continent; prohibited military operations and the use of nuclear weapons; promoted the exchange of scientific data and Antarctic researchers, and declared the Antarctic as a continent dedicated to peace and science.

Subsequently, considering our country the relevance of the Antarctic Treaty, Chile decided to form the Chilean Section of SCAR, in this way forming the Antarctic Research National Scientific Committee (CNIA–*Comité Científico Nacional de Investigaciones Antárticas*) in 1962. The following year, leveraging a reorganisation of the Chilean chancellery, an agreement was reached to form an Antarctic Scientific Research Centre, called Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH–*Instituto Antártico Chileno*), aiming to strengthen incipient national Antarctic science and somehow recover lost time.⁵ Consequently, INACH –founded at the initiative of the CNIA, the Chilean chancellery, Universidad de Chile, and the National Ministry of Defence– as of 1964 fosters national Antarctic science, especially through its Antarctic expeditions, becoming over time the driving force behind this activity. Additionally, the CNIA reserved for itself the right to advise the board of INACH in formulating its Antarctic scientific policy.

At Universidad de Chile, the rector was advised by the director of the Marine Biology Station in Montemar, Dr Parmenio Yáñez Andrade, and by the director of the Institute of Zoological Research in Santiago, Dr Guillermo Mann Fischer. In those years of 1964, the

⁵ Ibídem.

Chilean chancellery advised the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Enrique Gajardo Villarroel, and the Minister of National Defence, General(r) Ramón Cañas Montalva.

Fourth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting

The Third Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was held in 1964 in Brussels, Belgium. At this meeting the delegates of attending countries agreed to study the feasibility of protecting Antarctic fauna and flora, especially marine mammal populations, since at the time whale hunting in the Antarctic still existed, whereas the main aim of the International Whaling Commission was to regulate whale hunting, not protect them.

In this context, and shortly before the 4th ATCM was held in Santiago, the Montemar Marine Biology Station of Universidad de Chile was visited by two distinguished members of the Chilean Antarctic Commission –Ambassador Enrique Gajardo Villarroel and General Ramon Cañas Montalva– to diplomatically request the collaboration of researchers at this institution and that were interested in studying aspects of the flora and fauna in the Antarctic, since Chile should have in-depth knowledge of their life cycles and population size, in order to devise and implement standards for their protection.

On welcoming these two figures, Dr Parmenio Yáñez A. was accompanied by his zoology assistant, veterinary surgeon Anelio Aguayo-Lobo, who two years earlier had finished his professional thesis with a study on “The sexual maturity of a species of cetacean of great interest to the national whaling industry, the *cachalote* or *Physeter catodon*”.⁶ During the friendly and relaxed conversation with such renowned personalities, it was agreed that professor Yáñez and his assistant Aguayo-Lobo would prepare a scientific project to be presented to the chancellery, requesting the necessary funds for its implementation during the 1965-1966 Antarctic season, and in turn present the results achieved at scientific meetings to be held by SCAR at the Plenaries of the 4th ATCM to be held in Santiago de Chile from 3-18th November 1966.

The young assistant Aguayo-Lobo drafted a project called “First census of marine mammals in the South Shetland Islands, Chilean Antarctic”, which was approved by Professor Yáñez and sent to the chancellery. After the project was approved by the Chilean Antarctic Commission it was agreed to request logistic support by the Chilean Navy, that placed two-months use of the A.P. *Piloto Pardo* Chilean Antarctic ship with its two helicopters at

⁶ Cf. Anelio Aguayo Lobo, “Observaciones sobre la madures sexual del Cachalote macho (*Physeter catodon* L.,) capturado en aguas chilenas”, *Revista de Biología Marina* (Montemar). Valparaíso, Chile, 1963.

the service of the research project, for the census of marine mammals in the South Shetland Islands. Subsequently Dr Aguayo-Lobo travelled as part of a commission to Santiago to the hydrobiology laboratory of the National Museum of Natural History in the locality of Quinta Normal. At this laboratory he visited Professor Nibaldo Bahamondes N., who at the time was with a thesis student and research candidate to implement the coming census of Antarctic marine mammals considered by the project and to be presented to and approved by researcher Dr Aguayo-Lobo. The thesis student was the Biology and Sciences professor of the Universidad de Chile Pedagogical Institute, Daniel Torres Navarro, with whom Dr Aguayo-Lobo kept a long and enduring academic relationship.

During the international SCAR sessions in October 1966 –the preparatory sessions before the 4th ATCM– in Santiago de Chile, together with Professor Torres I was to present the results of the research project titled “First census of marine mammals in the South Shetland Islands, Antarctic”. This was my Antarctic christening.

With regard to this Antarctic christening and for my greater indulgence I would like to add that the president of the Chilean delegation and Chair of the 4th ATCM, professor and internationalist ambassador Julio Escudero Guzmán, in the final report handed to chancellor Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux in December 1966 said with regard to the task “carried out by the delegation in my charge at this meeting ... everyone performed in the most intelligent, patriotic, and correct manner, and all are personally deserving special mention be made of their performance in their respective service sheets”⁷.

For his part, the adjunct representative of the Chilean delegation at the 4th ATCM, Guillermo Pinto, assistant director for Borders, Frontiers, and Limits, in a note addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated participation by the technical and scientific advisors such as aviation captain Juan Becerra, vice-head of the Chilean Meteorological Office, engineers Víctor Dezerega and René Vidal of Universidad de Chile, professor Nibaldo Bahamondes of the National Museum of Natural History of Santiago, and veterinary surgeon Anelio Aguayo-Lobo of the Montemar Marine Biology Station in Viña del Mar, may be classified as “very good”⁸.

The words said by professor Julio Escudero and the assistant director for borders, Guiller-

⁷ 21-page report by the president of the Chilean delegation, Julio Escudero Guzmán, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux, dated 21 December 1966. Contains a detailed narrative of the 4th ATCM since its opening on 3 November until it ended on the 18th of the same month in 1966.

⁸ Note dated 22 November 1966 by the adjunct representative of the Director of Borders, Frontiers, and Limits of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

mo Pinto, regarding our performance in the IV ATCM, were key in my baptism as well as decisive in the subsequent work carried out in favor of national Antarctic science.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Consuelo León Wöppke and Dr Mauricio Jara Fernández of Fundación Valle Hermoso, Valparaíso, Chile, for their kind invitation to collaborate with a contribution to the History of Antarctic Science. Likewise, my gratitude to the Chilean Antarctic Institute for the facilities provided in drafting this article, and Miss Bárbara Galaz for her collaboration to the editing of the text.

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MEMORIES OF A RADIO- TELEGRAPHIST DURING THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR (ESPERANZA BASE, 1957-1958)

Valeria Analía Trezza

Tamara Sandra Culleton

Introduction

The International Geophysical Year¹ (from now on IGY), was a global event that counted on cooperation among nations², and it was its purpose to deepen humanity's knowledge of Antarctica, a marginal continent in the global economic system³. The objective of this project is to share some experiences of one of the members of the 1958 Personnel of Esperanza Base.

¹ In 1950 the International Scientific Unions Committee discussed the possibility of organizing the IGY based on the model of the 1882-1883 and 1932-1933 International Polar Years. The first meeting to coordinate IGY tasks in Antarctica took place on July 6th, 1955 at the Paris Observatory. During that meeting the political claims of Argentina, Chile and Great Britain were not discussed.

² Over 30,000 scientists and sixty-six countries worked on the exploration of all the planet areas, with a cost of 500,000,000 dollars. Twelve nations deployed tasks in Antarctica, seven of them had territorial Antarctic claims: Australia, France, New Zealand, Norway, Argentina, Chile and Great Britain. The last three countries with overlapping interests (UNESCO, 1958:3).

³ Until that moment, the most important economic activity in the area was the whaling industry, but by the end of the 1950's the resource was overexploited.

*Don Arpegio Agustín Riera*⁴, who is now a member of the Mar del Plata Antarctic Association⁵, is a retired Chief Warrant Officer of the Army and Mechanical Radio-telegraphist. He was only twenty-four, and knew barely nothing about Antarctica, but his contact with some radio hams and with some bases allowed him to get to know about an opening for his vacancy. He was designated to Antarctica Department in the city of Buenos Aires in October 1957. Without any previous training about the IGY, he was incorporated to the campaign towards Antarctica by the end of that month. He boarded the ARA⁶ *General San Martín* Icebreaker with destination to Esperanza Base, where he stayed for over a year until he got back by the end of 1958. His memories and some of the pictures he treasures, allow some closeness to the experiences of an Argentinian who contributed to carry out part of the planned tasks for Esperanza Base during the eighteen months that IGY lasted.

The period between the IGY and the coming into effect of the Antarctic Treaty (from now on AT) in 1961, strengthens the building of the imaginary that establishes that Antarctica is a place for science and peace. Nonetheless, this event which at the beginning had scientific objectives, in practical terms “turned into real international dispute in which – in the generic name of science – powerful nations came to and settled in the white continent”⁷. This initiative allowed the United States and the Soviet Union – leaders of the opposite factions of that period that were advancing in the occupation of the white continent – to “establish a strong presence in Antarctica without making this mean a provocation towards the enemy”⁸.

⁴ Arpegio was born on June 1st, 1932 in the city of San Rafael, Mendoza Province. He joined the Argentine Army on February 7th, 1951 and studied at *Escuela de Mecánica del Ejército Fray Luis Beltrán*. He finished his studies on December 17th, 1954 and got a degree as Mechanic Radio-telegraphist Lance Corporal, with honors. He got a medal from the Military Circle of the National Armed Forces. On December 7th, 1954 he was granted the Army General Master Base honors and given the Library of Professors and Levene Professor prizes and the Pioneer medal. On December 17th, 1954, he received from the Nation's President General J.D. Perón the dispatch which grants him the rank of Army Non-commissioned Officer and was given the Army Ministry prize from General F. Lucero himself. He has lived in the city of Mar del Plata since 1968, in this city he was designated to Camet Communications Center. He retired in December 1985 as Mechanical Radio-telegraphist Chief Petty Officer and started to work in the private sector, in the electronic field and as a teacher of technical education.

⁵ In Argentina, Antarctic Associations are non-profit organizations, which group together explorers and they are devoted to the dissemination of Antarctic topics through different activities. Today, they are active in the cities of Mendoza, Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires, Ushuaia and Córdoba.

⁶ ARA is Argentine Republic Army.

⁷ León Wöppke, C.; Jara Fernández, M., 2014: 15.

⁸ Fontana, 2018: 293.

Classic Argentine Antarctic historiography, in general terms, approaches the IGY in a descriptive way and as an experience prior to the signature of the AT. In this project, it has been noticed that it is an episode of the Antarctic history where the actors have been overshadowed. It is the intention of this research to give a face and voice to this episode of the history of the sixth continent which is essential to identify problems, breakdowns and continuities of the speeches about the exercise of sovereignty over that region⁹. In a certain way, by incorporating an oral source by a White Desert Explorer (from now on WDE)¹⁰, new perspectives appear with the objective of re-reading the Argentine Antarctic experience during the 1950's.

Contextualization of Antarctica in the 1950's

By the end of the 1950's, Antarctica had been transformed into a new scenario where the typical tensions of block politics during Cold War could be seen. This ideological confrontation threatened with the spreading of nuclear bombs and the advance of a global occupation of the territory. In spite of the creation of the United Nations (UN) on October 24th, 1945, the leading superpowers continued their rivalry and showed their power through the use of science and technology. As a result, there were advances in nuclear science, the use of rockets and artificial satellites in the space race¹¹, together with the spreading of occupation in remote places. In this context, science started to play a crucial role under the basic and universal premise: "knowledge is power", and it became a plausible language to be used in the exercise of sovereignty in the Antarctic territory.

Between the 1940's and 1950's, scientific activity and the territorialization under domain or defense guidelines, were seen in the whole world. In those times, Antarctica was the center of attention for all nations. The interest generated by the possibility of exploiting its natural resources and the confrontations caused by the sovereignty claims¹², have trans-

⁹ See Howkins, A., 2008a y 2008b; Fontana, P., 2018.

¹⁰ The 25433 Act, passed on June 13th, 2001 by Senate and the National House of Deputies, establishes the rank of WDE to the superior, subordinate and civilian personnel of the Armed Forces and civilians who depend on the Antarctic National Department and/or the Argentine Antarctic Institute, that have taken part in winter campaigns at Antarctic Bases.

¹¹ On October 4th, 1957, the Soviets perpetrated a deed with the artificial satellite *Sputnik I*. A month later they launched the *Sputnik 2* crewed by Laika, the dog. In 1958 the United States creates the NASA and launches *the Explorer I*, this way, the race to the Moon does not stop until 1969 with the landing of the American *Apollo XI*. In 1975, competence comes to an end with the American-Russian *Apollo-Soyuz*.

¹² Specially in the area of the Antarctic Peninsula there is an overlapping in the delimitation of sover-

formed it into a continent full of tension that was gradually starting to be occupied by the nations of the world¹³. The area of the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Atlantic Islands was one of the most conflicted areas, due especially to the superposition of claims of sovereignty of Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom.

During the 1950's the claiming countries focused on setting up scientific bases in Antarctica. Within the diplomatic framework of the United Nations, it was logical to think about the Antarctic continent on an international scale. Nonetheless, for the claiming countries with sovereign interests and scientific advances, this was not an acceptable choice.

By then, Argentina had already been present in those latitudes steadily since 1904, when it occupied the Meteorological Observatory of Laurie Island on the South Orkney Islands. In the following decades, efforts were made to claim an Antarctic portion as national territory. During the 1940's, a process of *national Antarctic conscience*¹⁴ construction was started, supported by state politics¹⁵ that strengthened the Argentine presence through the Argentine Army and the design of scientific, cultural and educative politics that contributed to the invention of a national Antarctic culture¹⁶.

During the 1950's – the great Argentinian Polar leap- the figure of Colonel H. Pujato stands out for his projects of advance and effective occupation in the continent, which had started the previous decade. The setting up of San Martín Base on March 21st, 1951 for logistic and scientific purposes, is one of the greatest milestones of *Pujato's Plan*. This experience favored Argentina's deployment during the IGY and it brought about important Antarctic experience. An example of this previous training is the creation of a subspecies of canines: Argentine Polar Dogs¹⁷. The use of dogs was a good response to the versatility of the sled as a means of transportation, functional when risky explorations in unknown territories were necessary.

In the context of the IGY tasks, the availability of this knowledge among the members of the personnel permitted the advancement in the exploration of still unknown areas. The

eighty claims, the United Kingdom claims the area comprised by meridians 20° and 80° West, Chile the one between 53° and 90° W, and Argentina the area between meridians 25° and 74° W.

¹³ At the beginning of the planning of the IGY (1955) only four of the twelve countries with activities in Antarctica had functioning bases: Argentina (7), Chile (4), Great Britain (8) and Australia (1). See Sullivan, W., 1963: 359.

¹⁴ Acuña de Mones Ruiz, P., 1948.

¹⁵ See Facchin, E. (et al), 2019: 11-98.

¹⁶ See Cicalese, G.; Pereyra, S, 2018.

¹⁷ Maida, J.C., 2015: 15-18.

acquisition of the *ARA General San Martín Icebreaker*¹⁸ in 1954 allowed the penetration into the Weddell Sea with the goal of reaching the Filchner Barrier and establishing a new Base. This was accomplished on January 18th, 1955, when General Belgrano Base was inaugurated at only 1300km from the geographic South Pole. This area witnessed the only exploratory flights that helped H. Pujato and his men to carry out important discoveries¹⁹ of geographic accidents whose toponomy is related to the place of birth of their discoverers²⁰. These approximations allowed Argentina to conduct scientific and oceanographic observations of great importance to plan its actions during the IGY. Nevertheless, the impulse of this Argentine ambitious project was interrupted by the self-proclaimed *Libertadora Revolution* on September 16th, 1955. The overthrow of J.D. Perón, caused H. Pujato and his men's discoveries and achievements to lose their deserved national and international renown²¹. The 1955 military coup, lead by General E. Lonardi and supported by all the opposing sectors, was the beginning of a turbulent political period defined by Peronist proscription. The Antarctic politics was not unaffected by the national political context and was strongly altered, and had to go through its own "deperonization" process and breakdown of the plans developed by Colonel H. Pujato.

Nonetheless, the Argentine presence in Antarctica was maintained, and even though the tasks²² for the IGY had already begun, Argentina carried out organizational restructuring related to the Antarctic territory. For instance, the establishing of the National Territory of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and South Atlantic Islands²³ and the creation of the National Defense Committee²⁴. In turn, legislation²⁵ to incorporate Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and South Atlantic Islands' electorate to Federal Capital city's electoral district was passed. The possibility of electoral participation of Antarctic Argentine personnel generated Brit-

¹⁸ It was built at the G. Weser Seebeck Werke Naval Dockyards, of Bremerhaven (German DR). It was given its name by Decree N° 3193, on January 26th, 1954 and was put in service for its first Antarctic Campaign in November of the same year.

¹⁹ Capdevila, R; Comerci, S., 2013:167-169.

²⁰ Genest, E. Op.Cit.:53.

²¹ Genest, E. Op. Cit :53.

²² In Argentina, it formally started on June 3rd, 1956, when the National Committee of the International Geophysics Year was created by Decree N° 11836. This Committee coordinated tasks with the participating institutions.

²³ Decree N° 2191/57.

²⁴ Decree N° 17413/57.

²⁵ Decree N° 15100 and the Decree Act N° 15200, on November 12th and 19th,1957 respectively.

ish claims²⁶, especially due to the closeness of the National Presidential and Vice-presidential elections scheduled for February 23rd, 1958. In spite of the defense of Argentine rights and the rejection to such claims, Argentine people in Antarctica could not take part in those elections.

A characterization of the facts and processes that are part of the context in which the IGY was planned and carried out have been described. In the next sections the focus will be changed in order to look at the experience of *Don Arpegio Agustín Riera*, who lived this event at Esperanza Base working as a radio-telegraphist.

Esperanza Base During the IGY

Esperanza Base is located near the Antarctic Strait, which separates Esperanza Bay from Bransfield, Joinville and Dundee Islands. *Don Arpegio* still remembers the landscape and the majesty of the tabular icebergs he could see on clear days. The area where Esperanza Base is situated features deep waters (180 meters deep), which is an excellent natural harbor. Even though this is a relatively warm area, the winds and currents there move quickly, dragging considerable ice masses, which makes it difficult to get to the shores from the ships and to use the anchorage²⁷ for long periods.

This area presents a privileged position for meteorological, glacial and geological observations. In turn, it is a historical site²⁸, since it was scenery of the events of the Sweden expedition lead by Otto Nordenskjöld (1901-1903). The small shelter²⁹ of such expedition where doctor Anderson, Lieutenant Duse and sailor Grunden spent the winter is located here.

Argentina, also related to the events of such expedition, had been present in this area since 1952 when the Naval Deployment Esperanza³⁰ was inaugurated. In December of the same year, the Army arrived and the foundation of the Base was organized. This event was headed by Captain J. E. Leal. This way, H. Pujato's objective of establishing three Bases

²⁶ See AH/0044 Min. De RREE. Serie 79. Dir. De Antártida y Malvinas C.20. Folios 268-269.

²⁷ Pierrou, 1981:382-383.

²⁸ Historical landmark and monument of Antarctica N° 39 under the Antarctic Treaty, Rec. VII-9, preserved by Argentina and Sweden. National Historical monument of the Argentine Republic as of 2010 by National Act N°26621.

²⁹ Army Antarctic Headquarter, 2002:5.

³⁰ It was created by Decree N° 1293, which had a permanent character, its duties included meteorology projects and depended on the Marine Ministry. Genest, 1998:40.

that framed the extreme points of the Argentine Antarctic Area³¹ was reached. This fact, on top of its scientific value, was a clear political decision in terms of sovereignty in the area³². This is of utmost importance in the frame of IGY tasks, especially because Trinity House Base (Great Britain) and O'Higgins Base (Chile) were nearby.

The arrival of the twenty-two men of the 1958 Personnel to the Base (see table 2) was full of unexpected events and surprises, which included the disembarkation of a coffin³³. There was a lot of hard work during the first weeks, especially because of the urge to put away those elements that could be affected if they were kept outside³⁴. The routine was intense and planned, and included the landing of materials and provisions with motor boats and an itinerary of two kilometers with a cargo car manually pushed on a railway. After those days of work there was little time or energy left for recreational activities, routine was characterized by three actions: working, eating and sleeping. *Don Arpegio* shared a modest environment which consisted, in his own words, of "bedrooms of about three by three meters, really small, bunk beds, a bed-side table, a dresser, a wardrobe and nothing else"³⁵. It was not easy to rest due to the light characteristics in the austral summer, characterized by short moments of darkness.

For the IGY task plan, Meteorology, Geomagnetism, night Light and daybreak, Glaciology and Oceanography³⁶ measurements and observations were projected at Esperanza Base (see table 3). Argentina already had experience in scientific projects in this area, specifically in work related to geological, topological and hydrologic explorations, carried out with dog sleds³⁷. For that purpose, as *Don Arpegio* states, the Base had been equipped with technology that allowed all those duties. That year, it was necessary to improve the work capacity, and for that reason, together with the arrival of the necessary food for the upcoming winter, new tools and materials³⁸ were received. The unloading and setup

³¹ Genest, 1998: 40.

³² Pierrou, 1981:471.

³³ According to *Don Arpegio's* story, this event caused concern among the new comers, especially because they did not know what had happened. Later, they were explained that a member of the previous Personnel had passed away after falling down a crack.

³⁴ Electronic related and wooden elements were specially taken care of, all these materials were necessary for the planned tasks.

³⁵ Interview with Arpegio Riera, 2019.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Box Nº: AH/0020, Serie 79. Dir. De Antártida y Malvinas, 1955, S.T.A. Nº 40-45- Anexo III.

³⁷ Genest, Op.Cit.

³⁸ According to *Don Arpegio's* testimony, the Base received equipment related to the carpentry

process took a long time because the instruments required a specific adaptation for their functioning³⁹.

It is worth mentioning that the 1958 Personnel had some special features and unexpected events that, at first, put at risk the task plan which had been designed⁴⁰. The fact that particularly stands out, according to *Don Arpegio*, was the lack of a doctor⁴¹, which caused the resignation of the nurse and the cook. Without medical assistance, or staff that could solve the vital mission of feeding the Personnel, the stay seemed to be an arduous (and risky) experience⁴². Finally, the cooking tasks were carried out by the cook of the previous personnel, who sympathized with the new comers and decided to stay for another winter. Cardozo, the cook, “who had already packed to go back to the continent”, became the “spoiled child” at the Base⁴³.

In this context, interpersonal relationships were vital to maintain a good atmosphere, and continue to go through such an extreme experience. Nonetheless, and according to *Don Arpegio*’s story, the relationships among the members of the Base, especially between the chiefs and the rest of the personnel was engulfed by the national political context. The moments prior to the presidential elections of February 1958 caused uncertainty among the military leaders, who “had not had a communicative behavior”⁴⁴. Once the uncertainty of the polls had been dissipated, which made Arturo Frondizi president—although the military leaders in Antarctica “expected a more right-wing result”⁴⁵—, winds of change allowed to take up the original plans to explore the territory.

As time went by, in *Don Arpegio*’s own words, they started to gain confidence and overcame the first obstacles to go ahead with the work plan elaborated by Argentina for such a

workshop, elements for scientific work, material for setting up antennas, shelters and sleds. Besides the food supply for the winter. The unloading process from the Icebreaker showed their previous experience in this type of logistics. The organizational unloading tasks were arduous, with 24-hour working days in shifts that lasted a few months.

³⁹ Interview with Arpegio Riera, 2019.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ The doctor suffered from an infection on the lip and decided not to be part of the Personnel.

⁴² Even though, as part of the sanitary protocols before setting sail, Personnel members had gone through an appendectomy and a strict dental checkup, the lack of medical assistance at the base made an impact on the new comers. This even affected the initial tasks since, according to the base chief orders, incursions on the continent towards the East were suspended.

⁴³ Interview with Arpegio Riera, 2019.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

crucial cooperative and scientific event. These anonymous men honorably committed and contributed with their science and Argentine institutions to the IGY⁴⁶.

Science and Cooperation: from Planning to Experience

As the bibliography and the official sources of the IGY were explored, cooperation was identified as a key element to fulfill the scientific projects planned in Antarctica. *Don Arpegio's* story is proof of that, from his position as radio-telegraphist, he experienced his work as a key factor and related to the support provided by the scientists at the Base. The tasks of the three telegraphists⁴⁷, was organized in such a way that communications happened during all day. Scientists sent reports that were transmitted every three hours. "In all Antarctica there were three ratios, all on the same frequency. There was Orcadas, Teniente Cámara, Almirante Brown, Decepción, Melchior, Esperanza, Belgrano Base and San Martín Base"⁴⁸.

Another moment related to communication and cooperation is the delivery of the sighting reports of the first artificial satellite: the *Sputnik*. "All of us contributed looking at the sky, checking when it passed by and broadcasting the information about its location, its longitude, how long it took (...) We waited for hours until the *Sputnik* appeared in the sky. It was a nice cooperation, both, after a short time, the second one with Laika the dog was launched. And we knew the satellite was approaching because of the broadcast in the twenty-meter band, which is a radio ham band (...) So when it was coming closer you could hear the International March, which was the Russian national anthem "It is approaching, approaching, approaching!" And everybody went outside to take a look (...)"⁴⁹

The lack of medical assistance at the Base kept the Personnel in alert to avoid accidents during work routine, nonetheless, during the campaign they had a sanitary emergency. The glaciologist Di Lena suffered from an abdominal hernia that had to be operated on. As there was no doctor at Esperanza Base, help was required from the neighbor British Base, which assisted with staff and instruments, and even an operating room was improvised at the Argentine Base. "We covered all the ceilings of the living room with sheets so

⁴⁶ AMREC, Series 79, AH/0020: 1955.

⁴⁷ According to *Don Arpegio's* story, the mission consisted on broadcasting and helping with the explorations carried out by scientists who were measuring daybreaks and observed phenomena around the Base. They codified all the information and, at a certain time, periodically transmitted it twenty-four hours a day.

⁴⁸ Interview with Arpegio Riera, 2019.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

that no element could come away from them. The pool table was the operating table and medical instruments lay on two small tables. The doctor had labeled the instruments for us with numbers and letters, the doctor's assistant was the Base Chief in a cook hat!"⁵⁰ (see picture 6)

Argentiniens also helped the British Personnel, and as *Don Arpegio* recalls, once, they had to give them technical assistance due to a transmission equipment malfunction. Communication was crucial for the base operational capacity that year, therefore, this technical support was a key factor for the IGY survival and cooperation. Even *Don Arpegio* remembers an Argentine assistance to British personnel episode on the way back, when the *ARA General San Martín* Icebreaker assisted *Shackleton* Icebreaker.

"When the campaign is over and it is time for relief and we come back to the American continent on the icebreaker, we receive a call for help from the ship, the English Icebreaker, *Shackleton* when we are half way back in the Drake Passage (...) On our ship, the icebreaker, there were technicians, divers, people who were much more qualified than the English people, we could solve any emergency, both technicians and scientists. So, our divers went down, checked the failure, the propeller had broken down, they disassembled it and brought it back. On the *San Martín* Icebreaker you could find all the necessary machinery for repairs so they fixed the propeller, turned it and built the broken parts. They did the job in three or four days, tested, put the parts together and left everything ready for the *Shackleton* Icebreaker to return"⁵¹.

Even though these examples show a cooperative attitude among the personnel deployed in the area, it cannot be confirmed that this was a direct consequence of the IGY planning. *Don Arpegio's* story, when he recalls these moments, does not refer to any imposed politics, but simply to the cooperation that has always been part of polar expeditions.

Antarctica, my Dogs and Me

As previously detailed, Esperanza Base shared work areas with the Chilean and British Personnel. In spite of some difficulties during the first encounters⁵², there was a coopera-

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Interview with Arpegio Riera, 2019.

⁵² During one of the first rounds, *Don Arpegio* met with a member of the Chilean personnel. On his own words, he "kicked him out". This clearly portrayed an act of sovereignty defense. In that moment, when the Base chiefs got to know what had happened, explained to him what the rules

tive atmosphere, according to *Don Arpegio*, when he recalls his rounds in the area. These stories call for the presence of new actors: Argentine Polar Dogs (from now on APD). It is worth mentioning that there was a pack of dogs at Esperanza Base and the personnel had experience with sled explorations⁵³, it was part of the learning process achieved by *Pujato's Plan*. Although *Don Arpegio* never imagined his work outside the Base, he actively participated building shelters and in continental explorations. Specifically, in that year, in the area of Weddell Sea, with the use of sleds and working together with APDs. To *Don Arpegio*, working with dogs and sleds was new and it was a learning he acquired over his Antarctica stay.

“When we arrived in Antarctica, who knew about dogs? Dogs were there, on a leash, puppies who had been born the previous year. They were tied up and we visited them, we did our job, I never thought I would be on a sled. There were three telegraphists at the Base, we thought our duties would be at the Base, like the mechanics, the cook, the Base supervisor (...)”⁵⁴

When *Don Arpegio* joined the explorations as a volunteer, he started his training consisting of getting to know the dogs, training them and controlling the sled. Since he had no previous instruction, he had to incorporate a basic routine which included the use of skis, placing harnesses and putting “little snow shoes” on the dogs. Once that stage was over, he focused his attention on getting to know the dogs: identify them, know their names, determine how to pair them up in order to put the sled in motion. According to his story, sleds were pulled by ten dogs and a guide dog, though they carried two replacements with them.

“The sled had a three-meter strap with a ring every three meters, there was a pair of dogs, one pulling to the right and another one to the left. They had a girth with a strap that was like a harness. It covered their chest and there was a rope from which they pulled and a collar that was tied up to the main strap, so the dog could not go backwards or forwards. The dog was fit inside its place so it would not come across any other dog. Dogs were two and a half meters apart from each other. So, the guide dog was about fifteen meters away and twenty meters away from the sled crew”.⁵⁵

for coexistence in Antarctica during that year were, pointing out that cooperation between neighboring bases should prevail.

⁵³ Genest, 1998:40.

⁵⁴ Radio interview with Arpegio Riera, 2016.

⁵⁵ Radio interview with Arpegio Riera, 2016.

The first “trial” trips were around the Base, in those first rounds the only load was the crew and four dogs, later on, the number of dogs was increased (see picture 7). It was a training month at the beginning of the heavy snowfalls. The objective was to maneuver the sled with a load of 100 or 200 kilograms. The challenge was to communicate with the guide dog, especially to make it understand and obey the orders. Once they felt confident enough, they went on the first journeys to a place called the “372”, located on the Buenos Aires Glacier:

“There, we built a small shelter called “Moro” (see picture 8) and we started carrying all the load to this place so we could get across the other side of the continent. Having gained such experience, we decided to go towards the Weddell Sea on the first days of May, which took us one day. We reached a shack with our sleds and after twenty days we built the Cristo Redentor Shelter, which we inaugurated on May 25th (see picture 9). There were two other sleds that carried food and load, which returned to the Base after unloading. These sleds would later support the Cristo Redentor Shelter periodically”⁵⁶

These were the first sled experiences for *Don Arpegio*, traveling for kilometers carrying out topographic survey, recognizing and naming some accidents – which had been previously recognized and photographed from ships – but which were visited for the first time. Since this was volunteer work they went on this journey on the continental shore: “We never went inland because there was risk of finding cracks which were unknown for us on the glaciers. We had been given some advice: “*take care of your health, prevent injuries*”, we had no doctors or nurses. We had to be very careful. Luckily, we had no accidents”.⁵⁷

He stayed alone on the coasts of the Weddell Sea between the months of June and July of 1958, making observations that he reported to the Base with his crank radio. His dogs were his only interlocutors in those days, his partners in a new routine in which basic actions such as cooking, washing up or drinking a hot drink were the result of a struggle with the environment.

Once he was surprised by a storm and had to set up a tent and stay there for a few days. Two days later the wind became less fierce and when he went out, he only saw snow. His tent was literally under the snow, he knew where the dogs were but he could not see them. He could only see their breath in the air, “it was as if they were smoking, they were

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

buried in the snow”⁵⁸. “So, I shouted at them “Attention!”⁵⁹ He started checking the dogs one by one, to see if they were OK. He fed them. They shook the snow off. He changed their collars so they could be more comfortable and cleaned their habitat. That moment is still present in *Don Arpegio*’s memory and he recalls that moment of solitude in the continent with his story: “Finally, there was no wind, no bird. From the ice pack area you could not even hear the growling of the seals, or the sea lions that are always around, they periodically show up. Silence. You could not see the skuas, no penguins, nothing, there was no one. I grabbed the binoculars and watched: it was just the dogs and me.

And it appeared to be that that total silence made us a little restless, scary. I do not mean afraid, but we were definitely nervous. I do not know from where it came from but I said to myself, how can it be? Just the dogs and myself are the only beings alive around here! We are the single beings alive in this place. Alive! Let’s show someone that we are alive, let’s make some noise! I had learned how to growl from the dogs at the Base (...) So, I told the dogs “What are we doing here? Let’s make some noises to show we are alive! They looked at me wagging their tails. I started growling and their ears stood up. I growled again. Then one of them answered with a growl, later another one, in a few minutes we were all growling and making a fuss in the place. This is an experience I had, I know what solitude is like, total silence, with my dogs, my pals”⁶⁰

Without a doubt, these events allow a human approach, which blur the rigorous planning that is presented by other kind of sources. These are stories that last in spite of the silence that covered them once they arrived in Buenos Aires, the same quiet that reigns on the pages of Antarctic historiography about the Argentine milestones that mark such a relevant and key event in the Antarctic history. Stories of anonymous heroes that last like footprints in the memory of the people who still remember those experiences.

Final Consideration

This research project allowed the reflection about the importance of rescuing from oblivion the great and ignored men, who deployed in that cold area of the planet, gave life to the IGY in Antarctica. This event approximation makes us take a look at the Argentine actions in the Antarctic territory during the 1950’s. The need to recover and focus on the

⁵⁸ Radio interview with Arpegio Riera, 2016.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

testimonies of anonymous characters of the Argentine Antarctic history arises: the WDE.

Approaching Argentine history in Antarctica through the memories of a WDE, not only opens methodological roads but also allows a historical reparation. We consider important to recover some of the greatest Antarctic achievements reached by our country, which have been condemned to oblivion due to our swaying political reality. We leave an open door to continue exploring the next decades through this approach, following the track of men, sleds and dogs, which is still fresh with the passing of time, in the memory of those that continue to remember their days in the white continent.

Translated by: Certified Translator Valeria M. Caeiro.

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Appendixes

Table Nº 1: Argentine Stations in Antarctica During the IGY

Estaciones Antárticas Argentinas	Ubicación
Observatorio Naval Orcadas	Isla Laurie
Base General Belgrano	Barrera de hielo en el Mar de Weddell
Base Esperanza	Península Trinidad
Destacamento Naval Teniente Cámara	Bahía Luna
Destacamento Naval Decepción	Isla Decepción
Destacamento Naval Melchior	Isla Observatorio
Destacamento Naval Almirante Brown	Puerto Paraíso
Base General San Martín	Bahía Margarita

Source: Instituto Antártico Argentino Bulletin. Vol. 1-Nº 3, Buenos Aires, Mayo 1958. p. 10.

Table Nº 2: 1958 Personnel Members- Esperanza Base

Grado	Nombre y Apellido
Mayor de Caballería	Alberto Pedro Giovannini
Teniente de Infantería	Raúl Alberto Gatica
Suboficial Mayor de Artillería	Francisco Matus
Sargento Primero	Héctor Pablo Elgueta
Sargento Primero Mecánico Radiotelegrafista	Carlos Antonio Moscatelli
Sargento Primero Mecánico Radiotelegrafista	Alberto Cicchinelli
Sargento Primero Mecánico Motorista	Antonio Carrión
Sargento de Artillería	Roberto Humberto Carrión
Sargento Mecánico Motorista	Fortunato Chichahuala
Sargento Mecánico Radiotelegrafista	Arpegio Agustín Riera
Cabo Cocinero	Eugenio Nicanor Cardozo
Cabo de Infantería (Res)	Carlos María Bustamante
Cabo Mecánico Motorista (Res)	Rubén Roberto Di Paola
Cabo Carpintero (Res)	Agustín Yannino
Cabo Carpintero (Res)	Erminio Jesús Lobato
Cabo Principal (ARA)	Armando Blas Barreiro
Subayudante Primero (PNA)	Rodolfo López
Doctor (IAA)	Juan Pablo Di Lena
Señor (IAA)	Juan Carlos Bértola
Señor (IAA)	Carlos Alberto Prola
Meteorólogo (FAA)	Eduardo Giménez Añolles
Meteorólogo (FAA)	Juan Daniel Santana

Source: Comando Antártico del Ejército 50 Aniversario de la Base "Esperanza" 1952-2002, Círculo Militar, Buenos Aires, 2002. pp. 64 y 65.

Table Nº 3: Possible Tasks at Esperanza Base during the IGY (1955)

Disciplina	Tareas Posibles	Instrumental
Meteorología	I.C.S.A. (Observaciones Meteorológicas trihorarias- Radiación global)	Equipo I.C.S.A. – Piranómetros esféricos (lucímetro Bellani)
Geomagnetismo	Observaciones absolutas y variaciones de los elementos H.Z Y D.	1 Juego de instrumentos absolutos- 1 Juego de variógrafos H.Z. Y D. de velocidad rápida- otro igual de baja sensibilidad.
Luz nocturna y auroras	Observaciones visuales	--- --
Glaciología	Densidad y temperatura de hielo terrestre y pack- Balance de radiación- Movimientos- Microscopia- Relevamientos aerofotogramétrico de glaciares.	Medidres de presión internas – Equipo topográfico – Medidores de Balance de radiación.
Oceanografía	Observaciones de mareas- Salinidad-Temperatura- Oxígeno disuelto – Plancton P.H. - Muestras de fondo	Mareógrafos. Equipos necesarios.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Box Nº: AH/0020, Series 79 – Antarctica and Malvinas Department, 1955, S.T.A. Nº 40-45- Appendix III.



Nº1. Arpegio Riera receiving from the hands of the President of the Nation Gral. J.D. Perón the office that accredits him as an Army NCO (12/17/1954).
Source: Personal album of Arpegio A. Riera.



Nº2. Arpegio Riera and his mates in the Port of Buenos Aires on the day of the departure.
Source: Personal album of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº3. Icebreaker ARA General San Martín in Bahía Esperanza (November, 1957)
Source: Personal album of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº4. View of Base Esperanza (March, 1958).
Source: Personal album of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº5. Personnel Members of Esperanza Base producing water.
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº6. Improved operating room at the Esperanza Base (September, 1958)
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº7. Practice of sledges pulled by Argentine Polar Dogs
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº8. Argentines and British at Moro Shelter.
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº9. Arpegio Riera camping at the Cristo Redentor Shelter, (05/25/1958).
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera



Nº10. Return from Patrol, end of winter campaign (August, 1958).
Source: Personal álbum of Arpegio A. Riera

THE JIM FRANKS STORY: FIDS AND ARGENTINES IN ANTARCTICA IN THE LATE 1950s

Mary R. Tahan

Introduction: Two Worlds, Two Cultures, and Two Time Periods Coming Together

The Englishman, Navy man, and FIDS member Jim Franks worked two separate tours in Antarctica as senior meteorological observer, general assistant, sledge driver, and “dogman”, during 1957–1960 and 1961–1963. FIDS was the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, which later became known as the British Antarctic Survey. During his two tenures in Antarctica, Franks participated in surveying missions, meteorological studies, sledge dog care, and sledge driving. He was one of the pioneers at that time who ushered in a new phase of scientific study while employing the older established methods of exploration –including dog-sledging– and working within unpredictable and extreme conditions.

While in Antarctica, Franks’s friendship with Argentine Army lieutenant Gustavo A. Giró Tapper, whom he called a “compañero muy grande”¹, spanned the seasons of 1958–1960 and 1961–1963. Franks and Giró were neighbors, at Horseshoe Bay and San Martin, and paid visits to each other. Despite the difficulty to go back and forth –to commute over the Antarctic ice– these were pleasurable

¹ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 6 February 2017.

excursions and a change of pace for both contingents. The FIDs contingent and the Argentine contingent found many things in common with one another. Their respective bases' personnel and members embarked upon exploration journeys and discovery missions. But throughout their work they maintained friendly relations between the British and Argentine bases. Franks and Giró in particular formed a close friendship and lasting relationship with one another – a bond that would continue after they were far away from each other and from the Antarctic ice.

Franks's initiation into Antarctic history occurred concurrently with the International Geophysical Year (IGY), which ran from July 1, 1957 to December 31, 1958. It was a time that straddled two time periods – the continuation of dog-pulled sledging expeditions and exploration missions that had begun at the end of the 19th century, and the beginnings of the introduction to the mechanics and the mechanical vehicles that would later overtake transportation in Antarctica during the modern era of exploration. Jim Franks, during his time in Antarctica, was part of these two worlds.

From the Thames and the Highlands to the Southern Regions

James Leonard Franks, known to his friends and colleagues as Jim Franks, was born in the United Kingdom on February 9, 1933. He attended Tiffin Boys' School in Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey during the World War II and post-war years of 1944 to 1948, and studied mechanical engineering at Kingston Technical College in Surrey from 1949 to 1954, while simultaneously performing a five-year aviation apprenticeship with Vickers Armstrong (Weybridge) Ltd. in aircraft engineering, during which time he worked on the Valiant – “the first jet bombers”² – in both the factory and the design office. (He had briefly worked with Hawker Aircraft, Ltd. on the Hurricane fighter airplanes in an apprenticeship factory position, but, preferring to do design work, he went on to Vickers Armstrong to work on the Valiant.) Franks completed the apprenticeship and passed the program with an Ordinary National Certificate, qualifying as a weights engineer, and gaining experience that years later would help him to win a national British award for designing a specific type of slide rule. (He would also later return to earn a Bachelor of Science Honours in Environmental Protection.)

At the age of 22, finished with his apprenticeship and “fed up” with life's circumstances that had led to a romantic breakup and that had left him “rather sick at heart”, Franks searched for meaningful work to accomplish. He contemplated working overseas. He was

² Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

informed of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey by the brother of the very person who had broken his heart. FIDS at that time was unknown to him. “I’d never heard of it”,³ recalls Franks, but he decided to give it a try. He submitted an application, and then promptly moved on to other opportunities. No matter what he selected to do, he knew that first he would need to complete two years in the National Service –a government requirement at that time in Great Britain. Given a choice of which of the armed forces to join, Franks selected the Royal Navy as his first, second, and third choice, and was “one of the very very few” accepted into that force, which, in Franks’s eyes, was “damn good training for people”. And so, the year after his apprenticeship, in 1954–1955, Franks joined the Royal Navy, carrying out his duties in the National Service, which he describes as a life-making and instrumental way for one to mature “from a school child into a grown person” – although by that time he was quite grown up already.

His first ship tour was on the HMS *Saintes* in which he traveled to the Arctic, visiting Tromsø, Norway, as well as Sweden and Iceland – a welcomed Polar tour and a first taste of the ice. Franks’s next assignment was in Weymouth Harbour, on a submarine support and repair ship, the HMS *Maidstone*, which afforded him the opportunity to take day trips on submarines -excursions which he quite liked. Immediately developing an affinity for the underwater vessels, Franks submitted a special request and was granted into the rarified and respected field of submarine work. He spent the next two years working in the submarine division –having the respected position as one of the few National Service personnel to do so at the time– and enjoying the work immensely.

Franks completed his time in the National Service. The year was now 1957. He joined the Seamen’s Union and entered into the Merchant Marines, where his first assigned ship was a BP Oil tanker, with which he again traveled to the Baltic Sea, putting into port at Norway and Sweden along the way. Returning from that northern voyage and docking at Newcastle upon Tyne, where the ship’s accumulated mail was brought on board, Franks found a letter waiting for him, sent from the “Crown Agents in London”, requesting him to attend an interview for the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey.⁴ Franks had quite forgotten about applying to FIDS previously. He proceeded to sit for an interview which, unbeknownst to him, went very well, but which ended with the vague words “we will let you know”.⁵ The FIDS office subsequently contacted Franks again and informed him that

³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁵ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

he had been accepted for training. Thus, following his seamanship experience, and after his voyages north, Franks now stood at the cusp of Antarctic work, preparing to voyage to the southernmost regions. He was sent to the U.K. Met Office/ British Meteorological School in Stanmore, Middlesex, where he trained as a Meteorological Observer as preparation for working on one of the Antarctic bases in the “British Antarctic”.⁶ He completed the six-week training course and then gained further practical experience working two additional weeks at an airport.

On October 1, 1957, at the age of 24, Jim Franks, along with his FIDS colleagues, departed from Southampton on board the RRS *Shackleton*, traveling on a six-week journey toward Port Stanley, Falkland Islands – or *Islas Malvinas* – with a stop at Montevideo, Uruguay. (“We couldn’t go into B.A. [Buenos Aires]”,⁷ remarks Franks with a wistful chuckle.) Another research ship – the RRS *John Biscoe* – also brought additional FIDS members down south. This marked the beginning of Jim Franks’s Antarctic experience and the start of his Polar work with the British Antarctic program that was at that time called FIDS.

The Beginnings of BAS and FIDS

The precursor to the British Antarctic Survey was a 007-like secret mission called Operation Tabarin, founded in 1943 during the tumultuous times of World War II.⁸ Operation Tabarin was initiated and promptly launched to protect the Antarctic region from enemies and invaders, collect weather information for the allies sending ships to the South Atlantic area, and reaffirm territorial claim to the Falkland region – known as the Falkland Islands Dependencies – by the British government. According to the British Antarctic Survey’s historical publication, the initial plan called for two bases to be established on the continent – one at Deception Island, and one on the Antarctic Peninsula. While political positioning was the immediate objective, scientific prowess was the long-term goal, and science indeed began to be accomplished over a course of two years, with even a third base being established. The bases that were established under Operation Tabarin were: Base B on Deception Island, Base A at Port Lockroy on Goudier Island, and Base D at Hope Bay “Trinity Peninsula” – later also called Trinity House. Port Lockroy and Deception Island have since been preserved as historical monuments, having been closed down in

⁶ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁸ British Antarctic Survey History 2015.

1962 and 1967 respectively; Hope Bay has been closed since 1964.⁹

At first, the men assigned to the bases, working in the dark of winter, would pull their own sledges during brief surveying and sample-collecting expeditions.¹⁰ They would “man-haul”, as Robert Falcon Scott had done. But in the following year, 1945, sledge dogs were imported in from Labrador, Canada, and the distance and depth of work increased exponentially. Like Roald Amundsen, the men of Operation Tabarin now had the speed and reliability of Polar dogs to ease their work and increase their productivity. The base at Hope Bay housed helpful teams of sled dogs that enabled the men to greatly improve their scientific studies and output. A Royal Canadian Engineers surveyor named Andrew Taylor set up Hope Bay as the dog-sledge headquarters during the second year.

Once the secret about Operation Tabarin was out in 1944, and the war was over in 1945, command of the operation was assumed by Britain’s Colonial Office, and the operation itself received the new name Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS), managed by the Governor of the Falkland Islands, and steered from the Falklands as well.¹¹ Four bases by now were in operation. They would continue to be called bases until 1967, after which the new nomenclature was “research stations”. As of 1946, FIDS was busy dispatching exploration teams to study Antarctica. The conditions were very rough for the men sent there. (And they indeed were only men, no women, who were sent by FIDS at that time – unfortunately BAS would not allow women into Antarctica until decades later; according to the British Library, the first time a female scientist was allowed into Antarctica was in 1983.¹² Communications, accommodations, provisions, and safety capabilities were all at a minimum in the mid-1940s. A fire at the Deception base in 1946 claimed the men’s food and shelter, and a fire at Hope Bay in 1948 extinguished two human lives.

The year 1950 saw a serious rise in the amount of scientific results being collected and a renewed dedication to amalgamating said data.¹³ Where personalities are concerned, Vivian Fuchs first rose to the scene, graduating from base commander to FIDS scientific officer. In the years after, he would rise to FIDS director and then BAS director. And, of course, he would co-lead the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1957–1958, during which he crossed the Antarctic continent from the Filchner Ice Shelf near Halley Bay, through the

⁹ British Antarctic Survey/Operation Tabarin Overview.

¹⁰ British Antarctic Survey/Operation Tabarin Overview.

¹¹ British Antarctic Survey History 2015.

¹² British Library.

¹³ British Antarctic Survey History 2015.

geographic South Pole, to New Zealand's Scott Base at McMurdo Sound off Ross Sea, using motor vehicles and dog sledges. By 1957 there were 12 nations with 44 bases in Antarctica. The IGY in 1957–1958 inspired international cooperation in Earth, atmospheric, solar, and cosmic studies. Dogs remained at British bases until 1994, when the Madrid Protocol that had been added to the Antarctic Treaty took effect, outlawing the presence of any non-native alien life in Antarctica – that is, with the exception of human beings.

Morse Code transmissions via wireless telegraph was still in use during the 1950s and early 1960s, having been the primary method of communication since 1944. Communications with the U.K. were only possible through the Falkland Islands. FIDs workers were not that much more connected communication-wise than had been Amundsen, Scott, or Ernest Shackleton. Letters were the only means of sending messages back home, and that could only take place during the warmer, ice-free months of the austral summer, and only if ship traffic and airplane traffic were conducive. It was only in 1965 when all this began to change. The year 1966 was the first year that London established a radio link with British research bases in Antarctica. The signal traveled through the Falklands. And it was only in the 1980s that one was able to call out of – or into – Antarctica via telephone. And, of course, there was no email or online communication at the time of Jim Franks's work. No, this was truly *roughing it*.

The Antarctic Treaty was signed in 1959 and took effect in 1961.¹⁴ Twelve countries vowed to work together, devote their efforts to peace and science, ban any nuclear weapons, and not make any claims on territory. Today there are 54 countries who are signatory to the Antarctic Treaty System. Subsequent agreements such as the Madrid Protocol signed in 1991 forbid any mining of resources, protect the marine and mammal wildlife, and preserve the flora and environment.

When the Antarctic Treaty took effect, its jurisdiction was established at 60° South.¹⁵ For this reason, according to BAS, the Falkland Islands Dependencies area was re-evaluated, and the Antarctic Peninsula was re-designated as British Antarctic Territory. FIDS, then, was renamed, becoming the British Antarctic Survey at the beginning of 1962. The BAS leadership and primary office were now in London. Three years later, the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) was formed, and in 1967 it took over the reins for running BAS.

¹⁴ British Antarctic Survey History 2015; Antarctic Treaty Secretariat/Parties; Antarctic Treaty Secretariat/Protocol.

¹⁵ British Antarctic Survey History 2015.

Applying Aircraft Engineering to Earth Sciences

The above summary is an overview map of the organization and infrastructure into which Jim Franks entered in 1957. He describes the ancestry of FIDS as a “war-time affair to guard the South Atlantic, with the Royal Navy having a couple of bases down there . . .”, and maintains that, at the end of World War II, in 1945, the decision was to keep the bases in operation, and so the two existing bases were turned into civilian bases. “And Hope Bay . . . was one of them because it goes back to Nordenskjöld”.¹⁶ Thus, the war effort eventually evolved into the establishment of a base called Hope Bay, or Base D. Hope Bay is the location along the Antarctic Peninsula where some members of Otto Nordenskjöld’s Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1901–1903 – the expedition which included the Argentine Navy under-lieutenant José María Sobral – overwintered and worked during their scientific mission. That mission unintentionally became an extended two-year expedition when the ship *Antarctic* was crushed by the ice and sank. Hope Bay was the location at which three of the Nordenskjöld expedition members were stranded. It was now one of the first three bases established by Operation Tabarin and managed by FIDS.

What began as a war effort “started to expand” in 1946 and onwards, states Jim Franks, who describes the expansion as an almost organic development.¹⁷ His own participation seems to have been a natural extension. He recalls: “In 1957, when I heard about it [FIDS], IGY – the International Geophysical Year – was coming up, and that came up for ’58, and it was so good they continued it in ’59, and that was so good, and so many countries had joined, that there were bases – not as many and as far around as there are today – but a lot around, whereas it had only been some [bases] here and one there for so long. And it began to grow. And, of course, now, it [Antarctica] has every Earth Science there is, going on all the way around, and on the main continent. But our – the British – point was up and down that Peninsula, shipping on the outside and doing all the land exploration of survey, geology, and everything.”¹⁸

And, indeed, Jim Franks came down south to the ice, on the RRS *Shackleton*, in the austral spring of 1957, traveling up and down along the Antarctic Peninsula during the austral summer with the plan that he would ultimately disembark at his Antarctic base.¹⁹ At the time that he reached Port Stanley, he did not know which base this would be. At the Chief

¹⁶ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

¹⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

¹⁸ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

¹⁹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Meteorological Office in Port Stanley, both Franks and another FIDS member – one from Yorkshire, named Alan Gill – were interviewed for their positions. They were both assigned to Base G – also known as Admiralty Bay – on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands. According to the British Antarctic Survey, Base G, or Admiralty Bay, on King George Island, was established for the purposes of geological, meteorological, and glaciological study.²⁰ Its first huts were built in 1947, and the base was inhabited from January to March of 1947 and from January 1948 to January 1961.

Jim Franks was selected as the Senior Meteorologist in charge of the base for that year of 1957–1958.²¹ The position required much responsibility and paperwork in addition to the general assimilation which would be necessary. And it did not pay much more in wages – but then, money was not the reason that Franks, or Gill, or their colleagues, were there. Franks had met Alan Gill during the preparatory course at the British Meteorological School back in the U.K. Franks recalls that he and Gill had “made one of those ‘instant mental connections’ of ‘style of mind’ which lasted throughout his lifetime”.²² Alan Gill would later go on to complete the British Trans-Arctic Expedition of 1968–1969, along with Roy “Fritz” Koerner (whom Jim Franks also calls “a great mate of mine”²³), Wally Herbert, Ken Hedges, and approximately 40 sled dogs. Gill and his companions would cross the frozen Arctic Ocean from Alaska, U.S.A. to Spitsbergen, Norway, and travel across the North Pole, using dog-pulled sledges, and without doubt reaching the North Pole by sled and foot. Franks and Gill worked the first year in Antarctica together at the King George Island Base. There they learned the intricacies of dog sledging by embarking upon sledging journeys with a geological surveyor.²⁴ It was there that they both acquired the skills for successfully driving dog-pulled sledges across the Antarctic ice.

The Best of the Dogmen

Franks remembers his first foray as “dogman” and his immediate fondness for the sledge-driving profession.²⁵ Driving dog-pulled sledges, it seems, is what he was naturally inclined to do. In fact, when asked how he became “the dogman”, his features brighten,

²⁰ British Antarctic Survey/History of Admiralty Bay.

²¹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

²² Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

²³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

²⁴ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

²⁵ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

and his lively speaking style becomes even more animated. He “immediately” knew that sledge-dog work was what he wanted to do, he says. “There were dogs on most bases,”²⁶ he recalls. “Even those that were not doggie-traveling bases had one or two. It’s very good psychology with the people, with the men . . . They talk about it today, having pets. It was good for them to have dogs. There’d even be the odd cat on the base as well.”

His first introduction to being the person responsible for the sled dogs was on a surveying trip at this first base he worked, at Admiralty Bay on King George Island, which “was a sledging base”²⁷, and which “had about a team and a half’s worth of dogs”. At the time, the island did not have all the bases that exist there now representing various countries, and, to Franks, it felt as though they had most of the island to themselves. “It was just us,” he recalls. “We were doing land survey, all the way along the top of the glacier – the coating on the top of the island.” Franks was the second base member to accompany the surveyor on a land surveying mission, embarking on a sledging journey immediately after midwinter, in August and September. “We went to the far northern end of the island,” explains Franks, adding that it seemed to him that most or “all of this had never been trodden before”; that he had heard that “bits of the sea edges had been visited” in the previous century, and he now found it very “interesting to think” that he was one of “the next people who actually trod there.” At that recently untrodden far northern end, “called North Point, on the westward side,” Franks and the surveyor conducted a “trigonometrical survey over the top.” This was part of a series of land surveys that were being performed from one end of King George Island to the other, conducted in sections, and Franks was involved in the middle to the north section.

It was on that trip that Franks discovered his passion for working with sledge dogs. “With the dogs, and two of us on the one sledge, you have an indoor man and an outside man,”²⁸ he explains. When he and the surveyor would camp, they would “picket the dogs” – meaning tie each one up carefully outside – and set up the tent. The “inside man” would go into the tent, and the sledge would be unloaded, with the outside person handing the necessary items into the tent, and the inside person arranging those items and preparing dinner. The outside person meanwhile would tidy up everything on the sledge, place weights on the tent all around its perimeter edges so as to secure it, and feed the dogs and help them settle down, although they were “usually quiet enough, they’ve had a hard day.” The out-

²⁶ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

²⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

²⁸ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

side person would then enter the tent “expecting a cup of tea and then supper.” When it was time to depart from camp, the “outside man” would become “the dog driver”, which greatly pleased Franks. “Oh, this was great, I really enjoyed this,” he states, mentioning that he still has copies of the letters that he wrote to his mother in which he wrote: “Oh, I really love these dogs, and the next base I’m going on, I want to be in charge of the dogs.”

According to Franks, only one person would be the “dogman” on a base, and this would involve carrying out all the official duties relating to all of the sled dogs.²⁹ This included the breeding, for which one had to “carefully control” the environment, conditions, and circumstances, and it included the important job to “look after sick and injured dogs,” all of which Franks “really thoroughly enjoyed.”

The sledging trips themselves were full of challenges, unanticipated events, and adventures, with intricate surveying work as well as working with the dogs.³⁰ The longest excursion that he undertook away from the base, recalls Franks, was in excess of two months. During his first trip, which had taken him across the top of the glacier, and during which he had encountered bad weather that had necessitated down time and delayed travel, Franks and the surveyor had brought with them 60 days’ worth of food but spent over 70 days on the journey. And so, aside from the rigorous driving and the careful avoidance of the glacier’s edge – something that is challenging when the white horizon and the ground ice all seem to blend in together visually especially under low cloud covering – there was now also the rationing of meals and the risk of running out of food.

It was imperative, therefore, that, on the return, Franks and his companion find a depot – one of the food depots previously established by the base members. While in search of the food depot, and while looking for a way to safely drop down from the glacier without dropping over the edge, finding a steep descent and making the run down, “all of a sudden, the lead dog, Spud the wise one – he was a wise dog – was out of his harness and off down the hill,” recalls Franks.³¹ Spud had seemingly and inexplicably “left us [Franks and the surveyor] in the lurch”. But Spud knew where he was going, and the sledge followed: “And we came out from under the cloud and there was . . . the food depot. And he [Spud] was halfway there.” Franks credits his lead dog with having the finer senses to find the depot. “Otherwise we would have gone past it,” he says. Thus, Spud the sled dog slipped his harness and quickly headed toward the depot, signalling Franks of the depot’s location

²⁹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

³⁰ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

³¹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

and attempting to secure some advance nourishment for himself. This was one example of the taxing but interesting and sometimes entertaining sledge journeys upon which Franks embarked.

And, so, the Senior Meteorologist Jim Franks learned the vital work of dog sledging and land surveying during his first year in Antarctica. After the completion of his and Alan Gill's first year at Base G on King George Island, Alan Gill was sent to the northeastern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, to the base at Hope Bay, which was the main dog sledging base. There "he did a lot of dog sledging".³² And there he "became a more experienced sledger, going on to cross the Arctic ice and stand at the North Pole along with 'Fritz' Koerner, another of our original gang at Met. School", recalls Franks.³³ Many years later, remembers Franks, after his many Polar exploits, Gill would return to Aviemore, Scotland, living near Jim Franks and remaining good friends with him until Gill's death in 2010.³⁴

At the end of the first year at Admiralty Bay base on King George Island, in 1958, when Gill was sent to Hope Bay, Jim Franks was sent "south" to Base Y – Horseshoe Island – for his second year in Antarctica.³⁵ This base was located at the southwest edge of the Peninsula, in Marguerite Bay. Here Franks received what he fervently desired: He worked as "dogman in charge of 48 dogs".³⁶ And here he met his Antarctic neighbor, Gustavo Giró, who commanded the nearby Argentine base San Martin.

"Jimmy" and the "Teniente" in Marguerite Bay

For Jim Franks, the second year in Antarctica – 1958–1959 – was challenging and exhilarating. The sea ice along the Peninsula that summer was "very heavy", and as a result many of the British bases had been "abandoned".³⁷ Franks and his FIDS colleagues had to be helicoptered into Horseshoe Island, or Base Y, located at the southern base of the Peninsula. They were "flown in by chopper" as "the ships couldn't get within 40 miles."³⁸ Moreover, due to the increase of ice and decrease of ship traffic, they were left with "min-

³² Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

³³ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

³⁴ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

³⁵ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

³⁶ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

³⁷ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

³⁸ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

imum supplies”³⁹ for their work and the duration of their stay. The helicopters, due to weight limitations, “couldn’t get half the gear in”⁴⁰, which necessitated that Franks leave much of his kit, including his diary, on the ship, waiting for his return the next year – if he returned that next year, for, given the heavy ice conditions, there was a question as to when the men would be retrieved. There was a possibility, then, that Franks and his colleagues would have to remain another winter and be taken off the base the year after the next, as the sea ice showed no signs of dissipating or flowing out of the bay. “In fact, in Marguerite Bay, the whole of that area there, I never saw sea – none of us there did at that time,” states Franks.

Horseshoe Island’s Base Y, according to the British Antarctic Survey, was established in 1955 as part of the scientific efforts to prepare for the IGY, and was dedicated to surveying work, geological study, and meteorological observation.⁴¹ It was subsequently closed in 1960 and later designated a Historic Site.) On Horseshoe Island, Franks – one of six men assigned to that base – immediately assumed the position of dogman, taking care of the health, progeny, and sledging activities of the teams of dogs, which enabled the men to perform the work they needed to do at this base – one of FIDS’s southern-most bases in Antarctica.⁴²

Less than one degree further south, situated in the southern part of Marguerite Bay, was Base E, known as Stonington Island, “one of the old British bases”⁴³, which had been abandoned previously due to the build-up of sea ice and the resulting inaccessibility to the base from the sea by relief and supply ships⁴⁴. According to Jim Franks, however, he would travel there to “maintain” the base, as “there was a lot of work being done there”,⁴⁵ and a geologist named Keith Hoskins, who had remained behind to continue his scientific observations, and who was now staying with Jim Franks at Horseshoe Island, needed to carry out his fieldwork there.⁴⁶ Stonington Island, according to Franks’s calculations,

³⁹ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁴⁰ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴¹ British Antarctic Survey/History of Horseshoe Island.

⁴² Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴⁴ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017; British Antarctic Survey/History of Stonington Island.

⁴⁵ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴⁶ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

was approximately 25 miles away from his base at Horseshoe Island. And very close to Stonington Island was the Argentine base San Martin, whose inhabitants Franks and his colleagues would talk to on the radio. “And so the first things we were doing was running 25 odd miles down to San Martin,” recalls Franks.⁴⁷ “And they [the Argentines] were wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. As soon as we were seen over the horizon, or they knew we’d been in radio contact . . . they would be ready for us.”

Thus, on his journeys south to Stonington Island, Jim Franks would never fail to make a “stopover” at the Argentine base San Martin, which was “*en route*” to Stonington Island.⁴⁸ There, at the Argentine base, he would find unsurpassed hospitality and a welcomed respite from the routine, as well as a change of pace and a treasure of friendly companionship during the cold dark season.

Despite the fact that the Argentines’ base had burned down the previous year, and that they were now living and working out of what Franks recalls as their small “*casa*”⁴⁹ – little house – which they had subsequently built, they would welcome their British comrades and freely accommodate them, giving them their own bunks to sleep indoors and refusing to allow Jim and his colleagues to sleep in the tents that they had brought with them. “Welcome. You’re in my bunk. And you’re in Rodriguez’s bunk . . .” their hosts would say, despite the Brits’ protestations that they could sleep in their outdoor tents, recalls Franks.⁵⁰ The hospitality demonstrated by his Argentine hosts in Antarctica, insists Franks, was equalled only by that which would later be shown to him by hosts he would meet in Canada, where he later lived and worked for several years during 1969–1976, including at McGill Sub-Arctic Research Laboratory in Quebec Province.

During those days at Horseshoe Island, in 1958–1959, Jim Franks would always attempt to reciprocate this caring friendship and hospitality whenever receiving the Argentines in turn as visitors at his own base. “Our welcome and care when visiting ‘Base San Martin’ was as good as a Canadian one and we always tried to compete with that when a *patrulla* [patrol] from them [the Argentines] visited us,” says Franks.⁵¹ “In fact, these ‘visits’ were like going abroad for a holiday – different food and language, sometimes even different weather . . .” Photographs from the reciprocal visits exhibit a celebratory atmosphere:

⁴⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁴⁸ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁴⁹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁵⁰ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁵¹ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

“they were definitely ‘party time,’” says Franks. The celebrations extended to gift-giving in that each group – the British and the Argentine – gifted to the other what was most needed by that party. The British contingent was short on meat and wine, whereas the Argentines were – and are – famous for both those libations, in both quality and quantity. The Argentine contingent, meanwhile, endured poorer grade incendiary supplies and toiletries, whereas the British had those in more abundance. Jim Franks recalls: “Presents were exchanged – in that we each had something ‘envied’ in the supplies of the other side. We were given excellent carne and vino, while we could supply better matches and toilet paper.”

Among his newfound Argentine Antarctic friends, Jim Franks bonded with Lieutenant Gustavo A. Giró Tapper in particular. Recalling how earlier he had “made one of those ‘instant mental connections’ of ‘style of mind’” with fellow FIDS member Alan Gill, Franks maintains that “This is the same thing that occurred between Teniente Giró and me when we first met at ‘Base San Martín’”.⁵² There was an instant “connection” and a feeling of *sympatico* between Franks and Giró, who, although they did not speak each other’s language at first, understood one another and communicated easily, with Franks ultimately learning enough Spanish words to speak with Giró and his men.⁵³ Franks recognized in Giró a kindred spirit and a colleague of mutual interests, one who shared with him a passion for sledge dogs and for sledging across the Antarctic ice. “Giró was obviously a ‘Dog Man’ and was working hard on improving Argentine Antarctic travelling standards,”⁵⁴ states Franks.

Although he would see him again during his next Antarctic tour in 1961–1963, Franks would not know the true extent of Giró’s passion and commitment until years later, when he would hear of Giró’s dual accomplishments⁵⁵: Crossing the length of the Antarctic Peninsula north to south from Base Esperanza (Bahía Esperanza) to Base San Martín (Bahía Margarita) in 1962, and trekking from Base Sobral on the Filchner Ice Shelf to the very South Pole in 1965 as a member of the first Argentine expedition to reach the South Pole via an overland crossing – both accomplished using primarily dog-pulled sledges as well as motor vehicles.⁵⁶

One observation that Franks makes about a point of difference between the British group

⁵² Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁵³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁵⁴ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁵⁵ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 13 March 2017.

⁵⁶ Mary R. Tahan [2017] 2018; Giró Tapper 1964.

and the Argentine group was the military status of the Argentines as opposed to the civilian status of the Brits: “U.K. bases were ‘all civilian’, [while] other countries [were] military, so that we were on first-name terms, where[as] the military (or Spanish) of course [were] not.”⁵⁷ Giró, says Franks, created a friendly, encouraging, and supportive atmosphere for his men, and, according to Franks, “there was no sign of militarism” in his base, and Giró would “lead from within”.⁵⁸

It is ironic that the British, who had strictly observed military ranks during Scott’s expedition of 1910–1912 – as opposed to the Norwegians, who had no such stringent rankings during Amundsen’s expedition of 1910–1912⁵⁹ –and whose Antarctic scientific program had evolved from a military war-time protection patrol, now were the ones with non-military members. The Argentines, meanwhile, at this time, employed military members, and Jim Franks wonders if there was any inference drawn among the British from the fact that the Argentines’ stations “were all armed forces bases.”⁶⁰ Giró’s base, as observed by Franks, operated with friendly and smooth efficiency.⁶¹

According to Jim Franks, Army Lieutenant Gustavo Giró was known as “Teniente Giró” among his men, and later would be addressed as “Capitán Giró” after making the rank of captain⁶² (he had been promoted to First Lieutenant by the time Franks had arrived there for his second tour in 1962). Ranks notwithstanding, there was a genuine camaraderie and friendliness among the men within each group and between the two groups of men. Jim Franks was always welcomed wholeheartedly at the Argentine base, was endearingly called “Jimmy” by Giró, and was treated as a true companion.

“All this nonsense about enemies . . .”⁶³, declares Jim Franks, emphatically reflecting that the British-Argentine working relationship he witnessed and in which he participated excluded any such animosity during his Antarctic experience.

That experience continued well into the season. The summer of 1959–1960, however, saw a deterioration of ice conditions along the traveling surface of his route to the two other

⁵⁷ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁵⁸ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁵⁹ Mary R. Tahan (2019), *Roald Amundsen’s Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole* (Cham: Springer International Publishing).

⁶⁰ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁶¹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁶² Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁶³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

southern bases –Stonington Island and San Martin– and so no additional sledging journeys were undertaken during the latter part of his stay.⁶⁴ According to Franks, his friend Giró was iced in completely at Base San Martin “although they’d got the *San Martin* ice-breaker [ARA *General San Martín*] and they did get out. But we had to be flown out by [De Havilland Canada] Beaver from [there] – the first planes we’d ever had; they flew us out over the top and we got out that way. Otherwise we were preparing to be able to hold on a further year with what we could.”⁶⁵

According to Jim Franks, the Beaver aircraft, also made for flying onto and from the ice, flew Franks and his FIDS colleagues from Horseshoe Island out to the sea ice, where they landed next to the RRS *John Biscoe* awaiting them approximately 60 miles north of the base.⁶⁶ The plane had had to fly them over a 3,000-foot-high glacier and a 5,000-foot-high mountain over islands and onto the sea ice.⁶⁷

Sir Vivian Fuchs, who, in his book *Of Ice and Men*, lists Jim Franks as having worked in 1958, 1959, and 1962 at Admiralty Bay, Horseshoe Island, and Hope Bay respectively, also writes about the severely packed sea ice conditions during the 1959–1960 season, about his personally transferring to the *John Biscoe* to oversee the air lift, and about the necessity to fly six men out from Horseshoe Island to the *Biscoe*, although he mentions that it was an Otter that flew them due to the Beaver’s being damaged.⁶⁸ Franks remembers Fuchs standing there near the ship as the plane landed on the sea ice and the six men from the Horseshoe base filed right past him to greet their FIDS mates on the ship.⁶⁹ Such was a typical encounter with Fuchs, says Franks. As Franks recalls it, there was a question as to whether the “geological specimens – the cases of rocks” were to be flown out first before the men and the dogs; that is, whether the scientific samplings would take priority over the people and the living beings. For this reason, and a few other first-hand experiences and encounters he mentions, Franks has a certain pointed impression of Fuchs and a few choice words to offer. The question of remaining a third year in Antarctica, however, if the plane had not been able to take them out of Horseshoe, did not bother Franks at all. “We would have done a third year, all six of us . . . if they couldn’t get us out at all. But that would have been

⁶⁴ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁶⁵ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁶⁶ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁶⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁶⁸ Vivian Fuchs (1982), *Of ice and men: The story of the British Antarctic Survey, 1943–73* (Oswestry, Shropshire, England: Anthony Nelson): 353–354, 356, 199–206.

⁶⁹ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

good . . . we were not looking forward to it exactly, but we'd be quite happy."⁷⁰ Such was the adaptability and grit of Franks and his crew. But luckily the plane was able to fly them out, and Franks departed from Antarctica in 1960 having completed his first two years.

Franks "heard little news of 'San Martin'" or Giró after that,⁷¹ and would not see his Argentine friends again until he returned to Antarctica in 1961, at which time the British and Argentine contingents would once again pay reciprocal visits to one another at the British base Hope Bay and the Argentine base Esperanza during a busy and eventful season full of cooperation and accomplishments – but that is yet another story, that will be told in a second part to this narrative.

Bringing the Antarctic Experience Home to the U.K.

And, so, Jim Franks's first Antarctic experience of two consecutive seasons in Antarctica brought to a close the decade of the 1950s. On his voyage home in early 1960, he befriended fellow FIDS member and Aberdeen resident "'Wee' George McLeod", and upon his return to his parents' home in Kingston on Thames, Surrey, England, he reunited with some of his Antarctic mates, including Alan Gill.⁷² With Franks's Antarctic experience still fresh in his mind and deeply instilled in his soul, Franks immediately contracted with FIDS to return to Antarctica in the austral summer of 1961 for another year down south, as FIDS "did not allow immediate returns" but required that he have "a break in the middle"⁷³ – a gap of a year before venturing down to the ice again. He spent that year working with fellow FIDS member George McLeod at Glenmore Lodge, an "outdoor school to teach Glasgow *bairns* about the hills, etc."⁷⁴ obviously inspired by his experience in the ultimate outdoors – the Antarctic – and wanting to bring that experience of Nature to children.

Glenmore Lodge was near Aviemore, Inverness-shire, Scotland, where Franks moved, met his life partner, and was married the following year of 1961, in May, just prior to departing again for Antarctica in October – this time to Hope Bay – for his continued work as "dog-man" for another year on the ice.⁷⁵ By this time, he was considered "an experienced hand

⁷⁰ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁷¹ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁷² Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁷³ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁷⁴ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017.

⁷⁵ Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 5 March 2017; Jim Franks, personal written communication to the author, 13 March 2017.

with two years behind [him], both dogging,”⁷⁶ and FIDS specifically sent him down “to be the dogman” at Hope Bay, which was “the dog place” and which was planned for closure after 1962 – in 1964. The assignment greatly pleased Franks, who dearly wanted to return to that place where he had experienced one of “the finest times” of his life in one of the most “beautiful” environments on Earth.⁷⁷ His newlywed wife Patsy wanted to accompany him to Antarctica⁷⁸ – such was the pull of the white continent for Franks and his loved ones. Indeed, the land of the ice would become his impetus for later work and mentoring, and would remain with him always.

Conclusion:

An Individual Representation of Life and Work in Antarctica in the Late 1950s

The 1950s Antarctic experience of Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey-member James Leonard Franks incorporated the mission of protection, exploration, and scientific study while bringing together the British and Argentine cultures in a spirit of cooperation and friendship. It employed sled dogs and the tried-and-true method of dog-pulled sledges for travel and survey at a time when motorized vehicles were just beginning to make their appearance. And it involved the pursuit of geology, geography, and meteorology to better understand the Earth and Earth Sciences. Jim Franks’s time in Antarctica took place during a crucial turning point: It began during the year of the IGY, extended to the year of the signing of the Antarctic Treaty, and predated the Madrid Protocol. During this period, Franks blazed trails across the vast Antarctic ice, achieved targeted goals for FIDS, and contributed to Antarctic history. For Jim Franks, what began as a national and professional mission also became a very personal journey – one that encompassed an appreciation for diverse human culture, a pursuit of environmental science, and an embrace of Nature.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Jim Franks for his much-appreciated interviews and correspondence with the author, as well as the Franks family – especially Patsy Franks and Chris Franks – for their continued kind cooperation. The author would also like to thank María Edelia Giró and Edelia “Puchi” Gamarino Giró for their interviews with the author and for their introducing the author to Jim Franks.

⁷⁶ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁷⁷ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 21 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

⁷⁸ Jim Franks, in-person interview with the author, 20 June 2017, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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All Jim Franks interviews and correspondence quoted in this chapter were conducted with the author via in-person meetings and emails in 2017.

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Nº1. Jim Franks at his first Antarctic base, Admiralty Bay, Base G, on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands, with his “wise” lead sledge dog Spud, as well as sled dogs Fay, Pam, and Wendy, in 1957–1958, during his first Antarctic tour that lasted from 1957 to 1960. (Photograph owner: Jim Franks. Photo courtesy of Chris Franks).



Nº2. At the field station Guemes later, during Jim Franks’s second work tour in Antarctica, from 1961–1963. (Photograph owner: Jim Franks. Photo courtesy of Jim Franks.)



Nº3. Jim Franks (standing second from right) with his Argentine colleagues during a visit from members of the Argentine base Esperanza to the FIDS base Hope Bay, during his 1961–1963 tour in Antarctica. (Photograph owner: Jim Franks. Photo courtesy of Jim Franks.)



Nº4. Letter mailing envelope addressed to Jim Franks in England, sent by his Antarctica colleague Gustavo A. Giró Tapper from the Argentine base General San Martín in February 1958, featuring the International Geophysical Year (IGY) insignia on the envelope. (Photograph owner: Jim Franks. Photo courtesy of Jim Franks.)



Nº5. Jim Franks on February 22, 2017, celebrating Argentine National Antarctic Day, in downtown Aviemore, Scotland, posing at Aviemore's Olympiads monument in honor of Aviemore Olympians. (Photograph owner: Jim Franks. Photo courtesy of Jim Franks.)



Nº6. Jim Franks at one of his in-person interviews with the author, on 21 June 2017 (which is Midwinter's Day in Antarctica), meeting together in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. (Photograph owner: Mary R. Tahan.)

YOU DON'T LOVE AND DEFEND WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW: ARGENTINE PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR (1957-1958)

Lydia Edith Gómez

Introduction

The VII International Congress of Geography, held in Berlin in 1899, was the starting point of our country's commitment to Antarctic activity. As a result of this Congress, a magnetic and meteorological observatory was built on *Isla de los Estados*, which complemented the observations of German and English expeditions.

In 1903, Argentina became international news, since Uruguay corvette rescued the Swedish Scientific Expedition of Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld. At the same time, and by decision of President Julio A. Roca, the weather station located in the Laurie island (Southern Orkney) was taken. This weather station had been operated by members of the Scottish expedition of William Bruce until that moment. Starting from that point, this station granted merit to Argentina as it was the first country with permanent presence in the Antarctic continent. From then on, annual campaigns of exploration and scientific research followed, taking over the South Orkney and South Shetland Islands, as well as large extensions of the Antarctic Peninsula. Besides, bases and shelters were built, making Argentina the country that certifies the greatest permanence in Antarctic territory.

In times of international crisis, in a Cold War context¹, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was intense. The scientific atmosphere over meetings and activities of the International Geophysical Year, served as a medicine to conciliate tensions, that derived from the confrontation between the two great powers of the time, and also from the existing problems of sovereignty as overlapping claims, among others.²

The International Geographic Year, as an experience in international cooperation on science in Antarctica, was undoubtedly the first step toward the Antarctic Treaty. This became strong in the following decades as the most appropriate legal instrument to protect the vast continent of Antarctica.

The International Geophysical Year in the World

It is necessary to remember that the 50s was marked in its early years, by a set of incidents that gave a bad premonition for good subsequent development of relations between the powers that had sovereignty interests in Antarctica.³

There were some who could have had a greater impact on strengthening relationships, as it is the case reported by Paul Émile Víctor in his book *Pole Sud*.⁴ Although there was a tripartite agreement, Argentine sailors fired their weapons at British forces because they

¹ According to Carlos A. Rinaldi newsletter (2013), *Desarrollo Científico Argentino en la Antártida* en Boletín del Centro Naval. May/August, N° 836, p. 148: "The development of the Argentinean Antarctic work was taken a close look at the end of World War II. The Cold War (USA-USSR) was a confrontation that took place in political, ideological, economic, social, technological, military and communication fields. Neither of the two parts ever took direct action against each other. These two powers restricted themselves to acting as influential force in the international context, and they set out economic and military cooperation with allied countries or satellites".

² Due to the geopolitical struggle between the main characters of the Cold War (the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), their relations were at one of the most conflicting moments. The culmination of the 38th parallel war in Korea (1953) was recent, the conflict in Vietnam (1955) had begun, and the Cuban Revolution (1958) took place, leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). This fact convinced it to extend the invitation because of the fear of the United States that the USSR would set up military bases in Antarctica.

³ To what has been mentioned, it should be added that the interest of states in exploring and establishing in the area was increasing. They were motivated by geopolitical issues and the possibility of finding strategic natural resources. As millions of years ago Antarctica was linked to Oceania, America and Africa, there's a possibility that there were fossils (highly coveted minerals) such as gold, silver, gas, oil.

⁴ Quoted by Rodríguez, Bernardo N. (Capitán de fragata (RE) de la Armada de la República Argentina) (1974), *Soberanía Argentina en la Antártida. Analysis of an eventual intrusion*. Buenos Aires, Centro de Estudios Estratégicos-Instituto de Publicaciones Navales del Centro Naval Navales del Centro Naval, p. 51.

began to land in Bahía Esperanza, to rebuild the British station destroyed by a fire years ago. As the British ignored warnings to stop the landing, the situation became dangerous in February 1952. Finally, the British stopped the landing and returned to their ship, leaving part of the cargo and the British flag in that place.

In the same direction, Ernesto Fitte in his booklet *Escalada a la Antártida*⁵ says that in 1953, the corvette Snipe and the frigate Birbarg Bay of the English Navy, destroyed facilities on Deception Island and detained the occupants who were released in Montevideo; this outrage occurred on February 13 and was carried out as a commando operation by a Marine squad.

On the other hand, in 1905, the Antarctic historian Dr. Hugh Robert Mill, asked for the creation of an international committee that would plan, not just an expedition, but a system of investigation by means of permanent observatories and both simultaneous and consecutive expeditions. This was the idea that supported all operations carried out in Antarctica by the International Geophysical Year⁶ which was the successor in the general aspect more than in the polar of the international years 1882-1883 and 1932-1933.

In contrast to what happened, the IGY put all the attention in the Antarctica. The influence of its large mass of ice on the climate and on oceanographic and atmospheric variables, the problems presented by partially unexplored Antarctic aurora, whose brightness had confused so many generations of explorers the possibility of leading research from the southern polar plain to the ionosphere during the sunless hours of long winter: there were several scientific advantages that derived from the concentration of work in the Antarctic; "The IGY (1957-1958), in which a dozen nations participated, leading to the settlement of 50 bases, was dedicated to scientific activities rather than exploration...".⁷

It is necessary to point out certain events due to new techniques used, and new guidelines given for transport and supply service, which seemed to indicate a bright new future for the polar trip. Among the most interesting events are the first direct flights between New Zealand and the Antarctic continent, which were carried out in 1955-1956. In addition, in 1956-1957 the American Amundsen–Scott Station was built in the Geographic South Pole. A new method in Antarctic explorations was pointed out, which consisted in fast transportation of men and dogs, vehicles, tractors, motorized sleds and food to strategic areas. In this way, strong local action would be taken, as it had already been attempted in the Arctic.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 24.

⁶ From now on IGY.

⁷ KIRWAN, L. P. (2001), *Historia de las Exploraciones Polares*. Barcelona, Luis de Caralt, p. 427.

The year 1953 was important for Antarctic history, as it was not only the year in which the IGY's international committees developed the needed plans for their combined scientific work, but also the date in which J.M. Wordie, a former colleague of E. Shackleton, established a link with the past by making the idea of an exclusively British trans-Antarctic expedition come alive, in surprising contrast to the international operations in progress. This idea, within the framework proposed by Shackleton (from Weddell Sea to Ross Sea, crossing the Pole), had been taken into consideration by several English explorers, among them, Dr. Vivian Fuchs, who was the leader of the expedition.

In 1954, thanks to the support of the Royal Geographical Society and the English government, the project was launched with a reconnaissance expedition. This trip succeeded by a scarce range, that consisted in crossing over the Weddell Sea and establishing the Shackleton base. This allowed the New Zealander Edmund Hillary to set up the supply and fuel warehouses needed for the operation. In turn, Argentine Navy used for the first time the icebreaker General San Martín, and put up a weather station on the Filchner Ice Shelf in 1954-1955.

The first overland journey to the Antarctic continent was made between November 24, 1957, and March 2, 1958, by Fuchs and his men, who visited the South Pole station, which was run by the United States. In spite of the great difficulties, the trip was carried out with an amazing precision, with a one-day difference over the planned date. But this expedition was not the only one of its members' achievements; there was also a lot of scientific work, mainly a seismic survey of the continent. This research revealed a depth in the ice up to 2,700 meters, with many high peaks below it; a valley was located below the Geographic South Pole.

Russia made an even longer journey and by taking part in the IGY, it rejoined the Antarctic exploration in 1955, for the first time since the explorer Faddéi Bellingshausen (1819-1821). In the mentioned trip, some 3,700 miles were covered, the expeditionaries went through the South Pole, the South Magnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility. The latter was the furthest point in the Antarctic continent from the coast.

The International Geophysical Year in Argentina

In 1947, Argentinean and Chilean Foreign Ministers, Juan Atilio Bramuglia and Raúl Juliet Gómez, signed in Buenos Aires a common declaration stating the rights of Argentina and Chile over Antarctica and taking the decision to collectively work on scientific research and exploitation of the region, as well as expressing the desire that the boundaries of the region could be determined.

In the same year, an Argentinean expedition under the command of Captain Luis M. Garcia made an extensive exploration to the west of the Antarctic Peninsula, installing beacons and building a meteorological observatory on an island in Melchior Islands.

When the Melchior detachment was established, the Chilean minister of foreign affairs sent a letter to the Argentinean ambassador notifying him of Chile's "tolerance" for this Argentinean installation. In January 1948, Foreign Minister Bramuglia responded as follows: "my government wishes to express that the Argentinean expeditions are acting within the Argentinean Antarctic area, making on its part the reservations of the case for the acts that could be carried out in the same area by the Chilean expeditions that visit it"⁸. Nevertheless, in March an agreement was reached on the matter.

The new Chilean Foreign Minister Germán Vergara Donoso and his Argentine counterpart Pascual La Rosa signed a common agreement by which both parties committed themselves to protect and defend the area of the Antarctic between the meridians 25° and 90° west of Greenwich, in whose territories both parties recognize indisputable sovereignty rights until the boundaries are established.

But the presence of Argentine and British warships, caused serious concerns in diplomatic circles so both governments together with the Chilean government, began negotiations that resulted in the signing of a tripartite naval agreement, pledging not to send warships to south of the parallel of 60° south latitude. The agreement was valid for one year and its terms were exchanged in January 1949 in the three capital cities involved. The agreement was renewed annually until the ratification of the Antarctic Treaty on June 23, 1961.

In 1955, the British government invited Argentina and Chile to claim over the Antarctic territory to the International Court of Justice or to an Arbitral Tribunal; but the proposal was rejected by both countries. The Argentine government argued that it would not submit its territorial rights based on legitimate entitlements to foreign entities, as it was the case of the Antarctic region and surrounding islands.

In 1956, the Special Committee for Antarctic Research was established⁹, in order to ex-

⁸ Cited by CISNEROS, Andrés, ESCUDÉ, Carlos (1998), *Historia General de las Relaciones Exteriores de la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires, Centro de Estudios de Política Exterior, chapter 63.

⁹ In 1950, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) considered the possibility of a third International Polar Year. At the World Meteorological Organization's recommendation, the idea of the International Polar Year was extended to the world, so the International Geophysical Year was founded between July 1, 1957, and December 31, 1958, with the participation of 66 countries. At the meeting in Stockholm from September 9 to 11, 1957, the creation of Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) was approved, inviting 12 countries that have done Antarctic research

change scientific information among its members. Later, this Committee decided to carry out an International Geophysical Year between July 1, 1957, and December 31, 1958. During their meetings, Argentina and Chile expressly warned "...that the research would not produce territorial rights and that the scientific bases established in the Antarctic area should be removed after the set deadline".¹⁰

The Special Committee of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), with headquarters in Brussels, organized different working groups, which can be summarized as follows: Communications, Geomagnetism, Meteorology, Auroras and Night Light, Solar Activity, Cosmic Rays, Ionosphere, Longitude and Latitude, Glaciology, Oceanography, Rockets and Satellites, Seismology and Gravimetry. The coordination of works was programmed in the International Antarctic Conferences developed in Paris in the years 1955, 1956 and 1957, and in Brussels, in 1955. The observations were made from ships and aircraft, by using established bases, as well as others that would be specially set up, and the land expeditions were done with motor vehicles specially designed to operate on ice. The stations installed and those planned were about fifty, they would cover the entire Antarctic continent. For instance; the land of St. Martín was in charge of Argentina, Chile and Great Britain; in the South Orkney Islands Argentina and Great Britain would do a research; the edge of the Weddell Sea ice barrier was under Argentina, the United States and Great Britain.¹¹

Thirty thousand scientists from sixty-six countries participated in the IGY in 1957/1958, which was mainly focused on the Antarctic continent, where twelve countries participated, among them the Argentina. This event was one of the largest scientific efforts worldwide undertaken to increase the physical geography of the earth.

In this context, the Argentine Antarctic Institute's researches were highlighted by the Aurora Project, which was an important contribution to the understanding of that atmospheric phenomenon, as well as the glaciological investigations.

In Antarctica "... 12 nations participated by operating eight bases in specific tasks, six ships, two helicopters, 3 aircraft and 12 tracked vehicles, developing programs of 16 Scientific

to send representatives to integrate the Committee, in order to exchange scientific information among its members concerning the Antarctica. SCAR was later renamed the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, with an Executive Committee of four members that were renewed every four years and with the Secretariat that was located in Cambridge (Great Britain). There were also working groups in the main scientific areas.

¹⁰ Cisneros, Andrés, Escudé, Carlos (1998).

¹¹ For further information on countries, stations and observations read Carlos A. RINALDI, Desarrollo Científico Argentino en la Antártida in Boletín del Centro Naval. Mayo/Agosto, N° 836, p. 152.

ic-Technical Institutions coordinated by the Argentine Antarctic Institute”¹² and Argentina had a lot of work in the white continent, with foreign and Argentinean scientists who were transported in the Argentinean ships and many of them spent the winter in the Argentinean bases doing researches and recordings; all means of transport, Detachments and Bases were real laboratories, that made a solid contribution committed by Argentina making an incomparable effort.¹³

However, what Argentina and Chile declared about the expiration of the scientific bases at the end of the IGY, in February 1958 the Soviet Union notified that the other countries would keep the scientific bases until the researches in progress had been completed and these would not be finished by the end of that year. The European states as well as Japan, the Union of South Africa and New Zealand did not speak out against the Soviet attitude. It was expected that the United States would state its position as the statement increased international tension concerning Antarctica, in the context of Cold War.

President Dwight Eisenhower’s response, at the State Department, was to invite all nations with interests in the Antarctic continent to participate in a convention to discuss a treaty. All countries that had participated in the IGY responded positively to the U.S. invitation¹⁴. Thus, the Antarctic Conference was inaugurated in Washington on October 15, 1959, in an atmosphere of uncertainty.

At the end of the IGY, the U.S. government gave to Argentina the Ellsworth Scientific Station, which was managed and operated by the Argentine Antarctic Institute until the end of 1962 when it had to be evacuated due to the movement of the Filchner Ice Shelf.

Although it surpasses the time frame of the present investigation, it is worth to be mentioned due to the importance of the event: on March 8, 1961, Dr. Arturo Frondizi arrived at the Deception Island Naval Detachment, and thus he became the first Argentine president to visit that territory. From this place, he gave a speech that was transmitted by *Radio*

¹² QUEVEDO PAIVA, A. E. (Expedicionario al Desierto Blanco). (2012), *Historia de la Antártida*. Buenos Aires, Argentinidad, p.371.

¹³ To see the detail of the seasons included in the IGY, refer to Adolfo E. QUEVEDO PAIVA (Expedicionario al Desierto Blanco) (2012).

¹⁴ In the first phase, representatives of the twelve nations met in Washington, who met in 60 sessions from June 1958 to October 1959, to define the basic negotiating framework. Still, no consensus was reached on a preliminary draft. In the second phase, a conference of the highest diplomatic level was held from October 15 to December 1, 1959. The main ideas with full acceptance were the freedom of scientific research in Antarctica and the peaceful use of the continent. Still, their demilitarization and the maintenance of the status quo also had consensus.

Nacional. He highlighted the shared effort made by scientific researchers, technicians and personnel of the Armed Forces in the Antarctic; "... His visit is in line with the strong support of his administration for Argentina's participation in the conference of the Antarctic Treaty in Washington in 1959 and the effort to achieve the approval of it...".¹⁵

The International Geophysical Year in Argentinean Newspapers of the Time

In order to reinforce what has been said so far about the IGY, four newspapers were consulted and distributed in the province of San Juan (Argentina) at the beginning and end of the IGY: *La Nación*, *La Prensa*, *Diario de Cuyo* and *Tribuna*. The first two have national distribution and the last two have a provincial one.¹⁶

The search and analysis of information in these written sources confirm what has been mentioned so far about the complexity of the international situation at the time the IGY was developed: the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, meetings between the powers for disarmament, the concern of the United States about the threats and progress made by the USSR. However; there is some doubt if this underlying danger represented by the Cold War, did it mean that the importance of a world event like the IGY was undermined? Or was it the repeated lack of interest shown over and over again in Antarctica? Or was it the policy of the protagonists of the *Revolución Libertadora*¹⁷ who took what was done in those months as a merely military plan?

In order to clear up uncertainties (or may be to increase them?) some numerous international news were selected from the newspapers consulted:

-The San Juan newspaper *Tribuna* published on its front-page Friday, August 2, 1957: "Constitutional guarantees in Cuba are suspended", the decision was taken in an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers under the presidency of General Fulgencio Batista. The news dated in Havana on August 1, 1957, gives an account of the government's 45-day suspension of constitutional guarantees in the country, at the same time a general strike was taking place in Santiago de Cuba, a violent campaign against the U.S. ambassador.

¹⁵ [Cancillería.gob.ar/es/iniciativas/dna/historiaypatrimonio/línea-historica/1957-1990](http://Cancilleria.gob.ar/es/iniciativas/dna/historiaypatrimonio/línea-historica/1957-1990).

¹⁶ To track information about the IGY, the copies were searched from one month before and three months after the event. As regards the end-date, the newspapers were consulted from one month before and one month after December 31, 1958.

¹⁷ This is the name given to the military dictatorship that ruled Argentina when the constitutional government of Juan Domingo Perón was overthrown in a coup d'état on September 16, 1955. More than two years later, the government was transferred to President elected Arturo Frondizi on May 1, 1958.

While a rural guard garrison in *Buyecito* was attacked and burned by rebel forces under Fidel Castro's leadership having their bases in the Sierra Maestra.¹⁸

-In the same context, the newspaper *La Prensa* reported on its front page on Tuesday, July 16, 1957, the news dated July 15, 1957, in London, that "the disarmament conference is not progressing. Now the Russians are rejecting different aspects of the American project", since Russian representative attacked point-by-point the Western proposal. Although many issues still remain to be discussed, there was greater pessimism in the British media about the possibility that the negotiations will lead to an agreement.¹⁹

But the priority and necessity in the news was not only the international ones, but also the national ones that had readers in suspense catching their attention. A specific example was the death of Dr. Ricardo Rojas, on July 29, 1957, days before the beginning of the IGY; the newspapers consulted occupied important extensions in their editions by reporting this news, they commented on his funeral and even published the impact of his death in the country and the world. Headlines include: An honoured Maestro has died: Ricardo Rojas, Dr. Ricardo Rojas passed away, Tribute to Ricardo Rojas Surrendered in Capital Federal, A heartfelt tribute was paid to Ricardo Rojas. During the funeral ceremony, several speakers said goodbye to the Maestro. The speech was followed by a mourning for the death of Ricardo Rojas, Condolences from Peru for the death of Ricardo Rojas, *Ecos de la muerte* of Ricardo Rojas, were some news and comments that took place several days after his physical disappearance, and it was accompanied by portraits and photographs of the outstanding character.

Another important news at national scale was that on Sunday, July 28, 1957, the Argentine citizens elected deputies to the Constituent Assembly to decide changes in the National Constitution, and *La Nación* newspaper on Sunday, July 28, 1957, shared its cover with the following headlines: In all the Argentina's territory, the election of Constituents and in the Geophysical Year will take place today.

The news about the election gives an account of the schedules to vote, the facilities provided by national and provincial authorities for the good development of the elections, the speech read by President General Aramburu on the radio for the whole country, in connection with the polls. The second headline on February 16 was attached to a photograph showing the view of the Wilkes scientific base in Antarctica, which was installed

¹⁸ Constitutional guarantees in Cuba are suspended. (August 2, 1957). *Tribuna*, p. 1.

¹⁹ The disarmament conference is not progressing. The Russians are now rejecting different aspects of the American project. (16 July 1957). *La Prensa*, p. 1.

by the United States on the occasion of the IGY, emphasizing that a radar equipment was covered by a plastic dome.²⁰

On the other hand, the news about the IGY is limited and short, even more when you consider the number of months that it lasted. But there are some news items that can be highlighted:

-*La Nación* newspaper on August 8, 1957, published the news called Trip to the South of an Icebreaker, which explains that it was General San Martín Icebreaker that set sail on the 18th of that month towards the Antarctic zone, in order to fulfill tasks related to the participation of the Navy in the IGY. Meteorological observations of ice and oceanography are made in the area of the South Shetland Islands, after verifying variable density on ice fields that were discovered on the way. It was also said that before reaching that point, in Drake Passage, he put up with a strong storm that forced him to take shelter in Isla de los Estados, until better conditions made it possible for him to continue with his plan.²¹

-The same newspaper in the Geophysical Year, but in its edition of Monday, August 27, 1957, published a news report which was made public in New York on the 25th. It analyzed the activity of the Argentinean hydrographic ship Bahía Blanca under Captain Emilio Berisso, in cooperation with the laboratory ship of Columbia University; Vema carried out tasks included in the IGY plan to fulfill some goals in the oceanographic area. There were remarkable researches in the sea, mainly sea floor formation studies and magnetic observations. The purpose of this operation is to determine the layers that make up the sedimentary structure, its relation to the foundations and the tectonic features of fractures and folds. In addition, 12-meter-long sea floor surveys were carried out to study the conditions of sedimentation of the biological content, to determine the geological age and the connection to nearby areas.²²

-On the other hand, the newspaper *La Prensa*, in the front-page of July 25, 1957, published an interesting article called The experiences of the Geophysical Year and its influence in the Communications with authorship of Harry W. Frantz dated in Washington the 24th; in that news, it is described that personnel of the International Geophysical Year declared that the world-wide network of communications that was organized to facilitate the cooperation between the participant nations, was working perfectly. Thus, a possible

²⁰ In all the Argentina's territory, the election of Constituents will take place today. (July 28, 1957). *La Nación*, p.1; In the Geophysical Year. (July 28, 1957). *La Nación*, p.1.

²¹ Trip to the south of an icebreaker. (August 8, 1957). *La Nación*, p. 4.

²² In the Geophysical Year. (August 27th, 1958). *La Nación*, p. 3.

chance was removed in the coordination of international efforts from the very beginning of the eighteen-month program, and this increased the possibilities of its greatest success. The first major benefit of organizing the communications network was that scientists were notified of the unexpected solar activity that occurred in July, and this resulted as an intensified solar observations and exchange of data with unusual speed, leading to increased interest in the Sun-Earth relations in all regions of the world.

The IGY World Warning Agency at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, was the main communications network center in day-to-day contact with stations in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Japan, Moscow and Antarctica. Its main and essential purpose consisted in immediately notifying the stations of unusual geophysical phenomena, such as solar flares, earthquakes or geomagnetic storms that could not be predicted. Therefore, scientists were able to observe the emerging stages of the phenomena and make a complete record. They were impressed with the idea that the global communication system would make it possible to collect universal physical data quickly, and they paid attention to the hard work of gathering, translating, classifying and printing this vast amount of documents.²³

-*La Prensa* newspaper of Wednesday, September 4, 1957, published that a new refuge was built in Antarctica. This work was carried out by military personnel at General San Martín base. As it was previously mentioned, on August 17, the Ministry of Defense informed that on the 107th anniversary of the death of José de San Martín, and in tribute to his memory, the *Granaderos* refuge in the Argentine Antarctic was inaugurated. The facility was placed on the island at the western end of the group called Terra Firma at 68 degrees, 42 minutes and 26 seconds south latitude, and 67 degrees 40 minutes west longitude. The temperature during the construction was 30 Celsius degrees below zero, and the elements for the structure were transported in four dog sleds, taking advantage of the four hours of sunlight. It is worth pointing out that at Marguerite Bay, personnel from the same military base, opened a similar facility for employees of the Argentine Antarctic Institute that worked in the Argentine Antarctic for IGY.²⁴

²³ FRANTZ, Harry W. (July 25, 1957) The experiences of the Geophysical Year and its influence on Communications. *La Prensa*, p.1.

²⁴ A new shelter was built in Antarctica. Military personnel from General San Martín base carried out this task. (September 4th, 1957). *La Prensa*, p. 4.

Conclusion

The development of science in Antarctica was carried out in different stages. First, it involved understanding the territory and gathering data. Then, it included researches in different fields.

At the beginning of 1904, Argentina's continuous scientific activity began in Antarctica, and in this way, it became the country with the greatest permanence in the white continent. From then on, different tasks were carried out, such as postmarking letters, carrying out rescues, and weather observations. Thus, Orkney became the first landmark in the Argentine Antarctic History.

The ideas suggested by researchers and historians who participated in the Polar Years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were taken by the representatives of powers of the Cold War to calm the international tension. According to what have been said, the IGY as an experience of international cooperation on science was undoubtedly the starting point of the Antarctic Treaty in Antarctica.

Consequently, under the protection of this vast scientific activity, the participating nations-built bases and created stations of observation. The Argentine bases and detachments were transformed into real laboratories, in order to fulfill the agreement made by Argentina for this remarkable event.

The Argentine newspapers that were consulted showed no interest in publishing or commenting on events related to the IGY and, when they did, the news came from other countries, in their vast majority. Despite the fact that, until that moment, the whole world had not been covered by so many communication facilities, this allowed the fast exchange of messages between scientists. In addition, the preparation and elaboration of a calendar with eighteen months, made it possible to identify regular world days when scientists of all nations could make simultaneous observations, according to plans determined in advance.

Once the International Geophysical Year concluded, science was enriched with the knowledge contributed by researchers from the twelve countries involved in the programmed studies.

“When analyzing the text of the Antarctic Treaty, it can be inferred that it tries by all means, that the Consultative Parties should join the necessary efforts so that the practices established during the realization of the International Geophysical Year (1957/58) continue to

be developed..."²⁵, even though important newspapers in Argentina did not give this world event a prominent position in their pages.

In the future, perhaps another research line should be opened to clarify the political application given to the IGY by the Liberating Revolution and the president who succeeded it, Arturo Frondizi, in order to find an explanation for the questions raised here, which exceed the purpose of this research.

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²⁵ Genest, Eugenio (1999), *Antarctic Treaty System at the First Meeting of Ibero-American Antarctic*. Buenos Aires, National Directorate for Antarctic-Argentine Antarctic Institute. N° 25, p.108.

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HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF ARGENTINE ANTARCTIC ACTIONS IN THE 1950's

Eugenio Luis Facchin

Year 1951

The 1950-51 campaign was the largest operation carried out by any country after the one developed by the United States of America in the summer of 1946-47: Operation Highjump¹. It was the conclusion of five years of campaigns designed in 1946² and that with different alternatives were consolidated in a series of events of different orders that made concrete the objectives that Argentina had set itself since the creation of the National Antarctic Commission in 1940 and expanded in 1946.

At that time, the command and planning of the Antarctic campaign was centralized in the General Directorate of Navigation and Hydrography, units were acquired for Antarctic operations, seaplanes were used, equipped with very modern photographic cameras, suitable to make an adequate restitution and to be able, from the photographic material, to make cartography. The partic-

¹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 353.

² Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 352 and following.

icipating ships were³: Transport ARA Bahía Buen Suceso, recently acquired in Canada, in a series of three, among them: the Bahía Aguirre (the ship that participated in the largest number of Antarctic campaigns in the world); tug ARA Sanavirón, tug ARA Chiriguano, tanker ARA Punta Loyola and the modern seaplane Grumman JRF 5 Goose 3-P-25.

The group's missions were: to relieve and resupply the naval detachments: Orcadas (recently assigned to the Navy by order of the President of the Nation), Deception and Melchior. They also had to carry out all the repairs and enlargements that they required; carry out an ambitious hydrographic and oceanographic plan, take aerial photographs that would be processed during the year to make cartography of the area of interest; support the scientists who were assigned by the universities to participate in the campaign; look for suitable places to establish other detachments and shelters.

When the planning was well advanced, the need arose to contribute to the initiative of Colonel Hernán Pujato, who had the support of the President of the Nation, to carry out an ambitious plan, with the objective of occupying the sector claimed by Argentina and projecting an expedition to the South Pole. His activities and planning were carried out outside the National Antarctic Commission, which in 1946 was already restructured with a representative of the Ministry of War (the Argentine Army) and the Ministry of Aeronautics (the current Argentine Air Force) and was the centralized area of planning and determination of national objectives in Antarctica. Colonel Pujato had the full support of the President of the Nation, who financed the plans for the "assault to the pole" and other occupation and scientific initiatives, which he had proposed and which were approved. However, they were not institutionally channeled and not even the members of his own force were aware of the initiatives.

Argentina owes to the colonel the acquisition of the 1st icebreaker,⁴ which we will see later, and the creation of the Argentine Antarctic Institute (IAA, on April 17, 1951);⁵ two achievements that radically changed the Argentine presence in Antarctica and its world projection.⁶ The possibilities of support for the construction of a new base were very scarce, because of the moment in which it was required, however, the Argentine business-

³ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 352.

⁴ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires 2012. p. 335.

⁵ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires 2012. p. 343.

⁶ Cano, Alfredo. "Todo comenzó en Upsala" aerospace history collection. Argentinidad Editions. 2009. p. 22.

man Gregorio Pérez Compagnon made available a cargo ship, the Santa Micaela, which transported the material prepared by Pujato and was supported by the tug ARA Sanavirón, which had to leave aside part of what was planned to comply with the new commitment.

The planning of the campaign was very successful and had only two significant alterations: These were the construction of the first permanent base in the continental zone of Antarctica, at Proa Point, Paradise Bay, called Brown Base, inaugurated on April 6, 1951;⁷ and the fulfillment of the presidential order to give full support to Colonel Pujato's operation, received by the commander of the Antarctic group on February 12, 1951,⁸ the same day that the ship carrying them sailed from Buenos Aires and whose farewell was attended by the President of the Nation himself, who gave the expedition his full and unrestricted support.⁹ Because of the latter, the construction of a new detachment in the Orkneys, whose facilities were precarious and unsuitable, had to be cancelled since the ARA Chiriguano had to remain in the area of the peninsula to replace the ARA Sanavirón, which remained in support of the BM Santa Micaela until April.¹⁰ The campaign began in Buenos Aires on 16 December 1950 and after passing through Ushuaia, the ships were operating in Antarctica by the end of the same month.

The tugboats ARA Chiriguano and Sanavirón developed, despite the interference, a vast amount of hydrographic activities such as: inspection, maintenance and commissioning of the lighthouses and beacons already installed; inspection and maintenance of the shelters built, to which the contents of medicines and provisions expired or about to expire were replaced; expeditious surveys, reconnaissance of coasts, anchorages, ports and places suitable for the construction of bases or shelters; survey and confirmation of foreign beaconing data in the navigation areas; survey of sounding lines in the navigations. The Mac Farlane Strait was navigated and an expeditious survey was made, confirming its

⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 360.

⁸ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 354.

⁹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 354.

¹⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 353.

usefulness for the entry and exit of ships to and from the American continent.¹¹ A quarton of Puerto Yankee was surveyed and made, marking its entrance with two blind beacons. Similarly, ports Orne and Lockroy, Dorian Bay, Lighthouse Bay, Leith and Paradise were surveyed.

Operation Colonel Pujato

Halfway through the Antarctic campaign, orders were received to support the operation. Up to Tierra del Fuego, the voyage of the Santa Micaela¹² was known to Captain Farrell, from there the unknown began for the merchant ship. Meteorological support was provided and the presence of ships sailing from Ushuaia, Rada Picton and Piedrabuena was arranged to accompany the ship in the distance in case of any mishap. The crossing was successful and on February 28 they met in Dallman Bay with the Sanavirón. From there they sailed very close, one mile away, to the mouth of Margarita Bay, which was reached on March 8, 1951. This area had not been explored and safety measures had to be taken. The commander of the ARA Sanavirón advised Farrell to drag half a shackle of anchor chain¹³ because, if they approached a shallows, the anchor would touch the shallows first and give them time to stop engines and investigate the site.

From the mouth, the tug sailed half a mile between ships and further inland, 500 meters, the ARA Sanavirón had a launch in the water that was sounding in the direction of the ships' advance. Once the tug found an anchorage, the merchant vessel anchored and prepared the cargo to be transported ashore, in the meantime, the tug docked alongside and the launch made an exhaustive search for landing sites to be able to unload. The ARA Sanavirón kept a close watch on the weather and glaciological situation to avoid being trapped in the bay by the ice. On March 14 she sailed to the mouth of the bay to check the situation. On the 17th, a huge storm broke out and the anchors of the Santa Micaela were dragged¹⁴ and it was saved by the tugboat, which remained pulling the stern of the Santa Micaela, with all its power, to prevent it from ending up on the rocks, a situation that

¹¹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 359.

¹² Cano, Alfredo A. "Todo comenzó en Upsala" Colección de Historia Aeroespacial. Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires 2009. p. 20.

¹³ This is a normal practice in the absence of multi-lobe probing equipment, which did not exist at that time.

¹⁴ The effect produced when anchors are moved from their position on the bottom as a result of a storm or mechanical action that drags the vessel away from the anchoring place.

lasted for two days. The winds exceeded 110 km/h. After these alternatives, on March 21, the new San Martín base was inaugurated,¹⁵ with the ceremony attended by the crews of the two ships, and their captains made speeches. On March 26, they set sail, following the same routine as at the inauguration. On March 27, after a tense night of navigation, with almost no visibility, the ships leave the bay and each one takes its course, one towards the American continent and the other to resume the postponed tasks.¹⁶

Science

Geological works were developed (Dr. Cordini of the General Directorate of Mining), Antarctic fossils, works appeared in the first edition of the magazine of the Argentine Antarctic Institute, also produced the first description of the various types of ice, its physical and chemical characteristics. Terrestrial magnetism whose results were published in the issue Nº 3 of the IAA, Marine Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Museo de la Plata, Ionospheric soundings from the Deception Base with simultaneous comparison of the Ionospheric station of the Navy (Vicente López–Buenos Aires) with this it was possible to develop a manual of ionospheric predictions for radioelectric transmissions. Even art was present since a writer, Alberto Iglesias, developed environmental observations to write about Antarctica.

Meteorology¹⁷

The concern for having adequate meteorological information was fundamental for the operations, the only unfortunate event occurred due to the lack of it. A surprise wind in the Melchior archipelago caused the seaplane to suffer damages, fortunately minor and at the end of the campaign. In this campaign the objectives were twofold, one, the operative one which was to have adequate forecasts and anticipation to fulfill the planning and the other was to have information to understand the meteorological phenomena in those latitudes and to continue with statistical series to be able to state, with a scientific basis, the models that govern the meteorological phenomena. For this purpose, a very complete meteo-

¹⁵ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires, 2012. p. 342.

¹⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 375.

¹⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires, 1981. p. 363.

rological center was set up in Ushuaia and another one on board the modern ARA Buen Suceso. At least three daily weather charts, synopses and forecasts were produced there. Notwithstanding the effort, there was still a lack of an adequate amount of data for the formulation of adequate forecasts, including data at altitude and stations further west.

Orkney

By presidential order, the Orcadas Base, until then under the National Meteorological Service, Ministry of Agriculture, was transferred to the Ministry of the Navy. This took place on March 3, 1951.

The Air Force makes its first attempt. Operation “Liaison”

On December 19, 1951,¹⁸ with an Avro Lincoln airplane, specially modified for long duration flights and equipped with skis for the aneisage, Vice Commodore Gustavo Marambio, head of the group and on board the aircraft, tried to deliver correspondence and other items, which were never found and when he realized that the runway, which the personnel of the San Martín base had prepared, was unsafe, due to the number of cracks in the ice, he returned to Río Gallegos. Among the things that were sent were the general's cap and insignia for Pujato, who had just been promoted.¹⁹ The flight lasted 12 hours and 22 minutes, covering the distance of 3500 km.²⁰ This would be the first Argentine flight from the American continent with overflight in Antarctica.

Year 1952

In 1951, the Antarctic Commission²¹ made a balance of what had been planned versus what had actually been developed and it was seen that there were many areas that could not be surveyed due to glaciological conditions, those areas were the areas of Margarita Bay and in the area of Esperanza Bay, near the Antarctic Sound. It was decided then, to

¹⁸ Cano, Alfredo. “Todo comenzó en Upsala” collection of aerospace history. Argentinidad Editions. 2009. p. 23.

¹⁹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. “History of Antarctica”. Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires 2012. pp. 345-346.

²⁰ Palazzi, Rubén Oscar. “The Air Force in Antarctica” “History of the Argentine Air Force. Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Buenos Aires 2008. p. 28 and ss.

²¹ Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 381.

complete those empty areas in this campaign, commanded by Emilio Diaz, an Antarctic scholar and an exceptional Antarctic commander. In addition, strategic places to be developed for military use were investigated. Let us remember that the signing of the Antarctic Treaty was still many years away, the so-called “Polar Year” had not even been planned and Antarctica was a place of confrontations and overlapping claims; in the case of Argentina’s area of interest, it overlapped with Chile and the United Kingdom, having generated problems with both countries.

During this campaign, several plans were developed to try to meet the pending and new challenges, the first one was to place an observatory and naval detachment in Bahía Esperanza, then to take advantage of the runway used by Lincoln Ellsworth on Dundee Island and to build a naval air base there that would serve to project the Argentine expeditions to the south. This year, in addition, the crew of the San Martín base, headed by Hernan Pujato, who had wintered, had to be relieved. The glaciological situation that was found in that place was really very hard, the transport ARA Bahía Aguirre, a new ship, was trapped in the ice for more than a week with all the outgoing crew of San Martín and caused a lot of damage to its hull and propulsion.

The balance of that year was very positive, the naval detachment and observatory at Esperanza Bay was built and inhabited for wintering, the naval detachment on Dundee Island, later called Petrel, was also created and built, more than 18 ports with capacity for military use were surveyed, 16 quartons were surveyed, cartography covering a small area, but with many details, very useful for approaching the coast or anchoring. Eighty-five square miles were sounded to develop these quartons and other general charts, 620 miles of coastline were surveyed, aerial photographs were taken of 26,000 square kilometers of coastline, 12 astronomical support points were taken and measured, in order to be able to properly locate the cartography, coastlines, etc. Twenty-eight oceanographic stations were set up, 17 scientists were embarked and 4 areas were surveyed to settle populations, which was one of the goals of the Antarctic Commission since 1946. One of them was undoubtedly Esperanza, which later became the settlement.²²

One of the operations was called Operation Petrel, which had the following objectives: to install a detachment on the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, in Esperanza Bay to be more precise and on Dundee Island to take advantage of the runway, which would be

²² Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 384.

very useful for Argentina for different objectives that had been proposed, already with stationed aircraft and to be able to make crossings from the continent to there. To survey the polygonal sea and aerial photogrammetry of the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, to recognize hydrographically the north of the access to Margarita Bay, that is, not to go outside, through the Bellingshausen Sea, but through inland channels, from Bismarck Strait to Margarita Bay; to consolidate the knowledge of the routes through inland channels. The Orleans Strait, to survey the Shetland Islands, especially Brabant and Antwerp, to look for places that would make possible support points for naval forces, whaling bases, which also at that time was an absolutely fashionable industry, and to study different Antarctic sites to be able to locate there numerous colonies, we are talking about numerous bases or even the installation of families in that place.

On the other hand, the frigates *Hercules* and *Sarandi*, which, as we remember, were purchased as meteorological ships, carried out two very important activities: the reconnaissance of the South Sandwich Islands to find a place to install a permanent detachment and also to carry out a hydrographic, oceanographic and geological survey of the area. The South Sandwich Islands are volcanic islands.

As another addition to this campaign, the naval planes began to make the Ushuaia-Deception line, landing on the water mirror of the volcano, establishing the first Antarctic air mail, and the moment was also used for one of them to cross the Antarctic Arctic Circle by air. Three groups were formed for the operation: the Antarctic task force with the ships *Bahía Aguirre*, *Buen Suceso*, the hydrographic ships *Chiriguano* and *Sanavirón*, the tanker *Punta Ninfas*, the air group was composed of air reconnaissance planes *Catalina 2 P5* and *2 P3* and an embarked air group the *GRF Goose 2 P20* and *2 P 1*.²³

First armed incident in Antarctica, the foundation of the Esperanza Base, the Petrel Base and the start-up of the Esperanza lighthouse

On January 14, the construction of the Esperanza base began, it was initially in charge of the *Chiriguano* notice, it installed a camp and began the tasks to erect on one side the base and on the other side the Esperanza Bay lighthouse, which was required to have a safe access to the Esperanza Bay. The lighthouse was completed and went into service on January 21, 1952. While the personnel remained at Esperanza Bay, the *Chiriguano* was de-

²³ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 388.

tached to Dundee Island to begin construction of the Petrel naval air base, initially called Dundee naval air base.

While these works were being carried out, on January 30, the British ship John Biscoe²⁴ showed up²⁵ and began to unload material to build a base in that place. In spite of the verbal and written warnings of the commander of the Antarctic task force, they maintained their defiant attitude; at that moment the chief of the construction, Lieutenant Isidoro Paradelo complied with the order given by Commander Diaz to prevent the work from continuing and fired a burst of machine gun into the air, made the work be suspended, returned the personnel, the British flag and all the materials that had been unloaded. The British withdrew, thus becoming the first effective use of weapons in Antarctica. The base was formally inaugurated on January 31, 1952 and was in charge of the frigate lieutenant Luis María Casanova who wintered in that place. The removal of the fifty or so workers who had worked in the construction of the two bases at the end of March was a difficult maneuver carried out by the Avisos, due to the advance of the Weddell Sea ice towards the north.

St. Martin base²⁶ and its difficult relief

For the first relay, the ships Bahía Aguirre, Sanavirón and Buen Suceso, which brought on board the governor of Tierra del Fuego, were assigned. On March 17, the Bahía Aguirre found a breach in the ice, the sea surface was covered between 8 and 10 tenths, that is to say, it was almost totally covered and the Sanavirón followed it, so they could reach it, but the Bahía Buen Suceso did not have the same luck, as it could not reach it and had to return to the Bismarck Strait area. After relieving the personnel and resupplying the base for a new wintering, an attempt was made to leave, this lasted a week and the consequences were several important, although not dangerous, damages, which had to be repaired on the return to Buenos Aires.

²⁴ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 393.

²⁵ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 347.

²⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 395.

Science in the campaign

Having sent invitations to numerous national universities and research centers, eight professors from the Universidad de La Plata, the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales Bernardino Rivadavia, the Universidad de Buenos Aires and the Universidad de Cuyo participated in various disciplines. The determination of the Antarctic convergence was developed by the ships in each crossing of the Strait of Sickles, taking in each approach to the Antarctic continent by different longitudes, measuring oceanographic data that allowed to discover that in the vicinity of Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, the Antarctic convergence²⁷ rose sharply to the north.²⁸

First flight from the American continent with landing in Antarctica and first Argentine airmail (Ushuaia-Decepción), the first flights to Antarctica by the Argentine Air Force.²⁹

February 7, 1952, two Catalina aircraft decollated from Rio Grande fly to make the first airmail flight to Antarctica, but it would also be the first flight from the American continent with landing on the Antarctic continent. In the morning hours they took off from Rio Grande and remained from February 7 to 10 in the Deception water mirror. During those days a strong storm broke out, the moorings broke and the planes broke down, they were rescued by the personnel of the Sanavirón, who were on Deception to support the operation. On the 9th they were repaired, leaving them in perfect condition to return and on the 10th they landed again in Rio Grande without any inconvenience.³⁰

After the first flight developed by the Air Force at the end of 1951, other flights were developed,³¹ supported on this occasion by the ships Hércules and Sarandí, was carried

²⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 402.

²⁸ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 402.

²⁹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 407.

³⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 423.

³¹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-

out on February 10, two Avro Lincoln took off from Río Gallegos and flew over Margarita Bay on February 17; one flew over Smith, Nevada, Livingston and Deception islands. On February 26 the Cruz del Sur reached 60° S³² but due to engine failure it had to return after 3 hours of flight without being able to complete the mission and flights were suspended until the 23rd.

On February 28, the ship Heroína was located near the Hoces Strait or Hoces Passage to support the Argentine Air Force flight to Antarctica. The Cruz del Sur plane, controlled by Vice Commodore Marambio from Río Gallegos, reached 60 degrees south and, not seeing the continent, returned. Then, on March 1st, he made his second attempt; the plane reached the Melchior Archipelago, flew over it and returned safely to Río Gallegos. On March 2nd the flight was made by two Catalina airplanes of the Argentine Navy, which carried the first air mail from Ushuaia to Deception. They left at mid-morning and at 2:00 p.m. they landed on the water mirror of the volcano on Deception Island. On day 3, one of them, the 2-P-3 flew over the San Martín Base in search of a water mirror to splash down, which it did not find and went to 69° S and returned.³³

Then, the Air Force would make another attempt on March 5, this time the bad weather did not allow them to reach even 60 degrees South latitude and they had to return; for a few hours communication was lost and the worst was feared, the ship Heroína, which was enduring rough seas in the middle of the Hoces Passage, gave the alarm; fortunately soon after they announced their arrival without any inconvenience to Río Gallegos. At the beginning of December 1952, the Antarctic Air Task Force (FATA) was created.³⁴

Year 1953

The numbers show the magnitude of the Antarctic campaign: six ships, two airplanes, one helicopter, 850 men of the Armed Forces and 25 scientists (on this occasion designated by

1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 414.

³² Palazzi, Rubén Oscar. "The Air Force in Antarctica" "History of the Argentine Air Force. Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Buenos Aires. 2008. pp. 30-31.

³³ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 425.

³⁴ Palazzi, Rubén Oscar. "The Air Force in Antarctica" "History of the Argentine Air Force. Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Buenos Aires. 2008. p. 31.

the recently created Ministry of Defense). More than 57,000 miles were sailed.³⁵

The scientific activities, strongly affected by weather and glaciological conditions, like the rest of the activities, were divided into four areas: geophysical prospecting, fishery productivity (physical oceanography, underwater chemistry and geology, marine biology and fisheries), scientific-technical research (astrophysics, bioclimatology, glaciology, botany and edaphology and micropaleontology), and ornithology. The activities were developed from the ships or remained in the bases or detachments as long as they could during the campaign.³⁶ In addition to what was projected by the scientists of the Ministry of Defense, the navy had to develop its own scientific plans in the areas of oceanography and meteorology, technical areas such as hydrographic surveys, aerial photography, beaconing, materials testing and operations to measure the behavior of naval and air units, operating limits and nautical safety standards.

The harsh glaciological conditions caused serious and multiple breakdowns in the ships and even the embarked aircrafts suffered consequences that put them out of service, broken engines, propellers, bending of propeller shafts, hull breakdowns, damages in the maneuvers, were some of the damages suffered by the Antarctic group. It also caused Margarita Bay to remain closed during the entire campaign, which prevented the "San Martín" army base from being relieved. The crew had to winter over for the second time. The ships Bahía Aguirre and Sanavirón tried to approach, the embarked aircraft flew at every possible opportunity looking for a route to the base, at the point of maximum approach they launched the embarked helicopter and it was verified that it was impossible to relieve the base at that distance, besides being extremely dangerous.

The base had a helicopter to support operations, and that year important crossings were made, more than 2,000 kilometers, crossing the Antarctic and arriving at Weddell. Unfortunately the helicopter broke down and had to be disassembled and returned to Buenos Aires for its reconstruction and the base burned almost entirely.

In view of this circumstance, it was decided that the Argentine Air Force plane would carry out an aerial refueling, with the support of the ships that remained in place until the operation was completed. The changing glaciological conditions, always worsening, motivated

³⁵ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 449.

³⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 459 and following.

a plan to assist the Bahía Aguirre, in case the ice trapped it. In this operation, all the ships of the campaign would participate, located in different positions and with a multiplicity of tasks, exploration, meteorological support, possible towing and rescue of its crew in an extreme case.

The practices and experiences developed during the previous year by the Air Force, were materialized in a real operation. The aircraft that made it possible was an Avro Lincoln, a piston bomber, modified in the factory to be able to perform long duration flights, for which internal fuel tanks and other improvements were adapted, which, although they did not make it totally suitable for Antarctic flights, were an acceptable capacity for the eventuality. Its name was Cruz del Sur. It flew from Río Gallegos to the San Martín Base,³⁷ dropped its cargo and returned to Río Gallegos in an incredible feat, without much experience and with more unknowns than certainties. The operation began at 7:34 a.m. on March 26, 1953, and at 2:30 p.m. she dropped her cargo. It was one of the seven days of good weather of the 54 days of the campaign, the operation counted with ships distributed throughout the maritime route of the plane.³⁸

Another consequence of the harsh conditions was the suspension of many of the planned tasks. One of them was the construction of the army base Esperanza, near the naval detachment,³⁹ which was started by the construction group. The permanent bad weather conditions prevented the completion of these works and sometimes, what was built during the day was destroyed at night by the winds and snowfalls.

On January 13, 1953, construction began on the “Cándido de la Sala” shelter in Caleta Baleneros, Deception Island, about 400 meters from the British base. On the 14th, the British base chief delivered a note of complaint to the construction chief, which was answered at that time by the commander of the ship Sanavirón, who was the highest authority in the place. On the 18th it was inaugurated and the Argentine ships left the place. The following day, the British warship Snipe, with authorities on board, arrived and delivered protest notes to the chief of the Deception base and to the chief of the recently built refuge. In the evening, the ship Punta Ninfas enters the water mirror and responds with another protest note. On the 23rd the Chilean ships meet at Decepción and begin the construction

³⁷ Cano, Alfredo. “Todo comenzó en Upsala” aerospace history collection. Argentinidad Editions. 2009. p. 25.

³⁸ Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 466.

³⁹ The old naval detachment is now incorporated to the Army base and is called “Galpón de Marina”.

of a shelter 200 meters from the Argentine one, after its construction is completed they leave it uninhabited. When the Argentine and Chilean ships left the island, on February 16 the British, with armed infantry troops, destroyed both shelters and took prisoner the two Argentines who were inside the installations. The chief of the shelter, who was circumstantially at the Deception base, appeared and was informed that the personnel taken prisoner were going to be taken to Georgias and then returned to Buenos Aires. Under such circumstances, the head of the Antarctic campaign, Captain Rodolfo Panzarini, appeared and sent a strong note of protest to the British base chief.⁴⁰

On April 1, 1953, the Bahía Luna naval detachment, later named Teniente Cámara, was inaugurated. The campaign ended on April 24, 1953, having developed the operations in harsh weather and glaciological conditions, which, although they prevented the fulfillment of the ambitious plan of operations and caused serious failures in the units involved, the campaign had a positive result.

Argentine Air Force strengthens its presence in Antarctic operations⁴¹

On January 3, the two Avro Lincolns assigned to Antarctic duties flew to 66° S, on January 6, one flew over Deception Island, on January 11 the Southern Cross flew over Shetland. Then on February 11 and 12 there were new overflights over the Shetlands, on the 13th, with the presence of the Commander in Chief of the FAA, the Southern Cross flew 11 hours over the archipelago. Fifty-five flights were made that year, totaling more than 600 flight hours. This marked a significant change in the Air Force's participation in Antarctica.

Year 1954

That year's campaign began early on October 8, 1953 and ended in mid-March 1954. The participating ships and aircraft were divided into three groups to undertake all planned tasks simultaneously. Once again, representatives of the Army and the Air Force took part in the campaign, as well as two US Navy officers, one of whom had to undergo an operation for appendicitis during the crossing of the Hoces Passage, in the middle of a fierce

⁴⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 467 and following.

⁴¹ Palazzi, Rubén Oscar. "The Air Force in Antarctica" "History of the Argentine Air Force. Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Buenos Aires. 2008. pp. 32-33.

storm, with complete success⁴² and the science was centralized under the organization of the recently created Argentine Antarctic Institute.

The ships were: ARA Bahía Aguirre, ARA Bahía Buen Suceso, tanker Punta Loyola, the ARA Avisos Chiriguano, Sanaviron and Yamana, the Grumman-Goose 3-P-50 and 3-P-51 aircraft and the S 55 Helicopters Hg 1 and Hg 2 (recently acquired to ensure the difficult relays from the San Martín base).⁴³

The competition with England for the occupation continued to be very tense, several shelters were destroyed and some, such as the one on Dundee Island, were vandalized and with inscriptions in English stating that this space belonged to the Kingdom of Great Britain. In others, the weather was in charge of destroying them (or at least it seemed that way), like the one in Potter Cove.⁴⁴ The latter was used as a support for the seaplanes operating in the cove.

That year the ice fields were very adverse to naval operations. Science was organized in a centralized way by means of Presidential Decree N°23.810, which created the scientific commission. The Argentine Antarctic Institute was responsible for drawing up the scientific plan. The disciplines contemplated were: geology, paleontology, glaciology, botany, phycology, oceanography, meteorology and also the construction of a hydroponic farm.⁴⁵

By virtue of a glaciological opportunity that occurred in mid and late December 1953, it was possible to penetrate to Cerro Nevado Island and the present Vicecomodoro Marambio. There, the good condition of the shelter used by Norsdenkjöld's expedition was checked, a plaque was installed, baptizing it Sweden shelter, and passing its dependence to the Argentinean Navy, an exhaustive inventory of what was found inside and outside the construction was made. Nearby, a shelter called Betbeder was built.⁴⁶ Then it was pos-

⁴² Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 519.

⁴³ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 482.

⁴⁴ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 483.

⁴⁵ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 515.

⁴⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-

sible to reach Paulet Island, where the crew members of the Antarctic ship wintered after the shipwreck. The hut was destroyed.

The relief of the San Martín base⁴⁷ was once again very difficult. For the occasion, the Army had prepared and separated from the total cargo eleven tons and the personal belongings of the future wintering personnel, as the minimum to be transported in order to carry out the emergency relief. Despite all attempts, the ships were unable to get within 120 miles. On the first flight were Captain Edgar Leal, the future base chief and the Antarctic commander, who after an inspection, returned aboard with five men and the operation began. Then they were able to approach 95 miles and the weather improved sufficiently. Twelve risky flights were necessary to rescue the men who had stayed two years and to accomplish the entire planned emergency relief. While these tasks were being carried out, the ice began to advance and the sea was freezing around the ships. This was not only happening in Margarita Bay, but also in the inland waters there were evident signs of freezing in all the water bodies. On March 15 they left the place and on March 22 the Antarctic waters were abandoned.

On March 4, the Navy handed over the base built for the army in Esperanza.⁴⁸ A very ambitious hydrographic plan was developed, reconnaissance and description of coasts, bathymetric surveys, aerial photography for a later cartographic restitution, maintenance and installation of maritime signals. The search for places suitable for the installation of bases or permanent settlements continued.⁴⁹

Eight new shelters were planned to be installed at strategically distributed points in order to confirm the occupation of the requested sector, but above all of the spaces that had been selected as priority areas in previous years. In addition to being supplied with everything necessary to contribute to the preservation of the lives of those who, in the event of an emergency, require their use. The construction of some of them was very laborious and required great efforts.⁵⁰ At the request of the Army, whose objective was to penetrate towards the interior of the continent, towards the pole, it was verified that near

1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 501.

⁴⁷ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 352.

⁴⁸ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 352.

⁴⁹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 513.

⁵⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-

Cape Primavera there was a place, close to glaciers that allowed access to the interior of the continent without inconvenience. We experimented penetrating 10 kilometers, which were done with ease, from there the difficulties increased, but were significantly lower than those experienced in other points already explored. A shelter was built there, in what would later become a base and a botanical research site of scientific importance.⁵¹

The first Antarctic newspaper, *La Voz de Decepción*, was published at the Deception Naval Detachment, which, in addition to the news received by radio, had an ad honorem correspondent from Buenos Aires. This is the first known Antarctic journalistic publication.⁵²

Argentina decides to order the construction of its first icebreaker in Germany.⁵³ With a view to the International Geophysical Year 1957-58, it ordered the construction of a vessel with all the technological advances and capacity to withstand the pressure of the ice without capsizing and that would allow the operation in areas never explored before. Its main mission would be to establish the General Belgrano base, southeast of the Weddell Sea.⁵⁴

Year 1955

The campaign began early on October 27, 1954, with the Yamana warning, whose mission was to report the glaciological situation in the areas of operation. A vast naval air deployment was made, with two Grumman-Goose aircraft and 3 Sikorsky S-55 helicopters, operating from the ships and Potter Cove (from that year the station was called Lieutenant Jubany), in addition to Deception, from where they were deployed to the area of Margarita Bay, as ice lookouts and to carry out aerophotographic surveys with modern and more precise technology equipment. At the Deception base, the first radio beacon was installed

1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 521.

⁵¹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 529.

⁵² Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 557.

⁵³ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 353.

⁵⁴ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 607.

and put into service,⁵⁵ with a proven range of 300 NM. Helicopters were instrumental in the development of the first deep Weddell Sea penetration.

Despite the presence of the icebreaker ARA General San Martín, the relief of the San Martín base was very difficult and had to be carried out by air, 12 miles away. That year a first lieutenant of the FAA wintered there as meteorologist.⁵⁶ As part of the International Geophysical Year 1957-58⁵⁷, a base was installed in the southern Weddell Sea, on the ice shelf.⁵⁸ This was the first penetration made by Argentina and the first real operation in a harsh ice field for the recently incorporated icebreaker. Thus began the long and successful Argentine experience in the operation of icebreaker ships. Nothing was known about the behavior of the ice, the currents, the tides, the meteorology of the area and even more, the response of the icebreaker in these operations was unknown, everything was new and one thing was certain, once a limit was exceeded, also imprecise, no one could rescue the unit, its crew and passengers. There was no unit from the equator to the south that could help them.

The future base chief and commander of the land forces, General Hernán Pujato, flies over the barrier, after having rammed the icebreaker in the southernmost position he could access through the ice. He managed to identify a suitable place to install the base, and sent a patrol of expert skiers from the Argentine Army to verify the suitability of the site. After two intense weeks of work, in which not only the members of the base, but almost the entire crew of the icebreaker participated, the base was built according to the army's requirements, as well as fully supplied and equipped. The base was inaugurated on January 18, at a latitude of 78° south, the southernmost to date.⁵⁹ The base had a Cessna 180⁶⁰ aircraft, piloted by Pujato himself, with which he made a large number of flights and

⁵⁵ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 594.

⁵⁶ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 355.

⁵⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 601.

⁵⁸ Rigoz, Susana. "The conqueror of the white desert, Hernán Pujato". Soldiers Library. Editorial María Ghirlanda. Buenos Aires. 2002. p. 27.

⁵⁹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 612.

⁶⁰ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 357.

discovered several geographical features,⁶¹ which he surveyed and mapped.⁶²

On his return, he passed Thule Island, one of the islands of the South Sandwich Islands archipelago, where he erected the Lieutenant Esquivel shelter and a beacon. The operation with the icebreaker changed the professional view of navigation in ice-covered waters, generated a school of Antarctic sailors who cultivated a specialized professional perspective, accustomed to observe details that, for those who do not operate this type of units, are not important or go unnoticed, to see the horizon in search of signs and signals that at sea have no meaning and in the ice fields, are the difference between moving forward or being trapped for weeks.⁶³

1956

The summer of 1955-56 was very favorable for ship operations; a mild winter meant that the waters were sufficiently free of ice to greatly favor resupply operations, scientific and technical surveys, as well as the possibility of collecting samples in previously ice-covered areas. For economic reasons⁶⁴ the campaign was carried out by a much smaller number of surface units, however, because of the sea ice, they were able to carry out a large number of operations and scientific work.

The icebreaker, supplemented by two S-55 helicopters,⁶⁵ in order to operate safely in deep Weddell, after resupplying the Esperanza base and exploring the Gulf of Erebus and Terror, made a passage through Orkney and headed for Thule, where the shelter previously built there was put in condition and inhabited. Two members of the crew, who were radio amateurs, established more than 1,500 contacts with colleagues around the world. A few days after the ship set sail south, a nearby island, Bristol, erupted, spewing lava and ash more than 1,000 feet into the air.

The relief of the Belgrano base was laborious, despite having found better conditions than the previous year, even the ship that had transported the transpolar expedition, the Tot-

⁶¹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 359.

⁶² Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 355.

⁶³ Not everything can be expressed in words in a manual, the experience, the development of the so-called seafaring eye, requires time and work within a given environment and the Antarctic is perhaps the most rigorous of them.

⁶⁴ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 631.

⁶⁵ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 361.

tam, was found trapped between the ice and the necessary help was given. The relief, repair and extension of the base and its total replenishment took 4 days, after which they continued southward, studying the surroundings, reaching 77° 57' S.⁶⁶

On his return he went straight to rescue the inhabitants of Thule, who were beset by eruptions and toxic clouds emanating from the volcano less than 50 kilometers away. Having rescued them, he headed for Robertson Island to build a shelter that the army patrols would use to move southward along the east coast of the peninsula. Then at Margarita Bay he was able, for the first time since its founding, to fully resupply the base, support its maintenance and the construction of new facilities.

During the campaign, preparatory to the International Geophysical Year, the following disciplines were developed:⁶⁷ zoology, geomagnetism, glaciology, geology, limnology, paleontology, microbiology, topography, oceanography and hydrography. Argentina was invited to participate, with a representative, in the U.S. Deepfreeze I⁶⁸ expedition. Lieutenant Commander Raúl Kolbe, who had served as commander of a warning during an Antarctic campaign, was selected on this occasion. He was assigned to the icebreaker Glacier, the most modern and powerful icebreaker in the world at that time. He participated in all the relevant activities in the expedition and acquired enormous experience in icebreaker operation, which was added to the incipient capacity, recently acquired.

Year 1957

The Antarctic campaign was very intense and a large number of ships had to be used since all bases and shelters had to be prepared to participate in the International Geophysical Year. Likewise, scientific activity was substantially increased for the same purpose.⁶⁹ The presence of the icebreaker and the benign glaciological conditions made it possible to

⁶⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 635.

⁶⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 641 and following.

⁶⁸ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 653 and ff.

⁶⁹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 657 and ff.

fully comply with the relieving of the General Belgrano and San Martín bases, which were not only fully resupplied, but also improved, enlarged and left all their systems and circuits working properly. A new house and an ionospheric station were built at the Belgrano base.

The St. Martin was to build a naval detachment, significantly expanding the existing one on Thule Island. She made three attempts, which failed for various reasons, weather, ice, swell and sulphurous emanations from nearby volcanoes. They finally gave up and put all their efforts in the bases and shelters of Weddell and Margarita Bay.⁷⁰ After participating in the visit made by the Vice President of the Nation, Rear Admiral Isaac Rojas, he returned to Esperanza to rescue two non-commissioned officers of the Army⁷¹ who were in a compromising situation in Duse Bay. They were happily rescued by the unit's helicopter in a risky maneuver.⁷²

On its way to resupply Belgrano, an unusual activity was found, the ships Maggadan and Tottam resupplying the British base and the icebreaker US Staten Island, founding the Ellsworth base. The Esperanza Naval Detachment is inactivated, handing over the facilities and all its contents to the Army.⁷³ On February 4, the Guillochon shelter was inaugurated on Rabot Island, consisting of a house measuring 6 meters by 12 meters, which was inhabited during the entire Antarctic campaign. The participating ships were: icebreaker General San Martín, transport Bahía Aguirre, hydrographic tugs Chiriguano, Sanavirón, as logistic support: transport Bahía Thetis, tankers Punta Ninfas and Punta Loyola. In addition to the naval air group, consisting of two Consolidated PBY Catalina aircraft, two S-55 Sikorsky H-19 Chickasaw helicopters.

The science deployed was led by two agencies, the Naval Hydrographic Service, which assumed responsibility for hydrography, meteorology and oceanography, and the Argentine Antarctic Institute, which carried out geology, biology and glaciology. A large number of hydrographic surveys and oceanographic stations were carried out, camps were deployed and lodging was provided at the bases and shelters, with logistical support to a large number of scientists who were transported by ships, carrying out research of various orders,

⁷⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. pp. 658-659.

⁷¹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 362.

⁷² Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 659.

⁷³ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 369.

oriented to the International Geophysical Year.⁷⁴ The air activity was limited by an accident occurred in Rio Gallegos in which a Martin Mariner seaplane seriously broke down and could not develop the route Buenos Aires-Puerto Foster (Deception), however, the Catalina made the Ushuaia-Puerto Foster aeropostal flights and countless aerophotographic and glaciological flights in support of logistical and scientific operations.⁷⁵

During the Deepfreeze II operation, carried out by the United States of America, as part of the preparation to participate in the International Geophysical Year, the Argentine Republic was invited, represented by Lieutenant Commander Daniel Canova, a former head of the Melchior base. His participation was on board the icebreaker Staten Island, which had the responsibility of building the Ellsworth base, in the southeast of the Weddell Sea, a huge base with 19 buildings, in only 15 days, which after the International Geophysical Year was ceded to the Argentine Republic. After construction and on departure, the transport ship and the icebreaker itself suffered damage to their propellers and hulls, without major consequences, but they had to be repaired at the first port.⁷⁶

As part of the AGI, the icebreaker General San Martín sailed from Buenos Aires on July 18, 1957. The navigation was planned for observation and scientific sampling. The disciplines to be developed on that occasion were: meteorology, oceanography, biology and glaciology. Eventually visits would be made to the Argentine bases in the northern part of the peninsula and the South Shetland. The latter was impossible due to the prevailing glaciological conditions, in spite of the attempts made by several approach routes. The common factor in the weather was the storms that, almost permanently, affected the ship during navigation.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. pp. 669-671.

⁷⁵ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 673.

⁷⁶ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (Institute of Naval Publications) XII book of the History Collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. pp. 683-685.

⁷⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 690.

Year 1958

In order to fully comply with the commitments assumed for the AGI, Argentina had eight permanent bases and six shelters. The institutions that participated in the scientific activity in various disciplines were: the Argentine Navy, the Argentine Antarctic Institute, the University of La Plata, the Military Geographic Institute and the Bernardino Rivadavia Museum of Natural Sciences. In addition to the participation of scientists and officers from the U.S. Navy, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the Weather Bureau, the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, the University of Miami and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. In addition, officers from the navies of the United States, Chile and Uruguay participated as guests.⁷⁸

The season was extremely difficult in terms of glaciology; the harsh winter meant that very late in the campaign, many of the areas were covered with ice. The first three automatic tide gauges were installed in Antarctica, in Brown, Melchior and Esperanza, in order to participate in the worldwide study of the average sea level in the planet. An offshore geophysics campaign was carried out with the ships ARA Sanavirón and Vema, sponsored by the Argentine Navy and Columbia University (USA).

Studies of gravimetry, geology, biology, glaciology, auroras at the Belgrano base, meteorology, radioelectric propagation, microbiology were carried out. International teams were formed, as in Melchior, where Argentines, Swiss, French and Americans developed research in marine biology. Samples were taken in all disciplines to continue with the studies in the different countries of origin of the scientists. In addition to science, some technological applications were studied, especially in the area of aviation with more suitable clothing for the Antarctic environment, use of equipment for rescue, etc. Air support was provided for the Deepfreeze III operation carried out by the United States.

There were some unfortunate events, some with happy endings, others with casualties and injuries. In the middle of a heavy snowstorm, a member of the Esperanza army base who had left with a boat was rescued,⁷⁹ as well as two members of the San Martín base crew who were left on an islet near the base when the ice pack moved and they were unable to return. Then a helicopter from the icebreaker plunged into the sea and three of its passengers perished, saving four others, with injuries and consequences due to immer-

⁷⁸ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 697.

⁷⁹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 373.

sion in the icy waters. The hydrographic plan continued, surveying areas to make nautical charts, putting into service all the luminous nautical signals, repairing all the signals and erecting new ones in areas where nautical safety required it.

In mid-January 1958, the first Antarctic tourism trip took place, aboard the navy transport *Les Eclaireurs*,⁸⁰ which visited several Argentine bases and constituted the beginning of this type of incursions in Antarctica, until now reserved for adventurers, scientists or state actions. The trip was not without controversy with the British: in Deception was the HMS *Protector*, originally a destroyer, converted into an Antarctic patrol vessel in 1955, there was an exchange of notes of protests and communications of “welcome” to the waters of both countries.⁸¹ In the new version of the *Deepfreeze III* expedition, the Navy appointed Lieutenant Margalot, who years later would be the navigator of the Navy plane that would take the first Argentines to the South Pole. He was assigned to the icebreaker *Westwind*, to resupply the Ellsworth base, close to the Argentine base *Belgrano*.⁸²

The naval aviation, continuing with its Antarctic strategic plan, had studied the possibility of linking, without stages, Deception Island and the city of Buenos Aires. After a very professional planning and adaptation of means, on January 19, 1958, in the evening hours, a *Martin Mariner* seaplane, of the “flying boat” type, after solving small technical problems, flew the 4,000 kilometers that separated it from its destination. The flight had some dramatic alternatives, as it suffered several hours of a storm of great proportions, after which calm returned. At 9:45 a.m. on January 20, he landed in the waters of the new port of Buenos Aires, almost 12 hours of uninterrupted flight, a feat of magnitude for the time.⁸³

It had been many months since the hectic Antarctic campaign had ended; at the *Almirante Brown* base⁸⁴ they were preparing to celebrate Independence Day, on July 9 they received a call from the British *Lockroy* base requesting medical help for the base chief, who was suffering from pains in his appendix. The bases are 25 nautical miles apart and the waters

⁸⁰ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. “History of Antarctica”. *Argentinidad Editions*. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 373.

⁸¹ Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. *IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection*. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 719.

⁸² Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. *IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection*. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 725.

⁸³ Pierrou, Enrique. “La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959”. *IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection*. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 727 and following.

⁸⁴ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. “History of Antarctica”. *Argentinidad Editions*. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 374.

were covered with ice and only a wooden boat with a small engine was available, which did not work very well in those conditions. The ice fractured on August 4 and they decided to go to the aid of the sick Briton, having to pass first through the Chilean base Gabriel Gonzalez Videla to complete the necessary equipment to attend to the sick man. A sudden storm prevented them from sailing and they had to wait until August 25 to return to the Argentine base, once there they could only leave on September 19 for Lockroy, before arriving, a storm with winds of up to 55 km/h surprised them and they almost capsized, however, seven hours later they had arrived at the base. The doctor decided to treat him with the medicines he had brought with him and not to operate due to the conditions of the place. It was not until October 12 that they were able to return. For political reasons they could not formally thank the support received from the Argentines.⁸⁵

Year 1959

The agreement between the U.S. and Argentina for the Ellsworth⁸⁶ base consisted of the delivery of eleven sheds and five laboratory houses dedicated to: glaciology, auroras, cosmic rays, gravity, ionospheric physics and surface and altitude meteorology. All the infrastructure and equipment was delivered. The Argentine Antarctic Institute, in charge of the base, committed itself to continue with the studies as long as possible (the base was built on the Filchner barrier, an inexhaustible source of tabular icebergs in the Weddell Sea). From that moment on, the icebreaker ARA San Martín was to resupply the two bases, 40 nautical miles away from each other.⁸⁷

The Esperanza chief asked to be left on Robertson Island to build shelters and leave food and equipment for a future patrol to the south, could not be recovered due to the glaciological situation and had to wait for the sea to freeze. The loss of contact forced a huge search and rescue operation involving naval, FAA⁸⁸ and Aerolíneas Argentinas aircraft. They were found, refueled and arrived at the base six months later.⁸⁹ The campaign was

⁸⁵ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires 1981. p. 731 and following.

⁸⁶ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 375.

⁸⁷ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 741.

⁸⁸ Palazzi, Rubén Oscar "The Air Force in Antarctica" "History of the Argentine Air Force. Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Buenos Aires. 2008. p. 34.

⁸⁹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. pp. 376-377.

used to continue taking measurements for the exact determination of the Antarctic convergence, bathythermographic profiles of all the places sailed.

Observing the Navy's incipient success in the study of antibiotics present in phytoplankton, he invited scientists from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and, as local support, a member of the University of La Plata to continue the research.⁹⁰ Up to the present, a large amount of geographic, oceanographic and hydrographic data had been collected and compiled, but what had been published and produced in terms of nautical charts, manuals or publications was scarce and, in some cases, the quality was not what was expected, according to current quality standards. It was therefore decided to improve and correct any erroneous data contained in the products already produced. To this end, an operation was planned with mobile camps and aircraft with modern aerial photographic equipment aboard ski-equipped aircraft.

An act of high political significance took place when the head of the Decepción base was appointed as a delegate of the Tierra del Fuego government.⁹¹ The Navy also deployed a group of divers to gain experience and study the possibility of blasting the Ravn rock, which is located at the entrance to the inner water mirror of Deception. This experience was then applied in support of Antarctic science, especially marine biology. Argentina continued with its Antarctic tourism initiative, this time with the *Motonave Yapeyú*,⁹² of the Argentine Overseas Navigation Fleet (FANU), with 300 passengers on board, with the support of the navy ships of the Antarctic campaign. This provoked an intense exchange of protest notes with the British.

An outstanding event was the support and towing provided by the Argentine Navy ship *Chiriguano* to the Chilean patrol vessel *Lientur*, which was affected by an explosion and subsequent fire in the engine room, with the unfortunate result of two deaths. The fire was controlled by the Chilean ship's own crew and then complemented by the Argentine crew, who also towed it to Deception Island, where it was handed over to the Chilean ship for support. Oceanographic campaigns were carried out both as part of the AGI and to obtain a thorough knowledge of the Hoces Passage, for which the oceanographic vessel *ARA Capitán Cánepa* was deployed. The ship completed 23 complete oceanographic stations

⁹⁰ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 743.

⁹¹ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 745.

⁹² Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 376.

and several in the area of the South Shetland Islands. After the campaign, it was complemented with another oceanographic cruise between June and September, this time some of the planned stations had to be cancelled because they were covered by ice.⁹³ The second oceanographic campaign was also carried out with the Lamont Geological Observatory vessel, called Vema, together with the Sanavirón.

Year 1960

The Antarctic campaign was carried out with three ships and two Sikorsky S-55 helicopters: the icebreaker ARA San Martín, the transport ARA Bahía Aguirre and the hydrographic ship ARA Chiriguano. Although they started early, on November 3, 1959, the ice they faced prevented them from fulfilling the plan of logistical, scientific and technical tasks, as well as relays. Although the members of the wintering crews did not have a general overview, the information they provided on the prevailing glaciology in the observable areas made it clear that the task would not be an easy one.⁹⁴ The icebreaker began the penetration of the Weddell Sea on December 22, 1959⁹⁵ and ended on January 17, 1960, the failed attempt to relieve and resupply the Argentine bases Belgrano and Ellsworth, whose crews had to remain for two continuous years in the place.⁹⁶

During the stay, the icebreaker rescued the Norwegian ship Polarbjorn, which had been trapped in the ice for 5 days, had the South African expedition on board and then provided support to the British ship John Biscoe so that it could arrive safely at the Halley Bay⁹⁷ base. During the long stays in the ice, it was realized that the water production and reserve capacity of the ships was not sufficient. During the ship's voyage, the shelters on the South Sandwich Islands, on Thule Island, Petrel, and on Dundee Island were repaired and fitted out, where the feasibility of building runways suitable for larger aircraft than those used up to that time was studied.⁹⁸

⁹³ Pierrou, Enrique. "La Armada Argentina en la Antártida, sus campañas en buques y bases, 1939-1959". IPN (institute of naval publications) XII book of the History collection. Buenos Aires. 1981. p. 771.

⁹⁴ Coli, Carlos A. "The Argentine Navy in Antarctica, Antarctic naval campaigns 1960-1980". Antarctic Naval Force. Buenos Aires. 2003. p. 14 and ff.

⁹⁵ Coli, Carlos A. "The Argentine Navy in Antarctica, Antarctic naval campaigns 1960-1980". Antarctic Naval Force. Buenos Aires. 2003. p. 15 and ff.

⁹⁶ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 379.

⁹⁷ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. "History of Antarctica". Argentinidad Editions. Buenos Aires. 2012. p. 379.

⁹⁸ Coli, Carlos A. "The Argentine Navy in Antarctica, Antarctic naval campaigns 1960-1980". Antarctic Naval Force. Buenos Aires. 2003. p. 36.

The San Martin base was going through a critical situation: the main house had caught fire and the crew was sheltered in tents and dog kennels. Three of the seven members were sick and required medical attention. The glaciological situation was extreme, north of the base and over the Bellingshausen Sea, a strong storm broke the thick pack ice, broke the ice floes and produced an unprecedented phenomenon of pressure on the hull, which caused the bending of 30 frames,⁹⁹ the denting of the hull, the breakage of the propeller and a perforation of the hull that caused the loss of 12,000 liters of aero fuel. About 30 miles away was trapped the legendary Vivian Fuchs' ship, the Kista Dan. To the north, the U.S. icebreaker Glacier was trapped. Despite the effort, the vessel, damaged and with propulsion problems, was unable to get within 75 miles of the base. The two helicopters were detached in a risky flight and brought back the 7 men, six dogs, sacrificing the rest and 700 kilograms of cargo, abandoning the rest at the battered base. They only had fuel for less than 10 minutes of flight time.¹⁰⁰

The Antarctic Institute conducted and developed scientific activities in: cosmic radiation, ornithology, paleomagnetism, geochemistry, glaciology and meteorology. Those who were part of the Ellsworth relief crew supported the scientists planned for the campaign in their activities. At the bases, studies of glaciology, meteorology, oceanography, geomagnetism, seismological observations, atmospheric electricity, fauna, flora, tides and general hydrographic work, etc. continued. The permanent bases occupied in 1960 were: Orcadas, Deception, Melchior, Belgrano and Ellsworth.

An analysis was made of the shortcomings reported by the base chiefs to correct the difficulties presented: low quality and poorly preserved food that caused problems to achieve a balanced diet during the winter; the need to correct some deficiencies in habitability; organization of the crews with more time and completing more courses than those already planned; more time for the change of crews to learn about the operation of the systems and the problems to be solved with the repair group. It was necessary to establish a better coordination with the Antarctic division of the Army and the Navy, since some considered that the Navy did not give priority to their requests and others that the requirements were not planned in advance and that even if the cargo was accepted at the last minute, it was always more than twice the declared amount, which generated enormous difficulties to comply with it.

⁹⁹ They are part of the internal structure of the ship's hull that gives the ship its shape and strength.

¹⁰⁰ Coli, Carlos A. "The Argentine Navy in Antarctica, Antarctic naval campaigns 1960-1980". Antarctic Naval Force. Buenos Aires. 2003. p. 20 and ff.

This was added to a series of considerations due to the places chosen for the location of the bases, which made them practically inaccessible and generated serious difficulties for their relief and resupply, besides causing to the units deployed for their support, enormous breakdowns and operational difficulties due to the permanent delays suffered as a consequence of the penetration attempts and long stays in their vicinity to try to complete the task entrusted to them. These disagreements, many times motivated by political issues that arose in places far away from Antarctica, generated: lack of coordination, mutual accusations and finally a kind of senseless competition that took many years to be overcome.

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Nº1. Catalina aircraft



Nº2. Catalina aircraft



Nº3. JRF Goose on board the Bahía Aguirre

ARGENTINE ANTARCTICA 1950-1960. PERÓN, PUJATO, LEAL. EARLY ANTARCTIC TOURISM FROM USHUAIA

Carlos Pedro Vairo

As in the 1940s, Colonel Hernán Pujato thought the country needed “a thorough knowledge of the Argentine Antarctic Territory on the mainland, establishing operational bases with trained personnel and suitable means –on land and air– to explore all of the vast Argentine polar sector”.¹

His plan was: 1) Installing operational bases south of the Antarctic polar circle: on the eastern limit of the Argentine sector, on the western limit, and at the bottom of the Weddell Sea, an area that remains unknown and, of course, with no settlers. 2) Creating the Argentine Antarctic Institute for the general and organic management of scientific activities. 3) Acquiring an icebreaker to penetrate the polar seas, hardly explored so far. 4) Once the above mentioned accomplished, try to reach the South Pole by land. 5) Set up a colony with families in the most convenient place that seemed to be the area of Esperanza bay, where a polar village would be built.

This idea was shared with his comrades and he also forwarded it to the National Antarctic Commission, which did not accept it in its entirety either. In fact, the person who was most enthusiastic

¹ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. *La Argentina y sus descubrimientos antárticos*. DNA-IAA, Buenos Aires, 1987.

about it was the President, General Juan Domingo Perón, who invited Hernán Pujato to elaborate on the plan to analyze it in greater detail when back in Buenos Aires, since at the time he was as Military Attaché with the Argentine Embassy in Bolivia. Later, the President of Argentina made the idea his own and the project was dealt with at the highest government level.

It was practically imposed on Colonel Hernán Pujato's superiors. So he decided to study everything related to extremely cold climates and requested permission to take a polar survival course in Alaska. He had also planned another in Sweden, but failed to take it. He took the course at the Arctic Indocrination School. It was very useful to him, as he was able to assimilate lifestyle under the ice and building types for the Arctic. He also trained himself in everything related to food, safety measures, and dogs and sleds managing. He prepared himself, in part, as Roald Amundsen had done. Pujato always had him in mind among other polar explorers he studied to understand their strong and weak points. We must also remember that Argentina's land expeditions through Antarctica were very scarce – mostly maritime and aerial.

At that time, the first bases or stations such as Melchior, Neko, and Decepción were under planning. Then, in the 1950s, they were expanded and improved. Important lessons were learned with the Orkneys Station and the improvements introduced as of 1904. In fact, it was a stone hut. It was not until 1905 that a wooden house was built and carried by the corvette ARA *Uruguay*. It was a house prefabricated in Buenos Aires. It was about 30 x 15 feet with double walls insulated with cork and sawdust (between the outer and inner wall). It had partitions for three rooms and a living room with a kitchen. Other constructions followed, but always prefabricated.

Back to his practice in Alaska, Pujato trained a lot with dogs and sleds – their treatment, the orders for the leader, nutrition, the care of the legs, etc. So he brought 40 dogs, sleds, harnesses, and various equipment to Argentina. Those dogs originated the Argentine polar dog with various crosses.

Hernán Pujato's Project Steps Forward

In 1948, the National Antarctic Commission edited "Argentine Sovereignty in Antarctica," published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It contains a "Preliminary note by the President of Argentina, General Juan Perón." In the note, he directly states national sovereignty over Antarctica "with the strategic and economic implications, it should be dealt with due responsibility". In another passage, he adds "the States interested in solving possession

problems over Antarctica must open a debate with no delay". In his note, Perón showed interest in sovereignty and in closing he added – "Argentina will jealously defend its territorial sovereignty and, in the peaceful discussion of its rights..."²

Back from Alaska, Pujato received a call from President Perón, who told him he would have to present the project at a cabinet meeting. Several ministers disagreed with the project, but it was approved on September 27, 1950 with a ministerial agreement. The President assumed direct responsibility for sending "The Scientific Expedition to the Argentine Continental Antarctica." A month later, the project started at the Ministry of Technical Affairs. The decree was signed on February 9, 1951.³

The promoter of the entire project was President Perón himself, since both the National Antarctic Commission, several ministers, the Navy, and the Army itself did not support Pujato. Lieutenant Colonel Fontana wrote, after reading *Pujato y la Antártida Argentina en la década del 50* [Pujato and Argentine Antarctica in the 1950s], by Eugenio Genest – "The historical truth, although hard to believe, was that the Minister of the Navy was opposed to carrying out the Expedition, since he was of the opinion that it was a risky and hazardous journey with an unpredictable end."⁴

While waiting for the decree, he set himself to get the expedition ready. So he put his team together and started to look for a ship. He hastily prepared everything. He intended to establish the base in Bahía Margarita that summer. He planned and supervised everything in person getting ready for a two-year stay in case they failed to fetch them in the summer of 1952. They gained the *Santa Micaela* from the Pérez Companc company, a 330-foot ship built in 1944 with the capacity to land tanks by her bow. Overseas Captain Santiago Farrell would be her commander and he received the functional cartography prepared by the Navy on President's orders. He also ordered the ARA *Sanavirón*, from Melchior, to join Pujato. She also had the mission to set up the base in Bahía Paraíso on continental soil. And she completed the mission.

The departure was on February 12, 1951 from Buenos Aires – President Juan Domingo Perón, some ministers, and many people said farewell. The voyage was eventful, but they reached Bahía Margarita on March 8. Cargo was unloaded on an islet near mainland. Until then, the Brown Base of the Argentine Navy was the only one in the Peninsula – "On

² Comisión Nacional del Antártico. *Soberanía argentina en la Antártida*. Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto, Buenos Aires, 1947, pp. 9-11.

³ Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴ Note by Colonel Fontana in response to the book by Lic. Eugenio Genest. Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 83.

March 9 at 2 p.m., the tasks for setting up the Base began (...) little by little the islet was transformed – on March 16, the dwelling room was completed; on March 20, the backup house, 5 sheds, and one of the 80-foot radio station towers were also finished; only a few tons of coal were left to unload...”.⁵ Thus, the southernmost base in the world was set up in 13 days. Colonel Hernán Pujato inaugurated the base with a simple ceremony attended by the crews of the *Sanavirón* and *Santa Micaela*, the nine members of the expedition, and the twenty-five volunteer conscript soldiers on March 21, 1951, at 3:30 p.m.

Still, they continued unloading the *Santa Micaela* and two unfortunate events occurred. One of the cold stores failed and all the chickens, turkeys, and pigs had to be thrown away.⁶ There was also the theft of supplies committed by the soldiers who were building the base. A search was carried out and they found everything from stockings to surgical instruments. Hernán Pujato gave a long talk, but did not take any punitive measures. On March 26, the *Santa Micaela* and *Sanavirón* were able to set off under a heavy snowfall with thick fog.⁷

One Year Ahead

On April 5, they underwent their first strong storm and feared for the house as it creaked and looked like about to fall. Some dogs died and the meteorological observatory was destroyed, as were the radio antennas. So they were left temporarily cut off and had to tighten all the nuts and bolts. Three days later, another heavy storm proved them the house was still creaking. Then, they distributed the food into the three houses (considering Rymil’s dating from 1935). The daily inconveniences were dealt with and the food problem was all the fresh meat had spoiled. They lived on canned food with no problems as they took vitamins to make up for the lack of fresh food. In conversation with the historian Adolfo E. Quevedo Paiva, he commented this base could be called the first Argentine Antarctic school, since it provided polar experience for land patrolling, training of men, reconnaissance of the area, experience with equipment and training of the pack of dogs reaching 800 miles below the Antarctic Circle.⁸ They also suffered three fire outbreaks in

⁵ Fontana, Luis Roberto. *Base Gral. San Martín. En el año de su cincuentenario 1951- 200*. Banco Tierra del Fuego, Buenos Aires, 2001.

⁶ (H. Pujato’s diary, March 22).

⁷ Rigoz, Susana. *El Conquistador del Desierto Blanco Hernán Pujato*. Fundación Soldados. Buenos Aires, 2002, p. 122.

⁸ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo, *La Argentina y sus descubrimientos antárticos*, DNA-IAA, Buenos Aires, 1987.

the room where they melted ice for water, so they decided to do it outside. Ongoing training took up most of their day.

On December 29, Colonel Pujato was promoted to Brigadier General and received the cap and insignia, as well as correspondence. The pilot was Vice Commodore Gustavo Marambio on the *Cruz del Sur*. The changing of the crew was eagerly waited for. The *Bahía Aguirre* and the *Sanavirón* arrived on March 7, 1952 and the changing took place on March 16. The *Bahía Aguirre* was left ice-bound, but she freed herself after six days. Reflecting on these events, General Pujato formed the idea to buy an icebreaker. The Navy invited Pujato to visit the Almirante Brown (Bahía Paraíso), Melchior and Decepción bases. He arrived in Ushuaia on the *Bahía Buen Suceso* and then flew on a DC6 back to Buenos Aires on April 9, 1952. The first Scientific Expedition to Antarctica had taken place.⁹

Creation of the Argentine Antarctic Institute

On April 17, 1951, by Decree No. 7338/51, the Argentine Antarctic Institute (Instituto Antártico Argentino, IAA) “Coronel Hernán Pujato” was created. It was founded to plan, develop, and coordinate all studies and research in the Antarctic region. Retd. Major General Otto Héctor Helbling was left in charge until Pujato’s arrival.¹⁰ Hernán Pujato took office as President of the IAA named after himself. He then prepared a report on the Expedition and presented it at the Enrique Santos Discépolo Theater (May 21, 1952) with a speech before the President, his cabinet, and a large audience. President Perón congratulated him and, taking his arm and in a low voice, said – “You see, proposals have been studied. The price of an icebreaker is between 8 and 14 million dollars and building it takes two to four years. As you must know, the country can’t spend that money.”¹¹

Pujato had talks with several countries and Germany offered one in nine months at a cost of three million dollars. He informed President Juan Domingo Perón and, by Decree No. 10793/53, the purchase was legalized. The IAA made consultations with the Navy and they agreed. The ship was built at the shipyard Seebeck Yard of Wese AG in Bremerhaven, Germany. Funding was provided by the ministries of Defense, the Army, and the National Atomic Energy Commission drawing from their budgets. It was launched on June 24, 1954. The Ministry of the Navy appointed her crew and the national flag was hoisted on October

⁹ Rigoz, Susana. *Hernán Pujato. El Conquistador del Desierto Blanco*. Fundación Soldados, Buenos Aires, 2002, p. 62.

¹⁰ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. *Historia de la Antártida*. Ed. Argentinidad, 2012, p. 343.

¹¹ Idem, p. 353.

25. Dimensions: length 278 feet; beam 62 feet; displacement 4,854 ton; speed 16 knots; range 16,400 miles. Ovoid bow; hull thickness: 1.2 in. It was equipped with an oceanographic laboratory, a radiosonde balloon room, and a meteorological center. In addition, the ship brought precision instruments purchased in Switzerland and 20 polar dogs from Denmark.

She arrived in Buenos Aires on November 29 and, a few days later, left on her first voyage. By decree No. 3193 of January 26, 1954, she was named *ARA General San Martín*. Pujato was already preparing to leave and President Perón told him – “Now that we have the icebreaker, you will take us there after your return. I want to visit Antarctica with all my ministers, some senators, deputies and other authorities to travel along our ice fields, visit some bases and assert our sovereign rights before the world.”¹²

San Martín Base – The Crossing of the Antartandes (1952)

Although it is not directly related to Hernán Pujato, it is worth noting the importance of this base and the latitude where it is established. As they say, it was the Army’s Antarctic school. It transcended due to the first crossing of the Antartandes up to Cape Berteaux joining Bahía Margarita with Bahía Mobiloil in the Weddell Sea. It was a difficult journey crossing cracks, going up to 6,000 feet height and getting around large pieces of rock and ice rubble. This is a difficult region to go around. On October 27, preparations began to set up food stores and the place was reconnoitered. They crossed through the Molinero pass, spotted by Pujato the previous year, and after enduring the storms and the rigors of the crossing, they reached the Weddell Sea on December 28, 1952. A fire also burned the main house, the infirmary, two food stores, a power plant, a radio station and a library that same year.

Esperanza Base, the Navy and the Army – 1953 Wintering

In 1952, the Navy transported a crew on the *ARA Chiriguano* assigned with the building of the Esperanza Naval Detachment in Esperanza Bay. It began in January 1952 and was completed and inaugurated on March 31. Let’s see the “diary of Edgar Leal” – Esperanza Base, possible Antarctic “settlement”:

In October 1952, I was appointed founder and Chief of a new base, the Esperanza Base, which the Army had decided to set up in Antarctica. And there I was, an Ant-

¹² Idem, p. 354.

arctic novice (in my early days)... The 1952-1953 Antarctic Campaign began in December and was running smoothly. The Commander of the Antarctic Naval Force, Captain Rodolfo Panzarini, had resolved that the installation of the Esperanza Army Base be carried out on the second stage of the campaign, initially transferring only part of the staff and material to the area. The facilities of the existing Naval Detachment in the place were used to park the aforementioned material and to accommodate a very small group of the crew of the future Base.

In February 1953, alleging adverse sea glaciological conditions in the area and taking into account the delays in the transfer of staff and cargo assigned for the new base, the High Command of both forces based in Buenos Aires decided that a reduced crew be assigned and that the Esperanza Army Base be founded. The creation decree dated December 1952 was thus confirmed. Both crews (Navy and Army) should coexist in the Naval Detachment facilities. That Resolution also anticipated the decision of the Navy to leave the area of Bahía Esperanza, where only the Army would remain in the future.

In compliance with the related orders received, four Officers and two Non-Commissioned Officers became part of the first crew of the brand new Army Base Esperanza: Chief: Captain Jorge Edgard Leal; 2nd Chief: Captain Héctor Manuel Benavides; Lieutenant Carlos Néstor Bulacios; Lieutenant Domingo Héctor Crotti; Assistant Sergeant Alberto Benicio Balegno; Assistant Sergeant Pedro Nicanor Ramos.

Thus began their first Antarctic wintering. It is a worth noting fact that the two crews coexisted smoothly with their respective missions and jobs. The Commander of the Naval Detachment Esperanza was Lieutenant Kelly. When any minor problem appeared, it was solved immediately. Given the altercations that had occurred on Deception Island (February 16), they prepared to reject some interference from their English neighbors at Trinity House, which never happened. In the course of time, they visited and invited each other for national dates.

Back with the Diary of Edgar Leal, he was concerned about fulfilling his mission:

As I have already pointed out, we needed to start training our pack of dogs in advance if we were to carry out land patrol and reconnaissance missions. The early freezing of Bahía Esperanza made our task easier. As this is an accident of limited dimensions framed by mountain ranges that protect it from the strong winds of the region, its freezing generally occurs in advance of the rest of the surrounding surfaces. Once frozen, it turns the bay into a fairly smooth track wide enough to enable the much-needed training of our small pack of dogs, whose pups had ac-

quired a good build and height of “real dogs” by the end of April. We worked hard.

In addition to being pleasant and fun, it was a good exercise to fight the cold and escape the confinement that, little by little, the shortening of the daylight hours of autumn was imposing on us. The determination for work and the willingness of the animals paid off and, after some time practicing in the frozen bay, we decided to change the scene. We began to train them in climbing glaciers that, towards the south of the base, closed the paths that we would have to travel to fulfill our missions.

One of the tasks was patrolling up to the Chilean base O’Higgins, which is nearby. It was by radio that they learned a group of three Chilean sleds had left for Esperanza and there was no news about them. Leal’s group set out to look for them. It turned out that the Chilean had lost their sleds with some dogs in crevasses. Fortunately, there were no casualties. Once they all rested, they decided both groups would go to the O’Higgins base. This is his account – “During the march, we lived moving moments and true camaraderie. Setting up the bivouac together and hoisting both flags tied to coligue canes in the white and sunny immensity of Antarctica moved us. This reminded us that somehow, setting aside time, men and circumstances, we were repeating what other Argentines and Chileans had done a century and a half ago”.

We arrived at O’Higgins uneventfully and attended their national day. They gave us red-carpet treatment, always with kind and chivalrous courtesies we will not forget. I must confess that I found an outstanding professional in Captain Stock, a good and sincere friend of Argentina and a convinced Latin Americanist, virtuous enough to get along with in good faith. He insisted, and made it a matter of honor, that once at their Base we should stay with them until September 18 (Chilean national date).

Once that mission was accomplished, they had to face another – setting up a shelter over the Weddell Sea. With great expertise, they prepared the improvised materials. So they headed for Duse Bay and set up a shelter 8 x 8 ft and 6.5 ft high. Back to Leal’s diary:

It was October 23 and I think the best to summarize my experienced is transcribing what I briefly wrote at the time . All the Army staff of Esperanza Base are present in Duse Bay for the inauguration of the shelter. We will make the final adjustments today and the celebration will take place tomorrow. But none of this could be completed; we were reminded of the proverb that says “man proposes, but God disposes,” because “... two very bad days of strong winds and heavy snow kept us locked up in our tents.

Day broke with a clear calm and, by noon, everything was ready and in order. With the staff in formation, I read the the relevant Minutes to start service in a refuge in Antarctica. On a small pole, “the most beautiful of Flags” was hoisted and then six voices sang in the immense frozen solitude the stanzas of the national song. “All the work and sacrifices were worth if, in the end, we were able to live these moments! And so this day the Martín Miguel de Güemes Refuge was inaugurated on Duse bay of the Weddell Sea.

But a very special satisfaction was added to the excitement of the day, something never experienced until now in our patrol activities. “We are on the ground on ice and snow, outside and far from the shelter and comforts of the Base; but we are not disturbed by the wind whistling very loudly outside, nor does the snow or the cold punish us and, even better, we can move and walk upright, without the extreme limitations of our small, narrow, and low tents. We will eat an appetizing and pleasant menu: We are living in our Refuge! Tonight I will dream like an Emperor ...!

It was October already and the arrival of the penguins changed their diet: – the cook obtained fresh meat, although the taste was not very convincing. They were already waiting for the changing of the crew and Edgar Leal received a communication from Hernán Pujato asking him if he could stay one extra year as Chief of the San Martín Base, which he accepted immediately. On December 4, they spotted the ARA Bahía Aguirre transport. A feverish activity began – unloading of food, materials, fuel, etc. They were happy with the old correspondence, magazines, and newspapers.

General Belgrano Base, Weddell Sea (1954-55)

Back to Pujato, the icebreaker *General San Martín*, the IAA and the orders of President Juan Domingo Perón, she was ordered to set sail for Antarctica by mid-December 1954. In addition to resupplying the bases with different Navy units, the plan was deep penetration into the Weddell Sea. Through Decree No. 20602 dated December 6, 1954, the Secretariat of National Defense, through Colonel Hernán Pujato Antarctic Institute, was entrusted with “the organization and execution of an exploration and scientific research expedition, penetrating the Weddell Sea, trying to establish a Polar Base that will be called ‘General Belgrano;’ naming Brigadier General Pujato his chief.”

Thus the icebreaker *General San Martín* left under the command of frigate captain Luis T. Villalobos. She carried two Navy Sikorsky S-55 helicopters and a Cessna 180 Skywagon

aircraft. On Christmas Eve, they dropped anchor in the Orkney Islands, Scotia Bay, Laurie Island. The ARA *Bahía Buen Suceso* was there with the Commander of the Antarctic Naval Force, Captain Ogara. During dinner, they received a notification about Pujato's promotion to Major General.

They set sail on December 27 on a course established by Captain Ogara and General Pujato. On the helicopters, they explored for areas with more water or less ice. Thus, on January 1, 1955, they reached 77° 58' S and 38° 48' W in an inlet they named Comandante Piedra Buena, in the Filchner ice barrier.¹³ This is how General Pujato himself toured the area with one of the helicopters and selected a place for the base about 15 miles from the ship, at 78° 03' S and 30° W at 800 miles from the South Pole and 3,000 miles from the city of Buenos Aires. Mottet described the base in a report:

Absolutely all premises are buried by snow and only the antennas, chimneys and partial roofs emerge. Access to the facilities is through openings in the snow, which are connected by a dense network of galleries or tunnels built at mid-height that connect all the units of the detachment. In this way, the normal life of the staff can be led without going outside; a clear advantage in bad weather. These galleries have been built with cookie tin boxes and food boxes for walls, covered by tent cloths. Those same tent cloths serve as the roof.

The snow has buried all that framework and a hermetic intercommunication network is left. The real discomfort is the low height of the tunnels. This forces men to crouch, which becomes worse when crouching with heavy Antarctic equipment. Cold stores are arranged with a purely practical concept – caverns have been dug in the snow on the sides of the dwelling building, which allows handy food at all times.¹⁴ (...) The base was set up in 15 days. We set up the main house, another emergency house, the workshop where we kept the plane, the mechanical workshop and the refrigerator that was a well... everything was connected with tunnels we built when we were left alone. To build the house, we first dug a well, then laid the floor, and the house was erected...¹⁵

The General Belgrano base was inaugurated on January 18, 1955, on top of a 650-foot thick ice plain, over a 2,600-foot deep sea. As soon as they arrived and, once established,

¹³ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. *Historia de la Antártida*. Ed. Argentinidad, 2012, p. 357. Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 172.

¹⁴ Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 172.

¹⁵ Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 172.

they began to patrol in all directions, to the south of course. It was an unexplored area and Pujato's idea was to reach the South Pole.

They also began to fly in the direction of the South Pole on small planes and see the geography of this unknown place. They named many places, such as Cordillera Diamante, Sargento Cabral Glacier, etc. They reached 83° 10" S. They were the first Latin Americans to fly over Antarctica. It was there that, flying very low due to poor visibility, on November 28, 1956 they managed to get out alive and returned on the other plane. The place was named "Aeródromo Ceferino Namuncurá," a 4.000-foot long plateau of hard ice.

Coup d'état

On June 16, 1955, the Plaza de Mayo square was bombed with the intention of killing Perón. He was no longer at the Government House; he had gone to the Ministry of Defense. The toll was 308 civilians dead. The conspiracies continued and on September 17 and 18, 1955, the actions of the Navy in Mar del Plata made Perón avoid a civil war. He went into exile first in Paraguay to end up in Spain.

In Antarctica, with reception deficiencies, Pujato heard the news little by little. But he was aware that he would lose his greatest ally to his plans. When receiving the "Peronist Medal" with all the members of the 1951 Scientific Expedition to Antarctica at the Enrique Santos Discépolo Theater, he said at the beginning of the conference: "I must categorically express that only due to the consistent support and personal intervention of His Excellency the President of Argentina, solving what seemed unsolvable, was it possible to organize and execute this Argentine venture entirely made up of Argentine staff..."¹⁶ I think this phrase sums up very well that he did not have the slightest support from his comrades, the Navy, or the cabinet. It must have been a big deal for the members of the *Revolución Libertadora*.

So Pujato learned about the new President and the fact that the Argentine Antarctic Institute was no longer named after him. Jealousy, envy, and resentment ruled over his peers. Events developed and a hasty replenishing by the icebreaker on January 4, 1956 left him with only 8 men. So, for the time being, he abandoned the idea of going to the South Pole. On October 25, 1956, Pujato requested his retirement, although he continued in "active retirement" as Chief of the Base. Either way, he kept the base active with patrols and training until his relief on January 25, 1957. He arrived at the Buenos Aires airport on February

¹⁶ Rigoz, Susana, op. cit., p. 170.

17 without any authority receiving him, only family and friends. The report, studies, cartography and other documents of the Argentine Polar Expedition were not published or revealed. So in April 1957, he decided to spend a few years outside the country. He stayed in Germany, France, Spain, Israel, and Egypt. After his return, he again visited Antarctica and he was present at the reopening of the San Martín Base on February 22, 1976. He was nationally and internationally acknowledged. He died at the age of 99 on December 7, 2003.¹⁷

Belgrano Base—Staff Relief, January 25, 1957

The staffing change took place. The outgoing staff under the command of General Pujato gave way to the new staff under Colonel Edgar Leal. But let's look at the unpublished diary of General Leal:

January 25, 1957. We arrived. General Pujato was waiting for me in a kind of small room that served as an office. I found him very thin and I remembered that the last time we talked was in January 1953, when I said goodbye when leaving for the Esperanza Base. Although it is true that in those four years we exchanged some radio messages, we had not seen each other face to face because, when I returned from San Martín, in March 1955, he was already at the Belgrano Base. He tried to hide the heavy bitterness on his spirit by talking to me about my duties on that base with such special characteristics. Aware of the unfair and arbitrary treatment he was receiving, I did not want to touch the subject. My old, dear and respected boss once again showed me the integrity and nobility of his spirit. He pronounced no word about what was happening in the country, or about his personal situation. I respected his position as a man of integrity in the face of adversity. He did tell me of his interest in delivering the command of the base that same day with the due ceremony.

This was done and, with both teams formed face to face, he addressed us. He spoke with his known vehemence about what it meant to safeguard our flag and interests in the southernmost inhabited place of the country. He wished us success in our endeavor and ended with an exhortation, which was at the same time a painful and frank acknowledgment, saying – “I could not reach the South Pole: you must do it.” It was the last order given to me by an honest man and a righteous and virtuous general. In time, I was able to complete it. I keep a letter from him, written

¹⁷ Quevedo Paiva, Adolfo. *Historia de la Antártida*. Ed. Argentinidad. 2012, p. 367.

from Europe, where he lived almost as an exile, that moves me every time I read it. He congratulates me profusely on the triumph achieved. I kept him posted of the organization of the Expedition to the Pole and received his communication when the icebreaker fetched us at the BB in January 1966.

My staff was heterogeneous. There were officers and non-commissioned officers from the Army, Navy and Aeronautics, and also civil scientists from the Argentine Antarctic Institute (IAA), therefore, it was numerous: 31 men in all. This large number was due to the fact that the International Geophysical Year was celebrated in 1957 all around the world. Observations had to be conducted in Antarctica (responsibility of the countries with established bases). They were particularly important because, back then, it was already sensed the climate of the southern hemisphere was influenced by physical phenomena originated in the White Continent.

Once all the material had been unloaded and arranged in three 8-hour shifts, the routine was resumed and they began to set up the new house. It should be noted that the ship's crew also helped, given that they had to rush to finish the operation and leave because the ice could trap them. Once alone, they rushed to finish the new house. Until then, they lived as best as they could in a house for 16 people. This would become the laboratory.

Different activities were developed. 1) Glaciology: installation of geodesic towers in places to be determined to measure the movement of the Filchner Barrier (at the Belgrano Base). The speed and direction of that movement were of interest. 2) They would also carry out measurements on snow accumulation. 3) Task in charge of the Naval Hydrographic Service. It was an ionospheric observation by soundings through a transmission and reception tower of Hertzian waves. The importance of our data in this regard consisted in the fact that, until then, scientists around the world received data from Trelew as the southernmost from this part of the planet. We delivered them information originated 3,800 miles further south and the closest to the South Pole. 4) Meteorology was another of the scientific disciplines developed from our base in the interest of the International Geophysical Year. 5) Installation of an all-sky aurora camera. All the information was sent by the radio operators on a daily basis. It was an important contribution from Argentina, given the data was from the base closest to the South Pole. Activities continued throughout the year until the relief in mid-January 1958.

Back in Buenos Aires, preparations for the campaign to the South Pole started. It would become the third expedition in the world to do so after Roald Amundsen and Robert Falcon Scott (1911).

Early Antarctic Tourism – Ushuaia, Door to Antarctica (1958)

On January 16, 1958, the ARA *Les Eclaireurs* sailed from Ushuaia with 98 tourists. Thus, the port of Ushuaia started Antarctic Tourism. At that time, Ushuaia did not have hotels; tourists had to spend the night on the ship. Passengers arrived and left on a Navy plane in two batches. They stayed three days visiting Ushuaia (Lapataia, Lake Escondido, sometimes the prison building and Harberton farm) and, on their return, the second batch did the same while waiting for their plane back. In Antarctica, they visited Decepción, Camera, Jubany, Brown, and Melchior.

The second cruise began on January 31 and returned to Ushuaia on February 11. The passengers also arrived in two batches and made the same inland excursions as the previous ones. The Commander of the ship was Captain Eduardo Llosa. The landings on Antarctica were few and were made with one of the ship's motorized boats.¹⁸ In 1959, two tourist cruises were made to Antarctica in January and February from Ushuaia with the M/N Yap-eyú motorboat of the Argentine Overseas Navigation Fleet (Flota Argentina de Navegación de Ultramar, FANU). The procedure was repeated for the 1958 cruises. It is worth noting that this boost for Antarctic tourism was from an enthusiast, Admiral Isaac Rojas. This was particularly based on the knowledge the Navy had of Antarctic waters and on the availability of an icebreaker for eventual inconveniences.

Acknowledgment: Thanks to the Leal family for Edgard Leal's Antarctic campaign diaries, included in a book about his Antarctic campaigns reaching the South Pole.

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¹⁸ To expand, see the book *1958 Los Inicios del Turismo Antártico*, by Carlos Pedro Vairo. Ed. Museo Marítimo de Ushuaia, 2019.

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ARGENTINA AND THE CHANGE OF ANTARCTIC COURSE IN THE FIFTIES

Pablo Gabriel Fontana

Starting point

After the expeditionary fever of the heroic era (1895–1920), Antarctic geopolitics had remained relatively calm until the invitation in 1938 to the International Polar Conference in Bergen and then the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39 triggered a chain reaction of claims, expeditions and incidents.¹ In the postwar period, Antarctic national deployments would reach a considerable magnitude and the Antarctic Peninsula would become the scene of confrontation between Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom, with a strong alliance of the first two resisting the advances of the latter. The 1950s was a pivotal moment in international Antarctic history, marking the change between a period of strong and growing political tensions around that continent, to one in which a *modus vivendi* of peace and international cooperation was progressively achieved through science, order that prevails until today.

The 1940s had concluded with a fragile agreement to avoid incidents in the Antarctic Peninsula: the Tripartite Naval Agreement signed annually from 1948 by Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom. The agreement was not to send larger ships to Antarc-

¹ Pablo Fontana, *La pugna antártica: el conflicto por el sexto continente 1939 – 1959* (Buenos Aires: Guazuvirá Ediciones, 2014).

tica than a frigate, and could be seen as an expression of desire for peace between the three States. Although tensions continued, this weak “polar truce” had largely calmed the strong demonstrations of force and incidents of early 1948. In this context, the Argentine Summer Antarctic Campaign of 1949/50 took place, with four ships operating in Antarctica between December and March without serious incidents. Maritime signaling was expanded, as well as scientific activity with a greater participation of national universities.

Rising tensions

President Perón, in his opening speech of the 1950 legislative year, affirmed that they had created “a clear awareness in the citizens of the country of all rights in such a way that no Argentine is unaware that the national geographic unit ends at the southern pole of the world”.² Indeed, the Peronist government had carried out a wide dissemination activity of great magnitude on the Argentine sovereignty of the islands of the South Atlantic and Argentine Antarctica. At the end of that year, the 1950/51 Argentine Antarctic Campaign was carried out. As part of it, on April 6, 1951, the “Almirante Brown” Naval Detachment was inaugurated in Paraíso bay (Paradise bay), that since 1965 would be administered by the Argentine Antarctic Institute (IAA), becoming the Argentine station with the greatest scientific activity until the eighties. A variety of scientific projects were also carried out, including the installation of the ionospheric observatory at the Decepción Naval Detachment, which would be of great importance during the International Geophysical Year in 1957/8.

In this campaign, Colonel Hernán Pujato managed to begin his activity in Antarctica by inaugurating the General San Martín Army Base on March 21, 1951, the first of the Army in that continent, being then the first Argentine settlement south of the Antarctic Polar Circle and at that time the southernmost station in the world. Pujato had set sail on February 12 from Buenos Aires, on the *Santa Micaela*, a private transport ship that was a former tank landing ship, which represented a great challenge when crossing the Hoces Sea or Drake Passage, being accompanied by the tugboat *ARA Sanavirón*. If he managed to complete the mission, it was thanks to the experience and skill of Captain Santiago Farrel, commander of the ship, and also to Pujato’s decision. The crew of the station, with its thirty-six dogs, would carry out 1,287 kilometers of patrols over the frozen sea and the continent. Meanwhile, Perón, through Decree 7338, created the Instituto Antártico Argentino–IAA

² Jorge Alberto Fraga, *La Argentina y el Atlántico Sur* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Publicaciones Navales, 1983), 173.

(Argentine Antarctic Institute) on April 17, 1951, which was given the name of Pujato, who was appointed as its director.³ It was the world's first scientific institution dedicated exclusively to the study of Antarctica.

On November 11, the national elections took place in Argentina, the first in which Argentine citizens and Antarctic stations participated. As for the campaign of that summer 1951/52, in Argentine subantarctic territory the frigates *ARA Hércules* and *ARA Sarandí* carried out a reconnaissance of the South Sandwich Islands. In Dundee Island the *ARA Chiriguano* crew began the construction of what would later become the Petrel Naval Air Station on.

The Argentine Air Force was also present on the continent. In November 1951, the Antarctic Task Force Air Group was created and assigned a C-47 twin-engine equipped with skis and an Avro 694 Lincoln four-engine bomber transformed into transport under the name *Cruz del Sud* (South Cross).⁴ Because San Martín station was isolated by the pack-ice, the Air Force devised *Operación Enlace* (Operation Link), consisting of its resupply from the air. As part of this operation, on December 19 at 9 am, Vice Commodore Gustavo Argentino Marambio took off with the *Cruz del Sud* full of fuel using the entire length of the Río Gallegos runway.⁵ On February 10, 1952, two Lincoln bombers resupplied the station. This was also the first time that the Argentine forces used helicopters carried on the aft platform of the ships. It was the Sikorsky S-51, which arrived the first week of March at the *ARA Bahía Aguirre* and was assigned to the San Martín station.⁶

But this great Argentine deployment was not without resistance. The tension did not stop growing as the presence of the three countries increased and in early 1952 a serious incident would take place. In January 1952, Argentine sailors were in Esperanza Bay (Hope Bay) installing the Esperanza Naval Detachment. On the 31st, unexpectedly, a British force from the Malvinas Islands aboard the ship John Biscoe disembarked there with the aim of installing a new station where the rubble of another station of theirs destroyed by a fire in 1948 was found. , ignored the verbal and written warnings of the frigate captain Emilio Díaz, commander of the Antarctic Naval Force, who was at the scene aboard the *ARA Bahía Buen Suceso*. Frigate Lieutenant Luis Manuel Casanova in command of the Ar-

³ Carlos A. Rinaldi, "Desarrollo científico argentino en la Antártida", *Boletín del Centro Naval* 836 (may/august 2013), 150.

⁴ Atilio Marino, "Avro Lincoln, Historias poco conocidas", *Aeroespacio* (set/oct 1993), 48 (46-50).

⁵ Alfredo A. Cano, *Todo comenzó en Upsala* (Buenos Aires: Argentinidad, 2009), 24.

⁶ "Aparición del helicóptero en la Antártida Argentina: Sikorsky S-51", *Antártida* 9 (July 1979); 13 (12-15).

gentine detachment communicated to the British his orders to prevent any landing at the site, including by force, but the British did not stop. Then Díaz transmitted a message to the Ministry of the Navy in which he urgently requested the support of two frigates⁷ and ordered Lieutenant Isidoro Paradelo, head of the group stationed ashore, to prevent the landing by force.⁸ At noon, facing the continuation of the landings despite the warnings, Paradelo fired a burst from his Madsen machine gun into the air, stopping the landing tasks and returned to the John Biscoe. However, the construction of the new Station D called Trinity House was later summarized, now at a greater distance from the Argentine detachment.⁹

Meanwhile, on February 7, 1952 in Decepción, two Catalina PBY-5A seaplanes of the Argentine Naval Aviation landed in the interior bay and thus achieved the first direct flight with descent to Antarctica from South America. They had taken off in Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego and with their flight they established the first air-naval post office between Argentine-American territory and its Antarctic bases.¹⁰

On the other hand, the land exploits carried out by the Argentines in Antarctica that year continued at the San Martín Base. In November, under the command of Captain Humberto Bassani Grande, part of the base's crew succeeded in crossing the Artantandes (Fig. 1). Throughout the journey, the patrol made up of six dogsleds had to withstand landslides, avalanches and snowstorms. Finally, the expedition members successfully met the challenge and on December 29 they reached a bay that was baptized Eva Perón, in honor of the First Lady, who had died on July 26.

Activities also continued in subantarctic territory: on March 3, days after the incident in Esperanza, Argentine sailors from the frigate *ARA Sarandí* landed in Cordelia Bay on Saunders Island, part of the South Sandwich Islands archipelago.¹¹ They were followed by other sailors from the frigate *ARA Hercules* who landed on Vindicación Island, where they erect-

⁷ Argentina AMREC, (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas/AH0005/18). Incidente Argentino-Británico en Bahía Esperanza. Comunicaciones entre el Ministerio de Marina y el comandante del Grupo de Tareas Antártico.

⁸ Enrique J. Pierrou, *La Armada Argentina en la Antártida 1939-1959* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Publicaciones Navales, 1981), 393.

⁹ It was permanently occupied for only a few years and in 1997 it was ceded to Uruguay.

¹⁰ Eduardo Prémoli, "Primera estafeta aeronaval a la Antártida Argentina", in *Revista del Mar* 136, (Octubre 1992), 48-50.

¹¹ Laurio H. Destefani, *Malvinas, Georgias y Sandwich del Sur: ante el conflicto con Gran Bretaña* (Buenos Aires: Edipress, 1982), 125.

ed a monolith and drew a Act.¹² They were part of Operation Seal, which consisted of the exploration of the South Sandwich Islands, especially in the location of anchorages to later install detachments. The frigates explored the islands for five days, charts were corrected, coasts were photographed and geological and biological samples were taken as well as meteorological observations.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, on May 21, 1952, General Pujato, already as director of the Argentine Antarctic Institute, gave a conference on the scientific expedition he had led. At the end of it, President Perón gave a speech in which he referred to the rights of Argentina and Chile over South American Antarctica: “over those lands, in good faith, no one has rights but Chileans and Argentines.”¹³

In keeping with the tense times in Antarctica, on July 18, 1952, the Argentine Antarctic Institute, which until then was under the orbit of the Ministry of Technical Affairs, became dependent on the Ministry of Defense through Decree 2855. In the same order, on December 23, Decree 13,714 declared the South Orkney Islands Meteorological Observatory transferred to the Ministry of the Navy.

That summer 1952/53 the Air Force, now with the *Fuerza Aérea de Tareas Antárticas* or FATA (Air Force Antarctic Task), created in December 1952, executed Operation Penguin, consisting of a series of planned and intensive training Antarctic flights with the three Lincoln aircraft. Thus, overflights were made over the Trinidad peninsula and the Decepción, James Ross, and Dundee islands, causing great jubilation among the Argentines present.

In early 1953 an incident, perhaps the most serious in Antarctic history, would take place on Deception Island. On January 14, the *ARA Chiriguano* crew installed the “Teniente Cándido de Lasala” shelter with a crew of four men on the “soccer field” of Balleneros Cove (Whalers bay). On the 19th, after the Argentine ship set sail, the corvette *HMS Snipe* arrived with the “governor” of Malvinas on board, who delivered a note of protest to the Argentines, answered by another note from the *ARA Punta Ninfas* commander who arrived that same late communicating to the British that they were in Argentine territory. On the 23rd, the crew of the Chilean patrol boats *Lientur* and *Leucotón* installed a shelter two hundred meters west of the Argentine hut. At noon on February 7, the Chilean patrollers set sail and left the hut unmanned. On Sunday, February 15, 1953 at 2:05 p.m., taking ad-

¹² Arnoldo Canclini, *Islas Sandwich del Sur: La Argentina en el Atlántico Sur* (Buenos Aires: Zagier & Urruty, 2009), 42.

¹³ Instituto Antártico Argentino, *Expedición científica a la Antártida: Sus actividades y resultados* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Defensa, 1954).

vantage of the absence of Argentine and Chilean ships, the corvette *HMS Snipe*, supported by *HMS Birburg Bay*, landed thirty royal marines armed with machine guns, rifles and tear gas. At 2:40 p.m., the occupants of the Argentine hut, two NCOs from the Argentine Navy, were detained by British forces.¹⁴ The group destroyed the Chilean and Argentine huts.¹⁵ *HMS Snipe* quickly set sail for the South Georgia Islands with the Argentine prisoners on board while the Argentine hut was set on fire. Fortunately, a geologist had been withdrawn earlier and the commanding officer of the hut was in the naval detachment, on the other side of the island, so they avoided being arrested, but the officer, upon returning the next day, made a strong protest in the British detachment, where he was received by several royal marines with weapons. It was an action that clearly violated the Rio Treaty.¹⁶ Immediately, the *ARA Bahía Aguirre* was ordered to be sent to the site, anticipating the *ARA Bahía Buen Suceso*, which was already on its way.

The *ARA Chiriguano* and the *ARA Sanavirón*, which had arrived in Esperanza Bay on the same day of the incident, left again the following day for the area. A Goose seaplane was also ordered to conduct a reconnaissance flight. However, upon hearing that the British frigate had sailed, it was decided to send the *ARA Bahía Aguirre* to Luna Bay (Moon bay), fearing that it would go there to destroy that detachment under construction. For its part, the *ARA Bahía Buen Suceso* anchored two hours later in Decepción, but it was too late. There they found the mast disarmed and the Argentine flag knocked down. Further north, *HMS Snipe* was seen moving away from the area.

At the time the events were made public, Perón was in Chile visiting President Ibáñez del Campo (Fig. 2). Upon entering Valparaíso he was greeted by a crowd with countless flags of both nations. Together they protested and demanded an explanation and apology for what happened. Along the same lines, it was agreed to bring together military ships from both countries on Deception Island to rebuild the facilities and it was agreed that “the war action of the English squad against either of the squads, the Chilean or the Argentine, would be repelled by both in the most energetic possible way”.¹⁷ In order to break

¹⁴ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0005/3), Soberanía de Tierras Antárticas. Memorandum de Subdirección y Planificación, 19 de marzo de 1953.

¹⁵ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0005/3), Soberanía de Tierras Antárticas. Agresión británica en Isla Decepción.

¹⁶ Ernesto Fitte, *Escalada a la Antártida* (Buenos Aires, 1973), 43.

¹⁷ Rubén Oscar Palazzi, *La Argentina del extremo sur 1810-2004* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2005), 318.

this alliance, the US government tried unsuccessfully to convince the Chilean not to act together with the Argentine. While Ibáñez del Campo invoked the Rio Treaty, Perón appealed to the OAS and José Sosa Molina, Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs, demanded the immediate release and restitution to the place of the events of the detained persons and the effects and the documentation seized. On February 18 in South Georgia Islands, the captured Argentines were transferred along with some materials to the Argentine oil tanker *Quilmes*.¹⁸ Although in Santiago the possibility of responding with the armed forces to the aggression was discussed, it finally gave up doing so and when the Chileans rebuilt the hut in the 1954/55 season, the British did not protest. For its part, on February 25, Argentina sent three *Lincoln* to the Island, two bombers, plus the *Cruz del Sud*, which flew over the Argentine and British facilities (Fig. 3).

On February 21 in Buenos Aires, when the news of the outrage was known, a large demonstration gathered in front of the British embassy to protest and the police had to intervene to prevent them from entering the representation. Various institutions demonstrated their support for the government and the rejection of British actions.¹⁹ Radio programs and a series of broadcasts about Antarctica were also organized. Simultaneously, the ambitious “Antarctica Diffusion Plan” was communicated to the ministries, in which all the ministries with their respective media had to participate.²⁰ The tension seemed to explode at any moment. On February 27, when the *ARA Chiriguano* entered the inner bay of Decepción Island, it encountered a British frigate that adopted artillery prevention measures when it was spotted without any notes or messages being exchanged.²¹

Meanwhile, in the austral winter, the crew of the recently inaugurated Esperanza Army station, commanded by Captain Jorge Edgard Leal, would carry out important sled explorations in the Antarctic Peninsula and in September 1953 they would demonstrate a deep Latin American camaraderie by helping a Chilean patrol in problems that came from the O’Higgins Base to visit the Argentine base, without knowing that the Argentines were casually preparing to visit the Chilean base. The Chilean expedition was surprised by a storm

¹⁸ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0005), Soberanía de Tierras Antárticas, STA 3 / Memorandum de Subdirección y Planificación, 19 de marzo de 1953.

¹⁹ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0004/4). Adhesiones de entidades oficiales y particulares con motivo del incidente de Isla Decepción.

²⁰ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0005/16) “Plan de difusión de la Antártida” del Excelentísimo Presidente de la Nación, 5 de mayo de 1953.

²¹ Argentina AMREC (Argentina / Serie 79 – Dirección de Antártida y Malvinas / 1953 / AH0005/3). Informe del Ministerio de Marina al Ministro de RR.EE., 9 de marzo de 1953.

that destroyed their tents and then lost dogs and sleds in a crevasse, but battered and at the last minute, they managed to reach the Argentine station. From there a binational expedition set out that managed to rescue some dogs and equipment, later moving to the O'Higgins base. Reviving the spirit of the independence war, Chilean and Argentine soldiers bivouacked together sharing tents and equipment. Similar fraternal relations were lived between the Brown Detachment and the Presidente González Videla station.

Further south, even south of the Antarctic Circle, the San Martín station could not be refueled by sea due to the state of the ice. For this reason, on March 26, 1953 at 8:20 AM, the Lincoln *Cruz del Sud* took off from Río Gallegos loaded with packages with parachutes to resupply the crew from the air. As for the naval detachment that was being built in Luna Bay, located on Media Luna Island (Half Moon island), on April 1 it was inaugurated by the Governor of Tierra del Fuego. For its part, the salvage ship *ARA Yámana* took care of its relief as well as the personnel in Laurie Island and Melchior.

At the beginning of November 1953 the rest of the naval force set sail, which carried out the Antarctic campaign that summer. In scientific matters, studies of botany, glaciology, paleontology, geology, astrophysics, magnetism, oceanography, zoology were carried out, and hydroponics experiments were carried out in Esperanza Bay. Five huts were also built in the South Shetland Islands and on the mainland coast. Due to the harsh ice conditions, the San Martín Base crew could not be surveyed by sea, but a Goose seaplane was used to supply air launches and then two Sikorsky S-55 helicopters for the survey. Air activities also continued with the Lincoln *Cruz del Sud* flights. New notes of protest were exchanged with the British when the *ARA Les Eclaireurs* transport, with the Minister of the Navy on board, encountered the British frigate *HMS Saint Austell Bay* in the Deception Island on March 3.

This is also the time when the most serious projects arise to install Argentine populations in Antarctica. On August 13, 1954, Pujato submitted a report to the Secretary of National Defense in which he proposed the installation of a permanent population in Cape Primavera, made up of ten groups of families (military and civilian) who would remain there for three years together with animals and flora introduced from cold regions, settlement that would receive the name of San Lorenzo village.²² A precedent was constituted by the project designed by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in 1953. This envisaged a series of geological studies in the Antarctic Peninsula for the exploitation of oil and other minerals in addition to whaling. However, neither of the two plans would come to fruition due to the 1955 coup.

²² "Los vuelos precursores del General Pujato", *Antártida* 8 (December 1977), 8 (32-39).

By the middle of the decade, the situation in the Antarctic Peninsula still showed no signs of distension. In the context of friction and incidents between Argentine and British military personnel in the extreme north of the Antarctic Peninsula and neighboring islands, Argentina began its activities in the southern Weddell Sea, an area that also had the advantage of not being claimed by Chile and that it had not yet been explored. Thanks to the direct intervention of Pujato, the construction of an icebreaker was achieved with the German shipyards Seebeck Werke, which, at a low price and in a period of only nine months, delivered the ship in accordance with the requirements of the Argentine Antarctic Institute.

On November 29, 1954, the first icebreaker in Latin America, named *ARA General San Martín*, arrived in Argentina in time for the Antarctic campaign that year. On December 20, she set sail under the orders of the frigate captain Luis de Villalobos. On board were Pujato and the commander of the Antarctic Naval Force, Captain Alicio Eduardo Ogara. Eight days later the icebreaker began the first successful penetration of the Weddell Sea. On January 2, the maximum latitude was reached: 78 ° 01' South, never before reached by another vessel. The following day, the elements were quickly unloaded to build the General Belgrano Army Base five kilometers away, located on the Filchner ice barrier, thus becoming the southernmost base in the world up to that moment (Fig. 4). The base had a Cessna 180, from the Argentine Antarctic Institute, which would be the first Argentine aircraft of a Antarctic station.²³ In December of that year, a DHC-2 Beaver, also from the Argentine Antarctic Institute, with registration IAA-101, was added. Through his flights, Pujato explored 105,000 km² of lands unknown to human beings, which meant the discovery of a series of geographical accidents that were given an Argentine toponymy that was reported to the Military Geographical Institute and the Argentine Antarctic Institute.²⁴

Regarding the icebreaker, having completed its mission in the Weddell Sea, it arrived on January 25 at Morrel Island, in the South Sandwich Islands, where its crew installed the beacon "Maritime Government of Tierra del Fuego" and built the Teniente Esquivel Hut, the first housing construction of that archipelago. In short, in the 1954/55 Antarctic Campaign, the *Plan de Operaciones garfio* (Hook Operations Plan) included the survey and

²³ Enrique S. Méndez, *Contribución del IAA N°2: Un vuelo sobre la barrera Filchner* (Instituto Antártico Argentino: Buenos Aires, 1956).

²⁴ Some of them are: San Lorenzo plain, Rufino mountains, Los Menucos and Diamante mountain, Sargento Cabral and Ejército Argentino glaciers (now Falucho), Santa Teresita massif, Santa Fe and Buenos Aires peaks, San Rafael and Entre Ríos nunataks, and Ejército Argentino plateau. Adolfo E. Quevedo Paiva, *Los descubrimientos geográficos antárticos argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Comando Antártico "Gral. Div. Hernán Pujato", 2005) 62-3.

provisioning of seven stations, as well as the construction of a new one, four huts and two light beacons. A variety of bathymetric, oceanographic and magnetic stations were also conducted.

Concerning the Antarctic presence of the Air Force during that campaign, the Lincoln four-engined FATA continued with their flights as in previous campaigns, carrying out inter-stations links, refueling, topographic surveys and studies on geomagnetism.²⁵ In 1955 the first scientific publications of the Argentine Antarctic Institute also began to see the light of field work from previous years.

On the other hand, the British offensive continued but in the field of international justice: on May 4, 1955, the United Kingdom unilaterally presented a request before the International Court of Justice to initiate a procedure against Argentina for its Antarctic actions and a similar request was filed against Chile. The following day the Argentine government sent a note to the British embassy that rejected the procedure, reaffirmed Argentine sovereignty over the sector and stated that together with the Chilean government they would defend the sovereignty that corresponds to both. On August 1, Argentina reiterated its position before the secretary of the International Court of Justice, stating that “territorial sovereignty should not be subject to discussion or questioning,” to which the British government responded on August 31 with another note in which he threateningly stated that “he cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences that may arise from the continuation of the dispute.”²⁶

In Buenos Aires, on September 16, 1955, a coup d'état removed the constitutional government of Perón. Despite never having declared himself a Peronist, Pujato was stripped of the leadership of the IAA, whose name was withdrawn and Rear Admiral Rodolfo Panzari- ni was appointed as its director. On January 26, 1956, the IAA became dependent on the Ministry of the Navy, through Decree 313 and Decree-Law 1,311. As if the political difficulties were few, on November 28, 1956 at 83° 10' South, on an exploration flight, the Cessna piloted by Pujato suffered an accident that ended its staggered flights to the South Pole.

Towards a new coexistence

In the Antarctic campaign 1955/56 the tasks of surveying and supplying personnel were completed, but no new bases would be installed. The project to install an Antarctic pop-

²⁵ José M. Rodríguez y Oscar L. Rodríguez, *Lincoln* (Buenos Aires: Editorial J & M, 2000), 53.

²⁶ Juan Carlos Puig, *La Antártida Argentina ante el derecho* (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Palma, 1960), 221 y 224.

ulation settlement was canceled. On the other hand, India's proposal in February 1956 to discuss the Antarctic question at the United Nations had the effect of generating a certain decrease in tension between the countries between the three countries facing each other in the Antarctic Peninsula. In any case, Argentina took the last step in the delimitation of its Antarctic sector by demarcating the extreme north through Decree Law 2129 of February 23, 1957 that established the definitive limits of Argentine Antarctica between meridians 25° and 74° West and the 60° parallel of South latitude.

In 1955, a great change also took place in international politics around Antarctica: preparations began for the International Geophysical Year (IGY) that would take place between July 1957 and December 1958, concentrating most of the activities on Antarctica, which actually began in January 1957. The IGY consisted of a massive, coordinated scientific study by more than 30,000 scientists from 67 countries. The dozen countries that led the IGY in Antarctica were made up of the seven that had made claims of sovereignty on that continent: Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, Great Britain, New Zealand and Norway, plus five that had not: Belgium, the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union and South Africa. Without doubt, Argentine science, through the IAA, was one of the protagonists of the IGY. The great Argentine contributions stood out in the disciplines of meteorology, auroras, seismology, gravimetry, ionospheric studies, oceanography, glaciology, solar activity and cosmic rays. A clear expression of the outstanding work of Argentine scientists and technicians is the fact that the United States of America gave the IAA the management of the Ellsworth Scientific Station, installed north of the Filchner ice shelf, with scientists of both countries working there together. As part of the IGY, in January 1958 the IAA installed an automatic camera called "all-sky" at the Belgrano Base, which allowed it to carry out a rigorous study of the southern auroras. The study of the ionosphere was carried out from the Decepción Naval Detachment, which had a team for this task since 1951 and at the Belgrano Base, whose ionospheric camera equipment was installed in 1957.²⁷ Regarding the study of terrestrial magnetism, a prominent place had the Orcadas Observatory, where since 1903 such measurements have been carried out continuously and uninterruptedly.

Another science in which Argentina achieved international renown during the IGY was glaciology, particularly at San Martín, Belgrano and Esperanza stations. Glaciologists Augusto César Lisignoli and René Dalinger, both from IAA, distinguished themselves in this discipline (Fig. 5). In the field of atmospheric studies, a large number of measurements were

²⁷ The films where the auroras and ionospheric chamber data were recorded are currently stored at the IAA and preservation and digitization work has recently begun to recover this valuable information.

carried out using pilot balloons and radiosondes. Extensive animal biology and oceanographic studies were also conducted, in particular bird banding at three Antarctic bases.

But not everything was science for Argentina in the IGY, since the first Argentine climb in Antarctica would also be achieved at that time. The protagonist would be a overwinter member from the IAA, Dinko Bertonec, a well-known mountaineer who had participated in the first Argentine expedition to the Himalayas and who had starred in the first Argentine mountain film: *Canción en la nieve* (Song in the snow). The place of the climb was the Pantera nunatak, Moltke group, south of the Belgrano Base, and it had a scientific purpose.

Obviously not only the disinterested scientific objectives moved these nations to carry out such a display of equipment. Especially the Americans and the British saw the IGY as an opportunity to definitively reveal the wealth of the continent, in order to define a policy with the sixth continent.²⁸ The existence of hidden political interests behind scientific facades led Argentina and Chile to propose that scientific works cannot be used to substantiate sovereignty claims, which was accepted. In addition to international scientific cooperation, one of the IGY's greatest contributions to the pacification of the continent was paradoxically not having discovered great mineral wealth, which, added to the harshness of the Antarctic climate, appeased immediate interests in it, at least in part. of the powers and the United Kingdom, not so of Argentina and Chile, which considered their Antarctic claims an integral part of their national territories, beyond any economic interest. However, despite the competition, scientific cooperation was real and thus arose in 1958 the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research known as SCAR, which today continues its prolific activity. That same year, 1958, Antarctic tourism was also born as a commercial activity by the Argentine State, with two trips with the *ARA Les Eclaireurs* transport, an activity that the State would maintain until the end of the eighties.²⁹

Along with the extractive disappointment, the near extinction of whales due to their excessive hunting contributed to further diminish the economic attractiveness of Antarctica, which added to the broad international scientific participation in the context of the Cold War, created the need for a new legal framework at the height of this new situation. This new framework began to emerge in 1958 when the twelve countries with activity in Ant-

²⁸ Adrian John Howkins, *Frozen Empires: A History of the Antarctic Sovereignty Dispute Between Britain, Argentina, and Chile 1939-1959* (Austin: University of Texas, 2008), 256, 287.

²⁹ Marisol Vereda, Marie Jensen and Pablo Gabriel Fontana, "La evolución del turismo antártico y su relación con las políticas públicas nacionales y provinciales", in *Registros: Revista de investigación histórica* 2 Vol. 15 (July–December 2019).

arctica and with the largest participation in the IGY agreed to meet in a conference to decide the future of the continent. In October 1959, final negotiations began in Washington to achieve this new governance framework. The US and the UK manipulated the Soviet Union's "red" threat to Antarctica so that Argentina and Chile would soften their positions in defense of their Antarctic rights. In any case, both nations continued to defend their claims on South American Antarctica. In those deliberations, the Argentine delegation promoted the prohibition of carrying out nuclear detonations in Antarctica, which would be adopted as an article of the treaty serving later as a precedent for other nuclear prohibition treaties during the Cold War.³⁰ New alignments also emerged and a South-South confluence began to emerge.

On December 1, 1959, the Antarctic Treaty was signed by the twelve countries that had participated in the IGY in Antarctica. The hinge decade of Antarctic history, thus closed, configuring the order that today reigns in the sixth continent and that transformed it into an example to follow for other regions due to the priority it gives to peace and international scientific cooperation for the benefit of all mankind.

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³⁰ Ignacio Javier Cardone and Pablo Gabriel Fontana, "Latin-American contributions to the creation of the Antarctic regime", in *Polar Journal* 2 Vol. 9 (December 2019).

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Nº1. The crew of the San Martín Base is preparing for the crossing of the Antartándes.



Nº2. Ibañez del Campo and Perón in 1953



Nº3. Avro Lincoln bomber of the Argentine Air Force over Decepción Island, February 1952.



Nº4. ARA Gral. San Martín icebreaker beside the Filchner ice shelf, January 1955.



Nº5. IAA glaciologists on the Antarctic Peninsula, south of the Polar Circle, during IGY 1957/8.

URUGUAYAN ANTARCTIC LINKS DURING THE 1950'S DECADE

Waldemar Fontes

Uruguay during the 1950 decade

In the Atlantic region of South America, a cycle of populist governments was ending.¹ In Argentina, the general Peron was re-elected in 1952, but without the Catholic Church support and involved in a chaotic social situation, which deteriorated when his partner Evita died. In Brazil, Getulio Vargas returned to the government in 1950, beginning a process of social progress, but also in provoking controversial situations, that conducted him to commit suicide in 1954. During 1950 and 1953, the War of Korea was conducted, and when it was finished, a dramatically change happen in the world organization, produced by a technological revolution where the ancient system based on the exportation of commodities was replaced, affecting the economy of countries like Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, provoking a new era of espionage and Cold War, ruled by the CIA and promoted by the Republican Governments in the U.S.

On July 16th, 1950, Uruguay consecrated as the Soccer World Champion in the mythic Stadium of Maracana, and whit this vic-

¹ Vivián Trias (1978), "Getulio Vargas, Juan Domingo Perón y Batlle Berres-Herrera. Tres rostros del populismo", *Nueva Sociedad* Nº 34, enero-febrero.

tory, a prosperity cycle began to finish. The wealth times coming from his role as a food and services provider during the first half of the XX Century were ending and the new era, should be not a prosper time, but a difficult one with economic recession, social crisis. During the firsts years of the decade, still it was present the imaginary of an “happy Uruguay”, with a Welfare State taking care of all needs of their inhabitants, in a world in process of change.

A time of de-construction and reorganizations was coming for the Uruguayans, under the presidency of Luis Batlle Berres, who was assumed on March 1st, 1947, after the unexpected death from cancer, of his predecessor Tomas Berreta, counting with the political support of the leader of the opposition party, Luis Alberto de Herrera. During the 1950's elections, the agreement support, called “the coincidence” was finished and assumed the new President, Andres Martinez Trueba, who promoted a Constitutional reform to introduce a new system based in a National Government Council, a collegiate governing body, where the presidency was rotated annually. In the 1954's elections, the Colorado Party won again, under the leadership of Luis Batlle Berres, which returned to the government, but now on restricted powers, under the new system, turning inefficient the management in a moment when the social and economic crisis began.²

Political Situation and International Relations

During the Peron Governments, the Uruguay and Argentine relations were tenses, except in a brief agreement moment in 1948, after the meeting of Batlle Berres and Peron in the middle of the River Plate,³ when they join to discuss some common issues. However, at the beginning of the 1950's the discrepancies between the two Presidents got worsen.⁴ During the Second World War, Uruguay was in the position to support the Allies, similar to the Brazilian position, and opposite to the Argentine one, which was of neutrality, under the Peron promoted “Third Position”. These differences favored the US economic and military assistance to Uruguay, worsening the Uruguayan – Argentine relation. The arrival of Argentinian political exiles in Uruguay, provoked a broadcasting and a press campaign

² Felipe Monestier (1999), “Los partidos políticos uruguayos en tiempos de cambio”. (Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria).

³ Felipe Monestier (1999), “Los partidos políticos uruguayos en tiempos de cambio”. (Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria).

⁴ Juan Oddone (2004) Vecinos en discordia: Argentina, Uruguay y la política hemisférica de los Estados Unidos: Selección de documentos, 1945–1955 (Montevideo: El Galeón / Universidad de la República).

against Peron, that added to the personal discrepancies between Batlle Berres and Peron, aggravated the conflict. In 1952, Uruguay signed a Military Assistance Agreement with US,⁵ and received military financial and material support, mainly for the Uruguayan Air Force, in a moment of serious tension with the Argentinian government.

In October, 1952, an Argentinian protest was conducted against the signature of an Air-navigation agreement between Uruguay and Great Britain, where it was accorded the presence of a Uruguayan consular officer in Port Stanley at the Malvinas Islands.⁶ The incident was solved diplomatically, with the Argentinian assent. During the 1950's decade it was normal to see at the Montevideo Port the ship RRS "John Biscoe", under the service of the FIDS (Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey) as many other British ships affected to the Antarctic activities.

In 1953, General Dwight Eisenhower assumed as the new President of the United States of America, promoting an active anti-communist campaign in Latin-America,⁷ and an approach to Peron, at the same time, that moving away from the Uruguayan government. Paradoxically, the US support to Peron influenced negatively on his political life, that even if helping Argentine to improve the external diplomatic image, provoked to lose the internal support in his country.

In June 1955 it was a maximum tense situation when Peron threatened order to bomb the antenna of the Radio Carve that was broadcasting news from Uruguayan territory, in supporting the rebels against the Peron's government. In September that year, Peron resigned his presidency, because a Coup from General Lonardi, who after a few months was replaced by President Aramburu. The Uruguayan government quickly recognized the new authorities and Uruguayan –Argentinian relations changed.

On 31th July, 1956, the Argentinian government invited their peers from Brazil and Uruguay, to discuss a possible defensive agreement on the South Atlantic Ocean, suggesting that Montevideo could be the seat of the conversations. Brazil was not agreed, considering that an agreement of this magnitude should include the assent of the US. A new bid for the control of the South Atlantic Ocean was growing, because of its strategic importance

⁵ Gilberto Pratt de María (1952), *El tratado militar con Estados Unidos. Exposición del Prof. Pratt en el seno de la Junta Directiva del Ateneo* (Montevideo: Grupo de Publicaciones de la Sección de Estudio de Asuntos Político-sociales del Ateneo de Montevideo).

⁶ Eduardo A. Duhalde y Hugo R. Flombaum (1990), "Malvinas, Georgias y Sandwich del Sur. Perspectiva Histórico – Jurídica" (Buenos Aires: Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales).

⁷ Stephen G. Rabe (1988), *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books).

as a maritime alternative route of this area in the new world order and from Great Britain, an active campaign about Antarctica was driven, promoting Dr Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary as world heroes travelling in their ships “Theron” and “Magga Dan”, which visited Montevideo in those days.⁸

Uruguayan activities in Antarctica

Under the new setting, the Argentinian Navy invited some Uruguayan Navy Officers to participate in the Argentinian Antarctic campaigns,⁹ being verified initially the visit of Lieutenant Commander Ruben Varela and Sub Lieutenant Commander Héctor Bomio in the 1956-1957 summer and Lieutenant Commander Carlos Rico and Sub Lieutenant German Lariou in the following campaign, that gave to them a great opportunity to get first-hand information, and to and their comrades, to learn about Antarctica. About these journeys, Cristina Montalban (2013) wrote an extensive detail on her work titled “*Distant experiences*”.

In parallel to those navy exchanges, the Argentinian Navy also invited two Uruguayan journalists from the Montevideo “El Dia” Newspaper, who covered the entire Argentinian campaign 1957-1958, publishing a special notice in the “El Dia” Dominical Supplement and also producing a documentary movie titled “Flags over the silence” where the Uruguayan flag was shown waving in Antarctica.

In this period, also was verified the participation of the Uruguayan Meteorologist Juan Mario Nantes, overwintering twice between 1956 and 1958, in the British Antarctic Station Faraday, the *F Base*, located at Galindez Island. Its experiences were related in an extended reportage published on August 6th, 1961, in the “Reporter” magazine from Montevideo.

Russian, Americans and whaling and fishing activities

The Montevideo port was always related to whaling activities, being the overwintering headquarters of the Norwegian Whaling fleet for many years, until it disappeared due to the Nazi German actions during the Second World War. The new ordering after the war prohibited Germany to build fuel tanks and its participation in the whaling hunting, giving

⁸ Vivían Trias (1957), “Preguntas y respuestas en el Atlántico Sur”, Tribuna Universitaria Nº 4, junio (Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios del Uruguay).

⁹ Germán Lariou Nario (2002), “Nuestra Armada y el Proyecto Antártico Nacional”, Revista Naval Nº 43, Montevideo.

the opportunity to the world global businessman Aristoteles Onassis, a Greek nationalized Argentinian to get German navy equipment not used, to reconvert it for transportation and whaling purposes. Through the *Olympic Whaling Company*, from Montevideo,¹⁰ he started the operation of some whaling ships, as the enormous *Olympic Challenger*. This ship and a catcher's fleet were crewed by Norwegians and navigated under the Panama flag, remarking that neither Panama nor Uruguay were members of the Whaling Commission of 1946 which regulated this activity. Besides that, the Onassis group operated in Montevideo during the 1950's the *Compañía Uruguay de Comercio & Marítima S.A.*, and *Balleneros Ltd, S.A. Montevideo*, from where 16 catchers were operated for whaling.¹¹

On 1955, the Cold War was on the apogee and the Antarctic region was on the spot, being in progress the discussion about to use it for the disposal of nuclear waste or as an atomic testing ground, among other terrific topics. On this moment, the US President Eisenhower launch an initiative to internationalize the Antarctic Continent or to divide it in between the countries confronted to the Antarctica. The magazine *Nexo*, published in Montevideo presented a note titled: "*Who are the owners of Antarctica?*" where it said:

The Southern Hemisphere is a geographical concrete entity and is moving to be the same in the political. The Nordic potencies presence in Antarctica should be anti-natural and contrary to the Right, as if an Argentinian o Chilean Icebreaker, navigating in declared quality of "house owner" on the Greenland shores; or like if the Santiago or Buenos Aires Governments, claimed their "rights" to have bases on the Artic Glacier Ocean or in the North Pole. About that, they could have something to say, if they should exist, the United States of Latin-America...¹²

On April 7th, 1956 marooned at the Montevideo port, the Icebreaker USS "Glacier", from the US Navy. At the same moment, the Soviet whaling factory ship "Slava" was there, as usually on that times, and its Captain paid a courtesy visit to the American icebreaker. A cable from the CIA, recently declassified (50X1-HUM, 1956), explained the reasons why the Soviet whaling fleet was frequently visiting the Montevideo port, adducing that from

¹⁰ Histarmar (2020) "Historia de la Marina Mercante Argentina", ONASSIS – 3. Historia y Arqueología Marítima. – recuperado el 15 agosto 2020 de www.histarmar.com.ar/BuquesMercantes/Onassis-3.htm.

¹¹ Gelina Harlaftis (2011), "Mr. Onassis and Game Theory", Business, Finance and the State in 20th Century: European Comparisons in Historical Perspective, Crises and Transformation, 15th EBHA Annual Conference. Athens, 24-26 August, Ionian University.

¹² *Nexo* (1955) "Los Estados Unidos de Latinoamérica" *Nexo*. Revista hispanoamericana 1955-1958– Directores-redactores responsables: Roberto Ares Pons, Alberto Methol Ferré, Washington Reyes Abadie.

here, it was provided support to the Communist movement being developed in South America, particularly in Uruguay. From the pro-soviet Montevideo weekly newspaper "Marcha" (Nº 808, 1956), they wrote:

Montevideo is the first warm water port in the Atlantic on route going and coming back to Antarctica; for its quality of a Capital city and as communication center location, it advantages over the Bahía Blanca or Mar del Plata ports, which are closest on the long trip back home. On this way, ship and aircrafts on expeditions to the Seventh Continent, they do here their obliged scale. In December, we offer them the last vision of the green trees and the good life, before to submerge on the extreme environments of the white hell. They came here, also, and we wait they continue to come, to recover those things when the first autumn days arrive; here they come to tell that histories never totally written, because the sobriety is their norm.

Here they come to fraternize whalers and the icebreakers, even if they are Russian or American, because the trips around the "Chilblain Strait" and the "Constipated Bay" it will serve to break the political hostility icebergs that they only perceive by the radio. Here they come to tell their histories. The official dispatches, dated in Montevideo, telling the last big adventure of the modern world conquest, by the moment, disinterested and generous, dictated only for the scientific knowledge eagerness. Attracted by her, they arrive in Montevideo, modern heroes as Sir Edmund Hillary, producing a romantic air on the journeys. That not should depreciate the as well-organized technical aspects of those expeditions.

Sensible and sober heroes are the Scientists like Dr Vivian Fuchs, the leader of the Antarctic Expedition, the Captains and the crew-members from the battered icebreakers, like the Admiral Dufek or the Captain Maher... We, here in Montevideo, observed them, with a hint of provincial satisfaction (the Russian with the packet under the arm and the American with his camera). Barely some young man, looking to pass the slower time and the rapid years in the payed leisure of the Public employments, in the bar empty nights, maybe could reserve a dazzled look of envy for the new Vikings from the far South.

The First Advisory Commission

In 1956 the pro-government newspaper "El Día", had published an article titled "*Uruguay could claim sovereignty on Antarctica, between the 53º 20' and the 56º 40'W*", expressing

that those claims it could be formulated based on the South projection of the Uruguayan territory, based on the Argentinian doctrine postulate, mentioning the convenience or not of this, telling that:

“The case interest to all American countries, especially those newest in the issue: Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, because Argentine and Chile they already passed from to the byzantine discussions to the real action, claiming their sovereignty. Apart from the surprise and the particularities, and almost about the easy smile, we can say that the Uruguayans live, a little separated from these news. However, the theory about an Uruguayan Antarctica, is there and it will have to study it seriously and detailed the problem, not only to claim the sovereignty, but also to deny it if it could be, when there are so important world interest around as the atomic danger, that we cannot avoid”.

At that time, the opposition newspaper *“El Diario”*, published an article in which downplayed the mentioned sovereignty aspirations, which it were seconded the day after, in another article in the also opponent *“El Diario”*. In view of the polemic, the Council of Government decided to analyze the situation, taking account that the Argentinian Chancellery was already alerted, because its country was not interested that Uruguay raised claims on Antarctica

The National Council of Government, pronounced a resolution dated on Octubre 9th, 1956, creating a First Technical Commission, in order to advise the government in respect to the Antarctica, on the possible rights that could correspond to the Republic Oriental of Uruguay. The commission was presided by Amabassador Gilberto Pratt de María, and integrated by Rear Admiral (R) Alfredo Aguiar Carrasco, the Director of the Geographic Military Service, Colonel Hugo Frigerio Herran; the Director of the Navy Hydrographic Service, Captain Víctor Vicente and the Captains: Jose M. Alvarez, Elbio Amorin, Víctor Dodino with the Frigate Captain Carlos R. Lluberas as the Secretary.

That Technical Commission met at least once, without any progress, possibly because of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Francisco Gamarra resign, which had been the promoter of the idea.

Preparation of the International Geophysical Year (I.G.Y.).

On September 27th, 1955, the Captain Carlos Travieso, gave a talk in the Military Center at Montevideo, where apart to explain about the Uruguayan rights on Antarctica, announced

the realization of the I.G.Y.¹³ expressing his opinion that the US Government had proceed rightly, promoting the I.G.Y. advancement initially provided to be organized on 1982-1983, which it will be executed from July 19th, 1957 to December 31th, 1958, remarking: “We have been the first ones to promote the adhesion of our country to the I.G.Y., linking there our Antarctic problem”.

On that, Travieso continued to say, Argentine and Chile, “with right judgment” had established that the I.G.Y. activities do not will provide precedents for territorial claims, warning that it could be that should some countries could will pretend remain in Antarctica, after finalized the I.G.Y. , with the US opposition and their though that the I.G.Y. could be only for carry out scientific research, considering that for these reasons he could get the support from the Pentagon and the U.N. for the actions and Antarctic plans he was promoting. Notwithstanding the Uruguayan government had not a clear strategic view on Antarctic issues, in the civilian society there was some initiatives, like as the Captain Travieso projects and other, as the article in the “Revista Uruguaya de Geografía Nº 8” said:

1955 has been characterized by an unusual geographical activity in our country. Besides the normal work from organizations as the Military Geographical Institute, The Meteorological Service, the Institute of Geology..., The Uruguayan Association of Cerographers, the Professor’s Institute “Artigas”, the Institute of Geographical Research, the Physical Geography Laboratory, have been developed interesting lectures... In the Humanities and Sciences Faculty a commission, integrated by F. Cernuschi, R. Méndez Alzola y J. Chebataroff, was designated to inform on the possible Uruguayan participation in the International Geophysical Year. That Commission was fully integrated later and developed an intense work, which we are going to report.

Effectively a National Commission was created and assigned to participate in all related to the I.G.Y. 1957-1958, as it is remarked in the 18th item of the Senate Camera session agenda Nº 15.342 dated November 5th, 1957, from where on June 26th, 1958, the Parliament approved the Act 12.511, assigning responsibilities and financial resources to buy instruments and other requirements related.

Unfortunately, the Act was promulgated to late, when the I.G.Y. was almost finishing, impeding to concrete the projects the commission formulated. Anyway, the Uruguayan intention to participate in the I.G.Y. activities were recorded and were written in the I.G.Y. official documents, as it can be checked in the UNESCO book about the International Geo-

¹³ Carlos Travieso Fernández (1977), *Geopolítica Atlanto–Antártida y de la Cuenca del Plata. En el mar está el porvenir de la Patria* (Montevideo: Publicación del autor. Montevideo), 22.

physical Year¹⁴ where it is mentioned Uruguay as one of the 52 nations registered announcing its participation.

The Uruguayan Antarctica

On October 13th, 1956, the Montevideo newspaper “El Bien Publico” published an article summarizing a December 14th, 1955 notice, where they had advocated by the Uruguayan rights on a part of Antarctica, based on the Argentinian thesis referred on the sector projections to the South. The press headlines said: “the Batllism putting their eyes on Antarctica” and “To became frozen: The Uruguayan Antarctica”... The concept of an “Uruguayan Antarctica” has been managed since 1956, being Captain Travieso the principal supporter of that idea, as it can be verified in his conferences and in these press notes:

“*The oblivion of the Uruguayan Antarctica*” published in the newspaper “La Mañana” on August 2th, 1958,¹⁵ which it expressed:

“From 1946 till now, as the high Navy commander officers describe, it could be mentioned the existense of a navy doctrine which it could be summarized as follows: “Our country must claim an Antarctic sector, proceeding as in the Artic regions, accomplishing the Western Hemisphere cooperation commitments on defense and security, and as a very important fishing and minerals reservation for the future”.

Another article also published in “La Mañana” on July 16th, 1959, its mentioned his expressions during a lecture in the “Club Rivera”,¹⁶ where he spoke about the hemispherical security, the continental shelf and the Antarctica, under the title “*For an Uruguayan Antarctica*”, specifying:

“Uruguay must claim the Atlantic-Antarctic sector Eastern to the Argentinian sector, according to our historical – geographical rights, helping to defend the South American thesis and based also in the anti-colonialist Pan-American security collective commitments”

¹⁴ Werner Buedeler (1957), “The IGY and UNESCO. The International Geophysical Year” (París: Oberthur Rennes-Paris, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO), 25-26.

¹⁵ Carlos Travieso Fernández (1977), Geopolítica Atlanto–Antártida y de la Cuenca del Plata. En el mar está el porvenir de la Patria (Montevideo: Publicación del autor. Montevideo), 28.

¹⁶ Carlos Travieso Fernández (1977), Geopolítica Atlanto–Antártida y de la Cuenca del Plata. En el mar está el porvenir de la Patria (Montevideo: Publicación del autor. Montevideo), 30.

From May 13th to 15th, 1958, the Newspaper “El Día”, published a serial notes,¹⁷ based on an interview to Ambassador Pratt de Maria where it come off the possibility to impulse an eventual rights claim on Antarctica, regarding the Uruguayan historical and geographical links to the Frozen Continent.

These “El Día” notes were published in three editions, under the title “Claims and Rights theories over the Antarctic territories. The Uruguayan position on its possible rights”. In the first article closing, Dr Pratt de Maria mentioned an anecdote, saying that the “father” of the Argentinian Antarctic doctrine, had was expressed to him, in confidence, that “*he could not understand why, Uruguay, never had raised a formal claim*” on Antarctica.

In the last edition, dated May 15th, 1958, the Newspaper “El Día” remarked: “*From the conquerors right to the Eisenhower formula, passing by the internationalizing and the confrontation theory. The Uruguayan position on the possible country rights*”, highlights the Dr Pratt de Maria expressions saying:

“Eisenhower has put on the table this Antarctic question and it will be necessary to check who could manage the destiny of that continent. The discovering could be cloudy to be taken as a base for rights claims. To establish scientific expedition’s stations, I don’t think it could be significant for rights. The most traditional is the confrontations theory. For that theory and for the internationalization, Uruguay has rights over Antarctica”.

Continued Pratt de Maria, commenting about the 1947’s Rio de Janeiro Treaty validity, declaring the Antarctica as an area of interest for American Continent security, explaining that, the US, never will approve the extra-continental powers presence in the White Continent. Asked about which one should was the Uruguayan doctrine on respecting that, he said:

“Till now, it could say that we have acting in the position not to pronounce any claim at all, however, no claims formulated by other have been recognized. In some way, our country position must be regulated by the parallel interest game. We must observe thoughtfully the thesis defended by other countries in similar conditions as Uruguay, for example Brazil and Peru. That we yes have to take in mind is that is not possible to disengage from the problem. Apart of that, who

¹⁷ Robert D. Hayton (1959), “National Interests in Antarctica. An Annotated Bibliography”, en The United States Antarctic Projects Officer 1959 – Uruguay P 76–1079 El Día – Montevideo. Las teorías de reivindicaciones y derechos sobre tierras antárticas: tema apasionante (13 May 1958: 9; 14 May 1958: 9; 15 May 1958: 10; 3 maps).

knows, even for the internationalization or by the confrontations, for what, it could be useful in the future, the adjudications that it could be assigned to Uruguay”

Toward the Antarctic Treaty

The Uruguayan position in relation to the Geophysical Year negotiations were not clear and only were promoted through the personal opinions as that from Pratt de Maria or the constant predicament of Captain Travieso, as he mentioned in his article titled: “Uruguay excluded from the Antarctica Conference”,¹⁸ saying that from May 1958, twelve nations were meeting weekly, invited by President Eisenhower, in a “Scientific conference, trying to get an agreement on Antarctica, pretending that it will be used pacifically”, and regretfully he remarked that five South Hemisphere nations were met there, Argentine, Chile, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, excluding Uruguay, “*it having ignored the problem*”, adding that:

“it should correspond to make a principles declaration, claiming the Uruguayan Antarctica from 20° E to 20° W or 25° W and to send, at least, a navy observer to the mentioned conference..., and request officially, to be admitted there”.¹⁹

The government opposition looked mockingly, the possibility to extend the Uruguayan territory in Antarctica, commenting sarcastically in the press like in this article published in “El Diario” on October 4th, 1958 under the title: “To became frozen: The Uruguayan Antarctica”, saying:

Even if it could be not true, we are one step away from a transcendental decision for our future... the Uruguay have rights to claim sovereignty on Antarctica, the most recent claimed continent, where now the Argentinian, Chilean, Russian, British, North-American, New-Zealander, Australian, Norwegian and French are now arguing heatedly. As we can see, we are going to the competence, a little late... From the geographical appreciations, it should correspond to Uruguay a band of Antarctic ground between the Meridian 53° 20’ an the 56° 40’ Longitude West... a kind of triangle, with vertex in the South Pole extended over 37.440 Square Kilometers.

The surface, as adverted, is so important that the Council of Government is worry-

¹⁸ Carlos Travieso Fernández (1977), *Geopolítica Atlanto–Antártida y de la Cuenca del Plata*. En el mar está el porvenir de la Patria (Montevideo: Publicación del autor. Montevideo), 48.

¹⁹ Carlos Travieso Fernández (1977), *Geopolítica Atlanto–Antártida y de la Cuenca del Plata*. En el mar está el porvenir de la Patria (Montevideo: Publicación del autor. Montevideo), 49.

ing on the future possibilities of that cold region. Somebody assure that they are going to plan the convenience to increase the number of departmental divisions, drawing two or three more in the map of the Uruguayan Antarctica, for what, according our constitutional texts, to govern it, should be necessary to assign five counselors and thirty one civic dignitaries for each one, with the advantage that because that polar regions, there is only inhabited by the penguins, the authorities could remain in Montevideo, where the climate and the spring winds are more tolerable than in the departments to be created.

Also, they ensure, the big countries greed is awaked caused by the possibilities to find uranium deposits on that latitudes, for what, in preventing that in any moment, it could possible to find a ship that could move us there, it should be necessary to be prepared for the creation of the N.A.U. that it should be the initials of the National Administration of the Uranium, assigning five directors, one General Manager, all with their respective official automobiles...

In 1958, Uruguay was facing a complex social and economic crisis, including factory closing and strikes. The government party was internally divided, producing the loss in the November 1958 elections, where the opposition won. In March next year, the new authorities assumed and in April 1959 they had to face some terrific floods, forcing the government to take especial measures to manage the situation, forgetting and get moving away the Antarctic question.

Moving to Cooperation, Peace and Science

The Uruguayan interests in the Antarctic are coming from the Spaniard Colony times and always have been there, subjacent. That interest had been more reflected in the logistic support to navy, research or whaling ships, than for that physical experiences which motivates to go far away from the southern maritime horizon, however, there was many people that effectively participated in expeditions to the Antarctic regions during the 1950's decade, as the navy officers invited to participate in Argentinian campaigns, those "El Día" journalists which documented the Antarctic life during the International Geophysical Year or Juan Nantes, who participating in the British campaigns, overwintering twice in Antarctica and surely, they should have many Uruguayan seamen embarked in any of the *Olympic Whaling Co* catchers, which they remain anonymous, and many other people, which in different ways could participate from fermental period they living on that time, when it was common to say "*Como el Uruguay no hay*" (There is no country as the Uruguay), a famous phrase from those years. The Captain Carlos Travieso Fernández was the most im-

portant thinker in defense of the claim for the Uruguayan rights in Antarctica. His actions and work, was described by Cristina Montaban (2008) in her work *“Uruguay presence in Antarctica. The unknown actions of a doctinaire”* and the contributions that Captain Travieso made for years in lectures and in the press, remained written in a few known book, titled *“Atlanto-Antarctic and from the River Plate Basin Geopolitics. In the Sea is the Homeland’s future”*, published in 1977.

On December 1st, 1959, twelve countries, in which was not Uruguay, signed in Washington, the Antarctic Treaty. A new era was beginning, where the cooperation, the peace and the science, were going to influence in all the related to the Antarctic. In this year, the Professor Julio Cesar Musso, after his divorce, found in the Antarctic question a balm for his intellectual concerns and taking the backgrounds given from his predecessors from the 1950’s decade, started a predicament which finally it could convince the authorities, provoking that some years later, the Uruguay it could concrete its adhesion to the Antarctic Treaty, participating then, in equal conditions with other nations, in the Antarctica administration.

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CHILEAN ANTARCTIC POLICY IN THE 1950s: SOME ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION¹

Consuelo León Wöppke

To speak of the 1950s decade is not easy, since in general there are stereotypes about life at the time and what was understood by Cold War. Even more difficult is to refer to Chilean Antarctic policy at that time, since it was marked not by glorious epics but rather apparently routine expeditions. These missions, nevertheless, depended on the anonymous sacrifice of those who wintered in the frozen continent, and also the silent heroism of those who did science with few means and under the most adverse conditions imaginable.

By then the Antarctic theme seemed far from the interest of national public opinion. It was understood the United States and the Soviet Union had already discovered everything there was to be discovered in the frozen continent and competed between each other to stand out in these achievements. Little was known of Chilean activities, except that certain international incidents had occurred in 1953, and in late 1958 a commission of national jurists had travelled to Washington to negotiate a treaty with regard to the Antarctic.

This study intends to analyse the unknown and almost opaque

¹ Special thanks to Jorge Ilabaca and Nelson Llanos for their orderly and detailed review of this article.

Chilean Antarctic policy during the 1950s, attempting to identify characteristic elements of continuity and ensuing transformations. Among these elements of continuity is clearly the bipolar atmosphere that marked the decade, the validity of certain geostrategic concepts, the adaptability of the Armed Forces in addressing scientific activities, and above all the constant pursuit of joint action with Argentina. Albeit factors of change will not be undertaken on this occasion –to avoid excessively extending the study– nevertheless an attempt will be made to weave together various studies on the topic.

Sources used were official, press articles, and specialised articles extracted from Chilean, British, Australian, and US archives.

I. Components of Continuity in Chilean Antarctic Policy in the 1950s

a. Atmosphere of world bipolarity and Anglo-Saxon areas of influence in the Antarctic Peninsula

One element that remains constant throughout the period of study is the Cold War, conflict present in the Antarctic since 1949. Since then, the United States and the Soviet Union kept to relatively similar behaviours: neither superpower clearly stated which part of the Antarctic they were claiming, and both used the continent as a setting to demonstrate their logistic and technological power during the International Geophysical Year (IGY) 1957-1958.

For the United States the Cold War context was an excellent and veiled opportunity to intimidate countries such as Chile, making them–forcefully– feel part of their world block and within their sphere of regional influence: the so-called Western Hemisphere. However, this situation implied no advantage at all for Chile, and *contrario sensu*, restricted its power to decide, becoming an easy toy for machination by the Anglo-Saxon block.

East-west hostility began distending towards 1953 with the change of leaders in both superpowers and the strengthening of the People's Republic of China, among other relevant events. Albeit the Antarctic continent did not turn into an active peripheral scenario of the Cold War, the positions of countries such as Argentina and Chile weakened more and more throughout the decade. In this way, since 1954 these nations gradually accepted various US initiatives that finally materialised in the Washington Treaty of 1959 and which would give rise to the “Antarctic system” that endures until today.

On account of the above, the Cold War may be considered an element of continuity in Chilean Antarctic policy during this decade of study. This restricted Chile's freedom for

international action, since –being part of the Western block– was in practical terms prevented from liaising with the Socialist world.

Now, within this bipolar world context there was one area of influence that greatly affected Chilean Antarctic behaviour, especially in terms of relations with Argentina. Albeit the existence of a US area of influence in the Hemisphere was understandable –given its great technological and economic power after the Second World War– in the 1950s it was not easy to understand what role was played by the British Empire in this region of US influence.

The aims of both Anglo-Saxon powers with regard to southern seas and the Antarctic were not easy to understand because the ambivalence of the powerful neighbour in the North and the opacity of British behaviour complicated to the extreme any attempt to identify the interests that motivated them. For example, the vagueness and contradictions in US intended Antarctic claims only led to confusion and hindered the work of the Chilean Foreign Office.

With the perspective gained with time and the unfolding of events it is possible to state without error that US policy in reality had not changed at all since proclaiming the Hughes doctrine in 1923². Probably the only identifiable nuance was the greater or lesser emphasis that Washington at given times assigned to the strategic value of interoceanic passes, and also the bases “for vital supplies” in the southern region and even Antarctica³. It should be noted that the area of influence known as the “Western Hemisphere” was an instrumental US creation based on supposedly “special hemispheric relations” among countries in the American continent, and which stemmed from certain shared values and a common purpose. This “relationship” –that appeared intermittently throughout the period of study– was aimed more towards surreptitiously imposing and confusing national loyalties, and gradually faded after the Cuban revolution in 1959⁴. Chilean diplomats found it hard to understand why this US intended protection of the Hemisphere did not always consider

² The doctrine proclaimed by State Secretary Charles Evans Hughes always bred uncertainty, misinformation, and complicated interhemispheric Antarctic relations. “*Impresiones en los Estados Unidos, Japón y Argentina sobre las declaraciones chilenas con respecto a los derechos Antárticos*” *El Mercurio* [hereon EM], 8 November 1940: 1. “U.S. wary on claims of Chile in Antarctic,” *New York Times* [hereon NYT], 8 November 1940, 3:1

³ “Valor estratégico que tiene *Little America*”, *La Unión* [hereon LU], 21 May 1940: 5

⁴ The “Western Hemisphere” was an “instrumental creation” since its extension and degree of engagement varied according to Washington needs. Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “*Hemisferio Occidental: Un concepto mítico relevante de las relaciones interamericanas, 1939-1940*”, *Diplomacia* 72 (March-June 1997): 74-87

the “American Antarctic”; whereas from the never-made-explicit perspective in Washington the Hemisphere was of variable extension, and may or may not include the Antarctic, as per the convenience of the United States and its relationship with the British⁵.

Precisely, another constant during this period was continuing Chilean difficulty in understanding the behaviour of the United Kingdom. It was particularly complex trying to discern if London/Washington relations were of equals, subordination, or predominance. This aspect was of the utmost relevance to the Chilean government because it was closely tied to the situation in the Antarctic Peninsula, with overlapping claims by Argentina, Great Britain –via the Falkland or Malvinas dependencies– and Chile⁶.

Although the existence of areas of US and British influence in the Antarctic Peninsula was unable to avert –and far less prevent– the arrival of other powers to the area, both Washington as well as London continued to exert strong influence over Chilean Antarctic policy, especially with regard to Argentina. Lastly, it must be recalled, that during this decade Chile had continued shaping and developing its area of influence in the south Pacific and Antarctic, consistent with maritime and southern policies continuously implemented since 1947 and which would bear fruit decades later.

b. Certain enduring concepts such as “Antarctic Southern Zone” and “maritime and Antarctic” Chile

A second enduring element throughout the period of study is related to a set of concepts linked to the geographical identity and location of Chile, and which for a long time characterised Chilean Antarctic policy. These were systematised –so to speak– in the late 1930s, and consolidated by external influence as well as by national initiative.

It should be noted that since the beginning of the presidency of Pedro Aguirre Cerda (October 1938) a new and more complete image of Chile was shaped, entirely different to the other agrarian and “self-enclosed” image that had prevailed until then with few variations since colonial times. In 1940, with profound knowledge of reality in Chile and of foreign interests, Aguirre Cerda devised the territorial consolidation of the country: building high-

⁵ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke and Jason K. Moore, “Antarctic science as a component of Chilean skepticism toward the United States in the 1940s and 1950s”, *Boletín Antártico Chileno [hereon BACH]* (2nd SCAR Workshop on the History of Antarctic Research: Multidimensional exploration of Antarctica around the 1950s): 37- 44

⁶ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “*Convergencias y divergencias entre los intereses anglo-americanos en la Antártica Sudamericana a mitad del siglo pasado*”, *Estudios Norteamericanos* 3 No. 3 (2004): 149-158

ways in Aysén, Chiloé, and Magallanes; integrating and developing new railway lines for better connections with the vast southern territories; and studying in depth the border issues of Chilean southern and Antarctic provinces⁷. The Chilean president projected challenging tasks in the midst of a complex context, in the international sphere marked by the start of the Second World War, and domestically by a recent earthquake that had destroyed five provinces in the centre of the country.

Jurists, diplomats, military, marines, aviators, politicians, engineers, scholars, journalists, and government officials all contributed with great disposition and determination to the conception of this new and buoyant Chile⁸. Many women also took part in this great task, as they considered that if such a future were forged, they would have better possibilities for economic and political participation⁹.

At the time, maritime issues were considered as the binding and unifying element of relations between American Chile and the Antarctic; also, as a fundamental factor for the new country to be built. In this regard, Francisco Orrego said there had been three national policies that had stood out on account of their “creativity and imagination and characterised by their continuity and endurance”: those related to the marine environment, the Antarctic, and the Pacific Ocean. These policies, formulated based on the lack of domestic geographical space, evolved in parallel and were part of “our national personality and historical tradition”. Later on, these policies enjoyed worldwide acceptance as part of general international law¹⁰.

The ocean contributed culture, trade, technology, migrants, and promised to be “the future splendour” of the country, forming an indivisible unit with the Antarctic. This approach was consolidated through various international statements about maritime sovereignty. In June 1947 the government of Chile declared its territorial sea of a breadth of 200

⁷ “\$60.000.000 se invertirán en construcción de carreteras en Aysén, Chiloé y Magallanes”, *Las Últimas Noticias* [hereon LUN] 18 July 1940: 10. “Construcción del ferrocarril que una Punta Arenas y Puerto Natales, se pide”, LUN 1 October 1940: 15. *Hoy*, 9 No. 445 (30 May 1940): 4. “Chile to File Antarctic Claims” NYT 4 October 1939, 7:6

⁸ Ramón Cañas Montalva, “Nuestra soberanía hacia el Antártico: Importancia de las rutas marítimas australes”, *La Verdad* (Punta Arenas), 1 April 1940: 3. See Consuelo León Wöppke, “La segunda elite antártica chilena y el gobierno de Gabriel González Videla” in Cristián Garay and Ángel Soto, *Internacionalismo y anticomunismo en tiempos de Gabriel González Videla*. Santiago: ITL Ed., 2018

⁹ “Chile claims vast quadrant in Antarctic,” NYT 7 November 1940, 4:5

¹⁰ Francisco Orrego Vicuña, “La proyección extracontinental de Chile” in Francisco Orrego *et alles*, *Política Antártica de Chile* (Stgo: Ed. Universitaria, 1984): 16 and 17

nautical miles, which was ratified internationally when together with Ecuador and Peru they subscribed the Declaration of Santiago in 1952 on the maritime zone¹¹.

These declarations definitively consolidated the so-called “Antarctic Southern Chile”, a concept devised and disseminated since 1943 by the then Coronel Ramón Cañas Montalva. This mental map highlighted the geographical continuity and economic interdependence existing between American Chile and the Antarctic, national sectors closely linked by Drake’s Passage. Furthermore, the maritime issue never declined in relevance in the decade of study: in 1958 during the 1st Conference on the Law of the Sea –and very much in tune with the third-world airs that prevailed at the UN General Assembly– various concepts of great relevance were ratified, such as the “territorial sea”, “contiguous zone”, “high sea”, and “continental shelf”, among others. Later all these concepts were to influence the Antarctic path¹².

c. Capacity of the armed forces to address any challenge –including scientific– in the Antarctic

Another constant in national Antarctic activity throughout the period of study was that Chilean marines, military, and aviators –albeit lacking the necessary technology and resources– successfully executed all tasks entrusted by the political establishment and civility¹³.

Reading the personal diaries of persons who travelled or stayed in Antarctica, as well as base log books and instructions, demonstrates that “doing your duty” was far more than mere cliché. Chile was at the time a poor country with an off-balance economy on account of constant variations in international prices of raw materials, and which found itself carrying out “Antarctic activities” while lacking sufficient and appropriate resources¹⁴.

Among the main difficulties were landings during strong swells in Bahía Covadonga; hydro-

¹¹ Gave rise to the so-called South Pacific System. Orrego (1983): 20. “*Se aconseja acción de las Naciones Unidas en reclamaciones sobre la Antártica*”, LU 15 August 1952:1. Bianchi (London) to Chancellor, “*Declaración británica sobre Soberanía en zócalo continental y mar adyacente en islas Falklands*”, Confidencial N 1344/80, 4 June 1951, Dip. Dept., MINRE

¹² Certain concepts such as continental shelf, territorial sea, and contiguous zone entered into force in 1964. Cf opinions by Cañas in “*Derechos de Chile a la Antártica*”, LU 18 August 1952:6. Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “*Conceptos fundantes y permanentes de la política antártica chilena?*” in *Pasado y Futuro del Continente Blanco*. (Punta Arenas: Instituto Antártico Chileno, 2014)

¹³ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, *Base O’Higgins, 1948-1959: Posicionando a Chile: Chilenos en la Antártica y biografías antárticas*, vol. 1 and 2 (Stgo: IGM, 2018)

¹⁴ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “The Chilean Army’s participation in the nation’s first Antarctic expedition”, *The Polar Journal* 2 N° 2 (December 2012): 408- 426

graphic and geodesic surveys and explorations; fragile communications; carbon monoxide intoxication; to a great extent all made far worse by the storms that constantly whipped the bases. In sum, all writings infer constant sacrifice and a professional capacity that outweighed the serious material limitations.

It is appropriate to mention that a major share of national Antarctic knowledge at the start of the 1950s came from Chilean naval officers invited or commissioned to take part in foreign expeditions or abroad¹⁵. Although normally the main objective of the Armed Forces' Antarctic policy was only to maintain sovereignty in the white continent, carrying out scientific activities was included among their initial and continued aims¹⁶. Therefore, as the international situation assigned ever greater relevance to the Antarctic, the government of Chile and the Armed Forces increased their scientific activities, in the understanding these were a means for maintaining Chilean sovereignty in the future¹⁷.

Furthermore, within the Chilean Armed Forces there was an Antarctic elite with significant sway on the political establishment and that greatly contributed to shaping national Antarctic knowledge¹⁸. Yet overall, this group did not always have the capacity to influence at government level. During the 1950s and on account of contingent domestic reasons, the Antarctic elite was perceived as close to preceding radical governments, and therefore

¹⁵ To give an example, lieutenants Federico Bonnert, Patricio Wichmann, and Exequiel Rodríguez travelled in 1940; the latter proposed reactivating the whaling station on Deception Island and building an Antarctic ship in Valdivia. Enrique Cordovez Madariaga and Claudio Vío travelled in 1942 with an Argentine expedition. Carlos Tromben, *Base Prat: Cincuenta años de presencia continua de la Armada de Chile en la Antártica, 1947-1997* (Valparaíso.: Imp. De la Armada, 1997): 2 and ss

¹⁶ There is mention of national scientific Antarctic activities in practically all newspapers at the time. Carlos C. Hall (Stgo Councillor) Carlos C. Hall to Dep. State, 10 January 1951. "Recent developments in connection with the Antarctic": 2 and 3. 702.0222/1-1051. Declas. 5 May 2000. NARA. "*Relevos se están cumpliendo desde ayer en la Antártica*", LU 17 January 1951: 2

¹⁷ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, "Antarctic peninsula wilderness: footprints on Chilean crews, 1948-1958", *Revista Estudios Hemisféricos y Polares* 8 No. 1 (January-March 2017): 1-11

¹⁸ Schmidt was able to encourage "national Antarctic awareness" understood as a doctrine according to which "citizens should focus on the issue and assist the realization of national Antarctic policy". Hugo Schmidt Prado, "*Conciencia nacional antártica*", *Memorial del Ejército* [hereon *Memorial*] 43 No. 230 (May-June 1949): 19 and 20 and also Schmidt, "*Posibilidades económicas del continente antártico*", *Memorial* 43 No. 233 (November-December 1949): 89-104. Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, "*La segunda elite antártica chilena y el gobierno de Gabriel González Videla*" in Cristián Garay and Ángel Soto, *Internacionalismo y anticomunismo en tiempos de Gabriel González Videla* (Stgo: ITL Ed., 2018

their outreach declined after 1952 with the arrival of the Ibañez administration, that –paradoxically– had also been in the military.

Although radicals as well as *Ibañistas* assigned great relevance to the Antarctic issue, the international context greatly limited the real possibilities of the new government in this regard, added to the somewhat hesitant and undecided direction of Antarctic policy. Despite this, during the Ibañez administration a specially designed and equipped ship for navigating polar seas was commissioned, the first of its type to be operated by the Chilean Navy. Additionally, for the first time, Punta Arenas was connected to the Presidente Pedro Aguirre Cerda Antarctic airbase via a return flight. This mission was carried out by an amphibious aircraft Catalina OA-10A of the Chilean Air Force, which landed in Foster bay and returned the following day.

Among the most important members of the military elite during the 1950s were retired General Ramón Cañas Montalva; sea captain, geographer, and hydrographer Enrique Cordovez Madariaga; former Commander in Chief of the Army and former Minister of Defence Guillermo Barrios Tirado; and Gregorio Rodríguez Tascón, who developed the Army’s Antarctic thinking. Other relevant names were: Boris Kopaitic O’Neill and Alfredo Martín Díaz of the Navy; Hugo Schmidt Prado, Aquiles López Barrenechea, and Enrique Correa Zendrini, whose personal effort enabled building the Luis Risopatrón scientific Antarctic base; and from the Air Force, among many others, Humberto Tenorio Iturra and Carlos Toro Mazote¹⁹.

It should also be noted that not all the military believed this international scientific effort would be purely altruistic, without self-interest, and “for the love of science”. In fact, Ramón Cañas Montalva and Eduardo Saavedra Rojas promoted national scientific research in Antarctic territory not only in pursuit of pure science, rather because they believed this activity would be considered –in the very short term– as a requirement for taking part in the new Antarctic order which the powers wanted to impose –and that in fact did impose.

If Chilean Antarctic policy is analysed from an exclusively national viewpoint it is not possible to understand its apparent evolution or –better said– decline. Nevertheless, when it is analysed from a broader perspective it is possible to appreciate how Chile began adapting to the international standards created by the powers. At the time it was understood that

¹⁹ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “*Ensayo acerca de la política antártica chilena de mediados de 1950s: Contextos, elites y desdibujamiento territorial*” in Jara, Mauricio, Pablo Mancilla and Consuelo León, *El Año Geofísico Internacional en la perspectiva histórica chilena, 1954-1958* (Valparaíso: Ed. Puntángeles, 2012): 19-30

in this way the country would ensure its rights, although not fully aware that, for example, the permanent presence –indispensable requirement for having polar domain– had been surreptitiously replaced by practicing science. Given that in this aspect the country did not have much tradition or experts, national Antarctic science ended up being, to a great extent, performed by the Armed Forces.

Neither is it wrong to point out that in 1958 an increasing separation began to arise between the objectives pursued by national diplomacy and the Antarctic policy carried out by the Armed Forces, obviously following instructions by the government. This lack of coordination was the consequence of national unawareness about what the Anglo-Saxon powers had in mind, and what was reservedly and selectively being forged in diplomatic negotiations that ultimately materialised with the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959.

d. Pursuit of a permanent Chilean-Argentine Alliance to face increasingly challenging times

At Chilean diplomatic level there was always a tendency to give priority to relations with Argentina with regard to the Antarctic issue, and this was no different in the 1950s. Furthermore, it was a constant in Chilean international actions; but it also implied constant frustration for the governments at the time, as they were not always able to capture the true motivations behind the fluctuations in Argentine politics.

Striving to establish a stable Antarctic relationship with Argentina was not and did not appear simple, but at least there was “some” legal certainty in terms of not having grave war-like incidents in the area. In fact, the erroneously called “Tripartite Agreement” –based on this feeling of security– was originated by the threatening British attitude in sending from South Africa its cruiser *Nigeria* in February 1948 to counteract the international impact of the Chilean president’s trip to Antarctica. To prevent future incidents Chile, Argentina, and Great Britain considered it convenient to renew this agreement every year, establishing that –during its enforcement– the signatories should abstain from sending warships and making naval or military demonstrations south of parallel 60° S. This agreement was maintained throughout the 1950s, and would later –voluntarily and without apparent reason– be joined by the United States²⁰.

²⁰ Bianchi (London) to Minister of Foreign Affairs, “*Acuerdo sobre la Antártida*”, confidential N 2067/162, 20 September 1951, Dip. Dept. MINRE. “*Se prorrogó por un año acuerdo sobre zona antártica*”, LU, 19 November 1951: 5. “*Estados Unidos tampoco enviará barcos de guerra a la Antártica*”, LU, 27 November 1952:5. “3 nations renew Antarctic pact”, NYT, 27 November 1952, 40:1. “*Piden que no se envíen barcos extranjeros a la Antártica chilena*, LU, 25 November 1952: 1

It is appropriate to mention that when these countries sent their ships to “show the flag” or for dissuasive manoeuvres, they quickly highlighted that such naval activities did not constitute a violation of the said agreement. Furthermore, when crossing Antarctic waters, warships navigated with main ordnance (artillery) fully lubricated and sheathed, in evident demonstration they were not in condition for immediate use. This was very clear, for example, during the southern summer of 1953 when Argentina and Great Britain sent backups to the proximities of Deception Island, as will be seen later on.

In general terms it may be sustained that a constant in Chilean Antarctic behaviour during the 1950s was its interest in creating and maintaining a common front with Argentina, but in turn achieving a certain balance with Great Britain. It should not be forgotten that from the start this tripartite relationship among London, Buenos Aires, and Santiago was powerfully marked by a fourth external element: influence by the United States.

i) Fundament for consolidating a “common front” with Argentina

As has been already said, maintaining unity of thought and action with Argentina was a constant objective for Chile during the decade of study. In this sense, establishing an Antarctic boundary of common agreement was a priority, since it would strengthen the position of both countries and reduce tensions –and hence foreign pretexts for intervening in the much-disputed Antarctic Peninsula.

In the early 1950s Chile considered it was wholly necessary and advisable to consolidate what had been intermittently talked about with the *Casa Rosada* since 1906. According to the eminent and respected Chilean jurist and judge of the International Court of Justice, Alejandro Álvarez, most recommendable was to sign a Supplementary Boundary Treaty to “make it clear that Chile and Argentina had not proceeded with an annexation of territory, rather the demarcation of borders in regions conceptualised as theirs since long ago”²¹. Unfortunately, this topic was not mentioned again because various events directed attention away from such a transcendental objective. Should such a boundary agreement in Antarctic territory have been signed this would have strengthened the Antarctic position of both countries and many subsequent controversies may have been avoided.

In addition to the above, Álvarez was of the opinion that “the guiding thread of conversations” should be maintaining “close Chilean-Argentine union for the defence of mutual

²¹ Although a bilateral meeting of high-level military leaders was held in October 1950, no major progress was made. “*Chile y Argentina realizarán reuniones sobre la Antártica*”, LE, 27 October 1950:1

rights”, as well as coordinating international stances and “marching together at every Antarctic conference”. Likewise, Álvarez understood that to uphold the rights of both nations it was essential to “oppose the establishment of a sort of condominium in the American Antarctic”²². This became an axis of national Antarctic behaviour during the decade, as will be seen further on.

The administrations of González Videla, Ibáñez, and Alessandri attempted to make viable and keep open the possibility of a fruitful joint Antarctic policy with the *Casa Rosada*, agreeing on a common behaviour before other powers determined their own. National public opinion –due to the long history of incidents that since long-gone-by times had determined border history with Argentina– was fairly reluctant to closing ties with Buenos Aires.

Furthermore –and curiously and repeatedly– when these conversations appeared to be going well, something happened, and positive negotiating atmospheres cooled. Albeit this has not been analysed in depth, it would appear this distancing may be related to close moments in Antarctic matters between the United States and Great Britain²³.

ii) Growing challenges

Various were the events that marked Chilean-Argentine relations during this decade. Most of these attempts were made to determine a behaviour in agreement with Buenos Aires. Among the events that most concern caused in Chile are: Soviet note in 1949; the disproportionate Argentine reaction to the British landing in Esperanza Bay; the English reaction motivated by the construction of Chilean and Argentine Antarctic bases or facilities in 1953; and since 1954, the increasing presence of the United States in the white continent, under the pretext of scientific research.

With regard to the first of these events, it should be placed in the middle of the Cold War period. By means of a diplomatic note, Moscow claimed its right to participate in any discussion about the future of the Antarctic, threatening to reject any decision taken without their involvement. Chile as well as Argentina rejected the Soviet position. Chile

²² Chilean Antarctic Commission Sessions. s.f. circa January 1950. MINRE

²³ “*Estudios de la Comisión Chilena Antártica*”, LU, 21 March 1941: 1. “*Cambian ideas las comisiones del Antártico*”, LU, 22 March 1941: 7. “*Viaje de flota norteamericana a Australia y N. Zelandia prueba la solidaridad con Gran Bretaña*” LE, 17 March 1941. “*Se ha dado término a los estudios de límites chileno-argentinos en territorios antárticos*,” LE, 26 March 1941. Byrd to Roosevelt, 21 March 1941, folder 2902, Byrd Polar Center. “*El North Star arribará hoy de la zona Antártica*”, LU, 9 April 1941:7

considered it was more advisable to present a united front in this incident, in accordance with the Vergara-La Rosa agreement on the “common defence of the sovereignty of Chile and Argentina in the sixth continent”. Thus, *La Moneda* waited prudently for Buenos Aires to decide which course it would follow, until in late August both countries officially expressed the South American Antarctic belonged exclusively to the jurisdiction of Chile and Argentina, and hence the Soviet claim was unacceptable²⁴.

In 1951 once again Argentina and Chile held a concurring attitude before Great Britain, as both nations were interested in building permanent bases on the Antarctic Peninsula as a way of preventing increasing foreign presence. In the Chilean case, although there were serious economic limitations and institutional reluctance, it was decided to build the Presidente González Videla air base on Penguin island, Paradise Bay, which was inaugurated in March that same year²⁵.

From the British viewpoint, the construction of bases represented an intromission or “encroachment” into their own territory, and hence they initially filed a “local” protest, that is, delivered solely to the Commodore of the Chilean Antarctic flotilla in the area, sea captain Diego Munita²⁶. Subsequently, after amply discussing the event in the House of Commons, London filed a formal protest before the governments of Argentina and Chile, which was rejected by both countries in May 1951.

²⁴ Walter H. Waggoner, “Moscow Asserts Role in Antarctic”, NYT 10 June 1950, 2:2. Douglas (UK) to SS, 19/06/50, 702.00/6-1950: Telegram, FRUS 1950, I: 914. Carlos C. Hall (Councillor in Stgo.) to State Dept., 10 January 1951. “Recent developments in connection with the Antarctic, 702.0222/1-1051.

Declassified 5 May 2000. NARA. “*Un diario ruso se ocupa de nuevo de cuestión antártica*”, LE, 20 July 1950: 11. “*En breve Chile dará respuesta a las pretensiones sobre la Antártica*”, LE, 22 August 1950: 3. “*Fue postergada la nota sobre la Antártica*”, LE, 29 August 1950: 3. “*Argentina rechazó la nota rusa sobre la Antártica*”, LE, 30 August 1950:1. Hulley, Memo, 7 September 1950, 702.022/9-1250, FRUS 1950, I: 917, quote 4. “*En días más será dada a conocer la declaración de nuestro gobierno*”, LE, 30 August 1950: 3. Declaration by the Government of Chile, 11 September 1951. Enclosure No.1: 1 Santiago 657 702.022/1-1501

²⁵ Foreign Office, Minutes, 24 February 1951, A 15216/1, FO 371/90448. “*Sus impresiones sobre la Antártica contó el ex jefe de base Soberanía*”, LE, 20 February 1950: 3. “Chile to build Antarctic base”, NYT, 5 September 1950, 14:4. “*La semana próxima terminarán la base aérea antártica*”, LE, 3 February 1951: 8. “*Se prepara para volver la expedición antártica*”, LU, 14 March 1951: 2

²⁶ Presented by *John Biscoe*, Commander of the English ship. Bianchi to Minister of Foreign Affairs. Munita had been maritime governor of Magallanes and had ample experience in southern seas. “*Expedición chilena a la Antártida*”, confidential No. 562/26, 2 March 1951, Dip. Dept., MINRE. “*Protestará Inglaterra si Chile ha establecido nueva base en la Antártica*”, LU, 1 March 1951: 5. “*Protesta contra Chile prepara Gran Bretaña*”, LE, 6 March 1951: 3

Indeed, Chile jointly rejected both the British protest as well as the proposal to take the case to the International Court of Justice, since in the view of the Government it was a case of “activities carried out in our territory and this would imply subjecting national sovereignty to the judgement of third parties”²⁷. Argentina, that had built two bases, one called General San Martín and inaugurated by Coronel Hernán Pujato, also rejected the respective British note, expressing the trans-Andean nation “did not require permission nor authorisation by any country to establish new bases”²⁸.

iii) Preamble on Esperanza island, February 1952

The controversy about the establishment or re-establishment of two bases on the Antarctic Peninsula complicated relations with Great Britain for the entire decade. This being the situation, in the first days of February 1952 there was an incident when a group of ten British scientists—who had come to establish a base in Esperanza bay—were repelled “with machine gun fire” by Argentine soldiers²⁹.

Inexplicably, the trans-Andean government immediately presented their excuses, saying their commander had misinterpreted the orders received³⁰. With regard to this incident two different positions were taken in Great Britain: British diplomats in Buenos Aires played down the relevance of the incident, saying the Argentines had already apologised for the incident, that they were a “little emotional and hot-headed”, and that therefore it

²⁷ Seemingly, Chile had also presented a protest to the British and three Argentine ships crossing their way. Bianchi to Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 24, 7 February 1951, Dip. Dept., MINRE. “British protest Chilean base”, NYT, 4 April 1951, 15:3. “Protesta de Gran Bretaña será rechazada por Chile”, LE, 4 April 1951: 1. “Se redactó la respuesta de Chile a Gran Bretaña sobre la Antártica”, LU, 9 April 1951: 3. “Gran Bretaña protestó ante Chile y Argentina”, LE, 18 April 1951: 20. “Britain protests on Antarctic”, NYT, 10 May 1951, 15:5. “Cancillería hizo declaraciones sobre Antártica”, LU, 18 May 1951: 1

²⁸ “Nueva base argentina se instaló en la Antártica”, LE, 31 March 1951: s/p. “Argentines at new base,” NYT, 1 April 1951, 9:1. “Argentina rechazará también la nota inglesa sobre la Antártica”, LE, 29 May 1951: 11. “Argentina rechazó protesta británica”, LU, 8 June 1951: 5. “Se incendió una base argentina en la Antártica”, LU, 9 August 1951: 1. “El quinto viaje de auxilio a base antártica argentina realizaron los chilenos”, LU, 6 September 1951: 3

²⁹ Later on they said they attacked with tommy guns, rifles, revolvers, and machine guns. “British hold Hope Bay,” NYT, 6 February 1952, 9:2

³⁰ Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Mack (Foreign Office), 2 February 1952, No. 28, A 15211/1, FO 371/97375. “Argentinos ametrallaron a británicos que intentaron desembarcar en la Antártica”, LU, 3 February 1952: 1

was only a matter of signing a supplementary agreement on disarmament to the tripartite agreement³¹.

The Colonial Office and the Governor of the Falkland Islands (*Las Malvinas*), Sir Miles Clifford on the other hand, adopted a very different stance. In their view this event was “part of a deliberate policy” to recover the islands³². The British Governor decided to go to Esperanza bay on board the Burghead Bay frigate, to reestablish the British base and thereby “restore morale”, saying that the Royal Navy ship regularly visited the Antarctic facilities³³. In the meantime, Argentina announced sending their Bahía Aguirre transport ship and two hydroplanes to increase their Antarctic task force; and also the construction of an observatory in Esperanza³⁴.

The Argentine attitude continued defiant. The following month—at an event to pay tribute to Pujato—President Juan Domingo Perón reiterated that Argentina and Chile were “the only countries with legal rights to the Antarctic, and urged making a “gradual and peaceful occupation of the Argentine sector”. The President emphatically indicated “rights should not be discussed but defended” and said there was neither “hurry nor vacillation”, outlining what would be known as the “progressive occupation” of the Antarctic³⁵. Towards the end of 1952 Argentina sent a “new air task force” fully equipped for polar climates, in this way contributing and supporting the new expedition by Pujato³⁶.

³¹ Benett (Colonial Office) to Cecil (Foreign Office), 5 February 1952, A 15211/18, FO 371/97375. Allen (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Anthony Eden, 13 February 1952, A 15211/23, FO 371/97375

³² Allen (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Cecil (Foreign Office), 3 February 1952, A 15211/17, FO 371/97375. “Argentine fire rounds British in Antarctica”, NYT, 3 February 1952, 1: 4

³³ According to *La Estrella* they did not go Esperanza but an Antarctic island. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 4 February 1952, no. 33, A 15211/6, FO 371/97375. “*Gran Bretaña protestó oficialmente ante Argentina por el incidente ocurrido en la región antártica*”, LU, 5 February 1952: 11. “British warship sent to Hope Bay”, NYT, 5 February 1952, 16:2. Burghead Bay to Admiralty, 5 February 1952, A 15211/21, FO 371/97375. “*Cientistas ingleses desembarcan al amparo de los cañones en las Falklands*”, LE, 19 February 1952: 1. Harrison (Colonial Office) to Cecil (Foreign Office), 19 March 1952, A 15211/30, FO 371/97375

³⁴ “Argentines on island”, NYT, 9 February 1952, 4:3. “Argentina adds to force”, NYT, 13 February 1952, 15:7. “Argentina sets up polar base”, NYT, 5 April 1952, 4:8

³⁵ “Peron asks for help on Falklands claim”, NYT, 2 May 1951, 21:8. “*El Gral. Perón hizo declaraciones sobre la Antártica*”, LU, 23 May 1952: 1. Bianchi (London) to Minister of Foreign Affairs, “*El Presidente Perón y la Antártida*”, Ordinary N 1157/277, 26 May 1952, Dip.Dept., MINRE

³⁶ The squadron comprised a Douglas C47 T49 that, under the advice of Byrd, had “rockets to support take-off and 18-hours flight autonomy”, a four-engine Avro Lincoln Cruz del Sur with a range of 4,000 nautical miles, and a four-engine Lancastrian T66. “*Expedición aérea argentina a la región antártica*”, LU, 28 November 1951: 5

All this may have gradually passed and been forgotten; but this was not to be, since Argentine rhetoric ensured it was kept current and alive. In fact, a few months later the President of the Argentine Republic, accompanied by this Marine Minister, publicly congratulated the Argentine commander responsible of the incident for his “energetic defence of national sovereignty”, in this way provoking the understandable and barely dissimulated annoyance of the British attending the function³⁷. It is possible that this attitude served even to fan de events of the following year and that would involve Chile.

There is no evidence that Argentina may have previously communicated Chile of what they would do on Esperanza island. Therefore the Chilean attitude towards the incident was to keep prudently silent, maintain naval presence in the area, and await the unfolding of events. In this way, instead of returning to Punta Arenas as planned, the Antarctic flotilla conducted hydrographic and meteorological studies in various Antarctic bays and straights throughout the month of February 1952³⁸.

iv) Incident in Deception island, February 1953

It was not easy for the government of Carlos Ibáñez –far less for his successive chancellors– to understand the intricate labyrinths of British Antarctic policy. Said policy –or rather, set of policies– came from various levels of decision-makers that normally determined various simultaneous behaviours.

There was an “imperial” policy devised in London that postulated taking the Antarctic matter to the International Court of Justice, despite firm refusals by Argentina and Chile to bring matters proper to their national sovereignty before international jurisdiction³⁹. The second came from the Falkland Islands (*Islas Malvinas*) dependencies and was implemented by the Governor, and that many times contradicted the view of the Admiralty. A third policy was devised by British Embassies in Buenos Aires and Santiago, that normally simulated “defending” the government before which they were accredited⁴⁰. They did not

³⁷ The previous year Perón had said he was prepared to use force to defend the Argentine Antarctic claim. “Peron threatens force,” NYT, 14 February 1951, 7:5. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Eden (Foreign Secretary), 3 and 13 May 1952, no. 95, A 15211/31, FO 371/97375. Y A 15211/32, FO 371/97375

³⁸ “La flotilla naval antártica relevó al personal de la base de aviación”, LE, 11 February 1952: 5. “Violento huracán azota a la flotilla antártica”, LE, 28 February 1952: 3. “Todo marzo continuará la flotilla en la Antártica”, LE, 5 March 1952: 1

³⁹ ICJ jurisdiction is not obligatory and requires the will of the parties. Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Bravo (Chilean chancellor), 16 February 1953, no. 6, 1521/43/53, FO 371/103354

⁴⁰ British ambassador in Santiago was Charles Norman Sterling, in Buenos Aires Sir Henry Mack; and De la Cruz Guerrero was the Argentine ambassador to Chile

always all coincide, nor were they casual, as the result of a supposed autonomy: all served both to confuse opponents and also to implement the best decision following the convenience of the moment.

Even today it is difficult to determine which was the real origin of the incident in February 1953. It may be thought it was an escalation of tensions stemming from the Argentine attitude in Esperanza bay the year before, but may also be presumed with fundament that it was an incident destined to weaken Argentina by the United Kingdom. The British considered their “main enemies in the Antarctic” were the trans-Andeans and Juan Domingo Peron’s plan to form an “anti-imperial block”⁴¹. Be it as it may, the incident was neither fortuitous nor casual, as there are many British documents dated days before that spoke of the convenience of arresting also the Chileans, or waiting for the departure of the Chilean flotilla from the area⁴².

The incident occurred mid-February 1953, when the British Governor in the Falkland Islands (*Islas Malvinas*) proceeded to destroy Chilean and Argentine facilities in Deception island, arresting and deporting two Argentine citizens⁴³. Strangely, they “did not take any action against Chilean and Argentine warehouses” on the other side of the island⁴⁴. Furthermore, strikingly remarkable is that the incident occurred while the Argentine head of state was travelling to Chile on an official visit after more than 40 years when no Argentine president had come to this nation. It may well be thought then, that faced by the special close approach between the two Latin American nations, an Anglo-Saxon power was interested in provoking their distancing.

Details of the incident are unclear in the documentary sources analysed; all in all, they allow putting together that initially London endeavoured this new incident be dealt with

⁴¹ Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires), Minutes, 13 March 1953, A 15212/158A, FO 371/103356. Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 4 February 1953, A 15212/9, FO 371/103149. Allen (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 5 February 1953 A 15212/12, FO 371/103149

⁴² There are also documents with respect to British ships in the proximity, and that the Chilean ships should be beginning their return to Punta Arenas. Foreign Office to Emb. (Stgo), 7 February 1953, No. 21, FO 371/103149. Admiralty to CJA AWI, 9 February 1953, A 15212/24(D), 091756Z, FO 371/103149

⁴³ The base commander and a geologist were arrested. Foreign Office to embassy (Buenos Aires), 19 February 1953, No. 83, FO 371/103352. Foreign Office to Emb. (Buenos Aires), 20 February 1953, No. 87, FO 371/103352. “British dismantle disputed Argentine base in Antarctica after expelling 2 Peron men”, NYT 20 February 1953, 6:4

⁴⁴ “*Gran Bretaña firme en la Antártica*”, LE, 19 March 1953:1

discreetly and there be no official statements⁴⁵. This attitude presumably was to better negotiate with more political freedom, and that public opinion in the three nations involved may not read too much relevance into the incident.

However, the news was leaked to the media and everything appears to indicate the State Department was aware of British intentions –or at least what was planned in the Dependencies– and the latter had informed the governments of the implicated Latin American countries. Otherwise the words expressed in London with regard to a “flagrant crime” and the need to remind Washington of the importance of “mutual trust” could not be interpreted⁴⁶. Incidentally, the Eisenhower administration –recently in office– did not initially intervene nor offered their good offices; although they would almost a month later, through the US ambassador to Chile, Claude Bowers.⁴⁷

Furthermore, at some point the British Admiralty was concerned both on account of possible Latin American reprisals as well as the possible capture, surrender, and even sinking of the Snipe frigate in high seas, British Navy warship sent as back-up for the forces put ashore on Deception island. Should any of these possibilities occur, it was definitely a *casus bello*, and hence the Snipe was ordered to keep close to the coast of Deception island. The British position was considered “not really very strong” and that the Latin American countries may “bring more ships”⁴⁸.

So, while the Foreign Office preferred British Forces remain on the island until hearing the statements by Chile and Argentina, the Admiralty preferred to withdraw. Finally, the British government resolved to embark British troops deployed on land, leaving 12 marines on board the John Biscoe, ready to disembark⁴⁹. While carrying out these provisions, London made sure to –on 17 March– warmly congratulate HMS Snipe personnel for doing “an excellent job under very adverse conditions”⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 20 February 1953, No. 31, A 15212/82, FO 371/103352

⁴⁶ Admiralty to commander in chief AWI, 18 February 1953. 181339Z, A15212/79, FO 371/103352. Makins (Washington) to Foreign Office, 21 February 1953, No. 367, A 15212/94, FO 371/103353

⁴⁷ “*Memorandum: audiencia concedida por el Min. Óscar Fenner a Emb. Claude Bowers, Antártica; Incidente en Decepción*”, 9 April 1953, Strictly confidential Memorandum, 44 Dep. Limits, Antarctic, Conversations with USA, 1950-1954., MINRE

⁴⁸ Garvey (Foreign Office) and Adm. Brock, Record of Meeting, 2 February 1953, A 15121/8, FO 371/103149. Barclay (Foreign Office), “*Memorandum sobre isla Decepción*”, 17 February 1953, A 15212/130, FO 371/103354

⁴⁹ Barclay (Foreign Office), Minutes, 21 February 1953, A 15212/111, FO 371/103354. Garvey (Foreign Office), Memorandum about Deception island, 25 February 1953, [A 15212/134], FO 371/103355

⁵⁰ Eden (Foreign secretary) to First Lord of the Admiralty, 17 February 1953, FO 371/103352

Great Britain played down the relevance of apologising for their destructive behaviour in Deception island and only mentioned the modest Argentine and Chilean facilities “hindered” the landing strip that had existed on the island since 1928. Now, based on a perfunctory analysis of the real options available to the Latin American countries for addressing this incident it would be necessary to conclude that –sincerely– these were not many nor were they highly effective. If the incident were taken before the Organisation of American States, this would have caused the evident annoyance of the United States, and invoking the Inter American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) against Great Britain was also useless⁵¹. Additionally, neither requesting the reconstruction of the facilities nor threatening reprisals augured good outcomes.

One thing that British and North Americans took for sure was that, being both Latin American heads of state together in Santiago, they would make an energetic joint statement. Strangely, this did not happen⁵². The fear was, additionally, that both presidents might form a common front, create a democratic confederation, or revitalise the old ABC compact –that included Brazil– opposing the existence of colonies in the American Antarctic⁵³. None of these apprehensions came about.

Finally, on 21 February 1953, Argentina and Chile made their statements separately, without mutually mentioning the other. Chile reiterated their sovereignty in the area and demanded the replacement of their destroyed facilities, pointing out –curiously enough– that “at the initiative of the British” they had agreed on a “commitment to be reserved” with regard to the facts, but that the British government had “given the incident publicity”⁵⁴.

London never made explicit its interest in keeping what had occurred confidential, nor did London explain why they broke their commitment to keep quiet about the incident. British diplomats accredited in Buenos Aires stated it was necessary to avoid “committing the mistake of apologising” in the case of Chile, but that unfortunately London “obliged by the circumstances had to make it public”⁵⁵. For their part, a British diplomat in Santiago recognised the Chilean statement as “fairly moderate under the circumstances”, and

⁵¹ Sterling (Emb. Santiago) to Foreign Office, 20 February 1953, No. 31, A 15212/82, FO 371/103352

⁵² “*Cancilleres de Chile y la Argentina harán declaración conjunta sobre isla Decepción*”; LE, 20 February 1953:3. “Argentina angry at British ouster,” NYT, 21 February 1953, 4:6

⁵³ “*Chile protesta por nota británica que desconoce la soberanía chilena*”, LU, 21 February 1953: 1

⁵⁴ Chancellor Olavarría, aerogram No. 44, 22 February 1953. “*Chile protesta por nota británica que desconoce la soberanía chilena*”, LU 21 February 1953: 1

⁵⁵ Mack, “*Minuta del Foreign Office*”, 13 March 1953, A 15212/158, FO 371/103356

that possibly mention of the OAS was merely a “useful safety valve” to tranquilise public opinion⁵⁶.

Additionally, on 21 February Argentina filed a protest on account of “unprovoked British aggression” demanding the freedom of the detainees, restoration of the scientific facilities, and threatening to resort to TIAR⁵⁷. Nevertheless, President Perón refused to comment on the incident and, in practice, preferred to use the media and public opinion against the British⁵⁸.

It should be noted that days before the mentioned official declarations, secret conversations were held among the Anglo–Saxons. In Santiago, US ambassador Claude Bowers commented to his British colleague that he favoured a direct negotiation and that, especially, it was necessary to avoid resorting to the OAS. Despite this, the British on the quiet began encouraging Latin Americans to attend said inter American agency so that Washington should face such “Latin American hatefulness”⁵⁹, and in passing recognised that albeit the “British reprisal” had been fortuitous, “it could not have been better”⁶⁰.

The British response to statements by the Latin American chancellors did not take long in coming, since the intention was to begin negotiations with Chile. However, Chancellor Olavarría took –as was his custom– his time, and so the British simply replied that they did not accept the demand to rebuild the facilities in Deception island⁶¹. This gave rise to mutual recriminations in the media and respective public opinions. Prime Minister Eden had to give explanations before a heated Chamber of Commons saying the facilities had always been “a bother and an obstruction”, and that their dismantling “dissipated any doubt about the way to proceed before encroachments into British territory”⁶².

⁵⁶ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 21 February 1953, No. 33, A 15212/87, FO 371/103352 and No. 36, A 15212/90, FO 371/103353

⁵⁷ The Argentine protest was extensive, comprised of 11 points, and spoke of violation of the tripartite Agreement. Grl. Sosa Molina, Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) Mack to Foreign Office, 20 February 1953, No. 85, A 15212/86, FO 371/103352

⁵⁸ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 23 February 1953 No. 41, A 15212/101, FO 371/103353. Lockhart (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Jackson (Foreign Office, American Department), 21 March 1953, 1521/145/53, A 15212/192, FO 371/103157

⁵⁹ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Barclay, 19 March 1953, A 15212/190, 1521/145/53, FO 371/103357

⁶⁰ Lockhart (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Jackson (Foreign Office, American Dept.), 21 March 1953, 1521/145/53, A 15212/192, FO 371/103157

⁶¹ “*Gran Bretaña firme en la Antártica*”, LE, 19 March 1953:1

⁶² *Foreign Office* to Emb. Buenos Aires, 23 February 1953, No. 93, [A 15212/97], FO 371/103353. “*Eden hizo declaración sobre isla Decepción*”, LE, 23 February 1953:1. “British offer rejected”, NYT,

On 23 February the Argentine chancellor spoke to his Chilean counterpart to agree on joint action and ask for intervention by the OAS Council; or, a meeting with American chancellors. Olavarría said he would study the proposal, but took time in reaching a decision⁶³. Seemingly, President Perón was about to take reprisals, but the Argentine Navy was opposed. All in all, the Argentine Air Force had made flights over Deception, Melchior, and Dundee islands since 26 February, insinuating they would conduct a retaliatory raid on 14 March⁶⁴. Although by early March the weather was already fast getting worse, British command continued analysing the situation, especially the condition of their ships, aircraft, and supplies; and their anticipated deployment in the proximities of Deception island would constitute a violation of the tripartite agreement⁶⁵.

Various relevant elements can be gained from the reviewed documentation. The first is that for the British, the Argentines were the real enemy. Second, the aim of British foreign policy was to break the Chilean–Argentine block, since they were convinced that if they kept to the Vergara-La Rosa agreement “there would be no real chance of dividing the Southern Cone”⁶⁶. A third element was that both Argentines and Chileans were difficult negotiators, albeit on account of different causes.

Indeed, same as happened with the Soviets, the British government found it “always difficult to discern what was in the mind” of the Argentines, since they remained cordial, “effusive”, and friendly, despite announcing reprisals, resorting to the OAS, or violating the tripartite agreement⁶⁷. With regard to the parsimonious attitude to resolve of the Chilean

24 February 1953, 3:6. “Britain will reject Falklands protests”, NYT, 22 February 1953, 18:3. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) 20 February 1953, No. 84, A 15212/85, FO 371/103352

⁶³ “Argentina defenderá sus derechos en la Antártica, dice su canciller”, LU, 23 February 1953: 6

⁶⁴ “Escuadrón aéreo argentino sobrevoló isla Decepción”, LE, 26 February 1953: 12. “Argentina presses claim”, NYT, 27 February 1953, 3:1. Sterling (Emb.Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 28 February 1953, No. 46, A 15212/127, FO 371/103354. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 26 March 1953, No. 6, A 15212/177, FO 371/103356

⁶⁵ Mack, (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 2 March 1953, No. 94, A 15212/129, FO 371/103354. Falkland Islands (OAG) to Secretary for the Colonies, 23 March 1953, No. 45, A 15212/160(A), FO 371/103356. Alexander (British Minister of Defense) to Prime Minister, 2 March 1953, A 15212/146, FO 371/103355. CJA AWI to Admiralty, 6 March 1953, 051727Z, A15212/155g, FO 371/103355

⁶⁶ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 25 March 1953, No. 58, A 15212/174, FO 371/103356. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 26 March 1953, No. 132, A 15212/179, FO 371/103356

⁶⁷ Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Barclay (Deputy Sec.), 6 March 1953, 1521/118/53, A 15212/16, FO 371/103356. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Eden (Foreign Sec.), 25 March 1953, A 15212/193, FO 371/103157

Chancellor Olavarría, the British attributed this to his excessive mindfulness of the law, a tendency to “avoid difficulties”, and intending to always find legal remedies⁶⁸. The available documentation does not permit learning of what Olavarría negotiated, except that he waited in vain for a British concession to placate Congress and public opinion that had already started using this incident against the Chilean government⁶⁹. Additionally, it appears the chancellor adopted an “intransigent” position and evidently “knew little” since he gave publicity to the Chilean note after the Argentines had already given way and “fire was falling over Buenos Aires”⁷⁰.

Another relevant element to consider is the late US intervention, which began in late March 1953 with a meeting between Ambassador Bowers and Chancellor Olavarría, who—apparently for remaining steadfast in his position with regard to resorting to the OAS—was replaced by Óscar Fenner Marín⁷¹. Ambassador Bowers returned to the chancellery on 9 April for an interview with the new chancellor, and to inform that the United States was “very concerned at the possibility of intervention by the Organisation of American States”. This on account of possible utilisation that may be made by other countries, “complicating any possible agreement”, and also the “strain” that might ensue with Western Europe. He also said the Foreign Office had let the State Department know that it now found the Chilean proposal “susceptible of being accepted and considered”.

Fenner replied itemising the steps to be followed prior to desisting from resorting to the OAS: Chile required a statement by the Foreign Office “retracting facts to the status” that existed prior to the incident, and then Chile—via direct negotiation with London—would resolve the matter; and in case such requirements were met, “there would be no need to resort to the OAS”. Bowers would have assured the British government was to accept the procedure suggested by Chile, that they would not oppose replacing the dismantled Chilean shelter, nor the “setting-up of new bases in the Antarctic”⁷².

⁶⁸ Confidential 1521/67/53, A 15212/114, FO 371/103354. Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Eden (Foreign Secretary), 19 and 20 February 1953, No. 33. Sterling (Emb. Santiago) to Foreign Office, 20 and 21 February 1953, No. 31, A 15212/82, FO 371/103352 and No. 37, A 15212/91, FO 371/103353

⁶⁹ Falklands Dept. (OAG) to Secretary of the Colonies, 23 March 1953, No. 45, A 15212/160(A), FO 371/103356

⁷⁰ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 25 March 1953, No. 58, A 15212/174, FO 371/103356. Mack (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 26 March 1953, No. 132, A 15212/179, FO 371/103356. Foreign Office to Sterling (Emb. Stgo.), 31 March 1953, No. 61, [A 15212/195], FO 371/103158

⁷¹ Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 31 March 1953 No. 63, A 15212/198, FO 371/103158. Sterling (Emb. Stgo.) to Foreign Office, 2 April 1953, A 15212/203, FO 371/103158

⁷² Interview conceded by Min. O Fenner to Bowers, “*Antártica: Incidente en Decepción*”, 9 April 1953,

II. Phases of National Antarctic Policy, 1949-1959

Although it is well known that any phasing is an artificial and arbitrary exercise when dealing with historical events, it is worth attempting to divide this decade into phases or stages as this allows a better characterization and appreciating more accurately when and why elements of change were introduced. Without defining or characterising the latter —which caused true changes to Chilean Antarctic policy— it should be noted that all have in common increasing aspirations by some foreign nations such as India, USSR, and Anglo-Saxon countries, to participate in the white continent, particularly the Antarctic Peninsula. In this way it is possible to distinguish four different phases or periods in the years covered by this study:

The first spans from late 1949 to 1953, when Chilean national Antarctic policy lost dynamism, became more sluggish, and may be described as idling. During this period expeditions became more routine and this coincides with the distancing from power of President Gabriel González Videla, a great driver of national Antarctic activity. The lack of appropriate ships and technology delayed and made more difficult any Chilean penetration into the continent. All in all, the first Chilean air base was established in 1951.

A second stage goes from the southern summer of 1953 to July 1955, characterised by an increasing dispute between Great Britain, Argentina, and Chile over the Antarctic Peninsula. Tensions peaked in February 1953 with the dismantling of the modest facilities that Chile had built on Deception island, “because they obstructed the existing airstrip”⁷³.

This incident continued for quite a long time, assisted by several different factors such as weak management by the Chilean chancellery, the ambiguous US stance, and the remarkable and traditional British skill in creating and encouraging susceptibilities and disagreements between the *Casa Rosada* and *La Moneda*⁷⁴. To this must be added the constant criticism by national public opinion of President Ibáñez for his “lack of a firm and clear attitude in defending our territorial integrity”; and, with some reason, that Ibanez’s Antarctic

Strictly Confidential Memorandum, 44 Dept. of Limits, Antarctic, Conversations with USA, 1950-1954. MINRE

⁷³ Allen (Emb. Buenos Aires) to Foreign Office, 5 February 1953, A 15212/12, FO 371/103149, Confidential Memorandum, 18 December 1953. MINRE. Foreign Office, Minutes (Ridsdale), 19 February 1953, A 15212/96, FO 371/103353

⁷⁴ “British dismantle disputed Argentine base in Antarctica after expelling 2 Peron men,” NYT, 20 February 1953, 6:4. “Chile protesta por nota británica que desconoce la soberanía chilena”, LU, 21 febrero 1953: 1. Sterling (Emb. Santiago) to Foreign Office, 21 February 1953, No. 33, A 15212/87, FO 371/103352

policy was “weak and quick-to-concede”, although this was ultimately a consequence of the difficult economic and social conditions at the time⁷⁵.

During the Inter American conference held in Caracas in 1954, US State Secretary John Foster Dulles understood the need to address the Antarctic issue with a different strategy, one that divested the United States from appearing to openly favour their Anglo-Saxon ally, placing the entire Hemisphere against them⁷⁶. Therefore, in that same year 1954 began to discreetly assess the Antarctic situation, proposing a series of courses for action to obtain control of the frozen continent.

The agency recommended that knowing so little about the Antarctic resources, scientific activities should be used as a tool to learn about the real value of the region, and also mentioned the need to “progress in an orderly fashion towards a solution to the territorial issue in the Antarctic that ensured maintaining control by the United States and friendly powers”⁷⁷. The report was sent and analysed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and subsequently approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) with a single difference: highlighting far more the importance of the Antarctic Peninsula, where British interests opposed those of Chile and Argentina⁷⁸.

The third phase in Antarctic policy starts mid-1955 and extends up to late 1957. This period is of unprecedented activity, due to Chile’s commitment to taking part in the pseudo-scientific event called International Geophysical Year. It should be noted that this really international political confrontation –with the appearance of being scientific– ended being totally instrumentalised, and consequently all countries with Antarctic interests, including Chile, had to modify and readapt both their policies as well as their activities in the region.

In fact, although initially it was proclaimed that the International Geophysical Year would only be the continuation of the old Polar years, the superpowers turned this supposedly scientific event into a political and mediatic contest of international prestige and demon-

⁷⁵ Cf. Deputies Espina and Raúl Morales Adriazola, 12th session, Chamber of Deputies, 18 April 1956: 569

⁷⁶ Important concepts for the Hemisphere and Antarctic space were also discussed: “decolonisation”, “intervention”, and “intervention of extra-hemispheric countries”. The Caracas conference was the last to be held at hemispheric level, since the meeting in Quito was “postponed” and later there were only meetings of chancellors. “Editorial comment: Intervention at the Caracas conference”, *American Journal of International Law* 48 No. 3 (July 1954): 451-453

⁷⁷ NSC, “Antarctica” (NSC 5424), 28 June 1954. NSC Series, box 6. Ann Whitman file, Eisenhower Papers, 1953-1961. Eisenhower Archive, Abilene, KA

⁷⁸ James S. Lay, “*Memorandum para NSC*, “Antarctica (NSC 5424), 13 July 1954, Office of the Deputy Secretary NSC Affairs, Policy Papers Subseries, NSC Series, White House Papers. NARA

stration of military power, seeking to impress their rivals –current and future– with their capacity for logistic deployment and their experience in extreme environments⁷⁹.

The accelerated dynamism experienced by national Antarctic policy during this stage was imposed by the imperious need to react appropriately to the many and varied foreign Antarctic initiatives that were –on good grounds– feared may territorially and internationally damage the position and status of Chile in the white continent, and particularly the Antarctic Peninsula.

Such acceleration had an amplified repercussion on the Armed Forces that, as State agencies, had to materialise the policies determined by the government in this respect. To give an example, the Army was not to play only a secondary role in terms of logistic support. On the contrary, in the absence of other national institutions with the experience and capacity to carry this out with reasonable chances of success, had to take on organising Chile’s participation in the International Geophysical Year.

As to the purely political aspects involved, mid-April 1956 a new national Antarctic plan was devised and adopted, and which took into consideration the demands of the IGY and also included several related or connected matters. An appropriate budget for this activity was considered and created, albeit in practice was merely an expression of good wishes. Also proposed was passing an administrative Statute incorporating the Antarctic to the political and administrative division of the country; creation of an Antarctic section at the Chancellery; and a specialised thematic hall in the National Museum. Additionally, in purely international matters, the convenience of continuing with the united Chilean-Argentine front was reiterated; and –naively– summoning US support within the American security area⁸⁰.

The fourth phase spanned the period from 1958 to the end of 1959, when Chilean activity in the field declined after the fire at the national scientific base Luis Risopatrón and which could not be rebuilt. Almost at the same time, there was an increase in the level of activity at diplomatic level. This was the consequence of activity by the Anglo-Saxon powers that decided to change their strategy. After agreeing on the creation and establishment of an “international authority to demilitarise the Antarctic and promote cooperation among interested countries”, Washington and London ostensibly reduced their scientific activities

⁷⁹ Anelio Aguayo Lobo, “El Año Geofísico Internacional y su importancia para el desarrollo de la ciencia antártica chilena” in Mauricio Jara et alles, *El Año Geofísico Internacional en la perspectiva histórica chilena, 1954-1958* (Valparaíso: Ed. Punta Ángeles, 2012): 31. Cf. Dr. Roberts (London), “Nota confidencial”, 15 July 1955. AGI. NARA

⁸⁰ “Plan de Política Antártica del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores: Aprobado en Consejo de Gabinete de 17 abril de 1956.” MINRE

on the ground. The United States even transferred part of their Antarctic bases to their partners and allies, among these Argentina⁸¹.

Following the new plan, the White House invited the eleven nations with greatest Antarctic backgrounds –and that had taken part in the IGY– to meet in Washington to prepare the negotiation of a treaty on the frozen continent. This agreement would establish fundamental guidelines that no country should renounce their territorial claims, and that the Antarctic would be solely used for scientific and peaceful purposes. What was not said was that the future conference in Washington was only convened to ratify what had before –in total reserve and secrecy– being agreed between the Anglo-Saxon powers. All of this while still fanning the fear of what may occur in the Antarctic by the Soviet Union⁸².

III. In Conclusion

In the midst of widespread ignorance about the history of the white continent in the 1950s, there are four constant elements that marked the unfolding of Chilean Antarctic policy. The influence of the Cold War and Anglo-Saxon intromission in the Antarctic Peninsula, the conception of Chile as a maritime and Antarctic country, the capacity of the Armed Forces to address polar challenges, and constant pursuit of an alliance with Argentina in Antarctic matters, all constitute an analytical basis for understanding the transformation –and apparent decline– in Chilean behaviour in the sixth continent.

With regard to the influence of the Cold War on the Antarctic path during the 1950s it should be pointed out that –contrary to other cases– the direct Soviet factor –at least in the Antarctic Peninsula– was minor. Rather, this possible threat was instrumentalised –mainly by the United States– as a way to maintain cohesion in the Western Hemisphere,

⁸¹ USA retained only 4 bases. American Department, *Record de discusiones entre los primeros ministros británico McMillan y neozelandés Nash*, 23 January 1958, A 15214/82, FO 371/131907. Walter Sullivan, “U.S. plans to stay in the Antarctic”, NYT, 24 January 1958, 8:2. “Help in Antarctic requested by U.S.,” NYT, 30 April 1958, 7:1. Richard E. Mooney, “President bids 11 nations to join in Antarctic Treaty to assure peaceful use”, NYT, 4 May 1958, 1:8

⁸² Embassy in Santiago (Chancellery) to American Department, 15 October 1958, A 1524/11, FO 371/131898. Miguel Serrano (Washington) to Chancellor (Chile). *“Posición soviética en sesiones del comité de trabajo para conferencia antártica”*, aerogram No. 390-21, United States, 1 August 1958, MINRE. Enrique Gajardo (Washington) to Chancellor. *“Informe semanal sobre las sesiones del comité de trabajo para conferencia antártica”*, strictly confidential No. 12, United States, 8 August 1958, Fondo. Antártico, *Preparaciones chilenas para la conferencia antártica*, 1958, vol. 87, MINRE. *“Celebrarán ratificación de derechos de Chile sobre zona antártica”*, LU, 2 November 1958: 2. Endre Marton, *“Conferencia para “congelar” las reclamaciones sobre la Antártida”*, LE, 7 November 1958: 3

and the subordination of Chile and Argentina in Antarctic matters. At the same time, the bipolar world atmosphere allowed consolidating Washington intromission in the white continent, establishing a sphere of influence that, together with the areas intended by Great Britain, ensured control of a large part of the region.

While the Anglo-Saxon Powers strengthened their presence in the Antarctic –without the antecedents for doing so– Chile maintained its image as a maritime and Antarctic country. This perspective was based on the southern-Antarctic nature of the territory, constantly vitalised by the maritime factor. Although this understanding of an American-Antarctic Chile joined by Drake’s Passage had been already indicated in the Decree of 1940, it underwent a major onslaught after subscribing the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. National diplomats apparently did not perceive this situation, and far less were intent on explaining it, since they were more interested for the legal structure they had just created may endure over time⁸³.

As to the third element of continuity in Chilean Antarctic behaviour during the 1950s, a significant contribution was made by the Armed Forces. This is particularly valuable considering the training, instruction, and equipment of Chilean armed institutions were not appropriate for the challenging reality of the frozen continent. Despite this, the limited scientific activity carried out by the Armed Forces in the Antarctic made a fundamental contribution to the research done by the few Chilean scientists in the region. Although this scientific output was not outstanding, it is fair to say the contribution by the Armed Forces collaborated in achieving the agendas of the International Geophysical Year. This enabled Chile to sit at the negotiating table in Washington.

With regard to relations with Argentina, there was a certain chance of establishing an alliance in Antarctic topics. The *Casa Rosada* maintained a hard line with Great Britain as well as the United States, and having common “enemies” may have led Chile and Argentina to act jointly, as for example in 1948, 1953, or 1958. Nevertheless, Chile was unable to clearly understand the game of Anglo–Saxon powers, or that Argentina would not be that sturdy partner, stable and consequent as required by the moment and circumstances in the Antarctic path, as demonstrated with the incidents in Deception island in 1953⁸⁴.

⁸³ Cf. Consuelo León Wöppke, “The formation and context of the Chilean Antarctic mentality from the colonial era through the IGY”, in Shandian, Jessica M. and Monica Tenneberg, *Legacies and change in Polar Sciences: Historical, legal and political reflections on the International Polar Year* (Norway & Finland, 2009): 145- 163

⁸⁴ “Chile to build Antarctic base,” 5 September 1950, NYT 14:4. “Chile sets up 3d Antarctic base,” NYT 14 March 1951, 13:1. “New Antarctic base Peron aim”, NYT 1 July 1953, 3:2. Mack (Emb. Buenos

Lastly, the instrumentalization of science to demonstrate political, military, and logistic power during the 1950s by the great powers, in addition to using the national media to have an impact on public opinion through those scientific and geographical achievements, had a negative impact on Antarctic awareness in Chile. Such was the aim of Washington, since they intended to establish that, in practice, titles, rights, permanent settlements, or the sacrifices of national Antarctic heroes were of no matter. Hereon, it would be the great nations that would create and impose Antarctic rules and customs on all other participants.

From then on it is possible to discern a clear spiritual distancing between Chile and the white continent. Those called upon to take charge of the negotiations in Washington were jurists and lawyers that –albeit they did everything possible to represent Chilean interests– had limited negotiating capacity and were totally unaware of the agreements negotiated upfront between the Anglo–Saxons. This, together with the lack of existing information in terms of public opinion –even among experts– contributed to great extent to a true drowsiness in national Antarctic awareness, a situation that would characterise the following decade.

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Con la inauguración de la Base Naval en Bahía Práttido, de la Isla Decepción, Chile completa cuatro bases en el territorio antártico en las que hombres del Ejército, Armada y Fuerza Aérea, cubren guardia custodiando al patrimonio nacional. En el grabado vemos en suape una la ubicación de las cuatro bases. La Isla Decepción, señalada con la flecha, es la última inaugurada.

Nº3. Chronicle of the *Memorial del Ejército* on the new Chilean Antarctic base in Deception island, 1955.



Nº4. Members of the Chilean Army had to carry out scientific tasks during the International Geophysical Year, 1957.

CHILEAN CONGRESSMEN AND THE ANTARCTIC TERRITRY, 1946-1961: from the reinforcement of the sovereignty to the suspension of the international controversy¹

Mauricio Jara Fernández

Pablo Mancilla González

Presentation and Sources

By the end of the 1940s of the 20th century and during the following decade, the Chilean government concluded the national reinforcement in the Antarctica (started in 1906) and participated in two important international political and scientific events: the International Geophysical Year and the Washington Conference with the Antarctic Treaty; however, when reviewing and studying the congressmen debates of those years, the last of these events seems to draw a slightly different interpretation to the one presented by the emerging Chilean Antarctic historiography of those years². Regarding this, it seems that the ones who approved the

¹ This article is a sub-product of the Fondecyt N° 1040187 project “English-speaking Powers and Chilean Antarctic Policy in 1956-1961: Scientific Continuity or Territorial Blur”, directed by Consuelo León Wöppke PhD in 2004-2006 and with the participation of Mauricio Jara as an Alternate Researcher and Pablo Mancilla as an Assistant Researcher.

² The publications belonging to an “emerging Chilean Antarctica historiography”, are mainly, written testimonies from diplomats participating in international meetings or other stories about performances

Antarctic agreement did it because it saved the Chilean rights, recognized the country as Antarctic, stopped the international controversies in this continent, and because through this, it was possible to expect a neighborhood stillness with Argentina.

Based on the minutes of the National Congress' sessions, the study expands from the political decision of president Gabriel González Videla in 1946 to organize an expedition to the Antarctica³ to carry out scientific studies *in situ*⁴ and settle a first base in the polar area or where the ex-president, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, had set in 1940 by supreme decree N° 1.747, until the approval that, in June 1961, done by the same Congress of the Antarctic agreement signed in Washington, December of 1959⁵.

accomplished in the name of the government abroad or in visits to the Antarctica on board of navy flotillas annually.

³ "Chilean Expedition to the Antarctica". *La Unión* (Valparaíso) November 24 of 1946, p. 4. (Example of the interest shown by president González for the Antarctica is that twenty days from assuming office, he ordered the Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministers to organize an expedition to the Chilean Antarctic Territory and get the required resources from the National Congress)

⁴ "Chilean Expedition to the Antarctica will depart by the end of January". *El Mercurio* (Santiago), December 20, 1946, p. 37.

⁵ The most certain chronology of the Chilean Antarctic history and in relation with this study, is made up of three well defined sequenced stages along the time: the first is the one named by Oscar Pinochet de la Barra as "the perfection of the title" which goes from the recognition of the Chilean Antarctic title by Argentina in 1906, followed by the creation of the first Chilean Antarctic Committee that same year, unsuccessful Chilean-Argentinian attempts to delimit the American Antarctica in 1907-1908, until the rescue of the British shipwrecks and partners of Ernest Shackleton by the steam tug *Yelcho* commanded by Second Pilot Luis Pardo Villalón from Elephant Island, Southern Shetland, on August 30 of 1916. The second stage: "from delimitation to the occupation", goes from 1938, with the Norwegian invitation to Chile to participate in the polar exhibition of Bergen, followed by the communication from this same country to La Moneda, in January of 1939, in relation to having delimited the Antarctica, the American insinuations so that the Chilean government took a prompt position for one of the areas in the Antarctica due to the potential Nazi threat and danger over the austral crossings and the Antarctic continent, the nomination of a special committee to study the eventual Chilean interest for the Antarctica, the promulgation of the Supreme Decree N°1.747 in November of 1940 that set the Chilean limits in the Antarctica until the foundation of the first headquarter in Greenwich island, in Southern Shetland, called "Soberanía", in February of 1947. The third stage, named "the consolidation of sovereignty to the suspension of the controversy", covers from November 1946 until June of 1961 and was characterized by the foundation of bases, annual Antarctic committees, diplomatic activities as a consequence of the overlapping of territorial intentions from England, Argentina and Chile, the beginning of science cooperation in the context of the International Geophysics Year in 1957-1958 and the international recognition of Chile as a signatory country in the Antarctic Agreement of 1959 and, whose approval was carried out by the Chilean National Congress a few days before the entry into force of the agreement at an international level: on June 23 of 1961.

By ordering and certifying the information of the legislative sessions from both chambers, the major connotation topics and persistent debates have been identified, together with the sub-terms or crucial moments of the studied period, as well as the main congressmen who participated in the discussion of the Antarctic policy of the presidents Gabriel González Videla, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo and Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez.

The two main outstanding topics of discussion among congressmen are the financial projects of the Antarctic committees and the political international and local matters. In the first, the annual navy flotillas highlight, the foundation of Antarctic bases, the rewards for the personnel of Antarctic crews, and the approval of the Antarctic Regulations in 1956, while for the second topic, the processing of the Antarctic Agreement signed in 1959 outstands and the inquiries and requirements from the congressmen to the Foreign Affairs and Defense ministers about the answers adopted by the government or the position it was planning to adopt in the future if the Trans-Andean activities and actions persisted in the Canal Beagle islands and its impact in the national Antarctic area. To a lesser extent, the funds allocated to the participation of Chile in the International Geophysics Year, the overlapping of the Antarctic territories of Chile, Argentina and Great Britain, the tripartite no belligerency agreement in the Antarctic seas and the British demand before La Haya International Court of Justice.

From the topics identified in the study, two sub-periods are deduced. The first, covering from the funds approval to travel to the Antarctica in 1946, the construction of bases (1947, 1948 y 1951) and the administrative integration of the Chilean Antarctic Territory to the internal government of the Chilean State in 1956. The processing and further approval of the Antarctic Agreement between 1958-1961 comprise the second sub-period.

Despite the fact that both sub-periods are independent and present their own legislative dynamics, in the analysis of each one they are permanently interweaving with the objectives of the annual navy flotillas, the bases crews and the administration and defense of the Chilean Antarctic territory. This close connection is reinforced when the congressmen express or criticize the government by sending records or when facing the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense, who are present in the room, for disagreement or dissatisfactions due to a weak answer to the Argentinian incursions in austral Chilean island territories and for the poor advertising management of the Chilean Antarctic sector in the national and international level, compared to the active and worrying international media campaign made by Argentina.

The senators with the most participation in the Antarctic policy debate are Eleodoro E. Guzmán Figueroa (typographer, radical party member and member of the budget mixed com-

mittee), Héctor Rodríguez de la Sotta (lawyer, conservative party member), Isauro Torres Cereceda (surgeon, radical party member, Foreign Affairs committee member), Exequiel González Madariaga (businessman and post office worker, radical party member, senator for Valdivia, Osorno, Llanquihue, Chiloé, Aysén and Magallanes), Marcial Mora Miranda (History and Geography teacher, lawyer, radical party member, ex ambassador), Ulises Correa Correa (farmer and civil servant, member of the radical party), Raúl Marín Balmaceda (lawyer, liberal party member), Aniceto Rodríguez Arenas (lawyer, socialist party member, senator for Valdivia, Osorno, Chiloé, Aysén and Magallanes) and Francisco Bulnes Sanfuentes (lawyer, united conservative party member, Foreign Affairs committee member).

In the House of Representatives, whereas, the Antarctic policy is supported and promoted by Alfonso Campos Menéndez (lawyer, liberal party member) Raúl Morales Adriasola (lawyer, radical party member), Pedro Espina Ritchie (rear admiral, liberal party member), Hugo Miranda Ramírez (lawyer, radical party member), Sergio Bustamante del Campo (engineer and farmer, labor farmer party member), Ignacio Palma Vicuña (civil engineer, national falange party member), Julio Sepúlveda Rondanelli (lawyer, radical party member), Abelardo Pizarro Herrera (agronomist, liberal party member), Rafael De la Presa Casanueva (business administrator, national democratic party member), Albino Barra Villalobos (furniture maker and social leader, socialist party member), Alejandro Chelén Rojas (worker and journalist, popular socialist party member), Salvador Correa Larraín (agronomist, conservative party member), Héctor Correa Letelier (lawyer, conservative party member), Nabor Cofré Palma (dogmatic radical party member), Javier Lira Merino (odontologist, agro-labor party member, member of the foreign affairs committee), Alfredo Hernández Barrientos (construction worker, party member, representative of the 26th Departmental Group of Magallanes, Última Esperanza del Fuego), Julio Durán Neumann (lawyer, radical party member) José Tomás Reyes Vicuña (architect, conservative party member and Christian democrat, he abstained from voting for the Antarctic Agreement), Raúl Hernán Brucher Encina (lawyer, radical party member, married to Mabel Irene Mac Farlane Chellew), Albino Barra Villalobos (furniture maker, socialist party member), Isidoro Muñoz Alegría (elementary school teacher, radical party member, national defense committee member), Manuel Rioseco Vásquez (surgeon, radical party member), Luis Valdés Larraín (lawyer, conservative party member, belonged to the foreign affairs committee), Raúl Irarrázaval Lecaros (lawyer, conservative party member, belonged to the foreign affairs committee), César Godoy Urrutia (normal-school teacher, socialist and communist party member) and Fernando Maturana Erbetta (lawyer, liberal party member)⁶.

⁶ The Representative Lía Lafaye Torres, teacher of French and lawyer, member of the women's party,

Research Question

From the combination of information, positions and appraisals mentioned by the participating congressmen in the analysis of the Antarctic policy between 1946-1961, the research question arises: In these fifteen years, the Chilean congressmen, senators and representatives, belonging to different political parties, supporting the budget projects presented by the national authorities over the Chilean Antarctic Territory, looked for reinforcing the Chilean sovereignty in the polar limited area in 1940, whereas, with the approval of the Antarctic agreement, among other aspects of the international political contingency of the moment, they tried that Chile continued to be recognized and be part of a select group of claiming countries and with presence in that continent and, not to waste the opportunity of a new order in the Antarctica to neutralize and minimize the accusations and aspirations of the Argentinian government in the austral Antarctic zone and, as a result, achieve more peace and international support to the sovereign exercise in the national Antarctic area?

From this research question, the underlying ideas are presented briefly in the thought of the participating congressmen in the analysis of the national Antarctic policy during a period that, simultaneously, was characterized by the transition, the execution in situ and new challenges.

Skip the Drake, the Failed Chancellor Huneus's Dream

Forty years since the chancellor Antonio Huneus Gana got from the National Congress in 1906 "the amount of \$150.000 for the expenses"⁷ for an exploration and occupation of "the islands and lands situated in the American Antarctic region"⁸ and due to the unfortunate earthquake in Valparaíso, it had to be postponed, the same Congress on December 1946, again, negotiated an Executive project with similar characteristics.

Through the information given by the congressmen themselves, the assessment about

didn't particularly participate in the debates about the Antarctic policy, due to the fact that she presented and defended a law project for the creation of a free harbor in Punta Arenas, which was approved on February 1956 (Law N°12.008); however, she indirectly contributed to show her partner congresswomen how to visualize the best political and economical way to the Chilean austral zone and the urgent need to pay attention to protect and boost its integration to the rest of the country.

⁷ Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *The Chilean Antarctica or Chilean Antarctic Territory* (Santiago: University Press, 1944) p. 149

⁸ Antonio Huneus Gana. *Antarctica*. (Santiago: Chile Press 1948) p.10

the previous governments' commitment for the Antarctica is clear enough as a geographic space close to the country and for its scientific, economic and political meaning, awoken at an international level. For example, since the Chilean Science Society was founded in 1891, there was a certain concern and interest to organize an expedition to the Antarctic lands. In 1896, the Chilean government received a letter from the scientist and explorer Otto Nordenskjöld, inquiring if it was possible to have a Chilean Navy ship to make a science expedition to the Antarctic lands and seas.

After the Swede geologist' proposal didn't succeed and a few years after, in 1903, when the wreck of the *Antarctic*, a ship lead by the same geologist Nordenskjöld in the Antarctica, the National Navy lieutenant, Ismael Gajardo Reyes, expressed in "an article in the *Revista Marina*, where he proposed that the Chilean government should join the initiative of going to rescue the Swede scientists lost somewhere in the Mar de Weddell, supplying coal and provisions, as well as making facilities and reconditioning required by the *Baquedano* corvette to bear the seas and weather of the Antarctica⁹. This Gajardo's proposal wasn't echoed immediately and, only three years after, in 1906, as we have mentioned before, chancellor Antonio Huneeus and the members of the recently created Chilean Antarctic Committee, tried without success, an expedition to Antarctica. During this same year, in July 1906, the Chilean government recognized and supported legally the Whale Society of Magallanes to make hunting activities in the austral seas and in the Southern Shetland islands, this was object of unilateral and unjustified measures imposed by the British government in the Falkland or Malvinas Islands¹⁰.

In 1907, a brochure named *The American Antarctica* was issued by the geographer and director of the boundary office, Luis Riso Patrón, reactivated the government and citizen's interest for this austral geographical zone, allowing a better view of that space and its features.

The Antarctica remained in different political perspectives until the presidency of Pedro Aguirre Cerda, who promulgated the Supreme Decree N°1.747 on November 6 of 1940, setting the limits of Chile in the sixth continent. From then on, and despite some countries' complaints, to show up in person and protect *in situ* was a must.

Six years after the promulgation of the mentioned decree and a few days after having been confirmed and sworn in by the Congress as President of the Republic for the period

⁹ Ismael Gajardo Reyes. "A timely aid to the *Antarctic* explorers", *Revista de Marina* n° 204 (1903), p. 703.

¹⁰ House of Representatives, 2nd Extraordinary session. (November 26, 1946): 153-155.

1946- 1952, Gabriel González Videla¹¹, decided to restart the policy gotten underway by President Pedro Aguirre Cerda¹² and have as soon as possible the national flag waving in the Chilean Antarctic Territory. Certainly, this presidential decision was influenced by his knowledge of the Chilean navy officers participating in the Antarctic expeditions of the USA and Argentina navy in 1943¹³, plus the famous and stimulating novel by Francisco Coloane *The Conquerors of the Antarctica* (1945) who invited to action in the Antarctica¹⁴, the Brit-

¹¹ Gabriel González Videla (La Serena, November 22, 1898- Santiago, August 22, 1980), graduated as a lawyer in December 1922. Radical party member since 1915. He started as mason in the Light and Hope Lodge in 1923. In 1930 he was elected representative of the Termal Congress by the radical assembly of Coquimbo. He was representative of the province of Coquimbo and was appointed President of the House of Representatives between January and July of 1933. President Pedro Aguirre Cerda designated him ambassador in France in 1939 and correspondent in Belgium and Luxemburg. As an ambassador he participated in the rescue of Spanish republicans. In 1941 he was extraordinary ambassador in Portugal. In 1941 he faced the internal elections of the radical party for the presidency with Juan Antonio Rios. The following year, 1942, he was appointed ambassador in Brazil and resigned in 1944. He was part of the delegation of Chile at the San Francisco Conference in 1945. That same year, he was elected governor for Tarapacá and Antofagasta and the next year in, after winning for relative majority with 40% of the votes, the National Congress had to resolve between him or Eduardo Cruz-Coke. His arrival to the presidency of the Republic was thanks to the support of the liberal party in the Congress plenary session.

¹² Mauricio Jara Fernández. The builder of the New Chile: Pedro Aguirre Cerda and the Polar Antarctica. In: *Antarctica. Truth and History. The forties from the Argentine, Chilean and Uruguayan perspectives*. Maritime Museum of Ushuaia. Zagier & Urruty Publications. Ushuaia, 2019, pp. 99-118. The President Pedro Aguirre Cerda together with ambassador Abraham Ortega Aguayo, designated by decree N° 1.541 of September 7, 1939, the international law professor of Universidad de Chile, Julio Escudero Guzmán, to gather records and study the current state of the problems of the Antarctica; by decree N° 1.723, of November 2, 1940, the president and ambassador Marcial Mora Miranda, disposed that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had the exclusive custody over the Antarctic issues, of any nature they were, and by decree N° 1.747 of November 6, 1940 of the same president and ambassador, the Chilean Antarctic limit was set.

¹³ The Navy officers who had participated in expeditions were: lieutenant 1st Ezequiel Rodríguez S. and lieutenant 2nd Federico Bonnert H. in Richard Byrd's expedition in 1941 retired ship Captain Enrique Cordovez M., frigate Captain Claudio Vio V. and the lieutenant 1st Ezequiel Rodríguez S., in the Argentinian expedition of transportation *1st Mayo* in 1943. Cf. Enrique Cordovez Madariaga. 1945. *The South American Antarctica*, (Santiago: Nascimento Ed.), p. 10.

¹⁴ In chapter 6 of this novel, entitled "In memoriam of a President", Coloane, remembering the President Pedro Aguirre Cerda, 'don Pedrito', for having been a representative of "a new age in Chile and, who knows if there will be ever someone who meets the standards of his started work, to continue it", sentenced that "The best homage one can pay is not sadness, but action. He enlarged the soul and body of Chile. He is the one we owe the decree that expands the limits of our country up to the Antarctica". Cf. Francisco Coloane. 1998. *The Conquerors of the Antarctica*, (Santiago: Zig-Zag), p. 92.

ish activities in Decepción island and the Tabarin Operation in 1944¹⁵, the arrangements of the international politics of the early post-war as a consequence of the emergence of the two world powers, “the Argentinian expedition in 1946 of 7 ships to explore the Tierra de O’Higgins, settling a permanent meteorological and magnetic headquarter”¹⁶ and, finally, the impact caused by the publication of a news article by Benjamin Subercaseaux in July of 1946¹⁷, where he mentioned with a sharp irony that the chancellery didn’t believe “apparently, in those clowning around the Antarctica”¹⁸ nothing had been done yet since the proclamation of the decree in 1940.¹⁹ All those matters, individually or collectively, would have motivated the president to act and not only be content with celebrating every year the mentioned decree of 1940, but it was time to take a final step: ‘*skip the Drake*’ to properly become the Antarctic country that it historically was and be present in that territory at last; specially, when nobody or very few, at that time, expected Chile to make an additional budget effort and organized a naval expedition, began scientific research and carried out construction works and, settling a sovereign house in the Antarctica.

Besides, with this ‘skip the Drake’ plan, González Videla payed a deserved recognition to the three main authors of this policy, ex-president Germán Riesco Errázuriz, ex-chancellor Antonio Huneeus Gana and ex-president Pedro Aguirre Cerda, because, without these visionary performances, the historic austral Chilean Antarctica projection, inherited from Spain, wouldn’t have been possible to achieve.

¹⁵ The Chilean decree of 1940 and the Argentinian visit to Decepción Island in 1942 and the so-called ‘inauguration’ of the area comprised between the 25° and the 68° 34’ west, would have motivated the English reaction to send the royal unit ‘Carnarvon Castle’ to Decepción Island in January of 1943, place where the flag was raised. “In 1944 the lieutenant of the British ship W. S. Marr, who had been to the Antarctica with Shackleton in 1922, aged 18, began the settlement of several spots in the Southern Shetland and in Tierra de O’Higgins, placed in the following points: Rey Jorge Island, Decepción Island, Bahía Esperanza, Puerto Lockroy, Argentinian Islands and Stonington Island”. Cf. Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *The Chilean Antarctica* 4th edition. Santiago: Andrés Bello Ed., 1976, p. 39.

¹⁶ Sergio Lausic Glatinovic. The Antarctica and the Beginning of its History. In: *The Antarctica, Continent of Hope*. I Jornadas Antárticas, Punta Arenas, August 1989. Punta Arenas: Impresor Offset Don Bosco, 1990, p. 127.

¹⁷ Benjamín Subercaseaux Zañartu. “¿What has our applauded Chancellery done since the ‘acknowledge and communicate’? Nothing”. *Revista Zig-Zag*, Santiago, July 25, 1946.

¹⁸ Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *Sovereignty Base and Other Antarctic Memories*. 2nd edition, (Santiago: Andrés Bello ed.), 1986, p. 15.

¹⁹ Subercaseaux reproached the Chancellery a kind of apathy and indifference for the Chilean Antarctic Territory, because it was supposed to be in charge of the guardianship and everything related to that polar territory.

Since the presidency of the Republic sent the House of Representatives and the Senate a law Project by the end of 1946 asking for the transfer of funds from the Treasury to the National Defense Ministry to provide economic resources and organize the first Antarctic expeditionary flotilla, the third stage of the national Antarctic policy began with the settling of bases and the permanent presence in the Chilean Antarctic Territory.

The debate of the first project of required funds by the Executive, was preceded by a motivating speech by future president González Videla's son in law; the liberal party representative Alfonso Campos Menéndez, in the second extraordinary session on November 26, 1946, after some brief introductory words, he encouraged his colleagues to start thinking about the convenience of sending a first expedition to the Chilean Antarctica to achieve the "completion of a traditional policy, studies and the administrative measures imposed by our governments"²⁰ from the first years of the XX century.

The following month, on December 24, 1946, the president sent an urgent project, asking for three million pesos to cover the extraordinary costs, preparations and unexpected events of the navy flotilla, the university and scientific institutions involved to travel to the Chilean Antarctic territory²¹. Four days after, on December 28, the Treasury committee of the House of Representatives,²² after introducing some corrections that meant to increase substantially the amount of money required to undertake 'that endeavor,' penalized favorably what was requested by the presidency and two days after, on December 30, the Representative's plenary session confirmed what was done by the commission and passed the project supporting "the expedition to the Chilean Antarctica, whose importance will not escape, obviously, to the high criterion of the Corporation and... with the consulted amounts...the purchase of equipment and special outfit for the expedition will be attended, films and photographic elements will be bought, a metallic and well-conditioned shelter will be provided to the people who will be living for a year in the polar region, providing, besides, a given amount for the concession of a special reward to the staff who will participate in the mentioned expedition²³. The same day, December 30, the Project passed to the next procedure in the Senate.

²⁰ House of Representatives, 2nd Extraordinary Session (November 26, 1946): 153-155.

²¹ House of Representatives, 13th Extraordinary Session (December 24, 1946): 635

²² The Treasury commission was composed by Eduardo Alessandri Rodríguez (liberal party member), Pedro Cárdenas Núñez (democratic party), Lucio Concha Molina (conservative party), Amílcar Chiorrini Alveti (radical party member), Andrés Escobar Díaz (communist party), Ángel Faivovich Hitzcovich (radical party member) y Pedro Opató Cousiño (liberal party member).

²³ House of Representatives, 14th Extraordinary Session (December 30, 1946): 693.

In the Senate, the project to transfer the funds obtained a short and demanding dispatch.

In the 13th session, extraordinary, chaired by the ex-president and senator Arturo Alessandri Palma, carried out on Monday 30 of December, first hour, between 4:00pm and 7:00pm, the Project firmly fulfilled the presentation process, debate and approval by 31 attending senators and representatives of all the political forces in that legislature.²⁴.

In that historic session, the secretary read the Project aloud to all the present senators and the conservative member Héctor Rodríguez de la Sotta, taking advantage of the presence in the Room of the Treasury Minister, Roberto Wachholtz Araya²⁵ and the National Defense Minister, Manuel Bulnes Sanfuentes²⁶, a detailed explanation was requested about the amount of the funds allocated to the Antarctic expedition project and clarification of how these funds had been transferred.²⁷.

After a brief exchange of words with Wachholtz, Minister Bulnes spoke and explained to Senator Rodríguez that “the expenses of the Antarctic expedition are going to be financed with several line items whose transfer is requested: first, with the transfer to the item 10/01/04 g) 2 “Consumption material and articles, for 200.000 pesos; then, with the transfer to the item 10/01/04 g) 3 “Fuels”; which is worth \$ 2.010.200. After that, 10.200 pesos are going to be used to pay for the fuel; not to be used in the expedition itself, but for the one that is going to be left in Antarctica. With the transfer to item 10/01/04 i) I/, “food supplies”, which is worth \$ 1.463.200. From these, 463.200 pesos correspond to the value of the extra groceries needed to support the crews and other staff members who are going to travel in the cold Antarctic weather. With the transfer to item 10/01/04 1-2, “Conservation and repairs, also the total amount; with the transfer to the item 10/01/04 v-11,

²⁴ The Project was supported by 7 conservative senators (among them the ex-chancellor Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal); 8 liberals (including Senator José Maza Fernández for Magallanes); 9 radicals (with the senator for Magallanes, Alfonso Bórquez Pérez); 4 communists (Senators for Tarapacá and Antofagasta, Elías Lafertte Gaviña y Pablo Neruda–Ricardo Eliecer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto); 1 from the democratic party (Julio Martínez Montt) and 2 socialists (senators Marmaduke Grove Vallejo for Santiago and Carlos Alberto Martínez for Aconcagua and Valparaíso).

²⁵ Radical party engineer, ex minister of Treasury of president Pedro Aguirre Cerda.

²⁶ Lawyer, liberal party member and descendant of the Presidents Manuel Bulnes Prieto, Aníbal Pinto Garmendia and Juan Luis Sanfuentes Andonaegui. We should bear in mind that President Bulnes, in 1843, had ordered to settle into a fort in the Estrecho de Magallanes and, in 1848, the moving of this settlement to a new founding called Punta Arenas; city from where Chile started to deploy and intensify several activities towards the southern islands and Antarctic lands. In 1916, President Juan Luis Sanfuentes authorized the sending of the *Yelcho* tugboat of the Chilean Navy from Punta Arenas to the rescue of the shipwreck of Ernest Shackleton in Elephant Island.

²⁷ Senate. 13th Extraordinary session, (December 30th, 1946): 518.

for “Reserved funds”, for \$150.000, the total amount. It is planned to pay with this figure for the extraordinary bonuses that, naturally, must be given to the crews who are going to be part of this trip. With the transfer to the item 10/01/04 v-12, that is for \$3.448.608, and with the item 10/01/04 w-2, “Purchases”, that is worth \$ 27.500”²⁸.

Bulnes’ speech clearly established that the total amount allocated for the expedition was \$ 10.640.000, coming from the budget of 1949 from the Treasury Ministry,²⁹ which had been transferred to the Retirement and Assistance Fund Office of the Armed Forces and from this to the items of the Sub-secretariat of War, Navy and Air Force of the National Defense Ministry.³⁰

Once the first topic was clear, Senator Rodríguez de la Sotta, again, insisted to Minister Bulnes about the procedure used by the Executive Branch to transfer funds, because, to his understanding, the way followed by the Treasury Ministry had not been the correct one, for being far from “good financial practices, because transfers are made to an item of the budget that had nothing to do with the Antarctic Expedition. For example, the use of reserved funds”³¹.

As a result of Rodríguez de la Sotta’s claim about the doubts generated by the transfer of funds from the reserved expenses item, the Radical senator Eleodoro Guzmán Figueroa, with the permission of Minister Bulnes himself, questioned Senator Rodríguez saying that “They have to do with it, Honorable colleague, because they are precisely the expenses that are going to be made in the expedition. The Minister of National Defense has detailed the operational expenses...”³² foreseen for the expedition and bonuses to be paid to the personnel of the naval flotilla and the members of the crew that will remain for a year at the base to be built in Antarctica.

Minister Bulnes, reiterating his explanations to senator Rodríguez de la Sotta, clearly established that the personnel who would travel to Antarctica: “You cannot pay them a bonus for staying abroad because it is a trip to Chilean territory. Nor is the zone bonus established by law for that Chilean territory and as it has been considered elementary justice to pay some to the personnel who are going to risk their lives and health in this trip,

²⁸ Senate. 13th Extraordinary Session, (December 30, 1946): 519.

²⁹ Supreme Decree N° 999, of February 13th, 1946.

³⁰ Senate. 13th Extraordinary Session, (December 30, 1946): 518.

³¹ *Ibídem*, p. 519.

³² *Ibídem*, p. 519.

no other item has been found suitable to charge the amount that this bonus will demand, than that of Reserved Funds”³³.

Even though Senator Rodríguez de la Sotta was not satisfied with Minister Bulnes’ explanations, when voting the expedition project to Antarctica, he argued that “I am not against spending, I could not patriotically oppose an expense of this nature, but I consider this procedure irregular”³⁴, finally giving his support and approval because “I basically accept the project, and I will not deny my vote”³⁵. The same position was signed and adopted by other senators present in the room and as none asked for a “vote, the project will be considered approved in general. Approved”³⁶. Next, the President of the Senate, Arturo Alessandri, to continue with the process, requested “the consent of the Chamber to enter into the particular discussion (of the project). Agreed”³⁷ and there was no interest from the senators to discuss each of its parts “by tacit consent, the four articles of the project were successively approved”³⁸ that authorized the financing of the first expedition to Antarctica.

The government was so hopeful and certain about the Congress approval of the Project of the expedition to Antarctica that, even, some weeks before it had advanced consultations and preparatory procedures, receiving as proposals of “the superiority of the Navy... to ship captain Federico Guesalaga Toro, current Chief of the Department of Hydrography and Navigation of the Navy, as head of the Chilean expedition to the Antarctica”³⁹ and also “that the *Angamos* transport and the frigate *Iquique* will be used for the Chilean expedition to Antarctica at the end of January. The mentioned ships are technically equipped for this expedition”⁴⁰ and they will be able to travel to the polar territory without difficulty and be directed by the Antarctic Department under the Ministry of National Defense, in charge of the retired Captain Enrique Cordovez Madariaga⁴¹, who did not participate di-

³³ Senate. 13th Extraordinary Session, (December 30th, 1946): 520.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 520.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 521.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 521.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 521.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 521.

³⁹ “Chief of the Expedition to the Antarctica will be Commander Federico Guesalaga Toro”. *El Magallanes*, (Punta Arenas), December 7th, 1946, p. 6.

⁴⁰ “*Angamos* Transport and Frigate *Iquique* will be used in the Expedition to the Antarctica”. *El Magallanes*, (Punta Arenas), December 11th, 1946, p. 4.

⁴¹ “The Department Antarctica will be created”. *La Estrella* (Valparaíso), January 3rd, 1947, p. 3 and Cf. Cordovez Madariaga, Enrique. *La Antártida Sudamericana*. Santiago: Ed. Nascimento, 1945.

rectly in the expedition and was in charge of the general coordination of the flotilla from Santiago.

When the aforementioned ships set sail from Valparaíso, Chile was passing through the third stage of its Antarctic history⁴². In February 1947, the first base was founded; the *Soberanía* base, on Greenwich Island, being inhabited by the first annual supply of men under the command of 1st Lieutenant Boris Kopaitic O'Neil⁴³.

From the perspective of lawyer and diplomat Oscar Pinochet de la Barra, both the installation of this first base and those that continued to be built in Antarctic soil, together with the uninterrupted of fellow nationals in the Chilean Antarctic territory, would have definitively perfected the Antarctic title inherited from Spain through effective occupation and, in this way, the country was able to close a long process that began in the late XIX century and resumed with greater intensity so far in the XX century⁴⁴.

Regarding this last aspect, in the 49th extraordinary session of Tuesday 22, April 1947, Deputy Campos commented to his colleagues that “according to the Sub-secretary of Navy, it was a complete success, as well as the establishment of the naval detachment that covers and attends to the operation of the Chilean meteorological station in the territories under its jurisdiction.”⁴⁵ in Antarctica. He also highlighted his fellow deputies on the economic importance and the reaffirmation of the national sovereignty achieved with the first commission in the Chilean Antarctic territory, highlighting the intervention made by Raúl Juliet Gómez at the Senate on January 21, 1947 and the support that the senator of the 5th Provincial Association of O'Higgins and Colchagua and renowned international jurist, Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal⁴⁶, had given to chancellor Juliet's presentation based on

(Commander Cordovez was by the time being, one of the few retired navy officer who had traveled to the Antarctica. In the summer 1943 invited by the navy and the trans-Andean government he traveled on board of the Argentinian transport on May 1st and as a testimony of that expedition, the mentioned work was published in 1945).

⁴² “Frigate Iquique leaves to Antarctica tonight: Angamos sets sail on the 15th”. *La Estrella* (Valparaíso) January 8th, 1947, p. 5. (Both ships are in Valparaíso Bay preparing for the expedition).

⁴³ León Wöppke, Consuelo and Mauricio Jara Fernández. *Brave Young Men. Life Experience in Chilean Antarctica in 1947*. Impresos Libra, (Valparaíso: LW Editorial), 2007.

⁴⁴ Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. *Chilean Antarctica*. 3rd edition, (Santiago: Edit. Del Pacífico), 1955, pp. 163-164; Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *Chilean Sovereignty in Antarctica*. (Santiago: Edit. Del Pacífico), 1955, pp. 55-56 y Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *Chilean Antarctica*. 4th edition (Santiago: Edit. Andrés Bello), 1976, pp. 81-103.

⁴⁵ House of Representatives- 49th Extraordinary Session 49th, (April 22, 1947): 2.181-2.183.

⁴⁶ Note that Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal was Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Chile in Argentina and Uruguay when Great Britain issued the first Patent Letter in July 1908, and from

the verdicts that the Permanent Court of International Justice⁴⁷ had issued on similar matters until that date.

In the following years, the financing projects for the successive Antarctic campaigns were well received and processed by the Congress. There were permanent agreements to support the construction of new bases, carry out maintenance and repairs in the summers and approve the expenses associated with the provision of food, clothing and other belongings necessary for the fulfillment of the missions entrusted to the Antarctic crews. In this legislative task, the Ministers of Treasury, National Defense, Foreign Relations and the respective sub-secretariat were in charge of preparing and presenting the antecedents and budget to the congressmen, individualizing the items of expenses incurred and rendered in previous years. In this sense, the observations and procedural complaints claimed by senator Rodríguez de la Sotta in December 1946 took effect, being accepted and incorporated in the evaluation of the items of the annual Antarctic commissions and in the discussions in the rooms of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

In the global analysis of the budget of these Antarctic commissions, the amounts allocated to assignments or bonuses of the crew of Antarctic flotillas and the personnel of the crews that remained at the bases for a year, were those that concentrated the greatest interest and time occupied in the debates and the many aspects causing delays and changes in the interpretation of what it had already been agreed in previous legislative sessions. The assignments or bonuses given to the personnel of the Antarctic commissions -both terms were used interchangeably at the time- began in February 1947 with the installation of the first base *Soberanía*⁴⁸, later called *Arturo Prat*, in the island of Greenwich, South Shetland

Buenos Aires he communicated to the government in Santiago that ‘rumors spread’ about the creation of the Union of the Falkland Islands or Malvinas that encompassed the peninsula and surrounding islands of Antarctica.

⁴⁷ House of Representatives. 49th Extraordinary Session. (April 22, 1947): 2.181-2.183. Cf. Raúl Juliet Gómez. *Chilean Sovereignty in Antarctica*. (Santiago: Imprenta Chile), 1948.

⁴⁸ Some of the books published on the occasion of the first expedition and base, Soberanía base, are: Oscar Vila Labra. *Chileans in Antarctica*. (Santiago: Nascimento Ed.), 1947; Oscar Vila Labra. *History and Geography of the Chilean Antarctica*. (Santiago: Tegalda Ed.), 1948; Oscar Pinochet de la Barra. *Soberanía Base and other Antarctic Memories*. (2nd Ed.), (Santiago: Andrés Bello Ed.), 1986; Eugenio Orrego Vicuña. *Terra Australis*. (Santiago: Zig-Zag Ed.), 1948; Hans Helfritz. *Antarctica Calls. Journey Through the Fantastic Frozen World of the South*. (Buenos Aires: El Buen Libro Ed.), 1948; Miguel Serrano Fernández. *Antarctica and other Myths*. (Santiago: El Esfuerzo Press), 1948; Miguel Serrano Fernández. *Who is calling in the Ice*. (Santiago: Nascimento Ed.), 1957; Carlos Oliver Schneider. *Bow to the South. Diario Austral de Temuco, May 4 – 24, 1947* and Guillermo Mann Fischer. *Biology of the South American Antarctica*. (Institute of Geography: Universidad de Chile), 1948. On the occasion of the 70 years of the foundation of the first base, the historian

island and, the following year, in 1948, with the second base, *Bernardo O'Higgins*, built at a very short distance from the Antarctic peninsula and inaugurated by the President of the Republic with a moving anti-colonialist speech at the "foot of the bust of the liberator O'Higgins"⁴⁹; it should be noted that by that date and worldwide no other head of State had visited the Antarctica⁵⁰. When it was built in 1951, in *Bahía Paraíso*, the third base, *Gabriel González Videla*, a name assigned in honor of the President, the congressmen were enthusiastic and willing to continue supporting the financing of the Antarctic activities, with the understanding that it was a territory that had to be protected and administratively integrated into the national life as any other of the country.

Towards the end of 1953, deputy and retired naval officer, Pedro Espina Ritche, in a long speech in the chamber, evaluated the construction saying that "the three Antarctic bases are proportionally distributed among the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. I have the impression that, from year 1947, when the first of these was founded, to the present days, those forces have fulfilled their strenuous and patriotic mission. And, just as Australia, France and other nations periodically organize scientific expeditions to carry out research in that area, in the same way our crews at the "Bernardo O' Higgins", "Arturo Prat" and "Gabriel González Videla Bases", should be reinforced with researchers of all kinds to study the future possibilities of Antarctica"⁵¹. The Senate shared a similar opinion in January 1954 regarding the Antarctic bases, which were called upon to protect and "maintain the occupation of that area that, in the end and in an eventual round table conference, have invaluable importance and value"⁵².

Consistent with this founding policy, in 1955, the construction of the fourth Base in the Chilean Antarctic Territory, *Pedro Aguirre Cerda Base*, in Decepción Island, South Shetland Island, was approved, followed by the *Luis Riso Patrón* scientific base adjacent to *O'Higgins* base and raised, specially, to develop the research program that Chile had promised to carry out during the International Geophysical Year in 1957-1958 and that, unexpectedly, for that national scientific plan, on March 10, 1958 was totally destroyed by a fire.⁵³

Consuelo León Wöppke published *The Chilean Antarctic Expedition of 1947. Journalistic and Specialized Perception*. (Valparaíso: LW Ed.), 2017.

⁴⁹ Cf. Villalón Rojas, Eduardo, Consuelo León Wöppke and Mauricio Jara Fernández. *Marking Austral Antarctic Chile. The Army in Antarctica, 1948*. (Santiago: Instituto Geográfico Militar), 2011.

⁵⁰ Schmidt Prado, Hugo. *O' Higgins Base No News* 2nd edition. (Santiago: La Noria Ed.), 1992.

⁵¹ House of Representatives. 22nd Extraordinary Session, (December 22, 1953): 1.760-1.764.

⁵² Senate. 23rd Extraordinary Session, (January 13, 1954): 1.056-1.057.

⁵³ Lopetegui Torres, Javier. *Antarctica, a Decisive Challenge*. (Santiago: Genesis Ed.), 1986, p. 100.

but “happily it did not affect the research work to a great extent and in some sense served as an incentive to continue with the program envisaged by the Executive Committee of the IGY”⁵⁴ and the country was able to respond in time with the scientific commitments acquired at an international level.

Along with the budget approvals and the construction of the bases in the Chilean Antarctic Territory, the assignments to the crew salaries of the Antarctic flotillas and the crew that remain for a year making all kinds of personal and family sacrifices in this isolated territory, was another of the important issues that caught the congressmen’s attention and the government’s itself. During the first years, the commissioned personnel received additional bonuses to the monthly salaries, but, in 1955, shortly before the International Geophysical Year, some changes were introduced, mainly, because after nine consecutive expeditions “these have resulted in the reaffirmation of the Chilean sovereignty in those regions; but also, in some cases accidents that have cost the lives of its members (radio operator of the Navy, Angel Gustavo Rojas), or contracting diseases typical of the environment, as a consequence of physical, intellectual and nervous exhaustion, given the regime of life that it takes, that can affect them for the rest of their days. The legislation currently in force considers for these hard-working Chileans, special wages that compensate somehow the sacrifice made, which consist of a zone bonus of 150% of their salaries and an isolation bonus of approximately \$8,000 monthly”⁵⁵.

The government of President Ibáñez, taking into account the new situations that affected military personnel, assigned to the Chilean Antarctic Territory at that time, started to consider “that these rewards are not sufficiently compensatory, if the risk and effort involved in the missions are taken into account, he believes it is convenient to match the salaries of these personnel to those of the ones who move abroad, in national currency, eliminating the aforementioned rewards. Considering the fact that it is a small group of people favored with this measure of the degrees of Captain, lieutenant, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, the greatest expense that this project means for the Treasury is of little amount.”⁵⁶.

With the aforementioned purpose, the President and his Minister of National Defense, Benjamín Videla Vergara, by means of official letter N° 983 of June 23, 1955 and addressed

⁵⁴ Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The United States and Chile in Antarctica: The International Geophysical Year (IGY), 1955-1958. In: *The International Geophysical Year in the Chilean Historic Perspective, 1954-1958*. (Valparaíso: Puntángelos Ed.), 2012, p. 97.

⁵⁵ House of Representatives 6th Ordinary Session (June 7, 1955): 204.

⁵⁶ House of Representatives 6th Ordinary Session, (June 7, 1955): 204.

to the House of Representatives, maintained that it was still “pending consideration of the Honorable House of Representatives a bill originated in a Message of the Executive by which the National Defense personnel in the Antarctic Bases are granted the same wage as that received by the personnel abroad. The Executive wishes to make substantial modifications to the mentioned project as a result of new studies, for which reason it requests from His Excellency, the withdrawal of the aforementioned message to replace it with another. Consequently, I will be grateful to this High Corporation for considering it retired and forwarding the information to the Ministry of National Defense (Sub-secretariat of War)”⁵⁷.

The following month, on July 6, 1955, the President communicated to the National Congress that, “As is public knowledge, every year the Ministry of National Defense selects a group of suitable men, with special physical and moral conditions, in order to ensure national sovereignty and as an outpost of the Continental Homeland, stand guard in the frozen Antarctic territories that, for historical, geographic and effort reasons are part of the heritage of the country. These group of men must spend a year garrisoning these remote bases separated from their wives, children and other relatives, with no other communication with the continent than the radio, having to endure harsh climatic conditions which constitute a threat to their very existence. In addition to the maintenance work of the bases, they must carry out explorations to unknown lands, withstanding the inclement weather and all kinds of dangers; they must also make excursions by sea in order to provide the bases with meat and other food and they constantly go sledding in order to maintain the necessary training”⁵⁸.

Considering that the zone bonus of a 150% of the salary and the \$ 8,000 per month for the isolation of each one of the members of the crew was not enough “if the risks and efforts that these missions mean are taken into account...the situation of the relatives, wives and children of these personnel and in the event that they die in the fulfillment of their mission, they will be considered for the effect of the compensation for death while in the line of duty”⁵⁹, this new bill, initiated by the Executive, introduced modifications and appropriately increased the bonuses in proportion to the circumstances in which the Antarctic crews were operating.

In article 1 of this bill, the President proposed to the Congress that having studied the

⁵⁷ House of Representatives, 17th Ordinary Session (June 24, 1955): 686.

⁵⁸ House of Representatives. Ordinary Session, (July 6, 1955): 905.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 905.

issue in depth, in justice, “the personnel of the National Defense, who work as a crew member of the Antarctic bases, will receive a wage with a 600% extra charge. Likewise, the National Defense personnel who are part of the relief Antarctic Commission will get a wage with a 300% surcharge for the duration of such Commission”⁶⁰. Equally, in this same first article, it was clearly established that the special bonuses of law N° 11.824 of May 6, 1955 were suppressed and, in article 2, it was stated “To add the subsection 3 of Art. 44 with DFL N° 209, of August 5, 1953, the following: regardless of the provisions of the previous articles, the pensions of the personnel who have died or die while garrisoning at the Antarctic bases, will be paid off with the benefits that are agreed with the deceased in the line of duty, with regards to years of service and calculated on the remuneration, corresponding to the highest grade in the hierarchical scale of the deceased.”⁶¹.

For the regular financing of these budgetary expenses, the Project provided in article 3 that the expenses of article 1 would be imputed “to the highest income that produces the additional tax on tobacco and the additional tax on wines established by the articles 8, 14 and 15 of the law N° 7.144...and to the Art. 2 it will be charged to the item “pensions” of the budget of the Ministry of National Defense”⁶².

With these adjustments to the law processed in the Congress in 1955, the allowances or bonuses given to the crews and the Antarctic naval, military and air crews will not have any alteration during that entire decade.

Years before, and considering that the Antarctic crews were isolated most of the year, the Congress gave the commanders of the bases another special function. In fact, in 1950, a “report of the Constitution, Legislation and Justice Commission, included in a message from the Executive it was stipulated that the Commanders of the Military, Naval and Air Bases established in the Chilean Antarctic territory will have the position of ministers of public faith for the effects of the writing and authorization of the instruments that are granted by the members of the Armed Forces or by other people who are in that Chilean territory”⁶³.

This initiative had its origins in that, by that time, the legislation did not contemplate for “the Officers, non-commission Officers and Troop of the Armed Forces of Chile who remain stationed in Antarctica, in such a way that they are prevented from signing docu-

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 905.

⁶¹ House of Representatives. Ordinary Session (July 6, 1955): 905.

⁶² Ibidem. (In Article 4, it was established that “This law will be in force from July 30, 1955”) p. 905.

⁶³ House of Representatives, 39 Extraordinary Session. (April 19, 1950): 1.483-1.484.

ments that have full legal value especially when a public deed is required for proceedings that have to produce effects not only in the aforementioned place but also within the rest of the country. This impossibility, as stated by the Government, derives from the fact that in the mentioned territory there are no competent officials to grant the instruments in question and that even in the event that these officials exist, the effect of these contracts or legal acts could not occur immediately, due to the material impossibility of getting public instruments to their destination at the appropriate time. The Government considers that this circumstance justifies the enactment of a special law that solves this problem that currently occurs to these servants of the homeland in the distant Antarctic Territory, so that they are offered the minimum guarantees so as not to hinder their action within the society, giving it the legal means for such effects”⁶⁴.

In short, and as it can be seen, the country, in less than ten years (1947-1955), did what it had not done in several decades, allocating budgets for the construction and maintenance of four bases and permanent personnel in the Chilean Antarctic territory. With two bases in the Antarctic peninsula: in Covadonga Bay and Paraíso Bay, and two in the South Shetland Island: in Greenwich and Decepción, Chile managed to perfect the historic and undeniable Antarctic title through effective occupation and fulfill what Antonio Huneeus in 1906 couldn't materialize even though he tried⁶⁵.

The Chilean Antarctic Territory in the Administrative Division of Magallanes

When studying the integration of the Chilean Antarctic Territory into the country's administrative political order, we observe that it is a process that, starting in 1906, ends in 1956 with the issuance of the Antarctic Statute and where it is possible to identify four main moments, aligned to internal, as well as external motivations with successes and lethargic forgetfulness⁶⁶ on the part of the national authorities.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, pp. 1.484.

⁶⁵ According to Antonio Huneeus the earthquake of Valparaíso on August 16, 1906 was one of the main reasons for the cancellation of the Project of the Antarctic expedition. Cf. Huneeus Gana, Antonio. *Antártida*. (Santiago: Imprenta Chile), 1948, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁶ In our opinion, the two 'lethargic forgetfulness' would have been prior to 1906 and were the little attention paid by the rulers to the declaration made by Bernardo O'Higgins from his exile in Lima on August 20, 1831, that "old and new Chile extends in the Pacific from the bay of Mejillones at latitude 23° S to new South Shetland at latitude 65°S and in the Atlantic from peninsula of San José at latitude 42°S to new South Shetland" "(...) Chile, as described, holds the keys to this vast portion of this South Atlantic (...) that is from parallel 30°S to the pole, and it also holds the keys to the entire great Pacific" and to the identification of the Antarctic peninsula on Alejandro Bertrand's school map of Chile in 1884, prepared by order of the government itself. A different issue, but equally

A fiftieth anniversary process supported by the “right of priority” inherited from the Hispanic era⁶⁷, in the principle of the *uti possidetis juris* of 1810⁶⁸, in the scientific conviction that the Antarctica was (and is) part of a continuous geophysical unit of the territories of Chile, in the contiguity or geographic neighborhood with South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic peninsula and in several governmental acts carried out in the Southern and Antarctic seas and lands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁶⁹.

In the first of these moments, the performance of Foreign Minister Antonio Huneeus Gana is key, by contributing and establishing three fundamental issues in the nascent national Antarctic policy. Thus, in June 1906 he obtained from the Argentinian plenipotentiary minister in Santiago, Lorenzo Anadón, the admissibility and international recognition of the Chilean Antarctic title⁷⁰, after his predecessor Federico Puga Borne and with the consent of President Riesco, promoted the first actions towards the American Antarctica. In the middle of that same year, Huneeus created and chaired by the first time a collegiate entity called the Chilean Antarctic Commission⁷¹, destined to advise the President of the Republic on all matters concerning the American Antarctica. Finally, in September 1906,

prehensive, not having known how to correctly use the textbooks for teaching Antarctica as in the case of Julio Monteburno’s ‘General Geography Courses’ in circulation since 1908. Cf. Berguño Barnes, Jorge. “Fifty Years of Antarctic Policy”, In: *Half a Century of Antarctic Policy (1940-1990)*. Diplomatic Academy of Chile. Santiago 1991, p. 24 and Cf. Jara Fernández, Mauricio and Pablo Mancilla González. Julio Monteburno and the Teaching of the Polar Regions and West Antarctica in the First Half of the 20th Century. *Sophia Austral Magazine*, N°26: 2nd semester (July-December) 2020, pp. 371-401.

⁶⁷ Morla Vicuña, Carlos. *Historical Study on the Discovery and Conquest of the Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego*. (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus), 1903 and Huneeus: p. 21.

⁶⁸ Matta, Manuel Antonio. *The Chilean-Argentinian Question*. Santiago: Libertad del Mercurio Press, 1874, pp. 13-36 and Romero Julio, Pedro. *Synthesis of the Antarctic History of Chile. Accompanied by fundamental documents*. Terra Nostra Collection N° 6, (Appendix N° 2), University of Santiago of Chile, 1985. Pp. 30-31.

⁶⁹ Martinic Beros, Mateo. *New Background on National Activities in the Antarctic Territory During the First Decades of the 20th Century*. *Annals of the Institute of Patagonia* Vol. III N

° 1-2 (1972), pp. 31-47 and Jara Fernández, Mauricio. *The Austral Islands and the Prolegomena of the Chilean Antarctic Policy, 1892-1896*. *Hemispheric and Polar Studies*, Vol. 3, N° 4 (Fourth Quarter 2012), pp. 269-286.

⁷⁰ On that occasion and reciprocity, the Argentinian Antarctic title was also accepted by the Chilean government.

⁷¹ The first session of the Antarctic Commission was held at the offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in La Moneda Palace, at 10:00am, on August 2, 1906. Cf. General Historical Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Antarctic Fund. Chilean Antarctic Commission and Minutes of Session. Santiago, 1906-1948” Vol. 3, pp. 315-317.

when handing over the post of chancellor to the new President, Pedro Montt Montt, he left stamped in the memory of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of that year that for the government of Chile “The Antarctic territories under study are matter typical of explorations not yet complete”⁷². Regarding this historical record, it must be emphasized that, towards that date, no other chancellor had testified in an official document such as the Memory of a government office, the relevance that it would have for Chile to continue studying and exploring that vast Southern Antarctic territory; the same concepts were consigned thirty four years later, in the recitals of the Supreme Decree N° 1,747 that limited the national Antarctic sector.

In the national Antarctic history, this first moment closes with a significant but unknown fact such as the provisional authorization delivered at the end of 1906 by the deputy Governor of Magallanes, commander Froilán González, to the Magallanes Whaling Society so that its ships could use the South Shetland Islands as landfall locations for hunting operations and activities.⁷³ Something similar occurs with the rescue carried out by second pilot Luis Pardo Villalón in the *Yelcho* cutter for the 22 British castaways on Elephant Island in August 1916⁷⁴ and that the Chilean historiography of the 20th century has not sufficiently incorporated, in circumstances that had a wide national and global journalistic coverage managing to shake- like never before- the hearts of Chileans for the Antarctica and serve as patriotic stimulus in the birth of an embryonic Antarctic consciousness in those years⁷⁵. In this same direction, another important ignorance appears in the field of national Antarctic science and in the creation of the National Committee of Geography, Geodesy and

⁷² Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Santiago, 1906, p. 9.

⁷³ Bunster Tagle, Enrique. Whalers in Antarctica. In: *Mar del Sur*. (Santiago: Nascimento Ed.), 1951, pp. 157-172. (In this article originally published in a weekly magazine -it could have been *Zig-Zag*, *Ecran* or *Qué Pasa* – and integrated into this book from the early 1950’s by the author himself, some data and a suggestive as well as an intelligent reflection were given on what presumably happened between the Whaling Society of Magallanes and the English government).

⁷⁴ With certainty the authorization given by President Juan Luis Sanfuentes for the *Yelcho* to go in search of the English castaways to Elephant Island, was advised by the Minister of War and Navy, General Jorge Boonen Rivera, who in 1906 participated in the first session of the Antarctic Commission convened by Chancellor Huneus and who had tried to organize an expedition to the American Antarctica.

⁷⁵ Jara Fernández, Mauricio y Pablo Mancilla González. *Commission of the 2nd Pilot Luis Pardo Villalón in 1916. Popular Hero*. (Valparaíso: LW Editorial), 2019. Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The reception of the 1st Pilot Luis Pardo Villalón in Valparaíso in September 1916. In: Baldomero Estrada Turra (Compiler), *Valparaíso History and Heritage*. (Valparaíso: University Editions of Valparaíso), 2018, pp. 95-103

Geophysics, in April 1935⁷⁶, after the official invitation extended to Chile to participate in the I International Polar Year of 1932 and 1933. The aforementioned scientific entity will fulfill an important directive role in the preparation of Chile for the International Geophysical Year.

The second moment of our understanding of the integration process begins in mid 1938 when the government receives an invitation from the Norwegian government to attend the Bergen Polar Exhibition that was planned for next year.⁷⁷ Foreign Minister José Ramón Gutiérrez thanking for the invitation and recognition of an Antarctic country that that government granted to Chile, added that “considering our geographical position, the studies carried out, our interest of all kinds in the Antarctica”⁷⁸ we cannot miss the opportunity to reserve the rights that assist us in that polar territory. The following year, on March 17, 1939, Foreign Minister, Abraham Ortega, when answering a diplomatic communication from the Norwegian government -Norway again- received in January and through which it was announced the setting of its limits on the Antarctic continent⁷⁹, reiterated the same concepts held by Chancellor Gutiérrez some time before, and that “by acknowledging receipt of the aforementioned note, I have the honor to expressly save everything and any right that the Government of Chile could assert over the Antarctic territories in question”⁸⁰. That year was the first time that a European government informed Chile of the issuance of a royal decree that fixed its Antarctic polar sector⁸¹.

⁷⁶ *Official Gazette of the Republic of Chile*, Year LVIII, N° 17,135. Santiago, April 2, 1935, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁷ This polar exhibition was suspended on the occasion of the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

⁷⁸ Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Santiago, 1938, p. 448.

⁷⁹ Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. The Antarctic Decree of President Aguirre Cerda. In: *Annals. Half a Century of Antarctic Policy (1940-1990)*. (Santiago: Imp. Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 1991, p. 16. Note that as early as April 1929 Norway had communicated to the United States that based on the discoveries made by Roald Amundsen in the South Pole in 1911, a priority claim over those territories was possible and in 1934, after some conversations with the British government, obtained a tacit consent to make a claim of the territory or sector located between the Dependency of the Falklands Islands or Malvinas and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

⁸⁰ Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Santiago, 1939, p. 271.

⁸¹ The Antarctic sector delimited by the government and parliament of Norway was called the *Land of Queen Maud* and ranges from the meridian 20° west to 45° east. It should be noted that in July 1908 when the Falklands or Malvinas Dependency was created with the first Patent Letter, and in March 1917, when the gross and ‘deliberate geographical error of the first’ was corrected, the Chilean Government did not receive any official communication of the English colonial government. Cf. General Historic Archives Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile. “Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Embassy of Chile. Manuel Bianchi Mission, 1946” Vol. 2.451.

A few months later, on August 16, 1939, the President received another communication regarding Antarctica. This was a suggestive memorandum from the US government explaining that there was an apparent German (Nazi) threat in the Antarctic continent derived from the expedition commanded by Captain Alfred Ritscher on the ship *Schweabeland* in the southern summer of 1938-1939⁸² and that, for the same reason, the United States would soon build two bases in Antarctica: one in Margarita Bay, the East Base, and the other, the West base, in the vicinity of the Ross sea⁸³. Along with this new and surprising communication, in the aforementioned memorandum, it was also clarified that “The action of the United States does not intend, in any way, to harm rights or interests that any American Republic may have in the Antarctic regions”⁸⁴, but rather to protect that wide area of the Antarctic continent that bathed by the Bellinghausen and Amundsen seas is located within the American hemisphere, did not have enough defense, despite being claimed by England since 1917.

Due to the implications that the communications from Norway and the United States could have in the decisions that Chile could make on the polar territory in the future, President Pedro Aguirre, knowing that he was witnessing a historic moment of potentially unsuspected results, his first and correct position was that it was necessary to act with greatest speed and efficiency. Given the abandonment of the study of the Antarctic matter by previous governments, Aguirre ordered his chancellor, Abraham Ortega Aguayo⁸⁵, act quickly and expedite such studies. On September 7, 1939, by Decree N° 1.541, Julio Escudero Guzmán, lawyer and professor of Public International Law in the School of Law at University of Chile was appointed⁸⁶, so that in a special commission and on an ad honorem

⁸² Cf. Genest, Eugenio. Impossibility of formulating Antarctic territorial claims. *Proceedings of the V Meeting of Iberoamerican Antarctic Historians*. National Directorate of the Antarctic. Argentinian Antarctic Institute. Buenos Aires: October 2000, pp. 47-48.

⁸³ Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The Builder of the new Chile: Pedro Aguirre Cerda and the Polar Antarctica. In: *Antarctica. Truth and History*. Ushuaia: Zagier & Urruty, 2019, pp. 104-105.

⁸⁴ Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. The Chilean Antarctica and its Diplomatic Implications. Cf. Sánchez G., Walter and Pereira L., Teresa. *150 Years of Chilean Foreign Policy*. (Santiago: Universitaria Ed.), 1977, p. 254.

⁸⁵ Radical lawyer and politician (1891-1951). Mayor of Concepción and as president of the Chilean Soccer Federation, he led the Chilean delegation to the first soccer world championship in Uruguay. In the position of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1938- July 1940) he assumed the defense of the Spanish Republicans asylees in the Chilean Embassy in Spain and had a decisive participation in the asylum program offered by Chile to the Spanish Republicans.

⁸⁶ Julio Escudero Guzmán was born in Rancagua in 1903, He graduated as a lawyer in 1929, with the senior thesis “International Legal Situation of the Strait of Magallanes”, directed by the prominent jurist José Guillermo Guerra Vallejos. For many years he taught at the Faculty of Law at the Univer-

basis it would take up what was consigned by Huneus in 1906 and finish studying “the current state of the Antarctic problems and their possible link to the interests of Chile.”⁸⁷. The idea of President Aguirre was to pronounce himself as soon as possible for Antarctica and not continue to be an spectator of the territorial claims of nations far from this southern continent and at a time when the Second World War was beginning.

Julio Escudero, with the collaboration of retired ship Captain Enrique Cordovez Madariaga⁸⁸, managed in less than a year of investigation and verification of the various documents collected from public offices and ministerial archives to prepare and present the requested study⁸⁹. In Escudero’s opinion, Chile, after so many years of waiting, should assert before the nations, and as soon as possible, the results achieved. To the President, Escudero’s proposal was correct, timely, and coinciding with the second communication received from The United States on January 10, 1940 which, among other aspects, called on the Chilean Government “that it perhaps be advisable that they become formal requests for sovereignty over those areas”⁹⁰ of the Antarctic continent. The same communication, in turn, expressed in a tax tone that, “to be more effective, they should be made by a government individually”⁹¹ and with the understanding that “the governments of other American Republics know that those requests will be considered as guarantee for the governments and citizens of all the American Republics to participate in the development and use of such resources as those that the claimed regions may possess”⁹². Also, in this communication, the Department of State together with that cautious invitation to formulate

sity of Chile and in that capacity, he directed the Memory of Oscar Pinochet de la Barra, entitled “The Chilean Antarctica or the Chilean Antarctic Territory”, published for the first time in 1944. Political advisor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and permanently linked to the Antarctic issue, leading a series of negotiations such as the so-called Escudero-Ruiz Moreno, with Argentina in 1941, and the Escudero-Green with The United States in 1948. He was part of the Chilean Delegation in Washington that signed the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. He deservedly obtained the Diplomatic Merit Medal from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, dying in Santiago at the end of May of 1984.

⁸⁷ Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Santiago, 1939, p. 267.

⁸⁸ Commander Cordovez at that time was serving as a naval advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cf. Aguirre Vidaurre-Leal, Carlos. *The Navy and Antarctica, 1900-1940*. *Revista de Marina*, N° 6, 1987, p. 10.

⁸⁹ During a visit made by Consuelo León and Mauricio Jara to the home of Mr. Oscar Pinochet de la Barra, in November 2008, he let them know that, from information provided by Marcelo Ruíz Solar, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs in 1940, Professor Escudero had already completed the study requested by president Aguirre in July that year.

⁹⁰ Pinochet de la Barra (1977), p. 255.

⁹¹ Pinochet de la Barra (1977), p. 255.

⁹² Pinochet de la Barra (1977), p. 255.

territorial requests in Antarctica, suggested that there was a special hemispheric policy for the future use and exploitation of Antarctic resources by American countries. Also, in this communication, the Department of State, together with that cautious invitation to formulate territorial requests in Antarctica, suggested that there was a special hemispheric policy for the future use and exploitation of Antarctic resources by the American countries. With this approach, The United States established that it did not share the Norwegian experience of having to pay licenses for whale hunting to the English government of the Falklands Islands and that this had been the main cause of the decision of that government to define a sector in the Weddell Sea⁹³. Also, on the other hand, using that arbitrary and unilateral Norwegian example, the American policy of distributing the 'resources' of Antarctica to all the 'American Republics', sought to undermine or simply cancel the historical, geographical and legal background of Chile in that polar territory⁹⁴. Surely, he planned to project the same purpose for Argentina in the South Atlantic and Antarctica.

The changing and unpredictable scenario caused by the war, led President Aguirre to think that the more time passed, the more difficult it would be to take a final position on the Antarctic continent. In addition, he was aware of and concerned about the effects that the war would have on the American continent, the appearance and the implementation of new American hemispheric policies and their extension to the Antarctic continent⁹⁵, of the concealed recognition of an Antarctic country granted by Washington so that Chile could make a formal 'petition' on a part of Antarctica and finally, that the special commission led

⁹³ Ihl C., Pablo. Information about Antarctica (Facts and Curiosities). In: *Geographical Magazine of Chile Terra Australis*. N° 8, Santiago, 1953, p. 99.

⁹⁴ It is deeply striking that, coincidentally, in Richard Byrd's third expedition to the Antarctic continent in 1939-1941, Chilean and Argentinian naval officers participated aboard the *North Star*. Foreign Minister Cristobal Sáenz, Marcial Mora's predecessor, when responding to the press about this participation, stated that in his opinion it was only "in order to avoid further differences of appreciation regarding the Antarctic and that the Chilean sailors Lieutenants 1st Federico Bonnert and Exequiel Rodríguez Salazar (between February 23 and March 30, 1940) carried only a scientific mission and did not represent the Government of Chile but the Navy, which had been invited by The United States Government to accompany this expedition" Cf Statements on the Chilean sailors who accompanied Byrd, *The Truth* (Punta Arenas), February 22, 1940, p. 12.

⁹⁵ In the context of The Havana Conference held between July 21 and 30, 1940 where The United States sought to defend the American continent facing the advance of the Second World War, the Chilean delegation following the same principle expressed in the response to the Norwegian diplomatic note from months before and in accordance with the instructions of President Aguirre, established "at the time of signing this Final Act, in addition to the reservation expressed in the Private Plenary Session of the previous day, it reserves the rights of Chile in the Antarctica". Cf. Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile. Santiago, 1940, p. 51.

by Julio Escudero had already completed the requested study and, consequently, its result had to be channeled and made official.

After deeply considering professor Escudero's proposal and consulting with Foreign Minister Marcial Mora Miranda⁹⁶ President Aguirre Cerda decided to rush a government resolution on Antarctica by issuing a Supreme Decree rather than by presenting a bill in the National Congress due to the time this would take in its full processing⁹⁷.

But before that and by the crucial international moment and the relevant matter that he hoped to channel, and accompanied by all his ministers: Marcial Mora, Pedro Alfonso, Juvenal Hernández, Guillermo Labarca, Salvador Allende, Juan Iribarren, Alfonso Quintana, Juan Pradenas and Rolando Merino, President Aguirre ordered by decree N° 1,723 of November 2, 1940 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the governmental body that in the future would have "exclusive control over all the Antarctic matters, of whatever nature"⁹⁸ on behalf of the country.

Upon resolving his first concern and leaving everything concerning Chilean Antarctica under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Aguirre Cerda, together with Foreign Minister Marcial Mora, proceeded to the issuance of Supreme Decree N° 1.747 of November 6, 1940. On the first part of this historic decree, it is included the legal recommendation indicated by Escudero to leave consigned "That it is the duty of the State to set exactly its territorial limits; That up to now the limits of the Chilean territory have not been specified in the part that extends towards the polar region called American Antarctica; publicly that this Ministry stated in 1906, that the delimitation of the aforementioned territory was the subject of studies begun, but not yet complete; That the current state of such studies allows a determination to be made in this regard; That the special commission, appointed by Decree of this Ministry N° 1.541, of September 7, 1939, has

⁹⁶ Marcial Mora Miranda was born in Cobquecura on January 1895. He graduated as Professor of History and Geography, and Lawyer at University of Chile in 1918. He was a member of the Radical Party, of which he was president and representative in the Congress as deputy and senator. He held the position of President of the Central Bank, Minister of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Treasure. On July 30, 1940, he was appointed Chancellor and the same November 6, after the 'Antarctic Decree' was issued and a cabinet renewal occurred, he assumed the Treasury portfolio. Ambassador to The United States and member of the Chilean delegation that participated in the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in Washington in 1959. He died in Santiago in May 1972.

⁹⁷ Cf. Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. Memories of the Antarctic Decree of 1940. *INACH. Serie de Difusión. Revista de Difusión*, N° 9, Santiago, 1976, p. 31.

⁹⁸ Escudero Guzmán, Julio. The Antarctic Decree of 1940. In: Diplomatic Academy of Chile. *Annals of the Diplomacy, 1973-1983*. Santiago: Universitaria Ed., 1984, p. 280.

established the limits of the Chilean Antarctic territory, in accordance with the one that provide the certified geographical, historical, legal and diplomatic antecedents that have been accumulating to date”⁹⁹.

The ‘recitals’ presented in the first part of the aforementioned decree reveal that the Chilean interest in Antarctica was not recent, improvised nor was it an extemporaneous reaction to the Norwegian and American notes. Unquestionably, those communications from foreign governments, prior to decree N°1,747, caused concern and to some extent, alerted and prompted the government to establish a polar delimitation. The decree of 1940 when completing what was pending, clearly establish that “The Chilean Antarctic or Chilean Antarctic territory is formed, all the lands, islands, islets, reefs, glaciers (pack ice), and others known and to be known, and the respective territorial sea, existing within the limits of the cap constituted by the meridians 53° West longitude of Greenwich and 90° West longitude of Greenwich”¹⁰⁰. It ended its promulgation with the words of rigor and individualizing those responsible “Take reason, communicate, publish and insert in the Bulletin of the Laws and Decrees of the Government AGUIRRE CERDA.—Marcial Mora Miranda”¹⁰¹.

As of November 1940, this decree has become “one of the most important milestones in the history of our polar presence, thus consolidating our sovereign rights in those regions”¹⁰² and, in a highly and remembered political action of the former governor Aguirre Cerda for his consequence with the Chilean past in that region, the context in which he adopted that measure and for having known how to take advantage, at the end of 1939, of the tour made to the Southern provinces of the country and direct contact with the inhabitants of Magallanes and correctly interpret that he was facing the construction of the unfinished Chile, the Antarctic polar¹⁰³.

When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated on November 6 to the country and

⁹⁹ Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. *The Chilean Antarctica 3rd ed.* (Santiago: Del Pacífico Ed.), 1955, pp. 114-115; *The Chilean Antarctica or the Chilean Antarctic Territory.* (Santiago: Universitaria Ed.), 1944, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰⁰ Pinochet de la Barra. (1955), p. 115.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 115. In addition to Professor Julio Escudero Guzmán, the Navy Commander Enrique Cordovez Madariaga, the President himself and Foreign Affairs Minister Mora, the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ruíz Solar also participated in the preparation and issuance of the decree.

¹⁰² Cf. Romero Julio, Pedro. Presence of Chile in the Antarctica. In: Francisco Orrego Vicuña et. al. *Chile's Antarctic Policy.* (Santiago: Universitaria Ed.), 1984, p. 39.

¹⁰³ Jara (2019), pp. 104-105.

foreign governments the issuance of Decree N°1,747, the reactions did not wait. In the country, it caused surprise and joy because, definitely, the limits of Chile in the Antarctica were specified and, on the other hand, it raised a quick and expressive disagreement from some nations.

As an example, Argentina, on November 12 protested because a unilateral declaration; The United States, despite the insinuations made previously and without expressing any direct opinion, reserved its rights; The United Kingdom on February 25, 1941 considered it illegal and; Japan, in an absolutely unexpected way, declared to have an interest and rights in the Antarctic zone, stating that “it reserved the right to assert its point of view on the matter”¹⁰⁴. President Aguirre, knowing that Argentina could have a dissenting position regarding the content of the aforementioned decree, together with his Foreign Minister, Manuel Bianchi Gundián “invited the Argentinian Government to have conversations between representatives specially designated by the Governments of that nation and Chile so that the bases of an understanding would be sought”¹⁰⁵ by the Antarctic continent and ideally allow “to find a common neighborhood line”¹⁰⁶ in the polar zone. The call took effect and in 1941, important conversations were held in Santiago and, in the long run, they resulted in both governments in 1947 pledging to defend the so-called South American Antarctica.

Although we could say that there was general complacency for the ‘Antarctic’ decree that set the exact extent of the limits of the Chilean Antarctic territory from the 53° meridian West longitude and included Elephant Island, the place from where the pilot Luis Pardo Villalón commanding the *Yelcho* had rescued the British shipwrecked in 1916 and to the West it reached the 90° West longitude, coinciding with the line that separated the American quadrant with that of the Pacific, some voices expressed dissatisfaction because the decree was self-restricting of the territory that Chile by the *uti possidetis juris* of 1810 had to proclaim and because Easter Island (109° 20° West longitude) was not considered as the Western meridian of the projected polar sector. But, the main complaint was that “In fact, this sector should have comprised from 46°, 5 W to 136°, 5 E, and not from 53°

¹⁰⁴ Pinochet de la Barra. (1944), p. 176. Cf. Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The Chilean Antarctic Decree and the reaction of Japan in 1940. *Proceedings of the V Meeting of Ibero-American Antarctic Historians, National Antarctic Directorate, Argentinian Antarctic Institute*. Base Marambio, Ushuaia, 2000, pp. 64-74.

¹⁰⁵ Senate. 52nd Extraordinary Session, (May 17,1955): 2.395.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Santiago, 1940, p. 442. (Main part of the text of the communication sent to the Argentinian Embassy on November 6, 1940).

to 90°, but surely other considerations prevailed, perhaps in relation to the position of our country, the distribution of Antarctic islands and lands, etc. even when this is not mentioned in the Decree"¹⁰⁷. However, after time, this two visions remained as a mere historical memory of that moment and largely surpassed by the sector that established the Decree of November 1940.

The issuance of this decree and in accordance with our academic proposal, closes the second Antarctic moment headed by President Aguirre and that of his immediate predecessor President Riesco and chancellor Huneeus in 1906. Aguirre's government had managed in a short time and in a complex and uncertain international scenario, to define the limits in Antarctic, including Tierra de O'Higgins, the South Shetland Islands, the surrounded seas and a total area of 1,250,000 square kilometers. A polar delimitation that beyond the historical and legal references, would also have considered the scientific background of the continuity and geographical contiguity as well as the glaciological and geophysical similarity of the southern territory and the Antarctic islands and lands developed by Enrique Delachaux and Luis Riso Patrón¹⁰⁸, among others.

The third moment of the administrative integration process of the Chilean Antarctic territory with the rest of the country is in the 1946 y 1947.

As soon as President Gabriel González Videla took over the leadership of the country in November 1946 and assuming that the Antarctic policy of former President Pedro Aguirre Cerda and his political co-religionist, required another audacious impulse, he decided to send a bill to the Congress that same month. The following month, the bill was passed and with this he managed to have the required budget to organize the first expedition and the appointment of an Antarctic commission and flotilla under the command of Commodore and Captain Federico Guesalaga Toro¹⁰⁹.

To the Antarctic claim and delimitation carried out in 1906 and 1940, respectively, the Ant-

¹⁰⁷ Santibáñez Escobar, Julio. *Antarctic Parenthood. Historic, Legal and Natural Titles of Chile*. (Valparaíso: The Navy Press), 1972, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The American Antarctica of Luis Riso Patrón at the Beginning of the 20th Century. *Annals of the Natural History Museum of Valparaíso*. Vol. 30, 2017. pp. 71-74 and Cf. Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The Antarctic Fueguía of Enrique Delauchaux Austral bridge or geographic barrier? *Austral Sophia Magazine*. N° 22: 2nd Semester 2018, pp. 45-54.

¹⁰⁹ Federico Guesalaga Toro was a descendant of the naval officer Policarpo Toro Hurtado who commanded by order of President José Manuel Balmaceda the expedition that incorporated Easter Island to Chile on September 1888, signing the deed of transfer with the King of the island Atamu Tekena.

arctic policy should now add and complete with the occupation and installation of bases in the national sector. Oscar Pinochet de la Barra has called this gradual and historic process, 'the improvement of the title' the Chilean polar.

To what has already been pointed out in the first part of this study, on the first expedition to the Antarctica and in connection with this third moment before the departure of the naval flotilla made up of the frigate *Iquique* and the *Angamos* transport, President González Videla and his Minister of National Defense, Manuel Bulnes Sanfuentes, accepting the proposal of the Commander in Chief of the Navy by official letter N°10 of January 7, 1947, proceeded to issue Supreme Decree N° 118 of January 20, 1947.¹¹⁰, designating Maritime Governor of the Chilean Antarctic territory 1st Lieutenant Boris Kopaitic O'Neill, a naval officer who in turn served in 1947 as commander of the *Sovereignty* base on Greenwich Island— island named in that year, President González Videla¹¹¹. On the same date, the general director of the Postal Service of Chile, Luis Campos Vásquez, by resolution N°29 of January 6, 1947¹¹², in the exercise of his powers, he created a Postal Agency or post office in the aforementioned naval base to receive and dispatch correspondence with the identity postmark of that Chilean base to anywhere in the world. On May 1947 the Chilean Postal Service issued two postage stamps in commemoration of the Antarctic Decree, one in red with an official value of 40 cents and the other with 2 pesos and 50 cents.

In parallel to these appointments and installation of the first base, the government, through the activation of the Antarctic Commission -the same one that Chancellor Huneus had created in 1906- was in charge of studying and foreseeing the next steps to be carried out. Among these, he was dedicated to evaluating the convenience of creating an Antarctic Department according to instructions received from President González Videla and study -not without difficulties- how to manage to articulate an administrative structure with the appreciable difference in size of the Chilean Antarctic territory of 1.250.000 square

¹¹⁰ Pinochet de la Barra (1955), p. 116.

¹¹¹ Eugenio Orrego Vicuña, expeditionary representing the Rector of the University of Chile, in a beautiful travel diary of the expedition, leaves testimony of the effort and work of the Chilean participants. The work contains photographs, an appendix and an interesting work entitled "The Renaming of the Chilean Antarctica" where the toponymy of the Chilean Antarctic Territory is established in order to give that polar geographic space its own identity. In addition, it presents the inaugural acts of foundation and speeches read on various occasions during the expedition, as well as some maps. Cf. Eugenio Orrego Vicuña. *Terra Australis*. (Santiago: Zig-Zag Ed.), 1948.

¹¹² Santibáñez (1972), p. 52.

kilometers and the continental American and insular Chile with just over half of that surface¹¹³.

At the initial impulse of President González, the culminating and historical fact of this third moment was the reading of this founding act of the first base by Commodore Guesalaga on February 6, 1947: “By order of the Government of the Republic of Chile, which constitutes one more form and a manifestation of the effective exercise of the rights of the Republic itself over the Chilean Antarctic territory...the undersigned Captain of the National Navy...come on an official trip to the Chilean Antarctic...” officially inaugurates “the new meteorological and radiotelegraphic station owned by the Chilean Government, called Sovereignty”¹¹⁴. Paraphrasing, with this first foundation, González achieved what Riesco had been denied by the infamous earthquake of 1906: to begin the effective occupation of the American and Chilean Antarctica¹¹⁵.

When the naval flotilla returned to Valparaíso in April 1947 and the first Antarctic commission ended, President González was advised by different personalities and institutions that Chile should organize and maintain a technical, scientific and naval entity to centralize the information and studies of the Chilean Antarctic territory. The President, when approving this initiative, understood that it would be a necessary coordination body for the future of Chile and the Antarctica and through Supreme Decree N°754 of May 12, 1947, ordered the creation of the Antarctic section in the Undersecretary of the Navy of the Ministry of National Defense; the organization and functions of the Section were approved by internal regulations of that Ministry and during its first year it was in charge of the experienced retired ship captain, Enrique Cordovez Madariaga¹¹⁶.

Citizen’s meeting point with these first experiences in the Chilean Antarctic Territory was the *Chilean Antarctic Exhibition* organized in Santiago in 1948 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Defense and Education, and the publication of a colorful dissemination brochure prepared by the National Directorate of Information and Culture, by Ricardo Boizard Bastidas and that, given free to all visitors, arouse the greatest enthusi-

¹¹³ Cf. General Historical Archive. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile. Antarctic Fund. Chilean Antarctic Commission and Session Minutes, 1906-1948. Vol. 3.

¹¹⁴ Romero (1984), p. 39.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Jara Fernández, Mauricio. *Chile and the American Antarctica. Contexts, actions, and mishaps in the first decade of the 20th Century*. (Viña del Mar: LW Ed.), 2019.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Mancilla González, Pablo. *Chile and the Chilean Antarctic Territory. Notes for the study of the geographical, historic, administrative, diplomatic, and legal antecedents that sustain the Chilean sovereignty*. (Viña del Mar: LW Ed.), 2016, p. 51.

asm among young students and general public¹¹⁷. In that occasion a toponymic version of the Chilean Antarctica or Chilean Antarctic Territory was presented, among other exhibited pedagogical materials, according to the proposals of Eugenio Orrego Vicuña, one of the 'wise men' participating in the first expedition of 1947¹¹⁸.

With this set of political decisions, regulations and government actions regarding its Antarctic policy, this third moment of the process that we are analyzing closes, but at the same time it must be recognized that it covers only part 'of the consolidation of the sovereignty in Antarctica' between 1946 and 1956, as a transit or meditation time towards the second sub-period that agrees to 'the suspension of the international controversy' 1956-1961 and which we will deal with in the final part of this academic contribution.

The fourth moment of this integration process of the Chilean Antarctic Territory to the political and administrative order of the country, took place in 1955-1956 and presents limited boundaries around a complex neighborhood situation with Argentina and the territorial administration.

However, before analyzing the events surrounding this moment, it is worth asking why did the Chilean government left time pass or wait until 1955 to establish the administrative dependency of the Chilean Antarctic Territory? Or why did it not do it immediately in 1947 or for reasons unknown until now, it preferred to wait until another time?

In this regard and to answer these questions, it can be said that indeed the Antarctic Commission, which had resumed its advisory activities to the Government's Antarctic policy¹¹⁹, decided that before this administrative link, it was necessary to occupy and give time of permanence in the Chilean Antarctic Territory. This proposal of the Commission received,

¹¹⁷ Directorate of Information and Culture. *Antarctica. Concern of 5 continents*. (Santiago: Hispania-Cautín Press), 1948.

¹¹⁸ In the publication of Eugenio Orrego Vicuña. *Terra Australis*. (Santiago: Zig-Zag Ed.), 1947 a renaming of the Chilean Antarctic Territory is presented that establishes a new toponymy of the islands, archipelagos, peninsulas and seas of the Chilean Antarctic Territory. As an example, the Drake Sea is called Cochrane Sea; the Elephant Island, Piloto Pardo island; Clarence Island, President Aguirre Cerda Island; Rey Jorge Island, Pedro de Valdivia Island; Greenwich Island, Sovereignty Island; Bellinghausen Sea, O'Higgins Sea; Weddell Sea, San Martin Sea; Land of Palmer, Land of Vicuña Mackenna; Land of Graham, Land of Carlos V; Alejandro Island, Andrés Bello Island, etc.

¹¹⁹ The Antarctic Commission created by Antonio Huneus in 1906 resumed its advisory activities in March 1941 with the Chilean-Argentinian conversations of Julio Escudero and Isidoro Ruiz Moreno in Santiago and during the joint declarations of July 21, 1947 by Foreign Ministers Raúl Juliet and Atilio Bramuglia and those of March 4, 1948 Germán Vergara and Pascual La Rosa, respectively. Cf. Aramayo Alzérrec, Carlos. *History of the Antarctica*. (Buenos Aires: Hemisferio Ed.), 1949, pp. 356-360.

in 1946,¹²⁰ full support of the Chilean diplomatic representative in England and former Chancellor of President Aguirre Cerda, Manuel Bianchi Gundián. From London, Bianchi argued that due to the long time that Chile had waited to be physically in Antarctica, it was advisable, firstly, to perfect the historical, legal and geographical titles and, very especially, at the international level to dissuade those who intended to or wanted to take away the Chilean Antarctic Territory, that this was a space that belonged to us and that having made ourselves present, we would remain in it uninterruptedly and forever. Six years was the minimum length of stay suggested by Bianchi for the government to give way to the administrative integration of the Antarctic sector. With certainty, this legal and political reasoning directly influenced President González Videla himself to desist from going ahead with the bill presented “to the National Congress in 1948 for the creation of the Antarctic Department within the Province of Magallanes and with two sub-delegations, one with capital in Puerto Navarino, that of Beagle, and another with capital in Base O’Higgins, that of the Chilean Antarctica”¹²¹ and wait for another moment and opportunity. Other reasons why President González did not rush the integration of the polar sector was due to the visit of the State Department official, Caspar Green, who arrived in the country in July 1948 to propose a way out of the emerging conflicts that were taking place between Great Britain, Argentina and Chile in the waters and lands of Antarctica¹²² and for the steps taken by Argentinian Foreign Minister A. Bramuglia in London to reach a tripartite agreement South of the 60° parallel and allow greater stability to South American Antarctica, between 25° and 90° West longitude of Greenwich, according to the commitment made in the joint Chilean-Argentinian declaration of July 1947 and March 1948.

In the unstable post war context and in the international political and economic adjustments that were beginning to be projected by different actors and international media,

¹²⁰ Cf. General Historic Archive. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile. Diplomatic Department. British Notes on the Antarctic questions. Confidential N° 264/16, 29 January 1948.

¹²¹ Jara Fernández, Mauricio. The Chilean Antarctic Territory: From the Claim to the Administrative-political Incorporation of the Polar Sector, 1906-1956. In: Consuelo León, et al. *Outlining the Latin-American Antarctic. Meetings of Latin-American Antarctic Historians, 1999-2011*. (Viña del Mar: LW Editorial), 2011, p. 171.

¹²² In the conversations between Caspar Green and Julio Escudero, the US diplomat proposed to the Chilean government that the trusteeship regime provided for in the United Nations Charter be applied to the entire Antarctic continent. This initiative was rejected by Chile, as well as the Antarctic internationalization Project proposed later. Cf. Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. Chile’s Antarctic Negotiations in a Changing World. In: *International Studies Magazine*. International Studies Institute, University of Chile. pp. 210-222 and Mancilla González, Pablo. Chile, Argentina, and Great Britain in the Antarctic Continent, 1906-1961. An approach to diplomatic controversies. *Journal of Historical Studies*, Volume 3, N° 1, August 2006.

national congressmen without renouncing the financial support of the annual Antarctic commissions and the defense of the sovereignty of the Chilean Antarctic Territory, they took a certain and prudent distance when observing that in the evolution of the so-called Antarctic question they were facing two victorious powers of the Second World War and that for the same reason they had to act with political caution and before any mishap or Antarctic 'cloud' it was preferable to maneuver it through diplomatic negotiations rather than attack with actions harmful to the work carried out by Chile in its polar sector and finish later, regretting not having acted otherwise. They would have expressed a different position with respect to Argentina, as there is a commitment to act in common agreement with third countries for the South American Antarctica.

In May 1955, the ex-chancellor of the Antarctic decree of 1940 and then senator, Marcial Mora, declared in a session of that Corporation to all his fellow senators that much attention had to be paid to the insistent intention that Argentina had been showing to "elaborate a protocol that bring back to arbitration the matter of the islands of the Beagle Channel, which has become current in everything related to the Chilean Antarctica"¹²³.

Although for Mora the issue of the islands of the Beagle Channel was resolved in favor of Chile, according to the terms of 1881 Treaty, the tireless search and expectations of the Trans-Andean people for these islands and for them to be submitted to arbitration was striking and worrying. In the numerous newspaper articles that circulated in the Buenos Aires press on this issue, this Argentinian claim, argued Mora, was not only dealt "to resolve in its favor what it is said in relation to the islands of the Beagle Channel, but taking as a pretext that circumstance about the possibility of obtaining a ruling that could change in some way the terms in which the matter was resolved by the treaty to which I referred, obtain for Argentina a new title -at least one, because, actually, it does not have any- to challenge Chile for its dominion, its rights, its legitimate and well-established rights over Antarctica"¹²⁴. Hence, the Chilean government and Congress had to address and confront this trans-Andean policy without ambiguity.

But the greatest risk that Mora could see if these persistent Argentinian aspirations were to be fulfilled was that "In fact, when all the antecedents related to the problem of Antarctica are studied, with that of the islands of the Beagle Channel or others that are latent in those Southern lands where the interests of Chile and the Argentinian Republic coincide, the clear conclusion is reached that Argentina is permanently trying to establish princi-

¹²³ Senate. 52nd Extraordinary Session, (May 17, 1955): 2.394.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 2.395.

ples, to create factual situations that allow it to later attempt defense, in other lands and with better arguments than now, of its rights over Antarctica"¹²⁵.

For those obvious objectives sought by Argentina, Mora encouraged the senators to be alert and, if possible, to be active in proposals and in the supervision of the actions that the government adopted to defend the islands of the Beagle Channel and the Chilean Antarctic Territory. Likewise, he reminded his fellow senators that the Chilean-Argentinian conversations of 1947, held in Buenos Aires, had sought to establish a common neighborhood line in the self-styled South American Antarctica. The following year, in 1948, in Santiago, both countries had agreed that the South American Antarctica encompassed between the meridians 25° and 90° of West longitude of Greenwich and that in that polar space they would act in common agreement in the protection and legal defense of their rights and in the 'administrative action' to follow their explorations and surveillance. However, in this last meeting, the Chilean Antarctic policy had registered an unthinkable or inexplicable incongruity -not to say the reverse- when signing in the Final Act a new and distorting concept for South American Antarctica: that of an "undefined border region of their respective Antarctic zones"¹²⁶. Perhaps Chile by that date had not already fixed its polar sector between the meridians 53° and 90° of West longitude of Greenwich and Argentina, on the other hand, between 25° and 74° of West longitude of Greenwich¹²⁷; perhaps both countries, by introducing the expression "undefined border region" only sought to take advantage of the opportunity of that 'joint declaration' of an international nature to disturb and ignore the English claims derived from the Malvinas or Falklands Islands on South American Antarctica. Whatever the reason or motivation for which that geographical-political expression was introduced, certainly few benefits emerged from it, this despite the fact that in that same minute of 1948 it was established that a bilateral treaty would later be signed to consecrate the spirit of reciprocal cooperation. Both that projected treaty and the other earlier negotiation attempt made by Chile forty years earlier, in 1908, were never a reality.

But senator Mora's greatest concern occurred when in the various Argentinian advertising references and journalistic analyzes that were published from time to time about the Argentinian Antarctica it was added "a piece of news from the Argentinian Republic, which seems to me to be extraordinarily serious. According to such news, the Argentinian

¹²⁵ Ibidem, p. 2.395.

¹²⁶ Ibidem, p. 2.396.

¹²⁷ On September 2, 1946 Decree N° 8,944 set the limits of Argentinian Antarctica between the meridians 25° and 74° of west longitude.

Government has sent to the Parliament of the neighboring nation a bill in which a new administrative division of the entire Republic is established; but, within this new division, it is also understood the administrative inclusion, in the Argentinian territory, of the entire Antarctic territory and not only that which presumably belongs to the Argentinian Republic, but also of most of the Antarctic territory that, obviously and clearly, as Argentina knows very well, belongs to Chile"¹²⁸. This news was immediately described by Mora as extremely serious because it was not complying with what was agreed in the joint declarations of 1947 and 1948 as well as in the conversations of 1941 to treat in a friendly way everything related to those territories and to "not take initiatives that could be considered harmful to one of the parties and not doing anything, not even in the scientific field -by no means in the administrative field- that could harm or mean a disloyal intention with respect to the other party, to obtain advantages as regards the domain over Antarctica"¹²⁹.

Indeed, for Mora, the information from Buenos Aires left no doubt that "The Government has already sent a bill to Congress that declares all the national territories of Argentina, including the Malvinas Islands (Falklands) and their dependencies such as, likewise, the Antarctic sector claimed by Argentina and Great Britain. The fifth new province would be formed by the territory of Tierra del Fuego in the Southernmost part, the Malvinas Islands and the territories of Antarctica over which Argentina asserts its sovereignty"¹³⁰.

Based on his long international experience and knowledge of the neighborhood issues, Senator Mora assured that this procedure in the Argentinian Congress was a "real administrative-legislative blow that the Argentinian Republic intends to give to the Government of Chile"¹³¹ and as on that date the Government of President Ibáñez seemed to have no initiative to counteract the effects of that Argentinian project on June 15, 1955, he initiated the 'processing of the of the Minutes' of the Senate Foreign Relations Commission "so that the Chilean Antarctic territory will be part of the province of Magallanes"¹³². The following day, on June 16, in the Chamber of Deputies, there was an agreement to accept

¹²⁸ Senate. 52nd Extraordinary Session, (May 17, 1955): 2,396.

¹²⁹ Ibidem, p. 2.396. The aforementioned news was also published in *El Mercurio* of Santiago, on Saturday 14 of May 1955 and was sent from Buenos Aires by the *Associated Press*, on May 13.

¹³⁰ Ibidem, p. 2.397.

¹³¹ Ibidem, p. 2.397.

¹³² Senate, 6th Ordinary Session, (June 15, 1955): 180-181. (The approval of this motion and subsequent processing was supported by 35 senators -including Marcial Mora- among whom were Francisco Bulnes, Raúl Ampuero, Luis Bossay, Exequiel González, Guillermo Izquierdo, Jorge Lavandero, Raúl Marín, Eduardo Frei Montalva, Isauro Torres, Eduardo Moore, Juan Antonio Coloma, Raúl Retting, etc.)

the bill from the Senate and to undertake the study “in secret session ... on administrative dependency of the Chilean Antarctic territory”¹³³.

Mora, when starting the process of this legislative project, wanted it to be one of the ways to respond to the incomprehensible Argentinian actions and because, in addition, the very integration of the Chile sector was objectively endorsed in years of Chilean presence and activities in the Chilean Antarctic Territory and in the international recognition of South American Antarctic power. On a personal level, Mora, told the president of the Senate that on this issue it was his “Chilean duty -and, in a way, because I believe that I must save the patriotic responsibility that corresponds to me in this matter, for having been a signatory of the decree that established the limits of the Chilean Antarctic Territory-, in requesting the Honorable Senate to take some initiative -since the Executive has not taken the one that corresponds to it- in the face of the unusual attitude of the Argentinian government, which I have reported, and, therefore, I ask the president to send a letter on my behalf to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in order to inform him of the words I have spoken this afternoon and asking him to inform what instructions he has given to our Ambassador before the Casa Rosada and what measures has the Government of Chile taken in defense or our legitimate rights in the Antarctic territory”¹³⁴.

With these words and requests, Senator Mora gave a proof of consequence for his responsibility in setting the limits of the Chilean Antarctic territory and the understanding that the defense of the Chilean polar sector depended on permanent interests and objectives of national policy and that, faced with this ‘emergency’ originated by the trans-Andean government, he would not give up in seeking to integrate the Chilean Antarctic Territory into the country’s administrative political division and, therefore, requested that the following bill be processed as soon as possible:

“Article 1. – The Chilean Antarctica or Chilean Antarctic Territory, whose limits were determined by Supreme Decree N°1747, dated November 6, 1940, will be part of the current province of Magallanes.

Article 2. – It will correspond to the Mayor of Magallanes, within his legal powers, the knowledge and resolution of all administrative matters related to the stated territory, without prejudice to what is established in the following article.

Article 3. – Given the special nature of the Chilean Antarctic Territory, it will be ulti-

¹³³ House of Representatives. 13th Ordinary Session, (June 16, 1955): 516.

¹³⁴ Senate. 52nd Extraordinary Session, (May 17, 1955): 2,397.

mately administered through a special regime that will be determined in a Chilean Antarctic Statute.

Article 4. – The Chilean Antarctic Statute will be dictated by the President of the Republic advised by his Ministers of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, National Defense and Lands and following a report from the Fiscal Defense Council and the Chilean Antarctic Commission”¹³⁵.

In the Chamber the Argentinian project, as in the Senate, as soon as it was known about its processing generated an enriching debate and analysis in the Chilean deputies. Pedro Espina regretted that the Argentinian decision to create “the 5th province, which includes the Argentinian part of Tierra del Fuego, The Malvinas Islands (held by Great Britain), the South Shetland Islands, South Orcadas, O’Higgins Peninsula, Sandwich Islands and South Georgia’s, that is, Argentina incorporates vast portions of our Antarctic territory, such as the entire O’Higgins Peninsula, the adjacent islands and the South Shetland Islands”¹³⁶, would call into question the joint statements of the past decade. The action of the Argentinian Senate with what was agreed by Vergara and La Rosa in 1948 to have a close solidarity and common defense of South American Antarctica in the face of British claims and to preserve the “status quo” as long as such claims existed was inexplicable and even contradictory. The situation described was aggravated in the deputies when, in turn, for not a few the South American Antarctica was a “heritage of America and one of the areas within the continental security belt, created by the *Mercury* Treaty of Santiago on Sunday 5 June, 1955 described as an effective protective instrument to face the powerful adversary, such as Great Britain, who on May 4 had filled lawsuits against Chile and Argentina at the International Court of Justice in The Hague for this body to declare invalidity of the sovereignty claims of these two countries over subantarctic and Antarctic areas”¹³⁷. Beyond the relevance assigned by the National Congress to the British demand¹³⁸ and the decisions subsequently made by the Foreign Ministry, the main concern of the deputies was to know if the project of the Argentinian Senate of a fifth province had been in response to the British demand that, in the case of Chile, that Government announced on

¹³⁵ Ibidem, p. 2.398.

¹³⁶ House of Representatives. 8th Ordinary Session. (June 8, 1955): 333-334.

¹³⁷ Cf. Mancilla González, Pablo. Chile, Argentina and Great Britain in the Antarctic Continent, 1906-1961. An approach to the Diplomatic Controversies. In: *Journal of Historical Studies*. Vol. 3, Nº 1, Santiago, 2006.

¹³⁸ House of Representatives. 26th Ordinary Session (July 12, 1955): 1.163-1.166.

December 21, 1954¹³⁹ or an independent measure and in parallel, to the international action deployed by Great Britain.

In the secret session of June 16 of the Chilean Chamber¹⁴⁰, the deputies Espina, Durán, Ramírez, Valdés Larraín, Bustamante, Izquierdo, Palma Vicuña, Olavarría, Montané and Sepúlveda Rondanelli, in a respectful and thoughtful attitude, exchanged various opinions and historical background, geographical and legal information on the administrative integration project of Chilean Antarctic sector presented by Senator Mora, following the recent news of the creation of the fifth province by the Argentinian Senate that occupied important 'portions of the Chilean Antarctica'. In the course of a measured debate, the deputies unanimously agreed that the defense of Chilean Antarctic rights should be directed at the claims of Argentina and Great Britain. The recent actions of British and trans-Andean government revealed and 'taught' that, in the future, Chile would have to act only in the defense of the Chilean Antarctic Territory and in this sense, the National Congress, as urged by Senator Mora, should be an actor and collaborator of the Executive of first importance.

Deputy Bustamante, in this same direction, recalled that in 1953 when the English destroyed a national refuge in Decepción Island, Congress did not make any complaint or claim and for the same reason, now, in 1955, compared to the scope of the recent approval of the fifth Argentinian province and the English demand presented to the International Court of The Hague 'we' had to raise our voices and represent the damage and annoyance that that unilateral act produced to the Americanist spirit sustained by Chile since independence with the neighboring country¹⁴¹.

Deputy Palma Vicuña, for his part, complementing Bustamante's words, directed attention to the fact that beyond seeking the defense of Chilean Antarctica separately in the future and "foreseeing the conduct that would be necessary to follow, in this order of things, the most worrying thing in recent times has been the ease with which the Chilean Government has accepted the suggestion of the Argentinian government, to enter to discuss, soon, the situation of the islands of the Beagle Channel"¹⁴². Regarding what was raised by Palma Vicuña, for the vast majority of the deputies it was clear that President Ibáñez does not 'learn from the past' or has failed to visualize that with a policy of concessions to

¹³⁹ Ibidem, p. 1.163.

¹⁴⁰ House of Representatives. 13th Ordinary session (June 16, 1955): 516-525.

¹⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 524.

¹⁴² Ibidem, p. 524.

Argentina the only thing that is done is to grant “a greater basis of their theses about their dominance over the Antarctic Territory”¹⁴³, affecting seriously “the existence of a certain continuity and overall vision on the part of those who direct our Foreign Ministry, and the need that, in this matter, as in others, do not improvise, leaving for the future positions that precisely weaken our titles that, today, our Government can display in a truly clear way”¹⁴⁴.

Deputies Olavarría and Benavides put forward a somewhat opposite opinion, saying that at that time, the Argentinian Project had only been approved by the Senate and not by the central Government in Buenos Aires and that therefore there was a need to weigh internationally the decision that was to be resolved the Honorable Chamber with the bill of Senator Mora¹⁴⁵; to these two solitary comments, Deputies Montané and Izquierdo, replied that it was only a technical question and a ‘matter of time’ because “the majority of the Argentinian Parliament blindly obeys the Government. Therefore, it is impossible to think that the parliamentary majority of the Senate, which approved the bill there, has a different attitude and is distant from the government’s thinking.”¹⁴⁶. Besides, Deputy Durán stressed, the Chilean Project has been a Parliamentary initiative while the Argentinian has its origin in the Executive. Valdés Larraín, in turn, when agreeing with Morandé and Izquierdo that it was only ‘a matter of time’, affirmed that the Conservative deputies supported Senator Mora’s project because it counteracted the Argentinian legislative process that, by being unconsulted with Chile, had been born violating the 1948 agreements. Pizarro Herrera, in turn, on behalf of the Liberal deputies, declared that he and his co-religionists were willing to support Senator Mora’s Project. Rodrigo Lazo expressed the same position “because I believe that anything could be endured, except the abuse of our territory”¹⁴⁷, and the deputy De la Presa, on behalf of the Agrarian Laborites, affirmed that ‘they would vote favorably on the bill under debate’.

Deputy Bustamante, when asking his fellow lawyers for clarification on what could happen when this territory became dependent of the province of Magallanes, we would meet with the Armed Forces, of both Argentinian Republic and Great Britain. In that case, for the Government to be able to authorize the stay, even if it were not from an armed soldier from those two countries, the National Congress would have to meet to grant the corre-

¹⁴³ Ibidem, p. 524.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 524.

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 524-525

¹⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 525.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 525.

sponding permission, or could the armed forces remain in purely Chilean territory, without the permission of the National Congress?”¹⁴⁸, Deputy Miranda Ramírez took advantage of the consultation of his colleague Bustamante to also clarify the doubts previously expressed by Olavarría and Benavides. Miranda, in the first place, argued that, from a legal point of view the discussion of the bill presented by Senator Mora in no way broke the status quo of the 1948 joint declaration “for a very simple reason: the bill contains no other idea than to grant administrative powers to the Mayor of Magallanes, in relation with the Chilean Antarctic territory. Consequently, the content of the project is not the same as that of the Argentinian project already approved by the Senate of that country, since the Argentinian project gives structure to a new political and administrative division of that province that is created by virtue of that legal initiative”¹⁴⁹. To this radical legal difference, “our project -Mora’s- only contains provisions of a general nature, in terms of granting administrative powers to the Mayor of Magallanes and expanding the Chilean Antarctic Statute, through the granting of powers to the President of the Republic, to appoint a Commission made up of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Lands and Colonization, as I understand. Following a report of this Commission, the Chilean Antarctic Statute will be drawn up. Evidently, the Honorable Senator Mr. Marcial Mora found it impossible to present a project proposing a political and administrative division, since the policy of the State does not give the initiative to parliamentarians on this matter”¹⁵⁰.

With the explanations of the deputy Miranda Ramírez the discussion of Senator Mora’s bill is closed and since in general he did not receive indications to the contrary, by regulation it was also approved in particular. In the Senate, it followed a similar path.

A few days later, Law N° 11.846 of June 21, 1955 establishes that it would be the Mayor of Magallanes who should take knowledge and resolve the administrative matters relating to the Chilean Antarctic Territory and in its article 2 “Considering the special nature of the Chilean Antarctic Territory, this will be ultimately administered through a special regime that will be determined in the Statute of the Chilean Antarctic Territory”¹⁵¹ that will enter into force once the studies have been completed by the corresponding bodies of Chilean legislation.

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 525

¹⁴⁹ Ibídem, p. 525.

¹⁵⁰ Ibídem, p. 525.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Mauricio Jara Fernández. The Chilean Antarctic Territory and the Law N° 11,846: ¿Question of Internal or External Policy? *Derroteros de la Mar del Sur*, N° 13, Lima, 2005, pp. 63-73 and National Congress Library. Chilean legislation. <https://www.leychile.cl/N?i=26852&f=1955-0621&p=>

The following year, with the issuance of decree N°298, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, and based on Law N°11,846 of June 1955, Articles 2 and 3; the Supreme Decree N°1,723 of November 2, 1940 and; Supreme Decree N°454 of September 8, 1953, the Chilean Antarctic Statute entered into force, which in its transitory article instructed that “the Director of National Assets of the Minister of Lands and Colonization shall proceed to register as a State asset in the Property Register of the Real State Curator of Magallanes, the territory located within the limits defined by Supreme Decree N°1,747 dated November 6, 1940 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”¹⁵². Upon with this demanding and irreplaceable procedure, said Deputy Espina, the Chilean polar territory delimited in 1940 was incorporated into the administrative division of the province of Magallanes¹⁵³.

With the officialization of the Antarctic Statute in 1956 and after fifty years of the Chilean claim to Antarctica, the fourth and last moment of the administrative integration process of the Chilean Antarctic territory is concluded. The only doubt presented by Deputy Bustamante during the debate on Senator Mora’s bill and refers to what to do when there is a presence of ships, military personnel or foreign armies in the Chilean polar sector in Articles 13, 14, 15 and 16 of this Statute, the procedures to channel them are established.

We cannot end this section without stating that the entry into force of the June 1955 law and the 1956 Antarctic Statute, respectively, coincide with the Chilean administrative, economic, logistical and technical preparations to participate in the programs and activities of the International Geophysical Year of 1957-1958, great international scientific event and prelude to the Washington Conference in 1959, from which the Antarctic treaty was born.

The Argentinian Factor in the Approval of the Antarctic Treaty

The minutes of sessions of the National Congress corresponding to the second sub-period covered by this study (1958-1961) provide information on the processing and subsequent approval of the Antarctic Treaty¹⁵⁴ and reveal the congressmen’s concern about the insistent and unintelligible Argentinian actions and aspirations in the southern island territo-

¹⁵² Cf. National Congress Library. Chilean Legislation. (The Antarctic Statute was promulgated on July 17 and its publication in the Official Gazette was on October 3, 1956). <https://www.bcn/ley-chile/#p9004382>

¹⁵³ House of Representatives, 26th Ordinary Session. (July 12, 1955): 1,163.

¹⁵⁴ As an example, Cf. Senate. 22nd Session (1960): 1,047; Senate. 33rd Extraordinary Session (April 4, 1961): 1,941-1,957; Senate. 34th Extraordinary Session (April 5, 1961): 1,984-1,989-; House of Representatives. 3rd Ordinary Session (May 30, 1961): 125-137; House of Representatives. 5th Ordi-

ries¹⁵⁵ and the eventual impacts that these could have on the national polar sector.

Unlike what happened in 1902, when after the Patagonian arbitration ruling by His Majesty Eduardo VII¹⁵⁶, the congressmen were divided into two groups, the ‘pacifists’, more numerous and staunch supporters of peace and of signing treaties regardless of territorial integrity¹⁵⁷ and that of the ‘internationalists’ who, also few, made an effort to nobly defend the reputation and honor of the country¹⁵⁸, now fifty something years after that unforgettable experience and faced with the study and dispatch of the Antarctic treaty signed in Washington in December 1959, they rather acted as a unitary and compact body, despite some differences of opinion and few abstentions and rejections¹⁵⁹.

In March 1959, the senator for Valparaíso and Aconcagua constituency, Pedro Poklepovic, commented on a transcendent national fact seldom recorded in the preparatory record of the Washington Conference of that year and from which, as we know, the Antarctic Treaty arose which consisted on a trip made by the national merchant ship *Navarino* to Chilian Antarctica, creating new links for the consolidation of sovereignty and the opening of national Antarctic tourism¹⁶⁰ shortly after the treaty was formulated and the study and evaluation of the same by the congressmen began.

The processing of the Antarctic Treaty began on March 11, 1960, when the presidential message was received¹⁶¹ in the Chamber of Senators requesting the ratification of both

nary Session (June 6, 1961): 353; House of Representatives. 10th Ordinary Session (June 14, 1961): 688-689.

¹⁵⁵ Irene Edit Yorio. *Ernesto Manuel Campos. Captain of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and Islands of the South Atlantic*. Graphic Workshops of the Government of the Province of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and South Atlantic Islands, Argentina, 1994. (On page 21 of this publication it is noted that the Picton, Lennox and Nueva Islands were in 1958 part of the department of Ushuaia and that “currently they belong to the Republic of Chile”).

¹⁵⁶ Mauricio Jara Fernández. The Chilean House of Representatives and the Arbitration Award of 1902: from the Patagonian solution to the Antarctic question. In: Mauricio Burgos Quezada & José Luis Riffo Muñoz, Editors. *Parliamentary Diplomacy*, Senate of Chile, Valparaíso, 2014. pp. 85-105.

¹⁵⁷ House of Representatives, 24th Ordinary Session (July 23, 1901): 306-307 and House of Representatives 52nd Ordinary Session (August 2, 1902): 1,053.

¹⁵⁸ House of Representatives. 15th Extraordinary Session (December 9, 1902): 308 and House of Representatives 16th Extraordinary Session (December 10, 1902): 367.

¹⁵⁹ In the analysis and votes made in both Chambers during the processing of the treaty, the concurrence of the congressmen is remarkable convergent, with insignificant abstentions and low rejections.

¹⁶⁰ Senate, 25th Extraordinary Session (March 11, 1959): 1,130.

¹⁶¹ In the article N°43 of the Political Constitution of the State of 1925, the requirement was clearly

Chambers of the National Congress for its entry into force, this in accordance with article 72 of the Political Constitution of Chile of 1925.

In the discussion of the treaty by the Senate Foreign Affairs Commission, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, German Vergara Donoso and the Legal Advisor of said ministry, Ambassador Enrique Gajardo Villarroel were present. The final report of this commission recorded the reasons why Chile had attended the Washington Conference (October-December 1959) and a detailed analysis of the articles and the future implications that were visualized regarding the national interests in the Antarctic continent¹⁶². A similar process had been carried out in the House of Representatives before final approval in June 1961¹⁶³.

For the Congressmen and Foreign Minister Vergara, the fact that Chile was one of the twelve signatory states of the treaty, meant a special recognition of its quality as an Antarctic country and the delivery of international responsibility by leaving that continent for peaceful use, scientific research and the implementation of a control system by means of inspectors belonging to the contrasting parties. A treaty that definitely established disarmament control and prohibited nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste on the Antarctic continent.

But, apart from the 'many or few benefits' that the treaty was expected to bring to national interests in the Chilean Antarctic Territory, it is a certain fact that during the debates on the processing of the treaty in 1960-1961, the congressmen were consolidating the idea that this agreement was an unbeatable opportunity for the Antarctic sector to achieve greater international protection in the face of the appearance of new competitors and territorial desires or internalization formulas as well as, and especially, due to the proposals that Argentina had been presenting since 1954 in the X Assembly of the International Geodesic and Geophysical Union, held in Rome, and that they tried to impose that "the delimitation of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans was not the Arch of the Southern Antilles, but the meridian that passes through the Diego Ramírez Island, which is practically the continuation of the Meridian, which divides Tierra del Fuego. Thus, by prolonging this

established. The process of analysis, discussion and approval of the treaty by both chambers lasted between March 1960 and June 1961.

¹⁶² Senate. 32nd Extraordinary Session (March 22, 1961): 1,926 and ss. (The report is inserted in the Annexes, Document N°3). The bill is in volume II of the 285th Legislature 285th (October 1959 to May 1960): 1,045.

¹⁶³ Senate. 33rd Extraordinary Session (April 4, 1961): 1,941-1,992; Senate 34th Extraordinary Session (April 5, 1961): 1,984; Senate. 3rd Ordinary Session (May 30, 1961):125 (In this session the deputies approved the report of the Relations Commission with the abstention of deputy Reyes Vicuña).

meridian of Diego Ramírez, Argentina incorporates into its Antarctic territory the entire Land of O'Higgins, the South Shetland Islands and, naturally, the entire cord of adjacent islets"¹⁶⁴.

In this sense, the Antarctic treaty appeared just at a time when an unease and disagreement among congressmen -more deputies than senators- was intensifying against the already almost institutionalized distancing behavior of the ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Defense towards the permanent trans-Andean intrusion and temporary occupation of islands in the Beagle Channel; to navigation without authorization in jurisdictional waters; to the surprising ignorance of the Chilean southern history and of a project of a dividing line in Antarctica and of a *statu quo* agreed with Argentina at different times¹⁶⁵. And; due to the frequent publications and dissemination of Argentinian cartographies, including part of the national Antarctic sector as its own¹⁶⁶. To the congressmen, it seemed that the government beyond continuing to raise protests before the Casa Rosada when the facts were confirmed, it was essential to start acting with anticipation and creativity, applying sanctions to the national institutions responsible for issuing erroneous or incomplete cartographies on the Antarctic sector¹⁶⁷ and that the Foreign Ministry was leaving

¹⁶⁴ House of Representatives. 13th Ordinary Session (June 16, 1955): 517.

¹⁶⁵ House of Representatives. 13th Ordinary Session (June 16, 1955): 524-525. (The deputy Hugo Miranda Ramírez in a long presentation expressed his annoyance at the intransigence and trans-Andean attitude; deputy Bustamante, when supporting this approach, recalled defending the Antarctic sector against the English of the Falkland Islands and Valdés Larraín, affirming that Argentina intended to create, by artificial means, certain and absurd new rights). House of Representatives. 3rd Ordinary Session (May 30, 1961): 125-138. Senate 34th Extraordinary Session (April 5, 1961): 1,984-1,989.

¹⁶⁶ House of Representatives. 2nd Extraordinary Session (October 20, 1953): 200-201. (Extensive debate on the circulation that Argentina carried out at the consular level "of publications and magazines referring to the Argentinian Antarctica" and where the Chilean Antarctica of 37 degrees in longitude (from 53° to 90° of west longitude) was reduced to only 14° in longitude. In the opinion of Deputy Raúl Morales Adriaola the most serious thing about this publication was that on the cover it appeared the stamp of President Peron and Ibáñez, accompanied by the speeches given on the occasion of the Chilean's President visit to Buenos Aires in July 1953). House of Representatives. 10th Extraordinary Session (November 3, 1953): 538-540. (Complaint and call of attention to the government of deputy Morales Adriaola for the publication and distribution of a map "in some American countries..." of the Antarctica). House of Representatives. 11th Extraordinary Session (November 4, 1953): 7,577. (Deputy Morales Adriaola somewhat tired for the lack of government foresight regarding the Argentinian southern actions, made use of the resource "Request for Official Letter", sending an official letter to the Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministers to remind them about "the sovereignty of Chile in Antarctica").

¹⁶⁷ Senate. 28th Extraordinary Session (August 14, 1956): 1,391-1,393; House of Representatives. 57th Session. (August 22, 1956): 3,656-3,658. (The edition and distribution of a map of the physical

aside the 'deep-rooted Americanist tradition'¹⁶⁸, the theories and doctrines were weigh on the country like a dead weigh"¹⁶⁹ and apply more correctly the expression 'gestures of international fellowship' to be able to have a more objective, purposeful and defender of these southern national spaces.

Regarding the latter and for much of the 1950s, the vision of Chilean congressmen was one of manifest concern and disapproval of the work carried out by the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of National Defense, seeing that the Chilean-Argentinian 'joint statements' did not contribute to the protection of the national sector, the frequent communication errors of the ministers and the president himself¹⁷⁰ and the Argentinian incursions into southern national jurisdictional spaces "passed and passed" without any changes in attitude and political leadership. To modify this uncertainty and generate new articulations in the southern zone, a national plan had to be drawn up and develop that would guarantee tranquility in the neighborhood and internationally, but without losing the role of the South American polar country. On one of the few occasions in which there was agreement of views and joint action by Chile and Argentina -perhaps the only one- was in the preparatory meetings for the International Geophysical Year and in particular "in the Paris Conference of 1955, the delegations of Chile and Argentina jointly formulated the following reservation: The Argentinian and Chilean delegations agreed to the recommendation concerning the coordination of existing and new bases, considering that in accordance with the resolution adopted at the first plenary meeting of the Conference and with the purposes and nature of the latter, these are temporary initiatives for the best success of the International Geophysical Year, adopted in favor of the development of science and

geography of the country by the Military Geographical Institute in 1956 and where the Antarctica appears green as if it were a meadow was the cause of arduous reproaches to the director of that institution, General Daniel Urra and of forceful criticism of the government by deputies Raúl Marín Balmaceda, Pedro Espina, Sergio Sepúlveda, Morales Adriaola, Valdés Larraín, Araneda, Lafaye, Fuentealba and Carmona).

¹⁶⁸ House of Representatives, 8th Ordinary Session (June 8, 1955): 334.

¹⁶⁹ Senate. 62nd Extraordinary Session (March 28, 1962): 2,993-2,999. (Extensive presentation of Senator Exequiel González Madariaga under the title "Borderline Problems in Antarctica").

¹⁷⁰ House of Representatives. 12th Extraordinary Session (April 18, 1956): 568-584. (In a long debate with Foreign Minister Enrique Barbosa Baeza over the 'decontextualized' statements made by President Ibáñez to the international press, he told the deputies that "the Government, especially the Foreign Affairs Minister who speaks, has had the satisfaction of that, in a recent Cabinet Council, a meticulous plan be approved which will be exhibited to the parliamentarians, and, to the public opinion, so that they have the opportunity to complete it, if necessary, in order to ensure a definite line towards the future in the Antarctic policy").

that these resolutions do not modify the “status” existing in Antarctica, in relation to the participating countries”¹⁷¹.

The Antarctic Treaty was interpreted by many congressmen as a good opportunity to contain or paralyze future territorial desires and ensure the inalienable Chilean sovereign rights within an international system located geographically between the 60th parallel and the South Pole and with a periodical meeting consultation mechanism between the contracting parties. This last characteristic early led senator Exequiel González Madariaga to recommend “to Minister of Foreign Affairs to take care of the organization of an Antarctic Department, assisted by competent and stable people, capable of withdrawing from the rugged management that in other international orders has had the same department. Failure to do so will expose ourselves to playing a slighted role within the community of nations that will now administer the Continent, despite our rights”¹⁷². The same Senator González, the following year, again, urged in the Senate hemicycle, the establishment of “an Institute of Antarctic Studies or Research, which should have its permanent seat in the city of Punta Arenas and be organized and directed by the University of Chile and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on whom matters related to Antarctic activity depend”¹⁷³.

For Aniceto Rodríguez Arenas, senator for the district of Valdivia, Osorno, Chiloé, Aysén and Magallanes, “the trans-Andean policy, of abuses, unfriendly acts and violation of agreements ... (could be broken with) this legal instrument -the Antarctic Treaty- and it pleases us as socialist senators because it enshrines international principals and stops the offensive of some powers, among which we can specifically mention Argentina and, of course, England...and when this treaty is approved we understand that it was buried, fortunately, the discussion of the Protocols with Argentina, which constituted, in our opinion, an act of undue pressure on the clear interests of Chile in bordering problems and also in Antarctica”¹⁷⁴. Rodríguez, at the end of his presentation in the Senate, assured that the Antarctic Treaty left Southern and Antarctic Chile much more protected than what had been done up to that moment by the Foreign Minister itself.

¹⁷¹ Senate. 33rd Extraordinary Session (April 4, 1961): 1,941-1,942. (Statement by Foreign Minister Germán Vergara Donoso in one of the sessions prior to the approval of the Antarctic Treaty).

¹⁷² Senate. 33rd Extraordinary Session (April 4, 1961): 1,957.

¹⁷³ Senate. 62nd Extraordinary Session (March 28, 1962): 2,993-2,995.

¹⁷⁴ Senate. 34th Extraordinary Session (April 5, 1961): 1,984-1,86.

Like many other senators and deputies¹⁷⁵ who, at the moment of casting their vote in support of the treaty, expressed some words, Senator Correa affirmed that “the Treaty is deeply convenient to the interests of Chile”, and therefore there was no other option than to subscribe it and approve it. In June 1961 the treaty was finally approved and ratified by the Chilean government, closing a short and intense process of legislative debate and where the most relevant final reflection and argumentation was in charge of the formal chancellor of 1940, promoter of the law N°11.846 in 1955 and promoter of the Antarctic statute in 1956¹⁷⁶ and head of the Chilean delegation in Washington in 1959, senator Marcial Mora Miranda¹⁷⁷.

With the declaration of senator Mora in 1961, the third stage of the national Antarctic policy called “from the consolidation of sovereignty to the freezing of the litigation” came to an end, starting another and, as far as we have been able to study, it seems to be characterized by a tenuous and repetitive national imprint and intense and marked international agenda¹⁷⁸.

Conclusions

In the identification of the positions and discussions of deputies and senators belonging to various political parties, in the minutes of sessions of the National Congress regarding the Antarctic question, the positive disposition of all of them in the face of an apparently new policy immediately draws attention, but for which there were more coincidences than divergencies, and generally, when arguing their position at the time of the ‘debates’ and ‘incidents’, they declared that out of ‘patriotism’, they supported the projects presented and those that without having spoken, they kept a strict silence and with this they assented their approval with generosity and a sense of future.

¹⁷⁵ House of Representatives. 5th Ordinary Session (June 6, 1961): 352-353 (In this session the House approved the Antarctic Treaty: “for the affirmative 37 votes; for the negative 11 votes”); House of Representatives. 10th Ordinary Session (June 14, 1961): 688-691.

¹⁷⁶ Senate. 33rd Ordinary Session (September 13, 1955): 1,797-1,799.

¹⁷⁷ Senate. 34th Extraordinary Session (April 5, 1961): 1,984 and ss. Cf. Mora Miranda, Marcial. The Antarctic Treaty. *Annals of the University of Chile*. Year CXIX, N° 124, (October-December 1961): 179-192.

¹⁷⁸ In a strictly provisional way, it can be postulated that this fourth stage of the national Antarctic policy born in 1961 would extend until the promulgation of the new Antarctic statute Law N° 21,255 of August 21, 2020 and its entry into force on March 16, 2021. In the immediate future, we hope to continue evaluating this Antarctic periodization proposal and in the best of cases, to be able to confirm it and develop it.

In the fifteen years from 1946 to 1961, the projects on the Chilean Antarctic Territory presented by the governments of González, Ibáñez and Alessandri received significant support from congressmen, both to continue developing activities and to safeguard the national sovereignty in the sixth continent. The congressmen, likewise, were perceiving that this was an international space and scenario that was very demanding of economic resources and that in order to justify all these expenses it was necessary for the government to prepare or provide opportunities for the training of specialists in its most varied subjects and scientific disciplines. A period of great changes and uncertainties and were the main victorious powers of the Second World War showed or winked at the other countries of their power in the polar region and expressed being called to have a leading role in the Southern continent.

At the neighborhood level, the Chilean congressmen were verifying that the historic agreements of the early XX century and those of 1941, 1947 and 1948 to act together in the defense of their respective Antarctic sectors did not apply, and however, Argentina persisted in unjustified demands for the Island of the Beagle Channel, in delaying positions and showing little interest in accompany Chile on the polar issue, leading to the conviction of taking advantage of every opportunity that arose and betting with its own roadmap and in the event of any emergency in relation with the Chilean Antarctic Territory, resort to all international bodies where it could be heard. The Washington Conference and the Antarctic Treaty would have been one of the opportunities that, by the way, the Chilean government welcomed and with the majority support of the congressmen ratified.

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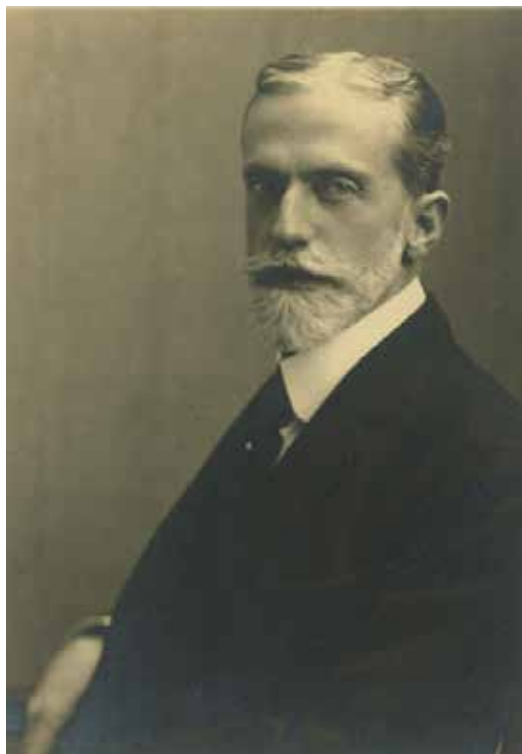
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Nº1. Julio Escudero Guzmán. Source: Chilean Antarctic Bulletin, vol 19, Nº1, 2000.



Nº2. Antonio Hunneus Gana. Source: Chilean National Museum of History.



Nº3. Raúl Juliet Gómez. Source: Library of National Congress of Chile.



Nº4. Lía Lafaye Torres. Source: Library of National Congress of Chile.



Nº5. Marcial Mora Miranda. Source: Central Bank of Chile Photo Archive

THE CONTROVERSY OVER ANTARCTICA AT THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (1955-1956)¹

Luis Valentin Ferrada Walker

Introduction

Antarctica was addressed as an important topic by the three successive Chilean governments in the decade of 1950. First, President Gabriel González Videla (1946-1952) founded the first Chilean stations and became the first Head of State in the world to visit the Sixth Continent. The Vergara-La Rosa declaration (1948), through which Chile and Argentina agreed to defend their respective rights mutually, strengthened the relationship between the two countries on this topic.

Second, the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1952-1958) supported the resolution of the Inter-American Conference of Caracas (1954), calling to cease the occupation of the American Antarctic by non-American countries (United Kingdom);² and inau-

¹ A previous version of some ideas included in this paper was published on the 60th anniversary of the British applications to ICJ, on “La Antártica ante la Corte Internacional de Justicia: A 60 años de los casos Reino Unido c. Chile y Reino Unido c. Argentina”, *Revista Tribuna Internacional*, Vol. 4 Nº 7 (2015), pp. 155-172. DOI: 10.5354/0719-482X.2015.36984.

I appreciate the collaboration of Carolina Flores in the translation of the present text. The responsibility for any errors is solely my own.

² R.G.J. “La X Conferencia Interamericana de Caracas”, *Revista de Política*

gured a new research station. Notwithstanding, the most remarkable Antarctic-related measure of Ibañez government was his enhancement of the Chilean legal framework regulating Antarctic activities. During his government, the Supreme Decree 1,747 (1940) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which delimited the Chilean Antarctic was finally published in the Official Gazette; Additionally, the Congress enacted the Law No. 11,846 (1955), which assigned the Governor of Magallanes as the administrator of the Chilean Antarctic Territory. During this period, it was also enacted the Supreme Decree 298 (1956), of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which contains the Statute of the Chilean Antarctic Territory; and the national Antarctic policy was made explicit for the first time. The previous developments responded, partially, to the United Kingdom's (UK) filings to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The British government asked the Court to rule the overlapping of its claimed Antarctic territories, with the ones claimed by Chile and Argentina (1955). This submission also increased the Chilean interest in participating in the International Geophysical Year 1957-1958 (IGY).³

Third, Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez (1958-1964) was Chile's President during the conclusion of the International Geophysical Year (IGY). The Antarctic Treaty (1959, in force 1961) was also negotiated under his administration.

The three governments mentioned above faced increasing Antarctic tensions in light of the development of the Cold War, which included actions of military connotation together with attempts at rapprochement.⁴

Internacional, nº 16 (1953/1954), p. 84; Palamara, Graziano. "Entre panamericanismo y macartismo: La X Conferencia Interamericana de Caracas en el juicio de la diplomacia italiana", *Cuadernos Americanos: Nueva Época*, Vol. 3 Nº 149 (2014), pp. 119-120.

³ León Wöppke, Consuelo et al. (eds.) *La Antártica y el Año Geofísico Internacional, 1954-1958. Percepciones desde fuentes chilenas* (Valparaíso, Universidad de Playa Ancha, 2006); Jara Fernández, Mauricio and Pablo Mancilla González (eds.) *El Año Geofísico Internacional en la perspectiva histórica chilena, 1954-1958* (Valparaíso, Puntágeles Editorial, 2012).

⁴ Klotz, Frank G. *America On The Ice: Antarctic Policy Issues* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1990), 21-24; Garay, Cristián and Ángel Soto. *Gabriel González Videla. No a los totalitarismos, ya sean rojos, pardos o amarillos...* (Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, 2013), pp. 175-183; y Villalón, Eduardo; Consuelo León and Mauricio Jara. *Jalonando Chile Austral Antártico. El Ejército en la Antártica, 1948* (Santiago: Instituto Geográfico Militar, 2010), pp. 206-210; Heron, David Winston, "Antarctic Claims", *Foreign Affairs*, 1954, vol. 32 no 4, p. 161; Mancilla, Pablo. "Chile, Argentina y Gran Bretaña en el continente antártico, 1906-1961. Una aproximación a las controversias diplomáticas". *Revista de Estudios Históricos*, Vol. 3, Nº 1 (2006), [en línea] <<http://www.estudioshistoricos.uchile.cl>>.

British Applications

The jurisdiction of the ICJ depends on States consent. They must agree on the Court's jurisdiction through an arbitration treaty or clause, accepting its jurisdiction upon being sued, or through a unilateral declaration of compulsory jurisdiction. If both parties agree, they ask the Court to initiate the procedure. If not, the plaintiff unilaterally requests the ICJ to do so, identifying the defendant, the subject of the controversy, the facts and legal grounds that support it, and the grounds for the Court's jurisdiction.⁵

Accordingly, on 4 May 1955, the UK filed two unilateral separated applications, against Chile and Argentina, seeking to determine sovereignty over certain islands and lands in Antarctica.⁶ Although independent of each other, the content of both filings was largely identical. Gerald G. Fitzmaurice, a promising British jurist, was appointed as Agent and signed the submissions.⁷

Given that the claims of the three countries over Antarctic territories overlap, the UK claimed that Chile and Argentina were illegitimately occupying spaces under its sovereignty according to the Patent Letter of 1908,⁸ corrected in 1917.⁹ Against Chile, the application referred to the islands and lands located to the south from parallel 58° south

⁵ Vargas, Edmundo. "La Corte Internacional de Justicia: su organización y competencia". *Revista Tribuna Internacional*. Vol. 3, special issue (2014), pp. 16-20.

⁶ The documents about the judicial dispute are published on ICJ, Antarctica Cases (the United Kingdom v. Argentina; the United Kingdom v. Chile): orders of March 16th, 1956; removal from the list. Pleadings, oral arguments, documents. (The Hague, 1956). They are partially available [on line] <<http://www.icj-cij.org>>. There is a Part I, "Application instituting proceedings and pleadings", with both applications and their background documents; Part II and Part III, kept only for maintaining the order but without materials; and a Part IV, "Correspondence", with the official communications in relations with the cases. If nothing different is said, references in this paper are made to "Application" or "Correspondence" followed by the page number inside of that part.

⁷ Note from The United Kingdom Ambassador on Neatherlands to the ICJ Secretary, 4.May.1955, at *Correspondence*, p. 82.

Gerald Gray Fitzmaurice (1901-1982) will be Judge of the ICJ (1960-1973) and later Judge of the European Court of Human Rights (1974-1980). He was also an international arbitrator. Among other relevant cases, he chaired the arbitral court in the Beagle Channel case (Chile v. Argentina) (1971-1977), although this case was solved at large by mediation from the Pope. *Vid.* Merrills, John Graham. *Judge Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice and de discipline of International Law* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998).

⁸ Issued on 21.Jul.1908, published at the *Falkland Islands Gazette*, 1.Sep.1908; and on the *British and Foreign State Papers, 1907-08* (London, 1912), (101): 76-77.

⁹ Issued on 28.Mar.1917, published at the *Falkland Islands Gazette*, 2.Jul.1917; and on the *British and Foreign State Papers, 1917-18* (London, 1921), (111): 16-17.

between meridians 53° and 80° west;¹⁰ and against Argentina, south of the parallel 60° south between the meridians 25° and 74° west.¹¹

Both applications follow the same structure, starting by circumscribing the lawsuit. In the case of Chile, it was claimed that the controversy started on 6 November 1940, when the Chilean Antarctic Territory was delimited,¹² which includes, among others, the Land of Graham and the South Shetlands.¹³

The application did not include the southern sector of the Antarctic Peninsula, as Graham Land only reaches up to approximately 69° south,¹⁴ nor the inner continental area. Even the attached map only graphs up to near parallel 75° south.¹⁵ It would be interesting to investigate how and when the UK extended its territorial claim to the South Pole since until 1955 it referred exclusively to coastal sectors useful for the whaling industry.

Concerning Argentina, the UK dated the beginning of the controversy in 1925, regarding the South Orkney Islands; in 1927, on South Georgia; and in 1937 to all the territories of the “Dependencies”, as confirmed in 1942 and 1946. The subject matter was broader compared to the application against Chile since Argentina’s and UK’s claims completely overlap.¹⁶

¹⁰ *Application*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹ *Application*, pp. 9-10.

¹² The Chilean Antarctic Territory delimitation had immediate legal effects, as a manifestation of the Chilean State will. The press announced the enactment of the Supreme Decree 1747 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs broadly. The year 1940’s Memoria del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores included this decree and some academic books, as Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. *La Antártida Chilena o Territorio Chileno Antártico* (Santiago: Imprenta Universitaria, 1944), pp. 23-24, transcribed it. The British Application cited it from Pinochet’s book. It was translated for the Application (p. 76). Although all of that, it was only formally published on the Official Gazette No. 23.177, on 21.Jun.1955. A plausible explanation about why a decree enacted in 1940 was published only in 1955 at Jara Fernández, Mauricio. “El Territorio Antártico Chileno: De la reclamación a la incorporación administrativa-política del sector polar, 1906-1956”, in León Wöppke, Consuelo and Mauricio Jara Fernández (editors). *Esbozando la historia antártica latinoamericana* (Viña del Mar: Editorial LW, 2013), pp. 171-172.

¹³ *Application*, pp. 48-50.

¹⁴ At the very begging wasn’t a clear definition about the southern limit of what British called Graham Land. In the end, this name was given to the Antarctic Peninsula area north to the line from Jeremy Cape (69° 24’ 00.0” S, 68° 50’ 00.0” W) and Agassiz Cape (68° 28’ 00.0” S, 62° 57’ 00.0” W). *Vid.* Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). *Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica*. [on line] <<https://data.aad.gov.au/aadc/gaz/scar/search.cfm>>.

¹⁵ The map is the Annex II. *Vid. Correspondence*, after p. 114.

¹⁶ *Application*, pp. 8-11.

The following four sections of both applications were identical, and the UK: (i) Dated the origin of its titles between 1675 and 1843, based in acts and discoveries of their nationals;¹⁷ (ii) argued the exercise of sovereignty between 1843-1908 in, and related to, the Falkland/Malvinas Islands Dependencies;¹⁸ (iii) claimed the eventual exercise of sovereignty in such territories between 1908-1938,¹⁹ and; (iv) asserted a supposed recognition of its claim by Norway, Argentina and Chile after its 1908 Patent Letter.²⁰

In these first four sections, the UK incurred in a series of inaccuracies and overstatements. For instance, the British exaggerated the relevance given to the travels of James Cook (1768-1779), who could have not possibly discovered Antarctica and who, as a matter of fact, questioned its existence.²¹ Moreover, the UK interpreted the requests of non-state actors as equivalent to the State's recognition of its own sovereignty; and it assumed that the attitude of the Norwegian authorities regarding Antarctica was somehow an object of concern for Chile or Argentina. In the UK's application against Chile, most of the arguments did not even refer to the disputed territories. Nevertheless, it must be said that in general the first part of the application makes a good summary of Antarctic's history from the perspective of the Foreign Office. It would be interesting to further consider and analyse critically this narrative.

The following three sections differ in both applications. In the application against Chile, the UK addressed: (i) the delimitation of the Chilean Antarctic Territory (1940),²² omitting that the Decree delimiting the territory expressly mentioned being a continuation of the delimitations started by Chile in 1906; (ii) the rejection of such delimitation and the alleged exercise of British sovereignty after 1940,²³ and; (iii) the Chilean insistence on interfering with the alleged British sovereignty through its material interference in the disputed territories and the establishment of stations.²⁴

The application against Argentina emphasized: (i) the origin and development of Argentina's claim over the Falkland Islands/Malvinas Dependencies and attempts to usurp them

¹⁷ *Application*, pp. 51-53 and pp. 11-13.

¹⁸ *Application*, pp. 53-55 and pp. 13-16.

¹⁹ *Application*, pp. 56-61 and pp. 16-21.

²⁰ *Application*, pp. 61-64 and pp. 21-24.

²¹ Cook, James. *The Three Voyage of Captain James Cook round the World*. Vol. IV (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1821), p. 219.

²² *Application*, pp. 64-65.

²³ *Application*, pp. 65-67.

²⁴ *Application*, pp. 67-69.

from British sovereignty;²⁵ (ii) the rejection of such a claim and the continued exercise of British sovereignty in such territories,²⁶ and; (iii) the Argentine insistence on interfering with the alleged British sovereignty through its material interference in the South Orkney, the South Shetlands and the Graham Land.²⁷

The last four sections were practically identical. In them: (i) the UK intended to rest judicial relevance to the Chilean activities since 1940, and to the Argentinean activities since 1925 or 1937 (depending on the addressed territories);²⁸ (ii) there was a brief analysis of some judicial cases,²⁹ which would support the British position;³⁰ (iii) the UK argued the Court's jurisdiction over the matter,³¹ and; (iv) there was a presentation of the specific requests.³²

The petitions presented in the last part were similar for the Chilean and the Argentinean cases. The UK based its claim on the historical discoveries in the sub-Antarctic and Antarctic zones, and the supposed exercise of British sovereignty since then, its incorporation into the domains of the Crown, and its formal regulation in 1908 and 1917 as "Dependencies of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas". Accordingly, the UK argued, it had, and it always has had, sovereignty over the disputed territories. The British sovereignty titles would be superior to any others, and particularly to those of Chile and Argentina, whose claims and sovereignty acts would be internationally illegal and invalid. They were to respect British sovereignty, cease their sovereign claims and, if requested, withdraw their nationals and missions.

Procedure

The British application was notified on 6 May 1955 and communicated to the member

²⁵ *Application*, pp. 24-26.

²⁶ *Application*, pp. 26-30.

²⁷ *Application*, pp. 30-32.

²⁸ *Application*, p. 70 and pp. 32-33.

²⁹ Huber (Arbitrator) (1928), *Island of Palma case* (The United State v. The Neatherlands), *Reports of International Arbitral Awards*, vol. II, pp. 829-871; Víctor Emmanuel III (Arbitrator) (1931), *Island of Clipperton case* (Mexico v. France), *Reports of International Arbitral Awards*, vol. II, pp. 1105-1111; Permanent Court of International Justice (1933), *Legal Status of Eastern Greenland case* (Denmark v. Norway), Serie A/B, Nº 53, pp. 22-75; and, ICJ (1953), *Minquiers and Ecrehos Case* (The United Kingdom v. France), pp. 47-109.

³⁰ *Application*, pp. 70-72 and pp. 33-35.

³¹ *Application*, pp. 72-74 and pp. 35-37.

³² *Application*, pp. 74-75 and pp. 37-38. Also in Press Release 55/26 (un-official), 6.May.1955.

states of the United Nations and other authorized to intervene before the Court.³³ The UK assumed that the defendants had neither accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court nor recognized its jurisdiction for this case. Therefore, the ICJ would only have jurisdiction if accepted by Chile and Argentina when notified. Despite having tried unsuccessfully for a jurisdictional settlement since 1947, the UK was confident on the possibility of reaching agreement on this.³⁴

After being notified, the Chilean Ambassador to the Netherlands, Luis Renard Valenzuela, requested that the communications be sent directly to Santiago.³⁵ In the following days, certified copies of the British applications were sent to the governments of Chile and Argentina, to the other 73 Member States of the United Nations at that time, to its General Secretariat, and to States were not Parties of the UN. Due to the interest raised by the case, another 75 certified copies and 300 plain copies were sent to the United Nations General Secretariat for distribution.³⁶

On 15 July 1955, Ambassador Renard informed the Secretary of the Court of Chile's position to reject the Court's jurisdiction to hear any matter on the Chilean Antarctic Territory, as it was under its absolute sovereignty. This has already been communicated to the UK on 4 May 1955, the same day on which it filed its application.³⁷

The Chilean note to the UK was a response to a previous communication dated 21 December 1954. In this communication, the UK proposed to submit the Antarctic question to ICJ or to an ad-hoc arbitral tribunal. The UK had warned unilateral application to the ICJ if this proposal was not accepted. Chile responded that, despite its traditional respect for peaceful means of dispute resolution, it was impossible for it to accept such jurisdiction over territory under its full sovereignty by incontestable legal, political, historical, geographical, diplomatic and administrative titles.³⁸ Furthermore, the American Antarctica was included in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, TIAR (1947). Therefore, the claims

³³ Different notes from the ICJ Secretary, all of them dated on 6.May.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 82-86.

³⁴ *Application*, pp. 72-74 and pp. 35-37.

³⁵ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 17.May.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 86.

³⁶ Different notes from the ICJ Secretary, dated on 23 and 26.May.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 86-89.

³⁷ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 15.Jul.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 94.

³⁸ An overview of the Chilean sovereign titles over Antarctica in Juliet, Raúl. "Exposición sobre la Antártica del señor Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, don Raúl Juliet Gómez, ante el Senado de la República de Chile, en sesión extraordinaria de fecha 21 de enero de 1947". *Revista Tribuna Internacional*. Vol. 6, Nº 11 (2017).

coming from outside the Americas, over an essential space for hemispheric defence and security, as it was Antarctica, were unacceptable. This claim was also applicable to Argentina, with whom Chile had committed in 1948 to legally defend the territory between the meridians 25º and 90º West, reciprocally recognizing incontestable rights of sovereignty. Express reservations were made about the validity of the 1908 and 1917 Patent Letters.³⁹

After rejecting the British proposal, Chile proposed to negotiate a treaty between the countries with interests over Antarctica, for the benefit of all humankind. This treaty was conceived as of limited duration and it would not make significant recognitions or modifications of the diverse legal positions over Antarctica. In this way, the treaty would enhance cooperation while facilitating scientific research and exploration in the continent. It would also avoid friction in an old and friendly relationship between Chile and the UK.⁴⁰ This proposal reiterated the statement made by Julio Escudero to the American Caspar Green in 1948; a real anticipation of the Antarctic Treaty.⁴¹ Even though this last one incorporated elements of greater complexity,⁴² the Chilean proposal to the UK is still remarkable as, with some nuances, it would come up as the definitive solution.

The transcribed note concluded by questioning whether the Court could exercise jurisdiction based on a unilateral application. It denied the Court's jurisdiction to rule on Antarctic sovereignty without the express consent of Chile.⁴³

Accordingly, Ambassador Renard declared to the Secretary of the Court that for Chile there was no point in contesting the British arguments, as they addressed acts over a territory of which Chile was sovereign by previous and irrefutable titles.⁴⁴

On 1 August 1955, the Argentine Ambassador to the Netherlands, Natalio Carvajal Palacios, sent two notes to the Secretary of the Court. The first was a response to the notification of the UK's application, of 6 May 1955. It consisted on a communication's transcription, submitted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating that he had communicated to the British Ambassador in Buenos Aires that Argentina would not accept to subject

³⁹ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 15.Jul.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁰ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 15.Jul.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 95-96.

⁴¹ About the Escudero proposal, see Pinochet de la Barra (1994), pp. 70-71, 73 and 76.

⁴² Among others, see Dodds, Klaus. "La administración del continente polar: Los orígenes geopolíticos del Tratado Antártico de 1959". *Istor*, (39), México D.F., 2009, pp. 27-49; and Berguño Barnes, Jorge. "Historia intelectual del Tratado Antártico". *Boletín Antártico*, 19 (1), Santiago, 2000, pp. 2-12.

⁴³ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 15.Jul.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 96.

⁴⁴ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 15.Jul.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 96.

its Antarctic sovereignty to an international or arbitral tribunal, reiterating this now to the Secretary of the Court. Argentina argued that territorial sovereignty could not be discussed or questioned, less if it was based on unquestionable rights, legitimate titles and effective, continuous and peaceful possession. Therefore, Argentina could not accept the Court's jurisdiction.⁴⁵

The second note transcribed the aforementioned communication, dated 4 May 1955, the same date of the British submission of its application and Chile's note, mentioned above. The note was a response to a British proposal to solve the Antarctic controversy, dated 21 December 1954. Argentina rejected any legal value of the Patent Letters of 1908 and 1917, as they were unilateral acts done without its approval. Being the Falklands / Malvinas under Argentinean sovereignty, and having been usurped, they could not create Antarctic rights in favour of the UK. Hence, there was no obligation to submit to foreign courts the question of the legitimacy of the sovereign titles, nor did Argentina intend to do so. The TIAR (1947) and the Chilean-Argentine Declaration (1948) were also addressed. It concluded by rejecting the claim to refer these matters to an international or arbitral tribunal.⁴⁶

The Secretary of the Court forwarded the notes from Chile and Argentina to Agent Fitzmaurice, stating that he had already delivered them to each of the judges.⁴⁷ The British Agent responded jointly. He regretted the denial of the respondent States to accept the jurisdiction of the Court. In his personal opinion, it was expected that after the notifications, the countries would reconsider it. The reason for this would have been their recent approach with the Court, as one of the judges was Argentinian⁴⁸ and one of the former

⁴⁵ Note from the Argentinean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 1.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 89-90.

⁴⁶ Note from the Argentinean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 1.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 91-93.

⁴⁷ Note from the ICJ Secretary to the British Agent, 3.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 97. The ICJ was chair by Green H. Hackworth (United State of America), and were judges at that time Hsu Mo (China), José Gustavo Guerrero (El Salvador), John Erskine Read (Canada), Milovan Zoričić (Yugoslavia), Helge Klaestad (Norway), Jules Basdevant (France), Abdel Hamid Badawi (Egypt), Bohdan Winiarski (Poland), Enrique c. Armand-Ugon (Uruguay), Feodor Ivanovitch Kojevnikov (USSR), Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (Pakistan), Hersch Lauterpacht (United Kingdom), Roberto Córdova (Mexico) and Lucio Manuel Moreno Quintana (Argentina). Four of the fifteen judges were nationals of an Antarctic's Claimants States, including one from the United Kingdom and other from Argentina. The two Cold War's Super Power had a judge. And six judges belonged to an Interamerican System country. That means that an international dispute in the ICJ would have had an enormous amount of implicit political considerations.

⁴⁸ Lucio Manuel Moreno Quintana (1955-1964).

ones was Chilean.⁴⁹ Furthermore, by intervening the supposed British Antarctic territory and by refusing at the same time to find a peaceful solution of controversies, Chile and Argentina would contravene the text and spirit of the United Nations Charter.⁵⁰

The UK accepted the right of Chile and Argentina to deny jurisdiction to the Court. However, it refused to validate the reasons argued by these countries, nor accept the impossibility to resolve this matter by jurisdictional means.⁵¹

Likewise, the British Agent did not accept the assertion of the titles invoked by Chile and Argentina being so self-evident, that they did not require to be determined by a court. These titles did not only oppose the British titles, but they referred to the same territory, based on the same grounds. However, Fitzmaurice misunderstood two different facts. On the one hand, the inaccuracy and ambiguity of the borders between the old colonial administrative units of the Castilian Empire. On the other, that the Empire, as a whole, exercised its authority up to the South Pole. He also did not accept a historical succession from Spain, since in his opinion, those territories had never been Spanish. Therefore, Antarctica was unknown until the British discovery. Thus, the British Agent confused the incorporation of Antarctica into the international scene (1820), with the acknowledgement of its existence. This last one was always present in human history, as recorded in the repeated mentions of *Terra Australis* in the old colonial titles.

The British Agent also rejected the argument linking the sovereignty of the Latin American countries to the closer geographical distance between Antarctica and its metropolitan territories.⁵² It is worth noticing that the distance is much smaller than the one from the Falkland Islands/Malvinas and of course from Great Britain!

Fitzmaurice pointed out that the Antarctic activities and acts of possession argued by Chile and Argentina were subsequent to the crystallization of the controversies. They would be illegal and prohibited demonstrations of sovereignty because they violated the British titles. Therefore, they would not produce any rights and they could not be addressed by an international court. The same would apply to any action subsequent to the beginning of the procedures before the ICJ, even if the Court would reject its jurisdiction over the matter. Finally, adding a slight tone of threat, the British Agent warned that having ex-

⁴⁹ Some month before had finished his appointment Alejandro Álvarez (1946-1955).

⁵⁰ Note from the British Agent to the ICJ Secretary, 31.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 97-98

⁵¹ Note from the British Agent to the ICJ Secretary, 31.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 98.

⁵² Note from the British Agent to the ICJ Secretary, 31.Aug.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 98-99.

hausted all peaceful means, the UK would not be responsible for the consequences that could follow.⁵³

The communication was forwarded to the respective ministries of foreign affairs.⁵⁴ Ambassador Renard told the Secretary of the Court that no comment would be made since Chile did not accept the jurisdiction of the Court nor could the Court intervene. Chile stated that it would not generate controversy over its sovereign right to accept or not such jurisdiction.⁵⁵

On 16 March 1956, the Court warned that after the notification and “the responses received since then from both governments, it is clear that they are not prepared to accept the jurisdiction of the Court in these cases.”⁵⁶ Therefore, it decided to remove them from the list of pending matters.⁵⁷ The decision taken was then notified.⁵⁸

Some Conclusions

It is striking to see how Antarctica has been “falklandized/malvinized” in the controversy brought before the ICJ and in the British narrative. This may be relevant for Argentina but is extraneous and irrelevant for Chile. It is enough to see a map to notice that the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and the other “Dependencies” have very different geographical, historical (and legal) situations. The controversy with Chile referred exclusively to the South Shetlands and the northern sector of the Antarctic Peninsula. Consequently, the multiple references and arguments about the Falklands/Malvinas, South Georgia, South Sandwich and South Orkney were irrelevant for the case.

Whatever the British would have done or not in the aforementioned islands does not affect Antarctica, enormously distant. As the British applications acknowledged, the al-

⁵³ Note from the British Agent to the ICJ Secretary, 31.aug.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 100.

⁵⁴ Notes from the ICJ Secretary to the Foreign Affairs ministers from Chile and Argentina, 3.Sep.1955, en *Correspondence*, p. 101.

⁵⁵ Note from the Chilean Ambassador to the ICJ Secretary, 10.Oct.1955, *Correspondence*, pp. 101-102. It was send by a note from the ICJ Secretary to the British Agent, 13.Oct.1955, *Correspondence*, p. 102.

⁵⁶ ICJ, Press Release 56/5 (un-official), 17.Mar.1956.

⁵⁷ ICJ, Antarctica Cases (the United Kingdom v. Chile), Order, 16.Mar.1956; and ICJ, Antarctica Cases (the United Kingdom v. Argentina), Order, 16.Mar.1956, both in ICJ, *Reports of Judgements, Advisory Opinions and Orders 1956* (The Hague, 1957), pp. 15-17 and pp. 12-14.

⁵⁸ Different notes from the ICJ Secretary, from 16 to 23.Mar.1956, *Correspondence*, pp. 102-105.

leged incorporation of the “Dependencies” only took place in 1908,⁵⁹ as a reaction to the unsuccessful Chilean-Argentine negotiations to define its Antarctic borders run between 1906-1908.⁶⁰ By then, and even more so in 1917, after *Piloto Pardo* rescuing Shackleton,⁶¹ Chile had been making a public statement of its rights for many years. Between others, the country enacted regulations and administrative acts, or published maps (Bertrand’s, on 1884; or Risopatron’s, on 1907). However, any of the previous acts did have any relation to the Falkland/Malvinas. The British even recognized in their application the 1906 Chilean-Argentinean diplomatic negotiations, but they did not reference the date where they took place. Moreover, such dialogues were mentioned only after addressing the Patent Letters of 1908, as if the negotiations of 1906 would have taken place subsequently.⁶²

It is impossible to know what would have been the results of these cases if taken forward. However, it is indeed possible to visualize their continuation as a stumbling block for other Antarctic initiatives.

The first preparatory meeting for the IGY took place in Paris in July 1955.⁶³ This scientific

⁵⁹ *Application*, pp. 53 and 55, pp. 13 and 15-16.

⁶⁰ Huneus, Antonio. *Antártida* (Santiago: Imprenta Chile, 1948), pp. 11-12; Siegrist, Nora. “Política exterior argentina durante la presidencia de Figueroa Alcorta (1906-1910) y el memorándum secreto del doctor Estanislao S. Zeballos”, in Siegrist, N.; N. Girbal, and A. Elio, *Tres estudios argentinos*. 2ª edición (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1982) pp. 68-85, 111-112, and 212-220; Pinochet de la Barra, Óscar. “Antecedentes históricos de la política internacional de Chile en la Antártica. Negociaciones chileno-argentinas de 1906, 1907 y 1908”. In: Orrego Vicuña, F., M.T. Infante, and P. Armanet (edit.), *Política Antártica de Chile* (Santiago: Instituto de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad de Chile, 1984), pp. 72-79; Pinochet de la Barra, Oscar. *Medio siglo de recuerdos antárticos. Memorias* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1994), pp. 28-35; Berguño, Jorge. “El despertar de la conciencia antártica (1874-1914). Los orígenes del litigio internacional”. *Boletín Antártico Chileno*. Vol. 18, nº 2 (1999), pp. 11-13; Jara, Mauricio. “El canciller Federico Puga Borne y el intento de demarcación polar y antártica, 1907-1908”. *Estudios Hemisféricos y Polares*. Vol. 5, Nº 2 (2014), pp. 122-131.

⁶¹ Omitted by British historiography, Llanos, Nelson. “Una historia distorsionada: El rescate de isla Elefante a través de la prensa anglosajona, 1916”. In: León Wöppke, Consuelo and Mauricio Jara Fernández (edit.). *El Piloto Luis Pardo Villalón: Visiones desde la prensa, 1916* (Viña del Mar: LW Editorial, 2015), pp. 95-99.

In addition to the argument given to explain this omission (pp, 97-98), it is important to consider the British interest to doesn’t give any credit to Chileans that they could use to legitimized the Chilean legal position over the Antarctic.

⁶² *Application*, p. 62 and p. 22.

⁶³ There were two previous meetings, in 1953 and 1954, but with broader objectives. Chile only participated in the second one. The first preparatory meeting about Antarctic research in relation with IGY was in 1955. *Vid.* Buedeler, Werner. *El Año Geofísico Internacional* (París: Unesco, 1957), pp. 67-69; Mancilla González, Pablo. “Chile y el proceso preparatorio para el Año Geofísico

ic initiative, rich in political elements, would inspire the Washington Conference (1959), where the Antarctic Treaty was adopted. This would have been unlikely to occur with an international trial pending. Although such an agreement did not resolve the sovereign disputes, postponing them, its successful practical execution has made it possible to combine national sovereignty with international governance. It has furthermore guaranteed the peaceful use of a gigantic continent and the development of science. Progress has been made towards conserving its resources and protecting its environment. The achievements of the Antarctic Treaty outweigh immensely the benefits of judicially clarifying the Antarctic boundaries between Chile, Argentina and the UK.

Another positive outcome that came of this situation was the development of coordinated Antarctic action between Chile and Argentina, which, beyond the ideological affinity between Ibáñez and Perón⁶⁴, is a reflection of a common position that, full of complexities, continues to this day.

The British application reactivated the Chilean Antarctic policy. The formalities related to Supreme Decree No. 1,747 of the Foreign Relations Ministry, promulgated in 1940, were finally concluded and it was published in the Chilean Official Gazette. Moreover, the UK's application gave place to the most complete national regulation until the recent Antarctic Law (Law No 21,255 of 2020), through the Law No. 11,846 (1955) and the Supreme Decree No. 298 (1956) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The public reaction to the controversy led the Ibáñez government to specify an Antarctic policy. The policy was presented before the Congress (Chamber of Deputies) on 18 April 1956. It set goals and objectives on (i) promoting national Antarctic awareness; (ii) increasing the acts of occupation and administration of the Chilean Antarctic Territory, the inauguration of stations, the implementation of expeditions, and the development of scientific activities; (iii) the active participation of Chile in the IGY; (iv) the enactment of a legal framework for a better administration of the Antarctic territory; (v) the inclusion of the Chilean Antarctic Territory in all national maps and; (vi) the dissemination of the Antarctic policy in educational establishments.⁶⁵

Internacional, 1950-1957", in Jara Fernández, Mauricio and Pablo Mancilla González (editores). *El Año Geofísico Internacional en la perspectiva histórica chilena, 1954-1958* (Valparaíso: Editorial Puntángelos–Universidad de Playa Ancha, 2012), pp. 40-43.

⁶⁴ San Francisco, Alejandro (general director). *Historia de Chile, 1960-2010* (Santiago: CEUSS, 2016). Tomo I, pp. 165-168.

⁶⁵ Chilean National Congress. *Sesiones de la Honorable Cámara de Diputados*, 18.Apr.1956, pp. 568-584.

In summary, even though the applications submitted did not result in any judgements, the arguments presented by the British are still relevant. They were never further developed by the UK, but they are outlined in its applications. If the Antarctic territorial disputes would reemerge in the future, the arguments will be brought again. Therefore, Chile and Argentina must keep them in mind.

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MISSION TO SYDNEY: JUAN DOMEYKO ÁLAMOS AND THE ANTARCTIC ISSUE, 1956-1957¹

Nelson Llanos Sierra

World and Antarctic Outlook

There is little risk in stating that –to a great extent– current reality in the Antarctic continent is the outcome of complex international events recorded since World War II. The decline of major colonial empires, US entrenchment in the West, increasing influence of the Soviet Union, and mid-century explosive scientific and technological development, among other factors, collaborated in shaping the intricate legal/diplomatic situation of the polar continent until the present day.

During the first decades of the last century the Antarctic was understood as a hostile region, impossible to inhabit permanently, and reserved only for those who dared an adventure to enhance the name of their countries. As is known, this heroic era came to an end with the conquering of the South Pole by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (1911) and the bitter failure of British expeditions led by Robert F. Scott and Ernest H. Shackleton. Thereon, romanticism of Antarctic exploration and the array of heroes in

¹ A prior version of this paper was published under the title *Amenaza Soviética en la Antártica: los intentos de Chile por conformar una alianza con Australia y Estados Unidos, 1956-1959*

this period would give way to a new stage in the history of the white continent. The outbreak of World War II –and especially the onset of the Cold War– tinged the region with political realism, scientific rivalry, and economic ambitions, all distinctive features of the East-West conflict.

As sustained by recent Antarctic historiography, the 1940's implied a rearrangement of forces and actors in the frozen continent.² The United Kingdom –once first world power– had been relegated to second place, and despite London continued managing an empire of colossal dimensions, in the short-term would experience its dismemberment. Although the Antarctic was not unaffected by the eclipse of British power, it may be said that it became one of the last strongholds where the Crown –on account of strategic reasons and prestige– would attempt to maintain presence of the empire.³ An essential part of this entailed collaboration by New Zealand and especially Australia, former colonies also closely linked to the frozen continent.⁴

Also during this period, the United States –now consolidated as the new Western superpower– extended and deepened its interests in the Antarctic. The diminished British situation and absence of a relevant rival in the region assisted the unfolding of actions never seen by the northern country in the white continent. The power of Washington ran from Pole to Pole throughout the Western Hemisphere, projecting toward both sides of the globe, spanning the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Global expansion of the Cold War, and particularly the consolidation of United States as leader in the West, implied the alignment –often time unavoidable– of Latin America with Washington foreign policy. Chile and Argentina were not foreign to this new reality, being ever greater the influence of the northern country over both. Neither did this panorama contribute to the Antarctic interests of these South American nations. Governments in Santiago and Buenos Aires upheld their territorial rights in the white continent, and which Washington refused to recognize. The country in the North, in a new version of their *open*

² See: Eugenio L. Facchin et al. *Antártida. Verdad e Historia. La Década de 1940 desde la Perspectiva de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay* (Ushuaia: Museo Marítimo de Ushuaia, 2019)

³ See: Klaus Dodds and Alan D. Hemmings, “Britain and the British Antarctic Territory in the wider geopolitics of the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean”, *International Affairs* 89 (2013)

⁴ In 1923 London transferred part of its Antarctic pretensions to New Zealand (Ross Dependency). Later, in 1933 the same would be done with Australia, giving rise to the so-called Australian Antarctic.

doors policy, preferred to disregard all existing sovereign claims and revindications, reserving for itself the right to make their own claim in future.⁵

Despite the attitude of the United States, South American countries with interests in Antarctica continued their projects in the frozen continent. In the case of Chile, the 1940's is considered a stage of consolidating activities by the country in the region, and which resulted in the establishment of permanent bases and uninterrupted annual expeditions, among others.⁶ In the following decade, renewed interest in the Antarctic issue among authorities, armed forces, academics, and public opinion in general, faced an unprecedented challenge with relevant consequences for the entire international system: the arrival of the Soviet Union to the frozen continent.

Juan Domeyko and the Cold War from Australia

Chile and Australia, located on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, were late in establishing diplomatic relations. Only the strategic importance acquired by the Southern Hemisphere during the Second World War appeared to drive this closing of ties. The Japanese threat in the Pacific had demonstrated the vulnerability of countries located in the ocean basin, leading to concern among authorities and at the same time making unavoidable a closer approach to the United States. The northern country appeared as the only power able to ensure security in the region in view of new international threats on the horizon.

Chile appointed writer and journalist Manuel Hübner Richardson (1944-1947) as its first representative to Sydney, while the Australian government sent John S. Duncan as its first representative to Santiago "in a Latin American country on the Pacific coast".⁷ Subsequently, in 1953 Juan Domeyko Álamos was to arrive at the island continent to take up his post as Chilean Deputy Head of Mission in Sydney.⁸ The diplomat had served in various positions in the Foreign Service since 1925, mainly in Argentina, Brazil, and the United

⁵ See: Robert Hall, "The Open Door into Antarctica: An Explanation of the Hughes Doctrine", *Polar Record* 25 (1989)

⁶ See: Consuelo León. *La Segunda Elite Antártica Chilena y el Gobierno de Gabriel González Videla*. In: *Internacionalismo y Anticomunismo en Tiempos de Gabriel González Videla* (Santiago: RIL Editores, 2018)

⁷ *El Establecimiento de Relaciones Diplomáticas y Consulares del Gobierno de Chile con los Gobiernos de Australia y Nueva Zelanda*, Annual Report of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1945): 374

⁸ Chile did not assign the position of ambassador to Australia until 1968

States.⁹ Domeyko's stay in the oceanic country would continue until 1958, during that time having to address not only challenges proper to his diplomatic task, but also the difficulties of daily life in distant Australia.

Domeyko constantly reported to Santiago on the immense number of unavoidable commitments to be fulfilled "at the expense of his time for rest" and without full understanding by Chilean authorities. The diplomat informed there was no support staff to delegate functions, having to "do everything himself", including typewriting, translating documents, organizing events, and attending official ceremonies in Sydney and Canberra, "where each trip meant losing one or two days". The precariousness of the Chilean mission to Australia was also reflected in the lack of domestic help. Therefore, and as Domeyko himself explained to the chancellery, his wife –María de la Paz Lea-Plaza– had to take on the arduous household chores, intermingled with social entertaining. In a communication with Chancellor Osvaldo Sainte-Marie in June 1956, the diplomat informed of his regrets at this situation:

The only reward is the satisfaction of doing everything possible to decently represent the country, and [do] effective work. However, this has not been duly appreciated, which is discouraging considering utmost efforts made were in vain.¹⁰

In his communications with the chancellery Domeyko recorded in detail the difficulties experienced in Australia. Already since his first days in Sydney, the diplomat informed Santiago that he had not received specific instructions on the work to be carried out. As he himself stated, on taking up office in the oceanic nation he had "arrived without any idea" about Australia, saying that neither at the chancellery nor at the British Embassy in Santiago had he been able to "get any information to guide him in this regard".¹¹

Among the long list of tasks required at the diplomatic mission in Sydney, Juan Domeyko placed special emphasis on studying Australian society and analyzing the challenges posed by the Cold War for members of the international society. In his position as Deputy Head of Mission, Domeyko was a privileged witness to some of the most relevant international events at the time, among these the weakening of the British Empire, expansion

⁹ Conversation with Cecilia Domeyko Lea-Plaza, 8 June 2020

¹⁰ Deputy Head of Mission [hereon ENEG] (Sydney) to Chancellor (Santiago), Confidential No.3 [hereon Conf.] 3 June 1956. Confidential, Documents received from the Embassy in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, Lebanon, Spain [hereon Conf. O-R Aust] 1956. Vol. 4295. Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs [hereon Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe]

¹¹ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), 182 Conf. 4, 10 July 1956. Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe

of the East-West conflict, increasing international ambition over the frozen continent, and Australia's complex geopolitical reality.

Already during the Second World War the position of the island-continent as Western bastion in the Asia-Pacific region had become evident, essentially on account of its role in the face of aggressive Japanese foreign policy. At the end of the conflict Australia would attain even greater relevance by containing various international threats. Since the 1950's the ocean country collaborated with the United States in efforts to contain the expansion of communism in the Pacific and South East Asia. As the Deputy Head of Mission would explain in his reports, the Australian role in the new post-war international order was promoted by Washington, a matter which evidenced the increasing fragility of the British Empire. Nevertheless, as Domeyko himself reiterated in his communications with Santiago, Australian foreign policy would continue under the influence of London for a long time.¹²

According to the Chilean Deputy Head of Mission, Australian dependence on the northern country was concretely expressed in various international agreements in the sphere of defense, such as ANZUS and SEATO, which were part of US containment policy in the Pacific Ocean and South-East Asia.¹³ In this way Australia held an uneasy place in the international concert, being a nation distant from traditional power centers and –although under the protection of the United States– continued closely linked to Great Britain. Its loyalty to the motherland, as noted by Juan Domeyko, was reflected during the Suez Canal crisis (1956), international controversy in which Canberra supported the British stance, contravening the interests of the northern country.¹⁴

Around this time, and toward the end of the Second World War, Washington supported the decolonization processes and self-determination of people around the world, in a complex political game that used the weakening of large colonial empires and sought gaining new allies to deal with the Cold War. Unexpectedly, this new approach to international affairs was shared by the Soviet Union, a power that was also suited by the appearance of new actors to join their allied block. Leading nations in the Cold conflict not only coincided

¹² ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), 182 Conf. 4, 10 July 1956. Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe

¹³ ANZUS: Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (1951). SEATO: South-East Asia Defense Treaty (1954)

¹⁴ "More than the desire to expect a turn in the issue with the Russians and decide on a common policy with Chile, as for the moment they consider there is no danger, I attribute this omission to the fact that Australia is the most loyal member of the British Commonwealth, the motherland. Its unconditional support of England has, once again, being expressed in the Suez crisis, by openly supporting Eden's policy, for the use of force" ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), Conf. No.6, 10 January 1957. Conf. O-R Aust. 1957, v4573 MinRe

in their interests in disputes such as Suez, but also in the tottering Antarctic scenario.¹⁵

As stated in reports by Domeyko, the main objectives of the United States in the Antarctic toward the mid 1950's focused on the search for minerals and a possible territorial claim, mainly promoted by the famed Admiral Richard E. Byrd. According to the Chilean Deputy Head of Mission, Byrd held many meetings with the State Department to discuss the possibility of the United States claiming part or the entire white continent. Washington, said Domeyko, intended sustaining its position on the basis of explorations and discoveries made by US citizens during previous decades. Soviet actions did not escape the eye of the Deputy Head of Mission. According to the Chilean diplomat, Moscow was planning a territorial claim, albeit there was still no concrete evidence of the existence of minerals in significant quantity, a factor of utmost interest to the Kremlin.¹⁶

This careful analysis by Domeyko of Antarctic reality in the mid 1950's was explained with unprecedented clarity in a confidential memorandum sent to Santiago in March 1956. There, the diplomat warned –with great vision– that expeditions to and scientific projects in Antarctica during the International Geophysical Year (IGY) would demonstrate the need to hold a conference for discussion on the rights of various nations with claims in the region.

According to Domeyko, this would follow the path of legal wrangling in the North Pole, which had been regulated “by standards set at various international conferences and agreements”. The shaping of this future scenario would have led the Australian government –as consigned by the Deputy Head of Mission– to strengthen its territorial revindications through occupation and exploration, thereby validating “the argument of its possession, stemming from the discovery, traditional interest, proximity, and the sector principle” (*sector theory*). Domeyko believed the ambitions of the superpowers would in this way unleash “formidable competition” which may seriously affect Chilean interests in the Antarctic, stating with regret that “we cannot be taken by the illusion of our possession”.¹⁷

¹⁵ Washington as well as Moscow had relevant strategic interests in the Antarctic, albeit they did not have clear rights to intervene. Thus, both powers would promote the holding of an international treaty to open the continent to all interested nations, under the premises of peace and science. This seriously affected the sovereign rights of countries such as Chile.

¹⁶ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 84-39, 12 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

¹⁷ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 84-39, 12 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

Soviet Arrival in the White Continent

In February 1956 the Soviet Union inaugurated its first permanent base in the Antarctic, specifically in the so-called Australian Antarctic Territory. This decision altered forever the order of forces in the white continent, since it broke the existing Western domain and, in so doing, extended the Cold War as far as the South Pole. Moscow officially informed construction of *Mirny* base was destined to tasks linked to holding the International Geophysical Year, scientific event with the Antarctic as one of its main scenarios and no stranger to geopolitical ambitions.¹⁸

Soviet presence in Antarctic land fed a series of speculations with regard to Kremlin intentions and which would be their next steps in the region after ending official IGY activities. This became more complicated on account of Soviet refusal to recognize any claim or territorial right in the Antarctic. This new and complex chapter in the history of the southern continent, as well as its consequences for Chilean interests, would be carefully observed and analyzed by Juan Domeyko Álamos, Chilean Deputy Head of Mission in Sydney.

As noted by Domeyko in a confidential communication in July 1956, Australian Antarctic policy remained linked to the British Foreign Office on account of the “moral commitment of their pretensions”.¹⁹ This was since England had transferred part of their intended Antarctic domains to the government of Canberra in 1933. This cooperation between the United Kingdom and its former oceanic colonies accounted for the need to shape a common stance within the empire, aiming to strengthen its situation in the frozen continent.

This effort would crystalize in the organization of the so-called Trans-Antarctic Expedition of the British Commonwealth held from 1955 to 1958. By then the Australian Antarctic experience was internationally renowned, and Mawson base had become one of the main centers for research and exploration of the white continent. In the words of Juan Domeyko, the aim of Australian Antarctic activities was to “strengthen their possible rights in the absence of other titles”.²⁰ The Deputy Head of Mission held a similar opinion with regard to the Soviet Union and the United States.

In Domeyko’s view it was evident that the International Geophysical Year was driving not only the development of numerous scientific projects in the most various disciplines, but was also providing an opportunity for the actors engaged in the Antarctic to strengthen

¹⁸ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 62-30, 12 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

¹⁹ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), 182 Conf. 4, 10 July 1956. Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe

²⁰ (Sydney) to Chancellor, 182 Conf. 4, 10 July 1956. Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe

their respective positions before the increasingly uncertain future of the frozen continent. In addition to the efforts made by the British block during the IGY, he highlighted deployment by the United States and the Soviet Union –countries that due to their high scientific-technological level turned the white continent into yet another scene for their competition within the context of the Cold War.

It was precisely the arrival of the Soviets to the region and their reluctance to leave after ending the IGY that forever ended Western hegemony in the sixth continent. Most conservative political sectors in Australia and pro-British media were amongst the most uneasy with these actions by the Kremlin, speculating on Moscow's true intentions in the Antarctic.

The media in the oceanic country speculated on the dangers of Soviet activities, indicating –as consigned by Domeyko– that in case of war, Moscow “may neutralize Australia, caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear, and dominating the surrounding seas with their powerful fleet of submarines”.²¹ The Chilean Deputy Head of Mission was able to skillfully capture existing concern in Australia, regularly informing Santiago of the goings-on. Since his first communications with the Chilean Chancellery, Domeyko expressed his clear understanding of the possible consequences of Soviet presence in the Antarctic, not only for Australia but also for Chilean interests.

Already in March 1956, shortly after the inauguration of *Mirny* base, Domeyko analyzed main Australian media, informing Santiago about the potential intentions of the Kremlin, which ranged from seeking uranium to a possible territorial claim.²² The Chilean Deputy Head of Mission clearly understood Soviet presence would not end with the IGY, and that the Soviets would “assert their claims” over the Antarctic to consolidate their position in the continent.²³

Contrary to Domeyko's opinion, Australian authorities did not appear to weigh the actions by Moscow. Chancellor Richard G. Casey (1951-1960), under pressure by public opinion and political opposition, constantly reiterated through the media that the Soviet Union had no territorial pretensions in the Antarctic, rather solely “carried out activities relat-

²¹ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), Conf. No.6, 10 January 1957. Conf. O-R Aust. 1957, v4573 MinRe

²² ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor. Of. Ord. 62-30, 12 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

²³ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), Conf. No.6, 10 January 1957. Conf. O-R Aust. 1957, v4573 MinRe

ed to the International Geophysical Year agenda".²⁴ Also on countless occasions –as emphasized by Juan Domeyko– Chancellor Casey attempted to convince public opinion that Moscow had requested their authorization to establish their scientific base in Australian Antarctic Territory.²⁵

Casey's unique position was manifest even before construction of *Mirny*. Already in June 1955 the Australian Chancellor had stated to the media that the government of Canberra "would welcome Russian research work" in connection to the various expeditions of the International Geophysical Year. Likewise, he indicated the Soviet government had in fact requested "special facilities" in certain ports of the country in order to "maintain liaison, naval, and air services between the Soviet bases in the Antarctic and Moscow".²⁶

For Domeyko it was very unsettling for the government of Australia to be saying they had authorized the Kremlin to set-up in Antarctica: "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has demonstrated poor statesman vision and no sense of foresight" sentenced the Chilean diplomat. Domeyko firmly believed the establishment of *Mirny* base would "sooner or later" entail difficulties for the Commonwealth, leading to an adverse scenario for "future negotiations with regard to the Antarctic issue".²⁷ It should be pointed out the attitude of Minister Casey –which had so surprised the Chilean Deputy Head of Mission– may be explained by a possible Australian interest in re-establishing official relations with Moscow and thereby driving trade between both countries.²⁸

Despite Casey maintained the Soviet Union –and also the United States– had built their bases with Australian authorization, this statement has been refuted by many researchers, among these the Russian researcher Irina Gan. The academic said the Kremlin did not recognize sovereignty of any country over Antarctic territories, reserving for itself the right to file their own claims in future, an identical policy to that of the United States in the Polar continent.²⁹ Likewise, Gan maintained the decision by Soviet scientists to stay in the Antarctic beyond the end of the IGY made it necessary for the opinion of Moscow to be considered in any relevant decision with regard to the fate of the region. This was justi-

²⁴ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor. Of. Ord. 62-30, 12 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

²⁵ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 46-22, 25 February 1956. Ord. O-R. Aust. 1956, v4296 MinRe

²⁶ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, 182 Conf. 4, 10 July 1956. Conf. O-R Aust. 1956, v4295 MinRe

²⁷ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 149-70, 1956. Ord. O-R. Aust. 1956, v4296 MinRe

²⁸ Ending of trade relations between Australia and the Soviet Union had seriously affected wool producers as well as other sectors. ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Nº190-84, 20 July 1956. Ord. O-R Aust. 1956, v4296 MinRe

²⁹ Chancellor to ENeg (Sydney), 05164, 16 June 1956. Com E-A 1956, v62 MinRe

fied by the “considerable contribution (by the Soviet Union) to the international scientific challenge, the location of its bases, and its status as world power”.³⁰

Chilean Proposal and Australian Reluctance

The new international scenario created with the establishment of the Soviets in the Antarctic as well as the impassive attitude of the Australian government led Juan Domeyko to promote a more proactive policy by Chile. In this way, the diplomat made relevant endeavors attempting to bring the Chilean Chancellery and Canberra closer, aiming to establish an agreement for the exchange of information and adoption of a common stance before the uncertain future of the white continent.³¹

As the Deputy Head of Mission stated in his communications with Santiago, this attempted strategic partnership with the oceanic country appeared highly convenient for facing together the actions by the Soviets in Antarctica. At the time, and aware of the possibility that the Russians would not withdraw from the region after the end of the IGY, Domeyko said:

The arrival of the Soviets in Australian Antarctic Territory and their possible pretensions to remain there will make Australia see the value of a common policy with stakeholder countries that better understand and wish to prevent the danger Australia pretends to ignore.³²

The Chilean Deputy Head of Mission believed the proposal to reach an agreement on the exchange of information about Soviet activity was of real interest to the oceanic nation. Domeyko thought that Soviet activity in the region would show to what extent Australia was able to adopt a stance independently of the United Kingdom in case of need, “to safeguard national interest” in Antarctic matters.³³

In February 1957 Domeyko communicated with the government in Canberra to begin official approaches with a view to attempt –according to instructions from Santiago– “adoption” of a common policy with regard to any Soviet proposal involving the Antarctic issue,

³⁰ Irina Gan, “Will the Russians abandon Mirny to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay?”, *Polar Record* 45 (2009), 167

³¹ Chile had by then made an agreement for the exchange of information on Antarctic affairs with Argentina and the United States

³² ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, 6 Conf. 1, 10 January 1957. Conf. O-R. Aust. 1956, MinRe v4573, 1957, MinRe

³³ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, 6 Conf. 1, 10 January 1957. Conf. O-R. Aust. 1956, MinRe v4573, 1957, MinRe

establishing a timely exchange of information”.³⁴ As reflected in diplomatic correspondence, Chancellor Sainte-Marie himself understood that in this way both countries may “remain mutually informed of Soviet activities in the frozen continent”.³⁵

Nevertheless, although the government of Australia accepted the exchange of information, did not show its readiness to adopt a common policy with Chile, thereby indicating it remained in British orbit. In turn, the oceanic country in this way avoided taking on any commitment that may directly or indirectly imply recognizing Chilean rights in the Polar region.³⁶ Australian refusal of the Chilean proposal was also tied to the diplomatic dispute existing between the South American country and Great Britain on account of their overlapping claims in the Antarctic Peninsula.³⁷

Chile’s unease with Soviet presence in the white continent and especially Australian refusal to engage in a joint position drove Domeyko to new criticism of the attitude of the oceanic country, considering “... its relevance in the South Pacific”. The Deputy Head of Mission stressed how convenient it would be if Australia, abandoning British aegis, were to definitively partner with the United States. The latter since –in his view– the British navy “was in no condition to control” the Indian and Pacific Oceans, having Australia to necessarily “turn toward the United States, the power directly interested in its preservation”.³⁸ The oceanic country, Domeyko insisted, could not “ignore any longer that global security in the Southern Hemisphere was the greatest current issue in common with the two Americas”.³⁹

Even while the government of Canberra was to continue with its attachment to the Foreign Office –avoiding direct engagement with Washington and an alliance with Chile– there were no few sectors of Australian society that agreed with the Juan Domeyko’s vision. And so it happened, for example, with the media. Alfred Poninski, writer for the Australian Catholic Weekly, was one of the most emphatic detractors of Soviet presence in the South Pole, appreciating the position adopted by Chile with regard to the Antarctic issue.⁴⁰

³⁴ Chancellor to ENeg (Sydney), Conf. 00211, 7 February 1957. Com. E-A. 1956, v62 MinRe

³⁵ Chancellor to ENeg (Sydney), Conf. 01740, 24 October 1957. Com E-A 1956, v62 MinRe

³⁶ Chancellor to ENeg (Sydney). Conf. n° 00211, 7 February 1957. Com. E-A. 1956, v62 MinRe

³⁷ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 76-34, 16 March 1956. Ord. O-R Aust. 1956, v4296 MinRe

³⁸ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), 7-3, 12 January 1957. Documents received Embassy Australia and Austria, 1957, v4574 Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs

³⁹ ENeg (Sydney to Chancellor (Stgo) N° 31-12, 14 February 1957. Com. E-A. 1956, v62 MinRe

⁴⁰ The documentation reviewed sheds no light on the manner how the Chilean proposal reached the hands of Australian media

The journalist and diplomat of Polish origin, resident in Sydney, maintained the nations involved in the white continent “should embark on a combined action in the common interest”, a matter that fully agreed with suggestions by Juan Domeyko. Likewise, the Sydney Telegraph recognized, in February 1957, that the “Russian guests in Australian Antarctica” would not wish leave, arguing that *Mirny* base was endowed with an “airstrip able to land jet planes, non-stop direct flights from the Soviet Union to the Antarctic”.⁴¹

Soon after, Soviet scientists announced they would not leave their bases in Australian Antarctic Territory after ending the International Geophysical Year. The Chilean Chancellery –that for a long time appeared not to assign much importance to the Antarctic matter– began changing their attitude after this announcement.⁴² Thus, the Chilean government decided to oppose the request by some powers to extend the duration of the IGY, seeking support from Australia and other countries claiming sovereignty. Although Canberra also refused to extend the scientific summit, it maintained its stance not accepting a strategic alliance with the South American country.⁴³

This complex scenario became even more uncertain and strange when the government of India began promoting –at the heart of the United Nations– a project to internationalize the frozen continent. This initiative, understood within the framework of the so-called Third World, mainly affected nations with sovereign rights. The Chilean Chancellery instructed its Deputy Head of Mission in Sydney to inform Australia of “Chile’s firm opposition” to the Indian project. This on account of being territories that included the Antarctic sector where the country had “indisputable sovereign rights”. In this aspect, national interests coincided with those of Australia, since –as indicated by Juan Domeyko– the oceanic country also sought to avoid the internationalization of the frozen continent.⁴⁴

According to information gathered by Domeyko from Australian media, the Indian project –defended by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru– aimed to avoid uranium and other mineral wealth found in Antarctica from remaining in the hands of a handful of nations. The ever-more uncertain future of the white continent also raised alarms in the United States. In this regard, Admiral Byrd declared his country “would be obliged” to intervene in the Antarctic matter, since it had rights and would uphold them “in the interests of

⁴¹ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo) Nº 31-12, 14 February 1957. Com. E-A. 1956, v62 MinRe

⁴² Chancellor (Stgo) to ENeg (Sydney) Nº 00593, 25 April 1957. Com. E-A. 1956, v62 MinRe

⁴³ *Australia se opone a prolongación del AGI: No desea dar oportunidad a Rusia soviética permanecer más de un año en su territorio.* ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo) / Cable No.3, 27 February 1957. Com Aus-NZ, v4558 MinRe

⁴⁴ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor, Of. Ord. 76-34. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

future generations". Given the "delicate status" of international affairs, neither did he discard submitting Antarctica to the jurisdiction of the United Nations. With his characteristic sharpness, Domeyko understood these initiatives would be detrimental to Chile:

Propaganda for control of Antarctica by the UN and the conception of transforming it into a territory under trusteeship, is in reality damaging for the interests of the countries that have established their rights over certain sectors of Antarctica.⁴⁵

While the Indian proposal made chanceries around the world uneasy, Soviet presence continued to spark reactions. In March 1957, within the context of a SEATO meeting, Australian Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies had discussed with US State Secretary John Foster Dulles about actions by the Soviets in the frozen continent, which was the first official expression of Australian concern with Moscow's Antarctic policy. This change in Australian attitude was personally reported to Juan Domeyko by the Head of the Antarctic Division of the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Charles G. Kevin.⁴⁶ As was to be expected, however, this situation would not result in a closer official approach by Australia to Chile with regard to their Antarctic policies.⁴⁷

By then it already appeared clear that establishing a strategic Alliance between Australia and Chile was impossible. Albeit both nations shared a common vulnerability in the South Pacific and expressed a legitimate national feeling in their Antarctic interests, there were more differences than similarities between them. Australia would not abandon British aegis, and its main authorities were not prepared to recognize that the Soviet Union had set-up in the so-called Australian Antarctic Territory without consent by Canberra. Furthermore, the Kremlin decision to not abandon the frozen continent after the end of the International Geophysical Year shook the until then existing international order and gave way to a process of negotiations that would lead to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in December 1959. With the signing of this agreement and the ensuing establishment of a new international regime for the white continent, some of Juan Domeyko's worst apprehensions seemed to become reality.

⁴⁵ ENeg (Sydney) to Chancellor (Stgo), Of. Ord. 134-61, 1956. Ord. O-R Aust 1956, v4296 MinRe

⁴⁶ Charles G. Kevin was member of the Australian delegation that took part in negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty. Chancellor to ENeg (Sydney), 00593 Conf. n° 1, 25 April 1957. Com. E-A 1956, v62 MinRe

⁴⁷ With regard to Soviet presence in Antarctica and the threat this posed for the South Pacific, John Foster Dulles said: "we should be very careful of the Soviets, in pretext of the Geophysical Year, engaging in activities not contemplated by the scientists that scheduled the year. Ambassador (Washington) to Chancellor, Aerogram 128, 18 March 1957. Chilean Antarctic. Communications Exchanged with USA. 1959, v74 MinRe

In conclusion

Same as other Chilean diplomats at the time, Juan Domeyko Álamos worked tirelessly and silently in defense of the rights of the country in the white continent, facing the precariousness of life in Foreign Service and often the apathy of the central government. In this regard, studying the work carried out by Domeyko and other Chilean agents abroad –such as Manuel Bianchi Gundián, Rudecindo Ortega Mason, and Mariano Puga Vega, among others– constitutes a significant contribution to understanding of the Antarctic issue during the 1950's.⁴⁸ And from his position as Deputy Head of the Chilean Mission in Sydney Domeyko was able to draft an assertive and detailed view of the Antarctic issue in the years prior to the signing of the Washington treaty.⁴⁹

Domeyko's thoughts often precluded facts that would later have an impact on the white continent. In this way, for example, the Deputy Head of Mission perceived the International Geophysical Year as an event that went far beyond science and that would constitute a platform for the devise of strategic objectives by the great powers. In this context the diplomat warned early-on of Soviet interest in remaining in the Antarctic after ending the IGY, a matter that in the short term would transform Moscow into a power in the South Pole.

Likewise, the complex scenario shaped with the arrival of the Soviets to Australian Antarctic Territory allowed Domeyko to identify the imminent change in the order of forces in the region. The diplomat understood that with the IGY and the arrival of the Soviets, permanent occupation and scientific development would be essential factors in ensuring participation in the future of the Antarctic. It is therefore not surprising that Domeyko visualized early-on the holding of a treaty for the white continent, which in his view would seriously affect Chile's interests in the region. He expressed a similar perception with regard to proposals such as the one presented by the government of India or any intromission by the United Nations in matters of the Antarctic.

It is equally of great interest to identify the negative appreciations expressed by Domeyko of Australian management of the Antarctic issue, and veiled criticism of action by the Chancellery and the government of Chile with regard to the same topic. Clearly expressed

⁴⁸ See: César Espinoza, *Un Embajador Chileno en Londres: Juan Manuel Arturo Bianchi Gundián, 1947-1952, Estudios Hemisféricos y Polares* 10 (2019)

⁴⁹ Domeyko was also skilful in building a broad outlook of international affairs at the time. He fully understood the new challenges posed by the Cold War at global level, as well as the role played by the different powers. Of particular interest are his observations on the decadence of the British Empire, the imminent process of decolonization, and the relevance of the Pacific Ocean in world geopolitics.

in his numerous reports to Santiago is his constant concern over the erratic Chilean attitude toward major events affecting the Antarctic. The Ministerial turnover affecting the Chilean government contributed to this adverse situation, and which implied a parade of ten Chancellors during the time Domeyko represented Chile before the government in Canberra.

Lastly it should be noted that Domeyko was convinced that the fragile position of countries such as Chile and Australia would inevitably mean the establishment of a new international regime for coexistence in the Antarctic, and that –fostered by the powers– would prohibit not only the use of nuclear weapons but also restrict the activity of the armed forces. Considering that until then Chilean sovereignty in the frozen continent had been safeguarded by military staff,⁵⁰ Domeyko anticipated the new Antarctic regime would in practical terms imply a restriction of the sovereign rights exercised by the countries legitimately present in the region.⁵¹

At the end of his time as Deputy Head of Mission in Sydney, Juan Domeyko Álamos returned to Chile in 1958, thereby distancing himself from the Antarctic issue. In this way, there was no opportunity to take part in the development of the preparatory meetings, the Antarctic Conference, or the signing of the Treaty in Washington. The following year he was to resume duties as Deputy Head of Mission in Santo Domingo, but when the OAS broke its diplomatic ties with the Dominican Republic, Domeyko was appointed member of the Chilean representation before the United Nations in New York. In 1961 he was appointed Minister Counsellor at the Chilean Embassy in Ottawa, the highest rank achieved by the diplomat during his career. The Canadian capital would be the Juan Domeyko Álamos' last destination abroad, after which he collaborated with the Chancellery on the border litigation with Argentina.⁵² After forty-two years in diplomatic functions he retired in 1967. He died in Santiago de Chile in 1980.

I am sincerely grateful to Cecilia and Andrés, children of Juan Domeyko Álamos, for their valuable collaboration.

⁵⁰ See: Eduardo Villalón et al. 2010, *Jalonando Chile Austral Antártico. El Ejército en la Antártica, 1948* (Santiago: Ejército de Chile)

⁵¹ Chancellor to Eneg (Sydney), 05164, 16 June 1956. Com E-A 1956, v62 MinRe

⁵² Conversation with Andrés Domeyko Lea-Plaza, 10 June 2020

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№1. Juan Domeyko Álamos. Source: Domeyko family photo archive.



№2. Establishing the first Soviet Antarctic Station "Mirny", 1956. Source: Alexandra Kochetkova, TASS Russian News Agency.

TOWARDS THE FROZEN HEART OF WRITING. “LA ANTÁRTICA EMPIEZA AQUÍ” BY BENJAMÍN LABATUT¹

Marcos Aravena-Cuevas²

Introduction

This writing explores the resonances of the Antarctic literary repertoire in the story “La Antártica comienza aquí” by Benjamin Labatut. A content analysis from Reception Aesthetics paradigm to determine how readers are presented with the image of the White Continent and the meanings it adopts throughout the pages of the story.

The Polar theme as a literary subject has a long-standing tradition in Western literature. Each fictional and referential work of writing that has emerged, especially since the 19th century, has sought to transmit the travails and experiences of the different crossings to the South Pole, developing a collective vision in which fantasy and reality intersect again and again. It must be said, however, that in recent years critics have approached with increasing attention the representation of Antarctica that these authors construct, but focusing their interest on the works of English-speaking cultural ref-

¹ My sincere gratitude to my friend and colleague Juan Eduardo Méndez for his work in translating this text.

² Scholarship holder of the “ANID-Subdirección de Capital Humano/Doctorate 2021-21211530” grant.

erences³. In this context, and bearing in mind that the subject of the Antarctic constitutes a source of inspiration for writers from different times and latitudes, a deeper approach becomes necessary to depict the polar zone from a more realistic literary viewpoint. An approach inclusive of the perspectives provided by Spanish-speaking output, but which also characterizes and highlights the particular vision provided by Chilean literature in light of its connection and its geographical proximity to the southern land.

Benjamín Labatut (1980–) is a contemporary Chilean writer who to date has published the volume of short stories *La Antártica empieza aquí* (2012) and the texts *Después de la luz* (2016) and *Un verdor terrible (When We Cease to Understand de World, 2020)*. Critics have only just begun to consider his work after the international exposure and recognition that his most recent work has had in recent times. In this sense, the author's production is a fertile ground to research the traits that determine his emergence into the current panorama of national literature and of the distinctive characteristics of his creative work. Consequently, the work the author proposes assumes that the homonymous story which composes the initial pages of *La Antártica empieza aquí* deals with the theme of the Antarctic as a dialogue with tradition from a perspective that, in his initial body of work, could already well define Labatut's work: the obsessive personality imprinted into his characters⁴.

A door to Antarctica

"La Antártica empieza aquí" is the story of a journalist who finds himself in the dilemma of choosing between a normal and routine life or going after his greatest and deepest desire: to become a writer. Without a clear direction to follow and facing the imminent possibility of losing his job in the culture section of a political magazine, he embarks on the investigation of Karol Vasek, an unknown poet who led a mysterious suicide expedition to Antarctica. Allowing himself to be carried away by his "uncontrollable drive towards literature"⁵ and the depth of his research, that he allows the initial purpose of his work to be replaced by an irrepressible desire to know what lies beyond the verses of a man that only a few have been able to know.

³ Espinosa, p. 3; Wainschenker and Leane, p. 324.

⁴ In an interview with the writer Marco Antonio de la Parra and the journalist Ana Josefa Silva, the author maintains that "obsession is key, obsession is what the human mind suffers the most [...] what interests me is [sic] people, men, women, who are so in love with one aspect of reality that they get lost".

⁵ Labatut, p. 14.

The scope of vision that unfolds from the very title of the narrative sets the polar ice caps as the starting point of the discussion. “La Antártica empieza aquí” is a statement that, from its paratextual condition, asks the reader to organize the disintegration of the segments that the story presents around the cold landscape aforementioned in the title⁶ and urges the reader to generate Antarctic projections that guide their processes of understanding and interpretation⁷.

Even though there are other points of view which are feasible to arise and develop in the reader’s minds due to the oscillating logic that characterizes the reading process⁸, the perspective of the White Continent as a field axis enables the transmission of what the story actually wants to communicate readers, since it allows to illuminate the quest of the main character and the Antarctic clues that arise in the search for information about the enigmatic bard and his poetry. In fact, as the reading progresses, it is interesting to note how these signs are woven into the text and how they reveal through the dialogue with the polar tradition that embodies who Karol Vasek really is as a “minor but interesting poet”⁹.

Footprints in the Snow

Extratextual references play an important role in the process of producing and receiving a literary work. The double capacity that this repertoire has to introduce external realities into literary worlds and to offer previous schemes that claim a specific knowledge¹⁰ encourages the inclusion of cultural tradition in literary works and encourages the implementation of previous knowledge to fully experience the aesthetic word play that the text proposes.

In anticipation of a reader capable of making inferential walks, “La Antártica empieza aquí” is a story that constantly invites us to “look for possible outcomes in the repertoire of what has already been said”¹¹. In this context, the Antarctic clues that emerge in the development of the narrative action indicate a trail of footprints in the snow that leads to the encounter of the journalist’s inner demons through thematic linkage with a series of texts from the western polar tradition. The constant appeal to intertextual dialogue to de-

⁶ Eco, p. 129.

⁷ Jauss, p. 69.

⁸ Iser, p. 301.

⁹ Labatut, p. 16.

¹⁰ Iser, p. 322.

¹¹ Eco, p. 167.

scribe characters and settings in his story is striking. It is as if the story wanted to implicitly indicate the provisions that must be considered in order to understand both Vasek's story and the experiences lived by the main character.

One of the first dialogues that the story in question establishes with the Antarctic production appears when the protagonist reviews a copy of the magazine *Finis Terrae*—the name of the publication is valid here— and discovers some

poems [that] were written in Spanish and German and spoke of the ice that covers an ancient homeland, of wild men like packs of wolves, and of a guardian who could be Vasek himself or a perverted image of Christ¹².

The reference to the ice, the wolves and the guardian does not constitute a gratuitous reference within the narrated world. Not at all. The synthesis offered by the protagonist on the content of the poems points to *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838), a novel by Edgar Allan Poe that narrates the journey of a group of sailors who, after walking through the world's oceans, come to disembark in an area full of natives whose voices resemble howls and in whose confines an abyss opens where resides "a human figure of infinitely greater proportions than those of any man who lives in the world" (s. p.). The projection that is established from this dialogue with the American writer comes to give new significance to a fact that the journalist discovered when scrutinizing the records of the Military School long before discovering the poems:

In a yellowish typewritten entry sheet, full of spelling errors and damp spots, I found the following basic information: Karol Vasek, born Karol Antón Vasek Geislerová, had entered the Military School at eighteen years of age, son of Karol Vasek von Roubal and Catalina Geislerová Pinto. *He was a huge man, almost six feet tall, with straight black hair*¹³.

Vasek's prosopography has, without a doubt, a strong hold on the figure of the White Giant that Arthur Gordon Pym claimed to see on his journey to the South Pole. The presence of this extratextual substrate provides a somber tone that brings to mind the mystery and terror of Poe's work, and prompts one to imagine the dark direction that both the investigation and the future of the protagonist will take from this moment.

Despite this important finding of information, the research suffered an unexpected stop: Vasek was impossible to locate, "he was missing. There was no way to find a clue, a phone

¹² Labatut, p. 20.

¹³ Labatut, p. 16. Italics are mine.

number or an email that could be used to contact him”¹⁴. Prisoner of fear and uncertainty in the face of the obstacle, the protagonist falls into an abysmal state of mind that makes him grow “a sense of urgency, of passing time”¹⁵ that disables and paralyzes his being:

It was something that happened to me a lot during those first years as a journalist. Writing made me so nervous that I could spend days wasting my time, looking at porn sites, having one coffee after another, without putting a word on the page or picking up the phone to set up an interview. Nerves simply paralyzed me and I was unable to react until it was too late¹⁶.

After overcoming this emotional episode, the protagonist decides to track down the only contact he has to achieve his goal of writing about Karol Vasek: his comrade in arms and editor Pablo Riquelme. Here is a second dialogue with the Antarctic tradition: the novel *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) by Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Focusing his attention on the retired colonel, he never ceases to be surprised by the particular and imposing pyramidal architecture of the military’s residence:

Riquelme’s building was a truncated pyramid-shaped construction, without the upper triangle, and it was unlike anything I had ever seen. Compared to the rest of the condominium, made up of ordinary gray blocks, exactly the kind one would expect from a military compound, the building Riquelme lived in *was like something out of a movie set, more of a temple or a mausoleum* than an apartment building¹⁷.

According to the journalist, “it was impossible not to be affected by the irrationality of the building, its excessive proportions, its macabre decoration”¹⁸ that recalls the structures of that ancient cyclopean city of architecture not known or imagined where “there were pyramids and cones compounds, isolated or crowning cylinders, cubes or pyramids and flatter truncated cones”¹⁹ discovered among the ice of the White Continent by the scientific expedition of In the mountains of madness.

Fear and claustrophobia add to the feeling of strangeness that the character experiences when crossing the threshold of the department of Riquelme, as if he were “entering a

¹⁴ Labatut, p. 21.

¹⁵ Labatut, p. 22.

¹⁶ Labatut, p. 21.

¹⁷ Labatut, pp. 23-24. Italics are mine.

¹⁸ Labatut, p. 24.

¹⁹ Labatut, p. 36.

crypt”²⁰. “He hadn’t even started reporting and he was already sorry”²¹ for having gotten to that point. Lovecraft’s resonances are further intensified by reporting the state of alienation of the interviewee from him:

He refused to answer any of my questions [...] His speech was riddled with paranoid situations: agents and counter-agents, spies who worked in the dark without contact with their superiors, men and women who—unsuspectingly—were part of orchestrated conspiracies by secret societies²².

The display of the Antarctic repertoire continues after the interview with Riquelme. The folders that the journalist manages to obtain from his hands not only contain valuable information but also significant signs that make the works of Poe and Lovecraft resonate once more on the reading horizon. The strange figures that Arthur Gordon Pym found in the chasms of Tsalal and the insanity of the Lovecraftian scientists make their presence clear in the colonel’s chronicle of his relationship with Vasek when dealing with “the strange metamorphosis that the poet had undergone, first as his companion and later as leader, prophet and lunatic”²³:

Overnight, the model soldier, that silent man who dazzled at target practice, who handled the horses as if he had been born on top of one and never wasted a word or a gesture, degenerated *into a maniac, rebellious and uncontrollable*. He did not keep schedules or follow orders, *he lined the walls of his room with obscene symbols and drawings* and muttered phrases that were incomprehensible to himself, which his classmates assumed were German, but which one of the teachers recognized as a mixture of Latin and Greek²⁴.

Reviewing the sources on Vasek’s life and work allows the journalist to become aware that something had changed in him “even though he did not know what it was”²⁵. The images that the chronicle delivers about the poet and his followers walking through the Antarctic landscapes, mutilated and in pursuit of a delusional end, are meaningless to him. Something is missing from this information. The obsession to know more and more leads him to compulsively read everything he can find about Antarctica, but the images that come

²⁰ Labatut, p. 24.

²¹ Labatut, p. 27.

²² Labatut, p. 28.

²³ Labatut, p. 32.

²⁴ Labatut, p. 34. Italics are mine.

²⁵ Labatut, p. 41.

to his mind still do not allow him to write the text that would save his work. Only once Vasek's true identity has been revealed as a result of an unexpected conversation, does the character's existential crisis hit rock bottom and the writing finally flows:

I returned to the office feverish, with Fede's laugh still ringing in my ears [...] I sat down in front of the computer, put on my headphones to drown out the noise and wrote until I lost track of time, as I had never done before, a One word following the other effortlessly, immersed in a trance state, and I didn't get up until I was completely alone, in the middle of a dark office, with the story of Riquelme and Vasek ready to hand over to my editor²⁶.

The Blank Page

The reading of "La Antartica comienza aquí" under the guidelines of Reception Aesthetics allows to report a treatment that values the Antarctic matter as an inspiring element for the current literary production of our country and that constitutes a novel appropriation of the polar tradition.

Throughout the history of Humanity, the human being has been attracted by the search and discovery of the unknown. Supported by the literary worlds of Edgar Allan Poe and Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Benjamín Labatut innovates in the Antarctic representation by presenting the image of the White Continent as a metaphor for the complex process of overcoming anguish, of the horror of emptiness²⁷ that an author lives by immersing himself in the creation of a world in front of a blank page.

As "an impenetrable place, a huge empty desert, alien and extraterrestrial"²⁸, the South Pole becomes synonymous with loneliness, obsession and madness: as well as the protagonists of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and *At the Mountains of Madness* they fight and survive against a complex and devouring nature without company, the writer works alone and abandoned as if he were in Antarctica imprisoned by a white aridity that leads him to seek, sometimes unsuccessfully, something with which to weave his text. "Something had to be sacrificed"²⁹ to provide the mind and body with what, in the eyes of the protagonist of the story, is essential to achieve what was desired: embrace the frozen heart of writing.

²⁶ Labatut, pp. 51-52.

²⁷ De la Parra, p. 86.

²⁸ Labatut, p. 41.

²⁹ Labatut, p. 20.

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