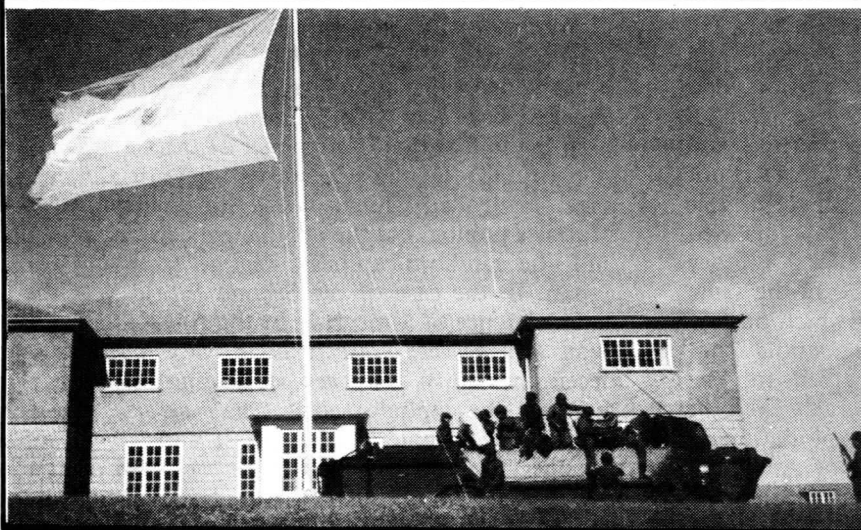
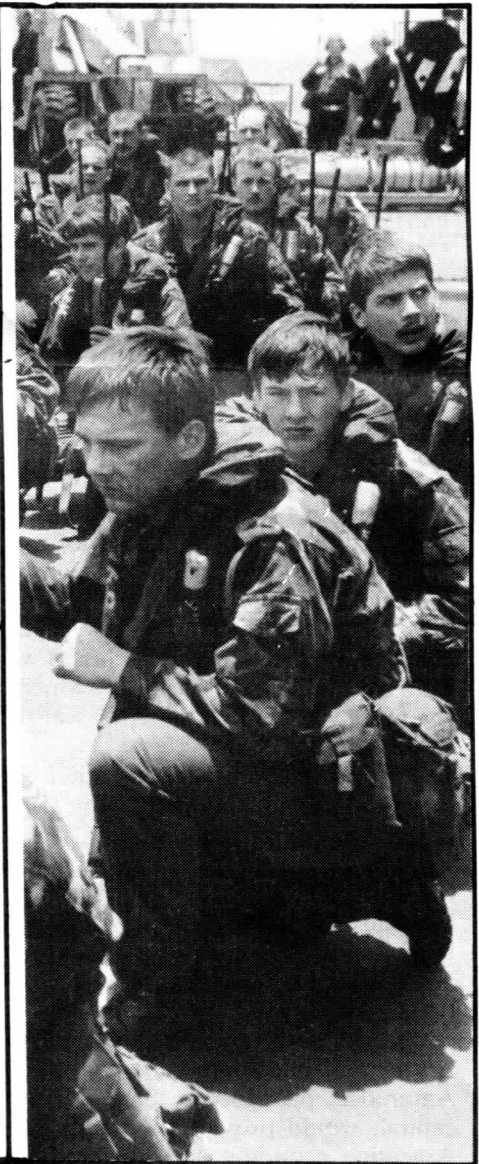
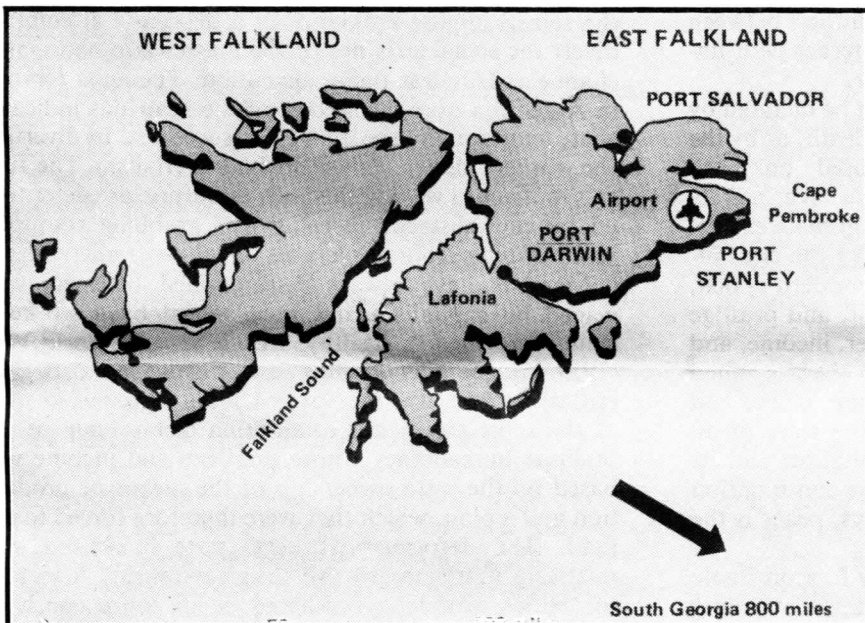


Falklands Crisis

A SOCIALIST ANSWER



15p

A MILITANT PAMPHLET

Falklands Crisis

A SOCIALIST ANSWER

By Ted Grant

The war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands is a symptom of the world crisis of capitalism. The international economic recession has ushered in a new epoch of upheavals, which will mean mighty clashes between the classes and conflicts between the nation states. Class conflicts will interact with national conflicts, aggravating one another.

A Marxist attitude towards war cannot be dictated by the horrors of war, by the suffering and death, or by the nightmare conditions inevitably imposed on both civilians and the ranks of the armed forces. War merely carries the horrors of capitalism to their ultimate extent. Our attitude towards war is determined by the class interests of those waging the war. In the modern epoch, wars are determined by the power, profit, and prestige of the ruling classes; and also by the power, income, and privileges of the ruling bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states of Russia, Eastern Europe, China and the other Stalinist countries. The working class of all countries has nothing to gain from capitalism and its policies, either in peace or war. War is the continuation of politics by other means, and, nowadays, peace is the continuation of war by other means.

The Marxist attitude is determined by irreconcilable opposition to any war waged by the capitalist ruling class. Our attitude to war between Britain and Argentina is determined by which class is waging the war. On both sides it is capitalist powers which are involved, and therefore we are opposed to the war of both Britain and of Argentina.

Why has war broken out now? Argentina has laid claim to the Falkland Islands for 150 years, yet has not dared to take action before now. It is the uncontrollable social contradictions in Argentina which have dictated the resort to arms by the Junta, which heads a military bonapartist regime, using fascist methods. In the same way, it was the social crisis in Germany which pushed Hitler into war. Lurking under the phrases about "national sovereignty" is the capitalists' greed for the potentially profitable oil, fish and mineral wealth of Antarctica. The Junta believes that the exploitation of Antarctica, probably as a junior partner of American capital, would provide the additional support for the Argentine economy and augment the income of big business. They imagine that this would be a means of solving Argentina's aggravated social crisis.

Even so, that is not the main reason for the seizure of the Falklands. Argentina was facing the beginning of

revolutionary developments. Only a few days before the invasion, there were mass demonstrations of the workers against the Junta in Buenos Aires. To escape the social crisis the Argentinian dictatorship decided on the seizure of the Falklands in a desperate attempt to divert the social strivings of the masses into nationalist channels. This was their calculation. The mass fervour in Argentina over the seizure of the Malvinas indicates that, temporarily, the Junta has succeeded in diverting the workers' anger against British imperialism. The Junta's motives in waging this war, therefore, are determined by capitalist considerations of grabbing resources and escaping from intolerable social contradictions.

Marxists have always distinguished between wars waged by capitalism and wars waged by a workers' state, deformed or healthy. In the Second World War (1939-45), the only country to which the Marxists gave critical support was the Soviet Union. This was in spite of the most monstrous totalitarian dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy whose privilege and income was based on the state ownership of the means of production and a plan, which they were therefore forced to defend. The deformed workers' state in Russia was relatively more progressive than capitalism. A victory for Hitler would have ushered in an entire epoch of counter-revolution. Thus Marxists gave critical support to the war of Russia against Nazi Germany. They also gave critical support to China, a colonial country in its war against Japan which seized Manchuria in 1931 and engaged in a war with China in 1937-1945. This was despite the fact that the butcher of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, the bonapartist dictator Chiang Kai-shek, controlled China. While supporting China, the Marxists pointed out the complete incapacity of Chiang and the landlord-capitalist regime to wage war on Japan. In the case of the Second World War the so-called defence of democracy by the American and European Allies were shot through with hypocrisy and deceit. In reality, they were defending the material interest of the capitalist class. The war was fought for markets, raw materials, colonies, and spheres of influence. The Marxists, therefore, opposed all the imperialist powers in the war. This, however, did not exhaust the problem—as we will explain in a moment—because of the British workers' deep-rooted hatred of the Nazis and their support for a fight to defeat the fascist regime.

In 1935-36 Mussolini, Italy's fascist dictator, invaded

Abyssinia (now called Ethiopia) in the interests of Italian capitalism. Despite the existence of chattel slavery in Abyssinia, Trotsky advocated support for Abyssinia in a war of national liberation from the imperialist power out to enslave the country. The position of the ILP (Independent Labour Party) leaders like John McGovern and James Maxton, advocating 'no support for either of the dictators,' was rejected by the Marxists. Marxism always supports the poor, the oppressed, and the enslaved in their struggle against the rich and powerful imperialist states. At the same time, a powerful consideration was that a defeat for the Italian capitalist and fascist invaders would undoubtedly have provoked a proletarian revolution in Italy.

A Marxist attitude can never be determined by the question of who started the war. The labour leaders, both left and right, are obsessed with defining the 'aggressor' as a means of determining their attitude. This has led the leaders of the Labour Party into a position where they are trailing behind the Tory government. The decisive question is: which class is waging the war and in whose interest? The method of reasoning which starts from who attacked first is completely shallow. There are many cases in history where war has been provoked by one or other power. Our attitude is determined by the class interests of the powers involved in the war.

"Under all the masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners and robbers..."

The ultra-left sects of various descriptions have—quite predictably!—supported Argentina on the grounds that it is a colonial country faced with imperialist aggression. That is nonsense, and shows a completely undialectical approach. Argentina is one of the most highly developed countries in Latin America. Her landowners are not feudal but bourgeois landowners comparable to the capitalist landowners in Britain. Eighty-six percent of the population live in the towns, and the country has a reasonably developed industry. Finance capital, both foreign and local, is intertwined with the bourgeois landowners and the capitalists in the cities. Whoever heard of a colonial country with a stock exchange! The Argentine has a similar basis to that of the United States. The settlers exterminated the local Indian population, and started out with bourgeois relations, rather than those of feudalism, although Argentina, of course, is not as highly developed as the United States. The regime's motives are not at all those of defending the rights of the workers and farmers, or rather, agricultural proletariat, but of defending the interests of Argentine big business and the country's highly developed finance capital.

On the Falkland Islands themselves, the Argentine presence consisted of one Argentine married to a Falkland Islander who fled from the Islands when he saw the possibility of war. Had there been a colony of, say, 100,000 Argentines, a case for colonial oppression could have been made out. But the Islands have been in British possession for 150 years. There was a fleeting

Argentine garrison for only a few months before that, which was expelled by the British. The population of the Islands is English-speaking and of British descent.

Although there are only 1,800 Falkland Islanders, Marxists nevertheless have to take into consideration their rights and interests. The Junta's claim to the Falklands is purely an imperialist claim for loot in the shape of resources which can be developed, although even this is secondary to their aim of heading off revolution by diverting workers along nationalist lines. Had the Junta weighed up the chances of successfully taking the Falklands, they would not have struck now, but would have waited for another 12 months. By that time, Britain's aircraft carriers, frigates, and the Vulcan bombers would have been scrapped, and Britain would not have had the means of resisting the seizure of the Islands. But the hot breath of revolution forced the Junta to act prematurely. The decisive factor was their fear of revolution. And yet, the ultra left sects are completely unaware of this fact.

The attitude of the Marxists towards this war is decided by all these considerations, and above all by the fact that it is two imperialist powers which are at war, even though the Argentine may in the past have been, like the United States, a colonial country. Therefore we oppose the capitalist war of Argentina against Britain, and we oppose the capitalist war of Britain against Argentina.

Certain of the ultra-left sects have quoted an isolated passage from Trotsky's comments in 1938 on the position of Marxists in the event of a war between Brazil and Britain, without taking his remarks in their context. All the circumstances of a conflict must be taken into account. Trotsky was dealing with a possible attempt by British capitalism to colonise Brazil. Brazil could hardly attack Britain! In that event, as with Chiang Kai-shek or the Negus of Abyssinia, it would have been correct to give critical support to the Vargas dictatorship, though not the uncritical support given to the Argentine dictatorship by the sects. The Argentine is a capitalist country, and its seizure of the Falklands—or Malvinas, which they have not held for 150 years—is an imperialist adventure, just as the reaction of Britain is an imperialist adventure. In this war, a defeat for Argentina will provoke the revolution. If the Task Force is defeated, on the other hand, it will mean the downfall of the Thatcher government. Either result would be in the interests of the working class internationally. After his comment on Brazil, Trotsky goes on to say, "Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers."

The Tories have sent the Task Force to defend the power and prestige of British capitalism

The stupidity of the Thatcher government, even from a capitalist point of view, has been clearly revealed. As a client state of United States imperialism, British

capitalism was obsessed with the struggle against Stalinist Russia. They decided virtually to scrap most of the navy, and even much of the airforce, and to rely purely upon Trident missiles, against what they considered their main enemy, the Soviet Union. The stupidity and unpreparedness of the British ruling class was revealed by the Junta's invasion, which took the Tory government completely by surprise. However, the attitude of different sections of the British ruling class is not clear. Finance capital has heavy investments in Argentina, and this is reflected in the luke-warm attitude of the *Financial Times* to the response of Thatcher's Government.

There have been reports in both the serious and the gutter press that the Foreign Office was well aware of the plans for the invasion, but did nothing about them. Apparently, the Foreign Office, and possibly Carrington, miscalculated. They may have believed that they would be able to arrive at some sort of agreement with the Junta after the seizure of the Islands. They were not averse to helping to prop up the Junta by giving them a foreign policy success. But they had forgotten that prestige is an important factor in relations between states and nations, over and above immediate material considerations. The power of British imperialism in its diplomatic dealings would have been completely undermined if they had just accepted the invasion tamely. This is why there was an outcry in Parliament and in the press about the 'national humiliation'. The Tory government, therefore, rapidly assembled and dispatched the Task Force, the biggest war fleet assembled by British capitalism since the Second World War. However, as far as the Junta was concerned, once they had taken the step of seizing the Islands it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to draw back.

Thatcher and the Tory Government did not seek a conflict with the bonapartist military-police dictatorship. Like Reagan, Thatcher wishes to prop up every reactionary regime: that of Chile, Turkey, and other dictatorships throughout the world. But once Galtieri seized the Falklands the Tories had no choice. It is with regret that Thatcher sees that the defeat of the Argentine regime will result in the collapse of Galtieri and the Junta. It is with complete hypocrisy that they have 'just discovered' that the regime is dictatorial, denouncing it as 'fascist' in order to justify war against the Argentine. In Britain, finance capital was not pleased with the policy of their government. In America, on the other hand, British diplomacy out-manoeuvred Reagan, who has a hankering to support the dictatorial regimes in Latin America, by winning over Republican and Democrat representatives in the House and Senate of Congress. The press in America from the *Wall Street Journal* to *The Village Voice* is unanimously in favour of British capitalism. This reflects the American bourgeoisie's decisive interests, which are bound up with NATO and the European allies.

The events in the South Atlantic have ruined all the carefully laid plans of Reagan and American imperialism. Their policy has been to prop up the dictatorships in Latin America against the social revolution. But American imperialism was put in the position where two client states, Galtieri on the one hand and Thatcher on the other, refused to accept the demands of American imperialism. Twenty-four hours before the invasion

took place, Galtieri rejected American demands to call it off. Thatcher also rejected the suggestions for a compromise from American imperialism. The fall of the Junta would prepare explosions throughout the length and breadth of Latin America. That is the fear of Reagan. On the other hand, American imperialism could not, in the last analysis, refuse to support the Thatcher government. To have done so would have ruined NATO as well!

Reluctantly, as a last resort, they have had to back British imperialism against Argentina.

British imperialism's position cannot benefit the working class. Its reaction to the seizure of the Falklands is dictated by considerations of prestige, and also by the wealth of Antarctica and the oil and fish around the Islands themselves. The Falklands are the gateway to Antarctica, and South Georgia is the entrance to the Southern Polar Continent. That is why Britain has seized the Dependency of South Georgia, and formalistically draws a legalistic distinction between South Georgia and the Falklands, though they have always been lumped together in the past, 'for administrative convenience'. After the resort to arms, British imperialism will consider that this is a decisive way of settling the issue. No further claim by Argentina will even be considered. For a whole historical epoch the question will be closed. If Britain takes back the Islands, British capitalism will then begin to develop the resources of the Antarctic, particularly around the Falklands, in a measurable period of time. These are the real war aims of British capitalism. Like all regimes, including that of the Argentine, they are interested in power, profits, privilege, and prestige and that is what dictates their policies.

The opposition of Labour's right wing is of the faintest character, completely lacking the realities of a class opposition

As always, the right-wing labour leaders have come out in support of British capitalism and imperialism in its hour of need. The Parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party gave immediate support to the sending of the Task Force and the seizure of South Georgia. Foot and Healey have compromised themselves with the Tories. Their opposition is of the faintest character, completely lacking the realities of a class opposition. While supporting the sending of the Task Force, they still insist on a diplomatic solution to resolve what is now insoluble except through the 'arbitration' of force. Neither side can back down. If the Junta were now to relinquish the Falklands, it would face immediate downfall and would even prefer the risk of defeat in war. The Thatcher Government is in the same position. Acceptance of defeat would mean the collapse of the Government, and the ruin of British imperialism's diplomatic power.

The Task Force has been sent not to roll Easter eggs

at Easter, not merely for a display of force, but to go to war if the enemy does not back down. The leaders of the Labour Party put themselves in a ridiculous position by supporting the sending of the Task Force but opposing its use. To safeguard its interests internationally, British imperialism, now a decadent and declining power, is fully prepared to undertake the adventure of war.

The opposition in the Labour Party of Tony Benn, Judith Hart, and others, is, in reality, purely pacifist. Tony Benn has put a very courageous position, but without thinking things through to a conclusion. Their opposition towards war will have some effect on the active layers of the Labour Party, and particularly on working women who fear for the lives which will be lost and the suffering that will inevitably be caused by war. Within the Labour Party there is a strong instinctive hatred of war, and a big majority of the active workers have a hatred of the Tory government. But the pacifist opposition of the labour lefts is not opposition to the class which wages the war, and nor is it directed against the aims of that class in waging a war. It is futile opposition which, once the war takes on bigger dimensions, can play into the hands of the imperialists. The demand for the 'withdrawal of the fleet', first put forward by the so-called 'Communist' Party, and then echoed by Tony Benn, Judith Hart and other Labour left wingers, is a meaningless, pacifist gesture. Naturally, the sects enthusiastically follow the Communist Party into this pacifist blind alley. How could the demand for the fleet to be withdrawn be accomplished? By asking Thatcher? She would merely shrug her shoulders and laugh. Throughout history, pacifist demands, to 'stop the war', to halt military mobilisation, or to withdraw the fleet, have never had any effect. The Communist Party is too cowardly, and the sects too stupid to think things through to a conclusion. In order to get the fleet withdrawn a general strike would be required, and not only a general strike, but also an insurrection. There would be no other means of attaining it. But such demands could get no echo from the mass of workers, or from any section of the labour movement. It would be ludicrous to put forward such demands. It is true that no war could be waged without the support of the trade union and labour leaders. But most of them are actually supporting the action of the Thatcher government. It would be absurd to call for a general strike at the present time. But this means that the call for withdrawal of the fleet is even more absurd. Marxists do not put forward slogans which are meaningless, and they do not put forward ideas that will not raise the level of the active layers of the labour and trade union movement and of the working class as a whole.

However, the second line of defence, for both the right and the left trade union leaders is to appeal to the United Nations, which should really be called the dis-United Nations.

The whole history of the post-war period has indicated that the United Nations can only solve secondary problems, which are of secondary consideration to the states involved. If the super powers and other powers are united, perhaps some issues can be resolved. Even then, however, it will not be successful if one of the parties is strong enough to flout the (dis)-United Nations. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a series of wars of a 'minor' type which the United

Nations has been unable to prevent or bring to a halt. In fact, since 1945 there have only been about 17 days of peace. There has been a war, or civil war raging, mainly in the third world, every day. The United Nations has been powerless to prevent them.

The United Nations is composed of imperialist powers, the Stalinist deformed workers' states, and the ex-colonial countries. They are inevitably riven with national and class antagonisms. If there is a unity of gangsters, does it mean that if one gangster falls out of line, there will not be a gangster conflict? The history of the Mafia in Italy, and the Chicago gangsters in America, shows that a union of gangsters breaks down the moment one of them finds that his interests are not being served by an uneasy agreement. The General Assembly of the United Nations can no more serve as a classless, impartial assembly, than the parliaments or assemblies of the member states, which are themselves divided into classes or ruled over by privileged elites. The major powers which form the Security Council, moreover, each have a veto and can vote down any action, or even declaration, by the United Nations. The attitude of the labour leaders on this question stems from the failure to understand that society is divided into classes, and also divided into nations, on which those classes are based. The class struggle is both national and international. Marxists explain that the labour movement must understand that it can no more have any confidence in the Tories' foreign policy than it has in the Tories' home policy. Foreign policy is the continuation of home policy—it is based on exactly the same class considerations.

The task of Marxists is first to raise the level of understanding of the advanced layers of the working class active in the trade unions, the shop stewards committees and the Labour Party. This can only be done on the basis of a clear analysis of the class interests of the capitalist powers.

Britain's capitalist allies in the European Economic Community have now unanimously supported Britain against Argentina. This is to demonstrate the solidarity of the EEC powers, but above all they have adopted economic sanctions for military reasons, showing their support for NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Nominally, at least, they have implemented a ban on imports from Argentina, and if it comes to decisive battles, American imperialism will reluctantly have to do the same. Sanctions, however, even though they could be a severe blow to the Argentine economy cannot prevent the Junta from going to war because Galtieri fears his regime will collapse if he does not take a stand and defend the seizure of the Falklands.

The retaking of South Georgia gives British imperialism a supply base for navy and for the troops. But it seems that Thatcher and the Tory Government have pressing reasons for undertaking immediate action in relation to the Falklands themselves. From the point of view of military strategy it would have been better to build up a base on South Georgia. But even though a delay of six to nine months could prepare the way for the partial collapse of the Argentine economy the Tory Government is not prepared to wait. The Tories fear that it may be difficult to maintain morale for six months, or a year, or more. It therefore appears that the

Thatcher government is prepared to risk everything on a quick ending of the conflict through an assault on the Falkland Islands. The navy, part of the airforce and sections of the regular army, together with special forces, (the SAS, the Commandos, the Special Boat Service) will be used in an attempt to retake the Islands. Nevertheless, this will be a minor war for Britain, whereas it is a major war for Argentina.

The role of Marxism in Argentina

In Argentina, the role of Marxists must be skillfully to oppose the war. They will expose the inconsistencies of the Junta, showing the mess which the capitalist officer caste have made of the economy. The Junta has, temporarily, been able to divert the Argentine masses on nationalist lines. But the Marxists will demonstrate the incapacity of the officer caste to fight a revolutionary war, without which it is virtually ruled out that Argentina could defeat Britain, which is still a relatively powerful imperialist power. Why does the Junta fight with kid gloves? The Argentine capitalists, on whose interests the Junta rests, are linked to American and British finance capital. Marxists in the Argentine will demand the expropriation, first of British investments, and then of all foreign capital in the country.

They will demand that Argentina be handed back to the Argentines: that is the expropriation of both landed and industrial capital. They will show the privileges and incompetence of the rotten upper strata of the officer caste, and their military incompetence. Without the genuine planning of industry, and fair rationing and distribution of goods for all, it would be impossible to wage an effective war. The Marxists would criticise the entirely selfish aims of the Junta and the Argentine capitalists, whose aim, if they hold the Falklands, would be to reap profits, as junior partners of American imperialism, at the expense of the working class. The Marxists would explain that victory over the powerful imperialist Britain could not be gained by military means, especially under the direction of the totalitarian Junta, but only through political and social means. An overthrow of the Junta by the workers and the establishment of a socialist Argentina would be the most powerful weapon against all imperialism, especially British and American. The Argentine working class could then appeal to the labour movement and the workers and soldiers of Britain. The workers of Argentina would then suggest a socialist federation of Argentina, the Falklands, and of a socialist Britain. A socialist government in the Argentine would then point out that the Falklands issue has been magnified out of all proportion by generations of Argentine capitalists for their own ends. They would appeal to the workers of all Latin America to overthrow the economic yoke of capitalism and imperialism, and to overthrow their own Juntas, and to prepare for a socialist federation of Latin America. The Junta's aims cannot be the aims of the working class, either in home or foreign policy. For the capitalists, war will be profitable. For the workers and soldiers, the war will mean bloodshed and suffering. In the course of a long war, if the present conflict were to be prolonged, Marxist ideas of this sort would receive

enormous support in Argentina and throughout Latin America. The overthrow of the Junta would mark the beginning of a socialist revolution in Argentina, though because of the absence of a Marxist leadership it would in the beginning take a distorted Peronist form.

Truth is always concrete. In any particular conflict, Marxists have always analysed all the strands of the class and national conflicts that have resulted in a war. War in the South Atlantic will have incalculable consequences in Argentina and Latin America, but also in Britain and Europe. Whatever the outcome of the war, Thatcher will probably be ousted as Tory leader within the next six or nine months, just as Carrington was eliminated as a result of his mistakes in the Foreign Office. Pym will probably be pushed forward as the next leader and Prime Minister.

Thatcher and the Tories pretend that the Falkland Islanders and their wishes are their first consideration. In reality, it is the last thing they are concerned about. If it were in the interests of British imperialism, they would sacrifice the interests of the Islanders without blinking an eyelid. It is the prestige of British imperialism and the prospect of exotic riches in the Antarctic, not the interests of the Islanders, which determine the policy of the Tory Government. The Second World War supposedly broke out over the city of Danzig, which was seized by force by the Nazis. In reality, however, it was considerations of markets, raw materials, colonial possessions, and spheres of influence which were the main cause of the war. The 1,800 Falklanders are just pawns in the game as far as British imperialism are concerned. If they launch an assault now it will be a desperate move on the part of British imperialism, though it is not ruled out that they could gain victory through a quick kill. The British troops are highly trained professionals, and the British navy is still the third most powerful in the world. The British forces are immensely powerful, and are equipped with sophisticated technological weapons and defences. The morale of the troops is apparently high.

No trust in the Tories! Only a Labour government, implementing socialist policies at home and abroad, could resolve the crisis over the Falklands

Marxists must explain that it is the dialectical contradictions, nationally and internationally, which have resulted in this war. It is necessary patiently to explain that the war is not in the interests of the Argentine or the British peoples, or of the Falkland Islanders. If British capitalism succeeds, then the irony of the situation is that Argentina, which might ultimately have succeeded through negotiations in gaining some sort of finger in the pie of the riches in the Falklands region, will obtain nothing. If British capitalism succeeds, they will turn a deaf ear to Argentine aims, but the social contradictions in Argentina unbalanced the regime and pushed the generals into action.

We must demand a general election now, as a way of bringing down the Tories and returning the Labour Party to power with a socialist programme. The capitalist government has landed us in a mess at home and abroad. This involves advancing our general programme: for the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies with compensation on the basis of proven need; for workers' control and management of industry, and for a socialist plan of production. If necessary, British workers and the Marxists will be willing to wage a war against the Argentine Junta, to help the Argentine workers to take power into their own hands. But only a democratic socialist Britain would have clean hands. A Labour government committed to socialist policies would probably not need to wage war, but could issue a socialist appeal to the Argentine workers to overthrow the monstrous Junta, take power, and then organise a socialist federation of Britain and the Argentine, in conjunction with the Falkland Islands. The fears of the Falkland Islanders could be laid to rest by a socialist Argentine, which would give them full autonomy with democratic control in the hands of the Falkland workers themselves.

An approach on these lines, demanding a general election and the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies, would raise in the minds of the working class all the issues of for who and for what the war is being waged. The irony is that finance capital did not want the war, but through their Tory representatives have blundered into a conflict which will have incalculable consequences for Latin America and Britain.

The strategists of British capital console themselves that Argentina is not El Salvador or Nicaragua, in that it has a powerful capitalist industry, and a powerful agricultural capitalist class. They calculate that even if they defeat Argentina and—with many regrets—dispense with the present regime, the military rulers will be replaced, at any rate in the first stage, by the Peronists, and the Peronist trade union leaders. The Peronist trade union leaders have timidly put forward the demand for the expropriation of foreign capital, but it will get short shrift from the Junta. But when the Junta is overthrown, the demand for the expropriation of foreign capital might get serious support. However, the strategists of British capital know that there is no Marxist party, or Marxist tendency, in Argentina.

After an interregnum—and this would be inevitable if the workers did not take power in Argentina—there would be a new military dictatorship 'to end the chaos', a totalitarian regime that would probably be even worse than the present one.

The war in the South Atlantic and its repercussions are a result of the accumulation of contradictions during the course of the last few decades. The analysis which we made of the crisis in British capitalism, and of developments in the Tory Party, has been shown to be correct. Thatcher and the Tories are desperate. Without a victory on this issue they are doomed. The splits between the 'Wets' and the hardline 'Dries' is reflected in

the splits behind the scenes on this issue. If no action had been taken, the Tory Party would have been split in three ways. This mirrors the social contradictions in Britain, and the splits in the Tories are an indication, as is the war, of the irreconcilable contradictions between the classes in society. We are now in a new epoch, nationally and internationally, an epoch of sharp turns and sudden changes. The social contradictions within Britain and Argentina are even greater than the national contradictions between them. Little things illuminate class contradictions. The British officers in the expedition to South Georgia were willing to risk the lives of the men, who were no doubt told that they were fighting against the fascists. But while the officers would not invite the soldiers or sailors to dine with them, they invited the officers of the defeated Junta forces.

This is only the beginning of a chain of upheavals in all countries in the coming period.

It is noticeable that Thatcher abandoned her snarling at the Labour leaders and cooed at Michael Foot on the television. Without the support of the trade union and labour leaders it would be impossible to go to war, at least for any length of time. But if things get really serious and Britain risked defeat, then the capitalists would demand a coalition with the Labour leaders, and the right wing leaders would join, under a new leader of the Tory Party and coalition premier. The Tories have embarked upon this adventure because there is no other way to defend their power and prestige, and to assure British big business of a decisive say in exploiting the resources in the Falklands and Antarctica. They are staking their future on a decisive victory.

The Junta miscalculated completely, aided by the miscalculations of the British Foreign Office. But the social contradictions have propelled them into war, and they have no other way out. The bloody equation of war is incalculable. While it is almost certain that there will be a victory for British imperialism, it is not absolutely certain that this will be so. The defeat of the Junta would have enormous consequences and would promote revolution in Argentina. A defeat for Britain would have enormous social consequences here, too, and would mean the collapse of the Tory Party.

Whatever the outcome, the Marxists, with a correct approach towards the war and the feelings of the workers in Britain, will gain. A correct orientation towards the working people in Argentina is also of decisive importance. The sectarians will remain stewing in their fantastic mish-mash of absurd slogans and spurious explanations, and will gain nothing, except perhaps a few odd-balls. A Marxist approach towards the war could result in a great increase of support for the genuine forces of Marxism. We are the only section of the labour movement which has a clear understanding, first of war in general and the war over the Falklands in particular, and, second, of how to approach the working class and other exploited strata and win them to Marxism in the event of war ●

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