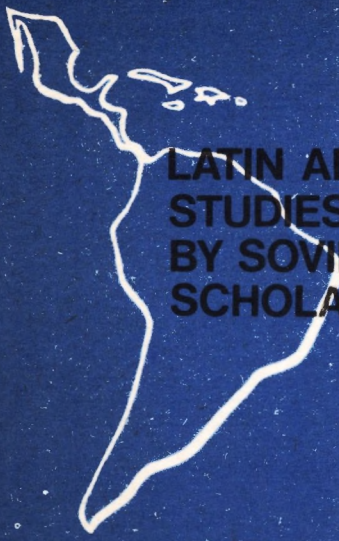


LATIN AMERICA:
STUDIES
BY SOVIET
SCHOLARS

THE MALVINAS (FALKLAND) CRISIS: THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

"SOCIAL SCIENCES TODAY" EDITORIAL BOARD
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LATIN AMERICA: STUDIES BY SOVIET SCHOLARS No. 3

THE MALVINAS (FALKLAND) CRISIS: THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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INTRODUCTION

The conflict which flared up in the South Atlantic in April 1982 immediately arrested world attention. The dramatic developments over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands lost in the cold wastes of the ocean demonstrated that an old diplomatic dispute over the sovereignty of that territory which has been dragging on for more than a century is capable of placing the world community on the brink of events that pose a real threat to world peace.

NATO's second biggest navy with nuclear arms, nuclear-powered submarines, paratroopers specially trained for "big warfare" against the socialist countries in extreme polar conditions, the most sophisticated military hardware, spy satellites, strategic bombers--all this was unloosed against Argentina, a Latin American country with a conservative military regime that stresses its being part of the "Western and Christian world".

Leading capitalist states applied trade and economic sanctions against Argentina, setting in motion a mechanism, which had been tried and perfected over decades as a means of pressure and blackmail of national liberation movements and socialist countries.

What has brought about such a sharp turn of the front of "Western democracies" against one of the countries of the "South"? The landing of Argentine troops on the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands on April 2, 1982, i.e., Argentina's attempt to regain national sovereignty over territory forcibly annexed by Britain in 1833 was the pretext for the demonstration of NATO's military muscle and "Western solidarity". But the root cause of the conflict was the desire of Britain and other imperialist powers to preserve the survivals of

long-dead colonialism at any price, to indicate to Argentina and the other developing states the "limits" beyond which they would not tolerate their independent political course.

The conflict in the South Atlantic by no means ended with the capitulation of the Argentine garrison on the Malvinas on June 14, 1982. It provoked and continues to provoke a great deal of comment throughout the world, comment reflecting the attitude of different classes, political and social forces not only to this particular conflict, but to wider global international problems, to the struggle between the opponents and advocates of restructuring world relations along just and equitable lines.

This is a collection of articles by Soviet historians and students of international affairs specialising in Latin America. It includes articles written right after the events along with scholarly investigations into the causes and various aspects of the Malvinas crisis and provides a fair idea of the Soviet reaction to the Anglo-Argentine conflict of 1982.

* * *

To better understand the events in the South Atlantic in 1982 it would be useful to turn to history and look at the long period of diplomatic negotiations on the Malvinas problem between Argentina and Great Britain. Restoring national sovereignty over the archipelago has always been one of the high priorities of Argentine diplomacy. But for many decades these efforts had been fruitless.

The situation began to change in the early 1960s when the rise of national liberation movements dealt a mortal blow at imperialism's colonial system. Argentina received international legal grounds for its position in the UN General Assembly's Resolution 1514 of December 14, 1960 on the liquidation of colonialism. In the dispute over the Malvinas considered by the UN, Argentina was supported by the Committee of 24 which observed the process of decolonisation, and by many newly independent states. On January 4, 1966 the General Assembly passed Resolution 2065 which called on

the British and Argentine governments to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the problem in accordance with the UN Charter, Resolution 1514 and the interests of the islanders.

It is significant that all the UN documents urged the need to take into account the interests of the population of the islands who are of British origin but none mentions their right to self-determination. The question of the Malvinas must be solved proceeding from the principle of territorial integrity of states which in this instance means return of the archipelago under the national sovereignty of Argentina.

In that same year of 1966, Anglo-Argentine negotiations began. They lasted many years without any results because of the obstructionist position of Great Britain. At the first stage of the talks--from January 1966 to January 1976--Britain tried to sidestep the basic issue of sovereignty over the archipelago. With that end in view it succeeded in putting on the agenda of the talks two more problems, namely the communications between mainland Argentina and the Malvinas and the question of economic cooperation.

Exchanges on these issues led to the signing on July 1, 1971, in Buenos Aires of a joint declaration in which both sides undertook certain commitments to establish naval and air communications between mainland Argentina and the islands. Measures were envisaged to facilitate travel to Argentina for the Malvinas inhabitants, to establish postal, telegraph and telephone communications between the islands and Argentina. The Argentine Government said it was ready to cooperate in public health care, in education, agriculture and to render technical assistance to the archipelago. It also undertook to offer places at its schools for the children of the islanders, to give them scholarships at various educational institutions in the country.

In 1972 the British authorities allowed the Argentine Government to build an airfield on the Malvinas, and in 1974 to ensure supplies of fuel to the islands through the government company JPF. All that involved considerable financial outlays but Argentina met them because it believed that these measures would help strengthen its ties with the islan-

ders and establish mutual understanding with the local people.

Because there was no progress on the main issue of sovereignty Argentina again went to the United Nations. In December 1973 the General Assembly passed Resolution 3160 (XXVIII) registering concern over the lack of progress at the Anglo-Argentine talks and recommending to expedite the conduct of the talks.

At the insistence of the British side the question of economic cooperation was put on the agenda of bilateral negotiations in 1975. By that time the Griffiths report on the natural resources of the Malvinas and the surrounding continental shelf, commissioned by the British Government, had come out. In the mid-1970s the Western press carried reports that there were rich offshore oil deposits around the islands. With the capitalist world in the grip of the fuel crisis, the remote archipelago in the South Atlantic attracted the attention of the oil monopolies. The report on the potential oil resources in the world presented to the US Congress in October 1980 noted, among other things, that "the only region with a significant oil potential outside the OPEC and the communist countries is the Malvinas basin between Argentina and the Falkland Islands".[1]

Argentina regarded with concern the sudden awakening of "interest" in the Malvinas natural resources on the part of the imperialist powers. On November 14, 1975 it issued a statement denying the right of foreign states to explore and exploit the resources in the region which is the extension of Argentina's continental shelf.

In spite of repeated Argentine protests the British Government decided to send a research party to the Malvinas headed by Lord Shackleton. On January 3, 1976 that party, which included experts in energy resources, fishing and cattle-breeding, arrived on the Malvinas. In July of the same year Lord Shackleton handed to the British Government a bulky report on the results of his studies. It contained a very interesting conclusion: "It is logical that, in any major

new developments of the islands economy, especially those relating to offshore resources, cooperation with Argentina--even participation--should if possible be secured."[2] It was not however the opinion of experts that determined the British stand.

While Lord Shackleton was exploring the islands, the Foreign Office dispatched a note to Buenos Aires in which it declared the talks on sovereignty "useless" and proposed confining the discussions to economic matters. On January 13, 1976 the Argentine Government demanded that the British ambassador be recalled from Buenos Aires.[3]

Thus ended a decade of bilateral negotiations whose aim according to the UN resolutions was to eliminate the remnants of colonialism in the South Atlantic. To put it bluntly the talks were wrecked by the British diplomacy.

In this situation the UN General Assembly took up the Malvinas question once more. The resolution sponsored by Iraq and adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 15, 1976, contained provisions coinciding with the Argentine point of view and mentioned the resolutions on the Malvinas adopted by the non-aligned movement at its sessions in Lima in 1974 and Colombo in 1976.[4] The General Assembly spoke highly of Argentina's efforts to improve the well-being of the islanders and noted the need to take into account their interests in future. The resolution recommended Britain and Argentina to avoid any unilateral measures that would introduce new elements into the contentious problem. It is significant that Great Britain for the first time in the UN discussions of the Malvinas question voted against that resolution (previously it had invariably abstained) and among the 32 states which abstained were all the leading capitalist countries.

The Argentine military government which came to office in March 1976 soon resumed talks with Great Britain. In April 1977 a joint communique to the effect was published simultaneously in London and Buenos Aires. The two sides declared that the negotiations would be on the sovereignty

over the Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands as well as on economic cooperation on these territories.

So, for the first time during the Argentine-British negotiations Great Britain officially admitted that the talks had to do with the national sovereignty over these territories although it made the reservation that it would "consult" the islanders. The new round of talks got under way in Rome in July 1977. Although the British official who headed the delegation turned out to have no mandate for conducting the negotiations the Argentine side nevertheless spelled out its position. The gist of it was that negotiations on economic cooperation could not be successful until a just solution was found to the question of sovereignty.

The next meeting of the delegations took place in New York in December 1977. A joint communique enumerated the problems discussed, and these included the question of sovereignty, and announced the creation of two working groups, one for the question of political sovereignty and the other for economic problems.

It seemed that the negotiations had at last got off the ground. But it proved to be just another London manoeuvre. At the next round of talks British diplomacy returned to its time-tested tactics of delays. It declared that it was necessary to ask the islanders whether they would like to return under Argentine sovereignty. That represented an attempt to return to the "right" to self-determination for the British settlers on the territory which had been forcibly and illegally annexed from a sovereign state, the thesis which has been rejected by the UN.

In October 1980 British representative N. Ridley visited the Malvinas officially to find out the opinion of the islanders. Speaking at Port Stanley he presented three alternatives. First, joint Anglo-Argentine administration of the islands which he said was unacceptable. Second, freezing the talks which too was not considered very suitable. And finally, the third alternative was recognising a symbolic

Argentine sovereignty over the archipelago on condition that it is leased to Britain over a long term.

Ridley declared that in his view the third variant was the best. Yet he knew all along that this variant was rejected by Argentina. The Council of the Malvinas Islands, representing the interests of the big local landowners, for its part demanded an indefinite freeze of the negotiations. This led Ridley to make a statement on the right of the islanders to "self-determination".

It was against this background that a new round of Argentine-British talks began in New York in February 1981. The British immediately proposed to freeze the negotiations so as to resume discussions after an indefinite time. Their arguments? Such a course of action allegedly would allow the time necessary to build the islanders' trust in Argentina and to draw up concrete projects of the Islands' economic developments.

Thus Great Britain, contrary to earlier agreements and contrary to the resolutions of the UN General Assembly, again refused to discuss the question of sovereignty over the Malvinas. After years of negotiations they were back to where they started from.

The latest official Argentine proposals were set out in a note handed to the British ambassador in Buenos Aires in July 1981. Their main points were: Argentina reaffirmed its desire to achieve recognition of its sovereignty over the islands and undertook to respect the interests of the islanders agreeing that these interests should be guaranteed by the United Nations.

The last Argentine-British meeting took place in February 1982. After two days of negotiations no progress was reached.

The question suggests itself: what makes Britain cling to the remnants of its colonial empire? After all, one cannot take seriously London's professed "concern" for the destinies of the islanders. The Argentine proposals offered sufficient guarantees of their interests. Meanwhile Great

Britain over decades had done practically nothing for the economic and social development of its colony. And the example of Diego García Island in the Indian Ocean from which the local population was forcibly driven out while the island was turned into a US strategic base, shows that the interests of the inhabitants of remote fragments of the colonial empire mean nothing to the English ruling circles.

The economic interests of the Falkland Islands Co. which enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the Malvinas, could not play a decisive role either. The company went on doing business with the Argentine garrison in the spring of 1982. It had never been worried about the fate of its possessions in mainland Argentina, a vast latifundia in Santa Cruz province. In general, no Argentine government had ever encroached on the property of the British citizens in Argentina, their large land holdings, industrial enterprises and banks. Least of all was it the intention of the Galtieri Government in 1982.

The causes of British obstinacy and unwillingness to approach the Malvinas problem constructively are to be traced to a complex combination of interests--economic, political, military and strategic--of the whole bloc of imperialist powers. By the early 1980s the Malvinas problem outgrew the framework of a bilateral Anglo-Argentine dispute on sovereignty. In fact it became a manifestation of the global contradiction between imperialism and the Third World, this in spite of all the differences of social and political systems in the states belonging in that category.

Indeed the huge natural resources of that region attracted the attention not only of the British companies. Powerful transnational corporations entered the game seeking to lay their hands on riches in the remotest corners of the world.

The importance of the Malvinas as the nearest geographical approach to the Antarctica is constantly growing in the eyes of the imperialist powers, in particular as the period of validity of the international agreement on the continent is running out.

Finally the policy of the leading imperialist power, the USA, of stoking international tensions, and its stake on military superiority and confrontation not only with the socialist countries but also with the national liberation movements and all the states whose policies for some reason do not suit Washington--all this went a long way to change the military-strategic significance even of those parts of the world which because of their geographical remoteness held no particular interest for imperialism. These trends increased after the Reagan Administration came to power in the USA.

In connection with the events of April-June 1982 Alfredo Varela, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Argentina, drew attention to a circumstance that sheds more light on the international aspects of the Anglo-Argentine conflict. In January 1980 the National Security Council of the USA approved a Free Ocean's Plan as the basis for the Washington Administration's military and political strategy.

That document notes that British help is necessary in realising the American plans for the southern parts of the three oceans. Britain must be America's main ally also because it possesses various islands in the South Atlantic which in a contingency could be turned into naval and air bases modelled on Diego García or a supply base like the Ascension Island.... Great Britain, said the document, should be encouraged to preserve its sovereignty over the islands under any circumstances, including the islands to which Argentina lays claim.[5]

So, the US National Security Council pronounced itself clearly for the preservation of the British presence on the Malvinas. Thus the Reagan Administration's "power" strategy, camouflaged in propaganda talk about the "Soviet naval power", turns out to be nothing but the defence of colonialism and a threat to countries seeking to eliminate it.

The archipelago became part of the global strategic plans of imperialism and Argentina's demands for the liquidation of the remnants of colonialism were bound to clash with

the general interests of the "free world" determined in Washington. It is the protection of its specific plans and not the considerations of "loyalty" to its closest NATO ally that determined Washington's pro-British stand in the South Atlantic conflict.

The deadlock at the negotiations in 1981 faced the Argentine Government with the need to decide on its position. Among the military in Argentina, the failure of prolonged negotiations and lack of apparent prospects for a diplomatic settlement revived the simmering sentiments in favour of "resolute actions".

On April 2, 1982 Argentine troops landed on the Malvinas and hoisted the Argentine national flag over its capital. "Operation Rosario" was conceived and conducted in such a way as to avoid loss of British lives. And indeed there were no British losses. The blood of hundreds of Britons and Argentines who became victims of London's colonial adventure is entirely on the conscience of the British Conservative Government and to some extent its NATO allies.

The contributors to this collection of articles analyse the whole range of domestic and foreign political causes of the Anglo-Argentine conflict, the motives that impelled the Galtieri military government to take such a drastic step, the miscalculations that eventually led to a military defeat after a 74-day stay of the Argentine troops on the archipelago. But irrespective of the character of the military regime in Argentina restoration of national sovereignty over part of the country annexed from it forcibly was objectively an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist step. This is how it was seen by the Argentine people and other Latin American peoples and by the progressives throughout the world.

This was the view taken in the Soviet Union. It was set forth on May 4, 1982 at a Kremlin reception for a government delegation of Nicaragua: "History and the present time are yielding further proof of the fact that the freedom movement is going on and mounting amidst the broad masses of the peoples of Latin America.

"The peoples want to be the masters of their land, of their homes, be it in Central America or in the Southern Atlantic. And if in the Western Hemisphere, too, there emerge dangerous complications and conflict situations, it is precisely because there are forces which are trying to preserve or restore their positions of dominance and to impose foreign oppression on the peoples.

"They do not stop at threats and pressure, blackmail and blockade, or the use of arms, and resort to actions reminding one of the time of colonial brigandage.

"Here, as in other parts of the globe, the Soviet Union follows its principal policy, that of removing the existing seats of tension and preventing new ones, preventing interference in the internal affairs of states and peoples, and settling disputes by peaceful ways, at the negotiating table."[6]

On October 4, 1982 the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Andrei Gromyko met the Argentine Foreign Minister Aguirre Lanari in New York and reaffirmed the unchanged Soviet position concerning a just settlement of the Malvinas problem "through negotiations within the UN framework and on the basis of the UN decisions".[7]

The British military victory on the Malvinas is unable to shore up the colonial status of the islands. Colonialism is irrevocably a thing of the past. The just demands of the Argentine people enjoy growing understanding and support in the world. The valour of the Argentine troops and their sacrifices were not in vain. Their struggle will go down in history as a patriotic saga of defending the dignity of the Argentine nation, the dignity of all the Latin American peoples who refuse to resign themselves to colonialism and diktat. The Argentine and the other Latin American peoples will draw lessons from the tragic events in the Southern Atlantic in 1982. The peoples value the lessons of history and know how to use them in their movement towards the future.

Andrei Goncharov, Cand.Sc.(Hist.)

NOTES

[1] El País, June 8, 1982.

[2] The Economist, June 12, 1982, p. 31.

[3] The Argentine ambassador had been recalled from London "for consultations" as early as November 1975.

[4] The non-aligned movement supported Argentina declaring that the principle of self-determination was inapplicable to the Malvinas and recognising Argentina's sovereignty over the archipelago.

[5] A. Varela, "La crisis del Atlantico Sur", Anales, Buenos Aires, No. 3, 1982, 2nd quarter, p. 39.

[6] Pravda, May 5, 1982.

[7] Pravda, October 5, 1982.

BRITAIN'S ARMED INVASION OF LA PLATA (1806-1807)

Vladimir MIROSHEVSKY

In July 1805 the British Government put Captain Popham at the head of an expedition against the Dutch colonies in South Africa. He was given eight ships and an infantry unit for landing operations. In January 1806 Popham fulfilled the assignment and a British flag was hoisted over Kapstadt.

The British squadron then suddenly left the African waters and headed for the South American shores. The vessels carried a large infantry unit commanded by General Beresford. The aim of the English as Popham reported to the Ministry for the Colonies was to attack the Spanish settlements on La Plata. On June 25, the British squadron appeared near Buenos Aires and the following day Beresford with his troops landed in the vicinity of the city.

News of the appearance of the British caused confusion in Buenos Aires. The Viceroy Sobremonte had only a token military force which made it impossible to defend the city. The Spanish colonial authorities could have armed the populace and called them to self-defence but mistrustful of the Creoles and the "coloureds", Sobremonte decided against it. He did not resist the English and was the first to flee from Buenos Aires into the hinterlands to be followed by most of the other Spanish officials. On June 27 Beresford seized the main city of the United Provinces of the Río de La Plata without firing a single shot.

Contrary to the expectations of the Creole separatists who thought that the British would bring liberation from colonial dependence to Spanish America, Popham and Beresford behaved like conquerors. They did not bother to conceal that they viewed La Plata as a new British colony. In a proclamation Beresford said without mincing words that henceforth Buenos Aires was under the British Crown and that the British would trade with it on the same basis as with other British colonies. Not a single word was said about future independence of Spanish America.[1] The English seized 1,291,000 dollars in the La Plata treasury; out of this sum 1,086,000 was immediately sent to England, and the remaining 205,000 dollars were given away as the prize money to the members of the expedition.

No wonder the local people soon came to hate the English. While Sobremonte was lying low in a remote town of the Viceroyalty doing nothing to oppose the English who had dug in in Buenos Aires, the Creoles began to set up militia units in various parts of La Plata to fight the invaders. The volunteers were headed by a French naval officer by the name of Liniers who had entered into Spanish service 30 years before but was still regarded as an "alien" by the colonial administration.

In early August Liniers with 3,000 fighters and backed by popular support surrounded Buenos Aires whose small English garrison headed by Beresford surrendered after offering brief resistance. Popham with what remained of his expeditionary unit managed to retreat to his ships.

In spite of the setback Popham decided to continue military operations. Taking advantage of the fact that the Spanish authorities had no naval forces the British squadron blocked the shores of La Plata. On October 5 and again on October 12 Popham received small reinforcements from South Africa which enabled him to make a second landing on October 29 and seize Maldonado, a small port east of Montevideo.

England had learned about the start of the La Plata expedition from Popham's letter back in June 24. For several

months the Government hesitated to send any reinforcements to Popham. Moreover reluctant to assume responsibility for the La Plata adventure it decided to replace Popham and recall him to England. But on September 12 news came that Buenos Aires had been taken by Beresford's troops. It quickly spread throughout England causing jubilation among merchants and industrialists who hoped that this would open the Spanish-American market.

Predictably, the government yielded to the demands of the bourgeoisie that troops be sent across the ocean. General Auchmuty was ordered to sail for Buenos Aires with 2,900 soldiers, General Crawford was dispatched to the shores of Chile with 4,200 soldiers. Besides, General Wellesley (future Lord Wellington) who was in Jamaica with 8,000 soldiers, was to land on the eastern shore of Mexico near Veracruz and another British unit (3,000-strong), stationed in the East Indies, was to land on the western (Pacific) shore of Mexico. Thus the invasion of Spanish America was to take place at four points simultaneously. More than 18,000 soldiers, a considerable force for that time, was assigned to carry out the mission.

The British Government's plans with regard to Spanish America may be gathered from the instruction the War Minister Windham gave to General Crawford before he sailed from England. It contained, among other things, some important political points: it said that should Crawford have success in conquering the province of Chile or part of it he was to use all the means available to him, both peaceful and violent, to prevent the spread of the rebellious spirit among the population. His main efforts should always be directed towards maintaining internal order and tranquillity on territory occupied by His Majesty's troops; even in adjacent territory, the General should not help rebel activities or measures leading to anything but the transition of the country under the patronage and government of His Majesty. It is His Majesty's wish, read the instructions, that the rights previously enjoyed by various classes of the population and the duties imposed on them should if possible not be changed;

the former forms of government should be preserved, the new will only consist in the replacement of the rule of the Spanish King by the power of His Majesty.[2]

The British Cabinet in deciding to send troops to the Spanish possessions intended that they should become British colonies in the same way as the Dutch colonies in Africa were acquired.

On October 13, Auchmuty sailed from England and in early November he was followed by Crawford's unit. The troops from Jamaica and the East Indies never started, probably because of Beresford's capitulation (August 12, 1806) news of which was received in London on January 2, 1807 and caused a scaling down of the planned operations. It was decided to concentrate the expeditionary troops on one point, La Plata, and the plans of attacking Chile and Mexico were dropped. A message was sent posthaste to Crawford not to land on the American west coast but to go and help the La Plata group. Besides, on March 7 General Whitelocke sailed from England to La Plata with 1,600 soldiers; he was to be chief commander of all the troops sent to South America.

The events in La Plata in 1807 developed in the following way. In early January Auchmuty with his troops arrived in Maldonado and handed Popham the order to return to England. The total British force at the time was about 4,000. In early February Auchmuty advanced on Montevideo and after a battle occupied that second most important city of the La Plata Viceroyalty. On May 9, Whitelocke arrived at Montevideo with reinforcements and assumed command. On June 14, Crawford with his unit joined them, bringing the total British strength in La Plata to 10,000, which Whitelocke considered to be enough for a second attack on Buenos Aires. On July 5, the British began the storm of the city. They were fiercely resisted by the volunteers led by Liniers. Barricades went up in the streets and every house became a fortress.

Exhausted in fruitless attempts to break the will of the defenders of Buenos Aires the British had to retreat. They began to negotiate a ceasefire with Liniers. On July 7, an agreement was signed on the strength of which Whitelocke was

to evacuate the area of Buenos Aires and subsequently Montevideo; there was to be an exchange of prisoners; and Liniers promised to allow the British free return to their homeland. Whitelocke and Liniers stuck to the terms of that agreement.[3] That brought to a fruitless conclusion the La Plata adventure started by Popham on his own initiative but subsequently supported by the British Cabinet.

What were the after-effects of the La Plata events? The fighting against the British forces waged mainly by the Creoles, while the Spanish authorities were confused and inactive, had serious consequences for the internal political life of the colonies.

At the height of the fighting on February 7, 1807, three days after Montevideo was occupied by the British, the city Council of Buenos Aires in which the Creoles enjoyed considerable influence decided to remove Viceroy Sobremonte as a coward and traitor who had failed to defend La Plata from the foreign attack. Because the colonial militia led by Liniers was at the time the only real force in Buenos Aires the Council's decision was immediately implemented. The militiamen arrested Sobremonte, the legitimate representative of the Spanish King, and sent him under guard to Chile to be deported to Spain and tried. Liniers was elected provisional ruler of the Viceroyalty. A petition was sent to Madrid requesting that he be appointed Viceroy instead of Sobremonte but it was clear that in reality the "petition" was an ultimatum.

After the British troops had been driven from La Plata by Liniers the Madrid Government did not dare to turn down the veiled ultimatum. The "alien" and "upstart" Liniers, idol of the Creoles, was appointed Viceroy of La Plata. It was a brilliant victory for the Creoles no less important in their eyes than the victory over the British. They gained greater confidence in their strength and readiness to continue the fight for liberation from the colonial yoke. All over Spanish America the Creoles celebrated their double victory over Whitelocke and Sobremonte as a victory of their own cause.

Thus, the repulsion of the British forces on La Plata far from strengthening Spain's positions in America, weakened them. It was clear that the Spanish colonial empire was on the threshold of the most dramatic crisis it had ever experienced before.

NOTES

[1] For the text of Beresford's proclamation see: S.H. Wilcocke, History of the Viceroyalty of Buenos Aires, London, 1807, pp. 356-358.

[2] A summary of the instruction of October 30, 1806, is given in The Annual Register for the Year 1807, London, p. 215.

[3] Ibid., pp. 690-691.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

Lina SHEINBAUM, Cand.Sc.(Hist.)

The Falkland (Malvinas) Islands are situated in the South Atlantic, some 300 miles east of the Magellan Straits. The archipelago consists of several hundred islands with a total area of 11,960 sq.km, but only two of them are big ones: West Falkland (Grand Malvina) and East Falkland (Soledad). They are separated by a narrow strait and their coastline is deeply indented. The islands are hilly. Closeness to the Antarctica and the ocean produces a moderately cool, damp climate. Strong winds and cloudy weather prevail throughout the year. The bleak aspect of the islands is heightened by the absence of trees. Peat is used for fuel. Wildlife is not rich either. The herds of cattle brought by the first settlers subsequently disappeared, with only sheep and horses surviving. But the coastal wildlife is rich and abounds in fish, sea mammals and birds.

The first settlement on the islands was founded by the French in 1764. Previously the islands were uninhabited. The French colonists stayed for only two years and the stay of their successors--the Spanish, the British, etc.--was also brief. The present population did not begin to be formed until the middle of the 19th century. It gradually began to consist of the English, Argentines, Scandinavians and others. As of 1977 the local population numbered about 2,000 of whom almost half lived in the administrative centre of Port Stanley (Puerto Argentino) on East Falkland.

One-fifth of the inhabitants came temporarily to work under contract. The main local occupation is sheep-breeding.

Farming is on a limited scale. Sheep are bred on large ranches. One ranch sometimes occupying a whole island. Central estates are usually small villages.

Until recently the biggest landowner was the Falkland Islands Co. which was granted a royal charter for the exploitation of the lands in 1851. It owns more than one-half of the total area, controls the entire domestic and foreign trade and holds the monopoly of sea transport. The Company used to administer the colony too. It owns also several trading enterprises in Britain through which it markets most of its annual woolclip, the chief source of livelihood for the population. By 1882 half of the territory of the islands was the property of the British Cowlight Company.

Having first arisen in the era of early colonial conquests and "primary accumulation" of capital by European powers, the territorial dispute over the Malvinas waxed and waned but never ceased to smolder because political and strategic plans and economic ambitions stood behind it. There is no consensus on who of the Europeans was the first to land on the islands. The British claim it was a British navigator. However, there is no documentary evidence to prove it.

In Argentina the accepted version is that the islands were discovered by Esteban Gómez. In 1520 that compatriot and probably a relative of Ferdinand Magellan accompanied the famous Portuguese sailor on his circumnavigation of the world as helmsman of the biggest ship in the Spanish flotilla, San Antonio. When the Magellan Straits were discovered and part of the seamen dreaded the perils of further journey, San Antonio deserted: Gómez replaced Magellan's captain and turned the ship back. It is believed that he must have run into the islands although there is no direct evidence of that, either.

Another version says that the islands may have been discovered in 1539 when the Spaniard A. de Comargo was repeating Magellan's feat by sailing round the southern tip of South America from the east. Finally, there is the view that the islands were discovered by the Dutch when Sebald van Weerdt visited them in 1598. For a long time thereafter

the islands were called the Sebaldine Islands after him. The name Falkland Islands appeared after John Strong, an Englishman, in 1690 entered the sound between the two main islands and called it after Vicecount Falkland, then the treasurer of the British Navy.

The French who in the 17th century often sailed from St. Malo in the English Channel to the mouth of the Argentine river Parana (Río de la Plata) and knew these islands called them Les Iles Malouines after the place from which their ships started on the journey. This name was later transformed into the Malvinas. Frezier, a Spanish engineer, who took part in the expedition of 1706, made detailed maps of the Malvinas and provided them with explanations. Spain based its claim to the islands on the fact that they were within the zone inherited by Spain under the Treaty of Tordesillas which divided oceans and lands with Portugal in 1494. The Treaty of Utrecht between Spain and Britain signed in 1713 also provided for Spanish possession. In 1763 the famous French navigator Louis Antoine de Bougainville landed on the Malvinas and founded the first permanent settlement, Port Louis, on Soledad (Puerto Soledad). In 1764 the islands were formally accepted under the French crown. This date is considered to be the start of the islands' "documentary history".

Two hundred Frenchmen worked from dawn to dusk to build a "possession" obelisk and a few structures. Bougainville did much to build up Port Louis village. But upon learning of what had happened, Spain lodged a protest. France, which was then engaged in the Seven Years' War with Britain and Prussia, decided not to become embroiled in a dispute with Spain as it saw no way to hold the islands. As a French minister told the Spanish ambassador to Paris, the main aim of the French Government was to prevent the British from seizing them.[1] France abandoned its claims for 680,000 livras and Bougainville himself prepared the ceremony of the handover of sovereignty over the islands to Spain which took place in 1766.

The Spanish possessions along Río de la Plata were then called La Plata and the capital of what later came to be

called the Viceroyalty was at Buenos Aires. Soon the Spanish King entrusted the city's ruler with controlling the Malvinas. On February 25, 1768 a royal order was sent to the governor of Buenos Aires instructing him to stop any British attempts to gain a foothold in the areas owned by the Spanish crown and to use force to drive them out. However, as early as 1765 Captain John Byron reached the Malvinas and left a unit in the bay which he called Port Egmont (on East Falkland) proclaiming it to be British territory. In 1766 a new English expedition fortified Port Egmont to create a naval base there and neither the French nor the British colonies which were situated nearby suspected the presence of a neighbour. Eventually the British discovered Port Louis and demanded that the French abandon it.

Meanwhile the Buenos Aires governor had sent an expedition to Port Egmont under Rubalcava, who ran into the British in 1770. The next visitor, British Captain Hunt declared the islands to be a British possession. Rubalcava found himself in a difficult position and asked for the governor's support. A military squadron under Madariaga was sent from Buenos Aires. In 1770 Madariaga landed on the islands and forced the British captain Maltby out of Port Egmont. Spain and Britain were on the brink of war but eventually a compromise was reached: Spain agreed to return Port Egmont if Britain relinquished its sovereignty over the islands as a whole. In 1774 the British, being unable to defend Port Egmont, sailed away leaving however a plaque over the entrance to the blockhouse claiming the islands as a British crown possession.

Succeeding governors controlled the settlement of the colony, fishing and hunting of sea mammals. At that time the Spanish monarchy regarded the Antarctic territory as their dominion under the direct control of the governor at Río de la Plata.[2] A Spanish-speaking population appeared on the Malvinas. The armed British intervention at La Plata in 1806-1807 made no difference: a people's militia defended Buenos Aires and drove the British away. The Malvinas also remained Spanish.

Spanish rule however likewise collapsed. The Maya national liberation revolution of 1810 brought a local government to power. A war for the independence of the Spanish colonies in America began. A few years later Uruguay and Paraguay seceded from La Plata and the rest, including the Malvinas, became the Argentine Republic, officially proclaimed in 1826. As early as 1820 the commander of the frigate Heroina which sailed from Buenos Aires was ordered to govern the Malvinas regardless of the protests of the British consul in Buenos Aires.

In 1823 the government of La Plata began settling the islands. The first land allotments on Soledad were received by the nobleman Jorge Pacheco and the merchant Louis Vernet. In 1829 the Argentine Republic decreed to deprive Spain of all its rights to the former united provinces of the Río de la Plata together with the neighbouring islands, their shores and ports. The decree announced the creation of the office of political and military commandant on the Malvinas: "Article I: The Malvinas Islands and the islands adjacent to Cape Horn shall be governed by the commandant directly appointed by the government of the Republic. Article 2: The residence of the commandant shall be on the Soledad Island and a battery under the national flag of the Republic shall be situated on the same island. Article 3: The political and military commandant shall enforce the observance of the laws of the Republic and the hunting and fishing order by the population."[3] Vernet was the first commandant. Thus began the Argentine development of the island.

In 1831 American whaling boats were spotted near Soledad. Vernet arrested them and sailed on one of them to Buenos Aires to report the incident. There Davison, captain of the schooner, met the US consul and the latter demanded a redress of the "illegal" activities of the commandant. Thereupon Davison returned to the Malvinas on the corvette Lexington, arrested the captain of the Argentine vessel there, razed all the buildings to the ground and proclaimed the islands no man's land. The British took advantage of the changed situation and in 1832 the corvette Cleo invaded the bay of one of the islands fulfilling orders to establish British rule over the Falklands.

On January 3, 1833, the British corvette entered Port Soledad and forced the military and civilian commandant Pineda to lower the Argentine flag and to withdraw. This was the act of brigandage which London cites today as the "legitimate" claim to the islands. At first the islands were ruled by naval officers who explored the coastal waters but in 1841 a British civilian administration was established.

The Argentine representative in London lodged almost yearly protests over the British aggression but to no avail. A British naval base was set up on the islands and that marked the start of a planned programme to settle the islands with people of English and Scotch descent. But the local economy patterns remained largely unchanged. A major event unfolded there during the First World War when on December 8, 1914, the Battle of the Falklands began. A German squadron which had orders to break from the South Atlantic to Germany decided to pass through the strait in the Falkland Islands and strike at the Port Stanley base. The German Vice-Admiral Graf von Spee was unaware of the presence of a considerable British naval force commanded by Vice-Admiral Doveton Sturdee. Von Spee ran into these forces and in spite of an attempt to evade them was defeated.

During the Second World War Port Stanley was a naval base for Britain and the USA. The postwar period saw new and more intensive Argentina's efforts to gain the islands in the context of the general collapse of the colonial system. The Malvinas question was discussed at the United Nations and on November 18, 1965, the General Assembly passed Resolution 2065 which urged the need for a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Argentina and Great Britain over the Malvinas in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (Declaration on Decolonisation) and the interests of the local population.

Bilateral negotiations which began in 1966 produced no results. The UN General Assembly resolution of December 14, 1973, expressed concern over lack of tangible progress on the question of the islands. It also noted the efforts of the Argentine Government to improve the living conditions of

the Malvinas population and it recommended the renewal of the talks. The new round that began in 1977 proceeded in two directions: the sovereignty of the islands and economic cooperation on the Malvinas.

In 1978 prospecting for oil in the South Atlantic began. There were signs of large oil deposits on the shelf of the Malvinas which fueled the dispute between Britain and Argentina. The US intervened, promising support both to Britain and to Argentina in order to have a pretext for interference on the request of either of the conflicting sides. These provocative actions of the imperialist circles led to predictable results and in the spring of 1982 the guns began to speak.

NOTES

[1] Gaillet-Bois, Las Islas Malvinas, Buenos Aires. 1948, p. 19.

[2] J.C. Puig, La antàrtida argentina ante el derecho, Buenos Aires, 1960, p. 121.

[3] V. Quesada, La Patagonia y las tierras australes del continente americano, Buenos Aires, 1875, pp. 434-444.

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC IN IMPERIALISM'S PLANS

Yuri KHRUNOV

Scholars studying the causes of the armed conflict in the South Atlantic in 1982 inevitably turned to history. They have traced step by step the intense chain of events marking the evolution of the Anglo-Argentine territorial dispute which goes back to 1833 when the British seized the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands by force. The dispute took on added intensity on the threshold of the 1980s because of the colonialist stand taken by the British side. This was convincingly demonstrated by General Guglialmelli, a prominent student of Argentina's foreign policy, and by other contributors to the discussion of the Malvinas problem in the magazine Estrategia.[1]

Guglialmelli has stressed that during the last, fifth round of the Anglo-Argentine negotiations on the future of the islands the British side had proposed to "freeze the negotiations on the sovereignty of part of our national territory, but to continue conversations on economic cooperation. That is to say, after 15 years of bilateral talks the one and principal subject--sovereignty--is slipping away".[2]

There was obvious reason for the analysts of international affairs to turn to the history of bilateral relations complicated by a territorial dispute which has its origins in the era of colonialism. However, the conflict in the South Atlantic has another, albeit a shorter history, running parallel to the first. It is aptly expressed by the Soviet writers on the subject who referred to the conflict not as

one "because of the Malvinas" but "over the Malvinas". That pinpoints an essential circumstance, namely, while for the Argentine side the question of the possession of the archipelago was one of the real reasons that made it take a firm and principled stand in the conflict, for imperialism, which was represented in the conflict by Great Britain, the USA and NATO as a whole, the issue was but a pretext for taking a short cut to further its global strategy, i.e., plans to set up a military base on the islands.

That less publicised side of the conflict is replete with events shedding light on the true goals of the joint Anglo-American aggression and helps to explain for example such an inexplicable "episode" as the decision to move to the South Atlantic a large part of the British navy constituting one of the NATO shock units in Europe. That this action was approved by Washington in spite of its repeated allegations of a "Soviet threat" to Western Europe and Britain itself, was added proof of the falsehood of imperialist propaganda which tries to justify the build-up of imperialist military strength in various regions of the world.

This shift of emphasis in the imperialist aggression to the South Atlantic, just like the creation of the Diego García base in the middle of the Indian Ocean, has vividly demonstrated that for imperialism the developing states, including Latin American, are no less "important" an enemy than the socialist community countries. Until recently Latin Americans found it hard to believe that, but as Galtieri, who was Argentine President during the armed conflict, had to admit: "We have been the object of such sanctions which the great powers avoid using even with regard to those they consider to be their worst enemies... We have been calumniated, we have been slandered and subjected to intimidation, threats and every imaginable means to humiliate us."[3]

Thus Argentina learned from its own experience what measures imperialism uses against developing countries when they try to uphold their independence.

That the masterminds of the imperialist aggression foresaw a possible clash with Latin American countries long be-

fore the conflict in the South Atlantic will be seen from the size and nature of the "aid" Washington has rendered to those countries. That aid is obviously insufficient to defend them in the face of a powerful enemy and is only sufficient to combat "subversive activity" inspired by imperialism's special services. As the Anglo-Argentine conflict has shown it was this "aid" that has made Argentina particularly vulnerable in the face of her enemy whose main aim was to establish control over the South Atlantic.

Imperialism has tried to take control of that part of the planet ever since the end of the Second World War. For example, the American strategists saw the creation of an inter-American military system in 1947 on the basis of a treaty of "mutual assistance" as a way to spread the US presence towards one of the sides of the so-called "Atlantic triangle". Its other side was "fortified" by NATO, set up shortly afterwards, and as early as the late 1940s there were plans to "secure" the third side of the triangle by the South Atlantic Pact dubbed SATO by analogy with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Since that time the United States and their NATO allies, backed by the pro-imperialist circles in Latin America, South Africa and the pro-colonialist forces in Africa, have never relinquished their intentions to militarise the South Atlantic. In the years that followed repeated meetings of the top officers of the region's countries have been called on various pretexts. In the 1950s and 1960s the US rulers felt confident that the military in Latin American countries had been sufficiently primed in the anti-communist spirit and had chosen the pro-imperialist orientation once and for all. That is why those decades and some later period saw a disproportionate emphasis in the US-Latin American relations placed on "military diplomacy" with the help of which imperialism tried to dictate its will to the governments in the region.

NATO for its part made steps towards rapprochement with the inter-American system with a view to establishing imperialist control over the South Atlantic. The then NATO Secretary-General P.A. Spaak in February 1958 approached the OAS Secretary-General J. Mora with the suggestion of exchanging

information of interest to both organisations. And the US representative in the OAS tried to exert pressure on Latin American countries to agree to an exchange of military information with NATO. A number of Latin American governments opposed the attempts to militarise the region and rejected any idea of a rapprochement between the OAS and NATO. The question was shelved for a few years.

The ruling circles of the United States and their NATO allies viewed the independent policy of many newly free countries as a direct threat to their interests. The victory of the Cuban revolution brought a dramatic change to the situation in Latin America. The United States sharply stepped up its anti-communist propaganda and renewed attempts to set up SATO. In this it was actively backed by Portuguese colonialism and South African racism whose positions were threatened as a result of the national liberation struggles of the African peoples.

However, the broad public awareness in Latin American countries of national interests and the idea of promoting cooperation between developing regions, coupled with the process of international detente, made it impossible for imperialism to carry through its plans of uniting the South Atlantic and South Africa in a single military bloc under the US aegis.

Unable to realise their plans by crude pressure on Latin American governments, the imperialist circles of the US in the 1970s bided their time and stepped up ideological brainwashing of public opinion. Taking advantage of the accession to power of a military junta in Argentina they immediately revived the question of creating SATO and tried moreover to use a docile propaganda machine to impress upon the Argentines that the question of the Malvinas, not to speak of financial and technological aid, could be quickly and successfully solved for Argentina if it joined SATO.

Brazil too was subjected to a good deal of pressure, in particular during Kissinger's visit to that country in February 1976. The visit, crowned with the signing of a certain document in which the US had to recognise Brazil as an "emer-

gent great power" was used by the advocates of SATO to step up their activities aimed at creating the military bloc. However, their efforts failed. Brazil opposed the policy of the racist South African regime and rejected military alliance with South Africa. It repeatedly declared not only its unwillingness to enter into any pro-imperialist alliances, considering it to be dangerous to the cause of peace, but resolutely opposed any attempts to militarise the South Atlantic.

These development impel Washington and NATO as a whole to look for new means to ensure their preeminence in the South Atlantic. One of the key instruments as seen by imperialist strategists is undoubtedly the creation of a military stronghold in that zone under US and British control. A convenient opportunity to put that idea into practice presented itself in the first half of 1982 in connection with the unprecedented dispatch of the British navy to the Argentine shores.

It is not by chance that the Western press at that time carried a lot of materials about the intention of the transnational corporations to gain possession of the potential oil riches on South America's continental shelf. The press wrote of the Malvinas as a springboard to the Antarctic, that mineral-rich and strategically important continent.

So, it is clear that the imperialist circles intend to seek unchallenged dominance in the South Atlantic. For that they need new military bases. They need them in order to use military muscle to wrest concessions from the Latin American republics which they could not get by economic pressure or by brandishing the bogy of the non-existent "communist threat".

NOTES

[1] Estrategia, Buenos Aires, No. 67-68, November-December 1980, January-February 1981.

[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] La Nación, May 3, 1982, p. 1.

[4] Jornal do Brasil, April 17, 1976.

POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE MALVINAS CRISIS

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It is said that Pope John Paul II, the present head of the Catholic Church (former Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla) "has a soft spot" for Latin America. And indeed in the first four years of his pontificate he visited it three times. Shortly after being elected he visited Mexico where he attended the Third Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) at Pueblo, a year later he visited Brazil and in 1982 he went to Buenos Aires in connection with the Malvinas crisis.

The background of the Vatican's relations with that region is complex and has many aspects to it. The turbulent revolutionary process in Latin America which is the home of about half of the world's Catholics worries the leadership of the Catholic Church. More precisely what causes their concern is the attitude of the believers towards the revolutionary process. That attitude is becoming more and more favourable with every passing day. In fact many Catholics and even priests become actively involved in it being themselves victims of brutal repression on the part of ultra-right "gorillas" and their North American patrons. It was the "gorillas" who murdered Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador during a Mass and many other churchmen whom they found not to their liking. And not only local but also North American monks and nuns whom they suspected of having sympathies for the "guerillas". We put the word in quotation marks because the ultra-right considers any political opponent to be a guerilla.

In Nicaragua, where the Popular Anti-Imperialist Revolution of 1979 involved not only believers but many priests (three of whom are now members of the Sandinista Government), the Vatican is particularly persistent in demanding that the churchmen renounce cooperation with the authorities on the pretext that they should stay out of politics. The latter argument is invalidated by the activity of Pope John Paul II himself. He does not by any means shun politics as evidenced by his desire to play an active role of "mediator" in the armed conflict over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands.

Let us review the events that led up to it.

Visit to Portugal

In early May 1982 the Pope went to Portugal whose episcopate is considered to be one of the most conservative in the Church. It still has a strong totalitarian tradition of the Salazar regime, one of the most "Catholic" fascist dictatorships of the past.[1] It was Portugal which in 1917 witnessed a "miracle" at Fatima where the Virgin Mary allegedly appeared before three young shepherd girls to reveal the "secret" that either satan would destroy mankind or mankind would overcome satan. The ultra-right claimed that Russia was the satan.

By an odd coincidence it was on May 13, 1981, Fatima Day, that Pope Wojtyla became the victim of an assassination attempt in Rome by an ultra-right Turkish terrorist, Agça.[2] Upon his recovery the Pope repeatedly stated that he had been "saved" from certain death by the "Lady of Fatima" and a year after the unfortunate event Wojtyla set out for Portugal to thank the Lady for the good deed. The government of Balsemao which was then in power guaranteed the Pope's security during his visit. After Agça's attempt to assassinate the Pope the question of the Pope's security has acquired particular significance. Although the Pope now uses a special bullet-proof "popemobile" and security precautions have been tightened, nevertheless during his recent travels in Africa and Italy

many arrests were made of people suspected of trying to follow terrorist Agça's example.

Strange Goings-On in Fatima

On May 12, Pope Wojtyla flew in from Rome to Lisbon, from where he went to Fatima on the same day. He made for the basilica where he served a Mass in the presence of thousands of believers. It was 22.30 in the evening, exactly a year after the first assassination attempt on him. The 62-year-old pontiff ended his ceremony. The crowd began to press on him. And then the Vatican and Portuguese body guards noticed a priest pushing his way towards the Pope very aggressively. They tried to shove him aside but he elbowed his way towards the Pope and producing a sharp 37 cm bayonet from a German Mauser rifle from under his cassock tried to stab him shouting "Down with Wojtyla and the Vatican Council!" The guards fell upon him, knocked him down, twisted his arms and took away his bayonet. During this scuffle the terrorist disguised as a clergymen yelled: "The Pope and Casaroli [cardinal, state secretary previously in charge of links with the socialist countries--I.G.] have destroyed the Church. The Pope has destroyed Poland! The Pope is an agent of Soviet Communism!"[3]

When the terrorist was delivered to the nearest police precinct it turned out that he was a 32-year-old Spaniard by the name of Juan Fernandez Krohn, the son of a major in the Spanish air force and a Swedish mother. Fernandez Krohn studied law and economics in Madrid university, was an ardent admirer of caudillo Franco and an adherent of the ultra-right bishop Lefebvre,[4] who publicly opposed the decisions of the Second Vatican Council. The terrorist attended the break-away seminary of Lefebvre[5] at Ekon (Switzerland) and in 1978 Lefebvre on a visit to Madrid ordained him to priesthood whereupon he was appointed chaplain of the Francoist movement Fuerza Nueva headed by Blas Pinar, a Falangist. The terrorist told the police that he had been preparing for the assassination attempt for six months. During the arrest he was found to be in possession of a "manifesto" in Spanish, Portu-

guese and Italian explaining his reasons for trying to assassinate the Pope along with 500 US dollars and 400 West German marks.[6] It is still unknown who gave him the money. He had travelled in different countries including even in Buenos Aires. In January 1982 he started a row at Paris' Sacré-Coeur church where the Archbishop of Paris (now cardinal) Lustiger was serving a Mass. Seizing the microphone Fernandez Krohn shouted that the church had betrayed Poland and that Lustiger was a "phoney convert" (in reference to the fact that the archbishop is a baptised Jew).[7] On February 20, 1982 the terrorist met Felipe Gonzales, General Secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (the present Spanish Premier) at Orly airport in Paris and tried to attack him. The world press has also reported that two weeks before the assassination attempt "right-wing Catholic extremists" from Spain, Portugal and France meeting in Vigo decided to kill the Pope during his Portuguese visit.[8]

The most intriguing part of the story is this. In 1981 Fernandez Krohn attended a congress of Solidarity in Gdansk (Poland). It appears that he had come to the conclusion that the Polish bishops "betrayed" the counter-revolution and since Pope Wojtyla came from their midst and supported the decisions of the Second Vatican Council then he should be killed.[9]

There is no doubt that Fernandez Krohn is a fascist. But why are the fascists after the Pope? What has he done to earn such hatred on their part?

Who Is Trying to Kill the Pope and Why?

One can answer that question fairly accurately by looking at the recent history of the Vatican. In the past the Popes, even the most reactionary of them, were prepared to collaborate and did collaborate with Italian fascism and with German nazism. But in doing so they sought to preserve a measure of autonomy, not because of their hostility towards fascism or nazism but because by relinquishing independence they would cease to be heads of the ecumenical church whose followers are scattered all over the world and become second-rate allies of the "Duce" and "Führer". The latter for their part

would not settle for anything less than complete subjugation of the Vatican and the local churchmen to their will and their bestial ideology. No autonomy, no "Catholic Action" independent of totalitarianism, no Catholic schools even slightly different from those under the regime's absolute control, no hint of independence. Why such fanatical exclusivism, why such absence of trust in allies and such cannibalistic stringency? All out of fear that the slightest autonomy of the church could in a crisis (war and defeat in war) attract all the malcontents and provide a banner for "rebels", for opposition. Then why did Mussolini and Hitler conclude agreements and concordats with the Vatican which gave churchmen some, though insignificant, rights? Because in those conditions it suited the Duce and the Führer who were desperate to have an ally. But neither had any intention of following the spirit or the letter of these agreements. Moreover, they knew in advance that when they saw it fit they would treat these agreements as a scrap of paper in the same way as they treated other international agreements and treaties they had concluded apparently only to honour them more in the breach than in the observance.

When Pope Pius XI, angered by the constant impingement upon Catholic lay organisations in violation of the earlier agreements, began to express his displeasure over the fact he was branded by the fascist press as a "chief rabbi of the Christian world".[10] And then Mussolini and Hitler decided to remove him. This is attested by Cardinal Eugenio Tisserant, one of the people close to Pius XI who asserted that his death on February 10, 1939 was caused by Francesco Petaci, the doctor who treated him and whose daughter Clara was the mistress of the Duce while he himself worked for the OVRA.[11]

In those years Cardinal Pacelli was described by the nazi press as an ally of the "Jewish Communists"[12] because of his visit to France in 1937 where the Popular Front Government was in power.

The question suggests itself: was not the assassination attempt on the Pope at Fatima the work of ultra-right circles

in the US who are trying in every way possible to involve the Vatican and the Catholic Church in the struggle against the socialist countries. The press has repeatedly reported such measures.[13]

Could this be the clue to the attempts to assassinate Pope Wojtyla?

Between the Devil and the Deep Sea

According to the Vatican calendar, after Portugal Pope Wojtyla intended to visit Britain in the middle of May 1982. But a sharp aggravation in the international situation left the question about the pontiff's visit to Albion in the air. Beginning from April Britain was engaged in hostilities against Argentina whose troops had taken hold of the Malvinas Islands. In mid-May the battle on the islands was at its height. In Britain the Thatcher Government was whipping up colonialist passions and, with the open backing of the Reagan Administration, intended to teach the Argentines a "lesson".

The aggressive actions of Britain and its ally, the USA, caused a storm of indignation in Latin America. What could Pope Wojtyla hope to gain by his visit to London? From the outset the Pope favoured a peaceful settlement of the conflict. He went so far as to appeal to Queen Elizabeth II and the then Argentine President Galtieri.[14] However, Britain was hell-bent on shedding Argentine blood and restoring its rule over the Malvinas.

If the Pope had openly opposed it he would, far from coming closer to the Anglican Church which he had been anxious to do and which was the idea behind his trip to Britain, have undermined the positions of the Catholic minority in that country which is already held "suspect" by such arch-reactionaries as pastor Ian Paisley, leader of the Northern Ireland ultras, who has long proclaimed the Pope "anti-Christ", or pastor Jack Glass from Glasgow, who agitated against the Pope's visit to Britain.[15]

That is why at first even the Catholic primate of Great Britain, Cardinal Hume, persistently advised the Pope not to

be in a hurry to cross the Channel.[16] Cardinal Hume told newsmen that the later the Pope made a decision on that question the better.[17] On the other hand, if the Pope cancelled his visit then many Britons regarding the war for the Falkland Islands as "just" would think that he condemns it and is in solidarity with Catholic Argentina whose clergy unanimously supported their government's actions.

Besides, a cancellation of the Papal visit to Britain would have caused serious damage to Vatican and the British Catholic Church incomes. According to McCormack, head of the agency promoting tennis and golf stars, which had the rights to cover the Pope's visit to Britain, the Vatican was to net between 25 and 30 million dollars from the sale of souvenirs (manufactured by 300 factories, and it was expected that 6 million British Catholics would buy souvenirs). Not only would the hard-pressed Vatican treasury find itself short of these incomes[18] but the Vatican would have to pay damages to various companies.[19]

Characteristically a Gallup poll in Britain has revealed that 62 per cent of Britons felt that the Pope had to visit Britain under the circumstances and only 42 per cent approved the Papal visit as a religious measure.[20]

In May 1982 the London Times published a notable letter of its reader Timothy T.S. Jump who wrote that if the Pope cancelled the visit to Britain it would strengthen the feelings of those Britons who question the sincerity of his actions. They would be less ready to welcome him a second time.[21] The following day the same paper published an editorial about the Pope's proposed visit to Britain. It was outraged by the fact that the Pope discussed the results of the Gallup poll with Cardinal Hume. "Did Christ consult Gallup polls before riding into Jerusalem [where he was crucified --I.G.] ?" the paper asked with pious indignation and added: "No one in Britain, one hopes, has any intention of crucifying the Pope, but it is clear that the British visit has become to him a bitter and difficult cup."[22]

On the other hand, the Argentine episcopate insisted that Pope Wojtyla should on no account visit Britain. Indeed

the pontiff faced the most difficult choice in the three and a half years of his papacy, commented the Italian newspaper L'Unità.[23]

The Pope summoned to the Vatican Cardinal Carlos Aramburu, the head of the Argentine episcopate and Cardinal Primatesta as well as Lopez Trujillo, leader of CELAM (now cardinal) and English cardinals. On May 21, 1982 the Vatican was the scene of discussions, talks and meetings between these people and the Vatican Monsignors headed by Pope Wojtyla, meetings that lasted far into the night. In the end it was decided that the Pope would after all go to Britain but would immediately after that pay a visit to Buenos Aires. He intended to spend a week in Britain and less than two days in Argentina.

As a sop to the Argentines, the Pope dispatched to Buenos Aires Monsignor Achille Silvestrini, assistant state secretary, head of the Council for Public Affairs (actually acting as the Vatican's ministry for foreign affairs), while he sent state secretary Cardinal Casaroli to London to meet British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Silvestrini handed to President Galtieri a personal message from Wojtyla explaining the reasons for the Pope's decision to visit Britain. The message was published in the Argentine press. The Pope justified his trip across the Channel by the fact that it had been planned two years ago. He asserted that it would be "strictly pastoral and ecumenical in character and that the only official figures he would meet in Britain would be Queen Elizabeth II as the head of the Anglican Church (the Pope would not meet Prime Minister Thatcher), and immediately after his British visit the Pope was ready to visit Argentina.[24]

The Pope's decision, which was uncomfortably reminiscent of the former US Secretary of State Haig's shuttling between London and Buenos Aires provoked some far from favourable comments in the Argentine press. One paper wrote: "Already Great Britain, the United States and the European Economic Community and the members of the Atlantic Pact have united against us. Is it now the Vatican's turn?" Many jour-

nalists recalled, with wry irony that the Argentine generals when they seized power in 1976 had sworn to protect "Western and Christian values". Now, they said, "the United States by its actions (hostile to Argentina) had undermined the Argentines' trust in the West and the Vatican is behaving in a way that calls in question Christianity itself".[25]

Leopoldo Bravo, governor of San Juan province, suggested that the Pope visit the Malvinas. By visiting Argentina, said Bravo, the Pope wanted to improve his "image" after the negative impression caused by the announcement of his forthcoming visit to the aggressor country.[26]

The influential Argentine newspaper La Nación used even more forceful expressions. It wrote that Argentina was in a state of war with Britain and hardly relished the prospect of welcoming the Pope after he had "lavished compliments on our enemies". A papal visit to Great Britain, according to the paper, was a "terrible slap in the face" for Argentina whose sons were dying fighting the British on the Malvinas. La Nación warned the Pope: "You cannot be friends with God and Devil at the same time", and it concluded: "The whole of Latin America backs us. The United States has betrayed us. The Holy Father too. May God forgive him."[27]

So Britain...

But the die was cast. On May 28, 1982 Pope Wojtyla stepped off the plane in London to be greeted by pilgrims and 7,000 Scotland Yard police.

In Britain (that was his 13th foreign trip) he visited 9 cities, delivered 26 speeches, was received by Queen Elizabeth II, served Masses, met Protestant clergymen and the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. He also met local Poles, delivered sermons, made statements and gave interviews. He spoke English and they say even learned a few phrases in Scottish and Welsh, which he used whenever the opportunity presented itself.

He was greeted by crowds of believers and the curious, although the crowds were not as big as expected. At any rate the hot dogs, papal photographs and other souvenirs put out

by the McCormack service did not enjoy a roaring trade. But there were more police than at the wedding of Prince Charles. There were frequent jeers and hostile shouts from the crowd and rotten eggs and other not exactly divine objects were sent flying at the "popemobile".[28]

Those actions were staged by the out-and-out anti-papists, the adherents of the ultra-reactionary Ian Paisley. The latter daily hurled abuse on the Pope. He asserted that Wojtyla's visit to Britain was an illegal and unconstitutional act, that the Pope is an anti-Christ, that Rome, the Vatican was a great prostitute as the Gospels clearly preach, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, who served a prayer together with the Pope, was an "Anglican Catholic", a "traitor", etc. Paisley's statements provide added proof that Pope Wojtyla is "an undesirable person" for such extremists.

Towards the end of the Pope's British visit Paisley declared that it had been a "failure".[29] But was it a failure? Not quite and for the following reasons.

The Pope had come to Britain which was waging an unjust colonial war. The film shots of the papal visit shown on television alternated with reports by political commentators on British losses on the Malvinas. That "small" war brought the spectrum of the "big" war closer to Britain than at any time in the past. And Britons whose relatives and friends were engaged in the hostilities and those who had no relatives there followed with bated breath the developments on the remote islands in the South Atlantic.

Now, in the midst of it all the Pope descends on them. Not an ordinary "papist" who was used as a bogey by Anglican preachers but a Pole (Britain had entered the Second World War over Poland), who calls them to peace, peaceful settlement of conflicts asserting that not only a nuclear war but any war is unacceptable, that one could lose everything by war and gain everything with peace.

True, the Pope never once mentioned the Malvinas, never once admonished the Thatcher Government but there was no mistaking what he was referring to. All this undoubtedly in-

creased his popularity. The London Observer wrote that the Pope's preaching of peace ensured the success of his trip since he was made welcome also by non-Catholics who saw him as an advocate of international peace and justice. The London Times, The Guardian and other British newspapers wrote in the same vein.[30]

The British Government for its part tried to "put a brave face on a sorry business". The British press hypocritically asked whether the Pope would be able to speak as freely in Catholic and "militaristic" Argentine as he did in Protestant Britain and The Times predicted with some glee that by the time of Wojtyla's visit the Argentines would be more in need of sympathy because of the disaster that befell them [i.e., Britain's victory--I.G.] than of deriving benefits from the Pope's presence in the country.[31]

Alarming Intermezzo

On June 2, 1982 the Pope returned to Rome, eight days before he was to make his air hop across the Atlantic to Argentina. What is in store for him? asked the Italian Monsignors in the Vatican, unused to all the transcontinental commuting and the frenetic pace of church activity.

The week sped by in feverish preparation of speeches, addresses, security precautions and tactics and strategy planning and mobilisation of the propaganda apparatus. On June 7 the Pope met President Reagan. To cap it all, the Lay Servicemen's Association, the Vatican trade union, announced a general strike for June 14, 1982, the first such strike in the 50-odd-year-old history of the Vatican city-state.

Il Messaggero wrote with its tongue in its cheek that the Vatican has at last "come of age socially", although there is no danger of buses not running because of the strike since there are none in the Vatican or of rail services being disrupted because they exist only on paper. There is no danger that the guards and the Swiss Guards would stop opening the doors to the cardinals and monsignors. In short, the strike was a relatively small price to pay for "coming of age socially". And yet, in spite of the flippant commentary, the

fact of the strike could not but worry Wojtyla, in particular because it was timed for June 14, the day before he was scheduled to visit Geneva to address a session of the International Labour Organisation with an oration in defence of the working people.[32] So, the Pope had his hands full.

At last June 10, 1982 came. The Pope packed his bags and climbed into a plane to go on his third visit to the Flaming Continent—Latin America, to Argentina, the first country which he was to spend less time visiting than going to. He planned to stay in Argentina not more than 30 hours while a flight from Rome and back takes 33 hours. The Italian papers wrote that the airhop across the ocean was a risky venture but so was Wojtyla's visit to Britain. The Pope himself shared that view describing himself as a "pilgrim of hard times". As usual he denied that his visit had any political implications.

By the time of Wojtyla's arrival in Argentina the situation there was pretty confused. President Galtieri, the head of the junta and commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces, was a particularly pious man. He always carried rosaries in his pocket and attended Mass daily. It was obvious that he would try to get maximum "mileage" out of the papal visit.

But there were also other forces in Argentina, including the Peronistas, the Communists and members of other parties. And they thought that the struggle for the Malvinas must be accompanied by political change in the country, demanding restoration of democratic freedoms, an amnesty and explanation of the fate of the 15,000 democratic leaders who had "disappeared".

In Argentina

How did the Pope's visit to Argentina go? In Buenos Aires where he arrived after a brief stop in Rio de Janeiro he was met by President Galtieri. Galtieri saluted the Pope and dropping on his knee kissed his signet ring. They talked for three minutes. Among the welcoming crowd the most nume-

rous posters carried three words: "Bread, peace and jobs!". From the airport the Pope went to the nunciature.

During his 30-hour stay in Argentina the Pope made 6 speeches, met members of the ruling junta, served Masses and talked to journalists. What did he talk about? About the same thing as in Britain, i.e., about the need for peace. But while in Britain these speeches had a positive ring, in Argentina they were met with displeasure. Especially on the second day of his visit when the British attacked Argentine positions on the islands. And yet the Argentines welcomed the Pope hoping that his visit would in some way promote their cause.

At the same time they made it clear to the Pope that they adhered to their former stand on the question of the Malvinas. That was eloquently shown by the posters in the crowds which he addressed: "May God help us because we are protecting Him!", "Holy Father, bless our soldiers!", "An unjust peace is the worst insult to the Christian world!", "When a war is just, soldiers do not sin (St. Augustine)", "Pope, we love you like the Malvinas!", "Long Live the Pope, the Madonna and the Fatherland!". A Monsignor from the papal retinue observing all this, said: "Here they shout more 'Argentina, Argentina' than 'Long Live John Paul'."[33]

The Pope left Argentina on June 12, 1982 in a sombre atmosphere with uncomforting news coming from the islands about a British attack on Argentine positions. The Pope was seen off by President Galtieri who had met the pontiff three times, unlike Margaret Thatcher who did not meet the Pope in Britain. It was cold comfort for the head of the Argentine state who would leave his post and the Rose Palace in a few days' time as a result of the defeat on the Malvinas.

On June 13 the Pope was back in Rome after what the Italian press described as his most dangerous trip to-date. What were its results? "Wojtyla tried to unite the clergy of the two belligerent countries in the struggle for peace," commented the Corriere dela Sera of Milan. "Something of this will certainly remain."[34]

Meanwhile the Anglican Archbishop Runcie proposed, during a Mass in London's St. Paul's Cathedral over the British victory on the Malvinas, to hold part of the ceremony in Spanish in tribute to the dead Argentine soldiers. The government rejected that proposal because its main aim was to encourage chauvinistic feelings in the country.

But Archbishop Runcie was a stubborn man. In his sermon at St. Paul's he declared that "war is a sign of human failure". He censured the arms merchants and the arms race and extended his condolences to the families of Argentine soldiers who fell in battle.

That clearly was against the grain with Mrs. Thatcher. In fact she was furious over Runcie's sermon. Former Conservative minister Julian Amery was even more outspoken declaring that the sermon would be more suitable for Buenos Aires. The high-ranking officials who attended the ceremony were displeased that the "Falkland crisis" had not been presented as an instance of Britain standing for "international law, freedom and democracy". And some Conservative MPs even called for a debate on the "unpatriotic" sermon in the House of Commons.[35]

NOTES

1 Il Messaggero, May 1, 1982.

2 An attempt was made in Italy in late 1982-early 1983 to frame another "Reichstag fire trial" and present Antonov, a Bulgarian diplomat, as an accomplice. This propaganda trick was condemned by the progressive public the world over.

3 Il Messaggero, May 14, 1982.

4 Pravda, May 14, 1982.

5 In 1976 Bishop Lefebvre was temporarily distracted by Pope Paul VI and deprived of his rights of priesthood.

6 Il Messaggero, May 15, 1982; The Times, May 15, 1982.

7 Quotidien de Paris, May 14, 1982.

8 Il Messaggero, May 15, 1982.

[9] L'Humanité, May 15, 1982.

[10] J. Derek Holmes, The Papacy in the Modern World, 1914-1978, London, 1981, p. 117.

[11] Jean Jiy Baillancourt, Papal Power, A Study of Vatican Control Over Lay Catholic Elites, Berkley, Los Angeles, London, 1980, p. 192.

[12] J. Derek Holmes, op. cit., p. 90.

[13] Izvestia, January 22, 1982; June 19, 1982.

[14] Il Messaggero, April 24, 1982.

[15] Paese Sera, May 31, 1982.

[16] Corriere dela Sera, May 12, 1982.

[17] Paese Sera, May 17, 1982.

[18] In recent years the Vatican sustained great losses as a result of massive swindles by its two trusted bankers, Roberto Calvi, director of Banco Ambrosiano, and Michele Sindona, a speculator, who had close links with the Institute of Religious Affairs, the Holy See's top financial body headed by American Cardinal Paul Marcinkus, a man close to the Pope. Calvi was killed in London in July 1982 and Sindona was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment but managed to escape to the USA. Both were members of the secret masonic lodge P-2 which was preparing a right-wing coup in Italy. According to the press, in 1981 the Vatican was 30,000 million liras in the red and in late 1982 its deficit was expected to reach 36,000 million liras (see Izvestia, June 7, 1982).

[19] Il Messaggero, May 17, 1982.

[20] Il Messaggero, May 17, 1982.

[21] The Times, May 17, 1982.

[22] The Times, May 18, 1982.

[23] L'Unitá, May 22, 1982.

[24] L'Humanité, May 27, 1982.

[25] L'Humanité, May 27, 1982.

[26] Barricada, May 27, 1982.

[27] La Nación, May 29, 1982.

[28] The Times, June 1, 1982.

[29] Corriere dela Sera, June 1, 1982.

[30] The Times, June 1, 1982; June 4, 1982.

[31] The Times, June 4, 1982.

[32] Il Massaggero, June 4, 1982; Corriere dela Sera, June 4, 1982.

[33] Il Messaggero, June 13, 1982.

[34] Corriere dela Sera, June 14, 1982.

[35] New Times, No. 32, 1982, p. 22-23.

THE LEGAL ASPECT OF THE CONFLICT

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The legal assessment of the Malvinas (Falkland) crisis (that is, examining the legitimacy of the behaviour of Great Britain, the USA and Argentina during the crisis and of their positions in the dispute) is of interest to many readers. And it is the purpose of the present article to look at the legal aspect of the conflict.

First of all, it should be noted that every international dispute has two aspects: a) factual, and b) assessment. The latter in turn has a) a political and b) a juridical, more precisely, an international-legal aspect. That means that the dispute is to be judged in terms of the UN Charter and international law. This fully applies to the dispute between Argentina and Great Britain over the possession of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands.

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Significance of the Legal Assessment of the Conflict

The background of the conflict is already known to the reader.[1] Let us just recall that in January 1833 a British squadron approached the islands and seized them from Argentina by the usual method of force. It was a classic instance of colonial usurpation. The dispute has been going on between the two countries for a hundred and fifty years. Argentina never recognised the British sovereignty over the islands. In April 1982 the dispute erupted into an armed conflict.[2]

The British position, reflected in the materials of the UN Security Council, proceeds from the concept of discovery, claiming that the islands were discovered by a British

subject, although there is no documentary proof of that. It is also claimed that the population of the Islands is British and that forceful acquisition of territories was internationally recognised before the Second World War but is not recognised today. On this basis Britain proclaims Argentina to be the aggressor because by bringing its armed forces into the islands it had allegedly violated the principle of the non-use of force.

This conclusion however does not stand up to serious criticism. It can be disproved if one considers the problem not within the perspective of the last few years but retrospectively ab initio, i.e., since the discovery of the Islands and the liquidation of Spanish colonial rule. It all depends on the time framework within which the picture is viewed.

While in the shorter term (i.e., the present time) Argentina was the first to use arms, British aggression is evident in the broader terms, for it was Britain who had forced Argentina out from the Islands. By attacking Argentine armed forces on the Islands a second time in 1982 and trying to retain possession of them by crude armed force, with US backing, Britain perpetrated an aggression. This is the only assessment of the British actions if one proceeds from the universally recognised definition of aggression adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1974. The British actions constitute aggression, i.e., an international crime.

It is known that Argentina was ready to conduct negotiations within the framework and under the aegis of the UN even after it has moved in its troops. Britain, however, categorically refused and, consciously seeking bloodshed, sent a modern navy against the Argentines. It is obvious that Britain as a great power and a permanent member of the Security Council could have, if it had wished to, avoided aggression and bloodshed and resumed negotiations. It is equally clear that the United States could have advised Britain to negotiate instead of egging it onto aggression and bloodshed.

In the first instance, occupation of the Malvinas (Falklands) by Argentina, the US stuck to formality because it was interested in approaching the question in that way. But in the case of Britain's aggression against Argentina, which constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the US preferred to simply ignore it.

Now the United States is doing everything to ensure that the Malvinas crisis and its unseemly stand is forgotten. To save face in Latin America it is anxious to be seen to take a favourable attitude to Argentina and to favour negotiations. At the General Assembly session in November 1982 it voted for a resolution calling the sides to negotiate. The move came too late for the hundreds of lives lost in the conflict.

The acuteness and depth of the Malvinas crisis also stems from the fact that the question of the sovereignty over the Islands is of importance in another dispute between these two states, namely, the dispute over the rights to the Antarctic territories.

The Soviet Union, like a number of other states, believes that an international regime should be maintained in the Antarctic, i.e., that it should be in the common use of all states because of the specific features distinguishing it from the Arctic, where the sectoral principle is maintained. Among these features are the lively sea traffic in the area, the accessibility of the region to all states climatically, technically and otherwise. These are the basic premises of the current Antarctic Treaty of December 1, 1959, which determines its status as international territory.

However, Britain and Argentina along with some other states do not share that point of view. They dispute a sector in the Antarctic. Theoretically that sector is formed by the southern coast of the Malvinas (Falklands) as the foundation and the two lateral meridians converging in the South Pole. Thus, according to the disputing sides, the country possessing sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands) automatically acquires sovereignty over a territorial sector in the Antarctic.

Although the division of the Antarctic between certain states is rather problematic and is unlikely to be accepted by the international community, the idea adds fuel to the simmering conflict over the possession of the Islands.

A key condition for a successful and just settlement of the Anglo-Argentine dispute over the Malvinas (Falklands) is the establishment of a "deadline", that is, a point in time beyond which any actions of the sides with regard to the islands cannot influence their position in the dispute. For example, no British actions to strengthen its positions on the islands would be legally valid if the deadline is established after Argentine acquisition of the islands.

As usual in such cases the question arises of the law that can be applied, i.e., which legal norms should be applied to determine sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands: the norms of past international law or the norms of current international law as well as the state laws, international and internal practices.

The question of which law is applicable to territorial disputes is considered to be very complex and delicate in the science of international law and every case must be decided on its merits. That means that the facts and the norms of the past may be taken into account to give a full and accurate definition of all the circumstances of the case but the solution of a dispute must wholly accord with the provisions of the UN Charter and current international law.[3]

According to one point of view, the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands belong to Argentina on the strength of the principle of decolonisation, i.e., of one of the basic principles of contemporary international law approved by the UN Charter and the subsequent resolutions of that organisation. That point of view casts aside as it were the complex and involved question of the original possession of the Islands (the succession of masters and claimants) and tackles the matter in terms of modern international law which forbids colonialism and demands removal of all colonies from the map of the present world. The weakness of this position is in that though Britain does not possess the Islands (on the strength

of the ban on colonial possessions) it does not automatically mean that Argentina possesses them and allows of different variants of independence for the islands.

Therefore, another premise is advanced which not only denies the British claim but specifically asserts Argentina's sovereignty over the Islands. According to this point of view, the Malvinas (Falklands) belong to Argentina not under the principle of decolonisation but by right of international succession. The latter means the passage of the rights and responsibility from the predecessor state to the successor state. What is meant in this case is that the rights to possession of the Islands pass from Spain, to the newly established successor state of Argentina (the United Provinces of Río de la Plata).

During the Spanish colonial rule the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands were under the jurisdiction of the Spanish authorities situated on the present territory of Argentina. After the Spanish authorities were replaced by the Argentine authorities the latter inherited the right to possess what their predecessor, Spain, possessed through its colonial authorities.

It is known that to facilitate settlement in territorial disputes between two states the principle of uti possidetis "possess what you already possess" is applied. In other words, "possess what you have inherited". That principle dates back to Roman law and it is believed to have been first used to determine state boundaries of Latin American countries which gained independence from Spain. That means that the newly born republics had borders coinciding with the administrative territorial borders of the former Spanish provinces.

The principle of uti possidetis was enshrined in constitutions of several Latin American countries and in treaties between them. As practice has shown however this principle too is not all that simple to realise. This is because actual administrative and territorial borders of Spanish provinces in Latin America did not correspond to the prescriptions contained in corresponding documents. Thus, the prin-

ciple of "possess what you possess" could be construed in two ways: on the one hand, it could mean "possess what you possess in fact" and on the other, "possess what you possess legally", i.e., according to documents.

Thus two uti possidetis principles have arisen: a) uti possidetis de facto and b) uti possidetis de jure. Both principles have been applied to settle territorial disputes between Latin American states depending on the acuteness of the arguments and the interests of the sides and possibility of compromise.

The Argentine side believes that it has the right to uti possidetis de jure, i.e., Argentina has the right to the Islands as an inheritor of the Spanish rights in keeping with the administrative and territorial division of that time although in fact the Islands were under foreign (British) sovereignty. In determining the status of the Malvinas (Falklands) one should be guided by both principles: the principle of decolonisation and the principle of uti possidetis.

Under the first principle, Britain must leave the Islands, on the second, Argentina must possess the Islands.

Consequently, Britain is obliged to relinquish the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands both on the strength of the principle of decolonisation and of the principle of uti possidetis.

However, considering the acuteness of the political and military crisis over the Islands, and the wish of the international community to see a peaceful settlement of the dispute and to prevent the use of the Islands for aggressive and bloc purposes a compromise solution is in order.

This makes it necessary to take a look at the US stand. From the beginning of the conflict it embarked on political and military support of the colonial ambitions of Britain as its main and "more worthwhile", and "more influential" partner in NATO, thus betraying the "inter-American solidarity" world which it had itself created. The Río Pact was paralysed. The whole world saw the ephemeral nature of the claims of "inter-American solidarity" and the struggle against "extracontinental threat" and "aggression" proclaimed by the Río Pact.

The Western press writes that the US Government found itself in a quandary because it had to choose between the Río Pact and the North Atlantic Pact. In strictly legal terms the question is not a complex one. In formal juridical terms priority should have been given to the Río Pact. And for the following reasons. Chronologically the Río Pact (1947) predates the North Atlantic Pact (1949). Many more states have signed the Río Pact than the North Atlantic Pact. Territorially, Argentina and Latin America are much closer to the USA than Britain, they are the USA's neighbours. The Río Pact was created specially to settle regional inter-American problems while the North Atlantic Pact covers a very different region, the North Atlantic and Europe. Furthermore, public opinion not only in Latin American countries but also in socialist and non-aligned states and in the world at large from the very beginning of the conflict were on the side of Argentina, which is a developing country. In that case the principle of decolonisation, one of the leading principles of modern international law supported by the UN, strictly applied. All its resolutions practically sided with Argentina and recorded a certain negative attitude to the British policy. Finally, for a considerable period of time Washington in its diplomatic game had been giving Argentina to understand that its sympathies were on its side and in the event of an extracontinental aggression or threat of aggression the latter would be resisted. But that did not happen.

Now both Britain and the USA are hoping to create on the Islands their own strategic military base, to use the offshore oil deposits and to form a reactionary South Atlantic bloc. And all the while the United States is mindful of its ultimate goal of ousting Britain from the region and as a minimum getting hold of the prospective military base on the Malvinas.

In this connection one cannot help recalling that in the period when the Latin American peoples were fighting for their independence from the Spanish colonial yoke it was the United States who opposed the liberation of Cuba and Puerto

Rico and took a very lukewarm stand on the struggles of the Latin American peoples who were groaning under colonial domination. That was underlined by the liberator of Latin America, Simón Bolívar.[4]

Today Latin American public opinion quite rightly sees Washington's support of Britain as a betrayal both of Argentina and of the commitments to "inter-American solidarity" in the face of a real and not an imaginary "extracontinental threat".

That might not have happened if Washington had encouraged the sides to peaceful settlement instead of preferring to play them off against each other.

The conflict gave the developing countries another convincing proof of the perfidious way in which US and British imperialism act today. The USA did not hesitate to betray the interests of the Latin American countries. And Britain, clinging to its colonial claims in a dispute with a developing country, was ready to unleash bloodshed and a wide-scale war to retain its positions.

The United States aided and abetted the aggressive military actions of Britain and its violations of the principle of decolonisation. The British invasion, the sending of a nuclear armada created a threat to peace and international security. That is why a TASS statement of May 24, 1982 said that "the responsibility for this is borne also by those states, notably the USA, which have associated themselves with the British position and have openly sided with London and thereby actually encouraged it towards a military solution of the conflict".[5]

There can be no doubt that under other conditions, the Malvinas (Falkland) conflict could have been put before the United Nations to be democratically solved by that universal organisation for the protection of peace, with the socialist countries taking part. In political terms one can understand the Argentine authorities whose patience wore out because over the past 17 years the British side at the diplomatic talks, disregarding the decolonisation goals proclaimed

by the UN and the recommendations of its resolutions, deliberately "marked time" and disrupted the slightest possibility of compromise in pursuing an open policy of "delays and procrastination". The result of all this is well known. To quote once more from the TASS statement of May 24, 1982, "the longest talks are better than the shortest war".[6] The Soviet Union has from the very beginning of the conflict favoured a peaceful settlement.

So much for the political and class aspect of the matter.

But there is also the juridical, the international-legal aspect of the dispute (and the conflict). By that is meant the need to settle the situation not by force but in ways that accord with and do not diverge from the criteria of justice, the norms of the UN Charter and present-day international law.

The political approach to any dispute and conflict consists in assessing the situation and the possibilities of changing it on the basis of any, including extra-legal methods and means of their achievement.

The international legal approach to any dispute and conflict consists in assessing the situation and the possibilities of changing it on the basis of international legal methods and ways of achieving a peaceful settlement.

The juridical international settlement of a conflict differs from a purely political settlement precisely in that it accords and combines with the principles of justice, equality, respect for the sovereignty of the sides and other basic norms of contemporary international law. These include such principles as non-interference in the internal and foreign affairs of another state, the principle of non-aggression, the principle of peaceful coexistence, the principle of the non-use of force in settling disputed, including territorial, problems.

Of course, the negotiated settlement of knotty territorial problems is arduous, but it is the only way. The

other alternative is feverish international activities, chaos, war and eventually a nuclear catastrophe.

Since Argentina's attempt to retrieve the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands ended in its becoming a victim of an open British aggression one must qualify as illegal the actions stemming from the aggression. That includes Britain's establishment of a 200-mile "war zone" around the Islands during the war and a 150-mile "security zone" after the Islands were reoccupied by the British forces.

An objective international jurist cannot cite any valid arguments to prove that the establishment of these zones is necessary or that these zones are legitimate or that they are binding on Argentina or on any other neutral state. These zones were not established on principles or norms of international law and are arbitrary. Moreover, like the fact of Britain's aggressive war the measures accompanying the war are direct violations of the principle of non-aggression, international security and universal peace. Consequently the "zone of war" and later the "security zone" established by Britain have no juridical force. They are not binding on any states ab initio, i.e., from the moment they were established.

Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

What are the means and instruments for peaceful settlement of the conflict over the Malvinas (Falklands)?

Present-day international law offers a considerable array of means of peaceful settlement of territorial and other disputes. These are summarised in Article 33 of the UN Charter: 1) negotiation; 2) inquiry; 3) mediation; 4) international arbitration; 5) International Court of Justice; 6) regional organs and organisations (in the case in point the Organisation of American States and its organs) and 7) the United Nations Organisation and its agencies.

Let us take a closer look at this arsenal of means of peaceful settlement of disputes between states.

Negotiation is the most widespread and effective means of peaceful settlement of territorial disputes. One must

bear in mind, however, that they become irrelevant if one side displays no good will to settle the conflict. Nor should one discount the unequal potential of the disputing sides as a result of which in a "showdown" the stronger side can exert pressure on the weaker side and coerce it. The latter situation is now less common than in past epochs because of the growing self-awareness of nations, the increased influence of world public opinion and the existence of the United Nations, that forum for discussions and democratic solutions.

Inquiry consists in a third side, not involved in the conflict, prevailing on the disputing sides to start negotiations between themselves.

Mediation is negotiations between the disputing sides on the basis of proposals by a third side referred to as the mediator which thus becomes a participant in the negotiations.

In international arbitration each side nominates an equal number of arbiters and the latter elect a superarbiter from amongst the citizens of third countries or from international organisations.

The International Court of Justice is called upon to settle disputes between the states and give consultative conclusions on them. Appealing to the International Court is strictly voluntary. If one of the disputing sides does not wish to do so, the International Court of Justice is not competent to consider the dispute. However its decisions are binding on the sides, are final and cannot be appealed against. If one side fails to comply with a decision of the International Court the UN Security Council can at the request of the other side force it to do so.

The regional bodies, in accordance with Article 52 of the UN Charter, are used before appealing to the UN. Considering that Britain is not a regional power the appropriate forum for settling the Malvinas (Falkland) conflict is not the OAS but the UN. That is particularly true if one bears in mind that the conflict goes beyond the interests of regio-

nal security and affects universal peace. That however does not rule out Argentina's appealing to the OAS to protect itself against the aggressive British actions in the Western Hemisphere. The UN Security Council must be kept constantly informed of the actions of the regional bodies.

The UNO. Primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security is vested with the Security Council and under certain conditions with the General Assembly of the United Nations. The latter circumstance may be of significance because in the event the US uses its veto at the Security Council the problem can be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

Such are the peaceful means of settling disputes and conflicts between states envisaged by the UN Charter. There is no doubt that any of them can be used to settle the conflict over the Malvinas (Falklands). However, what is needed for that is, before all else, the will and desire of the sides concerned to apply these methods. Today there is an obvious "gap" between the availability of a large arsenal of peaceful means of settling disputes, on the one hand, and frequent lack of a desire on the part of bourgeois governments to use them, on the other. That was made very evident by the constant British attempts over the years to avoid negotiations with Argentina.

Models of Possible Solutions of the Malvinas Crisis

What are the possible variants of an international legal solution of the dispute over the Malvinas (Falklands)? The practice of inter-state relations has accumulated considerable experience and offered quite a few models of the solution of territorial disputes and conflicts. This question is the subject of lively discussion in the press with various models being put forward.

The press for example has mentioned the Hongkong variant, which calls for the recognition by Britain of Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands) in exchange for the simultaneous leasing of these Islands to Britain for a long term.

Also mentioned is the Andorra variant. That means the establishment of a joint protectorate of Argentina and Britain over the Malvinas (Falklands) on the model of Andorra. In that case there will be two co-rulers on the Islands representing the Argentine President and the British Queen. All the decisions regarding the Islands, their population, domestic and foreign policies must then be taken jointly and by mutual consent.

Some Western jurists propose a Ruling triumvirate (the USA, Britain and Argentina). In that case all domestic and foreign political decisions will be made by a tripartite body consisting of representatives of the said states. The idea was put forward by the former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig during his "shuttle missions" between Buenos Aires and London when he was more concerned about furthering British and American political, economic and strategic interests than about a just settlement of the crisis.[7]

OAS control, temporary or permanent, with or without sending the corresponding armed forces, the establishment of the office of OAS commissioner and of self-government bodies is also a possibility.

Another variant being discussed involves the establishment of UN control, temporary or permanent, with or without the sending of UN forces to the island. The sending of UN armed forces to trouble spots is a long-standing practice and often serves to "neutralise" armed clashes and prevent territorial conquests by the disputing sides.

Theoretically there also exists a mixed variant of international control, i.e., joint participation of UN and OAS representatives in securing the autonomy of the Malvinas (Falklands).

During the crisis there were many in Latin America who voiced the opinion that it was possible and necessary to "Latin-Americanise" the Malvinas. However, that concept was not spelt out. Since the placing of the Malvinas under OAS control formally presupposes US participation it may be assumed Latin-Americanised "control over the islands" is not the same as control by the OAS.

The British press has suggested that the Malvinas (Falklands) could be given the status of a state freely associated with Britain. But that is still another form of dependence that could be described as neocolonial. It is used by the USA in Puerto Rico which under the 1952 Constitution is a state freely associated with the United States (estado libre asociado). It is known that the "freely associated state" of Puerto Rico has very limited legislative and executive powers and under the cover of independence is still completely dependent on the USA. US federal laws are effective on its territory. Although most of the Puerto Rican citizens are considered to be US citizens they have no right to vote in US elections. On pain of severe prison sentences the USA has established military conscription in the "freely associated state" sending Puerto Rican youth with its troops waging neocolonial wars as, for instance, in Korea and Vietnam. Now it is being suggested that Britain should copy that American neocolonial institution.

The British press has also suggested a protectorate of the Falkland Islands. That of course means creating a puppet state under total British control. In the colonial era Great Britain made wide use of that form of typical colonial dependence in which one state hands over to another the conduct of its external affairs under an unequal treaty, receives a counsellor or resident on internal affairs while preserving the trappings of independence. Great Britain in 1914 unilaterally established its protectorate over Egypt which it had been occupying since 1882. Protectorate is a crude violation of the principle of self-determination of nations and the UN Charter.

Theoretically Argentina can invite a state or states as guarantor (or guarantors) of its security during its struggle to reunite the Malvinas (Falklands). Juridically such an action is fully justified because any state has the right to appeal for help to any other state, although politically such an action is exceedingly complex.

It is possible also to proclaim the Malvinas (Falklands) a new independent state.[8] Independence, of course, can be

real or illusory. Britain, judging from the widely known statements of the Thatcher Government's ministers, would prefer it to be the latter. Take, in particular, the radio speech of John Nott, the British Defence Minister, on May 25, 1982 when he declared that if the citizens of the Malvinas wished to be independent it can be granted them on condition that the United Kingdom would take care of their "security". Comment is superfluous.

Finally, there have been proposals, including from the Legislative Council of the Malvinas (Falklands) to freeze the settlement of the dispute indefinitely. That does not suit the Argentine side and is not a way out of the situation.

* * *

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above. The legal aspect of the Malvinas conflict has far-reaching moral, political and ideological implications. If the disputing (conflicting) sides appeal to International Court or arbitration procedures, to the OAS or the UN, the dispute over the Malvinas (Falklands) can be decided in Argentina's favour contrary to the colonial aspirations of Britain. However, turning to International Court or international arbitration procedures is only possible if both disputing sides agree to do so but the imperial ambitions of Britain, backed by the USA, stand in the way of that.

Turning to other international legal instruments of peaceful settlement of disputes (such as negotiations, inquiry, mediation, the OAS, the UN) may result in more realistic compromise solutions. Of course, one should not exaggerate the significance of these instruments. Everything depends on the goodwill of the sides and on who uses these instruments. That was graphically evidenced by the travesty of the 17-year-long "negotiations" with Argentina staged by Britain. That was evidenced also by the distortion of the content and goals of the institutions of "inquiry" and "mediation" by the USA in April 1982. And so, the right use of peaceful means of settling disputes depends on the alignment of forces of peace and war, progress and reaction.

The Soviet Union has from the beginning favoured a peaceful settlement of the conflict over the possession of the Malvinas (Falklands) considering decolonisation and the rights of a developing Latin American country, Argentina, to be the imperatives.

NOTES

[1] See articles by Miroshevsky and Sheinbaum in this collection.

[2] Granma, April 3, 1982.

[3] B.M. Klimenko, Peaceful Settlement of Territorial Disputes, Moscow, 1982, pp. 124-130, 134-135 (in Russian).

[4] I. Lavretsky, Bolívar, Moscow, 1981 (in Russian).

[5] Pravda, May 24, 1982.

[6] Pravda, May 24, 1982.

[7] Granma, April 30, 1982, p. 8.

[8] Granma, May 26, 1982, p. 1.

LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY

Victor LUNIN, Cand.Sc.(Hist.)

The character and development of the conflict in the South Atlantic induced the peoples and governments in the region to express their attitude to Argentina's demands for restoring national sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands), the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia and to Britain's colonial adventure backed by the Reagan Administration.

There is no doubt that different governments on the continent rendered political, economic and other assistance to Argentina for reasons that were not identical. With some it stemmed from their consistent anti-imperialist foreign policy aimed at upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of states and elimination of the remnants of colonialism. With others they were prompted by the internal political situation and the desire of the ruling circles to boost their prestige inside the country. Still others saw the Anglo-Argentine conflict as a chance "to slam the door" in Washington's face by reactivating the weakened ties with their regional neighbours. With some countries support for Argentina was prompted by a combination of different motives.

Be that as it may Britain's imperialist actions backed by the US paradoxically led to a similar reaction of forces as wide apart as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador and the Salvadorean junta itself, the governments of Nicaragua and Uruguay, Grenada and Haiti, Cuba and Guatemala. This confirmed the fact that in spite of fundamental differences in social and economic realities in different countries there is a common basis for joint effective

action in the region. In the case in question even the openly pro-imperialist forces had to come out for political independence and stronger national sovereignty, for the elimination of the remnants of colonialism and against diktat in international relations. These demands have become so compelling that in a crisis situation even the conservative circles could not oppose them. They have to bear in mind how popular these demands are among the people.

In the course of the developments in the South Atlantic some Latin American countries came up with interesting initiatives for achieving organisational and political rapprochement between the states in the region. As many prominent political leaders on the continent believe these initiatives need to be realised and institutionalised, otherwise the imperialist and colonialist circles will see the triumph of their hopes that the surge of solidarity will turn out to have been just a sign of the Latin American temperament, and the storm will be followed by calm. In this context it is not irrelevant to recall the words of the herald of the Cuban revolution, José Martí, the ideologist of the battle for a "second liberation" of Latin America: "The trees must stand in a row and block the way to the giant in seven-mile boots. The hour of trial has come, the hour of marching in close order. We must go forward in serried ranks, monolithic, like the silver in the bowels of the Andes."[1]

In the early days of the Anglo-Argentine conflict Washington (followed, naturally, by London), ignoring the internal problems of developing countries and seeking to squeeze the complex relations between developing and developed states into simplistic patterns made another attempt to represent the problem as a result of East-West confrontation. These demagogic attempts however failed. As the Latin American press noted at the time, realities have shown that the Malvinas problem was rather a mirror of the profound contradictions within the "North-South" dialogue. "Our conflict on the Malvinas," wrote the Argentine newspaper Clarín, "is a result not of confrontation between East and West but of the hostility of the rich North (meaning the developed capitalist

countries--V.L.) towards the underdeveloped South. That conflict has become part of the struggle of all those who come out for a just international economic order and against the remnants of colonialism."[2]

The position occupied during the crisis not only by Britain and the USA, but by other leading capitalist countries, enabled Latin American states to assess the real goals of Western policy vis-à-vis the developing countries. The Anglo-Argentine conflict was a lasting "lesson" for the continent whose consequences are likely to affect the international activity of the Latin American republic at least in the short- and middle-term perspective.

Speaking about the concrete substance of the conflict, the forcible restoration of Britain's colonial status on the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands did not solve the problem. Argentina has never withdrawn the main question of its sovereignty over the territories in the South Atlantic. "Complete cessation of hostilities," said a note of the Argentine Government to the United Nations following the British occupation of the archipelago, "will only be reached when the United Kingdom lifts its air and naval blockade and economic sanctions, when it withdraws its occupation forces from the islands, recalls its special naval force and nuclear submarines which are in the waters of the region. Only negotiations within the UN framework could lead to a final settlement of the conflict, eliminating the situation of illegal colonial domination propped up by force and representing in itself a constant threat to peace."[3]

The Argentine Angle

The most direct impact of the developments in the South Atlantic has been on Argentina. As is generally known, the government of Leopoldo Galtieri was guided by several considerations when it decided on April 2, 1982 to restore national sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands), the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia by sending Argentine troops there. For the military internal considerations were paramount, in particular, a wish to find a way out of the po-

litical dead-end and the aggravated crisis of the "Chicago school" economic model which had been followed since 1976 and had brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy. But whatever the concrete motives that prompted it, the operation to put an end to the colonial status of the South Atlantic islands became objectively an anti-imperialist act, as the Argentine Communists have noted.[4]

Apparently the Argentine military did not expect the Reagan Administration to back Britain so openly during the conflict. They hoped that Washington would at least take a neutral stand. In his message to Reagan in late May 1982 in reply to the latter's greetings on the Argentina's national holiday, President Galtieri made a special note of the fact that the people and the government of the republic "were amazed at the completely unexpected stand of the United States which sided with Britain in her conflict with Argentina".[5]

In response to the actions of the White House which in addition to backing Britain imposed sanctions on Argentina on April 30, the Argentine Government made major adjustments in the country's foreign policy. Argentina ceased to be an "ideal ally" of the USA in Latin America as Washington had regarded the Galtieri Government until April 2. Argentina recalled its military advisers from El Salvador and its representatives from the Inter-American Defence Board. It is no secret that some Argentine officers demanded more resolute measures including severance of diplomatic and other relations with Washington.

By the same token Argentina made a number of moves to promote cooperation in diverse fields with many Latin American states which actively backed it in the conflict with Britain and vigorously condemned the sanctions of the leading capitalist countries against Buenos Aires. Amadeo Frugoli, the Defence Minister in Galtieri Government, noted that the conflict resulted in "a new discovery of Latin America that makes imperative a reassessment in the field of international relations" and prompts the idea of a possible "Latin American bloc which would be an affective instrument of defence".[6]

At the end of May Argentina informed the Andean Pact countries that it was lowering customs duties by 20 per cent to facilitate access of all goods from Latin American countries to its internal market and asked, through the Latin American Integration Association, to take reciprocal measures with regard to her own exports.

The expansion of ties with Cuba, which as a Latin American state and also as the leader of the non-aligned movement resolutely sided with Buenos Aires, was an essential factor in Argentina's foreign policy during the conflict with Britain. It made Argentina a more active member of the non-aligned movement. The movement itself again, as in the past, and especially since April 2, more resolutely backed Argentina's demands for the liquidation of the colonial status of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands. Nicanor Costa Méndez, the Foreign Minister in the Galtieri Government, who led an Argentina delegation to the meeting of the Non-Aligned Nations' Coordinating Bureau in Havana in early June 1982, expressed deep thanks for the solidarity of that organisation and for "the fraternal friendship of the Cuban people and government" with regard to Argentina fighting to return the Malvinas.[7] During his visit Costa Méndez and the Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca signed a document on resumption of the agreement on cooperation between the two states.

Thus, already under the Galtieri Government essential changes were initiated in Argentina's foreign policy. Priority was given to ties within the Latin American community and to relations with other developing countries, in other words, to "South-South" relations. The Argentina air force commander Basilio Lami Dozo stressed that from now on the centre of gravity for the republic's entire foreign policy is in Latin America.[8]

The British seizure of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands brought about a further positive change not only in foreign policy but on the domestic front as well. Reference is to the increased trend towards democratisation of the country, the lifting of the ban on parties and public organisations and a return to civilian government.

As regards the Malvinas problem the broadest strata of Argentine society favoured still more resolute action against the British colonial rule. Thus, retired general Jorge Raúl Carcagno, who was commander of the ground forces in 1973 and maintained links with the left-wing Peronistas, wrote an open letter to the armed forces calling for cardinal changes and continued war with Britain. He proposed accepting military aid from all the states who would wish to grant it provided Argentina's national sovereignty was respected; breaking-off of diplomatic relations with the USA and the European countries supporting Britain; scrapping the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and withdrawal from the Organisation of American States pending a revision of its Charter to expel the United States.

Carcagno's ideas, observers report, are widely shared in the nationalistically-minded circles of the air force whose representatives (along with the whole of society and the armed forces) were deeply shaken by the decision on capitulation of the Argentine forces on the Malvinas (Falklands).[9]

Argentina's military defeat triggered a government crisis. As a result of consultations between members of the military junta General Galtieri resigned as President and commander-in-chief of the ground forces. Within the junta marked differences arose over the question of institutionalisation procedure and the appointment of a provisional president. The air force and the navy wanted a civilian president to be appointed and a transition to civilian government without much delay. The ground forces insisted that the army should be in power for at least five more years. The ground forces command proposed retired general Reinaldo Benito Bignone as president. In response the air force and navy refused to take part in political leadership of the national reorganisation process declaring that they would remain in the military junta only to deal with matters of security and national defence.

That forced the ground forces leadership to make a compromise to preserve the unity of the army. They noted in a communique that the main tasks of the Bignone Government,

which was transitional in character, were to ensure the process of institutionalisation; an early agreement with political leaders on measures to legalise parties and transfer power to civilians following elections in the early months of 1984 (and not in five years as the army proposed earlier); concentration of government efforts on measures that would guarantee continuity and further development in the institutional period.[10] (In September 1982 the military junta was restored as the supreme political power body.)

On July 1, 1982 the Bignone Government (which along with the President included another officer--the Interior Minister) took office in accordance with the programme formulated by the Supreme Command of the Ground Forces. It reaffirmed the continuity of the new trends in foreign policy that emerged as a result of the worsening of relations with the leading capitalist powers. At the same time the new government declared a revision of the former economic and social policies. The Economics Minister in the new Cabinet, Dagnino Pastore, stated that the Argentine economy was in a critical situation as a result of the so-called "liberal philosophy"[11] which guided the military in their socio-economic policy after 1976. Pastore stressed that the new economic policy would (as distinct from the recipes of the "Chicago school") be aimed at reviving the economy with higher wages and price controls.

The new Foreign Minister, Juan Aguirre Lanari, underlined that the main foreign policy objectives would be strengthening ties with Latin American countries and active participation in the non-aligned movement. The Bignone Government emphasised that restoration of national sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands) would be a foreign policy priority.

From the early days of the Bignone Government, the Reagan Administration declared that it attached great importance to the restoration of normal and friendly relations with Argentina. It is notable however that the White House did not say a word about when it was going to lift the anti-Argentine sanctions apparently seeking to use them as a means of pressure.[12]

In his reply the new Argentine President noted that a worsening of relations between the two countries had not occurred on his country's initiative.[13]

It cannot be ruled out that in time the most reactionary circles of the Argentine establishment will try to set the clock back and forget the lessons of the recent crisis. Such tendencies can already be discerned. However, it is no easy matter under the current circumstances for Argentina to resume its role of Washington's "automatic ally", notably in its interventionist actions against other countries on the continent and to return to a rigid dictatorship.

Thus the crisis in the South Atlantic objectively precipitated long overdue changes inside Argentina and these changes may consolidate the anti-imperialist elements in its foreign policy, make it more independent in the world affairs, strengthen its ties with the states which showed genuine solidarity at a difficult moment.

Latin American Repercussions

The main consequence of the crisis however was its impact not so much on Argentina as on the whole of Latin America. The developments in the South Atlantic evoked widespread solidarity with the legitimate struggle of the Argentine people for its rights. "This is the hour of Latin American solidarity," stressed a Declaration of the revolutionary government of Cuba in early May 1982. "The cause of the Malvinas is the cause of the Argentine people and consequently the cause of Latin America and the Caribbean, is our cause!"[14]

As the situation in the South Atlantic grew increasingly tense and Britain intensified its aggressive actions and as the US, the EEC and most of the advanced capitalist countries applied sanctions against Argentina the overwhelming majority of Latin American states stepped up their backing for Argentina. This solidarity manifested itself on the governmental and intergovernmental as well as on the unofficial level. Many public organisations and political parties (sometimes noting that they disapproved of the charac-

ter and form of military government in Argentina since 1976) came out resolutely in defence of Argentina's sovereign rights to the islands, condemned the sanctions of the leading Western countries with regard to Buenos Aires, supported the demands for strengthening the inter-Latin American cooperation bodies to counteract both military and economic aggression against the countries of the continent.

It was a distinctive feature of solidarity with the Argentine people that the peoples and the overwhelming majority of Latin American governments viewed Britain's military action against Argentina as threatening the whole continent. That is why solidarity took such concrete forms as offers of military aid to Argentina (military hardware--planes, tanks, war ships, etc., and of sending regular units and volunteers). Such offers came for example from the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Peru and from some other countries.

The South Atlantic crisis had the most immediate effect on the leading bodies of the Inter-American System, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and even more so on the Organisation of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR). For the first time in its 35 years that organisation was confronted with a real danger to peace and security on the continent posed by a power outside the continent, i.e., with precisely the kind of situation in which the Inter-American System was committed to take counteraction. The United States, however, which in the past described any changes in any Latin American country which it found not to its liking as "external interference" and imposed the provisions of the TIAR on the states of the region for its own purposes, refused, in this case, to qualify Britain's actions as a threat from an extra-continental power. Washington's "double-standard" approach paralysed the mechanism of the "collective security of the Western Hemisphere", provoking unanimous condemnation in Latin America.

On April 28, 1982 the first plenary session of the 20th Consultative Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OAS Countries approved a resolution proposed by Brazil and Peru

jointly with Costa Rica and Honduras by 17 votes (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay and Ecuador) with four abstentions (Colombia, the USA, Trinidad and Tobago, Chile). The resolution called on Great Britain to immediately stop hostilities in the South Atlantic and on Argentina to refrain from "any acts that could aggravate the situation". The resolution called for a peaceful settlement taking into account "the sovereign rights of Argentina to the Malvinas and the interests of their inhabitants" and for complying with the Security Council Resolution 502 in all its aspects. Besides, the foreign ministers of the American states expressed regret over the application of sanctions against Argentina by the members of the European Economic Community and other capitalist states and demanded that they be lifted.[15] And Venezuela during the discussion of the draft resolution insisted that it be more strongly worded.

Just in two days of the adoption of that resolution the Reagan Administration openly sided with Britain by introducing sanctions against Argentina. A split developed in the Inter-American System. "The position of the United States," stressed the Nicaraguan magazine Patria Libre, "highlights for the Latin American peoples the fact that the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance is effective only when it comes to the blockade of Cuba, the suppression of the Dominican people, when attempts are made to prevent the victory of the revolutionaries in El Salvador or some other American country, but is ineffective when it comes to an extra-continental aggression carried out by a colonial empire."[16]

At the second plenary session of the 20th Consultative Council of the Foreign Ministers of the OAS Countries in late May 1982 the USA resorted to various means to bring pressure to bear on the Latin American countries to prevent them from forming a united front in support of Argentina.

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister, José Alberto Zambrano Velazco, stressed in his address to the session: "In view of

the fact that the political and diplomatic efforts made to date have been to no avail and in connection with the unjustified stubbornness of the British Government this meeting must take prompt measures provided for in Article 8[17] of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance to make more concrete our expressed continental solidarity."[18]

A resolution adopted by the session (by 17 votes with 4 abstentions) on May 29, 1982 was couched in much sharper language than that of the first session. It condemned "in the most vigorous form" the unjustified and disproportionate armed attack by the United Kingdom which affects the security of the whole American continent; demanded that Britain immediately stop military operations against Argentina and withdraw its armed forces from the area on the continent; stressed the need for an early peaceful settlement of the conflict with UN cooperation. The foreign ministers of the OAS countries demanded that the US Government immediately lift its sanctions against Argentina and refrain from material aid to the United Kingdom in accordance with the principle of continental solidarity enshrined in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The resolution called for immediate lifting of coercive economic and political measures against the Argentine Republic by the EEC members and other capitalist states which have not yet done so. Particularly important for Argentina was Point 7 of the resolution stipulating that every member state of the Río Pact could render the Argentine Republic whatever assistance it saw fit.[19]

The specific feature of the crisis of the Inter-American System brought on by the South Atlantic conflict is that never before had its most conservative component, the military structure of the Inter-American System, been subjected to such deep erosion. In other words, while formerly crisis was a constant feature of such elements of the system as the economy, political structure and ideological principles within the OAS today all the components of the Inter-American System are seriously damaged.

The leaders of most Latin American countries are now advancing various plans of restructuring the Inter-American System: the creation of an Organisation of Latin American States instead of OAS (i.e., without the USA), of a collective Latin American defence body without the Pentagon, etc. In the present structural crisis within the system a new element has emerged in inter-American relations. In effect the Latin American states seek to use in their own interests the mechanism of the Inter-American System set up by Washington to impose its diktat on the countries of the region, to suppress the liberation movements on the continent (one sees signs that the old instruments of imperialist domination in the Western Hemisphere are being invested with new content.[20]

The actions of the majority of Latin American states in applying the Río Pact to counter a real extracontinental aggression on the part of Britain are so far one of the few "fragile" proofs that the Inter-American System is being transformed into a Latin American organisation and major efforts by the Latin American republics are needed to promote that trend, to strengthen the common ground for collective actions, to repel the imperialist attempts to split the unity of the region's countries "from within".

Highly significant in the light of the above is the statement of Costa Méndez to the effect that Cuba "can and must return to the Inter-American System".[21] Asked about the possibility of Cuba returning to the OAS Fidel Castro noted: "We must see how events will develop. It would be premature for us to talk about it. The OAS used to be an instrument of aggression against Cuba, Santo Domingo and Central America. If it ceases to be such an instrument and in that case (during the Anglo-Argentine conflict--V.L.) it stopped being that then for perhaps the first time in years we are ready to praise the OAS. The OAS and the TIAR treaty have taken a correct stand and I think it happened for the first time in history."[22]

The crisis in the South Atlantic overturned the traditional concepts of security Washington had foisted on many Latin American leaders. There was almost universal awareness

on the continent of the need for an independent approach, in particular on the questions of relations between East and West. Addressing the Permanent Council of the OAS on July 1, 1982 the Venezuelan representative Hilarion Cardozo stressed that Latin America "has neither the forces nor the opportunities to attract the United States to its side. Washington has the forces and the opportunities to involve us in the East-West conflict".[23]

The South Atlantic crisis made many Latin American countries reassess the situation in Central America, the relations with Cuba and other socialist states. That put a different complexion on the problem of support of the Reagan Administration's interventionist policy in Central America and the Caribbean. There emerged a tendency to view the restructuring of inter-American relations and strengthening of Latin American unity in complex with peaceful settlement of the Central American situation.

The double initiative of Panama appears to be exceedingly fruitful in this respect. Speaking at the Second Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament in June 1982 the Panama representatives proposed convening a conference on security and cooperation in Central America and the Caribbean patterned on the Helsinki conference of 1975 and in addition a conference of the Latin American heads of state and government parallel with a conference of armed forces' commanders to lay the groundwork for reliable defence and collective security of the region from Río Bravo to Patagonia.[24] A similar proposal of convening a conference of presidents and foreign ministers of Latin American countries was advanced in August 1982 by Belisario Betancour, the new president of Colombia, a country which took a somewhat different stand than that of most Latin American countries over the Malvinas crisis..

The crisis in the South Atlantic gave an impetus to "non-traditional" trends in the foreign policy of many continental Latin American states, in particular to more active participation in the non-aligned movement. Along with Argentina, Venezuela and Colombia proclaimed their desire for

closer ties with the non-aligned countries. Herrera Campíns and Belisario Betancour noted that their countries intended to raise their status within the non-aligned movement from that of observer to full-fledged member.

An important role in expanding "the Latin American branch" within that organisation was played by the meeting of the Non-Aligned Nations' Coordinating Bureau at ministerial level in Havana in early June 1982, i.e., at the height of the Malvinas crisis. Along with condemning the British aggression and supporting Argentina's just claims to the South Atlantic islands that meeting paid special attention to other aspects of the situation in Latin America.

The crisis in the South Atlantic apart from its specific effects on the Inter-American System gave a powerful impetus to strengthening the existing Latin American associations and the development of measures to counteract and neutralise the economic aggression acts on the part of imperialism. Through such organisations as the Andean Pact, the Latin American Integration Association and the Latin American Economic System (LAES), the Latin American states did not only condemn the sanctions of the USA, the EEC and other advanced capitalist countries but took some concrete steps to pool their efforts and resources to neutralise the negative impact of the sanctions.

The most strategically important actions were carried out within the framework of LAES which held a special meeting of Latin American representatives. An important agreement was arrived at which qualified economic sanctions as a threat to the sovereignty and economic security of the LAES countries contradicting the norms of international law and violating the provisions of the UN Charter, the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In view of such imperialist practices the LAES meeting decided to develop a general strategy "permitting Latin America to defend its economic security and independence by strengthening its joint potential of action and mutual assistance to counter measures or threats of economic pressure".[25] The formation of

the special Action Committee to coordinate cooperation of the region's countries with Argentina was a concrete instance of economic support for Argentina on the part of LAES. That committee which took a series of measures to establish mutual customs preferences for Argentina in the region's markets included 18 Latin American states, the biggest number of LAES states represented in special committees (at the end of August 1982 the Committee had 22 members).

The Committee's first session held in Buenos Aires on July 26-27, 1982, i.e., after the British capture of the islands, discussed measures to set up a collective self-defence of Latin America and recommended to the Eighth Session of the Latin American Council of LAES to take effective decisions to ensure regional economic security. That session, held in Caracas in late August approved 32 agreements including those on the restructuring of relations with the USA and the EEC. The Eighth Session of the LAES Latin American Council at the ministerial level was described by many of the continent's leaders as the most important in the whole history of that organisation.

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Global Aspects

The conflict in the South Atlantic was rightly seen by most Latin American countries not simply as an armed clash between Argentina and Britain, backed by the USA, but as an armed conflict between that region as a whole and NATO.

Indeed the NATO bloc turned the South Atlantic war into a "proving ground" to test the most modern weapons. It was suggested that the North Atlantic bloc would "benefit" by the experience of the British expeditionary corps in the course of its military operations against Argentina. Moreover, as early as June 1982 a NATO naval squadron conducted a special exercise to simulate the tactics of the Argentine Air Force and develop countermeasures to it.

Some British ships sent to the area of the conflict had nuclear weapons on board. The sunken British destroyer Sheffield was reported to have carried a lethal nuclear load which in time will be (probably already is) a source of

contamination in the Atlantic. These British actions are a flagrant violation of the Tlatelolco Treaty banning nuclear weapons in Latin America for Great Britain is a signatory to the Additional Protocols 1 and 2 to that Treaty and is committed to respect the status of a nuclear-free zone in the region.

American observer Jack Anderson reported a top-secret message in which the Thatcher Government informed Reagan about the presence of tactical nuclear weapons on the British ships and that the squadron's command had orders to use them "in an extremely grave situation".[26] The Argentine Air Force command noted that the Argentine Air Forces could have conducted still more active and successful operations against the British squadron but were restrained by the danger of the British using nuclear weapons. What would have happened if the Argentine Air Force (which enjoyed supremacy in the air) had indeed launched more powerful raids is a matter of conjecture all the more so since some Latin American countries, including Venezuela and Peru, were ready to give modern planes to Argentina. But it is possible that Argentina's defeat has prevented the Malvinas (Falklands) from becoming a "Latin American Hiroshima".

Another global implication of the crisis is the fact that Britain's actions in the South Atlantic complicated the problem of nuclear non-proliferation in the world. Thus Vice-Admiral Carlos Castro Madero, Chairman of the Argentine Atomic Energy Commission, and Julio César Carasales, who led the Argentine delegation to the UN Second Special Session on Disarmament, declared that in the light of the developments in the South Atlantic Argentina reserved the right to use nuclear energy for military purposes.[27] (It should be noted that before the conflict Argentina did not accede to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and had not ratified the Tlatelolco Treaty.)

There is furthermore a possibility that Latin America will be more actively involved in the conventional arms race and that regional disarmament measures will be slowed down, since the developments in the South Atlantic have demonstrat-

ed the military weakness of Latin America vis-à-vis NATO. Addressing the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Disarmament César Carasales noted that the South Atlantic conflict made imperative a rethink of some concepts and plans in the disarmament field because regional disarmament measures cannot be effective so long as extraregional powers intervene with the most powerful weapons (nuclear and conventional) in their possession.[28] This may give a new impetus to the arms race in the region and to the local military-industrial complex. And the Malvinas problem whose solution has become more complicated after the colonial status of the South Atlantic islands was restored is a factor that "compels" Latin America to step up its arms build-up.

In purely military terms the conflict overturned many conceptions current among the continent's military. The hostilities in the South Atlantic demonstrated the increased role of the navy and air force in a modern war while the Pentagon had geared the armed forces of the region's countries to "an internal war against subversive elements", i.e., gave priority to strengthening the ground forces. In the light of the "military lessons" of the Malvinas crisis many Latin American states, notably Argentina, started to revise their concept of "internal war" and the traditional interpretation of "national security".

After the capture of the islands the ruling circles of Britain and NATO as a whole have been developing various scenarios for "perpetuating" the colonial status of the archipelago,[29] tied in with global geopolitics. Thus one of the actively discussed plans would turn the islands into an American naval and air base either patterned on the US base on the Ascension Island (where there is a civilian population) in the Atlantic or Diego García (where civilians have been driven out) in the Indian Ocean. The US Navy views this plan with undisguised interest tempted by the idea of creating a triangle Ascension Island-Falklands-Diego García.

Also being considered are projects to set up multilateral forces involving Australia, New Zealand, RSA as well as Chile which during the conflict virtually aligned itself

with Britain becoming one of the West's main allies in the Southern Cone.

British military experts claim that the minimal requirements for setting up a strong British defence system is a 3,000-strong military garrison (almost two per every citizen), 2 nuclear submarines, 2 frigates, 1 destroyer, 12 Harrier planes and a squadron of helicopters. The annual cost to London of maintaining the naval and air base would be about 720 million dollars.[30]

Thus the attempts of Britain to preserve the fragments of its empire lead to serious international complications. It is not accidental that Fidel Castro in a message to the heads of the non-aligned countries emphasised in connection with the dangerous developments of the Anglo-Argentine conflict that the imperialist countries were trying to turn the colonial war into a "lesson for all the Third World countries which are defending their sovereignty and territorial integrity irrespective of their social and political regime".[31]

The "lesson" to the developing countries took the form not only of military actions but also of economic aggression. The conflict led to the emergence of two blocs--a "front" of Latin American countries backed by all the anti-colonial forces and the bloc of the developed capitalist countries (with few exceptions) led by Britain and the USA. Support for London came both in the shape of specific military aid (USA, New Zealand, Portugal and some other countries) and in the shape of economic pressure on Argentina by imposing sanctions or restrictions (USA, EEC, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan).

Some West European countries accompanied their backing for the British aggression with reservations and complex demarches,[32] for Britain's "legitimate rights" to the South Atlantic islands are the subject of considerable doubt in most West European states. The introduction of sanctions, many West European leaders explained, was intended to prevent Argentina from "creating a precedent" of using force to return the islands (although that precedent was created by

Britain 150 years ago), and to "prevent a war" on the assumption that the demonstration of "Atlantic solidarity" would "deter" Argentina and make her more amenable at the negotiation table. In actual fact, however, the measures of West European countries and the USA within the EEC and NATO framework amounted to a direct encouragement of the Thatcher Government's war.

Official propaganda in those Western countries where the ruling parties are members of the Socialist International also claimed that a victory of "democratic Britain" would bring down the dictatorship of Argentina.

The EEC's economic sanctions applied against Argentina were strongly condemned in Latin America as contradicting the very idea of a new international economic order. In protest the Latin American countries cancelled a meeting with the EEC scheduled for June 1982.

As events in the South Atlantic have shown, economic sanctions, which have become standard practice for imperialism against the socialist states, are also actively used to bring pressure to bear on the developing countries. In a declaration, a meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the non-aligned movement in Havana notes the growing tendency of imperialism to use various forms of economic oppression against the non-aligned and the developing countries in general and rejects the use of economic blockade, sanctions, pressure and blackmail against the developing countries, including Argentina.[33]

* * *

The political consequences of the crisis in the South Atlantic for Latin America are diverse and will fully become apparent only after some time. But already now one can see the determining element in the new situation, the fact that the states of the region, as never before, have become aware of their dependent position as the "backyard" of the capitalist system, have realised the need for joint effort and organisational unity to strengthen their political and economic independence. "The tragic lesson of the Malvinas," stressed a declaration of the Latin American Parliament,

"shows that the alternative for Latin America is unification or vassal dependence."[34]

The US imperialist circles and some other developed capitalist countries do not conceal their hopes that the crisis in the South Atlantic will have no particular consequences for the West. They believe that the "class instinct" of the ruling circles, the extensive economic dependence of most Latin American states and their "peripheral" position in the world capitalist system will in the final count determine the policies of the region's countries and prevent them from realising the initiatives proclaimed at the height of the crisis.

All that makes it evident that the solution of future problems on the Latin American continent will depend on how lasting will be the positive changes in the international activity of most of the continent's states caused by these developments.

NOTES

1 José Martí, "Nuestra América", Complete Works, Vol. 6, Havana, 1963, p. 15.

2 Mundo obrero, No. 179, Madrid, 1982, p. 7.

3 Granma, June 19, 1982.

4 World Marxist Review, Vol. 25, No. 7, July 1982, pp. 72-73.

5 Granma, May 27, 1982.

6 América Latina. Informe político, London, No. 11, 1982, p. 808.

7 Granma, June 5, 1982.

8 Granma, June 22, 1982.

9 Latin America. Weekly Report, London, No. 24, 1982, pp. 1-2.

10 Granma, June 23, 1982.

11 The reference is to the liberalisation of private investment regulations.

[12] In connection with the South Atlantic crisis and the White House stand it is pertinent to recall a fact almost two years old which throws additional light on the Republican Administration's attitude towards Argentina. On the eve of Reagan's accession to the White House the military academies in the United States held a war game which included the mining of four main Cuban ports "in retaliation" for "a Soviet invasion of Poland" which Americans thought was imminent. Plans were also considered to make Argentina join the "wheat embargo" against the Soviet Union on pain of considering Argentina an enemy. See Latin America. Weekly Report, No. 50, 1980, p. 3.

[13] Granma, July 6, 1982.

[14] Granma, May 3, 1982.

[15] Granma, April 28, 1982.

[16] Patria Libre, Managua, No. 21, 1982, p. 48.

[17] This article provides for recall of ambassadors, severance of diplomatic relations, complete or partial suspension of economic relations or railway, marine, air, postal, telegraph, telephone and radio-telephone communications and the use of armed force by all the member countries.

[18] Granma, May 29, 1982.

[19] Ibidem.

[20] It should be recalled in this connection that during the Sixth Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Havana in 1979 General Omar Torrijos in an apparent reference to the possibility of such a trend developing, opposed a draft resolution demanding an annulment of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and liquidation of the Central American Defence Board. At that time Torrijos noted that organisations "are as good or as bad as their members".

[21] Granma, May 28, 1982.

[22] Granma, June 5, 1982.

[23] Granma, July 2, 1982.

[24] El Bayano, Panama, No. 100, 1982, p. 16.

[25] Granma, June 5, 1982.

[26] Granma, May 3, 1982.

[27] Granma, June 12, 1982; June 23, 1982.

[28] Granma, June 23, 1982.

[29] In addition to misinterpreted political considerations Margaret Thatcher had a personal interest in the restoration of colonial rule on the Malvinas (Falklands). Costa Méndez has noted in an interview that 46 per cent of the land on the archipelago belongs to the Falkland Islands Company and the other 54 per cent to 23 owners one of whom is Margaret Thatcher. See Granma, May 27, 1982.

[30] América Latina. Informe político, No. 12, 1982, pp. 090-091, 095; Granma, July 6, 1982.

[31] Granma, May 11, 1982.

[32] For example, the FRG supported Britain out of "Atlantic solidarity" but, as Federal Chancellor Schmidt stated, the solidarity of the West German Government should not be interpreted as giving London a "carte blanche". The British expedition to the South Atlantic, Schmidt felt, was an anachronism. See Granma, May 3, 1982.

[33] Granma, July 7, 1982.

[34] Granma, June 23, 1982.

POSITION OF THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES

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The events that unfolded in the South Atlantic in 1982 were in many ways reminiscent of the British seizure of the Malvinas in 1833. Just as 150 years ago, Britain resorted to force to dislodge the Argentines from the islands. And there are remarkable similarities in the US position then and now. Its attitude towards the Malvinas (Falkland) issue has always been based on selfish, narrowly pragmatic interests. The archipelago was a convenient base for US whaling fleets on their way to the South Atlantic. So, Washington reacted to the British landing "calmly" believing that a British administration would be easier to deal with than an Argentine one. At that time the Monroe Doctrine had been in effect for almost ten years. "The American continents," read President Monroe's message to Congress of December 2, 1823, "by the free and independent conditions which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonisation by any European power."[1]

The British move in expelling from the Malvinas the Argentine administration which had been on the islands since 1820, could be qualified only as the acquisition by a European power of a new colony in the Western Hemisphere. However, the United States chose to ignore its recently undertaken commitments. Remembering this, the Venezuelan magazine Resumen wrote in April 1982, that if the United Provinces of Río de la Plata (Argentina) had signed and ratified the Treaty on Union, League and Confederation concluded

at the Panama Congress in 1826 and had helped to set up a defensive alliance of Latin American states, Great Britain would have thought twice before attacking the Malvinas.[2]

To draw a historical parallel, it is clear that Argentina's defeat in 1982 was due to the same factors as the British occupation of the islands in 1833, namely, the pro-British policy of the White House and lack of unity among the Latin American states.

These factors are closely interconnected. While the Latin American countries, being economically and politically disunited, were powerless to create their own regional defence system the United States "managed to take advantage of the historical conditions and worked out a concrete, consistent and long-range policy. Patiently biding their time, they used threats, blackmail, pressure, invasions until finally they achieved their goal".[3] These efforts were climaxed after the Second World War by the creation of an Inter-American System and the Organisation of American States, subject to pressure from the United States.

Initially at least, most states in the region entertained illusions about the principles of self-determination and non-interference in internal affairs declared in the OAS Charter. Besides, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Río Pact) directly promised them US support in the event of an "extra-continental attack". In signing the Río Pact and the OAS Charter, the Latin American countries expected Washington's promised assistance in solving pressing economic, political and social issues.

Argentina, which had been upholding its claim to the Malvinas (Falklands) since 1834 undoubtedly relied on OAS aid in the coming struggle. That is why in signing the Río Pact Argentina made the following reservation: "The Argentine delegation declares that it does not recognise the existence of colonies or any other possessions of European states in the waters off the Latin American continent and washing the territory of the Argentine Republic in the security zone of this treaty, and reaffirms its legitimate rights

to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, and the Argentine Antarctic sector under Argentine sovereignty."[4]

The United States, however, was by no means interested in using the OAS mechanism to solve Latin American problems. It maintained that the chief purpose of the OAS and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance was "to combat world communism" and, as subsequent events have shown, it used them to crush revolutionary movements on the continent.

Furthermore, the USA was not interested in spoiling relations with Great Britain. In response to the Argentine reservation, the USA made its own, which read: "The United States declares that the Río Treaty cannot influence the sovereignty or the national or international status of any of the territories included in the region delimited in Article 4" ("The security zone"--B.M.).[5]

This was a clear signal to Argentina that it should not count on the assistance of the inter-American organisation in solving its problem. And indeed, despite the fact that most Latin American countries sided with the Argentine position and called for "an end to colonialism in the Western Hemisphere" the OAS did practically nothing to satisfy Argentina's legitimate demand. In 1954 Argentina appealed to the UN for assistance.

In time the Latin American countries became more and more disillusioned with the inter-American system. Contributing to that disillusionment were the disruption of economic conferences under OAS aegis, the US refusal to meet the pressing demands of the Latin American states and the increasing frequency of open interference by Washington in their internal affairs. The weakening of US world positions in the 1960s and 1970s, the growing influence of socialist Cuba, and the rise of the Latin American countries' economic potential changed the alignment of forces within the OAS. The US faced recurrent opposition. In April 1973, the 3rd session of the OAS General Assembly decided, on the

initiative of Latin American states, to carry out a far-reaching reform of the inter-American system which was to affect not only the OAS Charter but also the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and the ideological foundations of relations between the countries of the region.

These changes in the OAS were reflected in the January 1976 resolution on the Malvinas adopted by the Inter-American Juridical Committee, which contained a reference to the UN General Assembly's resolutions 2065 (1965) and 3160 (1973) recognising the legitimacy of Argentine claims and proclaimed "Argentina's inalienable right to the Malvinas Islands". The resolution urged the Inter-American community to "decide on the procedures and methods for their reintegration" and pointed out that "the presence of British naval vessels in the region constituted a menace to the peace and security of the continent".[6]

Hence, in launching a military operation to retrieve the archipelago Argentina could count on the moral support of the OAS. But apparently it did not expect Washington to take such a pro-British stand. The Argentine press wrote about the US "interest" in the islands long before the outbreak of hostilities. The Nueva Presencia newspaper, in particular, noted that in seeking to involve Argentina in the so-called South Atlantic Pact and secure a military base on the Malvinas, the USA would try to use the territorial dispute to bring pressure to bear on Argentina.[7]

Initially there appeared to be limits to Washington's support of Great Britain. Theoretically, if Argentina were attacked in the "security zone" established by the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (and the Malvinas are within that zone) all the other member states, including the USA, were bound to come to its aid. At any rate Washington's direct hostility came as a surprise to Argentina.

The United States tried to create a semblance of "impartiality", which was the purpose of the Haig mission. The American plan to establish a "tripartite administration" on the islands was aimed at securing a legal foothold there and furthering its own far-reaching strategic interests. After

Argentina rejected the "tripartite administration" plan and turned down Haig's offer of "mediation", the United States imposed sanctions on Argentina. Simultaneously it pledged moral and material support to Great Britain.

On April 25 the British attacked the Argentine garrison on South Georgia Island, thus becoming the first to use armed force against an American state in the "security zone" defined by the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The following day the 20th Consultative Meeting of the OAS Foreign Ministers opened in Washington at Argentina's request. As the Venezuelan foreign minister Zambrano Velazco noted, "it has been convoked at the moment decisive for the Inter-American System and, especially, for the Río Pact".[8] The pact, created to repel "an outside attack", was used by Washington to crush the freedom fight on the continent, and "forgotten" the very moment such an attack on a member country of the Inter-American System became a reality.

The Nicaraguan foreign minister Miguel D.Escoto called on the Latin American countries to cast aside the discredited Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance in favour of the first collective security treaty signed at the Panama Congress of 1826 without the USA.

The Argentine foreign minister Costa Méndez declared that the occupation of the Malvinas had been prompted by Great Britain's "provocative and contemptuous" attitude at the negotiations with Argentina and also by the use of force with regard to Argentines who had contracted to work on South Georgia Island, which made Argentina take "self-defence" measures. "We do not oppose international order, but we do oppose the form of order whose purpose it to preserve an oligarchic structure of the international system,"[9] declared the minister. And Costa Méndez went on to accuse Great Britain of intending to follow the traditional canons of 19th-century colonial policy.

On April 28, the 20th Consultative Meeting resolved by 17 votes (with the USA, Colombia, Chile and Trinidad and Tobago abstaining) to support Argentina. The resolution called on Great Britain to cease hostilities immediately and to

sit down at the negotiation table. The Meeting's decisions, which testified to majority support for Argentina, were welcomed in Buenos Aires. At the same time, "the voting results turned out to be a serious diplomatic problem for Washington which had obligations both to NATO and the OAS".[10]

The behaviour of the White House which backed the British colonial adventure was criticised even by those countries which had of late acquired a reputation of being the US "closest friends" in the region. According to The New York Times, "the right and the left regimes in Latin America have united against the US, which can undermine the strategy of anti-communism in alliance with the conservative governments".[11]

The OAS resolution condemned not only Great Britain but also the EEC countries which backed it thus showing that the Latin American states intended to oppose the economic sanctions against Argentina.

Since it was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority, the OAS resolution, under Article 20 of the Inter-American Treaty, was binding even on those states that had abstained. Which meant, wrote the Clarín, that the United States no longer had the right to side with Great Britain.[12]

Washington, however, justified its openly pro-British actions, following the OAS resolution (joining the economic blockade of Argentina and rendering material and technical assistance to Great Britain) by alleging that the Río Pact provisions did not apply to Argentina because it was an aggressor country. Open US interference in the conflict on the British side gave a free hand to the British admirals.

On May 2, a British nuclear submarine torpedoed and sank an Argentine cruiser within the Inter-American Treaty "security zone". The very presence in the "zone" of submarines using nuclear energy for military purposes represented a violation of Latin America's status of a nuclear-free zone.

The US position provoked an outcry in the region. President Osvaldo Hurtado of Ecuador declared that Pan-American-

ism was only valid when US interests were affected. The idea of Pan-Americanism receded to the second, third and even fourth place when the interests of Latin America were affected.[13] Elaborating on that idea, the Venezuelan magazine Resumen wrote that "if the United States had been the victim, then one could be sure that the Río Pact would have been applied without hesitation".[14]

It is already clear that the consequences of the Malvinas crisis will have a lasting effect on the Inter-American System. According to Gabriel Lopez, a Brazilian economist, "the thinking of the ruling circles of Brazil and some other Latin American countries underwent a change calling, in effect, for new solutions that would be a departure from the earlier patterns of military solidarity among states of the Western Hemisphere".[15] The new alignment within the OAS, when the USA and the overwhelming majority of Latin American states approach the notions of "sovereignty", "inter-American solidarity" and "national security" in diametrically opposed ways, marks the beginning of a new stage in the struggle of the Latin American nations for a restructuring of inter-American relations.

By the same token such organisations as the Latin American Economic System and the Latin American Parliament and the integration associations of Latin American countries designed to coordinate policies have seen their authority enhanced. Steps are being taken to set up a political consultative body of Latin American countries. At the latest, 10th session of the Latin American Parliament held in Bogota in August 1982, it was proposed to revise the OAS Charter and transfer headquarters from Washington to Brasilia. At the initiative of the Colombian President Belisario Betancourt, the session adopted a resolution on creating the framework for a "Latin American commonwealth of nations" by signing a treaty to the effect at a conference of the presidents of Latin American republics.

The resolution of the 10th session called for a restructuring of the regional security system by concluding agreements on mutual aid between Latin American states and

creating a new system of relations in the Western Hemisphere that would rule out all forms of subjugation or imperialism.

Almost simultaneously, an important 8th session of the Council of the Latin American Economic System held in Caracas discussed Latin American collective defence in the face of the economic aggression of the EEC and the United States. The resolutions of the LAES council session highlighted the growing tensions between Latin American countries and the USA after the latter, together with its NATO allies, had given all-out support to Great Britain's colonial war in the South Atlantic.

The central idea in recent statements of the majority of Latin American leaders is the need for closer coordination of actions between the region's countries in the foreign political, foreign economic and military fields. This was borne out by the results of the 12th session of the OAS General Assembly held in November 1982. The press wrote that the session saw a clash of two conceptions of continental and world relations, one put forward by Latin America and the other promoted by Washington.

Latin American spokesmen voiced distrust of the OAS and doubts that it was capable of maintaining peace and security and serving as an instrument of cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. Thus, the Mexican representative moved that the discussion of all the main political problems of the Western Hemisphere be shifted to the United Nations. The Colombian delegate criticised the US position in the Malvinas crisis which had brought the OAS to the brink of a split and said it was necessary to improve its structure.

Most Latin American countries at the session spoke in favour of creating a permanent consultative body within the OAS to deal with the urgent political problems of the continent. A. Orfila, Secretary-General of the OAS, spoke in favour of a summit meeting to work out a treaty creating a "Latin American commonwealth of nations".

Washington failed to divert criticism of its own policy by leveling more vicious charges against Cuba and Nica-

ragua. Secretary of State Shultz's threat to use the Río Pact against Nicaragua did not get support from the Latin American delegates. It would not be irrelevant to quote J. Childe, a US political scientist, who once said that as a result of its stand on the Malvinas, the US would be ridiculed each time it tried to invoke the Río Pact.[16] That is what happened.

The United States is now taking urgent measures to improve its relations with Latin America. Washington has even gone to the length of demonstrating a "cooling" of relations with its ally, Great Britain, by voting for the resolution urging a negotiated settlement of the Malvinas crisis tabled by the Latin American countries at the 37th session of the UN General Assembly. The US also supported a similar decision at the 12th session of the OAS General Assembly. On the eve of the session it was announced that President Reagan was going to tour the Latin American countries including Brazil, Colombia, Honduras and Costa-Rica. "In deciding on the tour," wrote the Bolivian newspaper Presencia, "Reagan apparently felt that the aftermath of the Malvinas crisis has been forgotten, but the speeches of many delegates at the OAS General Assembly were a 'cold shower' for the American Administration."[17] The course of Reagan's visit also proved that the Malvinas crisis had overturned the Republican Administration's hopes of making the OAS toe the US line as before. At a reception for President Reagan in Bogota, Colombian President Betancourt spoke of the need for the OAS to lift all restrictions on membership for ideological reasons. And he proposed admitting the Republic of Cuba to the OAS as a first step in that direction. He also called for making the OAS an "open forum, like the United Nations, that would reflect the continental realities the way they are".[18]

How did Washington propose to go about inducing the Latin American countries to "rally" around the USA? It resorted to crude anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, speculations on the Cuban and Nicaraguan "threat", to an economic policy facilitating the reign of transnational corporations

and active expansion of US capital in the region in the hope of harnessing them still closer to the US economy. Today these methods are inevitably at odds with reality. Washington's attempt to relegate countries which have achieved a certain level of economic development and gained international authority to the status of third-rate nations meekly following their northern neighbour are absurd.

The 1970s and early 1980s saw a further decline in US influence south of the Rio Grande. This has been manifested in the strengthening ties between Latin America and the socialist states and the search for a common platform for cooperation with the Asian and African countries in the struggle for a new international economic order. Latin American countries are more widely represented now in the non-aligned movement. In the UN, where until the 1960s the Americans had a smooth-running "voting machine", the Latin American countries more and more often range themselves with the socialist and developing countries. The OAS has adopted the principle of "ideological pluralism" which challenges the US-backed doctrine of "incompatibility" of Marxism-Leninism with the principles of the Inter-American System and has abolished mandatory sanctions against revolutionary Cuba which marked an important triumph of Latin American collective diplomacy.

The Malvinas crisis by contrasting Latin America to the USA and NATO, has proved that Washington cannot hope to dominate the OAS by speculating on anti-communist slogans. Only a decade ago a confrontation between the OAS and NATO, which became a reality during the Malvinas crisis, would have seemed incredible. The war in the South Atlantic dealt a severe blow to the plans for the creation of SATO, the South Atlantic version of NATO. It deprived them of their basis, i.e., the myth about the "Soviet naval threat to communications in the South Atlantic" which for decades has been used to condition the Latin Americans. The Soviet position in the Malvinas crisis met with public approval in Latin America despite the attempts of the USA and Britain to discredit it.

The world press describes Washington's moves in late 1982 as aimed at restoring trust between the partners in the Inter-American System. At the same time Washington pursues a policy that could only split the OAS rather than cement it. The United States is taking advantage of the economic difficulties of the region's major countries (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) in order to "help" them towards assuming a "correct" political line. Being the biggest financier and commanding a majority of votes in the Inter-American Development Bank, it opposes measures to strengthen the financial base of the bank to which these countries owe money. Argentina and Mexico, faced with the urgent need of returning their debts, experience grave difficulties due to US refusal to increase loans granted by the Bank. The US pursues a similar policy in other international financial organisations.

At the same time it is cementing political and military relations with the young English-speaking countries in the Caribbean. The insular Caribbean states, which have recently become independent, retain close ties with Great Britain and are members of the British Commonwealth. This was manifested dramatically during the Malvinas crisis when they all, with the exception of Grenada, opposed Argentina in the OAS.[19] The Reagan Administration is trying to take advantage of these features of the Caribbean countries, primarily their economic backwardness, in order to create a new "docile majority" within the OAS by separating them from the rest of Latin America. The US aims to set up a Caribbean military structure to stifle the revolutionary movements in the Central American and Caribbean countries.

In October 1982, the USA and Britain allocated tens of millions of dollars to create a so-called "regional defence and security system" in the Caribbean subregion including five countries--Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Dominica and Barbados. Plans are afoot to create coast guard police forces under joint command. The fact that Grenada has not been admitted to the "five" highlights the anti-democratic character of the new association.

Concerning the influence of the Malvinas crisis on the Organisation of American States it is noteworthy that it tends to galvanise the process of democratisation of the Inter-American System. On the whole, the OAS has contributed to the Argentine people's struggle against the leftovers of colonialism and to the consolidation of the Latin American countries' position on that issue. OAS policy in the "Malvinas crisis" should be assessed realistically. It would be naive to expect an organisation only ten years ago rightly dubbed "the US ministry of colonies" to make practical moves which, in case of an emergency, would have brought the Latin American countries to the brink of confrontation with the USA and Britain. Even so, the support Argentina was given at the 20th Consultative Meeting was a great political and moral boost both for that country and for the cause of Latin American solidarity in general.

NOTES

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965, Vol. 15, p. 787.

2 Resumen, No. 441, April 18, 1982, p. 44.

3 Sergio Matos Ochoa, El Panamericanismo a la luz del Derecho Internacional, Caracas, 1980, p. 217.

4 Resumen, No. 443, May 2, 1982, p. 48.

5 Ibidem.

6 Resumen, No. 447, 1982, p. 2.

7 Nueva presencia, September 18, 1981.

8 The New York Times, May 19, 1982.

9 Clarín, April 27, 1982.

10 América Latina. Informe semanario, London, 1982, No. 16, p. 1.

11 The New York Times, May 19, 1982.

12 Clarín, April 29, 1982.

13 Newsweek, May 18, 1982.

[14] Resumen, No. 443, May 2, 1982, p. 39.

[15] World Marxist Review, 1982, No. 10, p. 104.

[16] The Christian Science Monitor, May 18, 1982.

[17] Presencia, November 25, 1982.

[18] Granma, December 4, 1982.

[19] The Caribbean states, except Trinidad and Tobago, are not members of the Río Pact, so their position made no difference to the outcome of the OAS vote on the Malvinas problem.

ARGENTINE WORKERS' MOVEMENT AT THE NEW STAGE

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The Malvinas conflict was a dramatic reminder to the Argentine people of their country's dependent position, it linked the defence of national sovereignty with the struggle of the working class and all the working people against the pro-imperialist model of economic development being imposed on them. That model was based chiefly on the subjugation of the Argentine economy to the transnational corporations, mounting exploitation, impoverishment of the masses, and redistribution of the national income in favour of local and foreign monopoly capital.

Statistics bear witness to the extremely negative results of such an anti-national social and economic course. Between 1976 and 1980, 1,400 industries employing 890,000 people closed down.[1] Unemployment reached a record 1,500,000. The number of industrial workers dropped by 30 per cent, real wages of hired hands dropped by 32 per cent and their share of the national income shrank from 42 to 30 per cent.[2] On the eve of the Malvinas crisis the economy was at a particularly low ebb. In the first three months of 1982 the GNP decreased by 9.4 per cent, real wages--by 20 per cent, investments by 23.6 per cent and the consumption level--by 13.7 per cent compared to the previous year.[3]

Successive governments--civilian and military--were committed to a policy of attacking living standards of workers and sought to integrate the trade unions. The military regime established in March 1976, pursued a policy of de-

centralisation and depoliticisation of the working-class movement. In spite of repressions and anti-labour legislation passed in 1979 there was mounting opposition of the working people to the official social and economic policy. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT), bringing together 100 trade-union organisations, was revived in defiance of the Law on Professional Associations aimed at disuniting the working class. It forwarded a plan of action to protect the interests of all working people.[4] The CGT initiated major working-class actions which had far-flung repercussions throughout the country. The number of industrial strikes was soaring. A new stage in mounting social protest was marked by the general strike on March 30, 1982.

In Buenos Aires, thousands of workers and students responded to the CGT call to take to the streets, demanding "Peace, Bread and Jobs!" in spite of an official ban and threats of reprisals. The press commented that it was the most impressive working-class action since 1976 when emergency anti-labour legislation was brought in.

The Malvinas conflict gave rise to a new social and political situation in which the working class has an active and independent role to play. Crisis conditions and the struggle against Britain's imperialist aggression backed by the USA gave a mighty boost to activating all social classes, strata and groups. Within the working-class movement, the process of restructuring the trade unions so as to free them from military control was accelerated and new forms of mass organisation sprang up. All this indicated a search for a popular democratic alternative way out of the structural crisis aggravated by the pro-imperialist model of development.

To meet the new challenges facing the nation, the working class advanced the concept of "popular sovereignty", an extension of the concept of national sovereignty including not only territorial integrity, but also economic, social, political and democratic slogans. "It is necessary to understand that our homeland, apart from its national anthem, national flag and territorial sovereignty, needs above all to

assert popular sovereignty... meaning recovery of social freedoms, the restoration of the Constitution, recreation of the undermined national industry and economic independence, the assertion of social justice and the legitimate demand of the workers for respect of their dignity as Argentines," read a statement of the regional trade union of Cordoba.[5]

The position of the working class was prompted primarily by the anti-imperialist roots of the confrontation between Argentina and the leading imperialist powers and NATO over the Malvinas Archipelago. The extension of Argentine sovereignty over the islands had been prepared by the century and a half of struggle to eliminate the colonial legacy, against neocolonialism, in defence of national wealth and economic independence. For the Argentine workers the patriotic slogan of returning the Malvinas became part and parcel of the general struggle of the Latin American peoples against neocolonialist enslavement and an important element in the movement for democratic change.

The independent stand of the Argentine working class on international issues was shaped under the influence of the national liberation struggle, the non-aligned movement and the peaceful foreign policy of the socialist countries. The working class expressed its opinion on the dangers of a fratricidal war urged by the reactionaries between the Argentine and Chilean peoples over the Beagle Canal, and protested against the imperialist circles' designs to draw the country into the South Atlantic Pact and use its armed forces in "anti-guerilla" actions in Central America.

The position taken by the Argentine working people reveals a profound understanding of the class nature of international conflicts. In the case of the Argentine-Chilean dispute over the Beagle Canal, the workers demanded a peaceful settlement in a spirit of fraternal solidarity. However, they took a very different stand in the face of the British neocolonialist aggression. It was a clear-cut anti-imperialist position supporting the Argentine Government in its efforts to regain sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands.

While supporting the government's foreign policy, the working class did not abandon its demands for changing the socio-economic policy and making it more democratic. Witness the CGT statement of April 6, 1982: "The military operation on the Malvinas did not solve the grave internal problems... and the enthusiasm generated by that historical anti-colonial action among the working people does not mean that they support the anti-national political direction of the process." Backing the government in the face of the aggressor, the statement went on, "does not mean renunciation of the goals of social justice, economic independence and political sovereignty".[6]

Workers at many enterprises staged anti-imperialist actions under the slogan "passivity helps the enemy". The mass anti-imperialist campaign strengthened as the military aggression escalated, Britain's NATO allies imposed an economic boycott on Argentina and as the TNCs local branches actually joined the boycott.

There is evidence to show that many local TNCs used "secret boycott" by cutting production, dismissing workers in order to damage the economy of the nation at war and kindle social strife. In response to these subversive actions workers' commissions at big enterprises, mostly American or British-owned, demanded that government bodies establish effective control over production, and foreign directors' financial operations.[7]

The CGT urged the Lawyers' Association of Buenos Aires to set up a special commission to inquire into participation of foreign firms in the economic boycott.[8] Government employees came out in defence of national property, denouncing the policy of "privatisation", i.e., the handover of these enterprises to private interests, a policy pursued by the economic cabinet headed by Alemán, the monopolies' hack.

In the course of the anti-imperialist struggle the protection of national sovereignty slogan led to the emergence of new forms of workers' organisations and galvanised action at enterprises in support of the war effort. There were acts of solidarity with the troops engaged on the Malvinas

and patriotic civil defence funds accumulated. "Camea" Steel Plant employees collected 2.5 million pesos, those of the State Gas Company--4 million pesos. At the "Monte Chingolo" Plant every worker donated 15,000 pesos to the patriotic fund.[9] There was a collective drive for gifts for the troops and voluntary blood donations. Workers filled the front ranks of patriots who exposed the British and American monopoly accomplices, organising economic sabotage and financial swindles. The workers were the vanguard of the forces that in those troubled times came out in defence of national production, of the state sector and demanded that the government abandon the pro-imperialist model of development. The progressive press has noted that "the battle of the Malvinas also unfolded on the economic terrain ensuring a solid rear for the armed forces opposing imperialist aggression".[10]

As at all levels of social and political life, there was fierce polemics within the trade-union leadership over the direction of the class struggle and the content to be read into the slogan of "national sovereignty". Right-wing union leaders opposed the mobilisation of working people under democratic and anti-imperialist slogans and were against active forms of struggle. They deliberately tried to impede the fulfilment of the CGT Action Plan and oust from the leadership the most consistent advocates of such actions.

Two trends emerged on the question of working-class unity: 1) working-class unity should be achieved by the unification of the Peronista groups; 2) organisational unity must be achieved on a non-party class basis, beginning with joint actions based on an agreement between the most influential trends in the working class--the Peronistas and the Communists.[11] The latter trend was based on the acknowledgement of deep differences on the tactics of social struggle among the Peronista unions, which the right-wing circles use to undermine working-class unity.

In view of the differences in the union leadership the Labour Ministry began a dialogue with the leaders who were

prepared to collaborate with it. It promised certain concessions, including revision of some clauses of the law on Professional Associations of 1979.[12] As a result, in May 1982, at the height of the Malvinas crisis, the general secretaries of the trade-union federations which were subject to military control met under the auspices of the ministry to form a new CGT.

The rift in the trade-union leadership led to the formation of two trade-union centres, CGT-Azoprado and CGT-Brasil (after the names of the streets where they are located). It amounts to a division on tactical questions within the Peronista trade unions.[13] Neither of these Peronista groupings represents the majority of the organised working class. There are other trade unions. But the most important thing is that, in response to the requirements of the working people's daily struggle, there is a movement from below for restructuring the trade unions. It embraces all levels from the trade-union delegates at enterprises to sectoral federations and regional trade-union centres. Many of them have proved themselves to be militant class-oriented organisations.

The trend towards unity and union restructuring from below with the due account of the interests of the workers enjoys the full support of the National Intersyndical Movement. Its line for unity envisages independence from the government, political parties and individual groupings, and anti-imperialist goals of the working class. The unity of the working-class movement, writes the newspaper Qué pasa, "meets the demands of the union rank-and-file who see it as the only way to expand the daily struggle of the workers nationwide".[14]

As the Argentine Communists point out, the working-class role in politics and democratisation of the national life hinges on its unity. The significance of unity extends beyond the working class, which is in the centre of the regrouping of class and political forces at a time when the military regime is in crisis. In this situation national unity of the working-class movement is more urgent than ever before.[15]

The struggle of the Argentine working class against imperialism and the model of development being imposed on them evoked widespread response among the working people in other Latin American countries. During the Malvinas crisis messages of support came from the trade unions of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Central American and Caribbean countries. They staged solidarity actions of consequence. For example, the Venezuelan trade unions held a national rally and a token (10-minute) general strike in support of "Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas and the democratic and popular sovereignty of the Argentine people".[16]

The economic boycott launched by the capitalist countries against Argentina, sanctions which the trade unions of the USA and the so-called Free Trade Unions of NATO countries failed to oppose, made it clear to the national trade-union centres in Latin American countries who are their friends and who are not to be trusted. At a meeting of 350 union leaders Rubens Iscaro, an Argentine trade unionist, noted that of the two major international trade-union associations, the social-democratic International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) openly sided with Britain and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) which takes a class and anti-imperialist position, came out clearly in support of Argentina.[17]

NOTES

1 Latin American Weekly Report, January 8, 1982.

2 Qué pasa, June 15, 1982.

3 Clarín, June 9, 1982.

4 Informaciones argentinos, No. 1, 1981. pp. 32-33.

5 Qué pasa, June 14, 1982.

6 Ibidem.

7 Ibid., June 8, 1982.

8 Ibid., June 15, 1982.

9 Ibid., May 4, 1982.

[10] Rubens Iscaro, El papel actual de los sindicatos y sus principios clasistas, Buenos Aires, 1982, pp. 19-20.

[11] Clarín, November 14, 1982.

[12] Ibid., June 7, 1982.

[13] Rubens Iscaro, op. cit., p. 24.

[14] Qué pasa, January 20, 1982.

[15] Ibidem.

[16] Clarín, June 10, 1982.

[17] Qué pasa, June 1, 1982.

MOUNTING ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE

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The conflict in the South Atlantic stirred the deepest and most diverse currents bringing them to the surface of events and undermining previously unassailable assumptions. It may be too early to draw final conclusions but the question that can already legitimately be asked is what place will the Malvinas (Falkland) crisis occupy in the contemporary struggle against imperialism? What will be the role of the "Malvinas factor" in the internal politics of Argentina?

To assess the significance of the Malvinas events and its possible consequences for Argentina's internal political development, and for the situation in the Latin American continent as a whole, it is necessary to determine their causal relationship with these processes. It should be made clear from the outset that the events connected with the Malvinas were not an accidental episode as bourgeois and some of the "left-wing" petty-bourgeois press suggests. The Malvinas events take their origin from the objective circumstances brought about by the constant deepening and sharpening of the contradictions inherent in modern capitalism, the present phase of imperialist expansion and the general crisis of the capitalist system in its many and diverse manifestations in various groups of countries.

Speaking about Argentina the lasting effect of the Malvinas events is that they clearly demonstrated the acute and irreconcilable contradiction between the Argentine people,

on the one hand, and imperialism, on the other. These contradictions were seen not only as a phenomenon peculiar to Argentina but as a key element characterising the present-day realities in Latin American countries as a whole.

A significant phenomenon inseparable from the Malvinas crisis is the universal and rapid growth of discontent with the policy of the USA and other Western powers in Argentina and in the overwhelming majority of Latin American countries. The USA appeared as a "traitor" even to those circles in Argentina and Latin America which before the Malvinas events toed the Washington line and regarded the world's biggest capitalist power as their bulwark. The word "traitor" was used by Galtieri and after him by many representatives of these circles.

There are weighty reasons for such a stern description of a country which used to be a friend and ally of the ruling circles of Argentina, and not only of Argentina. It is not only that the United States had given direct diplomatic and military backing to Britain and unleashed economic aggression against Argentina during the Malvinas conflict. There is also the growing understanding in Latin American countries of the true motives of American policy over the Malvinas and the South Atlantic as a whole.

The USA, under the cover of "strengthening the West's defences in the common interest" has long been playing a double and selfish game on the Malvinas issue stage-managing the drama in the South Atlantic from behind the scenes.

It was symptomatic for example, that, according to a book[1] published in late April 1982, the American special services and President Reagan personally were all along well informed of the developments over the Malvinas. And not only they. As the author of the book stresses, Mrs. Thatcher since the end of February "knew everything" about the operation codenamed "Rosario" being prepared by the Argentine headquarters. It would be safe to say that more people knew about the coming events in the West than in Argentina itself.

There is every ground for believing that the United States began to prepare for its "mediatory peace-making"

mission long before the Argentine troops landed on the Malvinas. An important part of the American diplomatic gameplan was to create confidence in the government and military circles in Argentina that in their actions to "repossess the Malvinas" they would enjoy, if not direct US backing, at least its favourable patronage. Assistant US Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Th. Enders and the head of the Inter-American Defence Board General McEmery who visited Buenos Aires in early March 1982 spoke with "understanding" about the Argentine position in its quarrel with Britain and expressed the conviction that "the return of the Malvinas to Argentina is an almost indispensable condition for a reliable Western defence system in the South Atlantic".[2]

The developments that followed are well known. American diplomacy felt it would have no trouble handling a government which was on the brink of total internal political isolation and bankruptcy already before the conflict. However, the events took a direction different from that envisaged by Washington's scenario.

Argentina witnessed an unprecedented rallying of the broadest public and political forces behind the legitimate demands for a just settlement of the conflict. The government had to heed the sentiments of the masses which had taken to the streets. Internationally, Argentina's legitimate demands enjoyed the unanimous support of almost all the Latin American states, the non-aligned movement headed by Cuba, and the USSR and the other socialist countries.

The "mediatory peace-making" mission of Alexander Haig developed into open political pressure on Argentina, economic aggression, backing of Britain's military operations and into stepping up the subversive activity of the US controlled "fifth column".

It can be said without exaggeration that subversive activities by American secret services and pro-American forces in Argentina played as important a role in determining the outcome of the "Malvinas battle" as direct military actions.

In these crucial days for Argentina the mouthpieces of the Argentine oligarchy "dedicated to Western civilisation" also contributed their bit. They incessantly trumpeted the "threat of sliding towards the Soviet bloc", warned against "wooing the non-aligned countries" and launched scandalous attacks over the "embraces between Costa Méndez and Fidel Castro". After the fall of the Galtieri Government these circles thought that the time was propitious for revising the foreign policy on which the country had embarked during the Malvinas crisis. They tried to impose their ideas on the new president, General Bignone, who took office on July 1, 1982.

However, the desire of the anti-patriotic circles "to blot out the past" and to dispense with the question that nearly broke up the Inter-American System and the TIAR (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance) failed to gain support with the new authorities. General Nicolaides, commander of the ground forces, stressed that the Argentines had to reassess their position in the world without abandoning the traditional Argentine philosophy and policy, i.e., the tenets of "Western and Christian civilisation".

Nicolaides said that the outcome of the Malvinas battle would not change the basic issue in the confliot with Great Britain, the question of Argentine sovereignty over the archipelago and other South Atlantic islands.[3]

President Bignone was more outspoken. Addressing a meeting of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in Buenos Aires on July 26, 1982, he condemned colonialism as "an anachronism" and pointed out that "the Malvinas in the present situation are a symbol, although not the only symbol, which embodies the state of affairs running counter to the legitimate aspirations of humanity for progress". "At all the forums and in all circumstances," declared Bignone, "we shall uphold our inalienable right to the islands backed not only by legal norms, justice, history and even geography, but in particular by the argument provided to us by those who generously gave us comprehension and support considering our cause righteous. The Argentines will continue their efforts until the islands rightly belonging to them pass to

us for the effective exercise of our sovereignty over them."[4]

Nevertheless some of the leaders who succeeded Galtieri are noticeably inclined to "restore" former relations with the USA. Official statements and memoranda now hardly mention the USA as an accomplice of Britain during the Malvinas events. And the tone of the press close to the government has clearly revealed a tendency "to leave the US alone".

What has led the government which, according to Bignone, would long remember the "Malvinas lesson", behave in that way? Apparently a whole range of diverse factors, including the colossal pressure of the forces advocating "de-Malvinisation", i.e., quick and complete eradication from the government's policy and the minds of the Argentines of all that is connected with the Malvinas events and the "Malvinas lesson".

However, the process of political differentiation within the privileged social strata which manifested itself dramatically during the Malvinas events continues in Argentina and in other Latin American countries. The local elite linked with the transnational, mostly North American, financial oligarchy, is becoming more and more isolated politically as it increasingly reveals its anti-national essence. Nationalistic sentiments are growing in broad strata of the bourgeoisie and among part of the armed forces. They are shifting towards an anti-American stand which is objectively close, though not identical, to the anti-imperialist stand. The Malvinas crisis was a milestone in that process, whatever zigzags the future may hold in store.

There is no doubt that the Malvinas issue will remain a key domestic and international factor for Argentina. It will be an issue over which an acute political struggle will be waged. No social or political forces will be able to sidestep the question in formulating their stands in the coming years. A cleavage is inevitable between pro-imperialist, anti-national elements seeking "de-Malvinisation" of the country, on the one hand, and a broad spectrum of patri-

otic-minded social, political and class forces wanting to see the restoration of Argentina's full sovereignty over the islands.

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The impact of the internal political crisis that broke out in the country became clear after June 14, 1982, when the Argentine command announced a ceasefire and capitulation of the Argentine troops on the Malvinas.

On June 15 during a demonstration sponsored by official television in the central square rioting broke out with "looting, burning of buses and cars and building of barricades" in which according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs a "well-organised group" of people took part. Nothing was said of the identity of the arrested members of the group.[5] On the same evening President Galtieri addressed the nation on television declaring that there can be "no final peace if the Malvinas remain a British colony". He underlined that he intended to "revise and rectify all that is necessary in the field of home and foreign policies" and heed the opinion of "all the sectors of national life".[6]

The following day the newspapers noted the eloquent US silence concerning Galtieri's statements and "the tendency of the United States towards more active participation in the settlement of the crisis".[7] On the same day, after a stormy meeting of the top generals, Galtieri resigned as commander-in-chief, as member of the military junta and as president.

That triggered a crisis "at the top". Heated debates between the members of the junta on the appointment of a new president lasted for almost a week. In the end the ground forces unilaterally appointed their man--General Bignone--causing a virtual collapse of the junta. However, a common decision was reached to the effect that the new government would ensure the holding of general elections and the transition to constitutional rule before March 1984.

Further development of the political crisis was highlighted by an unprecedented reshuffle in all the services

of the armed forces. It came as a result of the struggle between those who wanted to draw lessons from the Malvinas crisis, with corresponding implications for the country's home and foreign policies, and those who would like to continue business as usual, to prevent any significant changes--all in order to bring about early resumption of relations with the USA and other capitalist countries.

Thus the focus of the political crisis logically centred on the Argentine armed forces and the military regime established in 1976 which was committed to a deal with imperialism and transnational monopoly capital and whose course had led the country into an impasse. The "Malvinas factor" indicated the direction following which the Argentine armed forces could expect to win recognition of their role in the country's political life although to do so they would have to drastically revise their former course.

This is the thinking among a growing number of the military who oppose a rapprochement with the United States and favour a policy of cooperation with Latin American countries and the non-aligned movement. Also indicative are the demands for effective measures to improve the conditions of the working people, to change economic policies and protect the national interests in dealing with the problem of foreign debts, to look for concerted action not only with political parties but with trade unions or other public organisations.

The growth of such sentiments among the military, in particular among young officers, the possible spread of patriotic and national democratic tendencies in the armed forces frightens the pro-imperialist circles and their foreign masters.

The economic policy which had over many years been subjugated to the interests of transnational monopolies and the local oligarchy had brought the country to a critical position making drastic and prompt measures imperative. Only active grassroots participation in a sweeping programme of national renewal capable of uniting all the national democratic and patriotic forces can restore socio-economic and poli-

tical stability and development. The unity of the national patriotic circles in the army and the people is becoming an imperative.

What do imperialism and its "fifth column" have in store for Argentina? It is not only complete economic enslavement of the country by transnational capital but loss of political independence, i.e., virtual denationalisation and cosmopolitisation of the Argentine state. One way towards that end is the complete take-over of the army by the "fifth column", liquidation of the army as a national institution and making it an instrument of neocolonial oppression of its own nation, the establishment of the military-police terrorist dictatorship of the TNC managers and the local elite associated with transnational financial capital under which repressive "supra-state" military-police units will play an even greater role than today.

But destroying the army as a national institution and disrupting the transition to constitutional rule which has already begun is a road dangerous for imperialism and its local agents and indeed a very problematical road. All the national public and political forces--political parties, trade unions, etc.--are now resolutely committed to making the process of democratisation irreversible, warning against possible attempts of the ultra-right in and outside the army to disrupt that process.

Within the armed forces, in spite of the acute crisis affecting them, the pressing problems engendered by the six-year period of military dictatorship, notably the problem of thousands of citizens who "disappeared"--fell victims of terrorist bands, there is growing awareness of the need for a profound reappraisal of the role and place of the army in the life of society, the need to abandon repressive and police functions. These sentiments interweave with the desire for normalisation of the entire political life on a constitutional democratic basis. In such circumstances an attempted ultra-right putsch is fraught with unpredictable consequences because it would inevitably meet with vigorous resistance not only from democratic circles but from large sections of the armed forces.

So, the most real perspective for the reactionary forces in the present conditions in Argentina is to try to remove the armed forces from the political scene and in the words of a zealous advocate of Western-style government, "to let the politicians play their role" within a "pluralistic democracy".

But even such a perspective causes some misgivings in the reactionary spheres. A mouthpiece of the conservative pro-Western circles which former Argentine foreign minister Costa Méndez described as "former friends" because they opposed a rapprochement with the non-aligned movement, complained back in June 1982 that there was "a gradual radicalisation of political parties to the detriment of moderate trends who would have to stop being moderate if they are to survive".[8]

However, in the wake of the Malvinas crisis that road seems more suitable as a vehicle of American interests than any other. First, American officials consider the Argentine military regime unacceptable for them. As Luigi Einaudi, director of US Latin American Policy Planning, declared a month after the Malvinas battle, "the US has better and more convenient relations with governments such as ours" and the US relations with military regimes "are fraught with hidden tensions". And Einaudi stressed that the example of Argentina refutes the thesis that a military regime brings stability [read: "stability suitable for the USA"--P.B.]. In reality, he said, "Argentina is not very stable".[9]

Second, the lobby of transnational corporations and the Western secret services find it easier to operate in "pluralistic" bourgeois-democratic models of government of economically dependent countries. It is better placed to play off factions, groups and splitter groups against one another, weaken the strong, pacify the defiant and inspire a desirable policy.

One important measure imperialism will try to carry out is to "reorganise" the Argentine armed forces on the Western pattern. It is proposed to abolish military conscription (which looks very attractive to the Argentine public). In

reality, however, the idea is to create "professional contingents" recruited to ensure "internal security" and replenish the imperialist Rapid Deployment Force. These intentions of the "fifth column" and imperialism were exposed by the communist press in Argentina which reacted to the pressure the reactionary circles had begun to exert on the new Argentine leadership immediately after the Malvinas events.

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On the whole internal political development in Argentina in the wake of the Malvinas crisis and up until the creation of a new military junta in September 1982 was marked by great tensions. However, imperialism and the "fifth column" were disappointed in their expectations for the capitulation of the Argentine troops on the Malvinas and the fall of the Galtieri Government did not bring chaos they counted on. The hopes of American and other Western strategists that the "internal front" would fall apart making it possible to dictate terms to Argentina did not materialise. The Argentine people's spirit of patriotism in upholding its just cause proved to be too strong and the positions of the pro-imperialist forces within the country proved to be too weak to cancel all the lessons of recent events.

The situation that arose can be described as transitional with everything still lying ahead. The promise of the military and President Bignone to take the country to elections and constitutional government are in effect a temporary compromise between contending forces, which in the current situation suits everyone to varying degrees.

At the same time the Argentine Communists are aware of the negative phenomena that weaken the democratic and national patriotic forces. Among these are the lack of unity in the trade-union movement. There exist two trade-union confederations (CGT) which are more often at loggerheads with each other than united in their actions. That greatly weakens the impact of the working people action to press their legitimate demands for effective solution of national problems.

The trade-union movement is affected by the situation in the mass political parties. The first action of the Bignone Government was the lifting, on July 1, 1982, of the "suspension" of the activity of political parties introduced back in 1976. The parties emerged openly on the political arena which was in itself an important phenomenon for encouraging the socio-political activity of the masses. But they emerged on the arena only to plunge into election battles each pursuing its own ends and neglecting even to unite their own ranks.

The Peronista Party, the biggest political force with the greatest influence in the trade-union leadership, for example, began its new phase of activity disunited to such a degree that the "inauguration of the campaign" at political rallies had to be conducted separately by three of the biggest factions. The Radical Party too had two factions organising analogous rallies. This dispersion of forces representing the most sizable political sector in the country gives the right wing considerable leeway.

One should also bear in mind the prejudiced attitude in some political trends towards everything connected with the armed forces and a blanket opposition of the military to the "civilian forces".

As regards the Communist Party of Argentina it has recently withstood a fierce attack of the reactionary forces and the attempts to isolate it politically, organisationally and ideologically. The CPA is today a model of cohesion, singleness of purpose and mobilisation of the masses. It is not by chance that the mass rally at the Luna Park indoor stadium organised by the Communist Party in early September 1982 was attended by more than 40,000 people and was described by the press as the "biggest political event" of recent times.[10]

The Communist Party shows the Argentine people the road to genuine solution of the tasks facing it today. That road was clearly defined by the Argentine Communists in the Central Committee's statement of June 21, 1982, at the time when the country was experiencing the bitterness of recent

defeat and was at a crossroads and virtually without a government. The statement read in part:

"The crisis now experienced by the military government testifies to the collapse of the system that removes the people from any participation in government affairs... The situation requires deep-going changes and not superficial half-measures designed to serve the moment. The main change must be ensuring popular participation in running the state which makes imperative taking the necessary steps to fix the date of elections and to put an end to a six-year period of political bans."

Also: "Bitter experience has proved that the military alone are unable to solve the country's problems just as the civilian forces alone are unable to do so. The Communist Party believes that in the grave situation now obtaining there is an urgent need to form a transitional military-civilian government agreed with political parties and not with individuals, no matter how respected, to carry out a plan of democratic, political and economic rehabilitation ensuring the proclaimed constitutional rights.

"The seriousness of the situation demands dedicated action within the framework of a broad patriotic accord that would prevent artificial clashes and protect the national interests. The same gravity of the situation makes it necessary to coordinate the efforts of all the democratic and mass parties for concerted action together with those currents among the military who are not inclined to capitulate in the struggle against colonialism. If that obliges the military to abandon their isolation it equally obliges the civilians to take a more active stand in filling the real political space. We cannot overlook the fact that the kind of monopoly in the Multi-party alliance which some of its leaders have assumed, has led it to inertia and lack of proper popular participation and organised mobilisation of the masses. Nor can we bypass the fact that the split in the trade-union leadership or its division into political factions has prevented the working class so far from playing its proper role.

"The people demand that all--the civilians and the military--assume their share of responsibility in the anti-colonial struggle and the democratic reorganisation of the country, in achieving the necessary concord to establish a renewed and stable democracy and gain peace.

"The Communist Party declares to the working class and the people that it is ready to bear such responsibility in carrying out the programme of democratic and anti-imperialist action. It is confident that the unity of the Argentine people will make possible its victory over external and internal enemies."[11]

NOTES

1 M. Berger, El Rescate de las Malvinas, Buenos Aires, 1982.

2 La Prensa, March 4, 1982.

3 Clarín, July 10, 1982.

4 La Nación, July 27, 1982.

5 Clarín, June 16, 1982.

6 Clarín, June 16, 1982.

7 La Prensa, June 17, 1982.

8 La Prensa, June 26, 1982.

9 La Nación, July 19, 1982.

10 Clarín, September 4, 1982.

11 Informaciones de la Argentina, No. 2, July 1982, pp. 30-33.

THE CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: CONSEQUENCES AND LESSONS

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The guns have fallen silent in the South Atlantic, no bombs or shells are exploding. Peace and quiet have returned to the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands and life is back to normal. The only reminders of the conflict are the 4,000-strong British garrison which outnumbers the local population (1,800 persons) more than twice and the traces of devastation in Port Stanley. It might seem that the waters of the Atlantic have engulfed not only a dozen of British ships, not only hundreds of young men who met their death as a result of the British colonial expedition, but the very echoes of the battles that raged here.

In reality, however, that is not so. The further the conflict recedes into the distance the clearer it becomes that it may have profound and in many ways irreversible political consequences, in particular for the Latin American countries.

I

International life in recent years has been anything but barren of stormy events and sharp clashes. Yet even against that background the Anglo-Argentine conflict takes a special place. For the first time in the post-war years an imperialist power not belonging to the Western Hemisphere launched large-scale military operations using the latest hardware against a Latin American state in order to keep its colonial possessions. That power had the backing of the capitalist world, including the United States, while its adversary, Argentina, had the backing of the overwhelming majori-

ty of Latin American countries. That alone lent the conflict a significance far beyond the framework of bilateral relations between states. It acquired not only a regional relevance but most probably will have wider international consequences.

Latin America is one of the regions whose role in international life and in the modern world has noticeably risen in recent decades. That is due to its size (some 20,064,000 sq. km), a large and burgeoning population (350,000,000 people and a very high growth rate of 3 per cent) and its strategic position.

Its growing role is also due to the increasing importance of these countries in the world economy and in the system of the capitalist economy. Although much of Latin America's natural wealth is still unexplored it already possesses vast proven resources of oil and accounts for 24 per cent of the capitalist world's production of iron ore, 28 per cent of copper, 33 per cent of tungsten, 36 per cent of bauxites, 32 per cent of silver and 82 per cent of nickel.[1] Latin American countries are major food exporters. Many of them have in recent years gone through a period of intensive economic development although that has often been accomplished through growing dependence on overseas capital. As a result, an impressive manufacturing industry potential has been created. In the 1970s it averaged an annual growth rate of close to 8 per cent and now accounts for 40 per cent of all the manufactured output in the developing countries. Some of the continent's countries, such as Mexico, Argentina and Brazil have reached a relatively high economic level.

Finally, Latin America's role is important because it is the scene of significant large-scale socio-economic and political changes. The overall trend is steady movement towards liberation from the prolonged period of dominance and exploitation by the United States, from the anti-democratic regimes fostered by it. For all that, although the level of the liberation struggle on the continent varies and there remain many contrasts--from distant rumblings of discontent with the tyrannical ruling oligarchies in some countries to

stormy liberation battles in others--the chief trend for Latin America as a whole undoubtedly is a growing national consciousness, a growing desire for independence and social progress and for a worthy international role.

All these processes, however, are opposed by the desire, notably of the USA and most aggressively manifested under the Reagan Administration, to keep the Latin American countries within its political, economic and military orbit. It is in this context and against such a regional background of Latin America today that the Anglo-Argentine conflict should be viewed.

The conflict over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands arose because of Britain's stubborn refusal to part with that fragment of its colonial empire and fundamentally it cannot be considered outside the general process of the collapse of the colonial system. As many observers note, that reluctance has been increased by recent data showing the presence of large offshore oil deposits close to the islands.

While one may argue whether the islands were discovered by the Englishman John Strong or the Spaniard Gómez Esteban, it is an unassailable fact that during the Spanish rule they were already part of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, and following the expulsion of the Spanish and until their seizure by the British in 1833 they were under Argentine sovereignty. In the 150 years since that time Argentina has repeatedly and unsuccessfully raised the question of that territory being returned to it. Negotiations on the matter did not begin until 1965, after the United Nations passed a Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the issue was taken up by a special committee monitoring its implementation and finally, after the 20th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2065 calling on the parties concerned to conduct negotiations. Britain however used delaying and even sabotage tactics and 17 years of talks have brought no results. The most that Britain agreed to--and that reveals its true intentions--was the public statement of the British foreign secretary in late 1980 to the effect that Britain was ready

to accept Argentine sovereignty on condition that the islands would be leased to the British for 99 years. And this in spite of the measure of flexibility displayed by the Argentine Government which declared that it was ready to respect the interests of and render assistance to the inhabitants of the islands, to accept the safeguards offered to them by the UN and, finally, agree to British participation in exploiting the archipelago's natural resources. In reality, Britain did not even entertain the possibility of Argentina repossessing the islands. One evidence of that was provided by the flying visit in 1983 to the Malvinas by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, according to Time magazine, "made it clear that ... she rejects negotiations with the Argentines over the Falklands' future".[2]

It could hardly be gainsaid therefore that the military conflict had been prepared by the obstructionist course of Britain which underestimated Argentine determination to regain sovereignty over the islands, a determination that cannot be sundered from the general atmosphere on the continent, and the striving of the Latin American countries to assert their national dignity and eliminate the survivals of colonialism in the Western Hemisphere.[3] Naturally, Thatcher's visit and her statements about the future of the Malvinas (Falklands) met with an extremely negative reaction not only from Argentina, but from many other Latin American countries who support Argentine demands for restoring sovereignty over the islands.

The decision of the Argentine military junta to use force was influenced to a large extent by its hope that the United States would support it or would at least take a favourably neutral stand. These expectations were prompted by Washington's general line in the Western Hemisphere and its attitude to the Argentine military government which the USA regarded as a reliable ally. The Reagan Administration put an end to the vacillations and inconsistencies displayed by the Carter Administration which sometimes struck an attitude of condemning military regimes, one result of which was a worsening of relations with Argentina. According to Profes-

sor Carlos A. Astiz of the State University of New York at Albany, "the first policy decisions, made by the Reagan Administration indicated a willingness to come to terms with conservative regimes and a higher degree of hostility towards factions that opposed the status quo".[4]

With the coming of the new incumbent to the White House the relations between the USA and Argentina markedly improved. In accordance with US wishes, Argentina actively supported the US plans of interfering in and suppressing national liberation movements in Central America. The American press has reported that the Argentine officers took part in the fighting against the guerillas in El Salvador and in training Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries. The Pentagon tried to get the Argentine top brass to support the plans of setting up a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO) "bringing together Brazil, Argentina and South Africa".[5]

However, the junta's expectations did not come true. After a brief effort to restore the status quo through negotiations the Reagan Administration discarded all pretence of impartiality and openly took the side of Britain citing its adherence to the principle of the non-use of force in international relations. Not only did the US render massive political support to Britain in and outside the UN, not only did it exert pressure on other Latin American countries not to side with Argentina. It also rendered extensive military aid to the British to make possible the impressive military effort mounted by them to capture the Malvinas. The London Observer wrote: "Washington is downplaying the importance of the material aid enjoyed by the British--though it is clear that it was crucial in the mounting of such a rapid and professional counter-invasion."[6]

The United States followed Britain in applying economic sanctions against Argentina by suspending all military supplies, new credits and guarantees of the Export-Import Bank and cancelling the guarantees of the Commercial Credit Corporation.

What motivated the USA?

First, Argentina's action, being inherently anti-colonial in character, objectively acquired an ever sharper anti-imperialist edge as events unfolded, reflecting the earlier-mentioned general Latin American trend towards greater independence and towards getting rid of imperialist tutelage in foreign policy.

Second, the decision had much to do with military strategic considerations, since the US wanted to see these islands under the control of its NATO ally, and hence as a base to which it would have access. It is not accidental that a CIA report on the Falklands noted, "Argentina geographically dominates the ocean route between the South Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean.... Were the Panama Canal not operable or available, or in the event of a protracted war, this route would have a high strategic importance."[7]

Third, there was the factor of inter-imperialist "solidarity", the desire to support its most loyal Atlantic ally and the most active backer of the US anti-Soviet and militarist plans, to prevent a weakening of the Conservative Thatcher Government and the growth of the Labour opposition which in its official programme rejects Reagan's arms race plans.

Other imperialist states took a similar stand. Britain's EEC partners imposed an embargo on Argentine goods, stopped all credits and froze all Argentine accounts in their banks. It was felt that with Argentina's foreign debt in excess of 36,000 million dollars, the embargo would empty the Argentine treasury within days, would cause an outflow of capital from the country and eventually lead it to financial collapse.

Before long it became clear that by taking such a stand the leading capitalist states, in particular the USA, had antagonised not only Argentina but almost the whole of Latin America. And while the Argentine generals miscalculated in taking for granted Washington's "understanding", the latter in its turn clearly miscalculated in underestimating the reaction of the Latin American states and their readiness to challenge their powerful "Northern neighbour".

Contrary to the USA and other imperialist states and to some extent contrary to their collective anti-Argentine stand, most Latin American countries supported Argentina. Seventeen of the twenty-one members of the Organisation of American States condemned the position of US-backed Britain and declared their solidarity with Argentina. Venezuela, Panama, Nicaragua, Peru, Brazil and some other Latin American countries said they were ready to render assistance to Argentina. In effect, the crisis in the South Atlantic led to the most impressive demonstration in many years of the noticeable political cohesion of most of the Latin American countries and, virtually for the first time in the history of inter-American relations, not only on an anti-imperialist but to some extent on an anti-American basis.

The Christian Science Monitor wrote in July 1982 that it would be no exaggeration to say that the US support of the British has wrecked its Latin American policy.[8] At any rate, there is no doubt that the line the US adopted has damaged its positions in Latin America and is bound to lead the countries of the continent to reassess their relations with Washington. The US stand spurred the traditionally strong anti-American sentiments which have their roots in the century and a half of dramatic experience of their relations with the United States, an experience replete with countless instances of Yankee imperialism's flouting of the national dignity of Latin Americans. The US position came in for sharp critical comment not only from those countries in the region which are known for their adherence to an independent course. It shook the quarters which have usually stood committed to alliance and partnership with the United States and insisted on being regarded as part of the "Western world". It was these quarters to which The New York Times referred in the first place when it wrote that "South American [military--K.B.]. leaders are already taking steps and anxiously pondering others to adjust to the conditions they believe will face the continent in the aftermath of the Falkland Island crisis. The principal perception motivating them is that the United States can no longer be trusted as a fully reliable ally".[9] The US position was widely, if not

universally, judged to run counter to the commitments following from the Charter of the Organisation of American States and the Rio Pact of 1947.

Britain's actions and vigorous US support brought home to the public and the rulers of Latin American states who threatens their interests, their independence and even peace in the Western Hemisphere. It revealed the true essence of such doctrines as "ideological borders", "national security", etc., which serve the US interests and privileges and which have been actively promoted with Washington's help. Equally, it revealed the true meaning of the "joint" military commitments set down in the Rio Pact and their utter ineffectiveness when it came to repelling imperialist aggression. Significantly, Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay, Ecuador and some other Latin American countries refused, in connection with the conflict, to take part in joint annual naval exercises with the USA.

The inter-American tensions resulting from the conflict were already manifest in the course of the meetings of the OAS, a military-political bloc which has been more than once used by imperialism to put down national liberation movements on the continent. The prevailing atmosphere at these meetings was one of confrontation between the USA and most of the OAS members. The governments and statesmen from some Latin American countries even suggested moving the OAS headquarters from Washington. There was also a proposal to replace the OAS by an organisation of Latin American states without the US participation.

Regardless of the extent to which these proposals can be realised, the very fact that they have been made is evidence of the strong influence the South Atlantic conflict has exerted on the feelings not only of the public but also of the continent's governments towards the United States. That was dramatically manifested during Reagan's Latin American visit in December 1982 when the Brazilian and Colombian governments made it clear that they support the Argentine claims to the islands and President Bignone of Argenti-

na reportedly ruled out a meeting with the US president to discuss the problems between the two countries.

At the height of the conflict the Venezuelan magazine Elité wrote: "The Argentine Republic has taught us a great lesson. By extending its sovereignty over the Malvinas it said to the English: no more colonialism. Henceforth Latin America cannot hope for anything from anyone and must rely only on itself. The Yankees have betrayed us and the whole of Europe has united against us. They have abandoned us. Well, so much the better. Now we know who is our enemy and that only our own solidarity will save us."[10] The New York Times, for its part, stated: "Argentina has argued that Latin America must look after itself and no longer trust in Europe and particularly in the United States. Though this diplomatic argument was improvised to justify the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, it has taken hold throughout the continent."[11]

There is a growing and increasingly authoritative body of opinion in Latin America in favour of closer political and economic ties between the continent's countries and broader regional cooperation. The New York Times wrote that the South American leaders pondering the lessons of the crisis feel that "they must ... build more regional cooperation".[12] The Argentine and Uruguay foreign ministers at their meeting in July 1982 agreed that "as a result of the conflict in the South Atlantic there has arisen the need for uniting the countries of Latin America in a regional bloc".[13] The Argentine newspaper Clarín reported that the two ministers were in full accord regarding the paramount importance of agreement between Latin American countries before considering their relations with Washington. The Uruguay President's initiative on convening a conference of Latin American presidents has also won support.[14] A similar proposal has been made by the President of Ecuador. In connection with the bicentennial of the birth of Simón Bolívar there were more and more calls among the broad public in Latin America to make the implementation of his ideas about the unity of Latin American countries the keynote of the celebrations.

The conflict in the South Atlantic heightened interest in Latin America in the non-aligned movement and in playing a more active role in that movement. The trend has been apparent for some years now. A steadily growing number of Latin American countries have taken part in the non-aligned forums. While at the Third Conference of Non-Aligned States in Lusaka (1970) the Western Hemisphere had only three participants (Guyana, Cuba and Jamaica) and eight observers (Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Chile), the Sixth Conference in Havana (1979) was attended by 11 Western Hemisphere countries as participants (Argentina, Bolivia, Grenada, Guyana, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica) and 11 as observers (Barbados, Brazil, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, El Salvador, Saint Lucia, Uruguay and Ecuador) as well as the Socialist Party of Puerto Rico. Among the guests present at the conference were representatives of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and the Latin American Energy Organisation.

The meeting of the non-aligned nations' Coordinating Bureau held in Managua on January 10-14, 1983, to discuss the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean met with wide response. It was attended by a large group of Latin American countries including Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica and Panama as members of the Coordinating Bureau; Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua and Saint Lucia as members of the non-aligned movement and Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Venezuela and the Socialist Party of Puerto Rico as observers. In the document it adopted the meeting re-asserted that Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be regarded as a strategic reserve by any state.

If that process continues actively it would undoubtedly lead to serious consequences, in particular for the relations between Latin America, on the one hand, and the United States and other imperialist states, on the other.

Many Latin American political and public figures stress the dangers of a one-sided orientation towards the Western

powers in the political, economic and other fields, a danger which has now been convincingly proved.

The economic and military aspects of the question are being actively discussed in the countries of the continent and merit special attention. The punitive economic sanctions of the imperialist states against Argentina have been widely condemned in Latin America. Argentina's statement qualifying these sanctions as flagrant violations of international legal norms and practices creating a dangerous precedent gravely affecting the future of international economic relations, notably those between the developing and developed countries, was met with understanding and sympathy by the Latin American public. In effect, it shared that assessment. Carlos Pérez, former Venezuelan President and an influential political figure, expressed the sentiments of many Latin Americans when he declared that "this collective economic aggression is a threat to all Latin America and to the whole of the Third World."[15] At the Emergency Consultative Conference of the OAS Foreign Ministers, held in Washington in May 1982, twelve Latin American states demanded an immediate lifting of the coercive economic measures imposed on Argentina. The actions of the USA and other imperialist powers tend to stimulate economic relations between Latin American countries, to make for greater economic cooperation with the Asian and African countries and the socialist states. The increasingly persistent voices in the continent's countries in favour of broader inter-regional economic cooperation undoubtedly owe something to the lessons of the conflict in the South Atlantic.

As for the military aspects of the affair, while the imperialist strategists concentrate on assessing the effectiveness of the weaponry used in a "full-scale war", in Latin America it is seen primarily in political terms and in terms of the interests of national security. There is almost a unanimous consensus that the events will have far-reaching consequences on the shaping of military policy. The general direction of the possible changes is prompted by and inferred from the enormous risk, and even more so from the seri-

ous danger for the sovereignty and security of the Latin American and, indeed, for all the developing countries entailed by dependence on the USA and other imperialist states for arms supplies. This was highlighted during the Anglo-Argentine conflict. President Belaúnde Terry of Peru has declared: "The lesson in all this is that we have to liberate ourselves from dependence on the arms-producing countries. We see what it means not to have a military capacity."[16] One notes that the Presidents of Venezuela and Panama, in their joint statement in Caracas on July 28, 1982, called on Latin American governments to meet to discuss "collective self-defence in the region".

In this connection, it is predicted that Brazil and Argentina would become more important as suppliers of modern arms to developing countries. By the same token fears have been expressed about a possible arms race in that part of the world which was reminded of its vulnerability by the Anglo-Argentine conflict.

It is also important to note that the conflict is likely to influence the ideological situation in Latin America. It may bring some changes to the value scales of some major Latin American leaders who up till then entertained some illusions about the United States and regarded some aspects of American life as models for their own countries. This seems to be the implication in the following quotation from the Venezuelan magazine Bohemia, not noted for left-leaning tendencies: "In the final count the Malvinas oblige us, Latin Americans, to understand the following: what is Latin America and what place each of its countries should occupy in the world? At the same time the war with Great Britain obliges us to determine something more important: what system of socio-political development best suits Latin America? That of the developed capitalist countries? The socialist countries? Or some other system adapted to the Latin American realities? All these questions need to be considered."[17]

The conflict over the Malvinas should essentially be viewed and assessed in the context of the sharpening contradictions between the imperialist powers, notably the United

States, and the Latin American countries which seek greater independence, equal participation in international life and a worthy place in the world. There is every indication that the conflict has highlighted for the Latin American public their objective, real position in the present system of political and economic relations. It has contributed towards a better awareness that the interests of the imperialist countries are the very opposite of theirs when it comes to their wish to put an end to the remnants of colonialism and to liberate themselves from any dependence. It prompts them to uphold their stand more vigorously. That is why the Latin American countries' relations with the imperialist powers are the likeliest area to be affected, in the shorter and longer terms, by the consequences of the conflict in the South Atlantic. It is in this sphere that the conclusions to be drawn from the events by Latin American countries, and by the developing world as a whole, will manifest themselves in the first place.

Indeed, the Malvinas crisis is of relevance to the developing countries on many counts. First, there is every reason to regard the military conflict in the South Atlantic as an attempt by imperialism to teach a lesson by force and intimidate not only the states of the Western Hemisphere, but the developing countries as a whole, to take the edge off the struggle for greater independence and for equal political and economic relations. This is the assessment given in the message to the non-aligned movement by Fidel Castro, in which he declares that imperialism wants the war it unleashed in the South Atlantic to be a lesson to all the Third World countries which--whatever their political and social system may be--are defending their sovereignty and territorial integrity.[18]

The Malvinas crisis further revealed the essence and goals of imperialism's policy with regard to the developing countries by showing that it is aimed at preserving its military-political and economic positions in the developing world. At the same time it became clear that this is part and parcel of the current US course towards building up tensions and escalation of the use of force in world affairs.

There is no doubt that the Anglo-Argentine conflict and in particular the method to which the imperialist powers resorted to "resolve" it are but a local reflection of the general toughening of imperialism's course in international relations, the Reagan Administration's policy of sharper confrontation with socialism and the national liberation movements. That presumably will contribute to a deeper awareness by the developing countries of how important it is, in their own interests, to oppose that course and the extent to which this imperialist strategy runs counter to their security interests.

It should be added that the Anglo-Argentine conflict has provided fresh evidence of the dangerous evolution of NATO's policy on a number of key world issues. For example, for the first time in the history of that aggressive bloc, its summit meeting held in Bonn during the conflict declared that the bloc may expand its sphere beyond Western Europe. The statement is symptomatic even though it merely puts a seal on the existing cooperation between the USA and other NATO countries in actions aimed at stemming complete decolonisation, at opposing the forces of democracy and progress using force "if necessary".

Judging from the stand the developing countries took on the South Atlantic conflict, the general thrust of the imperialist action against Argentina did not pass unnoticed by them. The non-aligned nations' Coordinating Bureau at its meeting in Havana condemned Britain's military actions and reaffirmed its support for Argentina's demand that its sovereignty over the islands be restored. After Britain's occupation of the islands representatives of more than 90 non-aligned countries adopted a document sharply deploring the economic sanctions applied against Argentina. The introduction of economic sanctions by practically all the developed capitalist countries against a single developing country is likely to be raised by the non-aligned countries as a subject of discussion at international economic forums, as was the case at the UNCTAD Conference held in 1983.

Be that as it may, the military conflict in the South Atlantic and the events around it have again confronted the non-aligned countries with the question of the movement's further development, the need for it to play a more active role in defending the interests of its member states against imperialist encroachments, in opposing the cult of the big stick being propagated by imperialism in the world and directed in the first place against the developing countries, and to do more to combat the threat of war and the arms race. There is every reason to assume that the anti-Argentine action of the imperialist powers will strengthen the positions of those forces within the non-aligned movement which favour closer cooperation between the non-aligned countries to solve the acute problems facing them and firmer counteraction to the pressure of imperialist states and their plunder of the developing countries' natural resources. This stand was reaffirmed by the non-aligned nations' Coordinating Bureau which met in Managua in January 1983.

There is an important lesson to be drawn from the Anglo-Argentine conflict in terms of understanding the nature of current international economic relations. It has dramatically revealed the existing contradictions between different groups of countries within the world economic system of capitalism. Being a clash between states belonging to the capitalist world, it has demonstrated that big imperialist powers are prepared to make full use of the economic weapon and their economic superiority even against those developing countries which are following the capitalist road if the latter stand up for their national interests and sovereignty. Former Venezuelan President Carlos Pérez, whom we have quoted earlier, has expressed the view that the conflict in the South Atlantic has brought it home to the developing countries that "mutual support at the regional and subregional level, i.e., the strengthening of South-South relations, is the only and possible way to global negotiations [on a new international economic order--K.B.] , to ensure development and to create the minimum conditions for stability".[19]

It would be safe to say that the Anglo-Argentine conflict has tended to dispel some of the illusions the develop-

ing countries have about the policy of the imperialist states and its true goals.

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It can be said with certainty that the Anglo-Argentine conflict and the circumstances surrounding it have dealt a heavy blow at anti-communist and anti-Soviet myths, at the slander about a "Soviet threat" which the United States and the local reactionaries have been assiduously spreading in the Western Hemisphere and have used in attempts to isolate Cuba, carry out subversion against Nicaragua and impede the development of relations with the socialist states. And that constitutes another feature of the events which is sure to have consequences.

The patriotic, nationalist and progressive forces on the continent highly appraised the resolute and unambiguous stand the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist community countries took from the very first days of the conflict in condemning the aggressive course of Britain and its allies. That stand had not been prompted by considerations of expediency. In striking contrast to the behaviour of the leading capitalist powers, the socialist community had been following its principled and consistent line in defending the legitimate rights of the nations in their struggle against the remnants of colonialism, against the imperialist "gunboat diplomacy" and the policy of "the big stick".

The Soviet stand was put by Brezhnev during the meeting of the Soviet leaders with the party and government delegation of Nicaragua: "The peoples want to be masters of their land, of their homes, be it in Central America or in the Southern Atlantic.

"And if in the Western Hemisphere, too, there emerge dangerous complications and conflict situations, it is precisely because there are forces which are trying to preserve or restore their positions of dominance and to impose foreign oppression on the peoples."[20] These words were seen as criticism of the aggressive policies of Washington and its allies, as an expression of solidarity with the struggle of

the Latin American countries for their independence and sovereignty, their right to decide their own destinies, and they came at a very critical moment for those countries. It was, indeed, active support of patriotic Latin America as it faced the collective anti-Latin American action of the imperialist powers. This support was reiterated by Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in his speech at a joint gala meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses on December 21, 1982. He said, among other things: "The Soviet Union's vigorous and resolute struggle for the elimination of colonialism, its unfailing support of the cause of the liberation and equality of nations facilitate their advance to freedom and progress. This is well known by the peoples of Asia and Africa, the Arab East and Latin America."[21]

The socialist countries' active support of the decolonisation process and of a negotiated settlement of the Malvinas problem met with a favourable response in the continent, has increased popular sympathies for real socialism, strengthened the sentiment, both among the broad public and at government level, in favour of expanding political and economic relations with the USSR and other socialist countries. Besides, the conflict itself and the events around it demonstrated the importance and even the necessity for such relations. The result of all this has been to reinforce the clear trend of recent years towards promoting cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, a cooperation that is mutually beneficial and equal and further strengthens the sovereignty and economic progress of the Latin American countries.

The past decade in particular has proved that solid objective prerequisites exist for extensive development of trade and other forms of economic cooperation. They stem both from the equitable character of cooperation and from the nature of the Soviet and Latin American economies. The existence of a legal basis for the intensive development of coope-

ration on a wide scale is of course a favourable factor. Agreements on trade, economic, scientific and technical co-operation with the main countries of the region were signed in the 1970s.

The Soviet Union is already playing a noticeable role in the power industries in some Latin American countries, for example, in Brazil. Prospects are favourable for such cooperation with Argentina and with some other countries on the continent. In short, on the agenda is the search for concrete ways and forms of further developing and improving that cooperation.

The conflict in the South Atlantic dealt a serious blow at the policy of isolating Cuba which US imperialism has been pursuing for many years. Cuba's anti-colonialist stand and the high degree of Latin American solidarity it has displayed not only improved its image with the progressive public in the Western Hemisphere but led many Latin American political leaders of a different persuasion to see that country in a different light and even to speak in favour of fostering relations with Cuba, dismissing the demagogic accusations of "subversive activities". Such trends, which are gaining ground and are anti-imperialist to varying degrees, and also the aftermath of the Anglo-Argentine conflict in general hold out the promise of improved relations between Cuba and a number of states in the region. In June 1982 alone Cuba was visited by the Argentine Foreign Minister, the Venezuelan minister of education, the deputy Minister of Foreign Trade of Peru who made clear their stand in favour of trade, economic and political ties with Cuba. An agreement was reached on a visit to Cuba by a government delegation from Trinidad and Tobago. Noting these changes, the Venezuelan magazine Resumen wrote: "Indeed, a couple of months ago it would not have occurred to any member of the Argentine Government to talk to Fidel Castro, let alone to go to Cuba. Now by force of circumstances C. Mendéz is cordially thanking Castro for the assistance rendered."[22] And this from another Venezuelan magazine, Elité: "We shall no longer reject Cuba. Cuba is ours. There will be no more Yankee-ordered boycotts

of the fraternal country. We have our common heroes. They are Morelos, Martí, Morazán, Sandino, Torres, Che Guevara."[23] It was significant that the non-aligned nations' Coordinating Bureau in Managua highly rated Cuba's and Castro's personal contribution to the search for ways of settling international problems.

The same is true to some extent of Nicaragua. Until recently it was inconceivable that the Argentine Government should have decided to send 6,250 tons of maize to Nicaragua as relief after it was hit by a natural calamity. It is notable that President Campins of Venezuela attended the celebrations of the third anniversary of the Sandinista revolution in July 1982, pledging continued cooperation with Nicaragua without any preconditions and making some anti-US statements.

Looking at that side of the consequences of the South Atlantic conflict, the London Observer wrote that "Cuba and Nicaragua... have cemented themselves back into the Latin American family of nations".[24] And it went on to note that "there has been damage... to the US crusade against Marxist influence in Central America. Future United States attempts to influence the course of guerilla wars will be clearly seen for the unilateral actions they are". In other words, the Malvinas crisis has made Latin America more clearly aware of the real essence of the US imperialist interference in Central America. It is significant that Argentina has recalled from El Salvador 200 officers who worked as instructors in the army and security forces.

Likewise, it was probably not lost in Latin America that the overwhelming majority of Communist and Workers' parties throughout the world voiced solidarity with the Argentine people and vigorously condemned Britain, the USA and other imperialist powers. During the conflict, the British and Argentine Communists met to condemn the military actions of the Thatcher Government and reaffirm the right of nations to fight against the remnants of colonialism.

There is yet another lesson in the Anglo-Argentine conflict. The events around it have highlighted the importance

of a democratic basis for a regime and broad popular support in repelling imperialist pressure, in particular direct aggression. Broad popular support multiplies a nation's effort in upholding its sovereign rights and makes it more solid. It serves as a deterrent for imperialist circles.

Certainly, changing the relations between Latin American countries and the imperialist states, notably the USA and "the outside world" in general, is a complex process that runs into serious obstacles of an objective and subjective character. Speaking about the sentiments that the South Atlantic conflict has provoked in Latin American countries one cannot help asking oneself how lasting these sentiments would be. Which of the consequences of the conflict and the reaction to it would prove to be short-lived and which of them would endure? It is clear that many of the above-quoted and similar statements are emotionally charged, prompted by a feeling of indignation which in many ways will be at odds with the real conditions, particularly as far as the economic aspects of the problem are concerned.

To begin with, in spite of the sharpening of political tensions between the majority of Latin American countries and the USA, one cannot discount the extent of their dependence on the "Northern neighbour", a dependence which has its roots in historical circumstances and the American policy of domination. As Pedro-Pablo Kuczynski, a minister in the Peruvian Government in 1980-1982 and now Director of the First Boston Corporation, has noted, "several Latin American countries in 1982 will have to make interest payments on their external total debt equivalent to 30 per cent or more of their exports of goods and services".[25] And most of these debts are owed to American banks and international banks associated with them. The United States remains the main trade and economic partner of these countries, a traditional market for their farm produce, industrial raw materials and oil. In 1981 Latin American exports to the USA amounted to 33,500 million dollars.[26] The USA is the main creditor and investor, supplier of modern technology and machines, of other producer goods as well as of food.

The US economic influence in Latin America is based on sizeable private capital investments. Although in the early 1970s part of US property was nationalised, investment showed a marked increase in the following years. In 1980 Latin America accounted for 73 per cent of the direct private US investments in developing countries, the figure for the manufacturing industry being 82 per cent and in the mining industry 70 per cent.

The attraction of Latin America for the USA lies not only in its being a large and rapidly growing market for its industrial goods and a profitable investment area and a source of many types of strategic raw materials. The continent, in the plans of US imperialism, is slated for a special role. It is seen as an important sphere of US political and military interests, as its "southern rear". The US strategy is aimed at promoting capitalism in the region, at turning such countries as Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina into a "stronghold" of capitalism in Latin America capable of influencing other developing countries.

For their part the ruling circles of a number of Latin American countries have long relied on the USA as the guarantor of the preservation and strengthening of capitalism in the conditions of the mounting revolutionary and liberation movement on the continent. They have usually pursued their trade and economic relations with the USA on a bilateral basis which naturally reduces the possibilities for collective Latin American actions.

Nor should one overlook the fact that, owing to their dependence on the USA and certain differences of national interests and rivalries between the Latin American countries, these countries failed to achieve complete unanimity during the South Atlantic conflict concerning resolute action in support of Argentina. Witness, for instance, the unsuccessful attempt of several Latin American states to bring about retaliatory collective economic sanctions against Britain (in accordance with the Río Pact). A group of Latin American countries, motivated by their own economic and political interests, took a moderate stand and avoided a conflict with the imperialist states.

It is to be expected that the imperialists will try to take advantage of the in many ways dependent position of the Latin American countries and differences of their interests in order to stem the rising anti-imperialist sentiments and smooth over the complexities brought about by the conflict. Active steps in that direction are all the more likely since the Anglo-Argentine conflict has exacerbated the contradictions within the imperialist camp over the course to be pursued with regard to Latin America and the developing world as a whole. There are known to be influential forces in the USA and Western Europe which favour a more flexible approach to these countries. Although the more bellicose imperialist groupings have prevailed at a certain stage, these forces have not laid down their arms. The consequences of the attempts to "teach" Argentina and other developing countries "a lesson" have caused alarm among many of the more realistically minded Western leaders who are concerned about the future of the whole system of their relations with these countries. It is not by chance that President Mitterrand of France, assessing the consequences of the conflict, predicted a possible aggravation of the confrontation between North and South. The West also fears a possible retaliation on the part of the developing countries which are becoming increasingly pessimistic about the readiness of the leading capitalist states to conduct dialogue with them on equal grounds.

The blood of the dead dries quickly, General de Gaulle used to say. It is already clear that "oblivion" is what the United States and other imperialist states are hoping for. They want the memory and the lessons of the conflict in the South Atlantic to be erased from the minds of Latin Americans. In a bit of wishful thinking, the London Observer wrote that the Falklands crisis will very soon be obliterated from Latin American memories.[27] It should be noted that from the very start of the conflict the Reagan Administration and the US corporations took steps to whitewash the US position and weaken the discontent it caused in Latin America. President Reagan and the then Secretary of State Haig in their messages to Latin American leaders tried to justify

Washington's position in the conflict and stressed that "the US is sensitive to their anti-colonial concerns" and that the US sided with Britain only because Argentina had violated the principle that "force should not be used to resolve international disputes".[28]

Inside Argentina US companies made ostentatious gestures of support for its actions and allocated resources and materials for the army's needs. The American Chamber of Commerce in Buenos Aires, representing 500 US corporations, sent a cable to President Reagan on May 12, 1982 condemning the British claims to the territory "whose inhabitants were treated by the British in a way that, in the United States, would have been a violation of human rights".[29]

Fear of a worsening of relations with the Latin American countries and of still more far-reaching consequences decided the Reagan Administration, after its support had enabled Britain to recapture the islands, to make pious attempts to prevent a "final humiliation" of the Argentine military. The US press has reported that "in a 90-minute meeting at the US Embassy, Reagan privately advised Thatcher to follow Winston Churchill's old axiom: be magnanimous in victory".[30]

The US exerted fresh efforts to dampen the anti-American sentiments. They hoped above all that "Argentina's surrender in the islands had dampened Latin America's emotional response to the conflict and had opened the way for gradual normalisation of ties with Washington".[31] The Observer wrote that the United States hoped to be rescued from "the hook on which it has been impaled since siding with Britain on 30 April".[32] That Washington is worried about the current situation and intends to take steps to mend it, can be seen from the remarks made by the Secretary of State George Shultz during the hearings at the Senate Foreign Relations Commission on July 13-14, 1982. He said that the USA should restore its relations with the Latin American countries that had been brought to a breaking point by the US siding with Britain in the Anglo-Argentine conflict. Considering the priorities facing the new Secretary of State, Juan de Onis,

a noted US specialist on Latin America, writes: "Troubles continue to boil for US foreign policy in other regions at the same time, and perhaps none of them with more significance for Washington, than those in neighbouring Latin America. Along with everything else, Shultz inherits from Alexander Haig a dangerous set of unresolved problems that could soon lead to a crisis in inter-American relations."[33]

The Socialist International whose member parties rule or are represented in the governments of the EEC countries, have been at pains to heal the "wounds" inflicted on the relations between Latin America and Western Europe. This was the aim of the meeting of a special "Malvinas Commission" held in Caracas on July 21-22, 1982.

Finally, it is not excluded that the "firmness" exhibited by the imperialist powers would incline some ruling quarters in Latin American countries and in other developing states to make concessions, to assume a conciliatory stance in order to secure preferential treatment in the granting of aid, credits, etc.

On the whole however it would be a serious error to underestimate the scope and political potential of the indignation the US political course aroused among the masses, the patriotic and nationalistic forces in Latin America. It has already given rise to a broad movement of solidarity with Argentina and has emerged as a substantial factor in the social and political life of the region. At the initiative of 20 Latin American countries the Malvinas question was considered by the 37th Session of the UN General Assembly which, in a resolution called on Britain to sit down at the negotiation table with Argentina to decide the future of the islands. That is why Thatcher's visit to the islands provoked an outraged reaction in the world and in Latin America, and from many governments. Argentine President Bignone described it as "a new act of provocation and arrogance" with regard to his country carried out by the present US-backed British Government.[34]

All this is bound to influence Latin American policies vis-à-vis the United States and other imperialist sta-

tes, the developing and the socialist countries. The experience of similar situations in the past gives grounds for predicting that the appeasement trend will be countered by another trend, a trend towards growing anti-imperialist and nationalistic sentiments, towards a more active assertion of Latin American independence, and a deeper public awareness in these countries of the acute and chronic conflict between their aspirations and the policy of imperialism. The fundamental factor is that the latter trend has strong roots in the present-day realities, which on the whole are evolving towards national and social liberation, and in the alignment of class forces on the international arena. It is backed by the Leninist policies of the socialist states which consistently come out in support of the freedom and independence of nations.

Such events as the Malvinas crisis serve the cause of political education and maturing of nations. In that sense, the traces of the battles that raged in the South Atlantic will be indelible whatever the imperialists and their allies in Latin America may do to erase them.

NOTES

1 Figures for the end of 1980.

2 Time, January 24, 1983, p. 25.

3 There are still 15 colonial enclaves in the Western Hemisphere owned by Britain, the Netherlands, France and the USA with a territory of 115, 666 sq. km and a population of 4,489,000 people.

4 Current History, Philadelphia, February, 1982, p. 51.

5 Foreign Affairs, New York, Spring 1982, p. 919.

6 The Observer, June 20, 1982.

7 New Statesman, June 4, 1982, p. 8.

8 The Christian Science Monitor, July 9, 1982.

9 The New York Times, June 8, 1982.

10 Elité, June 1, 1982, p. 60.

[11] The New York Times, June 8, 1982.

[12] Ibidem.

[13] Clarín, July 26, 1982.

[14] Ibidem.

[15] Diario de Caracas, June 13, 1982.

[16] Newsweek, June 7, 1982, p. 64.

[17] Bohemia, May 24, 1982, p. 91.

[18] Granma, May 11, 1982.

[19] Diario de Caracas, June 13, 1982.

[20] Pravda, May 5, 1982.

[21] Yu.V. Andropov, Sixtieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Moscow, 1982, p. 24.

[22] Resumen, June 13, 1982.

[23] Elité, June 1, 1982, p. 60.

[24] The Observer, June 20, 1982.

[25] Foreign Affairs, Winter, 1982-1983, p. 347.

[26] US News and World Report, May 24, 1982, p. 24.

[27] The Observer, June 20, 1982.

[28] Time, May 17, 1982, p. 22.

[29] International Herald Tribune, June 2, 1982.

[30] Newsweek, June 14, 1982, p. 10.

[31] International Herald Tribune, June 19-20, 1982.

[32] The Observer, June 20, 1982.

[33] Newsweek, July 26, 1982, p. 21.

[34] Time, January 24, 1983, p. 24.

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