

LIBERTARIAN voices have scarcely been heard about the Falklands during the seven weeks since the crisis began, though there has been more need for them than ever before during the three weeks since our last issue appeared and since the crisis turned into a war.

Not that it has been much of a war yet, at least as we go to press. A few minor ships and aircraft on each side, an Argentine cruiser and a British destroyer, a few hundred Argentine and a few dozen British deaths—this hardly counts on the current scale, when elsewhere in South America and in Central America, Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia, thousands and even millions of people can be killed without getting into the newspapers, let alone on to the television screen.

But a small war can all too easily and quickly grow into a big war, as has happened over and over again, most notably in 1914 and 1939. And this small war happens to involve this country, which is fighting for the first time since the Suez War of 1956 against an enemy outside the old British Empire and for the first time since the Korean War of the early 1950s against an enemy willing and able to fight back.

A lot of nonsense has been said during the crisis about Argentina. It is not a Fascist dictatorship, with a single autocrat ruling through a mass party. It is a military dictatorship, with a president and a junta (committee) ruling through the three armed services. It may be a bankrupt country, but it is self-sufficient in food and well-armed. Anyway, countries don't stop fighting because they are poor or badly ruled, and no one should imagine that the British only have to huff and puff for Argentina to be blown down.

Nor should anyone imagine that such a dictatorship, however appalling its atrocities against its own people, will find it

# From Farce To Tragedy

difficult to unite them behind it now. Patriotism is the first refuge of both rulers and ruled in trouble, and the war seems to be even more popular in Argentina than it is in Britain, which is saying something.

Support for the war may fall in either country when one or both sides begin to suffer serious casualties, but we must assume that we are once more in an all too familiar position, of being a minority within a minority—a tiny libertarian movement inside a small anti-war movement which includes careerist politicians and casuistic Marxists in an uneasy coalition.

The Falklands War is not about two thousand inhabitants of the Falkland Islands, or about the sovereignty over the two tiny islands, or about the principle of preventing aggression. British governments since the Second World War have abandoned millions of people who wanted to remain British subjects (and prevented them entering 'their' country), have abandoned scores of territories which used to belong to the British Empire, and have condoned dozens of acts of aggression (Vietnam, Cambodia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Eritrea, Lebanon and so on round the world).

The Falklands War, like the beginning of the two world wars, is about two groups of powerful but confused countries,

both in economic difficulties and with imperialist ambitions, both deeply divided but strongly nationalist, one dictatorial and the other more or less democratic, which have come to blows over a minor quarrel of many years' standing, and which may drag not just their subjects and allies but everyone else into a struggle which began as a farce but is becoming a tragedy.

This is what states do, when they are no longer satisfied with suppressing their own subjects. The vast proportion of national budgets spent on 'defence' must eventually be paid for. (It is ironic that one of the greatest producers of modern weapons in the world is now fighting one of its best customers.) This is what most of the members of the United Nations do most of the time, though their organisation is now being asked to mediate. This is what has been done above all by the United States and the Soviet Union. (It is ironic that the former, only a few years out of Vietnam, was the first mediator, and that the latter, less than only a few months after sponsoring a military dictatorship in Poland, is on the verge of supporting another in Argentina.)

There is no point in arguing in favour of sending the British Armada to the South

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## FROM FARCE TO TRAGEDY

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Atlantic, and then against using it, as the Labour leadership does. There is no point in arguing for an Argentine victory over Britain, as the Marxist sects do. There is no point in arguing for a British victory over Argentina, as most of our fellow-countrymen (though fewer of our fellow-countrywomen) do. There is no point in arguing for any kind of so-called 'just war', as most of the Christian denominations do.

There is no point in arguing for anything except the total libertarian message. Not just that both British and Argentine forces should get out of the Falkland Islands, but that they should get out of all islands and all oceans and all countries, including their own. The Argentine forces have been fighting a war against their own population since they seized power six

years ago. The British forces have been fighting wars against colonial populations all over the world ever since they began to seize the British Empire three centuries ago, and this fighting has been continued by Labour Governments as much as by Conservative Governments. War, as Randolph Bourne said at the end of the First World War, is the health of the state.

This is an unpopular message at this particular moment. But it must still be voiced, and it may even be heard when all the bills start coming in, when more British and Argentine bodies are taken home, when the taxes are raised to pay the hundreds of millions of pounds the war is costing, when the truth comes out about how our rulers blundered into the crisis and how they have behaved during it. The Suez War became one of the main factors in the revival of the libertarian left twenty-five years ago. The Falklands War may do the same, but it will need a lot of hard work.

## PRECISION KILLING

THE French makers of the missile that hit the British are very pleased at the accuracy of their weapon, as no doubt are the makers and designers of the homing torpedoes that sunk the Argentinian cruiser. The same accuracy is no doubt built into the missiles that are aimed at us, there are many highly trained men and women from all over the so-called civilised world busily engaged in this task of accurately killing human beings. These little items are being sold like refrigerators to whoever has the money to buy them, often to ultimately kill their own nationals. Appropriately, there is being held shortly a sales exhibition of these products in Britain, no doubt this year Argentina will not be invited. I hope there will be many uninvited guests this year to expose the glistly hypocrisy of this trade.

## Journalistic Jingoism

The headlines of *The Sun* (which condemns more sober views as 'treason') which celebrated the drowning of Argentinian conscripts, was somewhat sobered by the news that British volunteers had also been killed. No doubt *The Sun* and *News of the World* journalist who scrawled inanities on missiles intended for the Argentinians will no doubt write on the weapons we will still sell abroad, 'Cheer up boys we may get it back.' The hypocrisy of those who mould public opinion is breath-taking as is the way the public permits its opinion to be made. Already nearly 500 lives have been lost to establish who has nominal sovereignty over these windswept pieces of rock, the 1800 inhabitants have not had much sustenance from Britain some 8000 miles away and for some years have been supplied by Argentina. Those 55% of the population who are quite prepared to spend more lives (other peoples) on establishing British sovereignty on some islands 8000 miles away are probably more bloodthirsty than those in the freezing area of operations. The probability is that by the time this is printed many more than the total population of the Falklands may have perished. It is suspected that for several weeks there has been a British force on the main island, put there by the assistance of another great 'democratic junta' Chile, which by the way has seen off more of its opponents than the Argentinian junta. No doubt that other great supporter of military junta democracy USA are getting a bit worried, having busily supplied them with the means of survival all these years, now being used against their great British allies.

When will they ever learn?

Looking through our archives the other day at a book of cuttings of the 1914/18

## LONDON ANTI-WAR DEMOS



## WHERE WERE THE ANARCHIST BANNERS

AN 'Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in the Falklands' has been formed, with the support of the few Labour MPs (including Judith Hart, present leader of the Party!) who have opposed the sending of the task force from the very beginning—plus, of course, the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party—(who are calling for victory for Argentina!) and various religious and CND groups. In fact the organising groups seems to be centred on 'Spark', the CND printing press.

The Committee's main activity is

the organising of marches and rallies every Sunday. The second (picture above) was held on May 16th, when about 3000 people walked from Tower Hill to County Hall. This was more than the previous week, but there is still too much domination of the scene by Trotskyists and it's time some Anarchist banners were dusted off and brought out.

The next march—on May 23rd—is from Hyde Park (2 pm) to Trafalgar Square (3.30). How about making a libertarian presence felt this time?

# FAMILIES DIVIDED BY LAW

IN February this year a party of three: a Lawyer, a Vicar and a Cameraman (sponsored by Manchester Law Centre) left for Bangladesh to spend a month visiting the families of men living in the Manchester area who have been refused permission to join their husbands/fathers here.

Altogether the group visited about 20 families — some of whom had been waiting 10 years or more for visas. The group's findings, supported by film and their detailed village enquiries, has led to proof that most of these families had been

wrongly refused. Yet these were all families who had all been subjected to repeated interviews and had had Immigration Appeals turned down.

The social and personal cost of separating these families has been great. Children have spent their whole childhood waiting for visas, relations between wives and husbands have been subjected to great strain and stress. The group's report, together with similar findings in 1976 and last year, provides damning evidence that the British Government is deliberately separating genuine families and thus itself breaking its own laws and the basic right to respect for family life.

## United Campaign

Those 20 families, and a rapidly growing number of others caught in the same situation, are no longer willing to wait

another 10 years for more refusals and heartache. Like Sultan Mahmood and Anwar Ditta they have realised that only their determination to fight for justice for their families can help them and others caught by these unjust immigration procedures.

For the first time a group of families have come together and the BANGLADESH DIVIDED FAMILIES CAMPAIGN has been formed to unite and broaden their fight. This new local initiative will have an important national role in developing the fight by separated black families for justice.

**BANGLADESH DIVIDED FAMILIES GROUP**  
c/o Bangladesh Cultural Centre,  
Main Road,  
Oldham,  
Lancs.

## PRECISION KILLING

continued

war when European workers were killing each other, one sees how the politicians were saying the same things, one realises little has changed. How the weapons are always pointed in the wrong direction. If the German, French and British workers had followed the Russian peasants in the same direction the history of Europe might have been much different, and if the Spanish workers could have counted on the support of their European counterparts the same could be said. The probability is that whoever has ultimate sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, Coalite and Charringtons will still own it, just as many multinationals will still draw dividends and blood from the junta ridden states of South America, supporting those juntas with weapons that they will also draw dividends on as well as the weapons supplied to the Task Force.

Now is the time for the British and Argentinian people to stage a people's coup de grace, and stuff the journalistic rubbish of The Sun and its Argentinian counterparts up their journalistic arses. What about self-determination for the 1300 inhabitants of the island of Diego Garcia who are being evacuated against their will by us to make way for an American Base.

ALAN ALBON

## LEFT INTOLERANCE

ON 1st May there was a 'Right to Work' march from Shoreham to Brighton. In Brighton the march was joined by a small group of local anarchists. We began distributing our leaflets which gave a reasoned criticism of the Right to Work Campaign. We were immediately set upon by several SWP members, some of whom we recognized as students at the university. These 'revolutionaries' told the police we were disrupting the march, and the police dragged us off and told us that any more 'distruption' would get us arrested.

Later there was another march, organised by the Labour Party, through Brighton.

This march ended with a rally at the Brighton Centre. The first speaker was Alan Sapper, TUC President, TV Technicians Union leader, and Soviet apologist. An anarchist comrade from Worthing interrupted and asked Sapper how he could claim to speak for British workers when he supported the suppression of

Polish workers. He was immediately seized round the neck by a Labour Party organiser who is a university lecturer, whilst another man punched him in the back. The assailants were restrained, and the audience were divided in their reactions to the incident.

In conclusion, the day showed us the following.

1. The nature of much of the Left is thuggish intolerance. They prefer regimentation to debate, and, when their rituals are marred, don't hesitate either in asking the police for help against us, or in trying to beat dissent out of us, themselves.

2. In this area, at least, the Left does not act as a channel for popular discontent, as its active support is composed almost entirely of university students and lecturers, with a sprinkling of professionals, ex-students, and elderly working-class Labour loyalists. Therefore, making a presence at these Left rituals has a limited value for us.

OWING to production difficulties we apologise for the delay in publication of this issue, plus the absence of the usual format on our 'letters' page. In the absence of similar technical hitches, next issue should appear Saturday 29th May.

