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What lies behind the politics of the majority?..Smith.

Politica Obrera statement, April 5th 1982.

Politica Obrera statement, June 12th 1982.

WHAT LIES BEHIND THE POLITICS OF THE MAJORITY ?

This contribution to the Malvinas discussion arises out of the contribution I prepared for the debate at the summer school. Owing to the agreed division of speaking time, I was not able to include all the points I would like to have made either in the presentation or the reply, I have therefore set them out here.

First I'll make a rather peripheral point on the world Trotskyist movement. The observation by the minority that the majority comrades should think seriously about the isolation their positions place us in within the world movement has met with the answer: "It is not necessarily wrong to be isolated". Or, "We have been isolated before, e.g. Afghanistan". This however does not resolve the problem since this situation is quite different. Afghanistan was a contentious issue which not only initially split the world movement, but created minority groups in virtually every movement. The Malvinas war in contrast is a relatively simple issue for those regarding themselves as a part of the Trotskyist tradition. It involves principles well established in the literature and traditions of our movement. Therefore Argentina and defeatism was almost immediately and almost universally adopted, not only by the various movements but more or less unanimously within them. As far as we can see, no national or international grouping has a significant minority, or any minority at all, pressing for Argentine defeatism. The only people who have such a position, apart from the WSL, fall broadly into two traditions - the ultra lefts, such as the Sparts, and the various state capitalist groupings around the world (the significance of which I will refer to later).

Secondly, before I begin to argue the main point of this document, let me repeat some common ground as to the general principle of revolutionary defeatism - which still seems to be causing confusion. This is that revolutionary defeatism applies differently in an imperialist country as against a country oppressed by imperialism. In an imperialist country, Trotskyists are always for the defeat of their own ruling class in any war at any time, whether that war is against a rival imperialist power, a semi colony or a workers' state. This is not the case with an imperialist-oppressed country. There it is often necessary to stand with such a country in a war with an imperialist power - despite the nature of its regime. This is the only point we were trying to make with the much maligned quotes from Trotsky.

Compromises and contradictions in the TILC resolution

As the minority have said a number of times, the leadership of the WSL was very slow to react to the dispatch of Thatcher's task force to the South Atlantic. Three weeks after it had been sent, the majority on the EC still refused to take it seriously and still regarded the most likely action as skirmishing to back up diplomatic pressure. It is now plain that this was not a matter of a poor assessment, but a reflection of the politics of the current majority leadership in relationship to imperialism - which is always to seek to play down its role. Other movements regarding themselves as part of the Trotskyist tradition were able to immediately adopt positions which at least came to grips with the realities of the situation.

PO, as you can see from the article in this IB translated from the editorial of their paper, had developed a position and published it 3 days after the Galtieri invasion. The WSL leadership did not even seriously discuss it for nearly 3 weeks later.

The Easter TILC meeting forced us to begin to discuss it since the other sections insisted that it be made a major item on the agenda. Our lack of previous discussion made it difficult for us to operate as a delegation at that meeting. We had to develop our own position as a WSL leadership whilst at the same time discussing the issue with the other groups who were much better prepared. I want, however, to refer to our delegation discussions and

the resulting TILC resolution since they have an important bearing on today's debate. From the outset our delegation was agreed on two points: 1) That the Galtieri invasion of the Malvinas was a reactionary invasion since its aim was the containment of the Argentine working class. 2) That opposition to the war was the only possible policy to adopt in Britain (we are of course still agreed on these two points). There were two other points, however, on which there was controversy, although we eventually agreed on compromise formulations. These were 1) Self-determination for the Falklanders and 2) When and under what conditions would we defend Argentina?

These compromises, which contained the seeds of our future differences on the Malvinas, were achieved in various ways. The compromise of self-determination was achieved by moving it from the first paragraph, which it occupied in comrade Kinnell's first draft, to a lower and less significant position (although it is clear there was no real agreement).

The compromise as to when and under what conditions we would defend Argentina against Britain was reached after quite a sharp discussion. It resulted in the famous sentence with which everyone is now far too familiar: "While recognising that the present conflict is restricted to the Falklands issue, in the event of a full scale war between Britain and Argentina we would be unequivocally for the defence of Argentina".

Since this clause is important to the present debate, I want to focus on it for a moment. It contains two problems which were soon to emerge in full force. The first problem was that the clause threatened to fall apart as soon as the political and military situation demanded an interpretation as to what constituted an "all out war", and even more crucially - under what conditions would the war cease to be simply a "Falklands issue".

The second problem it contained was an assumption on the nature of Argentina which became an remains an unresolved contradiction in the majority case. This comes out of the clause calling for the defence of Argentina under certain conditions. To defend Argentina under any conditions implies that Argentina is something qualitatively different Britain, i.e. a country oppressed by imperialism. This view sharply conflicts with the overall view that the majority comrades project on imperialism (which is in essence a post imperialism theory) which would in my view preclude the comrades ever supporting an oppressed country against imperialism whatever the precise conditions. This contradiction, as I will show in more detail later, has led the majority comrades into confusion in their documents over the nature of Argentina. (In fact it should not have been necessary to debate the nature of Argentina once it was agreed that Argentina could be defended under certain conditions).

Two different starting points

Comrade C says in IB 9, page 2: "There is of course no getting away from the fact that whatever the correct reading of the TILC resolution, we now have in the WSL two radically different interpretations of it".

This was certainly true. But what makes these two different interpretations so important is that they mark the point of divergence. They define in the clearest way the two different starting points, of the majority and minority, from which flows their different analysis of the war.

The main division of opinion came over the first part of the clause: "Whilst recognising that the present conflict is confined to the Falkland issue".

The basis of the majority case is that despite the dispatch of the fleet and the start of the war, the war remained entirely confined to the "Falkland issue". Comrade C. put it this way in IB 9: "Both politically and militarily the war has remained strictly - one might almost say surgically - confined to the Falkland issue".

We need to look at these different starting points in more detail.

The minority starting point

For the minority, Thatcher's decision to go to war made the international dimension the key factor. Far from being a "Falklands issue", the war had become a world issue of considerable importance. Thatcher's decision had made it a war of imperialist authority. Imperialism would now use it to try to reestablish its ability to use a military option around the world which it had lost to such a serious degree in Vietnam and since. It would use it to demonstrate its ability to crack the whip and make the oppressed nations jump back into line. In other words, Galtieri's move had changed from an invasion with reactionary aims into a war between an imperialist power and an oppressed nation. Its outcome would seriously affect the world political situation. A Thatcher defeat would be a serious setback for imperialism, whilst a Thatcher victory would strengthen imperialism all over the world. It would as we have said, alter the balance of forces on a world scale to the advantage of imperialism.

The majority staked a lot on attacking our reference to "a world balance of forces". Sometimes they have denied its existence at others they have called it "intangible", "amorphous" or ridiculed it. At other times they have effectively accepted our point, such as comrade C's admission on page 20 of IB 9 that Thatcher's war was a factor in the Lebanon invasion. "No doubt the war in the South Atlantic was a factor in when the Israelis launched their war".

However much that quote underplays the situation, it accepts the basic point, that the Malvinas war created an international situation in which Begin felt he could launch a war of genocide against the Palestinians. (If Thatcher could defend her interests 8,000 miles away, he could defend his 60 miles away, he said). It concedes that Thatcher's war has increased the ability of imperialism to use its military option.

An ambivalent attitude to the strengths and weaknesses of imperialism and its ability to suppress opposition to its rule is a mentality which can only really be projected from a relatively safe position within one of the imperialist powers, and a determination to ignore the international dimension of the conflict. Seen from the Middle East, Central America, Soweto or Namibia, the "world balance of class forces" is a very tangible issue indeed. Liberation fighters in Salvador know exactly how tangibly an imperialist victory anywhere in the world affects them. Nor should these majority comrades ridicule our reference to a "tight situation in terms of the world balance of forces". We simply mean that it is easily shifted one way or the other at the present time by world events, making Thatcher's war more dangerous. It sometimes seems as if the majority comrades fail to think in international terms at all, except in the most general way.

In fact, a failure to think in international terms seems to be the only way to explain how the comrades can appreciate the importance of assessing the relationship of forces on a national level, but not an international level. The comrades would have a very good assessment of how the ASLEF betrayal altered the relationship of forces in Britain to the advantage of the Tory government and the employers. They wouldn't say that was "intangible" or "amorphous", they would say it is very real and very dangerous. They would recognise that the ability and confidence of the Tories to attack other sections of workers is strengthened by it. Yet when we talk about the strengths and weaknesses of imperialism, it is used as one of the reasons to call us Maoist. Thatcher made her assessment. Her summary of the result of war was: "Britain's great again". She now heads a government which has a new authority in the world, which can act as the cutting edge for world imperialism. She has shown that military power can be used.

This was how the minority defined the war, by what it represented politically. Not by who started it, or why, but what it politically became.

The majority starting point

Now let's go back to the starting point of the majority, and trace where it led them. Their insistence that the war remained confined to the "Falklands issue" was not an accident. It was arrived at as a necessary precondition necessary to establish that the primary political demand of their position was self-determination for the Falklanders. They were determined to establish that as the primary demand, and therefore equally determined not to allow a number of awkward facts to get in the way. Like the fact that the Falklands are a colonial enclave of Britain. The comrades are either avoiding such awkward facts or they have a serious problem in their basic definitions of the world. (Apart from seeing a semi-colony like Argentina as sub-imperialist).

If the Falkland islands are not seen as a colonial enclave, how do the comrades explain another awkward fact - that the Falklanders do not want independence, in fact would fight against it?

Colonised peoples all over the world have spilt rivers of blood fighting for independence, but here is a group in an official British colony who are hostile to it! The answer can only be seen in their role as a colonial enclave. The colonial enclaves are a particular phenomenon within imperialism. They are outposts of the empire dotted around the world at strategic points. The population is transported there, administered as part of the imperialist country. Woven into its structure. Generally in culture and language they are identified with the metropolis. They are protected by its military power. And when the peoples from whom the territory was plundered in the first place raise the demand that they want it back, the imperialists always produce the same answer - whether it is the Falklands or Gibraltar for Britain, or Guantanamo or the Panama canal zone for the USA - "the people have the right to decide, they want to remain part of us, and we will defend that right".

The majority comrades say the Falklanders oppress no one, but that is not really true. They are, and have been more so in the past, a part of a system of colonial enclaves which play a particular role in the domination of the capitalist world by imperialism. They are therefore a part of the system of imperialist exploitation. Their rights should never be counterposed to the rights of the peoples of the semi-colonies against whom they have been used by imperialism. (It would not be demagoguery to urge the majority comrades to think about this, and also why their own demands for self-determination seem to centre on the peoples of the colonial enclaves).

It has always been a part of the programme of Marxism not only to be for the freedom of colonial peoples, but for the handing back of colonial enclaves to the peoples from who they were plundered (this does not mean of course that we support every action to this end automatically, irrespective of the character of the particular move, it means simply that it is part of our programme).

The majority comrades however found a way around these problems. They got around the colonial enclave status of the Falklands by ignoring it. They got around the awkward fact that the Falklanders had never asked for independence by inventing a completely new definition of self-determination, which comrade C spells out in IB 9: "The Falklanders reportedly express their self-determination not by wanting independence, but by wanting to remain with Britain". The Falklanders "express their self-determination" by militantly fighting to remain part of Britain - the second imperialist power. That is a very strange kind of self-determination indeed. It bears not the slightest resemblance to anything Marx, Lenin or Trotsky said on the subject. Lenin reportedly defines self-determination as the right of an oppressed nation to secede and form a separate state. He always speaks of the right of nations, not groups of settlers transported and strategically placed by imperialism to justify its hold on territory by maintaining the support of the population to remain a part of the imperialist power. Search Lenin's works and you will not find anything remotely referring to such conditions. These are the terms that Lenin speaks of self-determination, in all of his major writings on it.

The Theses on the national question written 1913: The first sentence is as follows: "The article of our programme (on self-determination of nations) cannot be interpreted to mean anything but political self-determination, i.e. the right to secede and form a separate state" (CWV19 p.243).

Critical Remarks on the National Question, 1914: "The solution to the problem of the political self-determination of nations, that is, their separation as states by completely free, democratic methods" (CWV20 p.22). "The right of nations to self-determination, i.e. the right to secede and form independent national states, will be dealt with elsewhere" (CW V20 p.45).

National Liberalism and the Right of Nations to Self-determination 1914: "The question discussed was the political self-determination of nations, i.e. the right of nations to secede" (CW V20 p.56). "Throughout the entire history of international democracy, and especially the middle of the 19th century, self-determination of nations has been understood to mean precisely political self-determination, i.e. the right to secede, to form an independent national state" (CW V20 p.57).

The Right of Nations to Self-determination 1914: In this Lenin entitles the first chapter: "What is meant by the self-determination of nations?" He concludes: "Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movement, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations and alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state" (CW V20 p.397).

The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination 1916: "The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation" (CW V22 p.146). "The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of the oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means they must fight for the right to self-determination".

The purpose of this long series of quotes, for which I apologise to comrades familiar with the material, is to try to clear up a persistent, and serious error in the majority comrades' position. Comrades supporting the majority view on the Malvinas should think carefully about the implications of the majority's views on self-determination and how it relates to the colonial enclaves. It is not a Marxist standpoint, but a liberal democratic view of the issue. It takes the general abstract rights of any group of people and deals with them outside the context of the class struggle. It elevates them over and above the requirements of the class struggle.

Lenin stresses the point in "The right of nations to self-determination": "The demand for a "yes" or "no" reply to the question of secession in the case of every nation may be seen as a very "practical" one. In reality it is absurd; it is metaphysical in theory, while in practice it leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinate to the interests of the class struggle."

Lenin, it should be noted, was making this qualification in respect of the right of nations, not colonial enclaves, which emphasises the point even more.

Another good reason for going into the self-determination issue in some detail is because a number of majority supporters have said that they support the majority case but not the issue of self-determination for the Falklanders. Those comrades should remember that self-determination is not a side issue, but absolutely central to the majority case, and has determined their thinking from the outset.

The contradictions in the majority's definition of Argentina

Kinnell in IB 12 says on page 7 that Argentina is "economically a victim of imperialism" and then on page 9 "In fact, it seems to me, Argentina is not an oppressed nation".

Comrade Kinnell says on page 2: "If the war had been about Argentina's national rights, therefore we would have supported Argentina, but it wasn't." And then on page 11, "The bourgeoisie of Argentina differs from the bourgeoisie of the big capitalist powers essentially only as weaker from stronger."

On top of this, the concept of sub-imperialism which the comrades ascribe to Argentina, has led to some strange positions. Comrade C advocates supporting Argentina if national rights are attacked, despite it being "sub imperialist" (IB 6, p.11), whilst Kinnell backs away from sub-imperialism completely on page IB 12:

"Basic to our position is not so much that Argentina is sub-imperialist, as that the invasion was sub-imperialist... or mini-imperialist, or mini-colonialist, or an example of how "even medium-developed capitalist countries can hold expansionist "imperialist" aims."

It hardly needs saying that sub-imperialist type actions by Galtieri no more determine the nature of Argentina than fascist-type repression by the Soviet bureaucracy makes the Soviet Union a fascist state.

So where does all this confusion come from? On one hand it is because the comrades shrink from the political implications of saying that they would never support Argentina, whilst the essence of their politics in relationship to imperialism would in reality exclude them from ever doing so. It is clear from what they say. After all the contradictory statements, they always return to the conception which underlies all their positions - to seriously play down the role of imperialism. The content of the key statements by the majority always direct in one direction, that there is no qualitative difference between Britain and Argentina, or more broadly, that there is no qualitative difference between the imperialist powers and the vast majority of non-imperialist powers. The difference becomes simply "weak or strong" or "richer or poorer". This overall view is demonstrated on page 10 of IB 12:

"I would agree that a basic orienting fact of world politics is the broad division between the rich capitalist states - headquarters of the big industrial/commercial monopolies and banks, militarily strong; historically oppressor nations - and on the other hand poor capitalist countries, whose industry is owned by or operates in the shadow of those big monopolies and banks; in which big areas of pre-capitalist backwardness survive; and which are militarily and politically weak. The latter are mostly historically oppressed nations, though most have now won political independence and to call them colonies or even (in most cases) semi-colonies is not possible unless the words' meanings are twisted out of all shape.

"But I see absolutely no basis in fact or in Marxist theory for considering this as a matter of two camps. Rather it is a matter of two poles of a hierarchy. This hierarchy is fluid and changing (like the hierarchy of monopoly capital and small capital in a single country); the relations of oppression within it are all relative; and there are middle-ranking states. (I and others have cited facts to show that Argentina is one of the latter, and remain unconvinced by charges that we are 'revisionist' unless we assign the country to one camp or another). Moreover, the hierarchy is not one-dimensional: oppressed nations may be more economic partners of imperialism than victims (e.g. Quebec, Catalonia), and economically subordinate nations may be oppressor nations (e.g. Turkey, Persia)."

The origins of such ideas derive from the state capitalist tradition. Michael Kidron's "Imperialism the highest stage of capitalism but one", first published in International Socialism Journal No 20 1965, says the following:

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"It hardly seems necessary to sum up one's disagreement with Lenin on imperialism, as he defined it, as the "highest stage of capitalism". However correct the analysis in his day, and however justified the conclusion - and these are essentially true even in retrospect - it must be rejected on at least four counts: finance capital is not nearly as important for and within the system as it was; the export of capital is no longer of great importance to the system; political control in the direct sense meant by Lenin is rapidly becoming dated; and finally, resulting from these, we don't have imperialism but we still have capitalism... If anything, it is the permanent war and arms economies that are "the highest stage of capitalism".

"Indeed, it is difficult to see what value there is in still using the word imperialism to describe the system of Big Power aggression and coercion of today unless it lie in the reassurance to be derived from familiar sounds. The one feature held in common by all imperialisms to date - Roman, Tsarist or British - was their direct control of the state in subject territories. Today such control is rapidly becoming vestigial, and the distinction between empire and colony which loomed so large half a century ago increasingly irrelevant, politically and economically. Still very embryonic, the picture forming slowly, vaguely but surely before our eyes is one of a far more homogeneous world in which many centres of capital and many more potential ones - some large and powerful, others weak and willing, yet independent - jostle and compete, forming, dissolving and reforming alliances of expediency where before division of labour and the labour of divisions imposed an immutable pattern of relationships."

If you think about not only Kinnell's quote above, but the various statements the comrades have made on the issue, the similarity is remarkable.

Kidron's central point - that direct political control of the oppressed countries with the ending of colonial rule has fundamentally changed imperialism - runs right through the majority documents, as does his conclusion. He says that his thesis is "a plea to assimilate the 'new countries' into the traditional framework of the class analysis". It is becoming, he says, simply a matter of class against class.

The majority comrades have gone down exactly this road. The national question, they insist, ends with the winning of formal political independence and what is left is simply the class struggle. The permanent revolution is simply junked in the process.

Where does Trotsky stand in all this?

One thing which has been lacking in this discussion is much reference to Trotsky (apart from the tendency's initial quotes on Brazil, China etc). I would urge comrades to read, for example, the "Thesis on the world role of American imperialism", drafted for the founding conference of the Fourth International (Documents of the Fourth International, p. 242). Comrades would note that the entire political line is contrary to that of the majority.

Trotsky takes up strongly those who think that national oppression and political domination ends with formal political independence. He takes up what the the minority have taken up - the role of military dictatorships in Latin America. And the question we have asked, why is it that Britain just happens to have a bourgeois dictatorship, and Argentina a military junta?

"In order to achieve the 'closed door' in Latin America - closed, that is, to all rivals and open only to the USA - 'democratic' Yankee imperialism has been propped up in the Latin American countries by the most autocratic 'native' military dictatorships which have, in turn, served to prop up the imperialist structure and to guarantee an undisturbed flow of superprofits to the Northern colossus... The real character of 'democratic' US capitalism is best revealed by the tyrannical dictatorships in the Latin American countries

with which its fortunes and policies are inextricably bound up and without which its day of imperialist sway in the Western hemisphere are numbered. The blood-thirsty despots under whose oppressive rule the millions of workers and peasants of Latin America suffer, the Vargases and the Batistas, are at bottom nothing but the political tools of the 'domestic' US imperialists... Thus the USA remains the predominant and aggressive master of Latin America, ready to protect its power with arms in hand against any serious assault by its imperialist rivals or against any attempt by the peoples of Latin America to liberate themselves from its exploitive rule."

untrue This is all a very far cry from the politics the majority present us with. Surely they will not argue that things have changed and US imperialism no longer rules through the juntas in Latin America? Yet comrade Carolan argues incredibly in IB 9, p.3, that "a country like Argentina, which has long had political independence... has had the maximum independence economically possible in the modern world - the only (emphasis original) meaningful anti-imperialism is the socialist working class struggle."

That really sums it up. "Maximum independence economically possible", which means the Argentine workers are simply faced with the struggle for socialism. Kidron would be proud of it, but Trotsky would not. Trotsky talked specifically about Argentina in document "On the movement of the Fourth International in Latin America" (Documents of the FI P. 379). He talked about the possibility of the two groups the FI had in Argentina in the late 1930s fusing together. He paints a pessimistic picture. The divergence between the two groups he says is growing because one group has now adopted the position that the revolution in Argentina would be "exclusively socialist".

"In the beginning the differences between them were of a rather secondary character and mainly personal. But, at present, there is an indication that the divergencies are assuming a political character. In No. 7 of Inicial, a programmatic article appeared on the nature of the revolution in Argentina, which attempted to show that its character will have to be exclusively socialist."

The comrades cannot get around this by saying that things in Argentina have fundamentally changed since then, since a) it hasn't fundamentally changed and b) the case they have argued throughout the debate is that Argentina has been politically independent for a long period of time and it has been relatively advanced since early on with a high standard of living in the 1920s etc.

is it correct? Trotsky is making the general point that the natural struggle does not end with formal political independence, which contradicts the basis of the comrades' case.

Trotsky argues for a struggle against all forms of imperialist oppression, including economic (although we accept that economic independence cannot be our strategic goal, it is interesting that Trotsky stresses it as a part of the struggle).

"The revolutionists in the USA are obliged to rouse the US workers against the sending of any armed forces against the peoples of Latin America and the Pacific and for the withdrawal of any such forces where they now operate as instruments of imperialist oppression, as well as against any other form of imperialist pressure, be it "diplomatic" or "economic", which is calculated to violate the national independence of any country or to prevent its attainment of such national independence."

is it correct? All this is a long way from the majority politics - that the national question is ended with formal independence, that the struggle against the economic domination of imperialism is not an anti-imperialist struggle; and more significantly and which again sums up the majority position, their

insistence that in such countries the main enemy is at home.

In fact, the comrades attack the minority's perfectly consistent Marxist position that in semi-colonies and oppressed countries the main enemy is very definitely not at home but in the metropolis of the imperialist country, with the following formulation (Kinnell IP 12, p.4):

"For the Argentine working class, the war between Argentine state power and British state power over the Falklands was a war between its immediate enemy - the enemy that it must first settle accounts with in order to win its liberation... and a more general and remote enemy". In the words the comrades have used many times - in Argentina the main enemy is at home!

Trotsky polemicised against the Mexican LCI on exactly this question (Documents of the Fourth International p.273). He said: "In the struggle against foreign imperialism in Mexico, the leadership of the LCI (Galicia group), instead of emphasising above all in its agitation the struggle against the American and British bandits, emphasised rather the bourgeois nationalist Cardenas regime, attacking it in a way that was one-sided, sectarian and, in the given circumstances, objectively reactionary". (We don't need to argue about the obvious differences between the Cardenas regime and the Argentine junta, Trotsky is arguing that the main enemy is the imperialists, not the Cardenas bourgeois nationalist regime.)

It hardly seems necessary to add, that in an imperialist country it is quite different, the main enemy is always at home.

"Blocks" and "camps"

The stress the majority comrades have put on this issue recently is a bit beside the point. However the comrades want to juggle with words, our reasons for using such words was to point out which side we were on in the war. (Trotsky repeatedly used it in the same way.) We were making the point, of course that we were on the same side as Argentina, not Galtieri. The silliness of the point is shown by the comrades' own position. If they insist that they would defend Argentina under certain conditions, then that would put them on the same side, or in the same camp - whichever word you choose - as Argentina.

The Majority and Militant

Militant and the majority have basically the same starting point and motivate their case in the same way. Take some quotes from the Militant pamphlet on the Malvinas written by Ted Grant called "A Socialist Answer":

"Argentina is one of the most highly developed countries in Latin America. The landowners are not feudal but bourgeois landowners, comparable to the capitalist landowners in Britain. Eighty six percent of the population live in towns, and the country has a reasonably developed industry. Finance capital, both foreign and local, is intertwined with the bourgeois landowners and the capitalists in the cities..."

"On the Falkland Islands themselves, the Argentines present consisted of one Argentine married to a Falkland Islander who fled from the islands when he saw the possibility of war. Had there been a colony of, say, 100,000 Argentines, a case for colonial oppression could have been made out. But the Islands have been in British possession for 150 years... The population of the Islands is English speaking and of British descent."

"Although there are only 1,800 Falklanders, Marxists nevertheless have to take into consideration their rights and interests. The junta's claim to the Falklands is purely an imperialist claim for loot in the shape of resources which can be developed, although even this is secondary to their aim of

heading off revolution by diverting workers along nationalist lines...

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

"In this war, a defeat for Argentina will provoke the revolution. If the Task Force is defeated, on the other hand, it will mean the downfall of the Thatcher government. Either result would be in the interests of the working class internationally."

Militant of course go all the way! In Militant International Review June 1982, they round the position off by saying that had a Labour government been in power in Britain, they would have called for it to continue the war, a Labour government, they said, "could have rapidly defeated the dictatorship". On behalf, of course, of British imperialism.

So the Militant take it the whole way, our majority comrades don't, but the core of the argument, from the nature of Argentina through self-determination for the Falklanders and the withdrawal of the Argentine troops is remarkably similar. If comrades still doubt this, they should ask how the WSL ended up supporting the Militant resolution at the LPYS conference? It was a disgusting openly pro-British resolution, which after calling for self-determination for the Falklanders only condemns "the hypocrisy" of British imperialism as an after-thought and has a list of demands which include "Down with the Argentine government" and "Block trade with Argentina". There is no condemnation of Britain. No call for the withdrawal of the fleet. No call to black war supplies in Britain.

Was the British victory progressive?

Both comrades Carolan and Kinnell repeatedly characterise Thatcher's victory as progressive. It is something we must completely reject. Comrade Carolan has raised it many times in the course of the debate. He made it clear that at the beginning of the war he would have "preferred" a British victory, referring to Britain's bourgeois democratic institutions. Later he was not so sure and said a Thatcher victory would be "objectively progressive" (although unless I misunderstand the words, if something is objectively progressive we would support it!). In IB6, Carolan is a bit more modest about it, saying "The Argentine people have not suffered a defeat with any harmful consequences". Comrade Kinnell in IB 12, p.4, says the outcome is "all to the advantage of the Argentine workers".

These statements, which are shocking from those who view the world from an internationalist standpoint, are again no accident. They are the logical outcome of the majority comrades' real position, which Militant bring out so clearly, that Britain and Argentina are both middle-ranking capitalist powers, not qualitatively different, therefore the outcome is not important.

The sovereignty debate

At the beginning of his letter to JL, Comrade Kinnell equates the British Argentine claims to the Falklands, as if they were two countries of equal status. He says they are equally invalid. (I have already put the minority position that Argentina has a valid claim but it could not be decisive in characterising the invasion.) But this is not the worst side of the comrades' position. Like the Militant, in arguing down the Argentine case, they end up actually arguing the British case. They point to the brevity of the Argentine colonisation of the islands, to the fact that Britain has controlled it for 150 years and that there are no Argentines there. That is Thatcher's case too, which is the reason why the British case was never debunked in SO. SO never mentioned throughout the whole war that the Falklands belonged to Coalite for example.

It leads to some interesting questions and some strange conclusions. If 150 years of British control is an argument to destroy Argentina's claim, at what point was it destroyed? After 50 years? 100 years? Also, why are there no Argentines on the island, which the majority and the Militant point to so strongly? Because Britain imposed racist immigration controls and kept them out - to keep the enclave pure. It is dangerous to ignore this point. Comrade Scott defending the majority case in IB 12 in an article potently called "Once more on the Falklands" actually ends up half defending this policy with flippant statements like this:

"The reality is that because of the size of the population, the islanders' right to self-determination could be over-ridden simply by Argentina settling enough people there to outvote the present community". Although comrade Scott notes in the next section that we are against immigration controls, it does not mitigate making such a point which justifies Britain's racist laws and shows the dangerous trend in this line of argument. Scott's next sentence, which is a rejoinder to Cunliffe who is attacking the British case, continues his defence of the British case: "Are we to take this seriously (the Argentine case) that the stationing of a few dozen Argentine troops, whose permanent homes would have been in Argentina, for 4 whole years, gives Argentina a claim on the Falklands against a civilian community who have lived and worked there for 150 years with, until now, no real challenge from Argentina of their right to do so".

We find we have been subjected to a sleight of hand. Suddenly the disputed claims are between Argentina and the Falkland islanders. Britain, the imperialist power, is suddenly not involved in the dispute, and by defending the islanders' case of course Thatcher's case is defended since it is the same.

How do we characterise a war?

Some comrades who support the majority case seem to base their position on the fact that the war started with a reactionary invasion. But wars cannot be characterised by incidents which started them, or this would lead us to some very strange conclusions. We have to judge them politically from the forces involved.

Some comrades say, how can a war which began reactionary become progressive? I can't see how it is such a difficult issue. Thatcher's decision to go to war transformed the situation from a reactionary invasion of the Malvinas, designed to contain the Argentine working class, into a war between an imperialist country and a country oppressed by imperialism. From that moment onwards that is what it was. Our assessment of the original invasion or of Galtieri's motives no longer came into it.

Argentine "nationalism"

Throughout the main majority document by comrades Carolan and Kinnell, our references to anti-imperialist sentiment in the Argentine (or Latin American) working class is attacked as "Argentine chauvinism". The most favourable comment about it is by Kinnell who says: "If I racked my brains I might be able to imagine a situation in which Argentine nationalism would play a progressive role."

At the July TIC meeting however, there was a dramatic switch. Both comrades talked of anti-imperialism in the Argentine masses and stressed the need for a programme to channel it into a clearly anti-imperialist direction. (Although it is hard to see what such a programme would relate to, when argued for from a standpoint of calling for the defeat of the Argentine forces by Thatcher).

Withdraw the Argentine troops!

A bit more needs to be said about this demand which was stuck to strongly by the majority throughout the war, since it was necessary for the self-determination issue, but not given public prominence. In some way it takes the contradictions in the majority case a stage further, since it is in

reality a call for a Thatcher victory.

Just think about it. The WSL called for the withdrawal of the British fleet and the withdrawal of the Argentine troops from the Malvinas. If this had been achieved, the WSL then calls for the right of self-determination for the Falklanders. They would then exercise their self-determination as Carolan says "by wanting to stay with Britain". What is the result? - Britain retains the Falkland islands. An unqualified British victory is achieved through WSL policy.

POLITICA OBRERA EDITORIAL STATEMENT : "IN ORDER TO FIGHT AGAINST
IMPERIALISM, NO SUPPORT TO THE DICTATORSHIP"

(This statement was published on April 5th PO 328, 3 days after the Galtieri invasion. It shows how early PO developed their position and its consistency.)

The occupation of the Malvinas by the military government, has produced an international crisis in which the main imperialist powers are implicated and poses for Argentine workers and anti-imperialist sectors a whole number of problems, which if they are not solved wisely could make the long and painful struggle of our people against the sell-out military dictatorship and imperialism barren. Also important problems are posed for the workers, and especially the revolutionaries of the imperialist nations which oppress us - the US, Great Britain, France - whose correct solution depends on whether it furthers or not the cause of proletarian internationalism.

The struggle to the death for national independence.

The first thing to be made clear is that it is not enough to recover territory which belongs to us historically and geographically, and which is in imperialist hands, to be in the presence of a real action of national independence. It is evident that this depends on the aims that determine this act of recovery, as well as the total politics of the junta which carries it out. If the recovery of the Malvinas is in order to change master in the South Atlantic, or in order to resolve a legal dispute which impedes the handing over of the riches of the region to foreign capital, it is clear that the action has an anti-imperialist appearance but its real projection is a greater submission to imperialism. Such a thing should not surprise in a continent where bourgeois nationalism has a long training in demagogy, and in the tactic of deception of the popular masses.

Exactly a month before the occupation of the Malvinas, the daily "La Prensa", 3/3/82, gave a vast amount of information about the character and aims of this operation : "In the (Argentine) sources consulted, it is suggested to us, that the North American government has expressed its 'understanding' in relation to the new posture by Buenos Aires, and also its belief that the recovery of the Malvinas by Argentina constitutes, at this altitude, a condition almost 'sine qua non' for the establishment of an adequate Western defence structure in the South Atlantic, opposed to the Soviet penetration in the zone, and the tensions existing from along way back caused by the Beagle dispute

between Argentina and Chile, at present in the hands of the Vatican; a mediation whose resolution can depend, in a certain way, on the greater or lesser weight of the strategic or geopolitical position of Argentina in the whole austral region, not only in the Beagle, so that both matters appear also profoundly connected, and not only from the point of view of military security and general economics, except the diplomatic interests of the Church are referred to. As for Washington, everyone agrees in one thing : the recovery by Argentina of the Malvinas would maybe open up the door to the creation of joint bases on the islands - or to the leasing of bases to the US - with much more capacity of control over all the area whatever defensive device in the Beagle whether Argentine or Chilean or of another Western country (besides they wouldn't exclude each other)".

"As far as we know, the Argentine plans contemplate equally, eventual British interests which go beyond the specific ones of the Malvinas, having moreover, greater generosity concerning respect for their property, political and cultural status, facilities of all types in Argentina and even special financial compensation. In this sense it is pointed out to us that Buenos Aires would be disposed to offer B.P. and other British companies a participation in the exploitation of hydrocarbons and other resources in important areas of the region, the same facilities for its fleet, all this in a way that the devolution of sovereignty will not imply any decrease - rather the contrary- of the perspectives of Britain in the South Atlantic. Undoubtedly, this temperament tends not only to facilitate a peaceful solution, but also to consolidate the tacit endorsement of the US, in the event that it would necessitate the military procedure, by the way of Washington avoiding the greater part of frictions with their 'cousins' and NATO allies."

'La Nacion' of the following day (4/3/82) posed something similar, although from a different angle, but this time with information gleaned in Washington.

"Local diplomatic sources are trying to determine if the renewed boldness of Argentina to recover the position of the Malvinas islands is related to the growing internationalisation of the American continental situation.

"The re-arming of Venezuela, the announcement of the first NATO manoeuvre in the Gulf of Mexico, and the search for new North American bases on the Western Caribbean coast, are an expression of the new dimension attributed to the defence of the continent.

"It has coincided with the sudden and vigorous effort by Argentina for a quick resolution concerning possession of the archipelago that controls the austral route. The English have been there during more than a century, but their fleet has been contracting because of the heavy fiscal problems of the kingdom.

"The North American navy estimates that the Cuban high sea fleet, although tiny constitutes a threat to the continental routes.

"The Cuban ships do not have a big operational capacity in the Southern waters, but their intense activity in the warmer waters of the Caribbean can distract the North American naval forces that patrol the austral channels.

"It would be even more serious in the case of a potential crisis in the Indian Ocean, which weighs in the calculations of the North American naval strategists.

"Diplomatic sources point out that what they perceive as a growing Argentine - North American military relationship is added to these elements.

"Although it is recognised that Washington always tried to avoid the question of the Malvinas, the new circumstances could lead it to a revision of its positions or a least, they could encourage Argentina to force the change.

"The sources doubt that the sale of planes to Venezuela, the search for

bases in the Caribbean, and the first NATO exercises in an interior American sea can be isolated events.

"Of what there is no doubt is that Washington places the question of the defence of its continental allies in a global perspective that could lead it to persuade Britain to resolve the irritating austral subject with one of its key allies.

"The impression of the diplomatic sources is that although there are no formal elements to establish what is that is happening, something can be happening. Neither Argentina nor the US are quiet, and even more, they are operating in tandem."

Once again, the well-informed weekly 'Latin American Weekly Report' of London reported on 12/3/82 :

"Argentina is considering a broad range of options for a 'unilateral action', according to sources in Buenos Aires, if Britain isn't disposed to make concessions. This include initiatives in the UN, a break in diplomatic relations, and, lastly, an invasion of the islands.

"The link with the internal political situation is clear. This has already been described as a 'political year', and President Galtieri feels that a drastic action over the Malvinas, for long a question of nationalist pride, would do wonders for his popularity. Some observers believe that he will use the question as a platform for the launching of an official or semi-official party. They remember the successful electoral slogan of 1946, 'Braden or Peron' (Braden was the yankee ambassador, and the implication was that Peron was the only genuine nationalist candidate). The new version, according to these observers would be 'Galtieri or Britain'.

"Government functionaries think that the international repercussions of a hard line against Britain would be manageable. Argentine foreign policy is firmly leaning towards the Reagan administration, while the mass of its grain is bought by the Soviet Union. None of either superpowers, it is argued, would vary its present policy to defend the British position.

"There is a strong suggestion, in the light of Washington's anxiety with security in the South Atlantic, that it would be opportune to solve the dispute. This would open the road to the installation of North American military bases, a possibility over which there has been much speculation in Buenos Aires since Galtieri took power."

All this information must be linked to a more general problem : foreign policy is a continuation of internal policy, and the internal and foreign policy of Galtieri-Alemann is of subservience to imperialism. Therefore, whatever the consequences of the international crisis are, as a result of the contradictions and alliances between the yankees and the English, and between the dictatorship and both, the occupation of the Malvinas isn't a part of national liberation or national independence, but an image of national sovereignty, because it is limited to the territorial, while its social content continues being pro-imperialist. The national state is formally sovereign in all of continental Argentine territory, and this isn't in contradiction with the fact that, by its economic and international policy, it is subject to imperialism.

To take the recovery of the Malvinas as an isolated deed of sovereignty and worse, obscuring the active negotiation with imperialism on the part of the dictatorship, to integrate the occupation into a pro-imperialist strategy, is to allow oneself to be dragged along, consciously or unconsciously, by bourgeois demagogy.

Priority: Internal struggle against imperialist aggression.

Argentina is a nation oppressed by imperialism; the question of the Malvinas is one aspect of that oppression. Regarding this situation as a whole, what is the priority in the liberation struggle?

Today, the Argentine state that undertakes the recovery of the

Malvinas is in the hands of the direct and indirect agents of the powers that subjugate our nation. What scope can an act of sovereignty have when the country which undertakes it (not when the government that executes it) is politically dominated by the agents of national oppression? It is inferred therefore that the priority is another : to smash first the internal reaction, to cut the bonds of the subjugation (economic and diplomatic) and to construct a powerful internal anti-imperialist and revolutionary front, based on the workers. The priority of a real national struggle is to smash the internal front of reaction and to establish the revolutionary front of the masses. It happened thus in all the great national emancipatory ventures : the French, Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutions.

In relation to the fundamental priority of the struggle for national liberation the occupation of the Malvinas is an act of distraction, of which the dictatorship seeks to extract internal and international revenue for the Argentine exploiters and the imperialist bourgeoisies they 'protect'. This is the government which simultaneously with the Malvinas action, intervenes militarily in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Bolivia, in order to reimplant or fortify the national oppression. It is sure that Galtieri and the General Staff have thought that yankee imperialism would reward these services, leaving them to occupy the Malvinas. Whatever the course of events, what is clear is that the occupation of the Malvinas isn't the axis of national liberation, but a distractionary manoeuvre. The dictatorship has had recourse to it in order to get out of its profound internal crisis and impasse. If there is war, the nation must take up arms and make war the length and breadth of the country..

Britain, France and other declining colonial powers are pressurising Yankee imperialism in order to force, by whatever means, an Argentine withdrawal, because it is a 'bad example' for their last colonial possession. The Anglos are desperate about the repercussion that a capitulation of 'Her Majesty' could have on the glorious Irish nation.

Yankee imperialism itself is turning bellicose, because, probably, it doesn't like the direct method of the recovery of the Malvinas and because it could consider the dictatorship too weak in order to be capable of pledging itself actively in the South Atlantic pact. Therefore it is exercising an intense pressure to get withdrawal of Argentine troops, or on the contrary, to suffer a direct ^{defeat} by the British navy.

If it is war, it isn't for patriotism, but for authentic anti-imperialism that we pose : war to the death, revolutionary war against imperialism. This is not only a naval war in the South, but an attack on imperialist property on the whole national terrain, confiscation of foreign capital and above all arming of the workers.

The socialist and workers parties of Europe have lined up once more with their imperialist bourgeoisie. They believe that by describing Galtieri as a 'little dictator' they consecrate themselves as democrats, when the main oppression is that of the imperialists 'democrats', precisely those who present the government to the little dictator. We call upon the genuine European revolutionaries to repudiate their governments to defend the Argentine right to the Malvinas and to make every effort to sabotage the war will of the 'democratic' British crown, the historic gaoler of peoples.

The dictatorship doesn't want any fight against imperialism.

The policy of the dictatorship is 'respect for the property' of the oppressors. Such is how Galtieri-Alemann have been avoiding confronting the economic sabotage of imperialism. On Friday April 2nd, 10 million dollars of deposits were withdrawn, just from the Bank of London. Thatcher had to intervene Argentine funds in London before the dictatorship rushed into a ridiculous exchange control that doesn't impede the flight of capital for the black market, nor impede the capital of other imperialist nations from following the economic boycott.

The dictatorship is already capitulating.

Also there is evidence that it would be for acceting 'mediation' by Reagan about verbal recognition of Argentine sovereignty, in return for gradual devolution of the archipelago and with strong economic, military and internal political conditions, Costa Mendez and Ross have already said at the UN that they accept negotiations on the basis of formal recognition of sovereignty.

One mustn't confuse support for the national claim with political support for whoever, in this case the dictatorship, seeks to lead the struggle for that claim, as that would signify support to the inconsequent, traitorous and even anti-national leadership of the struggle for the national claim.

Workers and anti-imperialist independence vis-a-vis the dictatorship.

It wanted, and wants, to drag the Argentine workers behind the dictatorship, Taking advantage of the Malvinas affair, and even to whitewash it for its crime, to forget its selling out (to imperialism - m.j.) and aggression against the workers, And this, especially after the great events of the 30th that thwarted all the efforts of restraint and paralysis of the Multipartideria. There is even talk of a government of 'national unity'. In this 'entreprise' the Multi, Miguel, Triacca, Ubal dini and the CP have lined themselves up. Only a minority of CGT leaders resisted the parody of making a demonstration of support to the dictatorship on April 2nd. This honours them.

But precisely in order to have the liberty to fight imperialism and stop them negotiating the Malvinas in return of unacceptable concessions, it is necessary to not support politically the anti-national dictatorship. In a war we can strike the foreign enemy together, but we will never support the politics with which the dictatorship leads that war, we will fight to convince the workers that a revolutionary leadership is necessary. Faced with this situation and in the face of the intentions to subject workers to tailendism and support for the dictatorship we think it is necessary to maintain workers and antiimperialist independence with a precise programme :

- (1) Denunciation of the intentions to capitulate before imperialism, whether a sell-out negotiation (economic or foreign policy) or a withdrawal in exchange for conditional and gradual devolution of the island.
- (2) Demand the intervention of the property of all foreign capital which is already sabotaging or speculating against the national economy.
- (3) In case of war, extend it to the whole country, attacking and confiscating imperialist capital & aboveall call upon workers to arm themselves
- (4) Immediate satisfaction of the demands made bt T.Unions/workers' organisations and also the demands made by relatives/mothers of disappeared
- (5) Impel the formation of an anti-imperialist front that will practically push this programme.

The decisive battle will be on the internal front

The dictatorship has two alternatives before it, either to obtain the insertion of the Malvinas occupation into an agreement with imperialism, or decide to fight to save honour. In both cases its internal dislocation will be undeferable; firstly because its discredit among the masses and patriotic sectors will be brutal, fusing itself with the general impasse of the regime and secondly because it breaks its internal front with big capital.

The bourgeoisie is already conscious of this problem. It is reflected in the editorials of 'La Prensa', 3/4/82, bemoaning the 'incomprehension' of Reagan, for the calls of the daily for the inclusion of the Malvinas in the Yankee strategy; and in the divergence of 'Clarín', 3/4/82 which calls for a turn towards third-worldism.

The working class must be conscious of this because if it blinds itself to the situation, it will prepare a change of regime to its own cost. Therefore the demand for unrestricted political democracy and a sovereign Constituant Assembly must continue to be raised.

(4/4/82)

MALVINAS/FALKLANDS

Politica Obrera (Argentina section of Fourth Internationalist Tendency),
article of 12th June, The Political Situation at this Stage of the War,
in Politica Obrera No. 330.

...The forced departure of two thirds of the British fleet to a zone 17,000 kilometres from its usual operational area - with the resulting breaches of fundamental military dispositions - express the shakiness of the world political order of imperialism, of which the Argentina dictatorship was a vital part. The English had to send their ~~aircraft carriers~~ ^{aircraft carriers} because ~~the~~ continental Argentina and the Argentinian navy had ceased to be natural aircraft carriers for world imperialism...And all this has occurred simply because, after six years of merciless exploitation of the Argentinian economy by international capital and its local agents, together with the huge impasse of the Argentinian bourgeoisie as a whole, were undermining the bases of the dictatorship and the bourgeois State to such an extent that the regime felt obliged to undertake an international adventure against one of the minor imperialist countries, which has turned into a national cause, that of the subject state against world imperialism...The British troops, at the cost of serious losses to their fleet, surround the last bastion of Puerto Argentino. The Argentinian military command promise to resist and transform the situation in this final battle.

But are the measures necessary for victory being adopted? Quite the opposite. For two months the military has told the media that the occupation of the archipelago cannot be dislodged. In this way the argument for a policy of submission to imperialism has been established, ~~the~~ instead of arguments to expropriate imperialism and to ally ourselves to countries which support our case. First in the South Georgian Islands, then in the Malvinas, the "not dislodgeable" argument was smashed. Now ... Costa Mendez rejects military aid from Cuba and Venezuela, explaining that we have no "ideological" differences with imperialism...that we should go on being part of the system of imperialist alliances which has mobilised to defeat us as a nation. In the middle of a war this position is one of betrayal....But in this war there is a conflict of principles, or the war shouldn't have been begun. In the final analysis the principle at stake is the right of a minority of bourgeois imperialist countries to exploit the great majority of oppressed bourgeois nations. An Argentinian victory in this was is a victory for national self determination, for the abolition of all forms of national oppression.

...Instead of seeking the help of Latin America, they bring in the pope, instead of mobilising the nation with arms, they mobilise themselves at Lujan (conferences) with speeches. The dictatorship surrenders to the ~~imperialist~~ imperialist aggressor because it does not want to break strategic links with it.

The military clique, the exploiters, priests of all persuasions, the stalinists, are using the Argentinian soldiers that have died and yet to die in the Malvinas as a monstrous blackmail against the working people, to make a deal with imperialism. This they call to win "peace".

As we assume no responsibility for the initiation of the conflict by the dictatorship (for its class methods and aims), we should also assume no responsibility for the imperialist peace that is developing. The means necessary to impose victory for the national cause do exist - arming the people, expropriation of imperialism, realignment of international alliances. It is the dictatorship and bourgeoisie that have decided to reject and sabotage these methods. For them "peace" with imperialism is fundamental, because their vital interest lies in restoring political relations with imperialism. Are they not punctually paying interest on the national debt?

The only valid and durable peace is the one that will be won by smashing imperialism on all fronts. The church-military-stalinist campaigners for peace with imperialism are the ones are perpetuating the war, because they perpetuate its causes - the exploitation of nation by nation, and of man by man.

...One of the chief crimes of the military dictatorship is to have conducted the war in such a timorous manner that the American imperialists

...../

never feared possible confiscation of its property in Argentina, or a realignment of the regime's alliances. It was therefore not possible to exploit differences between Americans and English to weaken the fleet. With its defeatist line the dictatorship helped to avoid a break in the imperialist front...The Thatcher government is obliged to win in the Malvinas to stay in power. As this was one of the main aims in sending the fleet, it is replacing other general interests of imperialism for a negotiated settlement in the South Atlantic...For the Americans the priority is to renew their role as mediators...But it is highly likely that the Americans think that only political change in Argentina will make a settlement possible. ...The fact that the bourgeois parties (Multipartidaria) have declared themselves for "peace" makes them valid allies for imperialism. ... It was enough for the option of confrontation with imperialism to be clearly presented, for the proimperialist tendencies of bourgeois democracy to become clear. Formal democratic demands, which ~~are~~ inseparable from the decisive question of national liberation in general terms, are linked intimately to that question when there is a concrete situation of war against imperialism.

A front which aspires to political democracy must inevitably oppose a negotiated solution, which would involve compromise on sovereignty; it must pose rejection or revision of the national debt, nationalisation of the big banks, removal of the military clique, and arming of the people. On any other basis there is no viable democracy; democracy then becomes the demagogic weapon of imperialism for restoring Argentina's relations with the rest of the world imperialist system.

After the great demonstration of 30th March, the occupation of the Malvinas blocked the developing upsurge of the proletariat. From 2nd April, the union bureaucracy, the Multidaria and the CP struggled to prevent the masses from mobilising with their own methods and own objectives against imperialism. It was therefore not possible to use the turn made by the army to put pressure on the most oppressed layers of the army for a military front with the workers. The workers leaders demobilised the class and joined a Grand ~~Nxxx~~ National Accord with the dictatorship and with imperialism itself, since they posed negotiated peace and the sanctity of imperialism's political and economic interests in Argentina.

...How will the proletariat regain its perspective for an upturn and exploit the crisis with imperialism to raise mass struggle and take the leadership of the workers?

1) It continues to be essential to orientate the anti-imperialist impulse towards the patriotic committees in the factories, having in mind ~~xxx~~ chiefly control of capitalist profits, and to unite the districts in demonstrations for the training and arming of the population. It must be explained to officers and soldiers that Puerto Argentino is politically lost unless a revolutionary policy is adopted against imperialism. These patriotic committees must be used to organise delegate bodies and internal factory committees.

2) The existence of functioning unions must be imposed (on the government) on the basis of the demand that they mobilise against imperialism and to defend the workers against shortages and unemployment imposed by the bosses.

3) Formal democracy cannot lead to the struggle against imperialism, nor do away with the misery of the masses and the oppression of the nation. A democratic "coup" will only serve American imperialism. The conquest of effective political democracy is linked to two questions: the arming of the people and the defeat of imperialism. Together with these two demands should be posed the gathering of a sovereign constituent assembly. Only by exploiting the present struggle against imperialism by organising and arming the proletariat will it be possible to advance to the overthrow of the military dictatorship.

4) The realisation of these demands depends on the proletariat not being ensnared by the bourgeois (democratic) political now being developed. It is necessary to build proletarian class organisations and fight ~~for~~ to throw out the trade union bureaucracy.

5) The increase of the anti-imperialist awakening, the inevitable splits between bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie which will come from the rightwards move of the bourgeoisie, the struggle to the death against the bourgeois (democratic) political tendencies, all must be coordinated with the political tactic of developing a revolutionary anti-imperialist front.