

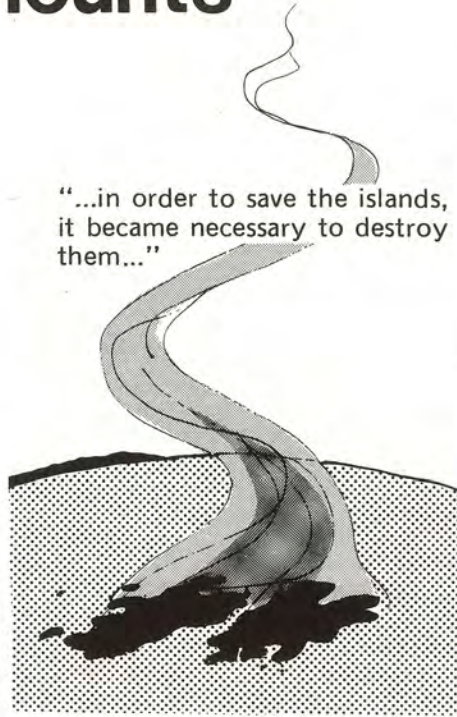
FALKLANDS WAR: opposition mounts

The most frustrating thing for the peace movement about the Falklands crisis is not only the feeling of powerlessness to have any immediate effect on the situation — that's common enough — but the difficulty of even being aware of our own strength of support, and the knowledge that most people not actively involved have no idea of what opposition there is, because of the way the media is reacting.

The little coverage of British opposition to the war has been mostly of the dissident MPs. People reliant on the straight press can easily think that the only opposition comes from people who don't have a strong opposition to the Argentinian junta. Yet where has the opposition to the junta been found for many years—amongst those Tory MPs who have suddenly discovered that it is fascist, or amongst those peace groups now opposing the war?

One thing that theorists in the nonviolent movement should now be doing is to look at ways that small communities like those on the Falklands Islands can evolve a self-reliant and self-chosen life, and how without force of arms they can sustain it in the face of nearby would-be colonial powers. Another important activity is to work harder in support of those few radical activists in countries like Argentina. The ultimate struggle is not between the British and Argentinian forces, but between those forces and those of us in both countries trying to subvert them.

"...in order to save the islands,
it became necessary to destroy
them..."



ACTIVITIES

Following the call by the Peace Pledge Union for a Day of Protest and Resistance on May 1, actions of various kinds—leafleting, vigils, demonstrations—took place in more than twenty parts of the country. At one of the London actions, theatrical blood was spilled on the steps of the Ministry of "Defence" during a vigil. Five people from London Peace Action were arrested and charged with criminal damage. They next appear at Bow Street Magistrates' Court on Tuesday May 18. They face possible large fines and compensation bills. Support can be sent to LPA c/o the PPU (see below).

There have also been independent local activities, including a daily vigil in Bristol

and two separate ones in London. In many towns there are now ad hoc local groupings of peace activists organising events. There were several such events last weekend including a march and rally by about 3000 people in London. This included not only peace groups but also many groups from left-wing parties. A delegation visited the BBC to complain about their coverage, and went to Downing Street to hand in a letter calling for a ceasefire and for negotiations with the help of the United Nations.

The organisers of the London demonstration, the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in the Falklands, consisting of MPs and representatives from national and international peace organisations—has called for more local actions on Sunday May 16 and for a national demonstration in London on Sunday May 23.

Gloucester Action for Peace has launched a campaign of sending telegrams to the Prime Minister and the Ministry of "Defence" calling for an end to the war. They ask all peace groups and individuals to join in. Sixteen peace activists in New Zealand have already sent a telegram to Margaret Thatcher expressing their disagreement with Prime Minister Muldoon's support for the Falkland's action.

The Ecology Party, together with other European Green and Radical parties has called for an end to the use of force and for independence for the Falklands, guaranteed by the UN and by the Organisation of American States.

RESOURCES

The Campaign Against the Arms Trade, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1, has produced a factsheet on British weapons supplied to the Argentine. **The National Peace Council**, 29 Great James Street, London WC1, has a lengthy fact sheet giving a wealth of geographical, historical and legal information, and copies of a press release and letter sent to the government with some valuable suggestions. (Send 20p and a SAE.) Anti-militarist posters and leaflets about the Falklands crisis and news of actions are available from: PPU, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1 (tel 01-387 5501).