

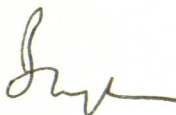
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PRIME MINISTER

Samuel Brittan, FT, tells me he has been resisting commenting to journalists about the Bruce Gardyne letter but has just issued the following statement to the Press Association:

"I am embarrassed and angry that a letter which was obviously entirely private and personal should have been stolen and copied. It is also extremely worrying that the New Statesman should have seen fit to use this type of material."



B. INGHAM

11 June 1982



STATEMENT BY MR JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE MP, ECONOMIC
SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY

I deeply regret that parts of the text of a purely private and personal letter written five weeks ago to an old friend to thank him for entertaining my wife and myself to dinner should apparently have been stolen from the recipient, and subsequently published in a weekly newspaper. In that letter I made some off-the-cuff comments about the state of public opinion regarding the Falklands campaign, provoked by the terms of an article which the recipient of my letter had published in the Financial Times on the same day, comments which I now believe to have been wholly erroneous, and indeed, which I would probably, on reflection, have regarded as wholly erroneous even at the time that they were written.

In fact my considered views about the campaign, and the Government policy towards it, were set out in a statement which I gave to the Knutsford Guardian, in which I expressed the hope that "the Argentinian Government will now realise that the international community simply cannot condone unprovoked aggression; that the British Government and people will take whatever action is necessary to restore the rule of law in the Falkland Islands; and that the reversal of their military invasion is the necessary precondition for any lasting solution to the long-standing dispute about the islands future."

(2)

I stand by every word of that.

Nevertheless, I am profoundly distressed that the breach of confidentiality and copyright perpetrated by a weekly newspaper should have caused embarrassment to the Government. I have expressed to the Prime Minister my great regret that I should unwittingly have been the cause of such embarrassment at this time.

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In fact my considered views about the campaign, and the Government policy towards it, were set out in a statement which I gave to the Knutsford Guardian, in which I expressed the hope that "the Argentinian Government will not realise that the international community simply cannot condone unprovoked aggression; that the British Government and people will take whatever action is necessary to restore the rule of law in the Falkland Islands; and that the reversal of their military invasion is the necessary precondition for any lasting solution to the long-standing dispute about the islands future."

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

May 6th, 1982

Samuel Brittan, Esq.,
Financial Times,
Bracken House
EC

Dear Sam

First, thank you for a lovely evening. I can't imagine a better way of sitting out the deluge: one would never have released the dove. The emotion over the needlework on my tum leaves me feeling a thorough fraud. I think that, like Lyndon Johnson, I shall have to expose my scars to the tv cameras.

But while I'm about it, a brief reaction to your thoughts this morning. Yes, the whole population of the Falklands could easily be resettled elsewhere on the globe at a far higher living standard. So for example could the whole population of Israel - which would solve another problem. Hence I doubt whether that is an altogether convincing argument.

But then I think I'd dispute your claim that you've got to have very good cause to go to war. I don't think the cause matters a tuppenny damn. All that matters is the stomach for the fight. The Kaiser in 1914 had given us far less cause to go to war than Hitler in 1939. Yet I suspect we marched to battle with twice the zest in 1914.

The problem on this occasion, I suspect, is that the travellers on the Clapham omnibus don't have the stomach for the fight. So biffing the Argies is fine. Being biffed by Argies is a mug's game. But it's got nothing to do with causes or morality. I don't think it ever really has.

In short I come to broadly the same conclusion. But by a rather different route.

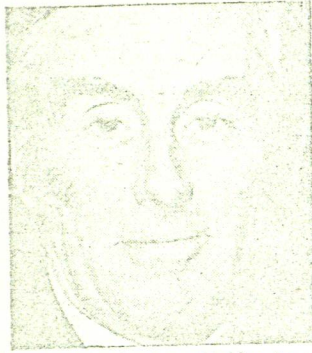
*Again, than you
for a most speaking dinner
I am
John*

No biffing cause

JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE, the Minister of State at the Treasury, was at least until last month a private opponent of the war in the Falklands. In a personal letter to Samuel Brittan, the economics commentator, Mr Bruce-Gardyne wrote to say that he agreed with Brittan's disapproval of the war outlined in an article in the *Financial Times* of 6 May. However, in his letter, also of 6 May, Mr Bruce-Gardyne wrote that his own disapproval was based on different grounds:

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Jock Bruce-Gardyne thinking treacherous thoughts

Presumably, since 6 May Mr Bruce-Gardyne may have been forced to revise his opinion about Britain's readiness to fight — at least at long distance.

Later on in the letter, Mr Bruce-Gardyne admits that: 'the whole population of the Falklands could easily be resettled elsewhere on the globe at a far higher standard of living.' But he goes on to say: 'so could the whole population of Israel which would solve another problem. Hence I doubt whether this is an altogether convincing argument.'

Sarah Benton reports on one anti-war initiative

Round-up against war

HUNDREDS OF people squashed into Friends Meeting House in London last Thursday to take part in a 'teach-in' against the Falklands war, organised by the three-month old Socialist Society and six-week old Ad Hoc Committee against the war. The audience was as generous in its welcome for MP Tam Dalyell and SDP member Peter Jenkins, strangers to most left-wing platforms, as it was for the more familiar disarmament campaigners Edward Thompson and Mary Kaldor.

Tam Dalyell analysed the days leading up to the outbreak of war, pointing out how at each step Labour had been inexorably sucked into supporting the war without ever having consciously chosen to fight in anger. The most crucial points, he said, were John Silkin's public and unprepared statement on *World at One* on 2 April that the Labour Party would use force; and the special sitting in Parliament the next Saturday where, if they had had a full day of discussion, the cooler and more dissident voices might have been heard.

Bernard Crick, in the evening's most philosophical exposition, rejected all the arguments that absolute principles were involved, whether they were about force, historic claims to territory, sovereignty or self-determination.

Mary Kaldor illustrated the hypocrisy of principles about war when so many of the rules are dictated by the arms trade. Peter Jenkins made it clear his opposition to the Falklands war was not because he was, in principle, against resisting the Argentinian act of aggression, but because Britain's response was quite out of proportion.

'This is a very ugly moment in our culture' said Edward Thompson. 'We are losing a sense of concern about how nations ought to behave.' The war was not, he thought, a classic case of imperialism; more 'a textbook case of the military logic taking over and directing events.' Politically, he said, the sinking of the *General Belgrano* had not been in the script; but politically Thatcher's only script was 'to save her own neck.' Her stand was bluff — and Labour's answering bluff had trapped it in complicity.

The support for the war, or difficulty in opposing it, was variously interpreted by other speakers, including journalist Beatrix Campbell who criticised the patriarchal character of both the war and the anti-war movement; writer Fred Halliday who portrayed the war as a move to recreate a nationalistic consensus untroubled by nasty facts of life like riots and strikes; and by George Cartwright, a lay member of the National Union of Seamen, who criticised the press for vastly exaggerating the degree of support for the war among seamen.

See Margaret Barker's contribution, p.8. The Socialist Society is publishing a new pamphlet, *The Falklands: Thatcher's War, Labour's Guilt*, by Anthony Arb-laster, 90p.

Lindsay Mackie reports on the rules against torture

Astiz could be put on trial

WHY IS Captain Alfredo Astiz being held in Britain? The 29-year-old Argentinian is the only prisoner of war to be brought back to this country out of the 2,000 or so Argentinian POWs being shipped to Montevideo and homewards.

It is alleged that Astiz, the son of a naval officer, was the head of a kidnapping squad in the late 1970s, based at the Naval Engineering School in Buenos Aires. There he conducted torture, it is alleged, against hundreds of people, some of them women watched by their small children.

The Foreign Office say that Captain Astiz was brought back to Britain because of the interest expressed by France and Sweden in questioning him about the disappearances of three women. These are two French nuns, Sisters Alice Doman and Leonie Duquet, whom the French believe were kidnapped by Astiz because they were helping relatives of missing people; and a 17-year-old Swedish national, Dagmar Hagelin, who was allegedly shot by Astiz in a Buenos Aires suburb in January 1977.

But, as Astiz sits in officer-grade incarceration in Roussillon Barracks, Chichester, all the signals are that he will simply be returned to Argentina when hostilities end, having refused to answer — as he has already done once — any of the questions put to him by Britain on behalf of the French or

the Swedes

The Swedes say that they don't contest the interpretation of the 1949 Geneva Convention which prohibits the treatment of prisoners of war under duress, and allows prisoners of war to remain silent.

In fact international law does provide a means of bringing Astiz to book. Under Article Three of the Geneva Convention, a category of protected persons was created to afford international protection in situations of armed conflict to civilians and those who are *hors de combat*. It was considered that the circumstances in which torture was most likely to arise would be those in which state authorities were trying to defend themselves against internal revolt.

So Article Three, signed by 138 countries including Argentina, made it a crime to torture, mutilate, or inflict inhuman treatment on those not connected with internal armed conflict. Furthermore, prosecutions against those who are believed, like Astiz, to have committed such acts, can be undertaken by any country.

Signatories to Article Three undertook to respect the provisions of the convention. It is the view of some international lawyers that there is a positive obligation on signatories to act against any breach of this protection of civilians. So, if the British Government announced that it would try Captain Astiz for war crimes under Article Three of the Geneva Convention, it would have a case. The problem is, of course, that it would be the first state to use Article Three — so blithely signed in 1949 and ignored by all governments ever since.

Steve Walker loses count of CND marchers

A mass — or a multitude?

LAST SUNDAY'S CND demonstration was a great success — or was it? Widely differing estimates of the numbers of people attending have been produced by the police and the organisers. Scotland Yard say there were 115,000 and that they use 'objective' methods for estimating the size of all demonstrations. These methods involve positioning observers along the route of the march with hand-held counting machines. The three marches which separately converged on Hyde Park were each counted and a double-check made as people entered the park through three entry points.

CND say there were 250,000 but do not claim to use any scientific methods for estimating the size of their demonstrations. Using largely impressionistic evidence, they say that the eventual size of the gathering was equal to or larger than the demonstration last

October. The police figure is hotly disputed by the organisers who say it does not include those who made their way independently to Hyde Park. Also, their stewards did not see any police observers taking a count at the entrances to the park.

Both sides confess that no accurate system for determining crowd size exists. Yet such accuracy is important. If the numbers of demonstrators had declined significantly from last October it could represent a major setback for CND, especially in view of the accelerating peace movement in America. On the other hand, if numbers were equivalent to or larger than the demonstration last October, CND could claim that the campaign was as vigorous as ever — especially in the current circumstances of the Falklands war.

The following information ought to concentrate the minds of CND's organisers on the problem of establishing effective methods of determining the size of their demonstrations. In the recent London Marathon the police positioned observers along the route to estimate the number of runners. Their final total matched that of the race organisers almost exactly.