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THE COVERAGE OF
THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT
BY THE *DAILY MIRROR* AND *THE SUN*.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Argentine military forces landed and took possession of the Falkland Islands on the 2nd of April 1982, there was a feeling of surprise in Great Britain as few knew where the Islands were, nor even that there had been a two-century-long dissension for its sovereignty with Argentina. Roy Greenslade, assistant editor of the *Sun* at the time, remembers:

Like the majority of Britons, I had no idea where the Falklands were, let alone what their history was. I only knew of their existence because, as a child, I had collected their stamps. [...] it was difficult to imagine Britain going to war over it.¹

However, the conflict shaped the political and media scene of the spring of 1982 and is still reckoned thirty years after, as a landmark of Margaret Thatcher's premiership and a time of heavy tensions in the media sphere.

The Falkland Islands archipelago, situated in the South Atlantic less than 300 miles off the coasts of Argentina, consists of about 200 islands, the largest being East Falklands and West Falklands, whose total land area is barely more than 12,000 sq km,² and inhabited in 1982 by 1,800 humans and 400,000 sheep.³ It was hard to predict that an armed conflict would occur for the dispute for the sovereignty of these islands. Although the conflict, as short as it was (it only lasted seventy-four days between the 2nd of April and the 14th of June 1982) led to a *status quo ante bellum*,⁴ ended with 649 Argentine casualties, the death of 255 British Army personnel and three civilian losses among the Falklands Islanders, and making many more wounded.

The last major overseas conflict of the British task force had been the Suez Crisis in 1956 to which the Falklands Campaign can be easily compared:

In both instances, Britain was reacting to an act by a 'dictator' against her interests and people; both acts took place far away from Britain; both involved Conservative Governments afraid to repeat the lessons of appeasements, and both incidents involved sending a task force to foreign lands. Unlike Suez, however, there was little Parliamentary opposition to the Thatcher Government's decision to send a task force to the South Atlantic.⁵

¹ Roy Greenslade, *Press Gang: How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2003) 441.

² *Britain and the Falkland Islands* (London: HMSO, 1993) 2.

³ Rupert Cornwell, "Shots across the bows: The images that defined the Falklands War", *The Independent*, 24/03/2012, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/shots-across-the-bows-the-images-that-defined-the-falklands-war-7582250.html>>.

⁴ *i.e.*, the way in which things were before the war

⁵ Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991) 128-9.

Fleet Street,⁶ however almost unanimously backing the decisions of the government during the campaign, complained about the treatment they received to take account of the events. But media had also to face a major discontent from the public, politicians and soldiers about their behaviour. The debate on the role of the press during the conflict animated not only the spring of 1982, but had also repercussions months after the battles had ended, leading to parliamentary enquiries and debates. Robert Harris concluded that the Falklands Crisis “*exposed* habitual abuses by the armed forces, Government, Whitehall and the media; it did not *create* them.”⁷

The aim of this essay will be to analyze the attitude of the media during the conflict, paying a special attention to the popular press. What are the characteristics of the popular newspapers? Has the Falklands crisis been a particular event in the press? What was the relationship between the media and the authorities? Why did they adopt such a tone and behaviour? We will try to find answers to these questions.

The *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* will be at the centre of my study not only because they were the two best selling newspapers in Great Britain (each of them selling more than three million copies daily, that is at least ten times more copies than *The Times* for example)⁸ but also because they didn't share the same point of view towards the political decisions and the means to end the conflict. They were politically opposed: the *Sun* supporting the Conservative Party and the policies of the Government; the *Daily Mirror* backing the Labour Party. They also had different point of views towards the means to end the conflict: *The Sun*, which was owned by Australian Rupert Murdoch and whose editor was Kelvin MacKenzie, was in favour of a military action whereas the *Mirror*, owned by the International Publishing Company (IPC) and edited by Mike Molloy, begged for a diplomatic solution before any fire was shot.

Our study will focus on the issues of the newspapers between the 2nd of April and the 14th of June 1982, paying a special attention to the articles, reports, editorials as well as cartoons. We will be helped by studies and analyses that have already been made on the attitude of the media during the conflict, as well as more general works on the media market, characteristics and history, and on the conflict itself.

⁶ Fleet Street is a metonym for the British national press as a majority of national newspaper companies had their offices in this street of London. Although many have moved elsewhere, the metonym is still commonly used.

⁷ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis* (Trowbridge: Faber and Faber, 1983) 152 (emphases in the original).

⁸ Michael Parsons, “Le Times et la guerre des Malouines – aspects du discours de la guerre” (Bordeaux III, 1994), 106.

As it might be difficult for the reader to understand the ins and outs of this study without having in mind the background of the events, a general overview of the political context and events of the war will constitute a first part of my essay. The history of the dispute for the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, the political context in Argentina and Great Britain in the early 1980s and the events of the conflict will be summarized with the help of works and studies made about the subject.

The print media sphere was highly animated by a strong competition during the 1970s that was continuing during the 1980s. In a second part, we will make an overview of the popular press history throughout the 20th century in order to help us have a better understanding of the media market of the beginning of the 1980s. We will try to get a snapshot of the situation of the media at the outbreak of the conflict. Audience, readership, advertising incomes and the means used by newspapers to improve in these fields will be discussed. We will base our analysis on studies already made on the history and state of the media of the time.

In a third part, we will examine the working condition of the correspondents accompanying the task force, the relationship between Fleet Street and the Ministry of Defence concerning the control of information, as well as the public, military and political reaction of the handling of the press. Two specific works will be used as a basis of our study: the first from the journalist Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis* (Trowbridge: Faber and Faber, 1983) and the other being a academic study by Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986). The former was written by a journalist and published a year after the events, whereas the latter was the culmination of a study made by The Department of War Studies at King's College in London after an invitation made by the Ministry of Defence to make proposals for studies.

What are the characteristics of the popular press in terms of design, structure and content? To what extent these characteristics are relevant under the perspective of the events of the conflict? The answer to these questions will constitute a fourth part as we will analyze the issues of *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* with the support of books on media analysis, especially the works made by Martin Conboy⁹ and Jean-Claude Sergeant¹⁰.

⁹ Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁰ Jean-Claude Sergeant, *L'anglais du journalisme* (Paris: Ophrys, 2011).

The spring of 1982 was not only animated by the events of the Falklands campaign. It also aroused the strong competition between the newspapers. A final part will study the conflict as a media war and will focus on the differences between the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* in the coverage of the conflict, on the representation of the Argentine president and soldiers in the media, and on the question of objectivity of the media, which were at the origins of studies and debates on the role of the press during a conflict. Not only editorials will be examined, but also visual contents such as cartoons will be at the centre of our attention, as well as reactions from other newspapers over the attitude of the popular press during the conflict.

**I. THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL
CONTEXT, AND THE MAIN EVENTS OF
THE CONFLICT**

The Falklands conflict lasted only seventy-four days between the 2nd of April and the 14th of June 1982. Yet, it was the result of a two-century-long dispute over the sovereignty on the islands between Argentina and Great Britain. In this part, we will make a summary of the events that led to the conflict, provide elements of the political context of both countries at the outbreak of the conflict, and finally give a quick chronology of the events of the spring of 1982.

A. The History of the conflict

The first landing on the Falkland Islands is itself a subject of controversy. As the Englishman John Davis is credited to have discovered first the Islands in 1592, Argentina claims that Ferdinand Magellan and Amerigo Vespucci were the first explorers to have a sighting of the islands.¹¹ There is no doubt however that, a hundred years later in 1690, a British landing occurred on the two main islands of the archipelago led by Captain John Strong who named Falkland Sound the inlet between the two main islands, in honour of Viscount Falkland who gave financial support to the expedition.¹²

The first colony was nevertheless established by the French Louis Antoine de Bougainville in 1764 on East Falklands. He gave the islands the name of *Iles Malouines* after the city of Saint-Malo in Brittany from which the expedition took departure.¹³ A year later in 1765, a British landing on West Falkland was made by the English John Byron who claimed the islands for Britain.¹⁴ This was the beginning of a dispute that is still not resolved today. Yet, in 1767, the French sold the settlement to Spain claiming sovereignty over any South American territory – set aside the Portuguese settlements – in accordance with the Treaty of Tordesillas¹⁵ signed in 1494.¹⁶ Spain called the islands *Islas Malvinas* according to the French name, which is still today the denomination

¹¹ Christopher Dobson, John Miller and Roland Payne, *The Falklands Conflict* (London: Coronet Books, 1982) 14.

¹² Michael Parsons, *The Falklands War* (Sutton: Sutton Publishing, 2000) 5.

¹³ Michael White, "Who first owned the Falkland Islands?", *The Guardian*, 2/2/2012, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/blog/2012/feb/02/who-first-owned-falkland-islands>>

¹⁴ Michael Parsons, *The Falklands War*, *op. cit.*, 5.

¹⁵ The Treaty of Tordesillas was signed between Spain and Portugal in 1494 under the blessing of Pope Alexander VI. Its aim was to divide the territories of the New World between the two crowns.

¹⁶ Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team* (London: Sphere, 1983) 34.

claimed by Argentina. The Spanish quickly reacted over the English settlement and expelled the British colonists from the islands by force. The British, highly discontent with the events, demanded reparation and on the 22nd of January 1770, Spain and Great Britain signed a reciprocal declaration in which Spain condemned the expulsion of the British settlement and restored them back, while Britain reserved the right to sovereignty to Spain (although the British copy of the declaration had no mention of the latter clause). The British returned to the islands but quickly abandoned the colony, in 1764.¹⁷ Spain remained an undisputed sovereign over the islands until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

After Argentine gained its independence from Spain in 1816, they claimed the control of the previous colonial territories but according to Michael Reisman, professor of International Law:

A possible obstacle to Argentina's title is that even though Spain may have originally owned the islands, Argentina, as a former colony, could not claim them.¹⁸

Argentine nevertheless went back to the islands in 1820 and established a colony in 1826 when Buenos Aires granted land on East Falklands to the German merchant Luis Vernet in 1823. In 1829, he was appointed Governor of the Islands. It gave him the authority to proclaim exclusive rights for fishing and various trades. He therefore seized an American ship, "in a dispute over fishing." The United States provided a rapid response and sent USS *Lexington*, whose captain Silas Duncan arrested and disarmed the islanders.¹⁹ He declared them as free from all government in 1831. Great Britain saw a possibility to take back the sovereignty over the islands and HMS *Clio* sailed to the islands at the very beginning of 1833. A study specified:

There are two versions of subsequent events. According to Argentine history books the British sailors 'brutally' expelled the Argentine garrison of fifty men at Puerto de la Soledad. The British version is that there was merely a flag incident when the Union Jack was raised.²⁰

From then on, Great Britain has remained in possession of the Falkland Islands and established a permanent colony. And in 1908, South Georgia and the South Sandwich islands were declared under the British sovereignty as dependencies of the Falkland Islands.²¹

¹⁷ Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team*, op. cit., 37-8.

¹⁸ Michael Reisman, "The Struggle for the Falklands", *The Yale Law Journal* (Vol.93, n°2, 1983) 303.

¹⁹ Christopher Dobson, John Miller and Roland Payne, *The Falklands Conflict*, Op.Cit., 17.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ Max Hastings, Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (Bungay: Book Club Associates, 1983) 7.

Although the dissensions between Great Britain and Argentina never totally faded (Argentina still produced maps in which the *Islas Malvinas* were part of the country)²², strong claims from Buenos Aires were not put in the forefront until the end of the Second World War. Under the presidency of Juan Perón, “A ‘Malvinas Day’ was declared and there were rousing proclamations, but no attempt was made to use force.”²³ Meanwhile, Great Britain had decided to register the Falkland Islands with the United Nations as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.²⁴ In 1960, The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 1514 (XV) which claimed “the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations”²⁵ After strong persuasion from Argentina, Resolution 2065 (XX) was proclaimed in 1965 by the General Assembly and considered the Falklands/*Malvinas* dispute as a colonial problem and therefore invited both parts “to proceed without delay with the negotiations [...] with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the problem, bearing in mind [...] the interests of the population of the Falkland Islands.”²⁶

The negotiations began short after and went throughout the 1970s. They led to some agreements between the two countries, in terms of tourism, trades and fuel supplies for example.²⁷ In 1980, a leaseback of the islands was even considered.²⁸ It was comparable to the lease of Hong Kong to China: Great Britain would keep propriety of the islands for a finite period (Nicholas Ridley, Ministry of State at the Foreign Office, mentioned “two or three or more generations”²⁹) after which they would be leased to Argentina.³⁰ Negotiators yet had to face a desire of the islanders to remain British, and a strong opposition of the proposal by the parliament in London.³¹ The negotiations were hold as far as the beginning of 1982 but Argentine’s invasion of the islands on the 2nd of April changed the diplomatic dispute into a military conflict. It occurred a year before the 150th anniversary of the British possession of the Falklands.

²² Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team*, op. cit., 40.

²³ Michael Parsons, *The Falklands War*, op. cit., 14-5.

²⁴ Michael Reisman, “The Struggle for the Falklands”, *The Yale Law Journal*, op. cit., 308.

²⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Assembly, Resolution 1514 (XV), Supp. (No. 16), U.N. Doc. A/4684*, 1960, 67.

²⁶ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Assembly, Resolution 2065 (XX), Supp. (No. 14), U.N. Doc. A/6014*, 1965, 57.

²⁷ Christopher Dobson, John Miller and Roland Payne, *The Falklands Conflict*, op. cit., 21.

²⁸ *Britain and the Falkland Islands*, op. cit., 11.

²⁹ Rex Hunt, *My Falklands Days* (London: David and Charles, 2002) 102.

³⁰ Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team*, op. cit., 52.

³¹ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, op. cit., 39-41.

B. The political context in Great Britain and Argentina

1. In Great Britain

When the 1979 General Election was held, the Labour Government was at the head of a country in crisis. The winter of 1978-9 is commonly called the Winter of Discontent. Arthur Marwick explains:

The phrase signified the excessively high number of days lost to industrial action [...], the irritations caused to the public, and above all the inconvenience inflicted by strikes on the part of formerly rather docile employees [...], and the discontent of high-paid workers³²

Unemployment was at its highest, inflation accelerated, and Britain suffered recession. It was clear for the Conservative Party that they had a chance to have the support of the population in the polls.

The Conservative victory in the general election of May 1979 was certainly no landslide, though Mrs Thatcher called it a 'watershed'; at least the Government, unlike its labour predecessors, did have a secure parliamentary majority (forty-three overall).³³

Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative Party at the time, became the first woman to be Prime Minister.

The new Government implemented a series of reforms to counter the poor situation of the country at that time: wage increase was limited, Trade Unions were reformed as well as the civil service, strikes were more controlled, and public spending was cut drastically. Nevertheless, these reforms did not produce the effects Margaret Thatcher sought. She explains:

We were now spending more when we believed in spending less; inflation was high when we produced the primacy of bringing it down; and private industry was faltering when we had been saying for years that only successful free enterprise could make a country wealthy.³⁴

Between her first days of administration and the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, Margaret Thatcher had to face a strong unpopularity whose most emblematic demonstrations were the discontent of the steel workers, the strikes in the coal industry and the more tragic urban riots in April 1981. The riots continued for several weeks and their cause is often linked with the distrust of the police and authority. One person was

³² Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2003) 227.

³³ *Ibidem.*, 228.

³⁴ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 129.

killed and many were injured (among them were many policemen), and several shops and houses were seriously damaged.

In January 1981, a Cabinet reshuffle saw John Nott becoming Secretary of State for Defence. In order to save the country from economic recession, various cuts in spending were made. The 1981 Defence White paper, written by Nott, suggested that Britain should “curtail the surface role of the navy and reduce its need for costly surface warships.”³⁵ We have recently learned that Sir Henry Leach, who was First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff at the time, wrote to Margaret Thatcher and asked her a personal meeting to ask her to cancel the cuts in Naval spending as it would “prejudice [...] national security”.³⁶ Yet, Great Britain had sent a clear message: she was about to be more vulnerable and Argentina heard this message very clearly.

The choices of the Prime Minister during the Falklands Conflict were surely highly observed and analyzed by the population and the media.

2. In Argentina

Argentina’s political system was very unstable during the second half of the 20th century, democracy and dictatorship following one another.

In 1974, Isabel Perón succeeded her husband Juan Perón, who died in office, as president of Argentina.³⁷ She had to run a country in great economic difficulties: unbridled inflation, suspension of meat exportations to Europe and a growing foreign debt. In reply, her government was hard and repressive.³⁸ She was put aside the power by a *coup d’état* on 24th of March 1982 and the military government that called itself *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*³⁹ led by Jorge Videla.

One of the most tragic landmarks of the policies of the military junta was the forced disappearances (*desaparecidos*). Many political dissidents disappeared and their families never had any news from them. In fact, they were arrested par heavily armed, questioned, systematically tortured and sometimes assassinated. Eventually, many

³⁵ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, *op. cit.*, 11.

³⁶ Ian Woods, “Records Reveal Thatcher’s Defence Cuts Battle”, *Sky News Website*, <<http://news.sky.com/home/politics/article/16139426>>.

³⁷ Juan Perón was president from 1946 to 1955 (with a re-election in 1951), and then from 1973 until he died from a heart attack on the 1st of July 1974. She was vice-president of the country under her husband’s third mandate and elected with him.

³⁸ Leslie Bethell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America (vol. VIII)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 144-57.

³⁹ *i.e.*, National Reorganization Process

captives were heavily drugged and dropped over the Atlantic Ocean by plane, with heavy weights tied to their feet. The other victims were shot and their dead bodies were disposed in mass graves. Although the official account of victims is as much as 8,961, estimations vary between 10,000 and 30,000, as many disappearances were never denounced.⁴⁰ The control of information was so important that the notion of “disappearances” were kept quiet:

politicians, trade unionists, entrepreneurs, clergymen and people in the best position in Argentine society avoided the subject and ensured that the reality of the disappearances didn't emerge.⁴¹

From 1977, the mothers of the victims however congregated signs and pictures of their children on Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires to open the public's eyes to the activities of the military regime.⁴²

General Viola, who replaced Jorge Videla at the head of the country in March 1981, was put aside power by General Leopoldo Galtieri. Even before he became president of the nation, “Galtieri set about building himself up as a popular figure.”⁴³ In order to gain support from the population and contain growing demands for explanations for the disappearances, Galtieri used the question of the sovereignty of the *Islas Malvinas*. The reaction was beyond his wishes as Alain Rouquié shows:

[the Argentine Military] had tried their last chance with the Falklands by playing the nationalist card. And they almost succeeded, because all Argentina, including left-wing supporters, acclaimed the military dictator who was taking back the Falklands. There was an outstanding demonstration of chauvinism at that time.⁴⁴

Along March 1982, the Argentine naval forces took strategic moves to prepare the retake of the Falkland Islands and on the 2nd of April, Argentine soldiers landed and invaded the islands.

⁴⁰ Lucas G. Martin, « Le mensonge organisé pendant la dernière dictature argentine » *Penser la société argentine avec Hannah Arendt, Tumultes*, 2008/1 n°30, 195.

⁴¹ « les hommes politiques, les syndicalistes, les entrepreneurs, l'Eglise et les personnes les mieux placées de la société argentine évitaient le sujet et contribuaient à ce que la réalité des disparitions n'apparaisse pas » *Ibidem.*, 205.

⁴² Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: the mothers of Plaza de Mayo* (Oxford: SR Books, 2004) 288.

⁴³ Christopher Dobson, John Millera and Roland Payne, *The Falklands Conflict, op. cit.*, 35.

⁴⁴ « [les militaires argentins] avaient tenté leur va-tout avec les Malouines, en jouant la carte nationaliste. Et ils ont failli réussir, parce que tous les argentins, y compris de gauche, sont allés applaudir le général dictateur qui était en train de reprendre les Malouines. Il y eu un élan chauvin formidable à ce moment-là » Jean Joana and Alain Rouquié, « Amérique latine : l'état militaire à l'épreuve des transitions », *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 2008/1 Vol.15, 157.

C. The main events of the Falklands Conflict

The Falklands conflict lasted seventy-four days between the 2nd of April and the 14th of June 1982. However, events occurred in two times. The month of April concentrated the political efforts to end the conflict by diplomacy while the task force was preparing to sail to the South Atlantic, whereas May and June saw the confrontation of two military forces.

When the Argentine army invaded the Falkland Islands on the 2nd of April 1982, the tensions between Great Britain and Argentina had already risen. London was already aware that military movements from the Argentine fleet took place in the South Atlantic, without knowing nevertheless if a real attack would happen. As soon as on the 26th of March 1982, intelligent sources in Buenos Aires had alerted the British government that an Argentine invasion on the Islands was close but the authorities didn't take account of it.⁴⁵ However, Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, asked his American counterpart to intervene and ask the junta to avoid a military action. However, on 1st of April, Rex Hunt, governor of the Falklands "announced to his shocked listeners that 'there is mounting evidence that the Argentine armed forces are preparing to invade the Falklands'."⁴⁶ Indeed, on the next morning, Argentine forces landed and took possession of the islands. In Great Britain, the population had to wait until the end of the afternoon for the confirmation of the news in a press conference held by Lord Carrington and John Nott (who was Secretary of State for Defence).

In the meantime, on the islands, the military *junta* put in practice their status of invaders. Rex Hunt remembers the behaviour of the belligerents:

The Argentine Government guaranteed the continuity of the Islanders' way of life in an atmosphere of peace, order and harmony. As we were later to learn, subsequent edicts show how hollow was this guarantee: for example, one decreed that all traffic should travel henceforth on the right-hand side of the road and another that Spanish would be the official language and teaching medium in schools.⁴⁷

The United Nations Security Council resolution 502 was adopted on the 3rd of April. It asked for the withdraw of Argentine forces, the use of diplomacy to avoid any further

⁴⁵ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, *op. cit.*, 61.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem.*, 72.

⁴⁷ Rex Hunt, *My Falkland Days*, *op. cit.*, 201.

military action and permitted Great Britain to claim the right of self-defence.⁴⁸ As a result, British task force got prepared and sailed to the South Atlantic, stopping by Ascension. Ascension was a British territory which was used as the British Task Force base during the conflict. It permitted the storage and re-equipment of supplies and artillery brought in by air to the army.⁴⁹



Fig. 1: Map of the Falkland Islands in the Atlantic Ocean

(Source: Max Hastings, Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (Bungay: Book Club Associates, 1983).

At a political level, Lord Carrington resigned from office. Margaret Thatcher tells: “Having seen Monday’s press, in particular the *Times* leader, he decided that he must go”⁵⁰ and appointed Francis Pym as his successor. Meanwhile, Alexander Haig, United States Secretary of State, was charged to conduct the negotiations between Great Britain and Argentina:

There were seven main elements:

First, both Britain and Argentina would agree to withdraw from the islands and specified surrounding area within a two-week period.

⁴⁸ Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team*, *op. cit.*, 110-1.

⁴⁹ Michael Parsons, *The Falklands War*, *op. cit.*, 44.

⁵⁰ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, *op. cit.*, 186.

Second, no further military forces were to be introduced and forces withdrawn were to return to normal duties. [...]

Third, there would be a Commission, in place of the Governor, made up of United States, British and Argentine representatives who would act together [...] to ensure compliance with the agreement. [...]

Fourth, economic and financial sanctions against Argentina would be lifted.

Fifth, the traditional local administration of the islands would be restored, including the re-establishment of the Executive and Legislative Councils, to which Argentina representatives from the tiny Argentine population in the Falklands would be added. [...]

Sixth, the Commission would promote travel, trade and communications between the islands and Argentina, but the British Government would have a veto on its operations.

Finally, negotiations on a lasting settlement would be pursued ‘consistently with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter.’⁵¹

Meanwhile tension arose and on the 23rd of April, Great Britain informed Argentina that any military or civilian ship or aircraft representing a threat to the task force would be destroyed.⁵² On the 25th of April, South Georgia was taken back by the British army against a poor Argentine resistance.⁵³ Facing remarks from the media, Margaret Thatcher declared “Just rejoice at that news and congratulate our forces and the marines.” On the 26th of April, Great Britain declared that the time for diplomacy was running-out and on the 29th, Argentina refused Haig’s proposals. By early May, the first fires and casualties were about to happen.

On the 3rd of May, the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk by the British fleet, causing the loss of 323 lives. The next day, an *Exocet* missile hit HSM *Sheffield*, killing 20 crew members. It sank some days later.

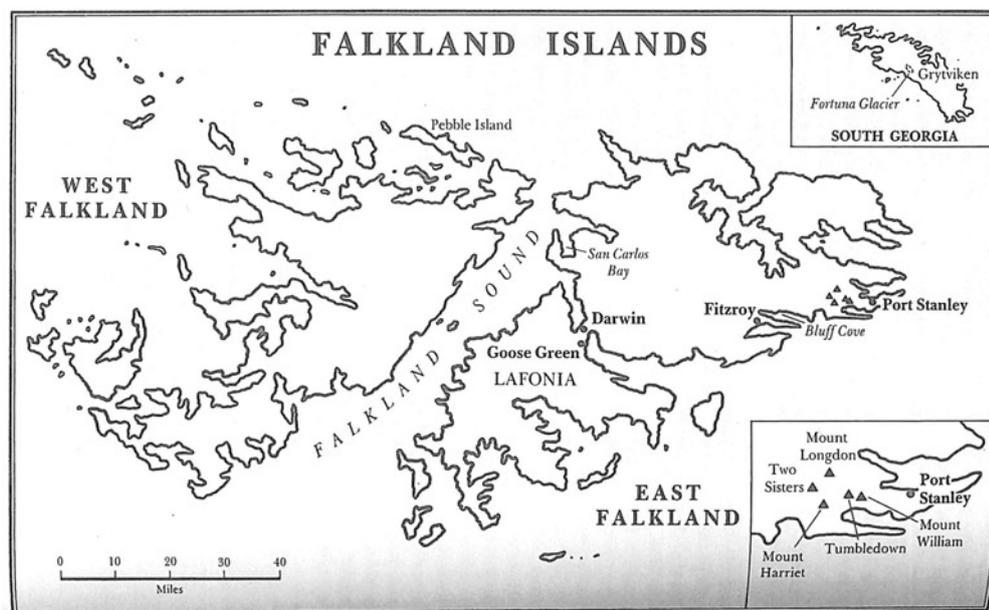


Fig. 2: Map of the Falkland Islands

(Source: Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

⁵¹ *Ibidem.*, 194-5.

⁵² Michael Parsons, *The Falklands War*, *op. cit.*, 88.

⁵³ *Ibidem.*, 49-54.

The British troops landed at San Carlos Bay on the 21st of May. Battles on land were difficult mainly because they had to advance by foot in a very uneasy practicable territory, but also because of the bad weather.⁵⁴

The advance of the British troops was marked by the Battle of Goose Green which occurred between the 28th and the 29th of May. In military terms Goose Green wasn't a necessary target. However, it seemed relevant to take back one of the major Argentine base which supplied the *junta* of men and equipment. The British army lost eighteen men while Argentine lost 250, and 1,000 Argentine soldiers were captured.⁵⁵

In the meantime, sea and air battles continued. On the 23rd of May, British HMS *Antelope* was hit by two Argentine missiles but didn't explode. However one did when an expert tried to defuse them, causing his death. The ship sank the next afternoon.⁵⁶

When the troops arrived near Port Stanley, they had to face new difficulties. The capital was surrounded with several mounts on top of which Argentine military strategic settlements. After a night of battle, the British troops succeeded in putting down the Argentine army. On the 14th of June, when the troops entered Port Stanley, they found white flags waving as symbol of the surrender of the military *junta*. A cease fire was signed and General Mario Menéndez surrendered to Major General Jeremy Moore on the same day.⁵⁷

On the 20th of June, South Sandwich was taken back without any fight. Britain formally declared an end to hostilities.

⁵⁴ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 125-127.

⁵⁵ Paul Eddy, Magnus Linklater and Peter Gillman (eds.), *The Falklands War: The Full Story by the Sunday Times Insight Team*, *op. cit.*, 217-9.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem.*, 204-5.

⁵⁷ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, *op. cit.*, 285-314.

**II. THE HISTORY OF THE POPULAR
PRESS AND THE MEDIA MARKET IN
THE EARLY 1980s**

The media sphere in the early 1980s was led by a strong competitive battle among the press, which was the consequence of dramatic changes in the market in the 1970s. In this part, we will provide a history of the popular press – our subject of research – and analyse the state of the media market at the outbreak of the conflict.

A. The History of the Popular Press

The *Daily Mirror* was created in 1903 by Alfred Harmsworth in a desire to compete with the *Daily Mail* – launched in 1896 and whose circulation at the end of the Boer War in 1902 was over a million⁵⁸ – and the *Daily Express* – started in 1900. One of the reasons for the success of the *Daily Mail* was that it was sold for a halfpenny, a cheaper price than other newspapers'. Yet, other reasons can be found in the sudden popularity of the popular press:

Victorian technological genius and the growing need for a basically literate workforce to meet its increasingly more sophisticated demands provided all elements for a revolution in Fleet Street: a new network of railways that reached into the most remote corners of the country, a telegraph system that linked almost every village with London, and millions of new 'graduates' of the 1870 Education Act, hungry for something to read but for whom the established dailies were too dull or esoteric to warrant the expenditure of a penny.⁵⁹

However, the *Mirror* had its particularity: it was intended to be “the first daily newspaper in the world produced for and by gentlewomen”.⁶⁰ The first issue came off presses on the 2nd of November 1903, with a first print run of 276,000 copies. The launch of the *Daily Mirror* was enormous as Chris Horrie relates:

The launch cost £100,000, with even more money lavished on assembling the paper's main gimmick – an all-female staff, described in the pre-launch advertising as “a large staff of cultivated, able and experienced women”. Huge ads were taken out in the *Mail* itself reminding “sir” to buy a copy of the “*Daily Mirror* for the wife at home. “No newspaper,” Alfred later wrote, “was ever started with such a boom. I advertised it everywhere. If there was anyone in the United Kingdom not aware that the *Daily Mirror* was to be started he must have been deaf, dumb, blind or all three.”⁶¹

Within two months however, the circulation fell to less than 25,000 copies daily. So that Alfred Harmsworth considered it as “an unmitigated disaster” and “the laughing stock of Fleet Street”.⁶²

⁵⁸ Dennis Griffiths, *Fleet Street: Five Hundred Years of the Press* (London: British Library, 2006) 132-3.

⁵⁹ Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street* (London: Comedia, 1985) 34.

⁶⁰ Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid* (London: André Deutsch, 2003) 17.

⁶¹ *Ibidem.*, 20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 17.

Alfred Harmsworth took the decision to get a new editor, Hamilton Fyfe, and changed the editorial line of the paper. Instead of being a “ladies’ newspaper”, the *Mirror*, would become a “picture paper”. The re-launch of the paper occurred in January 1904 under the name of the *Daily Illustrated Mirror* – only for a few months before it changed back to its original title – and its first issue was sold at a circulation of 71,000 copies. Regular sales rose dramatically to “just under a million in a few years.”⁶³ Hamilton Fyfe explained the reasons of the success of the new formula of the *Mirror*:

The shape and content of the *Daily Mirror* recommended it strongly to those who needed something to help them through their half-hour's journey to work in the morning. Packed in tram, train, or omnibus, standing up perhaps and holding on to a strap with one hand, they required in the other, not a journal to stir thought or supply serious information, but one to entertain them, occupy their minds pleasantly, prevent them for thinking. It was easier to look at pictures than to read print. The news was displayed and worded in a manner that made assimilation simple. Everything in the *Daily Mirror* was calculated to be easy of absorption by the most ordinary intelligence.⁶⁴



Fig. 3: Daily Illustrated Mirror, 25/01/1904

Sensationalism was already one of the features of the paper, so that on the 14th of May 1910, the *Mirror*'s front page showed a picture of recently dead King Edward VII on his deathbed. On that day, the newspaper sold 2,013,000 copies which at the time became a world record. The journalists and editors of the paper thought they would be

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Kevin Williams, *Read All About It!: A History of the British Newspaper* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 133.

libelled for treason, as the photographs have probably been stolen. Instead, Queen Alexandra declared “she had allowed the *Mirror* to print the pictures because it was her ‘favourite paper’.”⁶⁵

As much popular the paper was, Alfred Harmsworth – now entitled Lord Northcliffe – considered it as his “bastard offspring”⁶⁶ and sold it in 1914 for £100,000 to his brother Harold Rothermere. During the First World War, the paper called itself the “forces paper” and its circulation rose from 1.2 million to 1.7 million within the first year of fighting: “It had the highest sale of any daily paper”⁶⁷

On the 25th of January 1911, was launched the *Daily Herald* originally as a strike sheet.⁶⁸ It had a socialist orientation and was founded by a group of trade union activists.⁶⁹ The Daily Herald Company was however forced to liquidation in 1913. It resumed daily publication in 1919 as it was taken over by the Trade Union Congress and re-financed by support from the Odhams Press.⁷⁰ It developed a policy of “buying readers” by spending £3 million a year on “promotions”. In addition, the *Herald* offered free-gifts such as “pens, tea-sets, clothes, kitchen equipment, cut-glass vases and complete bound sets of Dickens for subscribers of the paper.”⁷¹

The *Daily Herald*'s circulation rose and in 1933, it became the best-selling newspaper with a circulation of two millions. It was the first demonstration of a big competition among the popular press during the 1930s. The *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Express* (2.37 million daily sales in 1937) were ahead of the *Daily Mirror* (circulation of 800,000 in 1934)⁷² and the *Daily Mail* (its circulation fell from 1.85 million in 1930 to 1.58 million by 1937)⁷³ in terms of sale. The competition was mainly the consequence of the policies put in place to entice readers to subscribe to their paper.” It led to an increase of the global readership of newspapers in Great Britain. Yet, “As more people read or at least subscribed to newspapers, the number of papers they could buy diminished”⁷⁴ which cause great difficulties to newspapers that had lower

⁶⁵ Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid*, *op. cit.*, 26.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem.*, 31.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁸ Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a community through language*, *op. cit.*, 7.

⁶⁹ Kevin Williams, *Read All About It!: A History of the British Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 153.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem.*, 153-4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁷² Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid*, *op. cit.*, 45.

⁷³ Kevin Williams, *Read All About It!: A History of the British Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 154.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem.*

circulation, and many of them (especially provincial mornings and Sunday national newspapers) were forced to closure.⁷⁵

The competition had an impact on the content of the press, and especially the popular. Market researches were produced and editors changed the content according to the results of these researches. Arthur Christiansen, editor of the *Daily Express*, is one of those who revolutionized the design and content of the newspapers in order to please the people. He produced general principles:

- There is no subject, no abstract thing that cannot be translated in terms of people.
- Avoid words of Latin or French derivation and try to find the Anglo-Saxon word that does the job.
- The last paragraph of a story should be as punchy as the first.
- One good home story is worth two foreign stories.
- Always, always, tell the news through people.
- Good stories flow like honey. Bad stories stick in the craw. What is a bad story? It is a story that cannot be absorbed on the first time of reading. It is a story that leaves questions unanswered. It is a story that has to be read two or three times to be comprehended. And a good story can be turned into a bad story by just one obscure sentence.
- Make the news exciting, even when it (is) dull... make news palatable by lavish presentation... the viewpoint that is optimistic.⁷⁶

During the Second World War, there was a shortage of newsprint “which meant that newspapers had to shrink in size.”⁷⁷ The *Daily Mirror* focused on the views of the British people in a more intense way than its rivals that the *Mirror* called the “Heil Hitler Press”.⁷⁸ It caused a great support for the paper from the population and the circulation of the paper rose dramatically (from 1.5 million sales in 1939 to 2.5 million sales and 11 million readers in 1945).⁷⁹ The popularity of the paper was not shared with the British authorities. One of the most famous examples of the dissension between the *Mirror* and the government was the “Price of Oil” cartoon: on the 5th of March 1942, the paper printed a cartoon by Philip Zec, in which could be seen “a muscular merchant sailor clinging on to a driftwood raft facing a certain death on the open ocean after, it seemed, his ship had been torpedoed by the Germans.”⁸⁰ Its caption was “The price of petrol has been increased – OFFICIAL”. The *Mirror*, with this cartoon, wanted to support the war effort. However,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁷⁸ Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid*, op. cit., 70.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem.*, 246.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

It attracted criticism from the government because of its potential effect on national morale, perhaps because illusionist style invited realist interpretation and sympathy for the fate of the common sailor rather than the greater cause.⁸¹



Fig. 4: Philip Zec, “The Price of Petrol has been increased – OFFICAL”, *Daily Mirror*, 5/3/1942.

After the end of the war, the paper adopted the slogan “Forward for the People” and later supported the Labour Party for the 1945 General Election. Analyses conclude that the Labour victory at the election was in great part due to the *Mirror*’s campaign.⁸² By the end of the 1940s, the *Daily Mirror*’s daily sales exceeded 4 million and the paper had overtaken the *Daily Express* as best selling newspaper in Britain.

During the 1956 Suez Crisis, the *Daily Mirror* was the only newspaper challenging the Conservative Government’s actions and opposed to the war. This anti-war campaign cost the paper an estimated 70,000 daily sales but Hugh Cudlipp, editorial director of the *Mirror*, is presumed to have said it was the price to pay “to keep the paper on the side of the Labour party and progressive opinion generally”.⁸³ However, competition during the 1950s was very little. The *Daily Herald* was in decline and the *Express* had its circulation rising at a lower rate than the *Mirror*. A threat appeared however in the media market in 1955, and that was ITV. The BBC already existed but was exempted of advertisement, and therefore did not compete with the press in the sector of adverting incomes. ITV’s revenues stood on adverting. As a reaction, the *Daily Mirror* changed its formula in 1959 to become the “youth” paper. On

⁸¹ James Aulich, “Wildlife in the South Atlantic: Graphic Satire, Patriotism and the Fourth Estate” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992) 98.

⁸² Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid*, op. cit., 71-2.

⁸³ *Ibidem.*, 92.

the 12th of October 1959, the paper announced that it was a “New *Mirror*... sparkling NEW ideas, NEW features, NEW contests, NEW writers...”.⁸⁴ The reception was great and the Express appeared old fashioned. “The *Daily Mirror* was the daily popular leader throughout the 1960s, reaching its sales peak of 5.28 million in late 1967.”⁸⁵

After years of decline, the *Daily Herald* was purchased by the International Publishing Corporation – owners of the *Mirror* - as part of a greater purchase including profitable magazines. However, IPC conceded the Trade Union Congress which were tied with the *Herald* that they would keep the paper going. With losses continuing to grow, IPC decided to re-launch the paper and renamed it *The Sun*. This did not help the paper gaining readers and its circulation fell from 1.5 million in 1964 to 850,000 in 1969⁸⁶ when the paper was sold to Rupert Murdoch, an Australian press owner who wanted to enter the media market and had already acquired several years before the weekly *News of the World*. Murdoch made some profound changes to the paper and hired Larry Lamb as editor. “The design of the paper was to be based on the *Mirror* with tabloid pages bristling with irresistible hooks for the eye.”⁸⁷ Printing moved from Manchester to Bouverie Street in London. *The Sun* had a disadvantage compared to other dailies: it was only printed in London (whereas others were also printed in Manchester). It meant that copies had to be printed earlier than the others to catch the train to be distributed early on the next morning in the north of the country. As a consequence, for instance, soccer results were too late to appear on the newspaper for the morning after.

The Sun took the slogan “Forward for the People” that the *Mirror* abandoned little time before and hired famous journalists and cartoonists that had made the *Mirror* popular in the past.⁸⁸ On the 15th of November 1969, the last edition of the “old” *Sun* printed on its leader:

YOUR SUN will be different on Monday. Very different.
But the most important thing to remember is that the new SUN will be the paper that CARES. The paper that cares – passionately – about truth, and beauty and justice.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁸⁵ Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain* (London: Constable and Company, 1983) 83.

⁸⁶ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper* (London: Pocket Books, 2005) 9.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem.*, 21.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 25-6.

⁸⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 23.

It introduced photographs of topless women and a year later created the “Page 3 Girl” (the publication of a topless model on page three every day), which created much jeering from its rivals.⁹⁰

Hugh Cudlipp wasn’t afraid of the newcomer and told there was “no reason to worry about”.⁹¹ However, in 1969 *The Sun* was selling about one million copies, in 1973, its circulation reached 3 million and by 1978 it overtook the *Mirror*’s leading position.⁹²

In 1978 was launched the *Daily Star* which copied *The Sun*’s successful formula including pictures of topless models and was sold at a cheaper price than *The Sun*’s. It led to a loss of reader for the paper: it a few months, its circulation fell down from 4 million daily to 3.6 million. *The Sun* reacted by a strong advertising campaign in by 1980 the circulation rose again.

As Jeremy Tunstall wrote in his analysis of the British media market, “The 1980s were going to be the second consecutive decade in which competition quickened.”⁹³

B. The media market in 1982

As we have seen, competition was at its highest in the beginning of the 1980s. We will try to examine the media market of the time so as to find reasons for the editorial choices of the newspapers. We will first analyse readership, then we will examine the advertising dependencies of the newspapers and finally study the bingo war that alimented the media sphere in the early 1980s.

1. Audience and readership

When dealing with the newspaper market, we have to make a first distinction: between the nationals and the provincials: “the national dailies were all morning papers (containing the serious news of politics, finance and sport) while the provincial were

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-35.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 498-9.

⁹³ Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain*, op. cit., 86.

primarily evening papers, carrying little national news.”⁹⁴ At the beginning of the 1980s, the national dailies had two thirds of the total market, and a third going to the provincials which were in decline (42% of adults in 1970 to 32% in 1981/82).⁹⁵

The BBC comedy show “Yes Minister” summarized the national newspaper readership in the tone of humour:

Hacker: Don't tell me about the press. I know exactly who reads the papers: The *Daily Mirror* is read by people who think they run the country; The *Guardian* is read by people who think they ought to run the country; The *Times* is read by the people who actually do run the country; The *Daily Mail* is read by the wives of the people who run the country; The *Financial Times* is read by people who own the country; The *Morning Star* is read by people who think the country ought to be run by another country; And The *Daily Telegraph* is read by people who think it is.

Sir Humphrey: Prime Minister, what about the people who read *The Sun*?

Bernard: *Sun* readers don't care who runs the country, as long as she's got big tits.⁹⁶

The national daily newspaper market could be split into two distinctive groups: the quality newspapers (comprising in 1982 the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Financial Time*) and the popular press (which included *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Star*) not only because of their editorial choices, but also because circulations between the “qualities” and the “populars” were different. For example, at the outbreak of the Falklands conflict, *The Sun* sold thirteen times more copies than *The Times* (Fig. 5.1 and 5.2). It was established that each sector didn't search therefore for the same audience. It meant that “in order to survive as viable businesses down-market newspapers have to attract big circulations, and they do this by publishing material that had the broadest appeal.”⁹⁷

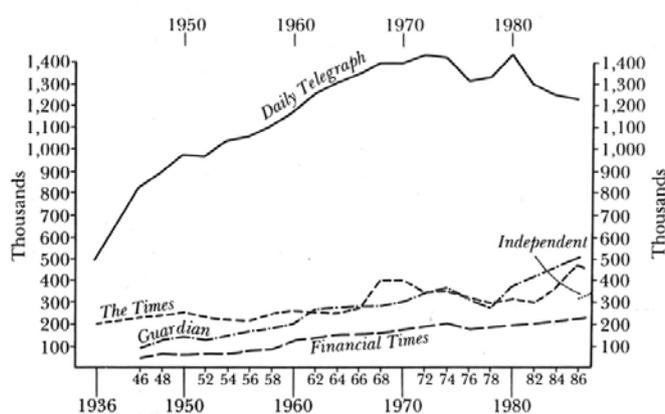


Fig. 5.1: Quality newspapers circulation between 1936 and 1986
(Source: Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media* (London: Routledge, 1989) 68).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁹⁶ “A conflict of Interest” (Series 2, Episode 4), *Yes Minister* (BBC, 1987)

⁹⁷ Dick Rooney, “Dynamics of the British Tabloid Press”, *The Public*, Vol.5 (1998) 96.

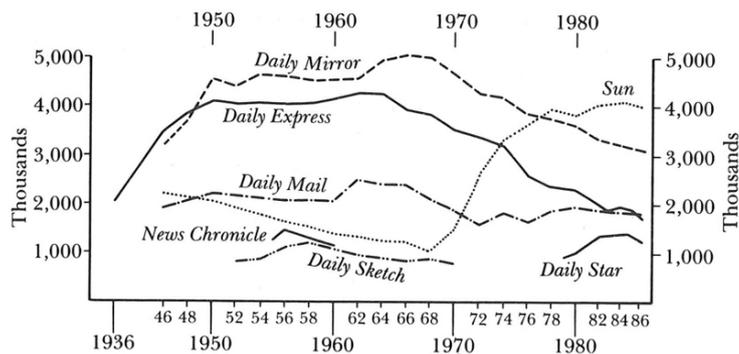


Fig. 5.2: Popular newspapers circulation between 1936 and 1986
(Source: Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media* (London: Routledge, 1989) 68).

The readership of *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* in 1980 represented respectively 11.5 million and 10.9 million, making a combine readership for both newspapers of more than 22 million. Studies demonstrated that

the proportions of men and women tended to be fairly even, although of course there are differences *within* the medium – sport and politics being preferred by men, women’s features and entertainment news preferred by women. National daily newspapers in 1981 had 55 men readers for every 45 women readers; the only main exception was the *Financial Times* with men constituting 74% of the readers.⁹⁸

Studies also showed that the “crucial area of competition between the *Mirror* and *The Sun* has always been among the under-35s.

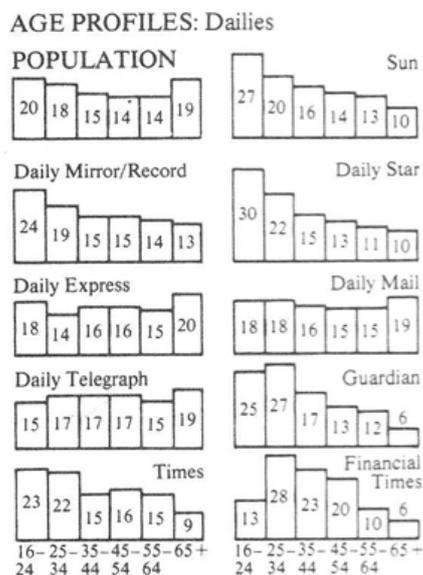


Fig. 6.1: Age repartition of national newspapers readers in 1981
(Source: Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain* (London: Constable and Company, 1983) 77).

A quarter of the readers of both newspapers was between 16 and 24, and a fifth was between 25 and 34. Analyses of the editorial content of both papers showed that the two papers attempted to gain young readers (We learnt in the previous chapter that the *Daily*

⁹⁸ Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain*, op. cit., 128.

Mirror changed its formula into a “youth newspaper”). Younger people were the main target of the newspapers as they were irregular buyers of newspapers and preferred reading magazines, and the newspapers wanted to be more attractive to this population.⁹⁹

As far as social groups are concerned, the competition between the two newspapers concerned C2, D and E groups (Fig. 6.2). Social classes are divided into 6 groups in a scale from A to E with a subdivision of the C group. They are described as:

- A: Upper middle-class (high-income professionals, executives, etc.).
- B: Middle-class (middle-rank income groups embracing wide range, professional, managerial self-employed).
- C: Lower middle class (white-collar and other non-manual workers, owners of small businesses).
- C2: Skilled workers (tradesmen, foremen, etc.).
- D: Semi-skilled, unskilled manual workers
- E: Pensioners and those dependent on social security.¹⁰⁰

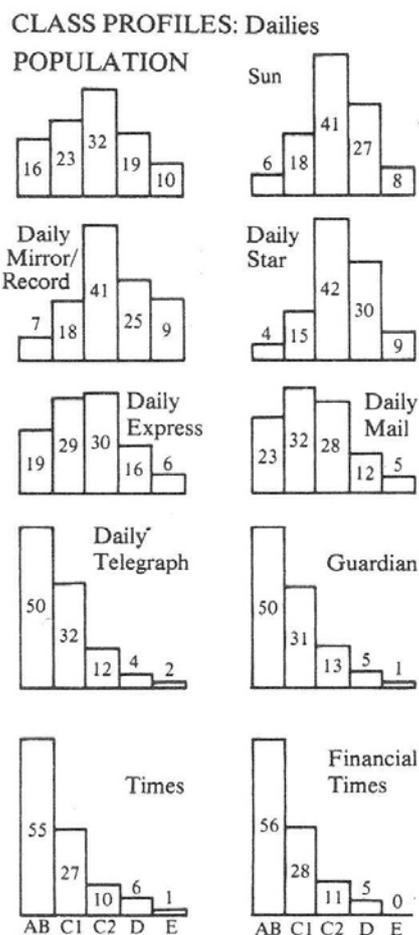


Fig. 6.2: Social class repartition of national newspapers readers in 1981
(Source: Jeremy Tuntstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain* (London: Constable and Company, 1983) 77).

⁹⁹ *Ibidem.*, 128.

¹⁰⁰ Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street*, *op. cit.*, 36.

Both newspapers had more readers who identified themselves as Labour supporters than Conservatives supporters. The difference is more marked within the *Mirror* readership but even though *The Sun* supported the Conservative party in the 1979 General Election, they had more Labour readers than Conservative ones.

The Sun, however, didn't consider itself as Conservative. It wrote

The Sun is not a Tory newspaper... The Sun is above all a RADICAL newspaper. And we believe that this time [in 1979] the only radical proposals being put to you are being put by Maggie Thatcher and her Tory team.¹⁰¹

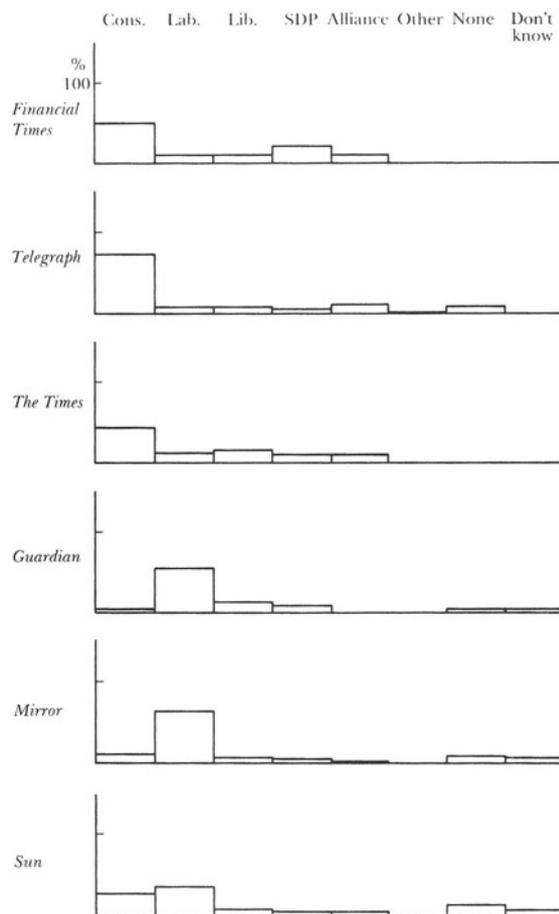


Fig 6.3: Party identification of newspaper readers in 1985
(Source: Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media* (London: Routledge, 1989) 70).

Studies tried to analyze the reasons of this contradiction between the paper's political orientation and their readership. Surveys pointed out that

The Sun's readers apparently saw it as containing little news, as being prone to sensationalism, as getting its facts wrong and using trivial stories. [...] Why, then, did its readers read *The Sun*? Presumably the answer lies in the high proportion of readers who found *The Sun* 'enjoyable'.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, op. cit., 73.

¹⁰² Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain*, op. cit., 158.

This reason explains another ambiguity of *The Sun's* readership: while newspaper readers were rather loyal to their newspapers mainly because most of them were home delivered on order,¹⁰³ readers of *The Sun* mainly bought their copies on the street or in retailers.

2. Advertising

The advertising incomes repartition was different between quality and popular newspapers. Because their circulations were higher, the popular press needed less advertising budget which represented 40% of their total income (against 70% for the quality press). However, “without this extensive support, many of our newspapers, for example, would either cost much, much more or cease to exist.”¹⁰⁴ Tom Baistow gave in 1985 an analysis of the importance of advertising in the newspaper industry:

Advertising not only subsidises a paper's cover price but determines how many pages it will print on a given day: the size of the issue is not decided normally on the amount of news coming in but on the amount of advertising that has been booked. It is a vicious circle – with fewer ads, and therefore fewer pages, a paper appears to the reader to offer less value for money than fatter rivals; dissatisfied readers switch to other papers and the resulting fall in sales hastens the decline in advertising revenue. Yet the leftish *News Chronicle* and *Daily Herald* died 25 years ago not so much from lack of readers as lack of the right ads: both had circulations of over one million, a figure which in any other country, including the United States, would have put them at the top of the sales charts but in Britain's fiercely competitive national newspaper league is not enough to keep a popular paper alive at the going cover price.¹⁰⁵

Advertising became a major issue, as the 1970s saw an increase in consumers' expenditures. A survey showed that 60.3% of British households had a car, 82.9% had a washing machine, 94.8% had a refrigerator, 96.9% had a television and 71.6% had a telephone.¹⁰⁶

Most of the *Mirror* and the *Sun* readers were from the C2+D+E social groups. This places them among the poorer sections of the population, but not necessarily among the most poor. Most of them were among a band of the population that was neither rich nor poor. [...] In 1974 *Mirror* and *Sun* readers comprised more than 50 per cent of the UK total in the following groups: members of car owning households, members of two car households, petrol buyers, adults with phones, those who had moved home in the previous two years, holiday takers, those with colour television and those with 12 consumer durables.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *Ibidem.*, 134

¹⁰⁴ Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989) 78.

¹⁰⁵ Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street*, *op. cit.*, 37.

¹⁰⁶ Dick Rooney, “Dynamics of the British Tabloid Press”, *The Public*, *op. cit.*, 98.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem.*, 98-9.

	<i>Mirror</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mirror and Sun combined</i>
Proportion of UK population who are readers	33	28	61
Members of car owning hsehd	32	27	59
Member of two car hsehd	30	24	54
Petrol buyers	31	28	59
Adults with phone	38	23	61
Moved home in past 2 yrs	32	30	62
Holiday takers	32	27	59
Colour TV	34	32	66
12 consumer durables*	31	25	56

* Respondents were asked if they possessed 12 or more from the following list of durables: electric cooker, gas cooker, vacuum cleaner, electric dish washer, washing machine (twin-tub, automatic, or other), sewing machine, lawn mower (hand powered or powered), record player, colour television, electric fan heater, refrigerator, deep freezer, electric kettle, electric food mixer, power tool, electric polisher, electric iron (dry or steam), electric blanket.

Fig. 7: *Proportion of total UK Consumption of a Selection of Goods and Services Made by Readers of Mirror or Sun (1974, in percentages)*

(Source: Dick Rooney, "Dynamics of the British Tabloid Press", The Public, 99).

Television companies represented a new competitor in the media advertising market. The BBC however, founded in 1927, wasn't a threat in this sector as it didn't broadcast any advertisements. Its revenues were made from licences and governments aids. In 1974, the *Annan Report on the Future of Broadcasting* reassured that "no BBC service should be financed by any form of advertising."¹⁰⁸ However, ITV, founded in 1955, was a far greater threat. "The bulk of revenue of the ITV companies comes from advertising".¹⁰⁹ We have already learnt that the *Daily Mirror*, in the late 1950s, did a mini re-launch to become a "youth newspaper" in order to compete with the newcomer ITV. Instead of putting themselves against the television, the popular press gave great interest in this new media. The coverage of television programmes represented a large part of the papers. Alastair Hetherington, former editor of *The Guardian*, explained:

"The prominence given to television and entertainment personalities (is) perhaps the nearest thing to a late 20th century 'opium of the people'. In this respect, popular TV and the popular press feed off one another."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting* (London: HMSO, 1977) 131.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem.*, 162.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Pascale Villate-Compton, "La presse populaire", in Bertrand Lemonnier, Claude Chastagner, Renée Dickason, Michel Etcheverry, Françoise Luton, Robert Tatham and Pascale Villate-Compton, *Médias et culture de masse en Grande-Bretagne depuis 1945* (Paris : Armand Colin, 1999) 110.

	<i>National Newspapers</i> £	<i>% of all advertising</i>	<i>Television</i> £	<i>% of all advertising</i>
1964	86m	20.8	102m	24.6
1969	111m	21.4	129m	24.9
1974	161m	17.8	203m	22.6
1979	347m	16.3	471m	22.1
1984	677m	16.7	1,245m	30.7

Fig. 8: Distribution of advertising revenue, 1964-84

(Source: Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street* (London: Comedia, 1985) 41).

But as we have learnt, popular newspapers relied more on circulation than on advertising revenues:

The popular tabloids take advertising but the low prices charged per thousand readers means that they spend most of the resulting revenue on the paper, production, ink and wage costs of putting these advertisements into the paper; they operate from a primary sales revenue base, which forces them to maximise sales.¹¹¹

3. The bingo war of 1981

We learnt in Chapter II.A that the *Daily Herald* tried to “buy readers” in the 1920s to increase its circulation by giving free-gifts to those who bought the newspaper, and that it achieved its purpose as the *Herald* became the best-selling newspaper in the 1930s.

In 1981, the recently started *Daily Star* repeated this formula with the same intentions by creating “bingo”. The *Star* printed each day “a series of numbers which its readers could check off on special scorecards distributed throughout the country.”¹¹² Brian Hitchen, the London editor of the paper at the time, explained the reasons for the introduction of bingo:

If you run a £500,000 advertising campaign on TV, you’re very lucky if 2 per cent of the new readers stick with you. With bingo we were getting a sticking rate of 37 per cent.¹¹³

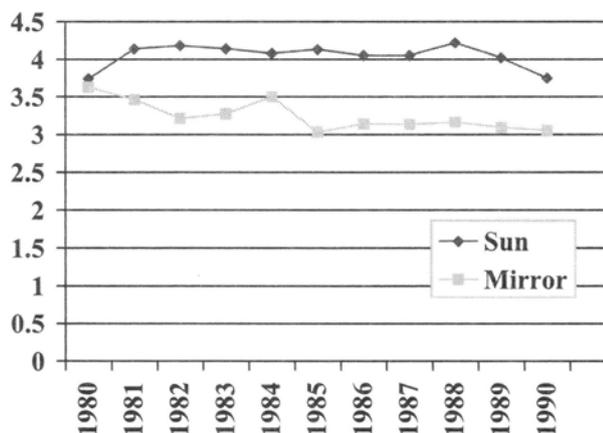
Indeed, the circulation of the *Star* rose dramatically in a short time and had some effects on the circulation of *The Sun*, which had been joined by its rival the *Mirror* that suffered less from the *Star*’s new successes (Fig. 9). Larry Lamb, who had been editor of the paper since its takeover by Rupert Murdoch in 1969, was replaced by Kelvin MacKenzie. The first decisions made to stop the loss of readers were to cut off the price

¹¹¹ Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain*, op. cit., 77.

¹¹² Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 41.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*.

of the paper, start a large advertising campaign on television and launch its own bingo. As a result, *The Sun* sold 500,000 more copies daily in three months.¹¹⁴



Above: sales of the *Mirror* and the *Sun* in 1980s. Figures in millions of sales. Nb the sharp rise in 1981 in *Sun* sales following the introduction of newspaper Bingo.

Fig 9: Sales of the *Mirror* and the *Sun* in 1980s.

(Source: Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid* (London: André Deutsch, 2003) 166).

The *Daily Mirror* rapidly launched its own bingo game with more and more appealing prizes. The game became so important that it turned into a selling argument and advertising campaigns for *The Sun*, the *Star* and the *Mirror* boasted the prizes that could be won thanks to their bingo. People didn't buy anymore the papers to get the news but rather to play games.¹¹⁵ The papers were followed by the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail*.¹¹⁶ Even the prestigious *Times* introduced in 1984 its own bingo called "Portfolio" and granted them 900,000 readers daily.

The Guardian, however, attacked the escalation of bingo prizes at the highest peak of the smear campaign of press companies against each others during the Falklands campaign. An article by Tom Baistow told:

the *Express* tried to keep a balance between the Falklands and other important issues. "From Monday," it announced, "there's an exciting new game – Double Quick Bingo - £40,000 to be won". (Immediately the *Star* counter-attacked, slashing its splash about Haig's shuttle in half to tell the punters about another hero, winner of "our world-shattering £100,000 bingo championship".)¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 99.

¹¹⁵ Pascale Villate-Compton, "La presse populaire", in Bertrand Lemonnier, Claude Chastagner, Renée Dickason, Michel Etcheverry, Françoise Luton, Robert Tatham and Pascale Villate-Compton, *Médias et culture de masse en Grande-Bretagne depuis 1945*, *op. cit.*, 107.

¹¹⁶ Kevin Williams, *Read All About It!: A History of the British Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 204.

¹¹⁷ Tom Baistow, "The Fleet Street warriors who turn from bingo to jingo in the battle of sagging sales", *The Guardian*, 10/5/1982, 8.

Although the media market has always been very competitive, the beginning of the 1980s was a period when this competition was strengthening. Newspapers found various means to keep their readership and to attract new buyers. This was even more relevant as the papers had to deal with difficulties to report the news from the conflict in the South Atlantic, as we will see in the next part.

**III. JOURNALISM IN TIMES OF WAR:
DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THE ARMY AND THE CONTROL OF
INFORMATION BY THE AUTHORITIES**

The question of the role of the press during a conflict has always been a thorny issue, and the Falklands crisis was not an exception. The Vietnam War ended only seven years before the conflict in the South Atlantic took place and was considered as “a war where reporting was assisted rather than hindered by official and military attitudes.”¹¹⁸ It led to a certain amount of criticism like the comment by Jim Meacham, correspondent of the *Economist*: “This is why you Americans lost the Vietnam War, because you had a free press.”¹¹⁹ When the Anglo-Argentine conflict broke out, the question of the latitude given to the press was one of the first sources of questions, and was subject of many debates after the conflict had been over.

A. The correspondents in the army: the difficulties to have good relationships

1. The struggle of newspapers to have reporters on board

As soon as it was announced that the British Task Force would sail to the South Atlantic, the Ministry of Defence received an important amount of calls from press offices who wanted to send a correspondent within the troops to report the war. However, a first decision had been made from military authorities that there would be no journalist accompanying the army, as Robert Harris explains:

On Friday morning, an hour after the invasion, when the Ministry of Defence asked how many journalists would be allowed to sail with the task force, the answer which came back from Fleet Headquarters at Northwood was: none. When the Ministry insisted that to exclude the press totally was unthinkable, the figure was grudgingly changed to six, and then increased to ten, including a television team. The Navy’s attitude was summed up by Leach,¹²⁰ who wanted to know whether he was expected to load his ships with ‘pens or bayonets’.¹²¹

There is a famous expression that would explain the reasons why the army didn’t want any journalists, that is “The essence of successful warfare is secrecy. The essence of successful journalism is publicity.”¹²² However, as Brian McNair explains: “the government as a whole required media publicity for its symbolic campaign.”¹²³

¹¹⁸ Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986) 37.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis, op. cit.*, 62.

¹²⁰ Henry Leach was Chief of the Naval Staff between 1979 and 1982.

¹²¹ *Ibidem.*, 17.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²³ Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication* (London: Routledge, 1995) 198.

When the number of reporters allowed to embark with the task force had been known, John Le Page, Director of the Newspaper Publishers' Association (NPA), was asked to make the selection of the journalists that would be accredited. After a strong lobbying from the newspapers to have their reporters allowed to go, Le Page chose to pick them randomly by "putting names in a hat".¹²⁴ As it was agreed that a place would be offered to the Press Association, the last remaining accreditations went to the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*. In reaction, the disappointed newspapers wrote directly to the Prime Minister, including the *Daily Star*. Robert Harris wrote:

It has now entered the mythology of Fleet Street that, in the words of the *Star*, 'had it not been for the direct intervention of the Prime Minister... half the British Press would have been waving the Task Force goodbye from the quayside.'¹²⁵

In fact, new allowances were given only with the help of Bernard Ingham, Margaret Thatcher's Chief Press Secretary, who convinced the Ministry of Defence to give more accreditations to the reporters.¹²⁶

One representative example is the one of Alastair McQueen, correspondent for the *Daily Mirror*, who has been told by a Royal Navy commander:

There is no room for you. We do not have the proper accommodation for you and you would be much better staying back here in the UK. You are only taking up space we could put to much better use.¹²⁷

The period between the grant of accreditations and the departure of the fleet was so short that every journalist had little time to reach the Task Force. Indeed, Tony Snow of *The Sun* was told only the last evening to go to Portsmouth; Michael Seamark of the *Star* even abandoned his car when he arrived and Garth Perry of the *Guardian* only had forty-five minutes to catch the last train when he learnt about his departure.¹²⁸

Robert Harris summarizes the effects of this hurry:

The haphazard way in which journalists were selected and sent on their way, in most cases without even the most rudimentary equipment, could easily have proved fatal. As it was, three reporters returned home before the fighting was over, and at least one appeared to be visibly distressed when recalling his experiences.¹²⁹

Reporters were accredited to different ships and led to complaints from some of them. *Invincible* and *Hermes* were battleships, and major military action and training

¹²⁴ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 19.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem.*, 20.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)* (London: HMSO, 1983) 144.

¹²⁸ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 21.

¹²⁹ *Ibidem.*, 23

were taking place in and from these ships. The *Daily Express* reporter complained to the Defence Committee that he was on a “logistics landing ship”.¹³⁰ Others were aboard *Canberra* which was a supply ship and left Portsmouth four days after the rest of the fleet. As a whole, twenty-eight journalists went to the South Atlantic with the army. It is important to notice that no foreign journalists were allowed to accompany the task force.

2. The difficult relationships between the army and the correspondents

Not only was it difficult to get accreditations to accompany the task force, but the communication between reporters and the military officers was more than complicated. For example, Michael Nicholson, reporter for ITN, remembered that Captain Middleton of the HMS *Hermes* said to the journalists that they were “an embarrassment to him”¹³¹

The guidelines that the Ministry of Defence laid down to the journalists and the commanders were strict:

Officers and crews with embarked correspondents should be reminded of the standard rules for dealing with the press and are to be specifically briefed to avoid discussing with them or in their hearing the following:

- a. Speculation about possible future action.
- b. Plans for operations.
- c. Readiness state and details about individuals units’ operational capability, movements and deployment.
- d. Details about military techniques and tactics.
- e. Logistic details.
- f. Intelligence about Argentine forces.
- g. Equipment capabilities and defects.
- h. Communications.¹³²

To ensure that these rules were not violated, journalists on board had to be accountable to the “mindings”. The mindings were responsible of verifying that the contents of the reports didn’t violate the guidelines, and censored forbidden content before they sent the report to London.

There were numerous restrictions and the complaints of journalists were daily. They pointed out the fact that some information that mindings did not want to transmit to

¹³⁰ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, op.cit., 185.

¹³¹ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 30.

¹³² *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, op.cit., 14.

London were however published in London by other means. Tony Snow, in his memorandum to the House of Commons Defence Committee wrote:

I failed on every major story of the war. I had all of those stories, from the sinking of the *Belgrano* to the missile attack on *Sheffield* to the cease-fire and surrender of Port Stanley – but I was stopped from sending them in time for the next day’s edition of my newspaper, the biggest circulation national newspaper in Britain.

I was told that these incidents would not be made public for at least 24 hours, perhaps not for days – then several hours later I would hear them on the BBC world service.¹³³

Captain Middleton, during his interview with the Defence Committee, had a different feeling about the integration of the journalists in the army. He said:

I had no complaints other than one basic complaint, which was an understandable one and which I had a certain amount of sympathy with [...]. I have about three letters which I [...] will take out the social padding and read them: “Instead perhaps I could use this letter to thank you and everyone on ‘Hermes’ for their help and hospitality during the campaign” – more social stuff – “... once again many thanks especially to those who spared their time or their company” – that is from the BBC.¹³⁴

However, Captain Black of the HMS *Invincible* was more cooperative. He was in favour of journalist presence within the army and “instituted regular daily briefings for the five *Invincible* correspondents.”¹³⁵ Yet, journalists on board *Hermes* complained about the differences of treatment between them and their colleagues on the *Invincible*.

The good relations held between Captain Black and the reporters were short-lived as Robert Harris explains:

Although he tried to be helpful, Black was in fact losing patience with the five journalists on *Invincible*. A series of incidents, trivial in themselves but cumulative in their effects, gradually transformed him from one of the few naval officers who were happy to talk to the press to a man who couldn’t wait to get them off his ship.¹³⁶

Journalists, for instance, were not allowed to go ashore at Ascension nor even had the right to tell London where they were. They also had difficulties to have access to communication facilities.

Reporters had to find tricks to explain to the public what was going on in the South Atlantic without violating the rules imposed by the Ministry of Defence. The ITN correspondent remembers:

On May 1, we weren’t allowed to report how many Harriers took part in the first raid, so Brian Hanrahan got round the problem using the phrase... [from] a Second World War movie: ‘I counted them out, and I counted them all back in again.’”¹³⁷

On land, journalists had to accompany the troops but were not prepared for it:

¹³³ *Ibidem.*, 104-5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹³⁵ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 30.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem.*, 123.

¹³⁷ Hugh Mc Manners, *Forgotten Voices of the Falklands: The Real Story of the Falklands War in the Words of Those Who Were There* (London: Ebury Press, 2007) 137.

In other wars, correspondents can at least normally return after a few days at the front to a comfortable hotel. On the Falklands the journalists had to share many of the discomforts of the men twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Robert McGowan of the *Daily Express* was with 3 Para: 'I had to dig my own trench, cook all my own food, carry some of their mortar bombs for them – and lost 2 stone in weight doing so.' There were no cars, no beds, no canteens. Even a simple matter like having a cup of tea often involved breaking some ice off the top of a pond, melting it, adding water-purifying tablets, getting a small fire going and boiling it.¹³⁸

The relationship between officers and reporters didn't improve during the conflict so that there are no photographs or television recordings of the surrender of the Argentine army or the signature of the ceasefire. General Moore who conducted the surrender explained the reasons why he refused photographers to witness it:

My reasoning was, and remains, that I was concerned with only one thing, and that was obtaining a surrender. I felt if there was half of a tenth of a 1 per cent that having the thing filmed might put Menendez off surrendering, and I did not know him, it would be a risk it could not be proper for me to take, and on these grounds I said 'No'.¹³⁹

There was neither good relationship between journalists. Rivalry and jealousy was alimented by differences of treatment. Michael Thomas Nicholson told about the relations between correspondents:

Somebody suggested that when we were all back in the UK, we should get together, and Patrick Bishop [of the Observer] said: 'I don't think we will, you know,' and we didn't.¹⁴⁰

3. The technical issues to file reports and to send photographs and films

The Falklands conflict was a particular conflict for reporters. It happened 8,000 miles away from London, on an isolated archipelago whose nearest country was Argentina which Great Britain was fighting against. Therefore, reporters had to deal with technical difficulties and they could only rely on official military technical equipment to file reports.

The reporters sent written copies to London through a commercial satellite communications system called MARISAT. Every ship was not equipped with the device that permitted the transmission. Journalists that were aboard ships deprived of it had to go to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Olmeda*. Reporters had to take a helicopter which flew them to the MARISAT ship. When the weather was too bad, they were winched down. This system was the only way to file reports as other ways of communication at

¹³⁸ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis, op. cit.*, 130.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem.*, 142.

¹⁴⁰ Hugh Mc Manners, *Forgotten Voices of the Falklands: The Real Story of the Falklands War in the Words of Those Who Where There, op.cit.*, 446.

sea could not be impossible, and because sending transmissions without encryption would put in danger the fleet as it would give strategic location of the ships to the enemy.

This system was however slow and officers complained about the amount of information journalists had to report to their newspapers. On the *Invincible*, “the five journalists were transmitting around 4,000 words of copy every day.”¹⁴¹ It represented “30 per cent of the daily workload of the ship’s communication centre was devoted to press reports.”¹⁴² And the system was not totally reliable:

Frequently the message would be garbled in transmission, and London would ask for a repeat. In all, a single story could take between ninety minutes and three hours to reach London. At one time, *Invincible* had a backlog of 1,000 signals awaiting transmission.¹⁴³

The technical limitations were not the only problems that led to the reporters’ difficulties to send reports. Captain Black insisted that

press copy should be filed during the night, the slackest period for signal traffic. This meant that an average story would not appear until two days after it was written.¹⁴⁴

He also limited the number of words that each correspondent could send per day to 700.

When the battles occurred on land, delays increased as reporters had to get back to the MARISAT ship, and they had to wait for the helicopters to pick them up, which could take a lot of time.

For photographs and films, they had to be sent physically by helicopter to the base, from which they would be sent to London. The ITN correspondent explained: “I realized this was not a television war. Our film was going to take four weeks to get back to UK”.¹⁴⁵ In a memorandum submitted to the Defence Committee, ITV gave a timetable of the delays between the date of filming of events and the actual date of transmission. For example, pictures of the loss of the *Sheffield* were transmitted on the 28th of May although it happened on the 7th of May (that is a delay of 21 days) and images of the Argentine surrender on the 14th of June arrived in London only 11 days later on the 25th of June.¹⁴⁶ An engineer from the BBC was sent to find an alternative way of sending films and photographs to London. However, it would have required the whole communication equipment of the army being used for a long period of time. The

¹⁴¹ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 35.

¹⁴² *Ibidem.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁴⁵ Hugh Mc Manners, *Forgotten Voices of the Falklands: The Real Story of the Falklands War in the Words of Those Who Were There*, *op.cit.*, 210.

¹⁴⁶ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, *op.cit.*, 63.

army refused. There was a debate with the House of Commons Defence Committee to find out if everything had been examined to make it possible. The authorities said it did although critics showed that they acted so slowly that it reflected their will to prevent a solution.¹⁴⁷

B. The relationship with the Ministry of Defence

1. The Ministry of Defence and the control of information

“‘Deception’ and ‘misinformation’ are recognized military techniques in which the British have long experience.”¹⁴⁸ wrote Robert Harris just after the conflict. And the Falklands campaign fed much the debate about the control of information. Relations between the media and the army were sources of many complaints in the South Atlantic, but the tensions between the newspapers and the authorities were not less peaceful in London.

In Great Britain, the main Act that provides protection of state secrets and official information is the Official Secrets Act. In addition, there are the D-Notices which permit authorities to indicate to the press that the publication of some information would put in jeopardy the security of the State. Both were applied during the conflict.¹⁴⁹

Valerie Adams summarized in her study the solutions that permitted information to be transmitted in the media without revealing the political sources:

The problem of protecting ministers and officials while satisfying the press’s curiosity is resolved in two ways: by ‘approved’ unattributable briefings, and by leaking material. [...] The public generally does not know its source and has no means of judging its authenticity.¹⁵⁰

However, off-the-record information was rapidly ended. Ian McDonalds, who was in charge of the Ministry of Defence’s public relations department, “simply stopped speaking privately to the press, and he instructed everyone else in his department to do the same.”¹⁵¹ Media could only rely on official statements, with short question-and-answer sessions. The briefings however were “minimalistic in the extreme, often failing

¹⁴⁷ Michael Parsons, “Le Times et la guerre des Malouines – aspects du discours de la guerre”, *op.cit.*, 75.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 93.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Parsons, “Le Times et la guerre des Malouines – aspects du discours de la guerre”, *op.cit.*, 47-8.

¹⁵⁰ Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, *op. cit.*, 17.

¹⁵¹ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, *op. cit.*, 97.

to clarify important information such as the name of a sinking battleship, or details of casualties".¹⁵² Non-attributable briefings only returned on the 11th of May. To illustrate the control of information and the misleading of the press, Robert Harris relates one particular event:

On the way to Ascension, *Invincible* developed severe problems with her engines. Rumours reached London, by way of American intelligence, that one of the carriers was in trouble. McDonald knew he would be asked a question and knew also that a 'no comment' would provoke a flurry of damaging speculation. But by an extraordinary stroke of luck the press had become convinced that it was the aged *Hermes* rather than the modern *Invincible* which was in difficulties. They asked: 'Is *Hermes* suffering from mechanical problems?' McDonald was able to deny it firmly and to bring the briefing swiftly to a close.¹⁵³

The attitude of the Ministry of Defence was a source of numerous complaints from newspapers and journalists, and we could find various examples in their memorandums sent to the Defence Committee. For example, Brian Hitchen, the London Editor of the *Daily Star* expressed:

The early weeks of the campaign were memorable only for the alleged public press briefings by Ian McDonald, who is a career civil servant, not a trained public relations official. And it showed.
[...]
We were enraged that normal practice was not carried out. The MoD had always operated on a basis of trust and off the record briefings with accredited defence correspondents. But, initially at least, this system broke down and officially we were given no more information than the man from Pravda.¹⁵⁴

Not only the Ministry of Defence gave little information to the journalists in London, but they imposed censorship to the reports, with the help of the D-Notices and the work of the minders in the army. The minders imposed the deleting of parts or totality of reports and replaced some words with asterisks when they thought needed. The information was however selected and studies wonder what were really the motives of censorship of some information could be reporters without restriction:

The number of stories which went missing or were altered suggests that the military and the MoD were always ready to 'improve the image' of the war wherever possible.
[...]
The reporter who was most successful in his coverage of the war was the journalist most willing to report only the 'good news'. When Max Hastings of the *London Standard* was asked after the war whether he thought his positive approach had helped him, he replied: 'It may have done. It'd be foolish to deny it. Obviously the task force is more likely to give help to those whom they think are writing helpful things than those who are not.'¹⁵⁵

Patrick Bishop of *The Observer* confirmed this hypothesis as he had to face censorship from the Press Officer:

¹⁵² Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication*, op. cit., 197.

¹⁵³ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 99.

¹⁵⁴ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, op.cit., 112.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 135.

On Wednesday 9 June I wrote an article about quoting extensively survivors' account of the loss of the Sir Galahad, which made it clear that the ship was given inadequate protection and that there was anger and bitterness over the incident. I handed it to MoD Press Officer Martin Helm for transmission but when I saw him again five days later, after that week's edition of the paper had been published, he told me that it hasn't been sent. The piece contained "inaccuracies" that he thought I would want corrected before it went off. [...] The suppression of the piece was a simple act of censorship because it was felt the article might lower morale.¹⁵⁶

Although there were many complaints made by journalists about censorship, they could not report it to their newspaper, as Michael Nicholson wrote:

Peter Archer of the Press Association sent a service telex to his London boss saying his reports were censored. The word 'censored' was censored.¹⁵⁷

2. The fear to put in danger the British troops and to give too much information to the enemy intelligence

The Ministry of Defence had to explain the reasons for the control of information. There were two main arguments: they wanted to protect the soldiers on the land and they didn't want to give too much information to the Argentine intelligence who might have taken information from the British press.

Margaret Thatcher said in Parliamentary debates on May 1982:

We really cannot have a full debate on military options with the House making a decision. Nothing would be more helpful to the enemy or more damaging to our boys.
[...]

I know that my hon Friend and many hon Members are very much aware that too much discussion about the timing and details of operations can only help the enemy and hinder and make things more difficult for our Forces. In wartime, there used to be a phrase 'Careless talk costs lives.' It still holds.¹⁵⁸

On its memorandum for the Defence Committee, the Ministry of Defence gave an example of possible danger when giving too much information:

On 3 May a voice report gave the name of the submarine which attacked the *General Belgrano*. From other reports it was possible to establish the location of individual units with the Task Force.¹⁵⁹

The manipulation of the media could also be a tactic to mislead the enemy's forces. On the 21st of July 1982, Sir Franck Cooper, Permanent Under Secretary of State, told the Committee about a "truth not absolutely presented":

¹⁵⁶ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, op.cit., 103-4.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Harris, Gotcha!: *The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 121.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, op. cit., 10.

¹⁵⁹ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, op.cit., 8.

I thought that was an extremely helpful thing because I am quite clear that the Argentinians thought that HMS *Superb* had gone to the Falkland Islands and therefore it must have had some impact on their naval operations.¹⁶⁰

However, Valerie Adams in her study stated that:

The risk that Argentine intelligence could have been assisted by the commentary existed, but in practice it appears that the Argentines did not pay close attention to what was being said or, if they did, did not take account of it in their own tactics.¹⁶¹

She arrived at the conclusion that

Finding the balance between the interests of security and the requirements of democracy cannot be easy; if both sides feel the other is going too far, that balance may have been found.¹⁶²

C. Reactions and enquiries about the control of information

1. The House of Commons Defence Committee and the Beach report

The relationship between the Ministry of Defence, the military authorities and the media led to a political debate about the handling of the press. Several reports were held.

Even before the end of the conflict, the Defence Committee of the House of Commons decided to investigate on the handling of the press and public information during the Falklands conflict. Minutes of Evidence were taken as soon as the 21st of July 1982 and the last were taken on the 10th of November. Witnesses were officers of the Ministry of Defence, journalists and military officers who had to answer to the committee about events of the conflict. Numerous memoranda were sent by reporters, and the Ministry of Defence in which they explained their reaction and analysis about the subject. These memoranda focused on several questions such as accreditation, briefings, censorship, technical issues, misinformation... The conclusions of the report were rather favourable towards the Ministry of Defence attitude and stated that:

‘It would have been quite unacceptable if information from the South Atlantic had been withheld simply because it might have provided opposition to the Government’s actions’, but they recognized that this could conflict with the requirements of operational security.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem.*, 23.

¹⁶¹ Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, *op. cit.*, 188.

¹⁶² *Ibidem.*, 194.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

After the conflict, the British government also set up an internal enquiry: the Study Group on Censorship and was directed by General Sir Hugh Beach. Its main purpose was to determine if, in time of conflict, censorship was necessary to protect military information. The report was published in December 1983 and concluded that:

Although many journalists were willing to exercise self-restraint, they could not always identify the information that would be of help to an enemy, and that ‘Some form of official censorship in time of conflict is therefore desirable.’ Censorship should, however, be limited to ‘the untimely disclosure of information which would prejudice our own or Allied operations and assist the enemy’.¹⁶⁴

2. The public and military opinions on the control of information

The media complained about the control of information and their relationship with the Ministry of Defence and the military officers. Claims of the press were that the public legitimately had to know what was happening in the South Atlantic.

Researches have confirmed that “the great majority of people understood that in war secrecy was important and deception took place, and were prepared to tolerate delays in the news”.¹⁶⁵ An opinion poll conducted in 1983 showed that only 38 per cent of the population considered the television as “generally honest”.¹⁶⁶

Soldiers and military officers showed great discontent of the coverage of the conflict by the media. For example, *The Sun* sponsored a missile on which side was painted “Up yours, Galtieri!” When the paper reported the news,

it went down badly on the ship, where the servicemen had not been consulted about this munificence. [...] Copies of the paper were later to be burned in some of the quarters, and disgusted letters were printed in the ship’s newsletter. Hacks on the fellow Task Force ship the Canberra were so outraged that they jointly sent a message of protest to Bouverie Street [...].¹⁶⁷

But one particular event provoked the anger of the soldiers. On the 26th of May, the troops advanced towards Darwin and Goose Green and prepared the attack when they heard BBC World Service announce their position and planning. Major General John Frost remembered in his story of the conflict that Colonel Herbert Jones, who was commanding the 2 Para that prepared the attack, was furious about the BBC broadcast of the information:

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Badsey, Rob Havers, Grove Mark (eds.), *The Falklands Conflict Twenty Years On: Lessons for the Future* (Abigdon: Franck Cass, 2005) 51.

¹⁶⁶ Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, *op. cit.*, 181.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 138.

He immediately ordered the battalion to disperse and find cover wherever possible, away from what must now be an obvious target for Argentine weapons...
There was much conjecture as to how the Ministry of Defence and all those responsible could allow the media to jeopardise the whole operation, indeed possibly the outcome of the campaign, in this way.¹⁶⁸

The coverage of the Falklands crisis was the subject of complaints and the source of a public debate on how to handle the press in times of conflict, although the general opinion favoured some control information in this particular case. However, the popular press, notably *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, managed to report the events in the same way they gave account of other information, using their own characteristics and editorial line, as we will explore in the following of our study.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, *op. cit.*, 119.

**IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
POPULAR NEWSPAPERS IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE FALKLANDS
CONFLICT**

The popular press is defined not only by its high circulation but also by its characteristics which are different from the one of the quality newspapers. In this part, we will study these characteristics and analyse them under the perspective of the Falklands Conflict. We will be helped by the studies of Martin Conboy and Jean-Claude Sergeant who have already examined the contents of the popular press.

A. Layout, titles and language: the structure of the newspapers

The popular press is commonly called the ‘Tabloids’. The first meaning of the noun refers to the format of the paper on which are printed the issues of the newspapers. The popular press uses the tabloid format whereas the quality press used the broadsheet format which is larger. By this means, the ‘tabloids’ are presented at the reseller in totality, while quality newspapers, using the broadsheet format, were folded in half. It let the reader recognize at a first glance the visual content of the popular newspapers. However, the noun ‘tabloid’ is commonly used to refer to the category of the newspaper rather than its physical size. When quality newspapers such as *The Times* or *The Independent* adopted the tabloid format in the 2000s, they called it ‘compact’ because they didn’t want to bring ambiguity about their content and categorization. The tabloid size was commonly used by the popular press because it was easier for the working class to read them in the public transports or in the street.

The popular press is also referred as the ‘red tops’ because their red masthead logo were printed in white over red, and was detectable from the potential buyer as belonging to the category of popular press. *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* – as well as the *Daily Star* – were part of this category.

Each category of newspaper has a code and proper style of writing and typographic rules:

Every journalist must, above all, get familiar with the home ‘style book’ which settles the rules of presentation of the copy, whether it deals with the punctuation, the use of capital letters, (simple or double) quotation marks or the use of some terms. As such, *The Guardian* decided to proscribe the expression ‘housewife’, considered as offensive to the feminine dignity.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹« Tout journaliste doit, avant tout, se familiariser avec le « livre de style » (*style book*) maison qui fixe les règles de présentation de la copie, qu’il s’agisse de la ponctuation, de l’usage des capitales, des guillemets (simples ou doubles) ou de l’emploi de certains termes. Ainsi, le *Guardian* a décidé de proscrire le terme *housewife*, jugé attentatoire à la dignité féminine. » Jean-Claude Sergeant, *L’anglais du journalisme*, op. cit., 27.

In our second part, we have already been aware of Arthur Christiansen's general principles about the popular press style, but we will examine further these characteristics.

1. Layout and titles

The front pages, but also the inner pages, of the popular newspapers are mainly composed of visual content, generally photographs. They also catch the reader's attention with large short headlines, usually in capital letters. There is an explanation for this choice:

The British tabloid is designed to be read – or at least looked at – in its entirety. Typically about 60% of a tabloid's contents is in fact 'look at' material – pictures, headlines, cartoons and display advertising – and consequently high proportions of readers do 'look at' at least the headlines and pictures on all pages.¹⁷⁰

The front page of the *Daily Mirror* of the 6th of April is a good example of this simplicity.



Fig. 10: Daily Mirror, 6/4/1982.

¹⁷⁰ Jeremy Tunstall (Ed.), *The Media in Britain*, op. cit., 134.

On this page, a large photograph illustrates the departure of the soldiers from Great Britain from the point of view of the families. The headline is written in capital letters and the content of the article is no longer than a single paragraph. The resignation of Lord Carrington and nomination of Francis Pym as Foreign Secretary are also mentioned with short titles, and send the reader to the last page. The two politicians are easily recognizable with photographs whose captions are summarized in the single words “IN” and “OUT”. The lowest part of the front page sends the reader to the inner pages of the newspaper with four very short titles “WE SHALL NOT FAIL”, “RETURN OF THE FEW”, “THE FINAL BATTLE” and “THE NAVY SET SAIL”, all written with capital letters. With this front page, the reader has a summary of the content of the newspaper with little effort of reading. The inner pages of the popular newspapers follow the same rules: a use of large visual content, short-sentence-made titles in large size letters and rather short length articles (in comparison with those of the quality newspapers).

During the Falklands conflict, there was frequent use of headlines composed of a simple sentence, of usually less than five words such as “IT’S WAR”,¹⁷¹ “Bless ‘em all!”,¹⁷² “IN WE GO!”¹⁷³ or “WE’RE WINNING!”¹⁷⁴ and sometimes the headlines was a single word like “BLITZED”,¹⁷⁵ “ATTACK!”¹⁷⁶ or “VICTORY”.¹⁷⁷ When two different news were reported by newspapers, the front page was split in two and the use of single words permitted to the reader to learn these news with a single look. For instance, on the 7th of May, the *Daily Mirror* reported the loss of two warplanes and the end of the diplomatic discussions. The headline was composed of two words: “WAR” and “PEACE”, followed by short subtitles to explain them, respectively: “Two Harriers down” and “Argentina rejects truce plan”.¹⁷⁸

Jean-Claude Sergeant gives a good explanation of the importance of catching the reader’s attention as “the title is the most important element of most of the texts. It is the cable which makes the reader decides to read the rest.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ *The Sun*, 3/4/1982.

¹⁷² *Daily Mirror*, 10/4/1982.

¹⁷³ *The Sun*, 28/4/1982.

¹⁷⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 29/5/1982.

¹⁷⁵ *The Sun*, 8/5/1982.

¹⁷⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 10/5/1982.

¹⁷⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 15/6/1982.

¹⁷⁸ *Daily Mirror*, 7/5/1982

¹⁷⁹ « Le titre est l’élément le plus important de la plupart des textes. C’est le télégramme qui décide le lecteur à lire le reste » Quoted in Jean-Claude Sergeant, *L’anglais du journalisme*, op. cit., 28.

Authentic or virtual quotations are often used. For instance, on the 18th of May, the headline of the *Daily Mirror* was “ONE LAST GO FOR PEACE” preceded by “Maggie warns junta to pull out”.¹⁸⁰ With this title, the reader’s attention is caught and the lead would explain the context of the headline.

Martin Conboy explains that “tabloids are keen to be seen by their readers as themselves playing a prominent part in making the news.”¹⁸¹ On the 12th of May, *The Sun* made an article about Michael Foot, Labour leader in 1982, attacking the newspaper about its coverage of the conflict. Its title was “FOOT BLAST THE SUN”.¹⁸²

Another feature of the popular newspapers titles was the use of pun. Jean-Claude Sergeant explains:

Humour in the writing of the Sun, forming part of the tradition of irreverence proper to the English popular press culture, is expressed by the means of play on words and evidence of cultural complicity addressed to initiated readers, community from which foreigners are excluded who only have an approximate knowledge of the language and its cultural background.¹⁸³

The headline of *The Sun* on the 20th of April is emblematic of this aspect. “STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA”¹⁸⁴ is a pun with the expression “Stick it up your Jumper”, a common insult used in Great Britain. This headline illustrated the British authorities’ refusal of the diplomatic proposals conducted by Mr. Haig.

Slang was often used in the titles of the popular press to express the familiar tone of the newspaper. On the 10th of May, after various victories of the British Task Force over the Argentine Army, *The Sun* used the headline “WALLOP”¹⁸⁵ to illustrate the events. The word meaning a ‘slap in the face’ is commonly known by the British people but a foreigner would have difficulty to understand the title.

At the outbreak of the war, many pages were devoted to the crisis, generally recognizable by a specific logo. Pages Two and Three had special reports, and on key events, central pages were dedicated to the campaign in the South Atlantic.

¹⁸⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 18/5/1982.

¹⁸¹ Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, *op. cit.*, 39.

¹⁸² *The Sun*, 12/5/1982.

¹⁸³ « L’humour dans l’écriture du Sun, qui s’inscrit dans la tradition de l’irrévérence propre à la culture de la presse populaire anglaise, s’exprime au moyen de jeux de mots et d’indices de complicité culturelle adressés à des lecteurs initiés, communauté d’où sont exclus les étrangers qui n’ont qu’une connaissance approximative de la langue et de ses ressorts culturels. » Jean-Claude Sergeant, *L’anglais du journalisme*, *op. cit.*, 44.

¹⁸⁴ *The Sun*, 20/4/1982.

¹⁸⁵ *The Sun*, 10/5/1982.

Articles, reports and editorials were short, composed of small paragraphs, illustrated by large photographs.

2. Language

The popular press wants to be close to its readership. For this reason, it uses a simple language that is easily understandable. Short and simple sentences are used and the vocabulary is chosen to be easily comprehended by the greater number. For example, when the Argentine army invaded the Falkland Islands, the press wondered about the future of the islanders, the *Daily Mirror* wrote:

Our incompetence put them there. It is our responsibility to rescue them from it. But that doesn't require counter-invasion.
*The islands don't matter. The people do.*¹⁸⁶

In this extract, sentences are all simple ones. Instead of using a complex sentence, the author chose to begin another one. The language used is closer of the oral language than of the elevated language of the quality press.

In order to stress a particular point of their purpose, journalists of the popular press use typographic means rather than grammatical and lexical ones. Jean-Claude Sergeant explains:

The standardisation of social roles goes with a hyperbolic mode of narration that dramatizes the event by the means of a dynamic typography (capital, bold, underlined characters).¹⁸⁷

Typographic devices are mainly used in editorials, when a subjective opinion is expressed. The first and last paragraphs are commonly highlighted, as well as important sentences, with bold and/or underlined characters. This editorial from *The Sun* is a relevant example:

AT LAST in the Falklands tragedy there has been a happy photograph.

It showed smiling liberated islanders greeting a British paratroop sergeant.

We do not yet know everything that has happened during the brief Argentine occupation.

But we do know that people of the Falklands have behaved as brave and proud people always will behave when confronted with oppressors.

The Argentines recognise this. They have already been creating the apparatus for tyranny and fear: a curfew, the confiscation of radios, a ban on the English language, and even a detention camp for leaders of resistance.

Courage

¹⁸⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 5/4/1982 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁸⁷ « La standardisation des rôles sociaux s'accompagne d'un mode de narration hyperbolique qui dramatise l'événement au moyen d'une typographie dynamique (capitales, caractères gras, soulignages) » Jean-Claude Sergeant, *L'anglais du journalisme*, op. cit., 47.

During Hitler's war there was an island outpost of the Empire that showed the same resolution.

Malta, in the Mediterranean, defied three years of blockade. It was at times close to starvation and bombed daily.

And on April 15, 1942, Churchill awarded her the George Cross, the highest civilian honour.

We suggest that Margaret Thatcher today recommends the GC for the people of Falklands. They are so proud to be British. We are so proud of them.¹⁸⁸

In this editorial, the first sentence is in bold and underlined letters and the first two words are in capitals. It gives the reader the information that there is important information and gives him an appeal to read the rest. The last paragraph is typographically similar, and contains the purpose of the editorial: that Margaret Thatcher should recommend the George Cross to the Falklanders. Two paragraphs in the course of the text are in italics and echo one to another by comparing the struggle of the Maltese people during the Second World War with the conditions of the Falkland islanders in 1982. The sentences are short and structurally and lexically simple. The purpose of the author is stressed by typography and can be understood by every reader.

To be closer to the population, the 'populars' use familiarity. Martin Conboy examines this particular aspect:

Bringing personalities into the familiar reach of the tabloids' vernacular moves them closer to the simplified and binary politics of much of their coverage. Familiarization may demystify but it can also be used to foment contempt for celebrities and politicians alike and erode any residual public confidence in the latter just as it reduces the humanity of the former.¹⁸⁹

Thus, Margaret Thatcher was commonly nicknamed by *The Sun* as "Maggie" like in this title of an editorial: "Show your iron, Maggie".¹⁹⁰ This title is interesting in two aspects. First, it shows the familiarity of the name used to call the Prime Minister. Secondly, the title refers to a cultural reference known by the whole population: Margaret Thatcher had the reputation of being a "strong willed" woman and was therefore nicknamed "The Iron Lady". This title is a play on words between the denomination used by the Sun and the one used by the common people. As the nickname is known by any British citizen, the purpose of the editorial is summarized in the four words of the title and its meaning brings no difficulty to the common people. In addition, *The Sun* makes no use of the titles 'Mr' and 'Mrs' and only mentions names as in: "PYM ATTACKS BBC"¹⁹¹ when referring to Francis Pym, Foreign Secretary.

¹⁸⁸ *The Sun*, 24/5/1982 (emphases in the original).

¹⁸⁹ Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, op. cit., 23.

¹⁹⁰ *The Sun*, 6/4/1982.

¹⁹¹ *The Sun*, 11/5/1982.

3. Visual content

As we have seen earlier in this study, the popular press content is mainly visual. Therefore, the choices of illustrations are carefully studied to bring the maximum of information to the readership.

On the first days of the conflict, the role of the press was to explain the conflict to their readers. They took much use of maps, charts and diagrams to visually take account of the various aspects of the conflict. Adjacent articles explained in details the content of the visual elements.

Photographs took a great part of the content of the newspaper and the pictures on the front page were chosen to illustrate the subject of the main event. During the Falklands campaign, they were usually portraits of politicians or scenes of conflict. When dealing with portraits, the attitude of the subject was not neutral.

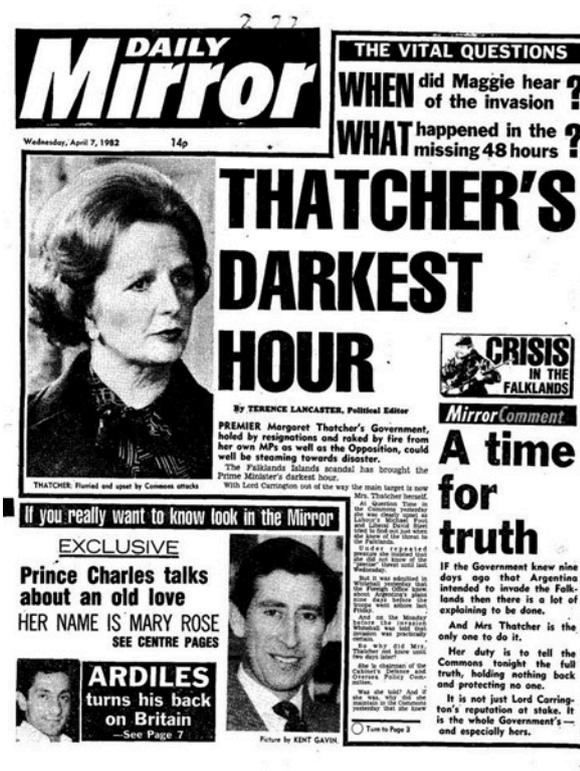


Fig. 11.1: Daily Mirror, 7/4/1982.

The photograph chosen in the front page of the *Daily Mirror* on the 6th of April (Fig. 11.1) shows Margaret Thatcher as worried and illustrates the title “THATCHER’S DARKEST HOUR”.¹⁹² On the contrary, the front page of the *Mirror* on the 15th of

¹⁹² “The Darkest Hour” is a reference to a Winston Churchill’s speech during the Second World War in which he affirmed the importance for Great Britain to win the war.

April (Fig. 11.2) shows the Prime Minister as voluntary, strong willing and threatening. The headline of the article accompanying the picture is “WE FIGHT if we must”. Therefore, both pictures were chosen to illustrate the mood and tensions of the Prime Minister and highlight her action.



Fig. 11.2: Daily Mirror, 15/4/1982.

Cartoons are also part of the editorial content of the newspaper. In the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*, cartoons are usually printed on the same page as the editorial (in general in Page 2 or 3 in the *Mirror*, and in Page 6 in *The Sun*).

B. Human interest and the iconic description of the soldiers

1. Human interest

Home and foreign affairs are not the most popular subjects from newspaper readership. Instead there is a much more demand in human interest. The interest in the individual affairs appeared with the transformation of the popular newspapers by Arthur Christiansen during the 1930s, as it is explained by Kevin Williams:

Human interest stories were [...] part of the process of attracting new readers in an era of increasing competition; according to Aldous Huxley, 'most people choose their daily paper, not for its opinions, but for its entertainingness, its capacity to amuse and fill the vacancies of leisure'.¹⁹³

The main interests in the popular newspapers were sensationalism and individual information about politicians, athletes, music and movie stars and famous people in general, but above all the Royal Family. Although the Falklands conflict was the main event that animated the spring of 1982, popular newspapers gave much interest to the Royal Family news, especially because of Lady Diana's pregnancy. For example, on the 1st of June issue of the *Daily Mirror*, while the battles on the land were happening, the front page was split in two, and the whole left part of the page was devoted to Prince Charles who has been hurt in a polo match.

As Tom Baistow explained:

Popular papers concentrate more and more on specific newsgathering within their formula. At the lower end of the tabloid market the news editors and their regional correspondents and stringers – local journalists on retainer – look primarily for stories with a sensational theme, preferably involving sexual scandal or crime, popular 'celebrities' or public figures, either ready made from the courts or that can be 'developed' by interviews obtained if necessary by constant door-stepping, or otherwise dogging and harassing the quarry to check on his or her movements, and when the story is considered juicy enough, lavish chequebooking.¹⁹⁴

For instance, in April 1982, two British adventurers made an expedition to the North Pole. The *Daily Mirror* made a large coverage of the event, putting aside the Falklands campaign although the diplomatic discussions were intense. They even gave much space on their front page for the interview of one of the adventurer's wife who told she was proud of her husband.



Fig 12: Daily Mirror, 12-3/4/1982.

¹⁹³ Kevin Williams, *Read All About It!: A History of the British Newspaper*, op. cit., 160.

¹⁹⁴ Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street*, op. cit., 45-6.

Yet, human interest was so important in the editorial line of the popular press that newspapers sometimes break the boundaries of journalism ethics. When Ian McKay, a sergeant in the British army who died in the battle, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, his widow agreed the *Daily Mirror* and ITN to give exclusive interviews. In exchange, the privileged media would ‘protect’ her from the rest of the media. *The Sun* then published a completely fabricated interview of Marica McKay based on testimonies from her mother-in-law who told them about the VC award and from previous public speeches Mrs McKay made in the past. The *Mirror* attacked *The Sun* with a leader entitled “THE SUN SINKS EVEN LOWER”. Several months later, the Press Council denounced the Sun’s false interview as “A deplorable, insensitive deception on the public”.¹⁹⁵

Thus, the popular press favours private sphere affairs rather than public ones, but the Falklands conflict wasn’t the exception to the rule and the ‘tabloids’ covered them under this perspective.

2. The soldiers as heroes and the interest in the families

The soldiers had a special treatment in the editorial choices of the popular press. There was a dichotomy in the representation of the fighting men: the newspapers made a difference between the army as a whole, and the soldier as a man on the front.

When the task force left Great Britain, *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* made much use of photographs showing grieving mothers, wives or girlfriends waving goodbye (Fig. 10), amplified by captions who emphasized the drama such as “SORROW: A sailor’s wife tries to calm his weeping mother yesterday.”¹⁹⁶ The popular newspapers wanted to emphasize on the fact that the Falklands conflict was more than a nation going to war against a belligerent, but the combat of men who were risking their lives for the country.

However, war casualties were not interesting as such. The victims had to have something special to gain the attention of the editors. For example, *The Sun* on the 3rd of May printed on their front page the headline “THE WOUNDED HERO” with the

¹⁹⁵ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 194-7.

¹⁹⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 6/4/1982.

subtitle “Sailor Ian, 20, is Britain’s first war casualty”.¹⁹⁷ What is noteworthy in this title is that the reader can put a name to the victim and the mention of the age was to make every parent in Britain think it could be their son or brother. Therefore it added tragedy to the conflict.

According to John Taylor, “To be the first or last to die, or in some other way to die in a cruel circumstances, or to leave the bereaved in unusually bitter or ironical straits was to be newsworthy.”¹⁹⁸

The case of Lieutenant Colonel ‘H’ Jones is a revealing example. He died during the battle of Goose Green with more than 250 other soldiers on the 28th of May. Yet, he was at the centre of all press coverage because of “his high military rank, his class (Eton and Sandhurst) and his bravery.”¹⁹⁹ On the 31st of May, the *Daily Mirror* had as headline “WIDOW’S TRIBUTE TO THE HERO OF GOOSE GREEN ‘He died as he lived.. A SOLDIER’”²⁰⁰ and the front page of *The Sun* said “MY HERO ‘If he had to die, then I believe he would have liked to have died the way he did’ SARA JONES, WIFE OF COLONEL ‘H’ TALKING YESTERDAY”²⁰¹ Both newspapers emphasized the bravery of the colonel and adopted a familiar tone by nicknaming him ‘H’. *The Sun* went further into the description of the military as a hero in its editorial “The Sun Says” entitled “Give him a V.C.” in its inner pages:

THE SUN today salutes Colonel “H” Jones, who died a hero’s death during the storming of Goose Green.

[...]

We can also be proud that Britain still produces commanders of the calibre of Colonel “H”.

[...]

The Sun has already invited readers to suggest designs for a campaign medal.²⁰²

Instead of illustrating its front page with an official portrait of the Colonel, *The Sun* published a private picture of him and his wife skiing during previous holidays. John Taylor explains this choice:

Photographs from happy times are uncanny, placing readers in the privileged position of playgoers who already know or quickly learn what is withheld from the characters – their fate. Similarly, the photograph shows us the man who is lost, the loss of that loving or familiar bond, making strange the possibility of happiness, making readers conscious of its fragility or transience. Ironically (and irony can be an important part of a story if it is sufficiently bitter), Colonel Jones was already known to the press, having threatened to ‘sue

¹⁹⁷ *The Sun*, 3/5/1982.

¹⁹⁸ John Taylor, “Touched with Glory: Heroes and Human Interest in the News” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, op. cit., 21.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibidem.*, 23.

²⁰⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 31/5/1982.

²⁰¹ *The Sun*, 31/5/1982

²⁰² *Ibidem.*

everyone' because of the premature announcement of the fall of Goose Green. In this case, the press made nothing of the irony.²⁰³

The widow of Colonel Jones was inclined to give interviews to the press. Yet, the media had difficulties to meet the families of the soldiers because of the control of information by the Ministry of Defence. *The Sun* published an editorial entitled "Lost Heroes" in which the newspaper asked the authorities to interview the families of the dead soldiers:

FAR AWAY in the South Atlantic, 20 seamen of the destroyer Sheffield died for their country.

We wish to honour their memory. We wish to show in tangible form the nation's gratitude. We would like to write about them and about how their families are trying to rebuild their shattered lives.

But in our way stands the Ministry of Defence. It is not merely being uncooperative.

It is doing everything possible to prevent The Sun and other newspapers even talking to the widows.

In heaven's name, why?

No security is involved here.

We regard the Ministry's attitude as unacceptable and an insult to the sacrifice of brave men.²⁰⁴

The popular press however managed to report the mourning of widows, at the condition that the story had to have a particularity. For example, on the 2nd of June, the *Daily Mirror* printed an article entitled "The Widow, Wendy, 17, mourns husband of three weeks".²⁰⁵ On the 8th of May, the *Sun* published the article "GRIEF OF HERO PILOT'S PREGNANT WIDOW, Couple had waited ten years to have a family."²⁰⁶ In both stories, the newspapers highlighted the cruelty of the war, making a young girl, who was not even of age, a widow, and a future orphan who will never know his father.

Wives were not the only relatives to have the interest of the popular press. On the 6th of May, *The Sun* published "MY SON 'I'm proud to have a son who died doing job he loved for the country he loved'",²⁰⁷ and the next day the *Daily Mirror* printed the pledge of a young boy to his father and said "DEAR DAD, PLEASE DON'T GET SHOT".²⁰⁸ By this means, everyone in Britain could identify themselves to the relatives of the soldiers who could be their father, brother, husband, boyfriend, or son. This was aimed as the readership of the popular press was very large.

²⁰³ John Taylor, "Touched with Glory: Heroes and Human Interest in the News" in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, op. cit., 26.

²⁰⁴ *The Sun*, 14/5/1982 (emphases in the original).

²⁰⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 2/6/1982.

²⁰⁶ *The Sun*, 8/5/1982.

²⁰⁷ *The Sun*, 6/5/1982.

²⁰⁸ *Daily Mirror*, 7/5/1982.

The newspapers devoted articles to the news of the families of the troops, like christening of children, wedding of soldiers before the fleet set sail (Fig. 13) or public reaction of relatives.



Fig. 13: Daily Mirror, 5/4/1982.

According to John Taylor “The papers show us the perversity, fragility and chaos of existence”.²⁰⁹

C. Nudity

Martin Conboy, in his study of the popular press, told that “readership within a national framework are also defined in the tabloids through projections of their attitudes to sex.”²¹⁰ Attempts to introduce sexually connoted contents were made by the popular press as soon as in the 1940s. However, it became a main feature of the tabloids when *The Sun* launched in 1970 its “Page Three Girls”. It consisted in publishing in every issue a full-page picture of a topless woman on its Page 3. The apparition of the Page 3 Girl was a source of mockery from its rivals, but according to studies of the popular press, it contributed in the success of *The Sun*. “Since the girls were purely visual objects, captions became a prime opportunity for stringing together the sort of puns which had always characterized the tabloid industry and the sun was now raising to new

²⁰⁹ John Taylor, “Touched with Glory: Heroes and Human Interest in the News” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, op. cit., 19.

²¹⁰ Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, op. cit., 123.

heights.”²¹¹ Patricia Holland in her essay on the Page 3 Girls analyzes the reasons of its success:

Page Three is a direct address by the newspaper to its audience. It presents itself as a source of pleasure to both men and women... it declares how the paper wants to be seen, how it should be appreciated, used, enjoyed. It is the pivotal point of *The Sun*'s address to the audience... It is part of *The Sun*'s discourse on female sexuality which invites sexual enjoyment, sexual freedom and active participation in heterosexual activity.²¹²

When the *Daily Star* was launched, it took for it the successful elements that made *The Sun* popular and therefore included sexy pictures of women. In reply to critics, Derek Jameson, editorial director of the *Star*, told:

No newspaper in history lost sales by projecting beautiful birds. Sex sells – that goes for pictures and words. So the *Star* will have its daily quota. Bigger and better than anyone else.²¹³

During the Falklands campaign, the sexy models participated in the ‘war effort’. Captions accompanying model pictures often made references to the conflict as for example on the issue of *The Sun* on the 31st of May. It showed nude model Carol Needham holding a chalkboard on which was written in capital letters “PEACETIME”. The caption said: “Her shirt is on Peacetime”.²¹⁴

The Sun by this means refers to the masculinity of the task force and the issue of the 16th of April is relevant to mention, as Robert Hamilton did:

Next to a typical Page Three photograph of a topless woman wearing a pair of briefs with the word ‘Invincible’ inscribed on them (‘Delightful Debbie Bouyland... in the battle colours of HMS *Invincible*’), *The Sun* declared ‘Knickers to Argentina’.²¹⁵

In the article, *The Sun* said:

Britain’s secret weapon in the Falklands dispute was revealed last night... it’s undie-cover warfare. Thousands of women with loved ones aboard the Navy’s Task Force are sending the defiant message: Knickers to Argentina. They are sporting specially-made underwear embroidered across the front with the proud name of the ship in which husband or boyfriend is serving.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 29.

²¹² Quoted in Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, *op. cit.*, 124.

²¹³ Quoted in Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 83.

²¹⁴ *The Sun*, 31/5/1982.

²¹⁵ Robert Hamilton, “‘When the Seas are Empty, so are the Words’: Representations of the Task Force” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, *op. cit.*, 133.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*. “Knickers to Argentina” is a play on words: knickers are woman underwear, but in this expression, it is also “A piece of abuse borrowed from the school playground, where it is a ‘naughty’ word.” (Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (London: Routledge, 1984) 652) This insult reveals the confidence of *The Sun* in the future British victory in the conflict and demonstrates its chauvinist tone.

On the 11th of May, when a debate about the legitimacy of newspapers to support the British army, *The Sun* hardened its patriotic tone. It published on Page 3 (Fig. 14) a photograph of a topless model and was accompanied with an article entitled “JUST FOR YOU LADS” and said “PATRIOTIC Page Three girl Denise Perry is doing her best to keep the lads in the Falklands Task Force smiling.”²¹⁷ The upper left corner of the page shows a picture of three soldiers smiling and holding posters of the model.



Fig. 14: The Sun, 11/5/1982.

The use of the Page Three girls in the coverage of the conflict was condemned however by the Task Force commanders. During their interview with the House of Commons Defence Committee, when Captain Middleton was questioned about the reasons why correspondents accompanying the fleet had difficulties to file their reports, he denounced the futility of the reports that were demanding high communication traffic as he said:

[Three priority signals about technical problems and logistic issues] were part of numbers that were waiting in the queue that day. Passing out of the ship on that day, and taking 30 per cent. of my outgoing traffic, as they did every day, was the copy – some 3,500 words. On the day in question, this was going out and I will just read, if I may, part of one man's copy: “The page 3 girls are going to war. 50 outsize pin-up pictures, each one 2 foot by 6 inches, were airlifted to the Task Force and are now on their way to the Falkland Islands. They were flown into Ascension Islands, 4,000 miles from Britain, and then dropped by helicopter on to the ‘Invincible’. They were featured on a television show on the ship's

²¹⁷ *The Sun*, 11/5/1982.

close circuit television and then distributed so that there is at least one in every mess in the ship.” Then there are one or two comments about them by various people on board.²¹⁸

During the conflict, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* followed their editorial line and the characteristics of the papers were used to report the events. However, we will see that the tensions in the media brought by the intense circulation war and the handling of the press by the authorities led to slippages from the popular press and especially *The Sun*.

²¹⁸ *The Handling of the Press and Public Opinion during the Falklands Conflict (First Report from the Defence Committee)*, *op.cit.*, 294-5.

V. THE CONFLICT AS A MEDIA WAR

The Sun and the *Daily Mirror*, however competing in the same market and having the same characteristics, differed in their coverage of the conflict. We already know that the newspapers didn't support the same political party, and in the spring of 1982, their differences were visible for the readership. In this final part, we will examine the differences between the newspapers during the conflict as well as the overflows of the media that resulted from it such as the chauvinist discourse of *The Sun* and the smear campaign of the newspapers towards their rivals.

A. The divergences of *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*

As soon as the beginning of April, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* showed their disagreements in the political responsibility of the Falkland Islands invasion by the Argentine army. Both asked the politicians to reveal the ins and outs of the lack of military defensive preparations from Britain: "If the Government knew nine days ago that Argentine intended to invade the Falklands then there is a lot of explaining to be done."²¹⁹ told the *Mirror* while *The Sun* demanded in capital bold letters that the Government must "**TELL THE PEOPLE**".²²⁰ Yet, the consequences foreseen were different between the titles. As soon as the 5th of April, the *Daily Mirror* asked political sanctions to the responsible politician as it told: "**The blood that needs to be split is the blood of political reputations. For a start, Mr Nott and Lord Carrington should leave office as quickly as possible.**"²²¹ Two days later, it repeated its opinion in an editorial entitled "A time for truth": "It is not just Lord Carrington's reputation at stake. It is the whole Government – and especially hers [Margaret Thatcher's]." Instead, *The Sun* declared its support for the Government when saying: "Even if the Iron Lady proves, as we hope, to be diamond-hard, she needs the means to defend us in the world!"²²²

The events of the war did not calm down the resentment of the *Mirror* towards the authorities. As far as the 11th of June, as the British victory was almost certain and while *The Sun* backed the political decisions of the Government, the newspaper said: "Mr Nott should tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and tell it

²¹⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 7/4/1982.

²²⁰ *The Sun*, 5/4/1982.

²²¹ *Daily Mirror*, 5/4/1982.

²²² *The Sun*, 6/4/1982.

quickly as possible”²²³ and repeated its opinion three days later and published “when the fighting is over a lot of answers will be demanded from the Ministry.”²²⁴

Alexander Haig was appointed by the United Nations to conduct negotiations between Great Britain and Argentina as soon as early April. The *Daily Mirror* described him with flattering words when telling that “Alexander Haig has shown the past few days that the mantle of world diplomacy fits comfortably on his shoulders.”²²⁵ At the same time, its rival showed more trust in the military deployment: “The submarines carry our hopes, our prayers and our TOTAL CONFIDENCE [...] We do not want war, but if there is no other way – GIVE THEM HELL, MAGGIE!”²²⁶

From then on, the differences of point of view about the means to end the conflict between the newspapers would never disappear and would grow more and more as the military actions would become inevitable. On the 29th of April, the editorial of the *Daily Mirror* said “Serious fighting may now be inevitable. We hope not.”²²⁷ When the cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk by the British fleet, the *Mirror* expressed: “THE loss of life in the Falkland crisis is sickening. [...] Now let us prove that diplomacy DOES pay – before the world recoils in horror at another tragedy”²²⁸ and the next day, it entitled its editorial “The killing has got to stop”.²²⁹

Even when the fighting had already begun on the sea and were about to start on the land, the *Mirror* reiterated its wish for a peaceful ending of the crisis but however backed the military actions. On the 18th of May, it printed an editorial entitled “Before we go in..” which said:

THE gloomier reports say there is barely any time left a negotiated settlement of the Falklands crisis. In that case, only invasion remains.

Before it starts, let us be clear what the fighting is about.

The task force was sent with three objectives:

- To restore British administration to the Falklands.
- To reassert British sovereignty.
- To return to the islanders the freedom to decide their own future. Their views were to be paramount, to use Mrs. Thatcher’s word.

The essential first step towards those aims was to remove the Argentine troops from the islands.

The first step remains. But the objectives are disappearing. The Government is willing to negotiate about sovereignty as the condition on which talks are held.

It is ready for a United Nations administration to take over.

²²³ *Daily Mirror*, 11/6/1982.

²²⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 14/6/1982.

²²⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 13/4/1982.

²²⁶ *The Sun*, 12/4/1982.

²²⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 29/4/1982.

²²⁸ *Daily Mirror*, 5/5/1982.

²²⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 6/5/1982.

And the paramount wishes of the islanders are no longer paramount – only something to be “taken into account.”

According to the opinion polls, including last night’s on Panorama – not previously Mrs. Thatcher’s favourite programme – the Government has substantial public support for military action.

If that action is taken, the Argentina faces heavy defeat.

Its leaders are mad if they do not see they can get much of what they want by talking. But that they may get very little if they force a fight.²³⁰

It is important to mention that, although *The Sun* supported military action since the very beginning of the crisis, it timidly expressed that a diplomatic solution would have been better than military action. Its editorial on the 17th of May said:

Even at this stage, The Sun would be in favour of continuing the diplomatic prospects of success.

Sadly the signs multiply that the Argentines are simply playing for time. They have conceded nothing.²³¹

B. Jingo: the image of the Argentine army and government

1. “Gotcha” and the chauvinist discourse

When the Falkland Islands were being invaded, Roy Greenslade had difficulties to consider Great Britain sending an army and fight for the retake of the islands. However *The Sun* had a very different point of view, as he explained:

When I returned to *the Sun* office next morning and told my colleague Wendy Henry how ridiculous it all seemed she laughed too but confided: ‘Be careful, pet, that’s a very unpopular view to hold round here.’ A visit to the newsroom showed me why. News editor Tom Petrie was wearing some sort of naval officer’s cap and told me he now wished to be known as Commander Pietrie. A map of the South Atlantic was pinned on the board behind him under a picture of Winston Churchill. He was explaining his strategy for ‘beating the Argies’.²³²

As soon as it became clear that a military reply would be made, *The Sun* found a new sense of patriotism and made it reflect in its pages. Despite the warnings made from the *Daily Mirror* as soon as the 14th of April when it declared the conflict “is to free the islanders from an invading force. It is not to [...] sink the Argentine navy”²³³ or days later it affirmed that “our priority is to get Argentina to evacuate its troops from the Falklands. It is not to punish it from sending them there”,²³⁴ *The Sun* developed a tone that would be qualified as ‘jingoistic’ by its critics. On the 20th of April, *The Sun*’s

²³⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 18/5/1982 (emphases in the original).

²³¹ *The Sun*, 17/5/1982 (emphasis in the original).

²³² Roy Greenslade, *Press Gang: How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda*, op. cit., 442.

²³³ *Daily Mirror*, 14/4/1982.

²³⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 17/4/1982.

headline was “STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA: A *Sun* missile for Galtieri’s gauchos”.²³⁵ The article explained that *The Sun* had ‘sponsored’ a missile on which Tony Snow, correspondent of the newspaper in the Task Force, had written “Up Yours Galtieri!”. The article said: “The first missile to hit Galtieri’s gauchos will come with love from the *Sun*”²³⁶ and two days later Tony Snow reported: “I saw my missile hit the back of the enemy aircraft. It exploded as advertised. His plane was in flames.”²³⁷ It gave the impression that the paper considered the Argentine troops as only dehumanized targets. Roy Greenslade remembered that “Within a week tee-shirts bearing that slogan were being marketed by the paper.”²³⁸

But a particular event would transform the patriotic discourse of *The Sun* into a genuine xenophobic attack is the sinking of the cruiser *General Belgrano*. The day after the sinking, *The Sun* produced a front page that would become one of the famous front pages of the paper, or maybe in the history of the British newspapers. On this day issue were photographs of two Argentine ships and the headline said in large capital letters the word “GOTCHA”.



Fig. 15: The Sun, 4/5/1982.

²³⁵ *The Sun*, 20/4/1982

²³⁶ *Ibidem*.

²³⁷ Quoted in Roy Greenslade, *Press Gang: How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda*, op. cit., 444.

²³⁸ *Ibidem.*, 443.

The article was subtitled “Our lads sink gunboat and hole cruiser” and said:

THE NAVY had the Argies on their knees last night after a devastating double punch.

WALLOP: They torpedoed the 14,000-ton Argentina cruiser General Belgrano and left it a useless wreck.

WALLOP: Task Force helicopters sank one Argentine patrol boat and severely damaged another.

The Belgrano and its 1,000 crew needn't worry about the war for some time now.²³⁹

The words employed were hard: ‘Gotcha’ transformed the vision of the war into a game,²⁴⁰ ‘wallop’ referenced cartoon vocabulary whereas Argentine soldier – including casualties – were called by the pejorative diminutive ‘Argies’. To understand to reasons of such a front page, we must examine the context in which the issue of this day was produced.

The Sun, in the early May, was in a crisis caused by a strike from the National Union of Journalists about management disagreements. *The Sun*'s edition of the 4th of May was produced by a small group of journalists who had to produce the whole content of the newspaper. A study tells the story:

MacKenzie [editor of the Sun] shouted across the virtually deserted room: ‘Christ! We’ve hit an Argie ship!’ He was clutching a wire-service report from Buenos Aires, which simply stated that a warship called the *General Belgrano* had been hit.

Everyone in the room was shocked. The war had suddenly become real. The silence was abruptly broken by Wendy Henry giving a sort of gut reaction which was her forte. ‘Wend’ was exultant. ‘Gotcha!’ she shouted²⁴¹

Kelvin MacKenzie decided to reproduce Wendy Henry’s word on the front page of the next issue. At the time when the issue went for printing, there was little information about the number of casualties on the Argentine side. When a first report announced that possibly 1,200 Argentine sailors had died during the attack, the editor Kelvin MacKenzie decided to pull off the first printed copies and changed the headline into the lesser controversial one “Did 1,200 Argies drown?” However, the copies intended to be sold in the north of the country had already left and only the south of England received the second edition of the newspaper. The coverage of the sinking of the *Belgrano* was source of many critics from the population and from the media. The *Daily Mirror*, on the next day published an editorial entitled “TOO HIGH A PRICE”. *The Sun* tried to minimize the effects of the ‘Gotcha’ headline by printing on the issue of the 5th of May “ALIVE! Hundreds of Argies saved from Atlantic”. However, the

²³⁹ *The Sun*, 4/5/1982 (emphases in the original).

²⁴⁰ ‘Gotcha’ is the contraction of ‘(I have) got you’. This expression is commonly used to express the satisfaction of showing one’s superiority over an opponent in a game or a battle. In this case, the expression might show to the reader that Britain and Argentine are playing the board game Battlefield.

²⁴¹ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, *op. cit.*, 139.

reputation of *The Sun* had been made and its patriotic abuses came into the public cultural references. *The Sun* didn't change its policies and as soon as the 11th of May adopted the slogan "The paper that supports our boys". On the 2nd of June, a *Sun* editorial qualified the junta as "tyrants who value honour as little as they respect human life."²⁴²

On the 21st of May, the fortnightly satirical magazine *Private Eye* published a spoof page of *The Sun* and made fun of its patriotic attitude. In an inset, one could find the slogan "KILL AN ARGIE – And win a Metro".²⁴³ Instead of being scandalized, Kelvin MacKenzie was amused and is supposed to have declared "Why couldn't we have thought of that, eh?"²⁴⁴

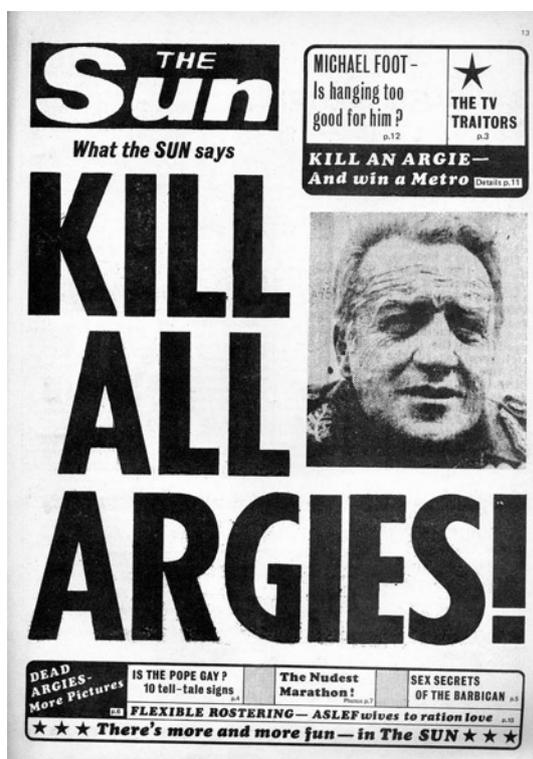


Fig. 16: *Private Eye*, 21/5/1982.

2. The patriotic aspect of the cartoons

Cartoons were an important feature for the press to express their political opinions. Indeed, their graphic language is easily accessible to the common people and

²⁴² *The Sun*, 2/6/1982.

²⁴³ A Metro was a car produced by Austin and Rover between 1980 and 1998.

²⁴⁴ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, *Stick It Up Your Punter: The Uncut Story of the Sun Newspaper*, op. cit., 151.

the funny aspect of the illustration brings attention of the audience. As James Aulich explained in his study:

Cartoons dramatize events through familiar public features and, to lesser extent, allegorical symbols. Rudimentary linear perspectives articulate simple, declarative stage-like compositions.

[...]

The cartoonist does not influence or create opinion, but identifies marketable positions within dominant liberal, conservative and populist orthodoxies constituted in the media: the *Daily Star* is supportive of armed conflict, the *Daily Mirror* more sceptical.²⁴⁵

When the Falkland Islands were being invaded, *The Sun* expressed the pessimistic vision of the fate of the islanders. On the 3rd of April, *The Sun* published a cartoon which showed the darkness surrounding the archipelago in the hands of the hard regime of Argentina (Fig. 16).

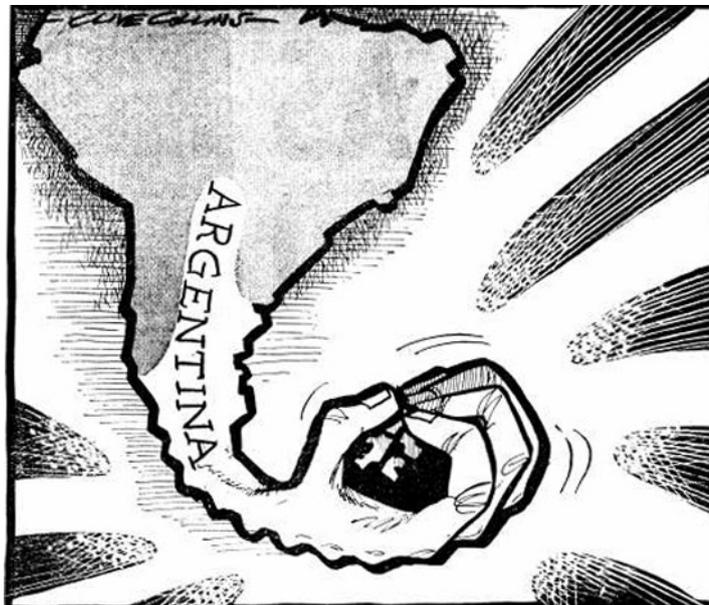


Fig. 17: Clive Collins, “no caption”, *The Sun*, 3/4/1982.

On the contrary, the *Daily Mirror* made fun of the political leaders of Great Britain. For example, a Keith Waite cartoon showed Lord Carrington wandering in a dressing gown into the office of Margaret Thatcher, where maps were pinned on the walls to show where the Falkland Islands were and a file which was given to the Prime Minister was entitled “INACTION” (Fig. 18).

²⁴⁵ James Aulich, “Wildlife in the South Atlantic: Graphic Satire, Patriotism and the Fourth Estate” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, *op. cit.*, 84-8.



Fig. 18: Keith Waite, "Don't shoot—don't shoot—I surrender!", Daily Mirror, 6/4/1982.

Throughout the conflict, the Sun tried to give a good image of the Government and especially the Prime Minister. In some cases she appeared smiling and bearer of good news as the cartoon of the 27th of April shows: she gives back South Georgia to Queen Elizabeth II illustrating the return of the island as a British possession (Fig. 18.1).



Fig. 19.1: Stanley Franklin, "With compliments of the Navy, Your Majesty", The Sun, 27/4/1982.

In other cases, she appeared as a strong willing warrior, courageously fighting with the army whereas Labour Party leader Michael Foot is depicted as a deserter (Fig. 18.2).



Fig. 19.2: Stanley Franklin, “No caption”, *The Sun*, 29/4/1982.

The Sun also described the greatness of the British army through cultural references. When HSM *Sheffield* was sunk by the Argentine fleet, *The Sun* paid tribute to the British army through the image of Horatio Nelson²⁴⁶ representing the “Heroic British Navy spirit” (Fig. 18.3).



Fig. 19.3: Stanley Franklin, “No caption”, *The Sun*, 6/5/1982.

While *The Sun* described the British authorities and army in the most flattering manners, it showed the Argentine leader and soldiers in negative terms. General

²⁴⁶ Horatio Nelson was a famous Navy commander in the end of the 18th century and early 19th century and is an emblematic figure of the Napoleonic Wars with the victory of the British Fleet in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 during which he died.

Galtieri, the president of Argentina, was described on one hand as a tyrant, on the other hand as a fool in humiliating positions.

A cartoon published on the 3rd of June showed Galtieri making alliances with the devil (Fig. 19.1). The drawing shows the darkness of the Argentine Government and the word “horror” on the bucket full of napalm highlights the hard description of the General’s attitude.



Fig. 20.1: Stanley Franklin, “The Junta’s new recruit”, The Sun, 3/6/1982.

But *The Sun*’s favourite description of the dictator is the one of an alcoholic fool. A cartoon showed him drunk with a bottle in his hand facing timidly the powerful army of Great Britain represented in the shape of a lion (Fig. 19.2). The Sun showed him at a bar with Michael Foot weeping of their political failures (Fig 19.3).



Fig. 20.2: Stanley Franklin, “Enemy who came to dinner!”, The Sun, 28/4/1982.



Fig. 20.3: Stanley Franklin, "I know your feelings, Leopoldo. No one loves me either!", *The Sun*, 18/6/1982.

But one particular cartoon is emblematic of both features of the Argentine leader: the tyrant and the fool. On the 2nd of June, the *Sun* published a cartoon showing Leopoldo Galtieri in the features of an octopus which is commonly used in visual media as a representation of power and domination. However, from the drawing stands out the defeat of the junta's leader from the strength of the British Army who cuts off the Falkland Islands from the sway of the Argentine tentacles (Fig. 19.4).



Fig. 20.4: Stanley Franklin, "Final Chop", *The Sun*, 2/6/1982.

Not only *The Sun* lowered the reputation of the Argentine president, it made also fun of the Argentine soldiers. The *junta*'s troops were often represented as a 'gaucho' with a large moustache, and wearing a sombrero and a poncho. On the 30th of April, the

soldier was sitting on the islands, under the threat of the British army set up in the pattern of the Union Jack (20.1).

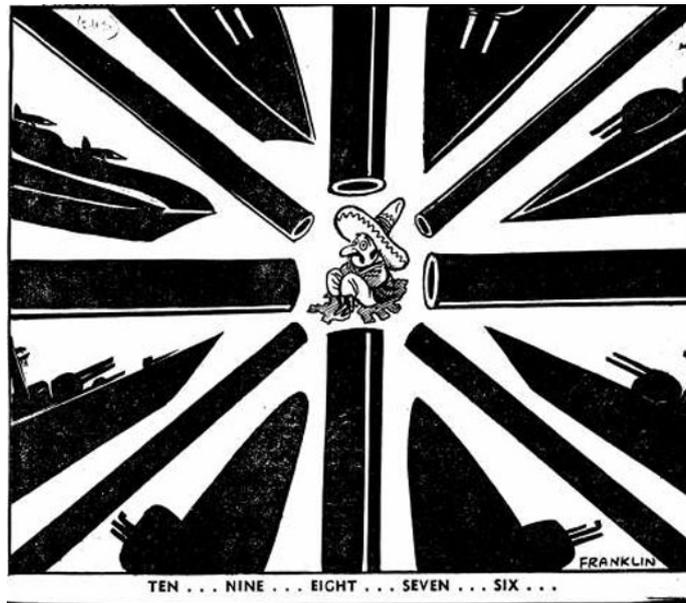


Fig. 21.1: Stanley Frankin, "Ten... Nine... Eight... Seven... Six...", The Sun, 30/4/1982.

On some occasions, the Argentine army was compared to negative symbols such as a rat under the pressure of the British Task Force led by Margaret Thatcher (Fig. 20.2) or to garbage (Fig. 20.3), occulting the humanity of the soldiers and considering them as a whole.



Fig. 21.2: Stanley Franklin, "Dropping in anytime now", The Sun, 11/5/1982.



Fig. 21.3: Stanley Franklin, "Bon Voyage!", The Sun, 16/6/1982.

Studies showed that throughout the conflict, the Argentine soldier was described as "anxious, emotional, unthinking, ineffectual, suggestible, dependent and weak."²⁴⁷ James Aulich in his study of the cartoons produced during the conflict explained the drawbacks of such description:

Such representations had a dual effect. On the one hand, they compounded the limitations of the understanding of the history of the Argentinian people and the immediate dispute. On the other, they allowed for the war to assume a world significance it did not have, despite the government's claim to the contrary.²⁴⁸

3. The Sun's assumption of its position towards criticism

The Sun was criticized by the political sphere and the population about their editorial line, and especially their patriotic tone. Instead of denying them, it boasted of their position and replied to them in their columns.

On the 15th of May, the newspaper published on their front page a letter sent by Donald Argy, candidate in a borough election, about the nickname they chose to call the Argentinian. It said:

'Dear Sir, In views of your outstanding news headlines in today's issue of The Sun, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that you have used my name, which is a very unusual one, instead of the abbreviation for the Argentinians, which should read ARGIE!
In view of my political position and also my leading communal position in the London Borough of Redbridge, I have received several incredulous telephone calls, most of them of

²⁴⁷ *Ibidem.*, 92.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

a joking nature, but nevertheless rather up-setting that my name should be used in this fashion.

If I was favourably inclined towards the policies of this government in respect of their action in the Falklands, I might have passed this incident off without further ado on my side.

However, I happen to be a very strong opponent of the whole Government policy regarding the Falklands as I do not accept that Britain is a Sovereign Power as of right, but only by acquisition.

I am therefore asking you to please register a note in your paper to the effect that I take umbrage at your use of my name in your headlines, and I want a full and unreserved apology to be printed in your next issue, otherwise you will leave me with no other alternative but to take whatever action I feel would be appropriate.

Your faithfully D.M. Argy, 15b The Broadway, Woodford Green. Essex.²⁴⁹

The newspaper replied to the letter with humour and a reference to the Second World War when telling “We are sorry that you and Britain’s enemy share the same name. Imagine the problem all people called Jerry²⁵⁰ had in the Second World War.”²⁵¹

Five days later, the newspaper reported a debate at Oxford College about a possible ban of *The Sun* for their “warmongering attitude”.²⁵² In the report, the journalist attempted to discredit the movement by revealing the political position of its leader who had “left-wing views and opposition to military involvement in the Falklands.”²⁵³

On the 29th of May, the Sun made an article about a comment that Peter Jay, former British Ambassador in the United States, made about the newspaper when saying in a BBC program: “I don’t regard the Sun as a newspaper”.²⁵⁴ The journalist reported the reaction of a Conservative Member of Parliament who defended the newspaper: “When something not too polite was said about The Sun a moment or two ago people applauded it, yet it sells millions of copies.”²⁵⁵ The article ended with a positive comment made by a reader which said: “The Sun is the only one to have taken a truly patriotic stand.”²⁵⁶

In order to prove the legitimacy of its editorial line, *The Sun* also published favourable comments from their readers. On the 5th of June, an article entitled “Thanks, my Sun” reported a letter sent by readers in London:

²⁴⁹ *The Sun*, 15/5/1982.

²⁵⁰ Jerry was a nickname given to the Germans during the Second World War by Allied forces and population.

²⁵¹ *The Sun*, 15/5/1982.

²⁵² *The Sun*, 20/5/1982.

²⁵³ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁴ *The Sun*, 29/5/1982.

²⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

'ME and my mates are really pleased that your paper is giving our forces and our cause in the South Atlantic full support. It is fantastic to see at least one of our papers voices our patriotism.'²⁵⁷

By printing favourable comments on its behalf, *The Sun* legitimized its conduct during the war and responded thus to the numerous critics that were held toward the newspaper.

C. The smear campaign of *The Sun* towards other media

At the outbreak of the conflict, and as the competition between newspapers was at its highest, *The Sun* saw the opportunity to denigrate its rival *Daily Mirror*, as Roy Greenslade remembered:

MacKenzie saw the opportunity not just to support the war against Galtieri, but to open a second front by fighting the war that mattered most to him and to Murdoch, for sales. So he attacked other newspapers, especially the rival *Daily Mirror*. Giving an early notice of its intentions, the *Sun* said: 'Isn't it amazing that there are some people who, in every dispute, believe Britain is wrong and the foreigners right?' It suggested that such people should 'arrange a free subscription to the sinking Daily Mirror'.²⁵⁸

The Sun's attacks however didn't exceeded the habitual hacks both newspapers made to each other until Margaret Thatcher expressed on the 6th of May, during a House of Commons Parliamentary Questions session, her disagreement with the manner some British media reported the conflict when she declared:

Judging by many of the comments that I have heard from those who watch and listen more than I do, many people are very concerned indeed that the case for our British forces is not being put over fully and effectively. I understand that there are times when it seems that we and the Argentines are being treated almost as equals and almost on a neutral basis. I understand that there are occasions when some commentators will say that the Argentines did something and then "the British" did something. I can only say that if this is so it gives offence and causes great emotion among many people.²⁵⁹

On the same day, *The Guardian* printed a cartoon by Leslie Gibbard entitled "The Price of sovereignty has been increased – official" (Fig. 22) and was a tribute to the Zec cartoon "The Price of Petrol has been increased – official" produced during the Second World War and published by the *Daily Mirror*. The cartoon was a response to the sinking of the *Belgrano* that occurred two days earlier and an attack to the "Gotcha" headline that *The Sun* made the day before.

²⁵⁷ *The Sun*, 5/6/1982.

²⁵⁸ Roy Greenslade, *Press Gang: How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda*, op. cit., 442.

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Robert Harris, *Gotcha!: The Media, The Government and the Falklands Crisis*, op. cit., 75.



Fig. 22: Leslie Gibbard, “The Price of Sovereignty had been increased – OFFICIAL”, *The Guardian*, 6/5/1982.

The next day, *The Sun* published an editorial entitled “Dare call it treason” and began with the simple but very offensive sentence in bold and underlined letters “**THERE are traitors in our midst.**”²⁶⁰ The first paragraph reported Margaret Thatcher’s reaction in the House of Commons and ended with “*The Prime Minister did not speak of treason. The Sun does not hesitate to use the word.*”²⁶¹ The following was not less hard for *The Sun*’s rivals. The editorial attacked severely the BBC and in particular TV show host Peter Snow about its coverage of the conflict, and then reproached *The Guardian* for publishing the Gibbard cartoon and terminated its attack to the newspaper with “The Guardian, with its pigmy circulation and absurd posturing, is perhaps not worth attention.”²⁶² The major attack was however destined to its closest rival the *Daily Mirror* and addressed to its readers when saying: “**They are buying a newspaper which again and again demonstrates it has no faith in his country and no respect for her people.**”²⁶³

Instead of suing *The Sun* for libel as he first intended to do, Mike Molloy, editor of the *Mirror*, asked Harold Wilson, the paper’s leader writer to publish a reply for the next issue. Indeed, on the 8th of May, a full page editorial entitled “THE HARLOTS OF

²⁶⁰ *The Sun*, 7/5/1982.

²⁶¹ *Ibidem.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

FLEET STREET”²⁶⁴ was illustrated with four emblematic *Sun*’s front pages, including the “Gotcha” one and was as offensive as *The Sun*’s attack of the day before. It said:

THE SUN, a coarse and demented newspaper, yesterday accused The Daily Mirror, The Guardian and Mr Peter Snow of the BBC of being traitors to Britain.

What The Sun means by treachery is a refusal to twist, distort and mangle the truth about the fighting in the South Atlantic.

No one could accuse The Sun of failing to do that.

There have been lying newspapers before. But in the past month it has broken all records.

It has long been a tawdry newspaper. But since the Falklands crisis began it has fallen from the gutter to the sewer.

[...]

The Sun today is to journalism what Dr Josef Goebbels was to truth. Even Pravda would blush to be bracketed with it.

The Daily Mirror does not believe that patriotism has to be proved in blood. Especially someone else’s blood.

[...]

We do not want to report that brave men have died so that The Sun’s circulation might flourish.

Though such is the temper of the British people that they are as likely to be repelled by The Sun’s treatment of the fighting as is every decent British journalist.

[...]

A Labour MP yesterday called for The Sun to be prosecuted for criminal libel. There is no point in that. It has the perfect defence: Guilty but insane.

What would be more useful would be if The Sun was compelled to carry an official announcement on each copy: “Warning : reading this newspaper may damage your mind.”²⁶⁵

The day before, an official from the National Union of Journalists and the Labour Member of Parliament Michael English had backed the Mirror’s position. It didn’t lower the Sun’s vehemence which replied:

Our message to Mr English,

The National Union of Journalists and anyone else who is interested in this:

We shall not be gagged on any matter of deep public interest

We shall treat crude threats with the contempt they deserve.

As for the BBC, the Guardian and the Daily Mirror (whose editorial line is now endorsed by the communist Morning Star), we know they are happy when they are dishing it out.

It remains to be seen whether they can take it.

Of one thing we CAN be sure.

All three must be deeply embarrassed by the melodramatic posturing of their new-found supporters.²⁶⁶

On the 10th of May, *The Guardian*, which was, like the *Mirror*, in favour of the diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, published an editorial by Tom Baistow in which the journalist attacked the majority of the popular newspapers. The editorial was entitled “The Fleet Street warriors who turn from bingo to jingo in the battle of sagging sales”

²⁶⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 8/5/1982.

²⁶⁵ *Ibidem* (emphases in the original).

²⁶⁶ *The Sun*, 8/5/1982 (emphases in the original).

and condemned the *Daily Star* for its “crude combination of nastiness and bathos”,²⁶⁷ denounced *The Sun*’s tendency to “show the decadent poms²⁶⁸ how to write a war”, criticized the *Daily Express*’s publicity over their bingo on behalf of the tragedy of the conflict and reproached the *Daily Mail* of being a warmonger. Only the *Daily Mirror* received a positive critic from the author. The articles ended as such:

If truth is the first casualty of war, the second in this unhappy conflict has been the last remnant of editorial integrity in the tabloids frenetic battle for circulation. It is a sad irony that in the name of press freedom the papers most British people read should take such liberties with journalistic ethics.²⁶⁹

The article was illustrated by a cartoon denouncing the attitude of *The Sun* in a metaphorical scene involving a soccer game (Fig. 21). The cartoon

has the two sides playing the Falklands Cup. Thatcher the goalkeeper has let one past and the BBC, *Financial Times*, *Daily Mirror* and *The Guardian* photograph the error while the photographer from *The Sun* squirts water over them.²⁷⁰

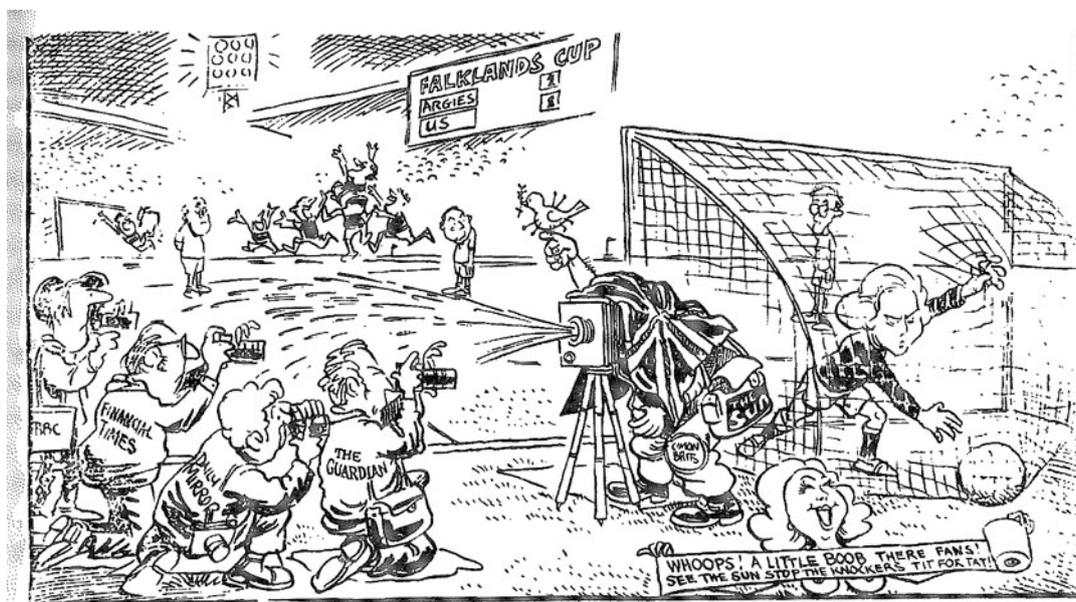


Fig. 23: Leslie Gibbard, “Whoops! A little boob there Fans! See The Sun stop the knockers tit for tat!”, *Guardian*, 10/5/1982.

To strengthen its position, the patriotic tone of *The Sun* rose and the paper adopted the slogan “THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR BOYS” and increased their chauvinist attacks towards the Argentine authorities and army.

²⁶⁷ *The Guardian*, 10/5/1982. Bathos is “(in literature) An unintentional change in mood from the important and serious to the trivial and ridiculous” (quoted from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

²⁶⁸ Pom is a pejorative nickname used by Australians and New-Zealanders to refer to the British people. The author used this nickname because the Sun’s owner was the Australian Rupert Murdoch.

²⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁷⁰ James Aulich, “Wildlife in the South Atlantic: Graphic Satire, Patriotism and the Fourth Estate” in James Aulich, *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, op. cit., 110.

The dispute between the newspapers reached the political sphere. On the 12th of May, an article from *The Sun* had as title “FOOT BLAST THE SUN – But Maggie refuses to censure us – and hits out at the BBC”.²⁷¹ One of the characteristics of the popular press is to be an actor of the news, and *The Sun* was in the middle of it. It published a full page editorial and reiterated its attacks towards its rivals:

You will have heard them whining on the radio or seen them huffing and puffing on television.

You may even have read their poisonous pronouncements in certain newspapers.

Britain’s pacifists, appeasers and elitists have been hopping with fury over the Sun.

WHY?

Because we denounced those sections of the media and those individuals who are sabotaging Britain’s war against the Argentines.

[...]

We mourn those, British and Argentine, who have already died.

In the mid-Thirties, Hitler could have been stopped with the loss of a few thousands, maybe few hundred, lives.

Because of appeasement, the toll was swollen into millions.

[...]

As always, the instincts of people are sure and sound.

THEY want peace. But NOT peace at any price.

THEY are not going to be pushed around by jumped-up dictators in Buenos Aires or anywhere else.

THEY are NOT going to surrender British interests in the Falklands or in any other territory.

THEY are NOT going to sacrifice honour to buy a quiet life.

[...]

We shall go on telling the truth and the trembling cardboard warriors can all take a jump in the River Plate!²⁷²

A cartoon accompanied the article and showed a BBC program hosted by an Argentine character wearing a poncho and sombrero. The caption said: “ELLO! ‘ERE’S ZE LATEST UNBIASED NEWS ON ZE FALK LAND CRISIS...”²⁷³



Fig. 24: Stanley Franklin, “Ello! ‘Ere’s ze latest unbiased news on ze Falk Land crisis...”, *The Sun*, 12/5/1982.

²⁷¹ *The Sun*, 12/5/1982.

²⁷² *Ibidem.* (emphasis on the original).

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

On the same day, the *Mirror's* editorial section dealt with the same topic but however didn't share the same opinion:

The Government is trying to bludgeon the BBC into becoming a mouth piece for its Falklands policy. The BBC should fight it.

[...]

She should be giving thanks for the BBC's independence, not trying to bend it to her will.²⁷⁴

The Times didn't take part of the dispute. Yet, it is noteworthy to mention that *The Times* had been acquired a year before by Rupert Murdoch, owner of *The Sun*. *The Times* however more nuanced in its analysis, shared the position of *The Sun* about the means to resolve the conflict.

Although *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* disagreements never disappeared, the advances of the British troops in the Falkland Islands moved the attention from the media dispute to the military progresses in the South Atlantic. Yet, *The Sun* had succeeded. It became an actor of the conflict not only on a nation scale, but internationally. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, a French weekly magazine, said:

The Falklands are on every newspapers front page for more than a month. In the popular press, whose circulations are tremendous, titles compete in the jingoistic and spiteful WWI stylish tones.²⁷⁵

The popular newspapers share the same codes and characteristics. Yet, in the desire to spread their audience the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* showed their differences in the treatment they made of the events of the conflict. Unlike the *Daily Mirror* which demonstrated their political opposition to the Government's solution to end the war, *The Sun* adopted a patriotic position which was highly criticized by its rival. This opposition was an event as itself in the media content in the spring of 1982 as the papers openly denigrated each other's position in their editorials.

²⁷⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 12/5/1982.

²⁷⁵ « Les Falklands tiennent la une de tous les journaux depuis plus d'un mois. Dans la presse populaire, dont les tirages sont phénoménaux, les titres rivalisent dans le ton patriotard et revancharde style guerre de 1914-1918 » Quoted in Michael Parsons, "Le Times et la guerre des Malouines – aspects du discours de la guerre", *op.cit.*, 13.

CONCLUSION

At first sight, the Falklands conflict might seem to have had little consequences. Indeed, the Falkland Islands remained a British territory as it was before the conflict. However, the crisis had political consequences in both countries.

In Great Britain, the victory against Argentina helped Margaret Thatcher gain popularity. Simon Jenkins wrote:

Previously, she had little public profile at home or abroad. The war had shown her a dominant presence. Her language, her decisiveness, her determination were its watchwords. Afterwards, she was a world celebrity and a changed leader.²⁷⁶

Before the conflict, opinion polls showed that Margaret Thatcher's satisfaction rating was of 36%. In June 1982, the figure was up to 51%.²⁷⁷ Although her mandate could run until 1984, she called for a General Election as soon as 1983 and won it by a landslide, giving her the majority in Parliament.

In Argentina, after the surrender of the army in Port Stanley, General Leopoldo Galtieri was removed from power as soon as the 18th of June 1982, four days after the Argentine defeat. Opponent political leaders held meetings and received great support from the population. Although the military government stayed for several months after the end of the conflict, in February 1983 General Bignone announced that elections would be organized in October of the same year. The result of the election gave the radical party – led by Raúl Alfonsín – a majority in Parliament in front of the *peronistas*.²⁷⁸ These elections saw the return of democracy in Argentina. The 30th anniversary of the conflict brought back the debate publicly. The Falklands wound is not healed and Argentina expressed through its president Cristina Kirchner the desire that the islands should return under its sovereignty. However, David Cameron, Prime Minister of Great Britain, reaffirmed the desire of the islanders to remain British.

The United Nations, by the voice of its chief Ban Ki-Moon, asked Argentina and the United Kingdom to avoid an escalation in tension concerning the Falkland Islands and to resume negotiations to solve the problem. Great Britain announced that the right of self-determination of the islanders was primordial. Indeed, a referendum will be held in 2013 in the Falkland Islands to determine the islanders' position on the political status of the territory.

As far as the press is concerned, the conflict had little impact. Even though several newspapers saw their circulation changing during the crisis, charts shows that

²⁷⁶ Simon Jenkins, "How an eccentric war turned around Thatcher's fortunes", *The Guardian*, 2/4/1982.

²⁷⁷ Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain*, *op. cit.*, 184.

²⁷⁸ Leslie Bethell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America (vol. VIII)*, *op. cit.*, 172.

regular sales went back to normal after the battles ended, especially among the popular newspapers. This can be explained by the fact that the Falklands conflict was rapidly replaced in the papers columns by other topics: Israel's invasion of Lebanon and a strike in the railways industry attracted the press's attention. But the popular newspapers had even more interesting events to cover and much more related to their centre of interest. First, a football world cup was taking place in Spain, and although a match opposing Argentina and England was at the centre of the media attention, it was for the 'tabloids' a means to express their patriotic opinions. But second and not least, Lady Diana gave birth to her first son William who was destined to be King in the future, and the popular press made much coverage of this event.

The circulation of the *Daily Mirror*'s continued to decline throughout the 1980s and 1990s so that at the end of the 1990s the *Daily Mail* overran the *Mirror* in circulation. Today, *The Sun* is still the best selling newspapers in the United Kingdom with 2.5 million copies sold daily, the *Mirror* being third with a little more than a million copies sold.

The Falklands campaign is considered by the media and analysts as one of the worst reported conflict. This can be explained by three factors.

First, newspapers had difficult relationships with the political and military authorities. The events occurring thousands of miles away from London, and the difficulties to transmit reports from the South Atlantic forced the newspapers to rely on official statements, which were biased by the Ministry of Defence for several reasons: protection of the soldiers in the battles, prevention from giving information to the enemy and will to present the events in a good way for Britain.

Second, the popular press commercially relied on their readership. They therefore had to respect their editorial lines to please their audience and prevent a loss in their readership.

And third, the hard competition between newspapers made press owners and editors see the conflict as a means to boost circulation. In order to achieve this rise in circulation, the popular press used various means: a smear campaign to denigrate the rivals, a populist discourse to catch the attention of the population and a strong political orientation.

However, the popular newspapers succeeded in making the Falklands crisis a memorable event not only by the nature of the conflict itself, but by their attitude in the

spring of 1982. Indeed, they were actors of the news, and still today the coverage of the crisis by the press is one of the main debated aspects of the campaign.

APPENDIX

A digest of the editorials from the press concerning the media dispute about patriotism and objectivity

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Dare call it treason

The Sun, 7/5/1982

THERE are traitors in our midst.

Margaret Thatcher talked about them in the House of Commons yesterday.

She referred to those newspapers and commentators on radio and TV who are not properly conveying Britain's case over the Falklands, and who are treating this country as if she and the Argentines had an equal claim to justice, consideration and loyalty.

The Prime Minister did not speak of treason. The Sun does not hesitate to use the word.

Enemy

We regard the Freedom of opinion, and speech as among our most ancient and precious rights.

But with rights go responsibility and a duty to one's country.

What is it but treason to talk on TV, as Peter Snow talked, questioning whether the Government's version of the sea battles was to be believed?

We are caught up in a shooting war not a game of croquet. There are no neutral referees above the sound of the guns. a British citizen is either on his country's side-or he is it's enemy.

Justice

What is it but treason for the Guardian to print a cartoon, showing a British seaman clinging to a raft, above the caption: "The Price of sovereignty has been increased-official"?

Isn't that exactly calculated to weaken Britain's resolve at a time when lives have been lost, whatever the justice of her cause?

Imagine a cartoonist who produced a drawing like that in Buenos Aires. Before he could mutter: "Forgive me, Senors" he would be put in front of a wall and shot.

The Guardian, with its pigmy circulation and absurd posturing, is perhaps not worth attention.

Respect

The Daily Mirror, however, has pretensions as a mass sale newspaper.

What is it but treason for this timorous, whining publication to plead day after day for appeasing the Argentine dictators because they do not believe the British people have the stomach for a fight, and are instead prepared to trade peace for honour?

We are truly sorry for the Daily Mirror's readers.

They are buying a newspaper which again and again demonstrates it has no faith in his country and no respect for her people.

The Harlots of Fleet Street

Daily Mirror, 8/5/1982

THE SUN, a coarse and demented newspaper, yesterday accused The Daily Mirror, The Guardian and Mr Peter Snow of the BBC of being traitors to Britain.

What The Sun means by treachery is a refusal to twist, distort and mangle the truth about the fighting in the South Atlantic.

No one could accuse The Sun of failing to do that.

There have been lying newspapers before. But in the past month it has broken all records.

It has long been a tawdry newspaper. But since the Falklands crisis began it has fallen from the gutter to the sewer.

Anyone who dares question Mrs Thatcher-in the Press, in politics, in television or on the radio-is a coward, according to The Sun.

Anyone who falls to urge the immediate sending of troops into battle is denounced for treason.

For its part, The Sun has exulted at the death of Argentine sailors. "Gotcha!" it shrilled when the cruiser General Belgrano, with over 1,000men aboard, was torpedoed.

Proudly, it boasted it had sponsored a missile which brought down an Argentine warplane. With a crudity which sickens other journalists, its reporters with the task force wrote, "Up yours, Galtieri" on the side of the missile.

The Sun is the harlot of Fleet Street.

It has been seen on American TV as an example of how British newspapers cover the crisis. Far from helping our cause, it shames it.

From behind the safety of its typewriters it has called for battle to commence and satisfy its bloodlust.

The Sun today is to journalism what Dr Josef Goebbels was to truth. Even Pravda would blush to be bracketed with it.

The Daily Mirror does not believe that patriotism has to be proved in blood. Especially someone else's blood.

We have said that in the last resort, if all else fails, force would have to be used to eject Argentina from the Falklands.

We also know that but for the bungling by the Government to which The Sun gives such hysterical support this crisis need never have arisen.

If force has finally to be used it must be to retrieve the freedom of the islanders. Not to save Mrs Thatcher's reputation. Nor to secure military revenge for a political defeat.

We do not want to report that brave men have died so that The Sun's circulation might flourish.

Though such is the temper of the British people that they are as likely to be repelled by The Sun's treatment of the fighting as is every decent British journalist.

The Daily Mirror believes that there should be a ceasefire now so that the diplomats can search again for peace.

That is not only our view. It is what the Foreign Secretary, Mr Francis Pym, has been working for.

If that is treachery, then Mrs Thatcher has just recruited a traitor to No. 10 Downing Street.

For the new head of the unit which advises her on policy is a distinguished political journalist, Mr Ferdinand Mount. And in this week's Spectator he calls for a ceasefire.

How long before the proprietor of The Sun, Mr Rupert Murdoch, an Australian who lives in New York, adds Mr Mount to his blacklist?

A Labour MP yesterday called for The Sun to be prosecuted for criminal libel. There is no point in that. It has the perfect defence: Guilty but insane.

What would be more useful would be if The Sun was compelled to carry an official announcement on each copy: "Warning : reading this newspaper may damage your mind."

Why the fuss?

The Sun, 8/5/1982

A POLITICAL furore is being whipped up over The Sun's attack on the Daily Mirror, the Guardian and the BBC's Peter Snow for their conduct during the Falkland Islands conflict.

An official of the National Union of Journalists made the absurd suggestion that the editorial in yesterday's Sun was "a serious threat to freedom of expression."

Labour M.P. Michael English even urges the Attorney-General to prosecute The Sun for criminal libel.

What is this fuss all about?

In the past, the Mirror Group, the Guardian, as well as commentators on BBC TV and radio, have frequently attacked The Sun—on all kinds of issues.

Democracy

They are fully entitled to do so. That is what democracy is all about.

Equally, The Sun is entitled to speak its mind, especially when it believes that certain newspapers are failing to support their own country at a time of grave national crisis.

Our message to Mr English, the National Union of Journalists and anyone else who is interested in this:

- We shall not be gagged on any matter of deep public interest.
- We shall treat crude threats with the contempt they deserve.

As for the BBC, the Guardian and the Daily Mirror (whose editorial line is now endorsed by the Communist Morning Star), we know they are happy when they are dishing it out.

It remains to be seen whether they can take it.

Of one thing we CAN be sure.

All three must be deeply embarrassed by the melodramatic posturing of their new-found supporters.

The Fleet Street warriors who turn from bingo to jingo in the battle of sagging sales

The Guardian, 10/5/1982

While patriotism may be the last refuge of a scoundrel, as the good Dr. Johnson declared in 1773, when Britain was preoccupied with another colonial conflict on the other side of the Atlantic, the kind of cynical chauvinism in times of crisis that he was getting at, has long been recognised at the lower end of Fleet Street as a useful stimulant for sagging sales. After all, didn't Northcliffe's new Daily Mail first hit the million, and start Britain's popular paper, rattrace, by its flag-waving coverage of the Boer War?

So it was no surprise on April 3 when our four right-wing tabloids switched eagerly from bingo to jingo and back-bench warriors who have never heard a cap-gunfired in anger foosed off their opening salvos of three-inch bold sans banner-lines, loaded with rabble-rousing clichés, and got the white weathers ready for "faint-hearts" anyone to the left of Winston Churchill II). Those emotive, red-blooded words that had been relegated to the sports pages after Kenya, Cyprus and Aden were recalled to the colours, "hero," so long languishing as a label for forwards who fumbled home the winning goal in the surrogate battles, was back at the front, all over the front...

Oh, what a lovely war this was going to be – down with the dirty dagoes! It will not be easy to select the eventual winner of the Samuel Johnson Cross for Extreme Bravado in the Face of Reason, but I offer some recommendations.

Well ahead of the field come the Daily Star and the Sun. But bloodthirsty as the Sun has been, the Star edges in front with its crude combination of nastiness and bathos, not least because it affects to be the Labour supporter among Lord Matthews's Tory sheets. On D-1 its leader demanded that "Britain must throw the invading Argentines into the sea" because, it explained for the benefit of those readers who never get past the racing pages, "the Falklands ARE British, just as much as Aintree Racecourse."

The Star's "hero" headline count is easily the highest, and eagerness for the fray was underlined on D-3 when it urged "Now let's end the war of politics... let the government – and the navy – get on with it."

Almost immediately it began its own war of politics against anyone with the temerity to question the Thatcher line. First, it devoted page 1, to an all-out attack on Tony Benn and nine fellow MPs "who want Britain to retreat cravenly" – "Whose side are you on," it screamed menacingly.

Having in the meantime lashed the Argentine dictatorship for its fascist suppression of political freedom, it returned, without batting an eyelid, to Benn's 'treacherous assertion that military action could lead to British deaths too. Benn martyrdom may sometimes seem self-inflicted, but this smear campaign was for real. Last week, under a heavy one-word streamer "Unpatriotic," it warned him "Do not abuse that privilege (democratic free speech) by continuing with your dangerous attacks on the Task Force." To show that this was no idle threat it then hired a lawyer to examine Benn's speech and come up with the solemn verdict that "he might be considered as preaching something very like treason." On the other hand the Star could be considered as preaching something very like vicious, undemocratic tripe.

By D-24 (a week before the Sheffield disaster) the effects of the war fever generated by the tabloids' non-stop barrage of battle cries was reflected in the Star's triumphant splash: "UP AND AT 'EM' -78 per cent say Go on and take the Falklands !" Significantly, its Mori Poll asked blandly "Should British armed forces attempt to restore British sovereignty by invading the Falklands?" – none of the usual qualifying clauses like "if all diplomatic moves fail". Ask the right question and you get the right answer.

When the Sheffield story broke the Star knew where the blame for the disaster really lays in a leader. "Lest we forget", which twisted Kipling's words to its own malevolent theme, it declared: "The cheap political stunts of the past few days gave the Argentinians the extra will to go on fighting..."

The Sun, owned by an Australian and edited by an Australian, naturally is out to show the decadent poms how to write a war. Its man aboard the Invincible, Tony Snow, has added a new dimension to the tradition of war coverage established by William Howard (Crimea) Russell, Sir Philip Gibbs and Alan Moorehead. As the Guardian Diary has pointed out, Snow "sponsored" a Harrier missile which, he reported with proprietorial pride, bore the legends "Sun's Sidewinder" and "Up yours, Galtieri" when it destroyed the Canberra bomber that opened up the casualty list proper. Rupert Murdoch, whose News International group is in the red, will be delighted – all this wholesome publicity cost only a £10 contribution to a drinks party.

To indicate just how seriously it is talking the conflict, the Sun moved its P.3 tits back to P.9 on D-23. Only once has it broken this rule of self-abnegation, on D-26, when the grim tidings were relieved by the

admirable forepeak of Olive Hawkins, stripped for action – no simpering girlie-mag model she, but the wife of a petty officer serving in Invincible alongside the gallant Mr Snow (smart thinking, Tony!).

To back up its Yobspeak headlines (“Stick it up your junta !) the Sun has also put in the party political boot with relish: “Out of the woodwork, like the political termite he is, crawls left)winger Tony Benn...” and “Michael Foot stands today accused of cowardice in the face of the enemy. When this *exercise* (my italics) is over let us not forget who was responsible for letting the nation down”. When the real cost of the “exercise” is counted one hopes some of its four million readers will not forget that kind of journalism.

The Express, which in 1939, as Beaverbrook’s mouthpiece, assured its readers there wasn’t going to be any war, promised on D-1 that this time there would be one – “Force must be met with force.” The threat to all things held dear by latest proprietor Lord Matthews – entrepreneurial freedom, for instance – was plain: “If diplomacy fails... nothing but a resounding victory is likely to restore the country’s reputation and *preserve the Thatcher regime*” (my italics). To be fair, the Express tried to keep a balance between the Falklands and other important issues. “From Monday,” it announced, “there’s an exciting new game – Double Quick Bingo - £40,000 to be won”. (Immediately the Star counter-attacked, slashing its splash about Haig’s shuttle in half to tell the punters about another hero, winner of “our world-shattering £100,000 bingo championship”.) Doing its best without a frontline ace like Tony Snow, the Express kept up a running fire of predictable leaders: “The British people have a message for Mr Pym – NO surrender !”; “Now for the REAL battle”; “The right is on our side. So, too, is the might” (*sic*).

Truest of the True Blues, the Mail, which has never really forgiven the current Prime Minister for being a woman in this age of trendy, unhealthy feminism, opened the campaign with a blistering attack, not on Galtieri but on Mrs Thatcher for being “less like the iron lady... more of a tinsel butterfly” (Pseud’s Corner please copy). By D-3, worried by her lack of butchness, it was asking “Has she got the stomach for it?”, meaning presumably some of that good old Boer War-type action which had given proprietor Rothermere’s great-uncle his big sales breakthrough in 1900. As the Task Force sailed south the militant tone sharpened: “No turning back now”... Don’t sell them down the River Plate”... “Negotiations is not for ever.”

Alone among the tabloids, the Mirror, to its credits, warned from the start that the answer wasn’t to be found in the mouth of a gun. “Might isn’t right,” it said on D-2. “Attack could be the popular thing to do – until the bills come in. Many men may die. The islands don’t matter. The people do. We should offer each of the chance to settle elsewhere.” Courageously, it kept consistently to its theme. Last Monday it underlined the dangers of mounting hysteria: “The language of war, of bombs and missiles and dogfights, creates its own excitement. It must not be allowed to take over.”

Next day the bills began to come in. First, fire Belgrano, then the Sheffield. But the other populars gave no sign that they had got the message. “Stick to your guns, Maggie!” shrieked the Star, citing another of its polls. “Listen to the people in the street... more than 85 per cent said Britain must not back down... 60,8 per cent said the Task Force must carry on.” What it didn’t point out was that the 1,000 people polled were almost equally split on the question “Should we step up our operations by invading the Falklands?”

The Express splash reported “First step in peace” as Haig tried again, but it moved its leader to P.1 to proclaim: “We do not crave a ceasefire” and lambasted the “fainthearts who now turn tail and hand the dispute over the United Nations.” The Mail restored to appropriately medieval, it embarrassing, imagery: “Because we yearn to coax the dove back into flight does not mean that we must keep the hawk, hooded and with tethered talon, flapping on our wrist.”

But it was the Sun that touched nadir. Not deterred by the Star’s early monopoly of the treason ploy, it took Mrs Thatcher’s complaints about the impartiality of the more reputable sections of the media as its cue for the latest bash on Friday at “the traitors in our midst”. The “pygmy” Guardian for one (the Diary’s jibes about Mr Snow had evidently got under that thick skin), but chiefly the ‘timorous, whining Mirror... appeasing the Argentine dictators.” Not until the last line did the leader’s real message become clear: “we are truly sorry for the Daily Mirror’s readers. They are buying a newspaper which... has no faith in the country...” In short, all good patriots should switch to the Sun. Yuk !

Again it was the Mirror that sounded the solitary note of reason: “The killing has got to stop... If that means both Britain and Argentina need to compromise, then compromise they must.”

Twenty-five years ago, during Suez, when Britain was the invader, four British newspapers showed what real editorial courage is. The Guardian, The Observer, the News Chronicle and the Mirror opposed Eden’s disastrous adventure in the teeth of the same jingoistic hysteria whipped up by the right-wing press – each at considerable loss of readers, and fatally in the case of the Chronicle.

If truth is the first casualty of war, the second in this unhappy conflict has been the last remnant of editorial integrity in the tabloids frenetic battle for circulation. It is a sad irony that in the name of press freedom the papers most British people read should take such liberties with journalistic ethics.

The right to report

Daily Mirror, 12/5/1982

THE Government is trying to bludgeon the BBC into becoming a mouth-piece for its Falklands policy. The BBC should fight for it.

The Prime Minister is leading the campaign, the Foreign Secretary is inciting it and it is being orchestrated by Tory MPs.

And most of the Tory newspapers, abandoning any independent judgement they might have possessed, have formed the chorus.

The complaint is that the BBC is “unacceptably even-handed” as one Tory MP put it—by reporting the claims and communiqués of the Argentine Junta.

A former premier, Sir Anthony Eden, tried to shackle the BBC at the time of Suez. The Corporation resisted him then. It should be as brave with Mrs Thatcher now.

The BBC is a world institution, not just a national one.

More than any passing Government, it is the voice of Britain abroad. It is listened to Europe, East and West, in Africa, in Asia and in the Americas. It is believed because it never deliberately lies. Because it has demonstrated it is not the tool of any Government.

If ever the BBC doctors its dispassionate approach to the news it will lose its reputation—a reputation more enduring than of the Government of the day and more precious than any policy.

Should Mrs Thatcher need evidence of the BBC’s power for truth, it lies in the fact that the Argentines are jamming it.

She should be giving thanks for the BBC’s independence, not trying to bend it to her will.

The men of blood

The Sun, 12/5/1982

You will have heard them whining on the radio or seen them huffing and puffing on television.

You may even have read their poisonous pronouncements in certain newspapers.

Britain's pacifists, appeasers and elitists have been hopping with fury over the Sun.

WHY?

Because we denounced those sections of the media and those individuals who are sabotaging Britain's war against the Argentines.

The Daily Mirror, which had been cowering in the trenches since the crisis erupted, raised its head long enough to devote a full page to us.

If you did not see it, don't worry. You missed nothing.

Abuse

Behind the saloon bar abuse there was not a single illuminating thought or one fresh image.

The Guardian, which is a sort of Daily Mirror for sophisticated adults, sneered that, basically, the Falklands expedition was a plot by The Sun to increase circulation.

That will make pretty reading for the families of the dead and wounded in the Sheffield.

But then, the Guardian has one quality that stamps it as unique among newspapers: it is **ALWAYS** wrong on any issue that really matters.

And fallibility brings us naturally to one other commentator, Curlylocks Simon Jenkins, of the Economist magazine.

Know what troubles this fellow?

He is concerned that we may encourage the people to expect total victory.

On Mr Jenkins's lips, the trumpet blows an uncertain note that must never be heard as a call to battle.

The Economist is a magazine aimed at the elite, and Mr Jenkins himself is a perfect example of the elitist attitude.

Arrogant

He typifies those arrogant individuals who know better than anyone else.

We find them not just in trendy, progressive publications and pale pink TV programmes.

They were in Whitehall in the Thirties when, by desperately seeking peace on any terms, they made conflict inevitable.

Peace-loving nations do not go to war because they are strong and united. They are led to the battlefield by internal divisions, by enemies within who gnaw at the nation's resolve and persuade would-be aggressors to grab for the spoils.

The Sun is accused of being jingoistic and bloodthirsty.

It is not jingoistic to love one's country and to insist that she is treated with justice and respect in the world.

WE have no blood on our hands. We had no part in starting the war. The Argentines did that.

WE do not wish a single death in the Falklands conflict.

Begging

WE mourn those, British and Argentine, who have already died.

In the mid-Thirties, Hitler could have been stopped with the loss of a few thousands, maybe few hundred, lives.

Because of appeasement, the toll was swollen into millions.

The Argentinians would have withdrawn from the Falklands long since, **IF** Tony Benn had not been campaigning for a British surrender, **IF** the Labour Party had not been begging the UN to come to our rescue, **IF** the Daily Mirror and their friends—who include the Communist Morning Star—had not been pleading that we should make a deal which would reward the Argentines for their aggression.

These faint-hearts, who can understand the views and appreciate the interests of every country but their own, are the REAL architects of disaster.

They—whatever their intentions—are the men of blood. Opinion polls and the flood of letters and telephone calls to this newspaper demonstrate with total certainty that they in no way represent the views of the nation.

As always, the instincts of people are sure and sound.

- **THEY** want peace. But **NOT** peace at any price.
- **THEY** are not going to be pushed around by jumped-up dictators in Buenos Aires or anywhere else.
- **THEY** are **NOT** going to surrender British interests in the Falklands or in any other territory.
- **THEY** are **NOT** going to sacrifice honour to buy a quiet life.

Anger

Enoch Powell has said it well: *The islands are ours by right and by power.*

That is where The Sun stands.

We shall go on giving voice to the resolve and anger of our country.

We shall go on telling the truth and the trembling cardboard warriors can all take a jump in the River Plate!

Easy touch

The Sun, 15/5/1982

HOW refreshing to find some honesty emerging at the last ever the inept way the BBC is handling the Falklands crisis.

Mr Robert Kee, presenter of last Monday's outrageously anti-British Panorama programme, now tells us he protested in advance about its bias.

Only to be told by the editor that changes were being made, the commentary would be re-written and there was no longer any need to worry.

Mr Kee did not see the film and commentary again until it went on the air with barely any changes.

Mr Kee had been conned.

Trick

As he explained in a letter to The Times, he was so angry he thought of dissociating himself from the programme.

BUT "in the interests of immediate programme solidarity" he carried on.

It is shocking that what purports to be a serious current affairs programme should be run in such a way.

But it is really surprising that it should be so sympathetic to the anti-British knockers, considering all the TV time given to the IRA in recent years?

The **BRITISH** Broadcasting Corporation needs a shake-up.

Too many of its studios are infested with arrogant little know-alls ready to serve up their loaded version of "truth" to the viewers.

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