

Falkland Islands NEWSLETTER

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Pressure grows for inquiry on the administration of Falklands

Pressure is growing for an independent judicial inquiry into the administration of the Falkland Islands by Whitehall during the last seven years. Documents held by the Falkland Islands Office show a disturbing history of inept planning and frustration of the development of the Islands' economy. Dealings with overseas territories are excluded from review by the parliamentary commissioner, the Ombudsman.

In particular, the construction of an airfield at a cost to the British taxpayer of £4.5 million - which will cost the Falkland Islanders at least £75,000 per year to operate, without generating any revenue - is being quoted.

Under the communications Agreement of 1971, between the British and Argentine Governments, the British Government agreed to build a permanent airfield in the Islands.

This substantial financial commitment by Britain was welcomed by the Falkland Islanders, who saw it as providing them with a link with the outside world. The subsequent revelation that the permanent airfield would be little different in size from the temporary metal strip laid by the Argentines was greeted with dismay by the Islanders and potential investors in the Islands.

No commercial aircraft capable of flying to countries other than Argentina or Chile will be able to use the new airfield. Even Argentine F28 jets cannot do so fully laden.

An agreement in 1974 granted the Argentines a monopoly of fuel supplies to the Islands. Islanders have always bought their supplies of diesel fuel from the Ministry of Defence fuel tanks, which hold four years' stocks; their relatively small requirements of petrol kerosene and Avgas have been imported in drums.

In October, the Argentines caused petrol rationing in the Islands by failing to deliver supplies: Argentine tankers refused to fly the Red Ensign courtesy flag.

The British Government has allocated £0.3M for the construction of a fuel jetty

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KEEP THE
FALKLAND
ISLANDS
BRITISH

press cutting
from:

(574)
LA PRENSA
SAN SALVADOR,
EL SALVADOR
D. 67.100

AUG 20 1977

YOUNG FALKLAND ISLANDER Sukie Cameron faced Press photographers to bring a message to the public and to display a whale's head from the Islands which she calls the 'skeleton of British diplomacy'. Sukie's 'photo-call' opened Falkland Islands Week during August.

DECEMBER TALKS UNDER SHADOW OF UNITED NATIONS

The negotiations between Britain and Argentina on the future of the Falkland Islands are to be held in New York. Press reports have referred to the talks taking place during December, although, beyond confirming that talks must take place before the end of the year, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has denied that any firm plans have been made.

In July, preliminary talks between the two governments were held in Rome, described as a 'neutral venue'. Any negotiations conducted in New York would be a demonstration to the General Assembly of the United Nations, which sits until 18 or 19 December, that the Falklands dispute is being discussed between the two parties. Any conclusions, apart from

being presented to the national legislatures, are likely to be put before the 'Committee of 2' on de-colonisation, which meets in February. No agenda for this committee is yet available.

The negotiations between Britain and Argentina follow Resolution 1514 (U.N.) which called on both governments to discuss formally the future of the Falkland Islands.

Inquiry call

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as part of the 1974 Agreement, although Clause Four of the Agreement commits Argentina to the building of such a facility, if necessary.

An error in the Agreement permitted Argentina to use a system since condemned by safety experts as a major fire risk. The cost of the jetty, according to independent expert opinion, is 'grossly excessive'.

The original agreement was open-ended in sterling price terms for the fuel, but following British commercial pressure a rate of exchange basis was agreed with Argentina, which operates multiple rates for different items.

Since May 1977, when the monopoly was applied the price of petrol has been increased by about 33 per cent. Petrol in Great Britain is now cheaper in real terms than it was before the 1973 oil crisis.

Exercising her monopoly of transport, the Argentine has raised the price of air fares no less than nine times this year. The monopoly arises as a result of the failure by the British government either to build a full-size airfield or to stand by the Communications Agreement, under which she was obliged to provide a passenger service by sea. No such service has been provided, allowing the Argentine to insist that all persons travelling to and from the Islands carry a visa, the notorious 'white card'; this permits entry and exit to the British Colony and is available only at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Buenos Aires.

Recently, Argentina has caused dislocation to travellers by arbitrarily cancelling reservations on air services.

NO RIGHT OF ENTRY FOR BRITONS INTO U.K.

The problems of travel are amplified by the immigration difficulties which Falkland Islanders encounter in Britain. More than 300 have no right of entry into the United Kingdom, under the terms of the Immigration Act.

Recently a teenage girl born on the Falklands was detained for more than three hours at London Airport for questioning. She was eventually granted conditional permission to stay for three months.

Islanders have no right of unqualified entry unless they have a parent or grandparent born in the U.K.; 97 per cent of the Falkland Islanders are of British descent.

Long to reign over us

A telegram was sent from the Falkland Islands Office to HM the Queen on August 26:

"WE, YOUR MAJESTY'S LOYAL SUBJECTS IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND FALKLAND ISLANDERS RESIDENT IN BRITAIN, TOGETHER WITH OUR FRIENDS, WHO ARE MEETING AT THE OLD HALL, LINCOLNS INN, EXPRESS OUR HUMBLE DUTY TO YOUR MAJESTY.

"PLEASE ACCEPT OUR CONGRATULATIONS AND OUR LOYALTY ON THE HAPPY OCCASION OF YOUR JUBILEE.

"LONG MAY YOU REIGN OVER US."
A gracious reply was received.



DESIRE AND RIGHTS

Argentines, above all people in South America, should support the people of the Falkland Islands in their right to choose their own future for themselves.

With most of South America at his feet, the liberator San Martin, Argentina's national hero, declared: "I leave to your wishes the election of the government you want".

San Martin accepted the declared wish of the freed peoples, who then chose their own future for themselves by founding Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and the country which later became part of the Argentine.

San Martin was an enlightened man, who anticipated a basic tenet of the United Nations Charter, which urges self-determination for all subject peoples. Of the Falkland Islanders' determination to remain British subjects there is no doubt.

SUPPORT FROM MPs, LORDS

In a debate on the Queen's Speech, Mr Michael Clark Hutchison MP (Edinburgh S. Con.) was the first member to raise the question of the New York talks on the Falkland Islands at the new parliamentary session:

"I view the development with suspicion and distaste. The talks are not necessary.

"However," he said "if they are to take place, I urge the government to ensure that representatives of the Falkland Islands Government attend the talks, that they have full status, that their voice is heard and that their standing is equal to that of any ministers or officials from this country."

Succeeding speakers from other parties supported Mr Clark Hutchison's call.

In the House of Lords on November 10, Lord Strathcona (Opposition spokesman on Defence) referred to the huge economic potential of the Islands and their seas.

Lord Morris, in the same debate, spoke at length on the Islands and demanded to know whether representatives of the Islanders would be present at negotiations. Lord Morris said that the government had shown little evidence of good faith or good will in their actions since the publication of the Shackleton Report, in particular their lack of action on the airfield extension.

On November 14, Sir Bernard Braine (Essex S E Con.) asked Mrs Judith Hart (Minister of State for Overseas Development) whether feasibility studies into sheepskin processing, mutton freezing and local television have been authorised for the Islands. He was told that an adviser had visited the Islands to give practical demonstrations on sheepskin processing. No plans had been made for studies in mutton freezing and local television.

CPA address

In his address to the delegates at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ottawa recently, Mr Adrian Monk spoke as an elected member of 'what is probably the smallest democratic legislature within the Commonwealth, the Falkland Islands Legislative Council.

"We are so small that we could not possibly survive as an independent nation, adjacent as we are to Argentina which claims us, without guarantees from the United Nations, supported by all major powers." he said.

"Therefore, we must belong to someone; in other words, we must remain a colony.

"We have during this present series of tours and also today, heard many distinguished and eloquent speakers proclaim their beliefs in the aims of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - in the rights and freedoms of citizens, the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy, self determination and so on.

"We in my country wonder why, when the Argentinian claim to our country is discussed in the United Nations and elsewhere, so few Commonwealth countries support our desire to retain our democratic, British way of life.

We are continually being pressured to join with that country, whose way of life is alien to us, a country often without even the pretence of a democratic government, a country where human rights are virtually non-existent, a country with different cultures and a different language.

"Even the United Kingdom government has occasionally to be reminded of the wishes of our people to retain their British way of life. Why? Is there some magic population figure above which human rights and self-determination apply? Not according to the aims of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, where even the rights of individual citizens are mentioned.

"Is it a matter of colour? Not in my view. I am quite sure Commonwealth countries have developed their thinking beyond that crude philosophy. One has only to have seen how well parliamentarians of every colour, race and creed have mixed together in great harmony during the last week to realize that is so.

"What then? Is it because we are a colony? Most Commonwealth countries were once colonies and are now rightly proud of being independent. The word "colony" is a dirty word. Is that the problem?

"My people have overwhelmingly demonstrated that they do not want to become part of Argentina. Since at this time we are too small for independence, we have demonstrated our desire to remain British. Is attempting to force us to become part of Argentina against our wishes showing a regard for the rights and freedoms of citizens? I do not think so."

Office active

Encouraging sympathisers to throw bottles containing messages supporting the Falkland Islanders into the sea is one aspect of the activities of the Falkland Islands Office, which opened earlier this year. The Office, which acts as a clearing house for information and commercial enquiries, as well as arranging events, receptions, ceremonies and meetings, has been endlessly active during its short existence.

Several papers are in the course of preparation by the Office to add to the studies already made - all of them concerned with developing the Islands in the way the Islanders themselves want them developed - the object of the Falkland Islands Research and Development Association, which finances the Office from members' subscriptions.

The South Atlantic Fisheries Committee was formed recently through the Office, with Mr James Johnson MP, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Fisheries Committee as president. The committee is pressing for a commercial fisheries project in the South

Atlantic and several other connected matters, along the lines recommended by Lord Shackleton. The present territorial limit around the Islands is three miles.

The SAFC membership includes food retailers, fishing interests, the National Farmers Union, the White Fish Authority and scientific bodies. Development is being encouraged in parallel with the fishing surveys being undertaken by the Falkland Islands Company.

The Office provides facilities of all kinds, and includes publishing information sheets, answering enquiries and offering a London base to visiting Islanders.

The publicity activities of the Office include the preparation of car stickers, brochures, news sheets, T-shirts and exhibitions. Liaison is maintained through the Office with MPs, Peers, government departments and the Press.

The U K Falkland Islands Committee uses the Office as its headquarters. The walls of this modest room are covered with maps, telegrams, messages and photographs. A larger room in the building is available for meetings, receptions or conferences: all to keep the Islands free.

The Falkland Islands Committee, which has branches in London and the Islands, was founded in 1968 to represent the wishes of the Islanders.

The UK Falkland Islands Committee is in permanent contact with the committees in the Islands, where there are several active branches.

The UK Committee is an honorary group and includes ex-Governors, scientists, professional men, and Members of Parliament from all parties.

Meetings are held regularly at the Falkland Islands Office.

Falklands Week

During August, when many Islanders were visiting the U K, they attended a series of events. In particular, they were the guests at a reception held at Lincoln's Inn which was also attended by MPs, Peers and the Press. The following day, the annual reunion was celebrated at Ham.

To reinforce the Islanders' case before the public, a young Falkland Islander, Sukie Cameron, bravely faced Press photographers to model a T-shirt. The T-shirt proclaimed "Keep the Falkland Islands British" and was worn by Sukie's sister, Jane, the following week when Islanders presented a petition at 10 Downing Street. Photographs of both Girls appeared in newspapers around the world (see front page.).

A Press conference, organised at the Falkland Islands Office, introduced journalists to the economic potential of the Islands, as described by a strong panel of experts.

F.I.C. HAS NEW PARENT

Following a successful bid for Charrington Industrial Holdings, the Falkland Islands Company has a new parent, a major British company, Coalite and Chemical Ltd.

The board of Coalite has confirmed that they will continue to support the Islanders in their determination to stay British.

ELECTION RESULTS

The first elections under the new constitution of the Falkland Islands took place recently. There are now six elected members of the Legislative Council instead of four elected and two nominated by the Governor.

Elected were: E. Falkland - Mr A B Monk (who was unopposed), W Falkland - Mr D Evans, W Stanley - Mr S Wallace, E Stanley - Mr W H Goss, Camp Division - Mr T Miller, Stanley Division - Mr W E Bowles.

BATTLE DAY

The ceremony to commemorate Battle Day, celebrated each year in the Falkland Islands as a reminder of the defeat of Graf Spee Squadron, will be held at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on December 8. Those wishing to attend are asked by the Falkland Islands Office to assemble at 12.45 in King Charles Street. Refreshments, for those confirming their attendance with the Office, will be available after the ceremony at 16 Regent

T - SHIRTS ARE ON SALE FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS OFFICE at £2.00 each including postage. The T-shirts are available with the crest or worded 'KEEP THE FALKLAND ISLANDS BRITISH'.

Crested ties (Navy blue) £1.50

LEARN MORE ABOUT FALKLAND ISLAND STAMPS

The Falkland Islands Philatelic Study Group founded in 1970 to research into all aspects of philately connected with the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies, leading to publication of findings. The 30-page, fully illustrated journal, aptly named THE UPLAND GOOSE, is circulated free to 300 members worldwide. Regular meetings in

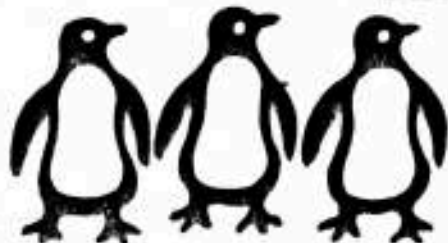


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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP
IN THE
BRITISH COLONY OF
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

A support group for, and authorised by, The Tabernacle (the United Free Church of the Falkland Islands).

Promises both of prayer support and financial gifts are very much desired. We will also be pleased to receive requests for our regular news-sheet. Please contact us also with requests for a speaker and slides for your meeting. Correspondence and further information from: Revd Robin Forrester c/o The Latymer Mission, Bramley Road, London W10.

(Cheques & postal orders should be made payable to The Penguin Project).