

THE FALKLANDS WAR AND THE MEDIA: POPULAR AND ELITE
UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CONFLICT

By

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to illustrate that certain narratives of the Falklands War were the products of a failure to account for a public that think in ways that cannot be classified in to simple categories. It will argue that the Falklands War remains an area of contested history within British discourse, not everyone understood the conflict as the noble crusade that Thatcher and newspapers such as *The Sun* thought it was.

It will look at how the presentation of the conflict shaped public perception and vice versa, how perception of public opinion shaped presentation. It counters the view that the public are easily manipulated, rather people are free-thinking individuals. It illustrates how relationships between the public, the military, the government and the media interacted to develop certain understandings of the conflict. Finally it assesses how the variety of different narratives have manifested themselves in later representations of the conflict. It asks what impact memory of the Falklands War has had in the thirty years since it occurred.

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Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBC W/A	British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archive
CAB	Cabinet Office
CAC	Churchill Archive Centre
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
D-Notice	Defence Notice
EEC	European Economic Community
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office
HC	House of Commons
HCDC	House of Commons Defence Committee
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
IRN	Independent Radio Network
ITN	Independent Television News
ITV	Independent Television
M/O	Mass Observation
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
MSS	Manuscripts
MTF	Margaret Thatcher Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PR	Public Relations
PRO	Public Relations Officer
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAF	Royal Air Force
RFA	Royal Fleet Auxiliary
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SAMA 82	South Atlantic Medal Association 1982
SAS	Special Air Service
SDP	Social Democrat Party
SIGNIT	Signals Intelligence
THCR	Thatcher
TNA	The National Archives
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
VC	Victoria Cross

Introduction

The sickening footage broadcast around the world of American journalist James Foley being beheaded is a symbolic consequence of a future Derek Mercer expressed thirty years ago; ‘thousands of journalists roaming around free, unfettered by censorship and communicating directly to their offices in Washington, London or Moscow’.¹ Foley was a freelance journalist reporting on the Syrian civil war when he was kidnapped by rebel forces in 2012. Unlike in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Falklands, he was not protected by anyone, not his country’s armed forces, not a radio station, TV channel, nor a newspaper. Foley is the counterpoint to the strict controls put upon the British Task Force correspondents who reported on the Falklands War. The democratisation of war reporting through the use of immediate communications such as satellites and the internet has given journalists the freedom to report on what they want, how they want. The cost has been their personal safety, this has in some cases led to brutal executions witnessed around the world via the same means of communication that gave them their journalistic freedom. Reflecting upon the merits of embedding with forces in relation to the Falklands War and her own experience during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Caroline Wyatt asked:

...are embeds worth the compromises undoubtedly made by those who rely on the military for transport, food and safe lodging, in return for a certain measure of security and that crucial access to the frontline?²

Wyatt’s comment shows that thirty years on there is still debate surrounding the relationship between the media, armed forces, government and the public. What balance should be struck

¹ K. Mercer, D. Mungham and G. Williams, *The Fog of War* (Cardiff, 1987), p.2.

² C. Wyatt, ‘How has embedding changed since the Falklands?’ *BBC*, http://www.live.bbc.co.uk/blogs/blogcollegeofjournalism/posts/falklands_2 (Accessed: 28 August 2014).

between the contradictory statement ‘the essence of successful warfare is secrecy; the essence of successful journalism is publicity’?³

If as military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz stated ‘War is merely the continuation of policy by other means’⁴ then it must be emphasised that these means are not confined to the direct area of military operations, but are also present on the domestic front where the nurturing of public support is fundamental to conducting a successful campaign. Clausewitz believed that the ‘means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose’,⁵ it should not be the case that the population of a democratic nation are deceived in order to promote the rights of another group; it is a contradictory strategy.

In the historiography of the Falklands War there have been many criticisms of the way that the media were handled, from the Task Force correspondents embedded with the Army, to the manipulation of journalists in the parliamentary lobby, of pressurising editors and the attacks against the BBC for its neutrality.⁶ With accusations of manipulation by elites within the government and media it is important to see whether such attempts were made.

On the figurative level Thatcher’s proclamation that ‘we have made Great Britain great again’⁷ appeared to try to use the Falklands as a conflict that had symbolically lay the ghosts of economic decline in the 1970s and of Suez to rest. Research by David Sanders has disputed the notion that the ‘Falklands Factor’ was the reason Thatcher won the 1983 General Election. It has been argued that Thatcher’s fortunes had begun to improve before the conflict

³ Mercer Mungham, and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.3

⁴ M. Howard and P. Paret, (trans.), C. Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Oxford, 2008) p.28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29

⁶ See; R. Harris, *Gotcha: The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis* (London, 1983); M. Cockerell, P. Hennessy, D. Walker, *Sources close to the Prime Minister: inside the hidden world of the news manipulators* (Michigan, 1984), N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London, 2007); J. Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London, 2006). See also works by the NGOs such as Campaign for Press and Broadcast Freedom, for example; S. Greenberg and G. Smith, *Rejoice! Media Freedom and the Falklands* (London, 1982).

⁷ Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 486/82, ‘Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham’, 03 July 1982, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104989> (Accessed: 29 August 2014).

because British economy had started to expand shortly prior to the war.⁸ But, when Argentina invaded the Falklands the Thatcher government was still at a low ebb, unemployment over 13% in April 1982, inflation high, cuts in public expenditure and social provision had sent the government at that time to the lowest approval rating on record.⁹ In the historiography of the Falklands War narratives have focused on the transformation the fortunes of Thatcher's government and the nation.

After victory in the Falklands the sabre-rattling and xenophobia of parts of the popular press were replaced with stories of national revival. Such narratives developed in the same way as certain memories of the Second World War became truths.¹⁰ Like Dunkirk was transformed from a military failure into a story of British heroism,¹¹ the supposed regeneration caused by the Falklands War masked the reality of a fractured Britain. Sententious headlines such as 'WE ARE ALL FALKLANDERS NOW'¹² created an image of a nation unified in its resolve after rediscovering its Second World War spirit that had been lost in post-war years of imperial decline.

If the way a nation fights its wars is an expression of its essential characteristics, then how it is presented to its members is also a reflection of these. Comparing how the conflict was understood at an elite and popular level can reveal what the elites of the country thought the nation was, what they wanted it to be and how this differed from what the reality was for members of the public.

⁸ D Sanders, H. Ward, D. Marsh, and T. Fletcher, 'Government popularity and the Falklands war: a re-assessment', *British Journal of Political Science* 17:3 (1987) pp. 281–313.

⁹ J. Campbell, *The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher: From Grocers Daughter to Iron Lady* (London, 2009), p.157-183; H. Clarke, W. Mishler, and Paul Whiteley, 'Recapturing the Falklands: Models of Conservative Popularity, 1979-83', *British Journal of Political Science* 20:1 (1990) pp. 63-81.

¹⁰ M. Connelly, *We Can Take It! Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (London, 2004).

¹¹ P. Knightly, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq: Third Edition* (Baltimore, 2004), pp.252-255.

¹² Editorial, 'We are all Falklanders now', *The Times*, 5 April 1982.

It is important to counter those who regard conflict as a force for regeneration. To think of Britain's current and future role in world affair as an extension of its military triumphs is dangerous. If British elite understanding of the Falklands War has led to the identification of 'combat as a viable means of renewing its people and restoring its glory days, then "the end" may be all too close to hand'.¹³ We must 'be better prepared to secure our future from the trajectories of the past'.¹⁴

The primary focus of this dissertation is to illustrate that certain narratives of the Falklands War were the products of a failure to account for a public that think in ways that cannot be classified in to simple categories. It will argue that the Falklands War remains an area of contested history within British discourse, not everyone saw the conflict as the noble crusade that Thatcher and newspapers such as the *Sun* thought it was.

To develop an understanding of where in times of conflict the media should align itself in relation to the armed forces and the government, and those it serves, the public, it is important to know how they operate in relation to each other. One aim of this thesis is to assess the levels of public manipulation and then to scrutinise how successfully it affected them compared to what some commentators have suggested. Though it is claimed that such activities happen every day, are the public passive receivers of messages? The conscious and unconscious ways that people change meanings of messages so that they elicit unintended connotations is a product of population where the innumerable variety life experiences enables people to resist attempts to influence them. This thesis aims to counter apocalyptic views of a dystopian world where the public blindly accept any propaganda.

It looks at how the presentation of the conflict shaped public perception and vice versa, how perception of public opinion shaped presentation. It will counter the view that the public are

¹³ K. Foster, *Fighting Fictions: War, Narrative and National Identity* (London, 1999), p.155

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

easily manipulated by elites,¹⁵ it will show people as free-thinking individuals. In doing so it will illustrate how different relationships between the public, the military, the government and the media interacted to develop certain understandings of the conflict.

To show how people think in different ways the dissertation must ask two overarching questions. First, to what extent was popular understanding of the war shaped by conscious and unconscious factors of media production? And second, can qualitative techniques reveal a divergence in opinion between the elites and the public that quantitative techniques alone cannot?

The sources of production to be considered originate at the elite level, the roles of the Task Force correspondents, editors, the government, the army and the MoD in influencing the content will be analysed. It looks at the motivations for the decisions they made in trying to shape how the conflict was understood at the popular level. It then evaluates the capacity of these different groups to influence popular understanding of the conflict and how the variety of different narratives have manifested themselves in later representations of the conflict. It asks what impact memory of the Falklands War has had in the thirty years since it occurred.

Consideration must be given vast array of factors that influenced how the war was presented to and received by the public. Consequently this dissertation is divided in to four chapters; Chapter One considers one of the initial sources of information, the Task Force correspondents. It profiles the reporters, looking at their prior histories before proceeding to question whether these profiles explained the way they reported, it then asks how their experiences during the conflict shaped their reporting.

¹⁵ See for example, E. S. Herman, N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York, 1998), see also the classic work on the post-structural construction of thought, E. Said, *Orientalism: 25th Anniversary Ed* (London 2003).

Chapter Two evaluates elite understandings of the conflict and the role of the media in it. It starts by appraising how newspapers positions were influenced by factors that they believed would be in their commercial interest. It then looks at how the government understood the importance and influence of the media in shaping understanding of the war at the elite and popular level.

Chapter Three discusses how the public understood the conflict and will develop a conceptualisation of them not in monolithic or binary terms, but instead as members of pluralistic society. It uses quantitative in conjunction with qualitative techniques to help explicate complex nature of public opinion. This is to highlight the flaws in the elite understanding of the public due to their reliance on quantitative techniques such as opinion polls. It challenges the view that sees the elites as having the power to readily control how the public think.

Chapter Four looks at post-conflict representations to further consider how certain memories of the conflict have been excluded from a dominant narrative of the war. It demonstrates through such mediums that the revival of the nation was not what everyone experienced, many felt excluded from the supposed post-war regeneration that the popular press were urging people to believe.

Chapter One - Task Force Reportage

*No honest journalist should be willing to describe himself or herself as 'embedded.'
To say, 'I'm an embedded journalist' is to say, 'I'm a government Propagandist'.*¹

Noam Chomsky

*Most of us decided before landing that our role was simply to report sympathetically
as possible what the British forces are doing here today.*²

Max Hastings

The idea that most of the journalists had made a conscious decision prior to the conflict that they were going to adopt a pro-British tone in their reportage is misleading. Certainly much of the content that made it back to Britain did reflect such sentiments, especially Max Hasting's, but not all of the Task Force correspondents had such clarity of thought. Apart from Hastings only ITV reporter Michael Nicholson had significant experience of war reporting. To assume all reporters knew what they were going to do is incorrect, many had little idea of what was to come. Apart from their own politics the primary influences upon their content were the challenges they faced once they had landed ashore. Reporting restrictions, the affinities bred by this early example of embedding and a general desire to see the troops (rather than the government or the nation) triumph ensured a largely patriotic if occasionally jingoistic response from the Task Force correspondents.

Past experience

The profiles of the Task Force correspondents have some notable similarities; the most obvious being that they were all male (the only female that went was the official artist Linda Kitson, whilst Kate Adie believed she was left out because she was a woman).³ Except for two reporters, Michael Nicholson and Max Hastings, who had previously worked in battle

¹ N. Chomsky and D. Barsamian, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World: Interviews with David Barsamian* (New York, 2006), p.34

² Sunday Times Insight Team, *The Falklands War: The Full Story*, (London, 1982), p.213.

³ K. Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Autobiography*, (London, 2003).

zones, there were only three journalists with the Task Force who were the defence correspondents for their newspapers, Alistair McQueen *Daily Mirror*, Ian Bruce *Glasgow Herald* and Dereck Hudson *Yorkshire Post*. By their own admissions the rest of the Task Force correspondents were not the ‘star’ writers, but were ‘solid but unspectacular wordsmiths’.⁴ They were a new generation of reporters who did not have to do National Service,⁵ nor were they the specialist columnists on defence for their respective organisations. Hastings won the journalist of the year for his reporting during Falklands War, his copy was even used by other newspapers instead of their own correspondents; as such he can be regarded as the most successful reporter to sail with the Task Force.⁶ Whereas Hastings prospered, the majority of the 29 reporters struggled to acclimatise, they had to deal with what they saw as inept MoD minders and a system that they felt unnecessarily hindered and censored their work. This happened despite ‘official’ leaks from government sources that meant the Task Force correspondents ‘had the sour experience of hearing "their" news being broken for them on the World Service’.⁷ How the prior experiences of the correspondents influenced their reporting can help explain why some prospered whilst others struggled.

The correspondent’s personal histories were deep shapers of their perceptions. Kevin Foster suggested that ‘what we think of as acts of perception are really acts of recall’⁸ whilst military historian John Keegan felt that when dealing with unfamiliar events an individual ‘will turn to look at what someone else has already made of a similar set of events as a guide for his own pen’.⁹ Historical precedents played an important part in helping the reporters make sense of unfamiliar events during the Falklands War.

⁴ Foster, *Fighting Fictions*, p.32.

⁵ Mercer, Mungham, and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.107.

⁶ Harris, *Gotcha!*, p.139.

⁷ J. Barnes, ‘The Worst reported War Since Crimea’ *The Guardian*, Monday 25 February 2002.

⁸ Foster. *Fighting Fictions*, p.12.

⁹ J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, (Harmondsworth, 1976), p.62.

Hasting's patriotic position followed his father's, a reporter during the Second World War, quoting him in an article that emphasised that he, like his father before him, was not a neutral, 'When one's nation is at war, reporting becomes an extension of the war effort'.¹⁰ Hastings propensity towards the British military was not purely because of proximity during the conflict, but also because his upbringing had followed a similar path to that of the officer class of the British Army, coming from a middle class family and being educated at Oxford University.¹¹

Hastings took a patriotic perspective from the beginning and was predisposed to moderating what he wrote. It is illustrative of how the prejudices of individual reporters can influence their content that he admitted that whilst some wanted to report on atrocities, or that it had been discovered that the Argentinians had napalm¹² he was 'just not going to file that' because the British were using white phosphorus, which he described as being 'every bit as unpleasant'.¹³

The BBC's Task Force correspondent, Robert Fox, described how Hastings was able to profit from his experiences and upbringing; 'he spoke the same language... he [liked] soldiers... got on well with them... and spent a lot of [his] working life with them'.¹⁴ This affinity with the armed forces, combined with the fact that he was 'military historian... as a reporter he had seen the Yom Kippur War... and Vietnam'¹⁵ meant he had a better grasp of the workings of the military than the other correspondents. His knowledge meant he picked up on the idiosyncrasies military terminology, whilst knowing who to befriend meant that he sometimes received favourable treatment, such as wrangling himself a place on a helicopter

¹⁰ Sunday Times Insight Team, *The Falklands War*, p.213.

¹¹ Harris, *Gotcha!*, p.138.

¹² See Image 1.

¹³ D. Morrison, and H. Tumber, *Journalists at War: Dynamics of News Reporting During the Falklands Conflict* (Beverly Hills, 1988) p.106

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁵ Fox, *Eyewitness Falklands*, pp.135-6.

back to the fleet in order to get his copy sent. An extreme example of this preferential treatment was that he was once able to send an article back via a secret satellite link meant only for the SAS.¹⁶

Michael Nicholson had even more experience of working in conflict zones yet nowhere near the same level of success. This can partly be attributed to the difficulty of getting video material back to Britain, but a significant element was that he struggled with a level of control over his content that he was not used to. Nicholson's fraught relationship with the British military was heightened because his experiences had led him to expect more from the British than they were willing to give. Task Force correspondent Martin Cleaver juxtaposed his own inexperience 'since it was my first war... I took it as it came' with Nicholson who was 'too experienced in a way'. Cleaver described how when Nicholson was prevented from doing something he had been allowed to in other conflicts he 'crawled up the wall and around the ceilings a few times'.¹⁷

The collective inexperience of the reporters meant that they were more likely to accept the censorship and restrictions that Nicholson struggled with. In some cases they tried to emulate the self-censorship practised by Hastings rather than the type of radical polemics of other established war correspondents, such as John Pilger, who did not sail with the Task Force. Pilger reported in detail the hypocrisy of British foreign policy for its rhetoric about the Falkland Islander's right to self-determination whilst at the same time handing over the Chagos Islands and its inhabitants to America. Pilger's tone is radical, describing how the Chagos Islanders were 'ruthlessly expelled'¹⁸ to the Mauritius and quoted a former resident who said 'they stole our country and imprisoned us here'.¹⁹ Contrast this with the works of

¹⁶ J. Newsinger, *Dangerous Men: The SAS and Popular Culture*, (Chicago, 1997), p.31.

¹⁷ Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p.8.

¹⁸ J. Pilger, *Freedom next time*, (London, 2007), p.8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.35

reporters such as Gareth Parry of the *Guardian*, whose newspaper was critical of the conflict; Parry stated that there were certain things that he refused to report on because he thought that ‘to attempt to describe some of the more horrific sights and sounds of a war would be unkind’.²⁰ Unlike Hastings, Parry’s motivations were not necessarily to censor stories for the British cause, but because he found them unpleasant. Regardless, there were factors external to the Task Force correspondents prior experiences that helped shape their reporting.

Influence on Islands

The embedding of reporters with front line troops had a significant impact upon the content produced by the Task Force correspondents. They were in the thick of the fighting, they witnessed the deaths, felt fear, anger and confusion with the soldiers who were sent to reclaim the Islands. They yomped with the forces and slept in the same waterlogged trenches.²¹

Being immersed in the military culture meant that Task Force correspondents struggled to entirely incubate themselves from its pervasive influences. Military culture is difficult to define, instead of offering a definition it may be of more use to describe its function. Arthur Marwick saw culture as a set of beliefs that helps a group of people orientate themselves within the world, it gives them identity.²² The military’s culture can be understood as the product of a multifarious set of symbols, legends and assumptions suffused with historical significance that consolidate themselves in to a set of values and beliefs that are gradually inculcated in to its members.²³

²⁰ G. Parry, ‘Gareth Parry reflects on his time with British forces during the Falklands war’, *The Guardian*, 3 July 1982.

²¹ M. Nicholson, *A Measure of Danger: The Memoirs of Legendary War Correspondent Michael Nicholson: Memoirs of a British War Correspondent* (London, 2013), p.232

²² A. Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (London, 2001) p.156.

²³ See, P. Wilson, ‘Defining Military Culture’, *The Journal of Military History*, 72, (2008), pp.11-41; D. French, *The British Way in Warfare 1688 – 2000*, (London, 1990).

The closeness of the correspondents to their subject is an important factor for understanding how the journalistic principles of impartiality and objectivity were corrupted during the Falklands campaign. Reflecting upon how his outlook changed, Robert Fox said that at the beginning of crisis he saw himself as an independent actor. However, because he was sharing in the fear and exhilaration of the fighting with the soldiers, he noticed that his attitude changed. His description of his reaction to the downing of an Argentine Skyhawk after it was hit by machine gunners from 2 Para is revealing ‘We jumped out of the trenches and danced like apes, shouting “Yaaaaah” with delight that the attackers have been hit’.²⁴ The atavistic elation demonstrated by Fox was matched by moments of great sobriety. Ian Bruce said in no uncertain terms that he was ‘Fucking bitter... Bitter because people I know are dead’.²⁵

It has been said about motivation for fighting that ‘...fighting for yourself, your comrades, for each other, that sustains you in the moments you think you might be losing.’²⁶ By extension, if soldiers fight for their comrades, not for their rulers, then journalistic identification with the soldiers does not necessarily mean they supported the British cause. The *people* the British armed forces were fighting were not the ‘enemy’ just because they were from Argentina, but because it was the Argentines who were (in general) shooting at them. Likewise with the journalists, because they were *British* journalists with the *British* army their lives were also threatened by the Argentinians and thus cast as the enemy in their reports. The similarities between the two sides was described by one British soldier ‘we didn’t regard him as an enemy soldier, but as someone unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time’.²⁷ Though many the senior naval commanders did little to hide the contempt for the journalists, the soldiers gradually warmed to the reporters. This occurred as it became

²⁴ Fox, *Eyewitness Falklands*, p.145.

²⁵ Morrison, and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p.102.

²⁶ M. Bilton and P. Kominsky, *Speaking Out: Untold Stories from the Falklands War* (London, 1989), p.229.

²⁷ V. Bramley, *Two Sides of Hell* (London, 1994), p.211.

apparent that they would not be running away as soon as their lives were threatened, correspondent Fox even went as far as to say he would pick up ‘the nearest weapon’ and fire it at an advancing enemy if necessary.²⁸

The reporters came to associate themselves with the British forces because they shared experiences of trauma and jubilation, combined with their total reliance upon the military for everything, from their protection to their food and transport acted as forces of assimilation. They built bonds and fostered camaraderie between journalists and soldiers which caused shifts in the copy of the reporters; for example, the Argentinians were labelled negatively as ‘the enemy’ rather than impartially as ‘the Argentinians’. Partisan language was less prevalent from correspondents Brian Hanrahan and Robert Fox; this was because they were reporting for the BBC who’s ‘chartered duty, its moral responsibility, and its greatest pride [is] to tell that truth’.²⁹ They were under professional obligation to try to remain as impartial as possible, whereas most of the other journalist’s decision was a personal choice, ‘some reporters consciously [rejected] notions of objectivity’ others chose objectivity due to their perception of professionalism.³⁰ Nonetheless, bias towards the British forces did creep in to BBC reports, Fox’s dispatch on the liberation of Goose Green slipped from speaking as an external observer to one directly involved; his use of the phrases ‘enemy’ and ‘we’ indicated to the listener that he was on a side, rather than neutral as he was directed to be:

The enemy were falling back slowly to prepared positions... Time and again we were pinned down by fire from mortars and anti-aircraft guns. I was with the battalion

²⁸ Fox, *Eyewitness Falklands*, p.75.

²⁹ BBC W/A, ‘M. Howard, Speech, 06 May 1982’.

³⁰ Mercer, Mungham and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.12.

headquarters, and if we were within ten feet of death shells once, we were there forty times.³¹

Some reporters were able to resist the cultural influences more than others, however, even amongst correspondents from papers inclined to disapprove of militarism there was unexpected relationships. Gareth Parry of *The Guardian* recalled how the officers that he met were not like his preconception of them as ‘conservative fools’, but rather they were intelligent and professional individuals, some even ‘[confessed] as though they were converts.... That they were *Guardian* readers’.³² Mutual affiliations helped to moderate opinions, whilst Parry wrote critically of the conflict he still managed to praise both the British and Argentine forces;

...the lethal accuracy of the task force missile ships was spectacular. Crewmen around us paid tribute to the courage of the Argentinian pilots. They also deserved credit for their own bravery, both those exposed and manning the ships defences and the many others, marines and sailors, crouched and waiting in the vessel.³³

Some reporters became too “native”; Tony Snow of *The Sun*, misunderstood how the military thought. He assumed that because the armed forces were designed to use force to compel others to do as they wished, that it meant that the forces took a perverse pleasure in doing so. Hence his decision to ‘Sponsor a Sidewinder’ which led to requests for more copies of the *Sun* as they were ‘urgently needed for lavatory paper’.³⁴

The connection the reporters felt was not simply down to being stuck with the army; defence correspondents are regularly at the mercy of the military that they are escorted by. Famous

³¹ [Underlining my emphasis]. B. Hanrahan, and R. Fox, *I counted them all out and I counted them all back’: The Battle for the Falklands* (London, 1982), p.44.

³² Mercer, Mungham and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.111.

³³ G. Parry, ‘Crewmen applaud bravery of pilot enemy’, *The Guardian*, 25 May 1982.

³⁴ Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p.35.

BBC reporter Kate Adie maintained an impartial tone throughout her career yet titled her Autobiography *The Kindness of Strangers* in gratitude to those who had helped her and in some cases even saved her life.³⁵

A point of difference highlighted by several correspondents was that the wounded men were not foreign, they were British. Veteran of several particularly bloody conflicts, soundman John Martin, summarised it by contrasting how he felt different dealing with ‘an absolutely horrendous massacre in Uganda’ that he did ‘with no feeling’ because it was ‘not your problem’ but that with the Falklands things were different as it was ‘people you’re involved with’.³⁶ This attitude is not necessarily xenophobic, but instead can be elicited by a sense of shared connection through the nation state. The soldiers may have seemed more familiar because it was possible to pick out certain British idiosyncrasies, unlike in Uganda the maimed soldier could have lived just down the street and drank a cup of tea with the correspondent.³⁷ This could create a form of connectedness derived not just from personality and circumstance, but also because they shared a specific connection or represented something familiar.

There were many occasions when the war was very real for the correspondents, they were not just observers, but participants. Most of the correspondents were not veterans of several conflicts, so the sights of horrific injuries was something new. Seeing the headless corpse of an Argentinian conscript,³⁸ or helping wounded soldiers³⁹ back on to land after the attacks on the ships *Sir Galahad* and *Sheffield*, some of whom whose uniform had fused with their skin because of the sheer intensity of the heat from the fires on board their ship, were very

³⁵ K. Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers*, (London, 2003).

³⁶ Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p102.

³⁷ See Image 2

³⁸ See Image 3

³⁹ See Image 4

distressing for the correspondents.⁴⁰ The fragility of human life became very apparent. The guns and the bombs were no longer objects, but weapons that could kill. Remaining detached from events became much harder for the correspondents after witnessing such things.

The association with the British armed forces, combined with a misled belief that they had a duty to be more sensitive because it was a British, not foreign, conflict meant that the content was more moderate than what more seasoned war correspondents may have produced.

Perhaps if more reporters of Nicholson's experience had sailed with the Task Force there may have been more concessions from the military due greater resistance to the restrictions on what they could report and when they could transmit their copy. Add to this how more seasoned reporters had had to learn how to deal with their emotions in such distressing situations, then maybe a slightly more detached and less pro-British (whilst nonetheless still more radical) tone may have been the result. As it was, for the majority of the Task Force correspondents, Hastings statement that 'Most of us decided before landing that our role was simply to report sympathetically as possible what the British forces are doing...'⁴¹ became truer after the landing and the shared traumas of the conflict brought them closer to the soldiers that they were enduring it with. Through such processes the reporters contribution to the understanding of the conflict was limited as much by their own experiences and forms of self-censorship as it was by the influence of the Government, the MoD, and their own editors back in Britain.

⁴⁰ Nicholson, *Measure of Danger*, p.192.

⁴¹ Sunday Times Insight Team, *The Falklands War*, p.213.

Chapter Two - Elite Understandings

Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods department store in London, called me one night in the mid-80s to complain about a story we had run criticizing the way he was renovating the house in Paris once occupied by the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. I offered him space to put forth his point of view. He demanded a retraction and an apology. I refused. He threatened to withdraw all Harrods advertising from Times Newspapers.

“You can’t do that,” I said.

“Why not?” he asked. “It’s my advertising.”

“Because as of this moment,” I replied, “you are banned from advertising in The Sunday Times.”¹

Andrew Neil, Former Editor of *The Times*

It has been suggested that newspapers are disproportionately influenced by the commercial interests of their advertisers.² The quote above illustrates this was not the case, Nick Davies has claimed that he has never seen advertisers be able to have much, if any influence over a newspaper's position.³ The view that a new generation of malign corporations with sinister intentions to manipulate the public owning the press does not hold much credence. If history shows anything it is actually that the previous owners had more sinister objectives; Lord Beaverbrook, owner of the *Daily Express* stated ‘I run the paper for the purposes of making propaganda with no other purpose’.⁴

In contrast, the most (in)famous media mogul today and also during the Falklands War, Rupert Murdoch, operates based upon what will make him the most money. Neil summarised Murdoch’s outlook as ‘He is far more right-wing than is generally thought, but will curb his

¹ A. Neil, ‘Murdoch And Me’, *Vanity Fair*, (Dec, 1996), <http://www.vanityfair.com/business/features/1996/12/rupert-murdoch-199612> (Accessed 10 June 2014).

² Nick Davies claims this view is particularly favoured by left wing radicals; See, N. Davies, *Flat Earth News: An Award-winning Reporter Exposes Falsehood, Distortion and Propaganda in the Global Media* (London, 2008), p.14.

³ Davies, *Flat Earth News*, p.13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.

ideology for commercial reasons'.⁵ His switch from the Conservatives to Tony Blair's Labour Party for the 1997 General Election is illustrative of money outweighing his politics. The same was true of other papers, *The Daily Mirror*, which during the Falklands War situated itself on the opposite side of political spectrum to Murdoch's *The Sun*, was primarily concerned with selling newspapers; the managing director of the *Mirror Group* said 'We tried to stand up for the man in the street, but he wasn't really interested. Now we are about entertainment'.⁶

The commercial interests of the ownership can be seen as one of the primary influencers upon how the editors attempted to present the conflict. Political ideology does influence the editors, though this still tends to be related to the commercial aspect because readers tend to choose a paper that reflects their own political views.⁷ Accordingly, a change in stance would only be likely if the public mood had changed sufficiently for the move to be economically sensible. This chapter will consider how newspapers positions were influenced by factors that they believed would be in their commercial interest. It will then look at how the government understood the importance and influence of the media in shaping understanding of the war at an elite and popular level.

Editorial opinions

The consistency of circulation figures indicated that newspapers adopted a certain rhetoric that they knew would keep their readers. Statistics collected by David Morrison and Howard Tumber indicate that despite maintaining a similar level of readership throughout the campaign, dissatisfaction with the position of their newspaper was most prominent amongst readers of *The Sun*.⁸ This was because the newspaper attracted a large number of working

⁵ A. Neil, 'Murdoch And Me', *Vanity Fair*, (Dec, 1996), <http://www.vanityfair.com/business/features/1996/12/ruPERT-murdoch-199612> (Accessed 10 June 2014).

⁶ Quoted by N. Hiley, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 October 1987, p.1149.

⁷ M. Temple, *The British Press*, (Maidenhead, 2008), p.201.

⁸ Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p.302.

class, Labour supporting readers who were more inclined to oppose the war than Conservative supporters. During the conflict *The Sun* actually lost readers at a rate of 40,000 a day, in contrast, *The Mirror*, with its pro-Labour, anti-war stance gained 95,000 readers over the same period.⁹

If Murdoch regarded his newspapers primarily as a means of making money, why was no action taken to win readers back? An explanation can be provided by looking back to Suez, 1956. *The Mirror's* opposition to the Falklands War was a risky gambit. Newspapers who opposed the actions of the British during the Suez Crisis suffered heavy losses of readership; combined, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and *The Daily Mirror*, lost 130,000 because of their stance.¹⁰ History, in conjunction with Murdoch's support for the Thatcher government, may help to explain the overtly jingoistic tone of *The Sun*. Once the paper had 'tied its flag' to the jingo 'mast' it would be very hard for it to change without angering both those who supported and opposed the war, and please neither. To use an apt cliché, they had made their bed, now they had to sleep in it.

The philosophy of the newspaper guides the production of its content, when journalists are operating under extra pressure the true nature of what the editorial staff feel reveals itself. Davies has stated 'if truth is the object and checking is the function, the primary asset of all journalists... is time'.¹¹ People instinctively turn to their immediate impressions when there is little time to make a decision. During the Falklands War *The Sun* illustrated this with their infamous 'GOTCHA' headline after the sinking of the *General Belgrano*.¹² The decision was taken by the editor Kelvin Mackenzie, who was working with a skeleton staff with whom he had to produce the next day's entire paper due to a journalist strike.¹³ It was this pressure that

⁹ Harris, *Gotcha*, p.55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.44.

¹¹ Davies, *Flat Earth News*, p.64

¹² See Image 5

¹³ Harris, *Gotcha*, p. 51.

removed the final element of restraint from their bellicose rhetoric and revealed how *The Sun* really understood the war.

A point to be added is that the number of readers lost were actually a small amount of the circulation figures for the Tabloids; their contents were read more for entertainment than for information. There was, however, an assumption that readers were excited by the idea of a shooting war, *Daily Mail* headlines such as ‘NO SURRENDER’¹⁴ and ‘HAIG DOUBLE FAULTS’ from the *Express*,¹⁵ demonstrate that amongst the Tabloids, barring the *Mirror*, there was barely any attempt to hide their belligerent warmongering behind ‘the veil of national pride’.¹⁶ Consequently, commercial interests and politics were enmeshed with the need to entertain and influence. This led the editors of the Tabloids to understand their role as much about pressing an agenda in an entertaining format, over being informative. Their objective was to entertain and influence, not simply to inform.

With television becoming the primary medium through which the public sought to be informed, broadsheet newspapers faced their own challenges in trying to make a profit.¹⁷ Within the government one memory that came readily to the fore was Vietnam and the mistaken belief that the media were responsible for the American defeat to the communist North Vietnam.¹⁸ It is important to remember that in historical context the Falklands War happened only seven years after the fall of Saigon. As David Welch and Mark Connelly have emphasised Thatcher was not prepared to ‘lose the Falklands on TV’.¹⁹ The fear in government was that they could very easily have fallen had there not been a sufficiently decisive response to Argentina's seizure of the Islands. With their over focus on opinion polls

¹⁴ M. Hastings and S. Jenkins, *Battle for the Falklands* (London, 1983), p181.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Editorial, ‘When Soldiers Play Journalists and Journalists Play Soldiers’, *The Times*, 10 June 1982.

¹⁷ Scannell, *Radio, Television and Modern life: A Phenomenological Approach*, (Oxford, 1996), p.89.

¹⁸ Cockerell, Hennessy, Walker, Sources close to the Prime Minister, p.160.

¹⁹ M. Connelly and D. Welch, (eds.), *War and the Media: Reportage and Propaganda, 1900-2003* (London, 2005), p.xiii.

the government were right to be worried; a Gallup poll published in the *Sunday Telegraph*²⁰ asked: 'The Government have been criticised for being caught off-guard by the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands. Do you think this criticism is justified or not?' 78% thought the criticism was justified (including 74% of Conservative supporters, 77% of Labour supporters, 82% of Liberal supporters and 86% of SDP supporters), compared to 14% who thought it was not justified and 8% did not have a view.²¹ These results were included in the weekly polling summaries that were the primary source Thatcher used to gauge public opinion, and thus help explain why she was 'keen to project resolution and an appropriate degree of moral outrage'.²²

Although TV had overtaken the broadsheets, they were still major influencers as they were the sources that the higher echelons of power were likely to read.²³ The resignation of Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, at the beginning of the conflict gave the government an early warning of the power of the media, and in particular the broadsheets, to have influence on the government. Thatcher noted how Lord Carrington was pressurised to resign after he had seen 'Monday's press... in particular the *Times* leader'.²⁴ Lord Carrington emphasised how there had been 'strong criticism of Government policy in Parliament and in the press'. A lot of which he felt had been 'unfounded', but nonetheless he took responsibility and thought that it was 'right that [he] should have resigned'.²⁵

Seeing Lord Carrington forced out of his job by the media had a major effect on MPs as it reminded them of Suez and the end of Anthony Eden as Prime Minister. Suez had a profound

²⁰ 'Gallup Opinion Poll', *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 April 1982.

²¹ CAC: THCR 2/11/9/34 f66, *Opinion Polls: Britto note ("Public Opinion Background Note 109") [weekly survey note; Falklands crisis]*, 19 April 1982.

²² Personal Correspondence with Professor Kevin Foster.

²³ M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, (London, 1993), p.186; See also M. Temple, *The British Press*, (Maidenhead, 2008), p.208.

²⁴ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, p.186.

²⁵ CAC: THCR 1/20/3/5 f6, *Carrington message to FCO*, 6 April 1982.

effect upon Defence Secretary Sir John Nott, a point emphasised numerous times in his memoirs.²⁶ When reflecting on the conflict he noted that memories of Suez ‘haunted many of his colleagues’,²⁷ a view supported by fellow War Cabinet member Willie Whitelaw who feared the war could turn in to a similar media debacle and said that he was ‘lying awake at night with visions of Suez’.²⁸

Tony Shaw’s revisionist analysis of Eden’s media management during the Suez crisis, 1956, demonstrates the difficulty in trying to draw lessons from history. Eden controlled the media with a greater level of sophistication than initially thought.²⁹ Though unlike Thatcher, Eden’s strategy failed, and with it his tenure in government ended. This happened twenty years before the blame for the American defeat in Vietnam was attributed to the media. Shaw remarked that ‘Suez taught future governments – like Margaret Thatcher’s during the 1982 Falklands conflict – about the values and methods of successful propaganda in wartime’.³⁰ The controls and restrictions placed upon the media during the conflict can be linked to a sense of paranoia that the media could cause a collapse in public support for both the war and the government.

The role of Suez in influencing government policy can be seen from the two lessons Nott took from the conflict: ‘The need to avoid divisions at the top in Whitehall and the necessity of carrying outside opinion’.³¹ International support was very important to the British government; throughout her memoirs Thatcher continually related events in the Falklands to their influence on what was happening with the Americans. With regards to the influence this

²⁶ J. Nott, *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow*, (London, 2002).

²⁷ Sir John Nott, in ‘The Falklands War’, seminar held 5 June 2002, Centre for Contemporary British History, 2005, www.icbh.ac.uk/witness/falklands (Accessed: 25 July 2014), p.77.

²⁸ M. Garnett and I. Aitken, *Splendid! Splendid! The Authorized Biography of Willie Whitelaw* (London, 2002), p.281.

²⁹ T. Shaw, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media: Propaganda and Persuasion During the Suez Crisis*, (London, 2009), p.12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. x.

³¹ Nott, *Here Today*, p.74

had on the media the minutes from a meeting for the Information Group on the Falklands, chaired by Bernard Ingham, emphasised that there was a ‘danger of losing domestic and international support for policies if we failed to present our actions in a coherent and authoritative manner’.³² Consequently, the aim was to get firmly based information out in the ‘most helpful context’.³³ This phrase is key, context is what gives a message meaning; for example, on the domestic front the government sought to mitigate the bad news of the attack on *HMS Sir Galahad* by making the media give the ‘good’ news that Argentine planes had been shot down first.³⁴

A consequence of the broadsheets being regarded as an influencer of opinion was that it drew the attention of the government, who at times tried to exert direct editorial influence over them. Minutes from a Chiefs of Staff meeting show that there were attempts to encourage ‘one or two authoritative newspapers... to include within their coverage an article highlighting the need for discretion and responsibility in the reporting of an operation in which men’s lives could be at risk’.³⁵ The belief that it was necessary to ‘encourage’ newspapers is indicative of the difference between the media and the government. It was in part caused by newspapers ignoring D- Notices advising them on what they could publish, for example The *Daily Mail* ignored D-Notice number six in its discussion of the ways in which SIGNIT could be used.³⁶ However, the motivation was also driven by a patronising attitude towards both the media and the public, who if they opposed the principle of censorship were regarded as not understanding its necessity. This was ironic since it highlights the lack of co-ordination within the government that they should want newspapers to raise the issue of

³² CAB 164/1622 f5, *Falklands: Minutes of meeting of the Information Group on the Falklands [media and related issues]*, 26 April 1982.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ D. George Boyce, *The Falklands War* (London, 2005), p.160.

³⁵ TNA, FCO 7/4473, ‘COS 28th Meeting/82’, 23 April 1982.

³⁶ N. Wilkinson, *Secrecy and the Media: The Official History of the United Kingdom's D-Notice System* (London 2009), p.395.

editorial staff in many newspapers and broadcasting organizations are deeply divided and are thus unsure what balance to strike between blind patriotism and constructive criticism...’ It continues to then critique the fact that ‘The British authorities are practicing censorship and many in the media feel a patriotic duty to re-establish the veracity of official communiques’.³⁸

Furthermore, the encouraging the papers to talk of acting with ‘discretion and responsibility’ failed. *The Times*, a newspaper that supported the war, did carry an article about the role of censorship two weeks after it was suggested encouraging them to do so. Yet, it did not take the blindly supportive role that it was assumed that it would; instead it said ‘Editorial staff in many newspapers and broadcasting organizations are deeply divided and are thus unsure what balance to strike between blind patriotism and constructive criticism...’ It continues to then critique the fact that ‘The British authorities are practicing censorship and many in the media feel a patriotic duty to re-establish the veracity of official communiques’.³⁸

Memory of the Second World War played an important part in elite perceptions. Michael Foot’s support for the Falklands War is interesting; as leader of the Labour party, with strong affiliations to peace organizations such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), it would be easy to assume that he would have taken an oppositional stance. However, this was not the case, Foot’s support for the Falklands War was not a change in position, but rather was consistent with opinions he had expressed prior to the war. Foot regarded the conflict as a war against a Fascist dictator, a man who should not be appeased. To Foot appeasement was a dirty word; as a journalist in 1940 he co-wrote a book called *Guilty Men* under the name Cato. The book blamed the war on poor foreign diplomacy with Germany, culminating in a policy of appeasement that left them unprepared for war.³⁹ Foot’s distaste for Fascists was shared with his predecessor, the former leader of the Labour party, James Callaghan, ‘I’m not handing over two thousand eight hundred Britons to a gang of fucking fascists’.⁴⁰

³⁷ Nicholson, *A Measure of Danger*, p.245.

³⁸ Editorial, ‘When Soldiers Play Journalists and Journalists Play Soldiers’, *The Times*, 10 June 1982.

³⁹ Cato, *Guilty Men* (London, 1945).

⁴⁰ G. Smith, *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London, 2013), p.135.

The criticism of appeasement was not confined to the Labour Party, Lord Stoddart emphasised that ‘Appeasement never pays’. He pointed to the appeasement of Ian Smith in Rhodesia, who he described as ‘every bit as much a Fascist as Galtieri’ stating that ‘It took 15 years and 22,000 lives to restore the position before Smith seized power’.⁴¹ Evidently, Britain’s history of decolonisation in the post-war era did not mean that their relationship with former colonies was over. During the Falklands War many of these countries sent Thatcher letters of support and encouragement, their main concern, a rhetoric that Thatcher was to continually re-affirm, was that if Britain did nothing then their own nations would be threatened. A letter from Prime Minister Price of Belize stated that they strongly supported the ‘principles of self-determination’.⁴² This is unsurprising since Belize had only gained independence a year before in 1981 and feared invasion from their larger neighbour, Guatemala.

From an international perspective, the BBC took the lead in making sure that information was presented in the ‘most helpful context’,⁴³ though not necessarily in a manner that pleased the Government. The BBC’s ‘reputation for telling the truth... led to Argentina jamming British Spanish language broadcasts’.⁴⁴ As *The Daily Mirror* stated ‘Truth is always the best propaganda’.⁴⁵ Thatcher criticised the BBC for their position of impartiality, saying that it caused ‘great irritation among many people’,⁴⁶ the reaction from the press did not correlate with her statement. Instead they came to the defence of the BBC after Conservative MPs and *The Sun* attacked the corporation over a *Panorama* episode on opposition to the war.⁴⁷ There

⁴¹ BBC W/A, ‘Notes and Comments from House of Lords’, 13 May 1982.

⁴² CAC, THCR 3/1/20 f21 (T62/82), ‘Letter from Prime Minister Price of Belize to Thatcher’, 5 April 1982.

⁴³ CAB 164/1622 f5 ‘Falklands: Minutes of meeting of the Information Group on the Falklands media and related issues’, 26 April 1982.

⁴⁴ BBC W/A, ‘Speech by George Howard’, 06 May 1982.

⁴⁵ Editorial, ‘Why We Must Tell The Truth’ *Daily Mirror*, 12 May 1982.

⁴⁶ Boyce, *Falklands*, p.153.

⁴⁷ *Panorama*, (BBC One, 10 May 1982).

was clearly disagreement about the BBC, but one thing that was agreed was that the BBC should not become a mouthpiece for governmental propaganda.

There was an element of self-protection as newspapers that came out in support of the BBC came from both those who opposed and supported the war.⁴⁸ The widespread support for BBC independence was contrasted with Argentine false propaganda which did much to lend legitimacy to British claims to be defending their basic democratic rights. As George Howard stated this made the BBC 'a vital engine of this great democracy'.⁴⁹

Where the BBC were criticised ITN were praised for their coverage. This is because they had more scope for independent comment, without the obligation of impartiality. ITV Editor David Nicholas said he would not take part in 'overt misinformation',⁵⁰ this did not mean that there was not scope for editorial bias, current guidelines understand that different forms of programme will have different purposes and functions, yet the essential facts must remain accurate.⁵¹ By not having the responsibility of having to be neutral ITV had a broader range of positions from which it could tackle challenging issues than the BBC. For this reason ITN's and IRN's coverage of the war seemed to garner more praise for its coverage. Tam Dalyell, one of the strongest and consistent MPs to protest against the war said; 'as a dissenting voice over the Falklands issue, I believe that ITN and IRN were fairer in opening their doors to minority and dissenting opinion'.⁵² There was also an Anti-Falklands war demonstration at the BBC Head Quarters because they wished to object to what they saw as 'bias of excluding views of people who [wanted] an immediate truce, negotiations and to stop the war'.⁵³ To look at it another way, if the BBC were angering people on both sides with an

⁴⁸ These included *The Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Mirror*.

⁴⁹ BBC W/A, 'Speech by George Howard', 06 May 1982.

⁵⁰ David Nicholas quoted in Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at War*, p.208.

⁵¹ See; Mercer, Mungham and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.138. See also; ITV, 'Viewer trust', <http://www.itv.com/documents/pdf/Viewer%20Trust%20in%20ITV.pdf> (Accessed: 09 July 2014).

⁵² BBC W/A, 'Prime Minister relations with the Media', 07 February 1983.

⁵³ See Image 6; 'Anti-Falklands War Protest', *Morning Star*, 10 May 82.

apparent bias, then they were arguably doing something right in order to present maintain their neutrality.

One way that the MoD tried to shape the media was through control over the flow of information, this led to the criticism from the press for the MoD being ‘stingy with information and [seemed] to be under the impression that the media will publish what it says and no more’.⁵⁴ Some have described it in terms of a sort of government conspiracy to keep the public in the dark.⁵⁵ The HCDC made it clear that they did not see it this way, rather they attribute the problems primarily to technological and logistical issues.⁵⁶ A number of commentators have also contested that this is a moot point and that strategic deception is legitimate according to the principle of military necessity. The Second World War played an important part in helping shape this outlook, where strategic deception was used on a scale not seen before. Deception became part of British military doctrine, its cultural resonance from the Second World War gave some the feeling of legitimacy in thinking that deception of both the public and the enemy is acceptable as ‘if wars are to be fought,[they] are there to be won’.⁵⁷

Another way that government officials sought to control the press was through the Lobby system. There have been many criticisms of the Lobby, historians such as Peter Hennessy, who was a journalist for the *Times* in 1982, claimed that for a liberal democracy Thatcher used an unacceptable level of manipulation that had ‘not [been] seen before in British politics’.⁵⁸ Valerie Adams suggested that in the Falklands War followed precedents set by

⁵⁴ Editorial, ‘Winning the propaganda war’, *Daily Mail*, 8 May 1982.

⁵⁵ Harris, *Gotcha*.

⁵⁶ HCDC. *The handling of the press and public information during the Falklands conflict*. (London: HMSO, 1982) Vol.1 *Report and minutes of proceedings*; Vol. 2 *Minutes of evidence*; MoD, *The handling of the press and public information during the Falklands conflict. Observations presented by the secretary of State for Defence*. (London: HMSO, 1983). Item no. 602.

⁵⁷ B. Ingham, *The Wages of Spin* (London, 2003), p.297.

⁵⁸ Cockerell, Hennessy, Walker, *Sources close to the Prime Minister*, p.12.

previous British governments,⁵⁹ a view supported by James Margach who showed how lobby journalists had been corrupted by their closeness to their sources; they abided by a set of rules and willingly operated within a system where conditioned information was provided on the MPs terms, inhibiting their capacity to act as independent agents.⁶⁰ Nott appeared to agree, he claimed that rather than helping the war effort, the Lobby meant he had to spend a large amount of time correcting untruths spread by ‘disaffected’ MPs.⁶¹ Alan Clark believed those responsible were ‘determined that the expedition [would] not succeed....’ in order to bring about the ‘downfall’ of Thatcher’s government.⁶²

Ingham understood the historic precedents of the Lobby. His book on the development of the relationship between the government and journalists builds upon Margach’s. Strangely, Ingham criticised the historical corruption of government-media relations and also of having to fight ‘official secretiveness’.⁶³ His comments raise questions about the motivation of his work, admitting himself that he has been described as the original ‘spin doctor’,⁶⁴ there is an element of covering his own back with these assertions. Ingham tried to moderate Margach’s criticism of the lobby, arguing that they help to limit press excesses and are a way of politicians combating the ‘piranhas of the press, radio and TV...’⁶⁵

Within the War Cabinet Foreign Secretary Francis Pym took a similar line; he saw victory as the ultimate aim, and that the public’s right to information was secondary to this.⁶⁶ At a conference held to discuss elite views of the conflict John Nott was far more aggressive in his

⁵⁹ V. Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign* (London, 1986).

⁶⁰ J. Margach, *The Abuse of Power: The War between Downing Street and the Media from Lloyd George to James Callaghan* (London, 1978).

⁶¹ Nott, *Here Today*, p.281.

⁶² A. Clark quoted in Nott, *Here Today*, p.283.

⁶³ Ingham, *Wages of spin*, p.93.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.93.

⁶⁶ House of Commons, *Final report of the Defence Committee Session 1982-83: The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict: Vol. II, Minutes of evidence* (London, 1982).

opinion ‘the press are nothing but a pain in the arse! Whatever the circumstances, they will do their very utmost to make a military operation almost impossible’.⁶⁷

Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore did not blame the Task Force journalists, but that ‘the problem tended to arise... with editors back at home’.⁶⁸ Admiral Sir John (Sandy) Woodward was more moderate and self-critical. He spoke about the journalists ‘total ignorance of all things military’ blaming this on the fact that ‘we do not take them on operations anything like enough as often as we should, nor do we offer them any indoctrination or training.’ He placed blame for this not with the media, but that it was a ‘long-term Ministry of Defence failure’.⁶⁹

The differences between the Army and the Navy were pronounced; the Army had years of experience of operating with the media in Ireland, learning the ‘hard way... that the press is a necessary, and often very useful evil’.⁷⁰ In contrast, the Navy had not seen major active duty since Suez. Some officers such as Captain Jeremy Black learnt during the ‘Cod War’ with Iceland, the ‘importance of the media’s role in the international propaganda war’.⁷¹ Yet his outlook was not shared by the majority of the Navy’s staff, whose preference were summarised by Michael Nicholson, ‘...they would dearly have liked to sail away from Portsmouth, at night, win their war and return as silently, hoping no one had noticed they had been away’.⁷²

The media were low on the Navy’s priorities, whose focus was on the direct military operation ahead. The lack of interest in the value of PR revealed itself in systemic flaws within the structure of the Navy; jobs as a media officer were regarded as inferior and

⁶⁷ Sir John Nott, in ‘The Falklands War’, seminar held 5 June 2002, Centre for Contemporary British History, 2005, www.icbh.ac.uk/witness/falklands (Accessed: 25 July 2014), p.66.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore, p.66

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Admiral Sir John (Sandy) Woodward, p.66

⁷⁰ Boyce, *Falklands*, p.164.

⁷¹ Mercer, Mungham, and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.70.

⁷² Nicholson, *Measure of Danger*, p.232.

therefore did not attract the most able recruits. Consequently there were only thirty-one Navy PROs.⁷³

The flaws in the Navy were exacerbated by a lack of co-ordinated information policy, with the MoD sending confused and contradictory messages. For example when speaking about the BBC broadcasting the attack on Goose Green prior to its actual occurrence Admiral Woodward believed ‘some clown’ at the MoD had told them.⁷⁴ His comments also help to illuminate the sense of confusion that he felt with the censorship system; ‘we did hope that someone, somewhere, would have the common sense to put a censoring delay on release of this kind of information’.⁷⁵ His view was common, one Marine Officer said

...there was almost daily changing of the ground rules. Some days you were allowed to talk about certain things, and other days you were not... a policy should be laid down in black and white so that everybody knows what it is.⁷⁶

The inclination of the government to try shape the media was the product of a certain reading of history, particularly the Second World War, Suez and Vietnam. It suggests that Thatcher may have tried to paint a picture of a united Britain, yet in reality she and her cabinet feared that public opinion was more fragile and dependent upon what they read, watched and heard from the media than she wished to let on. It was telling of how heavy the influence of events such as Suez loomed over the government that Senior Civil Servant, Bernard Ingham, related his own predicament during the Falklands War to that of Douglas Clark, Eden’s Press Secretary who resigned in protest during the Suez Crisis. Ingham claimed that he would have resigned because he had been ‘left in ignorance’ and was therefore not able to ‘do his job

⁷³ George Boyce, *Falklands*, p.151.

⁷⁴ S.Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander*, (London, 1992), p.342.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Mercer, Mungham, and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.25.

properly', but that unlike Clark did not because there 'had been a war on'.⁷⁷ Ingham understood the value of his role during the conflict, especially that of tying policy to its presentation.⁷⁸

The attempts of the government to manipulate the press generally ended in failure, with newspapers that even supported the conflict resisting the challenges to their editorial independence. The systemic failures that led to the incoherence of the information policy may have helped the media; Peter Preston of *The Guardian* stated:

Centralized, co-ordinated information is more a feature of autocracies and it is certainly not in the interests of the press... you talk to all different sources, not only in Britain but crucially in America. It was helpful to have the Foreign Office, MoD and Bernard Ingham all uncoordinated because you could compare sources. It is in any case daft to think that anyone has got a monopoly of information.⁷⁹

There were sharp divergences between the government and its fear of the power of the media and the media's sympathies towards these fears, with most newspapers generally refusing to simply be mouthpieces for governmental propaganda. Those who did adopt a jingoistic tone did so more because they saw it as the economically sound choice, based upon their own reading of history and not because an owner, a wealthy advertiser or the government forced them to.

⁷⁷ Ingham, *Wages of spin*, p.98.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Mercer, Mungham, and Williams, *Fog of War*, p.47.

Chapter Three - Popular Understandings

*The coverage by the popular press was disgusting. And time and time again, as I listened to the Government's propaganda – yes, propaganda – I felt incensed that they could think that we were all so stupid.*¹

Female Mass Observation Correspondent

The image of a unified Britain regaining its confidence after economic decline masks the reality of a population that did not think in the simple binaries of 'goodies' and 'baddies' that elites assumed that they did. As the above quote shows, people were capable of critical thought that recognized propaganda from a variety of mediums. The reliance of the elites on quantitative statistics inhibited their ability to fully distil the complexity and conditional nature of public opinion. A consequence of this narrow impression of public opinion was that with victory, history validated the decisions made, and mistakes and misunderstandings were marginalised. This meant the war drum beating by parts of the popular press and the government's control of the media became justified by British triumph. Consequently, in the ensuing years the techniques learned for dealing with the media during the Falklands War were utilised by the United States of America during their military operations in places such as Grenada.² This was a false correlation that imagined that the public could be categorised by their opinions and that their views were readily malleable and absolute. The reality is that people can and do think in different and often contradictory ways that do not fit neatly in to categories that quantitative techniques create.³ Accordingly, this chapter will show that popular views on the Falklands War did not fit neatly in to a narrative of national unity, rather

¹ M/O, G226, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

² 'We learned our lessons from the Falklands War'; Colonel Robert O'Brien, the then Pentagon Deputy Director of Defence Information talking to CBS in the aftermath of the 1983 invasion of Grenada, Quoted in C. Brothers, *War and Photography* (London, 1997), p.206.

³ G. Philo (ed.), *The Glasgow Media Group Reader, Vol. II: Industry, Economy, War and Politics: Vol. Two* (London, 1995), p.139.

members of the public had concerns about the war which were not necessarily reflected in opinion polls.

This chapter will begin by looking at how the public understood the media before proceeding to consider how the media and personal experiences interacted to influence individual views of the conflict.

According to Noam Chomsky media power is held by the producers of the content;⁴ this thesis does not agree with such a view. Instead it subscribes to Paddy Scannell's argument that, 'power... rests more with those on the receiving end rather than with those who produce what is on offer'.⁵ This is because it does not adopt a deterministic outlook that regards individuals as easily manipulated. Instead Scannell highlights the capacity of the individual to choose what to watch, read, and listen based on their own personal preferences and circumstances.

Furthermore, viewing, listening and reading habits can shape audience perception. Ludmilla Jordanova noted that what constitutes an audience is 'context dependent',⁶ how a person reads the newspaper, listens to the radio, or watches the TV can be influenced by many things such as; the design of their house, how busy their day is, to other activities they may be doing at the same time. For example, a number correspondents stated that they did not just sit and watch TV but had to do something else, knitting was one such popular pastime.⁷ This suggests that some viewers dipped in and out of watching the TV. No two people watched the TV in the same way; whereas some dipped in and out of watching others described how they followed the news with great interest;

⁴ Herman, Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

⁵ Scannell, *Radio*, p.23

⁶ L. Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge, 2012), p.158.

⁷ See: M/O, R4970, '1983 Summer Directive Response'; and, M/O, R403, '1988 Time Directive Response'.

Falklands news like a serial. 10 p.m. viewing compulsive. Despite the crucial run-up to exams I always made a point of joining my husband for a drink in front of the TV at this time...⁸

Such factors make the media a poor 'register of the diversity of public opinion'⁹ and mean it is difficult to study the influence of the media purely through content analysis. A useful way to help see how the public utilised information presented to them is through an assessment of levels of trust in different institutions and groups.

A year after the Falklands War Ipsos MORI asked the public whether they trusted certain groups of people to tell them the truth, Journalists were rated one of the least trusted, with only 19% of people believing that they are truthful and 73% believing that they were likely to lie to them.¹⁰ In contrast, with 63%, people were three times more likely to trust TV news reporters to tell the truth and three times less likely to think that they would lie. These results are supported by a BBC opinion poll conducted during the conflict that asked members of the public what sources they used in order to 'find out what's happening in the Falklands'.¹¹ BBC TV came top, with 89% claiming to use it, ITV second with 79%, BBC Radio had twice as many listeners as commercial radio stations, with 54% for the former and 24% the latter. Of the pollsters 74% said that they had used Newspapers to find out what was going on. However, when asked which gave the best coverage, Newspapers, with 17%, fell well behind the both BBC, 39%, and ITV, 30%.

The scepticism of the public did not stop people from using newspapers for information, what the results suggest is that people read them with a critical eye and did not simply believe what

⁸ M/O, G226, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

⁹ Aulich, *Framing the Falklands*, p.88

¹⁰ Ipsos Mori, 'Trust in Professions', <http://www.ipsosmori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/15/Trust-in-Professions.aspx?view=wide> (Accessed: 18 August 2014).

¹¹ BBC W/A, *BBC Press Office*, 'Falklands coverage: Strong support for the BBC', 15 May 1982, p3.

they were told. It has been suggested that trust is an ‘active category... it is something that we decide to do’.¹² Even amongst those who had to trust the newspapers for their information there was still cynicism towards what they read; one correspondent who noted that,

I too know only what I read in the papers which is obviously a biased opinion [sic] of a particular [sic] news man edited by a biased editor; as you can gather I don’t really [sic] believe what I read in papers, but they are my only source of information.¹³

Correspondents emphasised their cynicism at what they saw as blatant attempts at manipulation. One correspondent described the popular press as ‘disgusting’¹⁴ she continued; ‘...time and time again, as I listened to the Government’s propaganda – yes, propaganda – I felt incensed that they could think that we were all so stupid’.¹⁵

A case that gives a clear illustration of popular understanding of the media was when tensions in the media came to a head with the BBC’s controversial *Panorama* episode on opposition to the war.¹⁶ The reaction from the political classes was aggressive, however, not all the public saw the issue in the same light. Letters to *The Times* show that despite the newspaper supporting the war, its readers did not blindly follow its position. Whilst some people did ‘Dare Call it Treason’¹⁷ many members of the public took a more moderate tone. One letter criticized MPs such as John Page who was quoted as saying that ‘we expected the BBC to be on our side’. The letter contended that the BBC was only on their side in the ‘sense that they are an independent assessment of the news’. The letter emphasized the authors historical memory, it argued for the BBC to keep the public ‘genuinely informed’ rather than returning

¹² M. Hilton, J. McKay, N. Crowson, and J-F. Mouhot, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2013), p.183.

¹³ M/O, D156, ‘1983 EEC Special Directive Response’.

¹⁴ M/O, G226, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Panorama*, ‘Can We Avoid War?’ (BBC One, 10 May 1982).

¹⁷ Editorial ‘Dare Call it Treason’, *The Sun*, 7 May 1982.

to the 'naive and patronizing jingoism of the Second World War newsreels...' ¹⁸ Letters such as this highlight how parts of the public understood that this was not an existential battle for the nations survival, but was as Thatcher said herself, to preserve the British principle of people to 'choose their own way of life and to determine their own allegiance.' ¹⁹

The hypocrisy of the attacks on the freedom of the BBC whilst claiming to be fighting for those same principles on the Falklands was not lost on the public or the media, former *Guardian* editor Alistair Hetherington stated '...if the BBC were to allow Government pressure to weaken its editorial judgments... in the long run, no good would be done to the British cause.' ²⁰ This is supported by polls conducted for the BBC which show that 81% of viewers and listeners felt that the BBC 'acted responsibly in its TV and radio coverage', with the same number also asserting that the BBC should continue to 'reflect the full range of opinions in its programs.' ²¹

Mass Observation correspondent's revealed a sophisticated understanding of how the media functioned in Britain. One, a journalist who trained with Gareth Parry, *The Guardian* newspaper reporter with the Task Force, spoke at length about a number of technical and stylistic elements to the newspaper reportage. She saw newspapers in the context of a reflective rather than domination model, whereby 'Not everyone would admit it, but there is a strong tendency to take a daily newspaper that agrees with one's political views'. ²² She labelled people by the newspaper they read, after speaking to one woman who staunchly supported the war she '[wondered] which newspaper she's been reading and [speculated] on the *Express*'. ²³ This leads to an interesting point on how newspapers help shape identity;

¹⁸ P. Bazlagette, 'Letter to the editor', *The Times*, 14 May 1982. (BBC WA 40)

¹⁹ Hansard, 'Thatcher's speech to the House of Commons', 3 April, 1982. 21/633-38

²⁰ A. Hetherington, 'Letter to the editor', *The Times*, 12 May 1982. (BBC WA letter Times p.29)

²¹ BBC W/A, *BBC Press Office*, 'Falklands coverage: Strong support for the BBC', 15 May 1982, p.1.

²² M/O, G226, '1983 Spring Directive Response'.

²³ M/O, G226, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

despite her opposition to the war causing her to feel a sense of alienation, she felt part of a wider ‘imagined community’²⁴ because of the shared connection that *The Guardian* newspaper provided: ‘I thanked god for The Guardian, there were other people who felt the same way as my husband and myself’.²⁵

Of those correspondents who supported the war there was still criticism for how the media were managed;

“Experts” were asked to predict, project, criticize, ad nauseam. If this, if that, if the other – as if any of their views would make one tiny bit of difference. Oh for the days of factual, straight news broadcasts lasting ten minutes and read by Frank Phillips or Alvar Diddel.²⁶

Speculation can be seen from all mediums, though *The Sun* took it further, presenting operational decisions like they were part of a video game, using computer edited graphics and hyperbolic language.²⁷ Whilst the journalists at home were described as making a ‘hash’ of things, ‘those who went out with the Task force, against the Royal Navy’s wishes, did a magnificent job.’ Particular praise was given to Max Hastings of the *Evening Standard*, whose work one correspondent believed ‘really hit a peak of descriptive writing, without lurching over into purple prose or tear-jerking... [and] would like to see him win a “journalist of the year” award’.²⁸ The public wanted accuracy and honesty, not belligerent propaganda. This may explain why Hastings, was the most successful journalists to have sailed with the Task Force; that year he did win the award for journalist of the year because his reporting was accurate, pro-British, and he wrote pieces on his general surrounding that meant his work

²⁴ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism: New Edition* (New York, 2006).

²⁵ M/O, G226, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

²⁶ M/O, W633, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

²⁷ See Images 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.

²⁸ M/O, W633, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

was more widely published and read, rather than specific news that would be out of date by the time it got back to the UK.

Influence of media

The supply and presentation of information from the media influences attitudes, it is through such mediums that issues enter in to the public sphere which is what sparks reaction, debate and helps to form opinions amongst the population. Censorship is a device used by authorities to maintain a power/knowledge dynamic; the suppression of news limits the range of opinions that can be held. Evidence of how public thought was constrained can be seen through a range of comments.

With echoes of Chamberlain's remarks on the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia as the problems of 'a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing'²⁹ some people felt an element of fantasy to the Falklands War. This sense of detachment was partly due to the physical distance, 'it all seemed so remote, as if anywhere which takes a fortnight or more's voyage is on another planet',³⁰ but also because of the censorship 'We still feel we are not being told the truth, everything seems too easy for us. It is more like listening to a fairy story.'³¹

The desire for accuracy is seen in one correspondent who stated that 'If there has been a disaster I tend to turn to BBC Radio 4, my normal source of news anyway, because it tends to be the most unemotionally factual, with the possible exception of the World Service'.³² This seems to run against Radio theory, which seeks to 'record the wars images with a tape-recorder.'³³ The want of unemotional factuality may explain the correspondent's

²⁹ R. Self, *Neville Chamberlain: A Biography*, (London, 2006), p.375.

³⁰ M/O, W633, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

³¹ M/O, S496, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

³² M/O, W633, '1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response'.

³³ Nicholson, *Measure of Danger*, p.205.

desensitization to violence, ‘as with Northern Ireland, the deaths became progressively less shocking’.³⁴

Not all correspondents had become desensitized to violence; for some the media coverage made the war seem very real. One person who initially said that the British were right to go and fight described how ‘I do have to leave the room if reporting on an accident or a shooting is too specific’.³⁵ Interestingly in the latter parts of her Falklands diary she appears to shift to a more reflective tone, she described her how ‘I would be very sorry if in a few years we find ourselves giving up sovereignty, it would make the sacrifices men and families have made seem very futile’.³⁶ Another correspondent who was sensitive to deaths on both sides felt that ‘*The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* takes a very frivolous view of death. The battleship with over 1,000 young men going down in in the icy Arctic and headlines like “Up your Junta”. It is not funny!’³⁷ Both correspondents’ views were tempered by the sense of reality they felt upon learning of casualties, which was partly shaped by how they were presented within the media.

An expression of the way that the belligerent language of the tabloids pervaded public discourse was noted by one correspondent who saw some graffiti that said ‘KILL ALL ARGIES’.³⁸ This sort of aggressive jingoism was in tune with newspapers such as *The Sun* and *The Express*, with headlines such as ‘STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA!’ and the infamous ‘GOTCHA!’³⁹ Ironically the graffiti was almost the exact same words that had been used in a spoof article by satirical magazine *Private Eye*, ‘KILL AN ARGIE AND WIN A METRO’.⁴⁰ This shows that although some were influenced by *The Sun*’s tone, there was also significant

³⁴ M/O, W633, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

³⁵ M/O, C108, ‘1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response’.

³⁶ M/O, C108, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

³⁷ M/O, S496, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

³⁸ M/O, G226 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

³⁹ See Images 5 and 10

⁴⁰ ‘Kill and Argie and win a Metro’, *Private Eye*, issue 535, 18 June 1982.

opposition, from both the public and other papers such as *Private Eye*, and also famously from the *Daily Mirror*, which described *The Sun* as the ‘Harlot of Fleet Street’.⁴¹

Although people were cynical of what they saw as propaganda the media still influenced the way people thought and acted. One instance where the media had a clear and direct influence over the public was how *The Sun*’s anti-Argentine rhetoric led to members of the public shopping politically. *The Sun* ran a campaign that ‘[urged] every housewife NOT to buy corned beef produced in the Argentine’.⁴² A number of correspondents mentioned how they refused to buy Argentinian beef, or noticed it had been removed from shop shelves. This was a familiar form of protest, with members of the public having boycotted South African produce in opposition to Apartheid. Peoples anger did not stop with Argentina, ‘attitudes towards the French and Irish were decidedly cool’, one middle aged couple cancelled a holiday to Italy because they believed the Italians were being too sympathetic to Argentina, whilst others returned home from holidays in Spain for the same reason.⁴³ As ill feeling towards certain nations grew there was also a shift in attitudes that saw an increase in support for the EEC. The help that was provided by EEC nations such as France (who provided technical information on the most feared weapon in the Argentine arsenal, the French made Exocet), helped re-frame it as an institution that could foster co-operation rather than an opaque and foreign organization to be distrusted. An expression of this attitude was that, Lord Hitchingbrooke, one of the leading Anti-marketeters of the day, dropped his opposition to EEC membership because of the support given by member states during the war.⁴⁴

⁴¹ ‘The Harlot of Fleet Street’, *Daily Mirror*, 8 May 1982.

⁴² ‘GOTCHA!’ *The Sun*, 20 April 1982.

⁴³ M/O, W633, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

⁴⁴ N. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?* (London, 2006), pp.131, 155.

Personal experience

The relationship of public attitudes towards the Falklands War and the EEC goes deeper; the Falklands reignited the memory of the Second World War within public discourse. The horrors that were evoked by memory of the Second World War forced people in to thinking about how to end such violence. Nicholas Crowson remarked that as recently as 1973-5 there had been attempts to convince the post-war generation that joining the EEC was a way of limiting the possibility of war as it would rid European nations of their hatred for one another.⁴⁵

The propensity of the post-war generation towards the EEC as an institution for bringing peace is reflected in the quantitative research conducted by Morrison and Tumber. Their work has suggested a correlation between age and support for military action; they asked ‘Did you think at the time of the (invasion) that the situation could be solved by diplomatic means alone with no fighting or did you think it could only be solved by fighting?’ Their results indicate that support for fighting increased from 30% in the 18-24 age group, up to 51% for the 65 plus age group, whilst the results were inverse for support for diplomacy alone. Gender also had a similar correlation, 57% of women regarded diplomacy as the best way to solve the situation, compared to 49% of males.⁴⁶

Lucy Noakes has argued that public understanding of the Falklands War was structured by a gendered memory of the Second World War. She contended that females had a greater range of positions from which to view the Falklands War. She believed both men and women used their personal memories of the Second World War ‘in order to make sense of their own thoughts and feelings’.⁴⁷ However, women appeared more likely than men to draw upon

⁴⁵ N. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?* (London, 2006).

⁴⁶ Morrison and Tumber, *Journalists at war*, p.287.

⁴⁷ L. Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity*, (London, 1998), p.107

memories which did not “fit” in with the dominant public memories being expressed in the press and in parliament...’⁴⁸

One opponent of the Falklands War, a female correspondent, offered an indication of how gender and memory of the Second World War influenced her response to the sinking of the *General Belgrano*. ‘In the last war I believed the only “good German was a dead one” I know now that was wrong and feel no hatred for the Argentinians, in fact I feel sad that they also have lost so much.’⁴⁹ This retrospective critique of her own views highlights how loyalty to the ‘British’ cause can be more conditional and discriminating than what opinion polls revealed to the elites. Her response shows how she shifted from an outlook situated within the traditional memory of the Second World War, with the Germans firmly placed as the evil enemy, to one where enemy has taken on a human face. She related her personal experiences of loss to those that she thought the Argentine enemy must also have been experiencing.

The same correspondent also illustrated how men used their personal experiences of conflict to support the Falklands War. She spends some time writing of her husband’s support for the sinking of the Argentine ship, the *General Belgrano*. His justification is based on military necessity, ‘When the Argentine battleship was sunk, my husband who served on *HMS Jamaica* in the last war said “if this is war you sink the lot for your own safety...”’⁵⁰ This strikes a very different tone to her own position, whilst her husband thought in terms of the broader military context framed within his own memory of the Second World War, her view was based on the emotional consequences of the use of force.

One male correspondent, claiming to be of a socialist persuasion, explained how his memory of the Second World War helped guide his opinion. When discussing generational differences

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ M/O, S496 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

he noted how ‘the only bodies children see today are either make-believe or violent death victims on TV’.⁵¹ His point is emphasized by his hard attitude in towards the loss of life during the Falklands War, which he related back to the Second World War:

The Falklands War was regarded by many as a disaster... yet the total British death toll was 365, exactly the same as the civilian death toll in the Metropolitan Police District, on what was accepted as the first night of the blitz. To those directly involved there were 365 tiny little disasters, collectively it was just a little bit of the war, 0.00076% of the population...⁵²

Whereas this male correspondent used the memory of the Second World War to make the Falklands War seem proportionally insignificant, female correspondents appeared to use their memories to express their fears of escalation and more destruction. In contrast to the hardened attitude of the male correspondent, one woman identified her age as a major determining factor, she said that having been ‘born after the Second World War, [she had] no vision of what it will be like if the major countries get involved.’⁵³

A different female felt that in her area gender seemed to be a stronger determinant of opinion than age; ‘young men seemed to think it was jolly fun’, but older people such as herself did not like what was happening as they had ‘terrible memories of the “last war”’ (meaning the Second World War).⁵⁴ Her remarks run against the general conclusions of Morrison and Tumber and so raise questions of what other factors shape opinion. In this case it appears that geography may have played an important part. The correspondent lived close to Plymouth, home to the Navy’s largest base, Devonport, so many of the young men she would have been in proximity to would have some relationship to the armed forces, either as members of Navy

⁵¹ M/O, R470, ‘1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response’

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ M/O, G218 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

⁵⁴ M/O, S496 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

or as workers contracted to work on the base. As a result, their views may have been coloured by their association to the military.

The cynical attitude of the correspondent was inherited by her daughter, who noticed how after the ITV news there were adverts normally only seen before Christmas for the toy soldier, Action Man. She questioned the attempt to re-enforce such gendered roles through the sarcastic comment 'they should advertise nurses outfits for little girls'.⁵⁵ This daughter shows that people are capable of not blindly accept the messages targeted at them but can resist attempts to influence them.

It has been argued that another important impact upon a person's opinion is their family. Thatcher had an idealised and essentially fictional vision of Victorian familial values; her attitude towards the family can be seen from a now famous quote 'There is no such thing as society; there are only individuals, and families'.⁵⁶ This implies that she believed that one of the primary structuring forces within the nation state was the family with it operating as a naturally formed cohesive unit with its own rules, regulations and reprimands.

One form of propaganda mobilized during the conflict was the Royal family, who assumed their traditional role as a symbol of 'national/familial unity'.⁵⁷ Each member's role was dictated by their gender and position within the family; the Queen came to represent the mother waiting for her son to return home, headlines such as 'I HUNT THE ENEMY WITH ANDY'⁵⁸ show how her son, Prince Andrew, a helicopter pilot with the Task Force, slotted in to the symbolic character of the warrior prince.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ G. Douglas, 'Family Law under the Thatcher Government', *Journal of Law and Society* Vol. 17, No. 4 (1990), pp. 411-426, p.413.

⁵⁷ Foster, *Fighting fictions*, p.164

⁵⁸ T. Snow, 'I HUNT THE ENEMY WITH ANDY', *The Sun*, 10 April 1982.

⁵⁹ See Image 11.

What becomes apparent is that family and representations of it played an important part in helping to shape public perception. The use of readily understood symbols by the Royal Family helped clarify the protagonist each member in society was expected to play. Kevin Foster has expanded on this, he identified how both the Falklands and Second World War, ‘focused on a shared vision of the family as a symbol of the nation’.⁶⁰

However, Thatcher’s understanding of the family does not seem to be reflected by all the Mass Observation correspondents; for example, there does not seem to be a relationship between close family ties and support for the war. Not all Britons were members of traditional nuclear families, one correspondent who expressed mixed feelings towards the Falklands War grew up in foster home because her father was unable to care for her after the mother had committed suicide. Having had a sense of detachment from her own family she grew up in a home where although she loved her foster parents, the environment was one that was ‘constantly warring’.⁶¹ In her reports it is possible to see her mixed feelings for the war in terms her family and social relationships. Her opposition is expressed in relation to the fractured nature of her own family experiences, worrying mainly about the consequence the casualties will have on other families: ‘WAR whether small or large is so destructive. 250 families have been directly affected by the deaths of their loved ones...’⁶² However, her fear for other families was mitigated by her then current social situation; she was living in an area near RAF Wattisham and mixed with a lot of RAF families and she consequently emphasized the influence they had on her, ‘I felt very proud of our forces – specially [sic] the RAF.’⁶³

Another female correspondent opposed the war on the basis Argentina was a young country and Britain should not have been so heavy handed with them. She struggled to share her

⁶⁰ Foster, *Fighting fictions*, p.47

⁶¹ M/O, G218, ‘1984 Winter Directive Response’.

⁶² M/O, G218 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

⁶³ M/O, G218 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

opposition to the war as she believed her view was the minority in her family who ‘see Britain as the good guys and want a scrap, “go in there and blast them out” being the general consensus of opinion’.⁶⁴ She felt she ‘could not air views in a climate that seemed to have unanimous support for the government’s actions.’⁶⁵ Despite her sense of isolation and incapacity to share her opinion her family was not a force for changing her opposition to the war.

The fracturing of opinions within the family did not have much bearing on other member’s views. One person who felt she could not share her views with her family was still able to hold them,⁶⁶ another described how her husband vehemently opposed the war on the premise that he was a strong socialist, yet despite believing ‘family comes first’⁶⁷ it did not stop her from supporting the conflict.⁶⁸

One way that the family influenced opinions was through people contextualizing events happening in the war to the effects it could have upon their own families. Major events had an influence on how people perceived death; after the sinking of *HMS Sheffield* one woman with a strong sense of familial connection described how her fears had manifested themselves in disturbing dreams.

I dreamt I was carrying a dying soldier in my arms. I was walking along the beach in the dark and when a light shone on the soldiers face it was my son. My daughter and I also dreamt of soldiers and ourselves drowning.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ M/O, W632, ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ M/O, D156, ‘1984 Winter Directive Response’.

⁶⁸ M/O, D156, ‘1983 Spring Directive Response’.

⁶⁹ M/O, S496 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response’.

These dreams helped reinforce her views that despite the war being several thousand miles away it was ‘not just something you read of in the papers and watch on TV’.⁷⁰ The fear of it being her son who would die helped confirm her opinion that the war was a ‘nightmare’.⁷¹ She also linked the fear for the safety of her family to criticism of Thatcher’s position, ‘Thatcher cried when she lost her son, now she is sending others’.⁷² Similarly, another correspondent asked whether Thatcher would have appeared more ‘humane’ if had been her son, Mark, who had been killed or injured.⁷³ She described her memory of Thatcher’s ‘coldness’ towards sending people ‘needlessly to their death’⁷⁴

Individual views were not sufficiently reflected in the opinion polls the government relied upon. The statistics failed to elucidate the complex range of feelings held, nor did they explain the great variety of factors that shaped perception. The roles of personal experience, viewing habits and free thought were limited to closed questions that prevented a fuller analysis of what people actually thought.

To many people the war did not seem like a “gung-ho” war movie that elements of the press sought to make it appear. People understood that the war was very real, they used their memories and experiences to make sense of the conflict, hence people feared for the lives of soldiers on both sides. This did not mean that there was no animosity towards the Argentinians, but rather that such sentiments did not necessarily equate to wanting to kill them. There were times when the media were able to influence the public, such as people refusing to buy Argentinian beef. However, this should be put in context, shopping politically is a form of peaceful protest that has its roots in the identification of Free Trade as ‘civilizing

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ M/O, G218 ‘1982 Falklands War Directive Response: Postscript’.

⁷⁴ M/O, G218, ‘1989 Disasters Directive Response’.

mission of peace and progress'⁷⁵ at least as far back as 1904 and had were a tactic used by contemporaries in the Anti-Apartheid movement.⁷⁶ Even though it was an idea from *The Sun*, to think that this meant that people were easily manipulated by newspapers is inaccurate. Peaceful protests are actions that any person can support, this does not mean that they support the organization that came up with the idea. Individuals are capable of resisting propaganda and developing their own opinions that may be influenced by the media but are not dictated by them. Public understanding of how the media in Britain operated as well as general cynicism towards attempts to influence them meant that reservations about the war were nuanced and not reserved solely for those in opposition, but also held by those who supported it.

⁷⁵ F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption, and Civil Society in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2009), p.2.

⁷⁶ Hilton, McKay, Crowson, and Mouhot, *The Politics of Expertise*, p.213.

Chapter Four- Representations and Memory

*Thatcher sits there in her fucking ivory tower and sends us on a fucking phoney war! The Falklands? The fucking Falklands? What the fuck's the Falklands? Fucking innocent men, good fucking strong men. Good soldiers losing their lives, going over there thinking they're fighting for a fucking cause. What are they fighting for? What are they fighting against? Fucking shepherds!*¹

Combo

Views like Combo's were excluded from the early post-war narratives of the conflict, which instead portrayed the war as stimulating a national revival; it is a contention of this chapter that memory of the Falklands War has over time morphed to enable the expression more critical representations of the conflict. An exhibition titled 'The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict' by the Manchester City Art Galleries presented a critical view of the conflict through the use of selected images, cartoons and photographs. One intention of the exhibition was to suggest that the Falklands 'story was "produced", or "constructed" in the media'.² Co-organiser, Tim Wilcox, suggested that it was 'a meta-war – you might say it never quite happened',³ though Foster has contended it existed only in 'strictly defined terms'.⁴ The foundational narratives were principally a product of the media, which as the 'first draft of history'⁵ was the primary source through which the public gained their information. In academia the most cited work has been the book written by Task Force correspondent, Max Hastings and political editor of *The Economist*, Simon Jenkins, which published in the post-war rush to print offers 'but a snapshot of partially observed reality'.⁶

Neil Smelser argued that during a crisis, political discourse shifts its focus from specific issues generally related to economic and political objectives towards the broader and more

¹ *This Is England* (Shane Meadows, 2007)

² D. Sexton, 'Image of the Falklands War' *Evening Standard*, 2 Nov 1988

³ *Ibid.*, (Sexton)

⁴ Personal Correspondence with Professor Kevin Foster.

⁵ S. Badsey, 'The Falklands Conflict as a Media War' in S. Badsey, R. Havers, M. Grove, (eds.), *The Falklands Conflict Twenty Years on: Lessons for the Future* (Oxon, 2009), pp.39-53, p.41.

⁶ H. Bicheno, *Razors Edge: The Unofficial History of the Falklands War* (London 2006), p.28.

fundamental level of perceived norms and values of the nation.⁷ During the Falklands War this meant that certain types of memory were employed within the media to help present the conflict as based largely upon a retrospective assertion of the parallel values it shared with the Second World War. This chapter will demonstrate how the memory of the Falklands is an area of contested history by arguing that the presentation of the conflict through any medium has been built upon a set of foundational narratives that have themselves been shaped through a variety of factors. It will consider how forms of memory mobilised during the Falklands War have by both conscious and unconscious processes reflected or sought to dispute these formative discourses. The themes to be considered are; national revival, representations of heroism, memories of public opinion, and current media presentation.

National Revival

Kevin Foster has claimed that ‘by the mid-90s it had become clear that the war had played an important role in shaping the new bombast of Cool Britannia and the national revival’.⁸ The idea of national regeneration was one that Thatcher used in the aftermath of the conflict to attack the power of the unions;

...once again Britain is not prepared to be pushed around. We have ceased to be a nation in retreat. We have instead a new-found confidence—born in the economic battles at home and tested and found true 8,000 miles away. That confidence comes from the re-discovery of ourselves, and grows with the recovery of our self-respect.⁹

⁷ See N. Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago, 1959) and *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (New York, 1963).

⁸ Personal Correspondence with Professor Kevin Foster.

⁹ Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 486/82, ‘Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham’, 03 July 1982, <http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/104989> (Accessed 17 July 2014).

Research by the academics such as David Sanders¹⁰ have pointed out that the British economy was beginning to improve shortly prior to the war, nonetheless, when Argentina invaded the Falklands the Thatcher government was at a low ebb: massive rises in unemployment (over 13% in April 1982), inflation high, deep cuts in public expenditure and social provision had sent the government at that time to the lowest approval rating on record.¹¹ Though there were many people who despised Thatcher and her government some entirely approved of her response to the crisis; this, then, makes the question of public opinion very complex. As members of the public quarantined their responses to the war from their more traditional political sentiments, whatever they felt about Thatcher and the Conservatives, Argentina's invasion had humiliated the nation and marked a low in the post-imperial decline. Victory gave people a reason to be proud.

The notion of a transformation has been adopted by Naomi Klein, who suggested that 'it was the Falklands that gave Thatcher the political cover she needed to bring a program of radical capitalist transformation to a Western liberal democracy for the first time'.¹² Klein's argument is riddled with presumptions and takes a deterministic outlook that seems to obscure other factors in order to try and fit the Falklands War in to her concept of the use of shock to instigate radical political reforms. For example her assertion that 'When news arrived that Argentina had laid claim to the Falklands, Thatcher recognized it as a last-ditch hope to turn around her political fortunes and immediately went into Churchillian battle mode'.¹³ Was it really last ditch? Although her popularity ratings were lowest on record, Thatcher's fortunes were on the rise prior to the Falklands War, with some theorists arguing

¹⁰ D Sanders, H. Ward, D. Marsh, and T. Fletcher, 'Government popularity and the Falklands war: a re-assessment', *British Journal of Political Science* 17:3 (1987) pp. 281–313.

¹¹ J. Campbell, *The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher: From Grocers Daughter to Iron Lady* (London, 2009), p.157-183; H. Clarke, W. Mishler, and Paul Whiteley, 'Recapturing the Falklands: Models of Conservative Popularity, 1979-83', *British Journal of Political Science* 20:1 (1990) pp. 63-81.

¹² N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London, 2008), p.137.

¹³ Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, p.137.

that based on forecasts conducted prior to the conflict that Thatcher was likely to have won the next election regardless of whether the war had happened.¹⁴ Certainly there was an element of self-preservation in Thatcher's decision to send the Task Force to recover the Islands; there was a real sense that if they did not act then the government could fall.¹⁵

The jingoism of the tabloid papers and the sententiousness of a number of the broadsheets is indicative of how the media made generalizations around which an 'imagined community'¹⁶ was formed. Such rhetoric highlighted how the media wished to convince the public that the conflict was a threat to certain 'British' values rather than primarily endangering economic and geopolitical interests. Thatcher did use the conflict as a springboard from which to attack the unions, who were transformed in to the new 'enemy within',¹⁷ but it was not a conspiracy that from the very beginning was designed to induce 'shock therapy'.¹⁸ There was a sense that Thatcher saw the Falklands War as part of a bigger historical narrative about the geopolitical role of the United Kingdom and national revival; it did play a significant role in her decision to go to war, but it is important to emphasise that it was not the *only* reason. The importance of the democratic rights of the islanders did play part in Thatcher's calculations.

The Falklands Soldier

The 2002 BBC production of Ian Curteis's *The Falklands Play*¹⁹ contrasts with Klein's argument, the conflict is presented as a morally righteous 'crusade' to preserve democratic rights lest it lead to attacks on other democratic nations. The pomposity of the victory parade sought to glorify the conflict and consolidate it as a positive event in British history, a

¹⁴ H. D. Clarke, W. Mishler, and P. Whiteley, 'Recapturing the Falklands: Models of Conservative Popularity, 1979-83', *British Journal of Political Science* 20:1 (1990) pp. 63-81; D. Sanders, H. Ward, D. Marsh, and T. Fletcher, 'Government popularity and the Falklands war: a re-assessment', *British Journal of Political Science* 17:3 (1987) pp. 281-313.

¹⁵ Connelly and Welch, (eds.), *War and the Media*, p.xiii.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁷ See image 12.

¹⁸ Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, p.140

¹⁹ *The Falklands Play* (Ian Curteis, 2002).

narrative that Ian Curteis's *The Falklands Play* fits within. Curteis's Manichean portrayal of the conflict had clear binaries between good and bad, weak and strong, right and wrong. The simplicity of this narrative led to the BBC initially refusing to produce the show in 1983, feeling that the moral oppositions were the reason for the 'laughably poor quality of the script'.²⁰ When watching the production after it was finally made in 2002 the absence of any criticism of Thatcher is very obvious and it grossly over-simplified both the characters involved and also the consequences of the conflict. It valorises Thatcher as a Prime Minister in the mould of Churchill and casts men such as Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym, as enfeebled and weak. Curteis's depiction of Thatcher was consistent with the way she was presented in other sources; for several years afterwards *Spitting Image* had her puppet dressed up as Winston Churchill, complete with a cigar.²¹

In 1988 the *Daily Star* attacked the exhibition by the Manchester City Art Galleries for its critical perspective on the Falklands War, the newspaper published an editorial that argued that it was 'tainted with needless nonsense. With works that poke fun at our brave lads, belittling the blood that was shed'.²² According to the paper the memory of the conflict was still raw and the exhibition failed to take account of 'the widows and the children who still grieve for more than 225 British dead'.²³ One of the organisers, James Aulich, disagreed; he felt that whilst in certain spheres (namely the popular press) it would not be acceptable to express such views, but the gallery was a free liberal space in which he could.²⁴

²⁰ I. Curteis, *The Falklands Play: A Television Play* (London, 1987), p.44.

²¹ See Image 13, see also; M. Harmes, 'A creature not quite of this world: Adaptations of Margaret Thatcher on 1980s British television', *Journal of Popular Television*, 1 (2013), pp.53-68, p.59; See also *The Iron Lady*, (Phyllida Lloyd, 2011), has a scene on the sinking of the *General Belgrano* identical to one in *The Falklands Play*.

²² Editorial, *Daily Star*, 'Don't mock our heroes', 31 Oct 1988

²³ Editorial, *Daily Star*, 'Don't mock our heroes', 31 Oct 1988

²⁴ Interview with Professor Jim Aulich

Asking when and where it is appropriate to criticise a conflict is an interesting question. Disputing certain memories can cause angry backlashes; Conservative MP Geoffrey Dickens called for a boycott of the exhibition, describing it as a ‘slur on the memory of brave men like Colonel H. Jones VC’.²⁵ Hugh Bicheno’s revisionist analysis of the conflict goes further than the Manchester exhibition, he builds upon Spencer Fitz-Gibbon’s critique of Jones and the battle of Goose Green,²⁶ by seeking to further dispel what he believed are myths that have built up around Jones. His work suggested that whilst Jones’s actions in charging an Argentine position during the battle of Goose Green were heroic, his operational and tactical planning were ill suited to the battle. Bicheno recognised the difficulty of his work ‘offending against the “of the dead speak kindly or not at all” stricture’, but felt it necessary to dispel how an ‘act born of enraged frustration’ led to the awarding of a posthumous Victoria Cross that immunised from criticism by valorising him with ‘excessive significance’.²⁷ It is not the historian’s role to construct or reinforce a specific memory. Evidently a sensitive subject must be treated with the level of respect it deserves, but the dispassionate examination of the past requires the historian to try to get closer to the truth rather than to further obscure it.

Representations of British Falkland veterans as heroes has helped to shape certain memories of the war, glorifying the sacrifices that the soldiers made for their country. However, at other times this has obscured realities, not all returning soldiers came home to the fanfare, flag waving and cheering of the victory parades. Those who were wounded did not take part in the Victory March in London, and there were no crowds to welcome them home when they came off of their ships. A number of correspondents from the Mass Observation noted their displeasure at the absence of the wounded; they believed that their presence would have

²⁵ Editorial, *Daily Star*, ‘Don’t mock our heroes’, 31 Oct 1988

²⁶ S. Fitz-Gibbon, *Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green* (London, 1995).

²⁷ Bicheno, *Razors Edge*, p.161.

added an important element of sobriety to the event as they would have acted as reminder of the actual sacrifices men had made. One retrospective response written seven years after the conflict said explicitly 'I will never forget the Victory March where the people with injuries were not allowed to take part'.²⁸ They also noted;

I remember very well the young army lad who suffered burns to the major part of his body but mainly face and hands and his coming home to a Welsh Village welcome and his struggle to come to terms with the way he looked and presented himself and his courage with operation after operation.²⁹

The 'young lad' was Simon Weston, a member of the Welsh Guards who was badly wounded in the attack on *RFA Sir Galahad*, suffering 46% burns to his body. Weston's path to both physical and psychological recovery was long and difficult, having over seventy operations to reconstruct his face. In February 2014 Weston was named as the nation's 'most heroic figure'³⁰ for the way that he has recovered from the traumas of his injuries. His story has made him a public figure that has come to symbolise the heroic sacrifices that soldiers made in the conflict; a subject strikingly absent from the immediate aftermath of the conflict where the wounded were not represented at the victory parade.

Yet Weston's publicity was only possible because his experience was a story of regeneration; hence the shift in the titles of the three documentaries from *Simon's War* (1983), to *Simon's Peace* (1985) and finally *Simon's Triumph* (1989).³¹ Because his story follows a positive path it may actually have obscured the memories of those who struggled to cope with the

²⁸ M/O, G218 '1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response'.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ BBC, 'Simon Weston voted Britain's most heroic figure' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25999454> (Accessed: 15 July 2014)

³¹ *Simon's War* (Stephen Rose, 06 April 1983), *Simon's Peace* (Malcolm Brinkworth, 12 June 1985), *Simon's Triumph* (Malcolm Brinkworth, 5 April 1989).

challenges of returning home, whether due to PTSD or finding themselves alienated from a nation that they had fought for. There have been several artistic attempts to address these issues, the Manchester Exhibition had a poignant display on works by soldiers undertaking art therapy as a 'cathartic act'³² to help cope with their PTSD. The images reveal some telling points about how the returning soldiers felt about the status in society and how both they and those surrounding them remembered the conflict. One collage used a thick black barbed wire to indicate the divide between his life before the conflict, where he was 'happy, reliable, hopeful, caring, responsible, appreciative, ambitious, PROUD' and after the conflict which emphasises how he became 'moody, quick tempered, unreliable, forgetful, [having] depression, and non-understanding'.³³ Reviews of the exhibition commented that 'for power of expression, the most moving of the exhibits will be collages by Servicemen in post-trauma art therapy sessions at the Royal Navy Psychiatric Hospital'.³⁴ Co-organiser Tim Wilcox said;

They [the servicemen] come to it completely open. So not only does the way they are made look kind of raw compared to the other stuff, so is the experience, you can't fail to be moved by them. They are the most powerful things in the show because they are the most direct things.³⁵

The rawness of the emotional pain that some felt has been tackled the broader public sphere of film and television. Building upon the anti-war films that dealt with the mental distresses of returning soldiers from the Vietnam War, films such as *Tumbledown* and have explored the consequences for the wounded soldier and the psychological challenges they face when

³² L. Robinson, 'Soldiers' Stories of the Falklands War: Recomposing Trauma in Memoir', *Contemporary British History*, 25 (2011), pp.569-589, p.584.

³³ See Images 12.1, 12.2, 12.3; Manchester Art Galleries, *The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict*, (Manchester, 1989).

³⁴ A. Spinoza, Critical images from a far-away conflict, *The Guardian*, 03 November 1988

³⁵ A. Spinoza, 'Coping with the Conflict', *The Listener*, 10 November 1988.

back in Britain. Richard Eyre's film *Tumbledown* is a televisual depiction of Robert Lawrence's book of his experiences during the Falklands War, in which he was seriously wounded, losing 43% of his brain and focusses on his subsequent treatment after the war. When it was first broadcast the film was watched by 10 million people and caused an outrage within the armed forces for its graphic representation of what the fighting was actually like. Ian Briggs described how the film 'shocked the nation'³⁶ as it included incredibly vivid, real photographs of Lawrence's exposed brain after he had been shot. Whilst distressing, the point was clear, war is bloody and brutal. The armed forces reaction to the film revealed how emotions pertaining to the Falklands remained sensitive, the MoD even threatened to seek an injunction against the programme.³⁷

The film used flashbacks of Lawrence's memory to present what happened on the Falklands. The realism of the memories, sometimes obscure and seemingly random help to express the psychological challenges Lawrence was dealing with. One of the most controversial scenes was a flashback that showed Lawrence bayonetting and slowly killing an Argentine conscript. The film depicts Lawrence as seeming nonchalant about what he did in battle. The actor Colin Firth, who played Lawrence in the film, portrayed the character as having an air of swagger and arrogance in the tone of his discussion with his friend. However this is done in a way that suggests that in reality his arrogant manner is a mask to disguise his mental frailties. A point vindicated when he was diagnosed with PTSD in 1995, thirteen years after the war and seven after the film was made.³⁸

³⁶ I. Briggs, 'Falklands War 25 years on: Tumbledown revisited', *The Independent* 28 January 2007.

³⁷ M. Townsend, 'The hardest fight of all for a Falklands hero', *The Observer*, 14 January 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/jan/14/falklands.world> (Accessed: 20 June 2014)

³⁸ A. Parr, 'Still tormented by Tumbledown: Shot in the head during one of the bloodiest battles of the Falklands War 30 years ago, heroic officer and wife say the scars still are with them every day' *Daily Mail*, 7 April 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2126612/Still-tormented-Tumbledown-Shot-head-bloodiest-battles-Falklands-War-30-years-ago-heroic-officer-wife-say-scars-day.html> (Accessed: 28 June 2014)

As Weston became proof of the government's care to its soldiers, and later a symbol of the path to recovery, Lawrence became the angry counterpoint. The film shows how Lawrence became progressively more isolated as support from the government slowly disappeared. It highlighted how no one gave him any information on the things such as the pension support he would receive, and later his sense of anonymity was reaffirmed when he was sent to an Army barracks where no one had his health records nor even knew who he was. This sense of isolation is further accentuated by showing how like many other wounded soldiers Lawrence was hidden away from the public during the victory celebrations; the film shows Lawrence being sat at the back of service of remembrance at St Paul's so that he was out of the way of the camera. In his book Lawrence speaks of the privileges he had by having a father who had twenty eight years' experience in the RAF behind him;

He was always prepared to throw his weight around on my behalf, and did so after I came home. He knew the forces system, and the language of the system, and the right people he should be contacting to help me at any time. What's frightening is how much I still suffered despite having the sort of father I had, doing all that. It made me wonder, if this is happening to me, an officer with a supportive forces family, what the hell was happening to the injured guardsman whose father was an out-of-work shipbuilder in Glasgow, or an out-of-work miner in Wales.³⁹

Lawrence has tried find out what happened to his fellow soldiers who fought in the Falklands. Through the South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 (SAMA 82) he sought funding from the MoD for an assessment of what effect the war had upon veterans; at the time of the article the MoD had refused the request. One telling statistic is that 'during the ensuing 25 years, more

³⁹ J. Lawrence and R. Lawrence, *When the Fighting is Over: A Personal Story of the Battle for Tumbledown Mountain and Its Aftermath: New Edition* (London, 1999), p.193.

Falklands veterans have committed suicide than the 255 that died during hostilities'.⁴⁰ The quote was originally used by the *Daily Mail* on the twentieth anniversary in 2002, the story was prompted by the suicide of Falkland veteran, Charles 'Nish' Bruce. The article referenced SAMA 82 who believed 'some 264 veterans have now taken their own lives'. It has since filtered in to the wider press and the internet, and has mutated from a conjectured statement to being accepted as fact, as demonstrated by the *Guardian* interview with Lawrence. Published in 2014 (seven years after Lawrence had asked for funding) official government research in to 'deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel deployed to the 1982 Falklands Campaign 1982 -2013' explicitly contradicts the statistics that originated from the *Daily Mail* article:

There had been concerns raised that more Falklands veterans had taken their own lives since the conflict than died in action. However, the statistics show that 7% of the deaths of Falklands veterans since the campaign were attributed to suicide, significantly less than the number of deaths during the campaign.⁴¹

When discussing memory of the war Lawrence said pointedly that the long marches across the Falklands known as 'Yomping' are 'the only thing that will be remembered'.⁴² Lawrence is alluding to the point that only the challenges that had positive outcomes were to be memorialised. Lucy Noakes emphasised how one of the public memorials for the Falklands War is a statue of a Yomper, which she asserted represented 'determination and courage in wartime; both of the nation and of the individual'.⁴³ The way that the statue shows the soldier

⁴⁰ M. Townsend, 'The hardest fight of all for a Falklands hero', *The Guardian*, 14 Jan 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/jan/14/falklands.world> (Accessed: 28 June 2014)

⁴¹ MoD, *A study of deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel deployed to the 1982 Falklands Campaign: 1982 to 2013*, (Bristol, 2014), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307098/20140428_Falklands_Statistical_Release-1982to2013.pdf (Accessed: 31 June 2014)

⁴² *Tumbledown*, (Richard Eyre, 1988)

⁴³ L. Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity*, (London, 1998), p.103.

as a masculine figure facing forwards and staring into the distance is ‘suggestive of many First World War memorials, which often consist of the “heroic” soldier figure, transfigured in death to represent all the nation’s “glorious fallen” commemorated by the statue’.⁴⁴

Tumbledown operates as an oppositional memory of the conflict that seeks to counter the heroic narrative of sacrifice and regeneration.

Race

One subject that was absent from popular narratives of the Falklands War was the contribution of ethnic minority soldiers (barring the Ghurkhas) fighting in the conflict. Sapper Pradeep Gandhi was the only Asian Hindu to be killed during the Falklands War, some have wondered whether he would be remembered as such. One of his fellow soldiers said ‘Goosey, as we called him, would have laughed at this’, in a letter to the *Telegraph India* Don McGillivray said,

His name, besides being on the main memorial, is also on the Royal Engineers’ Memorial on the top of Sapper Hill overlooking Port Stanley. Goosey won’t be remembered as an Asian Hindu, he wouldn’t want to be, he will always be remembered as a Sapper and a friend.⁴⁵

The colour blindness can be considered positive in the sense that it serves them the respect paid to every soldier for *what they did* rather than *who they were*. Alternatively it can be seen as part of a system of exclusion whereby although ethnic minorities made up only about 1% of the armed forces,⁴⁶ the memory of ethnic minority soldiers was absent from the foundational narratives. One need look no further back than to the issues around granting

⁴⁴ Noakes, *War and the British*, p.103.

⁴⁵ D. McGillivray, ‘Sapper Remembered’ in ‘Letters to the Editor’, *The Telegraph India*, 28 April 2007, http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070428/asp/opinion/story_7705889.asp (Accessed: 31 June 2014)

⁴⁶G. Berman and T. Rutherford, *Defence Personnel Statistics*, (House of Commons Library, 2013).

British Citizenship to Ghurkhas (who coming from Nepal the most famous ethnic groups to fight for British Army) to see how memories of minorities struggle to even forcibly enter public discourse. Paul Gilroy has suggested that this was because ‘most Britons today identify more easily with those of the same stock 8000 miles away... than they do with West Indian or Asian immigrants living next door’. Because ‘the national traditions of Deep England do not find much room for certain social groups’ and that these traditions ‘sometimes peter out in the black areas of inner cities’,⁴⁷ ethnic minority groups may have been left out of the ‘imagined communities’ through which the media produced the foundational narratives of the Falklands War.

This point was expressed in Martin Stellamn’s *For Queen and Country*, in which the central protagonist, Reuben, a black Falklands veteran originally from St Lucia, struggles to adjust back to life outside of the armed forces. Despite trying to keep himself out of trouble and get a job, a combination of his inability to find work and the growing sense of alienation from the country that he had fought for, culminating in the revoking of his British citizenship under the Nationality Act 1981 (which when it was passed no longer guaranteed citizenship to members of the commonwealth),⁴⁸ drives him to crime. At the end of the film he is killed by a police sniper because he had just killed a police officer in revenge as the officer had just killed his friend for no reason.

The officer that Reuben killed was the same one who had confronted him at the beginning of the film when he was returning home from the army back to the council estate he had grown up on. During the confrontation the officer does not believe that Reuben was a member of

⁴⁷ N. Thrift ‘Images of social change’ in C. Hamnett, L. McDowell and P. Sarre (eds.) *Restructuring Britain: The Changing Social Structure* (London, 1989), p.40.

⁴⁸ D. Dixon, ‘Thatcher’s People: The British Nationality Act 1981’, *Journal of Law and Society* 10:2 (1983) pp. 161-180; See also Ch. 9 of Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (Oxford, 2000).

Two Para who fought in the Falklands War. He makes it clear that he thinks Reuben is lying by framing the conflict in terms of race; ‘listen pal that was an English War not a jungle war’.⁴⁹ The officer’s perception of a British soldier reflects the portrayal of the soldiers in the press. In the same way that Roland Bathes noted how the characters in Joseph Mankiewicz’s film *Julius Caesar* had fringes in order to signify their ‘Roman-ness’,⁵⁰ the infantry soldiers were described as being indistinguishable from each other with their ‘skinhead haircuts’ in order to signify their nature as ‘hard men’.⁵¹ This form of signification is one that *The Sun* utilised, running stories about soldiers prefixed with them described as ‘With his close-shaved head, tattoo covered body and heavy bover boots, he looks every inch what he is – a hard man.’⁵² This image of a Falklands soldier was further established as the atypical form in the TV Soap *EastEnders* where hard man Grant Mitchell plays a Falkland veteran.⁵³ Grant is large white male with a shaved head, he and his brother, Phil, are the two tough guys of the show. Grants toughness as a soldier is transferred from the Falklands to the east end of London, where he is never far from trouble.

Such representations of the ‘hard man’ was satirised in Steve Barron’s *Mike Bassett: England Manager*,⁵⁴ which addressed the issue of ‘larger louts... laying waste to European cities in the name of football’.⁵⁵ An issue that Paul Greengrass argued could be traced back to the bellicosity by parts of the press who applauded the courage and violence of the British forces during the conflict.⁵⁶ In the film England are faced with Argentina for their World Cup Semi-Final, during the pre-match build up the TV broadcasters play a video montage that showed

⁴⁹ *For Queen and Country* (Martin Stellman, 1989).

⁵⁰ R. Bathes *Mythologies* (London, 1993 Edition), p.26.

⁵¹ P. Bishop and J. Witherow, *The Winter War: The Falklands* (London, 1982), p.59.

⁵² Harris, *Gotcha*, p.36.

⁵³ B McGuirck, *Falklands- Malvinas: An Unfinished business* (Seattle, 2007), p.223.

⁵⁴ *Mike Basset: England Manager* (Steve Barron, 2001).

⁵⁵ P. Greengrass, ‘Foreword’ in J. Aulich (ed.) *Framing the Falklands, Nationhood, culture and identity* (Buckingham, 1992), p.X.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

scenes from the British victory in the Falklands. The purpose of this montage is to connect the oncoming sporting confrontation with the historic conflict that led to bloodshed in 1982. One way that the film mocked the hooliganism and belligerent headlines of the popular press was through the depiction of the England Captain, Gary Wickett, who, with his cropped hair and broken nose, established himself as the stereotypical English hard man when, with echoes of headlines such as 'STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA', he shouts 'Lets fucking kill 'em' and punches through the wall before walking out of the changing room.⁵⁷

Recent representations

Recent discussion of the Falklands War has shifted away from the narratives that never doubted a British victory. With victory the jingoistic tabloids felt vindicated in their confidence and could consolidate their presumptions in to history and obscure how close run victory actually was. If newspapers are framed as devices of propaganda, in the sense that they function to shape the way people think, then the confident tone can be linked to how propaganda operates upon the public. Welch has noted how the great amount of new research that contradicts 'simplistic assumptions' about the power of propaganda to brainwash the masses, describing people as having 'resistance' or 'immunity' to it.⁵⁸ He states that 'in the short term propaganda may carry its audience on a wave of fervour... in the longer term it becomes less effective, because the audience has had both time and opportunity to question its underlying assumptions'.⁵⁹

This helps explain why in the aftermath of the conflict Robert Harris's work gained such traction for its accusations against the government of media manipulation. Within the

⁵⁷ *Mike Basset: England Manager* (Steve Barron, 2001).

⁵⁸ D. Welch, *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion* (London, 2013), p.30.

⁵⁹ Welch, *Propaganda*, p.30.

academic field this remained a disputed area, with some agreeing with Harris⁶⁰ and others disagreeing, claiming that there was little or no conspiracy to manipulate the press for propagandistic purposes.⁶¹ Since Harris's work public views seem to have erred towards his view, with the *Guardian* running an article describing the conflict as 'The worst reported war since the Crimean', in reference to how bad news was hidden and information censored.⁶²

During the conflict the BBC came under attack because they refused to submit to pressure to present the conflict from a pro-British angle. In the BBC's recent coverage this has not changed; Peter Snow, who came under particular criticism from Thatcher⁶³ and the parts of the public because he would not describe British forces as 'our forces'⁶⁴ kept the same neutral tone when describing the events of the conflict in the BBC documentary *Twentieth Century Battlefields*.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the documentary emphasises how close the British came to defeat by highlighting the weaknesses of the British Task Force and the potential threats the Argentines could use to expose these. Snow highlighted that the greatest worry for the British was that a French made Exocet would get through their defences and hit one of the two vital aircraft carriers.

The programme has helped give greater clarity and understanding of the conduct of the campaign, for both contemporaries and also for people born after or have no memory of the conflict. This is achieved by showing the battlefields through maps and footage of the terrain;

⁶⁰ R. Harris, *Gotcha: The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis*, (London, 1983); see also M. Cockerell, P. Hennessy, D. Walker, *Sources close to the Prime Minister: inside the hidden world of the news manipulators* (Michigan, 1984), N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (London, 2007); J. Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, (London, 2006). See also works by the NGOs such as Campaign for Press and Broadcast Freedom, for example; S. Greenberg and G. Smith, *Rejoice! Media Freedom and the Falklands* (London, 1982).

⁶¹ V. Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign* (London, 1986); See also L. Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume 2: War and Diplomacy* (Oxon, 2005).

⁶² J. Barnes, 'The worst reported war since the Crimean', *The Guardian*, 2 Feb, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2002/feb/25/broadcasting.falklands> (Accessed: 1 July 2014)

⁶³ M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London, 1993), p.181.

⁶⁴ BBC W/A, 'Summary of public's response to BBC for Tues 11 May 1982'.

⁶⁵ *Twentieth Century Battlefields*, Series One Episode Seven (BBC 2, 16 July 2007).

another technique was to have co-presenter and son of Peter Snow, Dan Snow, take part in simulations of the types of fighting and marches the soldiers experienced during the conflict. During the simulations Dan Snow gives a running commentary on the challenges that arose, such as the noise and confusion of night time fighting. When it was first broadcast in 2007 the series had 1.7 million viewers, in taking an 8% share of the viewing figures it represents a significant and influential piece of history on the Falklands War.⁶⁶ This, combined with its clarity marks it out as an important work in bringing a greater sense of understanding within the British public about the reality of a war that is still an area of contested history.

Through an examination of representations of the Falklands War it is possible to see how despite attempts by elements of the press to corner their version of the war as the main narrative, attitudes and memory of the conflict have begun to change. The jingoism and newfound confidence that later emerged in football hooliganism has faded and critical questions such as Rob Wyatt's song, *Shipbuilding*, (which although never happened) asked if economic revival in the shipbuilding industry because of the war would really have been worth the deaths?⁶⁷ In addition, films have questioned the treatment of returning soldiers whether wounded or ostracised from the nation they had fought for because of the colour of their skin.

These interpretations of the war reflect how British public attitude seems to have cooled towards the status of the Islands. Though the British public would still not tolerate an Argentine invasion, a recent *YouGov* poll of British opinions on the Falklands suggested that '37% think the Islands should remain British and 14% would support shared sovereignty, but 28% think the fairest outcome would be for the Falklands to become independent from both

⁶⁶ B. Dowel, 'Snows put up a good fight for BBC 2', *The Guardian*, 5 June 2007.

⁶⁷ *Shipbuilding*, (Rob Wyatt, 1983).

countries'.⁶⁸ This contrasts with a MORI poll taken at the end of the conflict in which 77% of those polled felt that the Falklands should remain British.⁶⁹

Critical representations of the war have become more prevalent since the angry reactions by parts of the press to the Manchester Gallery's exhibition. As seen in the film *This is England*, which in a subversion of traditional representations of opposition to the war only being held by left-wing people, a far right-wing skinhead, who does not look too dissimilar to Grant Mitchel, asked 'What the fuck's the Falklands?'⁷⁰ Combo's expletive ridden speech helps to show that 'resistance' to propaganda is part of everyday life; he represents how people can think in unexpected ways and their opinions are not set in stone but are actually more fluid and conditional.

⁶⁸ 'Falklands War: Britain and Argentina', *YouGov*, <http://yougov.co.uk/news/2012/04/10/falklands-war-britain-and-argentina/> (Accessed: 2 July 2014)

⁶⁹ THCR 2/11/9/35 f127, 'Opinion Polls: Britto note ("Public Opinion Background Note 119") [weekly survey note; Falklands crisis]', 27 June 1982.

⁷⁰ *This Is England* (Shane Meadows, 2007).

Conclusion

I had the winter at the back of my mind. The Winter. What will the winter do? The wind, the cold. Down in South Georgia the ice what will it do? It beat Napoleon.¹

Margaret Thatcher

Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Evidently Thatcher had learned her history of the Napoleonic wars, she feared the power of the press as she did the winter for its capacity to halt the Task Force from taking the Falklands. She saw her Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, hounded out of office by the media early on in the conflict. She was not prepared to ‘lose the Falklands on TV’² and face the end of her term as Prime Minister as Anthony Eden had because of the Suez Crisis in 1956. Thatcher’s criticisms of parts of the press for expressing dissenting opinions is based upon her misguided impression that firstly, public opinion correlated directly to the stance of the media, and secondly that she could sufficiently influence the media.

This thesis has shown that there were a complex variety of factors that affected what information was available to the public and just as importantly how it was conveyed to them. It was the presentation of this information that the foundational narratives were formed from and which the early historiography of the conflict was therefore based upon. With the Falklands War, one idea that some in the media and government sought to establish as axiomatic was that war was a positive force for re-energising the nation. Thatcher did not need to try to shape the media, it was a world largely policed from inside. History had taught the media the same lessons to those in government. As members of the war cabinet laid ‘awake at night with visions of Suez’,³ so too were most of the press unwilling to criticise a

¹ M. Thatcher, *Daily Express*, 26 July 1982.

² Connelly and Welch, (eds.), *War and the Media*, p.xiii.

³ M. Garnett and I. Aitken, *Splendid! Splendid! The Authorized Biography of Willie Whitelaw* (London, 2002), p.281.

British military expedition since they had seen it cost newspapers with falls in circulation figures during Suez. The jingoism was a product of the media regarding it as the most likely way for them to make money, and to then promote that agenda in order to entertain as well as influence reader's opinions to keep them buying the paper.

Every possible view about the war existed in public domain, from vigorous opposition to flag-waving support. At the beginning the media too reflected these views, from *The Mirror's* rejection of the conflict as an imperialist throwback, *The Financial Times's* careful neutrality, *The Guardian's* focus on the potential costs of taking the Islands, through to the more vocal expressions of support from *The Daily Mail*, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, to the outliers in terms of their jingoistic position, *The Express* and *The Sun*. Meanwhile, the BBC retained, as far as possible, a neutrality that subsequently got it into a lot of trouble. From the Falklands the collective inexperience of the Task Force correspondents, the military and technological restrictions, combined with the correspondents growing sense of association with the soldiers they were embedded with fostered a desire to see the troops (instead of the government) succeed. Through such processes, the reporting from the Task Force correspondents assumed a largely patriotic if sometimes jingoistic tone.

As the campaign advanced and the task force assumed momentum, voices of opposition or caution were largely drowned out by the good news of military victory. In the face of mostly good news of victories and advances from the South Atlantic the media amplified the voices of those supporting progress and a positive outcome, they accentuated positives and masked negatives. Victory vindicated such jingoistic and belligerent rhetoric and helped to establish them as the foundational narratives, with those who were critical of the war labelled as 'traitors'.⁴ It was the same jingoistic papers that praised Thatcher's handling of the conflict

⁴ 'Dare Call it Treason', *The Sun*, 7 May 1982.

and the supposed revival of the nation the conflict inspired. They helped embolden Thatcher and encouraged her to fight the unions after the battles in the Falklands had been won.

The likes of Chomsky have argued that if a person's reality is produced through what they know and if this is mediated through the prism of the media, then it suggests that it was one of the primary forces that conditioned people's reality during the Falklands war.⁵ Such power would make the media presentation fundamental to explaining society late twentieth century Britain. This is too deterministic, it sees the public as subordinate to the elites in the media and government. After Winston Smith is tortured in George Orwell's *1984*, he finally submitted to the will of the party and is made to truly love Big Brother. With such a pessimistic ending it is possible to miss a critical point of the novel; despite Winston Smith living in a world where his every thought and action is observed, a world where thoughts are conditioned through the manipulation of language, he still has the capacity to emerge as a free-thinking individual who questions what he is told.⁶ The point is that if Winston Smith can be such a person in a totalitarian state, then the British people of 1982 did not exist in a state of false consciousness but were free thinking individuals that were not subject to the all-encompassing power of the media.

The ordinary daily life of individuals is difficult to account for, but what this thesis has attempted to do is to demonstrate that people are not simply numbers that can be categorised by one opinion that they may hold. People's realities were made up by the infinite variables of their own experiences. In the Mass Observation responses there is evidence of forms of 'everyday resistance';⁷ there were people who opposed the war and took in every piece of

⁵ Herman, Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

⁶ G. Orwell, *1984*. (London, 1949).

⁷ J. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1987).

information that they could,⁸ others mediated their perceptions by leaving the room if news reporting became too graphic.⁹

Where one praised Max Hastings for the way that he reported the conflict,¹⁰ another felt that the only Task Force correspondent that was getting things right was Gareth Parry of the *Guardian*.¹¹ Likewise, whereas some post-war depictions of the conflict have accepted the basic foundational narratives produced by the press,¹² a number of artistic representations have tried to reveal alternate understandings and memories of the conflict. No one can criticise Simon Weston for the huge amount of good he has done for the cause of the wounded soldier, the problem is that his symbolic path to recovery has obscured other narratives that are not so positive. Weston has become synonymous with the Falklands War so that his story is one that is readily available within public discourse. This means that someone like Robert Lawrence, another badly wounded soldier, is relegated to insignificance. Members of the public were upset that the wounded were excluded from the London victory parades, recognising it as an attempt to mask bad news in order to promote the good news associated with victory.¹³ Similarly, little has been made of the contribution of non-white soldiers who fought in the Falklands, where the atypical soldier is Grant Mitchell from *EastEnders* and not like Reuben from *For Queen and Country*,¹⁴ nor Sapper Pradeep Gandhi, the only Asian to be killed during the conflict. This gives works such as *Tumbledown*¹⁵ and *For Queen and Country*, symbolic significance beyond the artistic and in to the realm of

⁸ M/O, G226, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

⁹ M/O, C108, '1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response'.

¹⁰ M/O, W633, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

¹¹ M/O, G226, '1982 Falklands War Directive Response'.

¹² *The Falklands Play* (Ian Curteis, 2002); see also *The Iron Lady*, (Phyllida Lloyd, 2011).

¹³ M/O, G218, '1989 Spring Disasters Directive Response'.

¹⁴ *For Queen and Country* (Martin Stellman, 1989).

¹⁵ *Tumbledown*, (Richard Eyre, 1988)

resistance as they express forms of knowledge that for a multitude of reasons have been absent from the foundational narratives.

According to Jean Baudrillard ‘people have become *public*’.¹⁶ During the Falklands War this was certainly true, the individual as a free thinking agent was denied in favour of the collective; national unity was promoted, division was shunned. The truth according to the elites and the media was that Britain had become great again by defending democracy against the fascists of Argentina. Dissent from this view made you unpatriotic, to some it made you the enemy. Later in the same essay Baudrillard asked ‘is it the media that fascinate the masses, or is it the masses who divert the media to showmanship’.¹⁷ In 1982 it was the latter; false conceptions of the imagined communities that the media were writing for reduced “people to the public” and in doing so placed them in categories which elites felt confident were true because the opinion polls told them so. Opinion polls obscure, they fail to elucidate the complex nature of public opinion, people are individuals, not numbers on a graph. The Falklands War did take place, but there is no single narrative, no singular truth, no one consequence, and this must be remembered.

¹⁶ J. Baudrillard, M. Maclean (trans), ‘The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media’, *New Literary History*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 577-589, p.583

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.582.

Appendices

Appendix A – Mass Observation Correspondents Data

Reference	Gender	DoB	Age During Falklands War
C108	F	1936	46
D156	F	1952	30
G218	F	1946	36
G226	F	1941	41
N403	F	1937	45
N470	M	1934	48
R470	M	1934	48
S496	F	1927	55
W632	F	1941	41
W633	F	1942	40

Appendix B - Images



Image 1: Evidence of Argentinian Napalm. Source: Fox and Hanrahan, *'I counted them all out and I counted them all back': The Battle for the Falklands* (London, 1982), Image 20.



Image 2: A photo of a British Soldier sharing a cup of Tea with Falkland Islanders. The image was widely circulated back home for the sense of normality it elicited. Source: Photograph taken by Tom Smith, *Daily Express*.



Image 3: A marine stands over the headless body of an Argentinean conscript. Source: Photograph taken by soldier Adrian Brown, 40 Commando.



Image 4: A wounded British soldier is carried by his fellow soldiers, his injuries can just be seen on his lower left leg.
Source: Fox, *'I counted them all out and I counted them all back': The Battle for the Falklands* (London, 1982), Image 24.

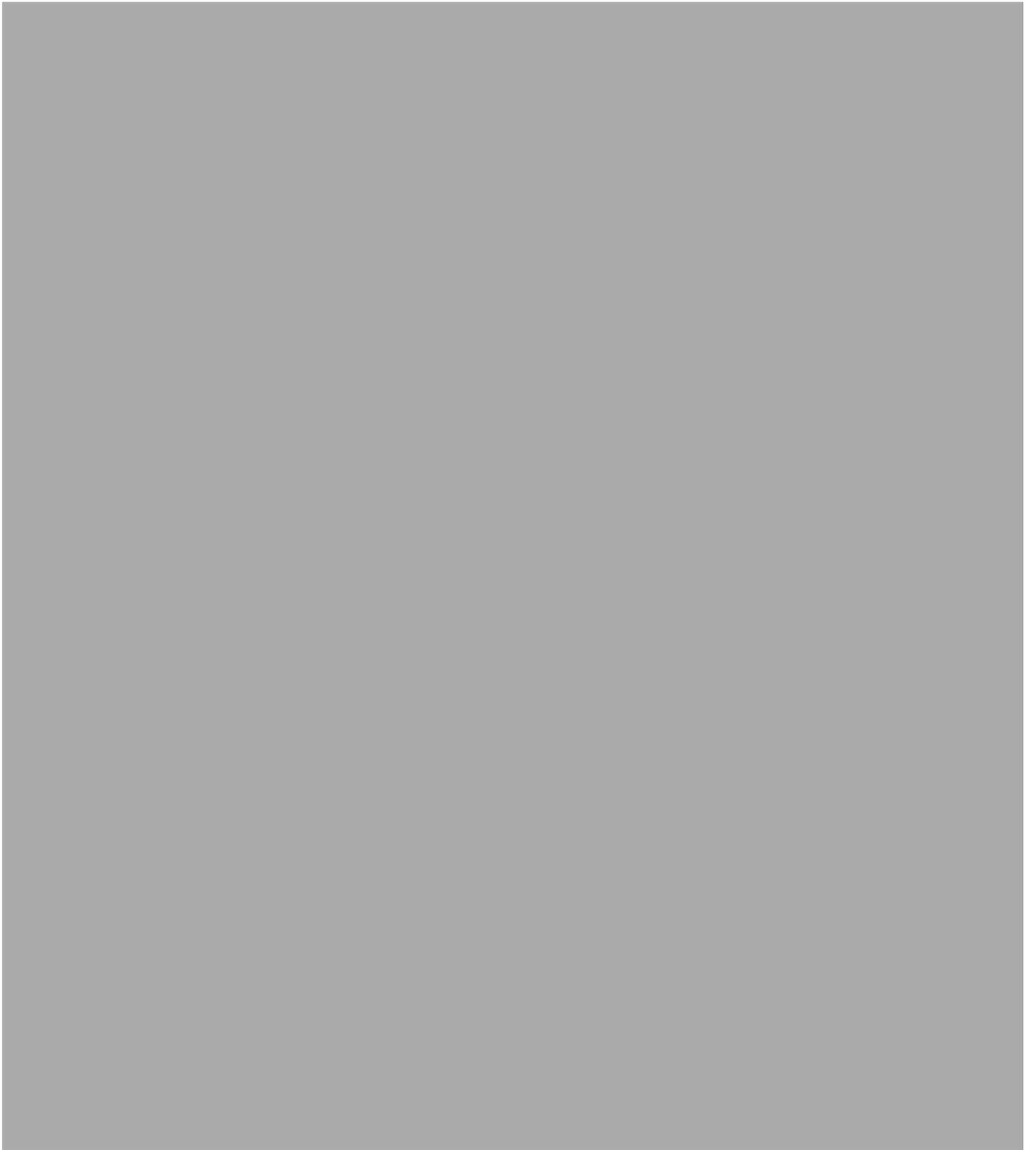


Image 5: *The Sun*, 'GOTCHA', 04 May 1982.



Image 6: Caption Reads 'Anti-Falklands war demonstration in Oxford Street yesterday on their way to the headquarters of the BBC in London to object to its bias in excluding the views of people who want an immediate truce, negotiations and a stop to the war.' Source: *Morning Star*, 10 May 1982.

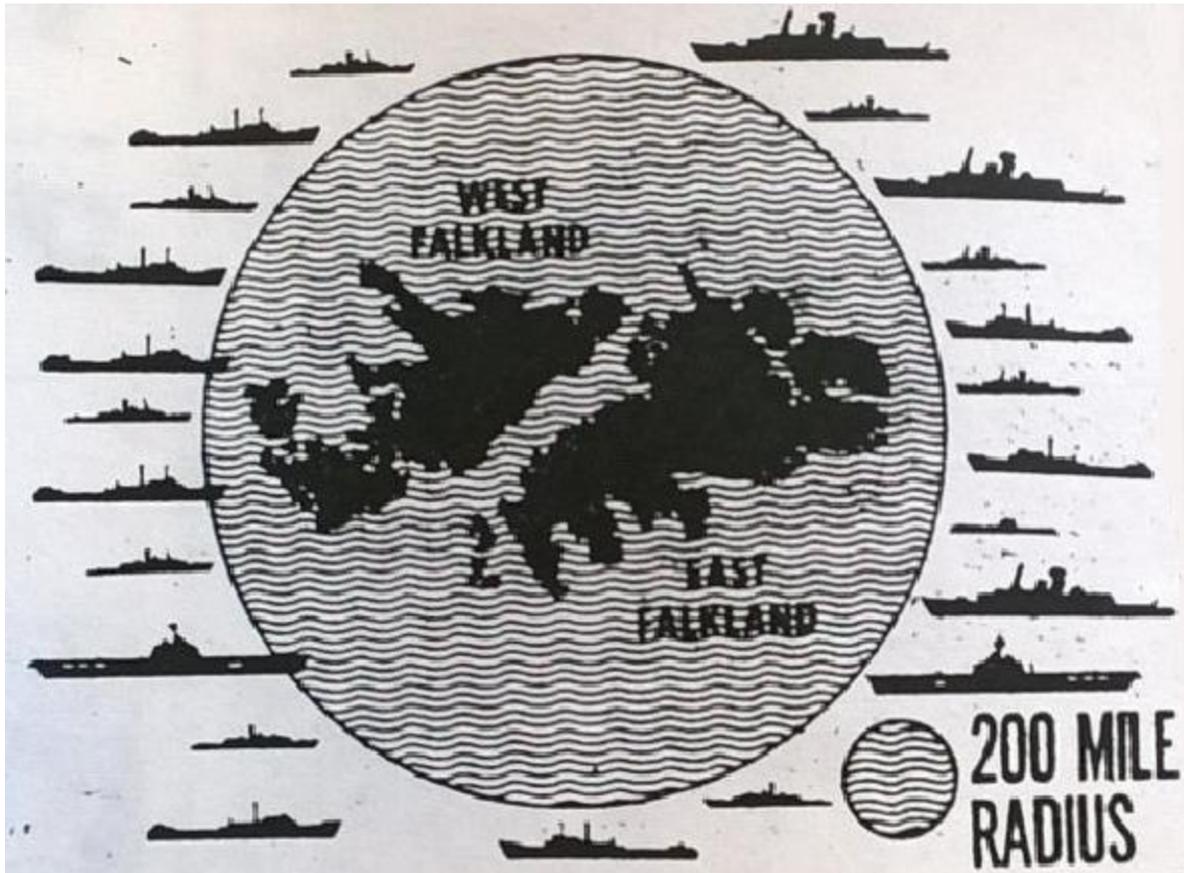


Image 7.1: Caption reads 'Step One: BLOCKADE... Warships seal off the Falkland Islands. The Argentinians are given 48 hours to get out.' Source: *The Sun*, 06 April 1982.

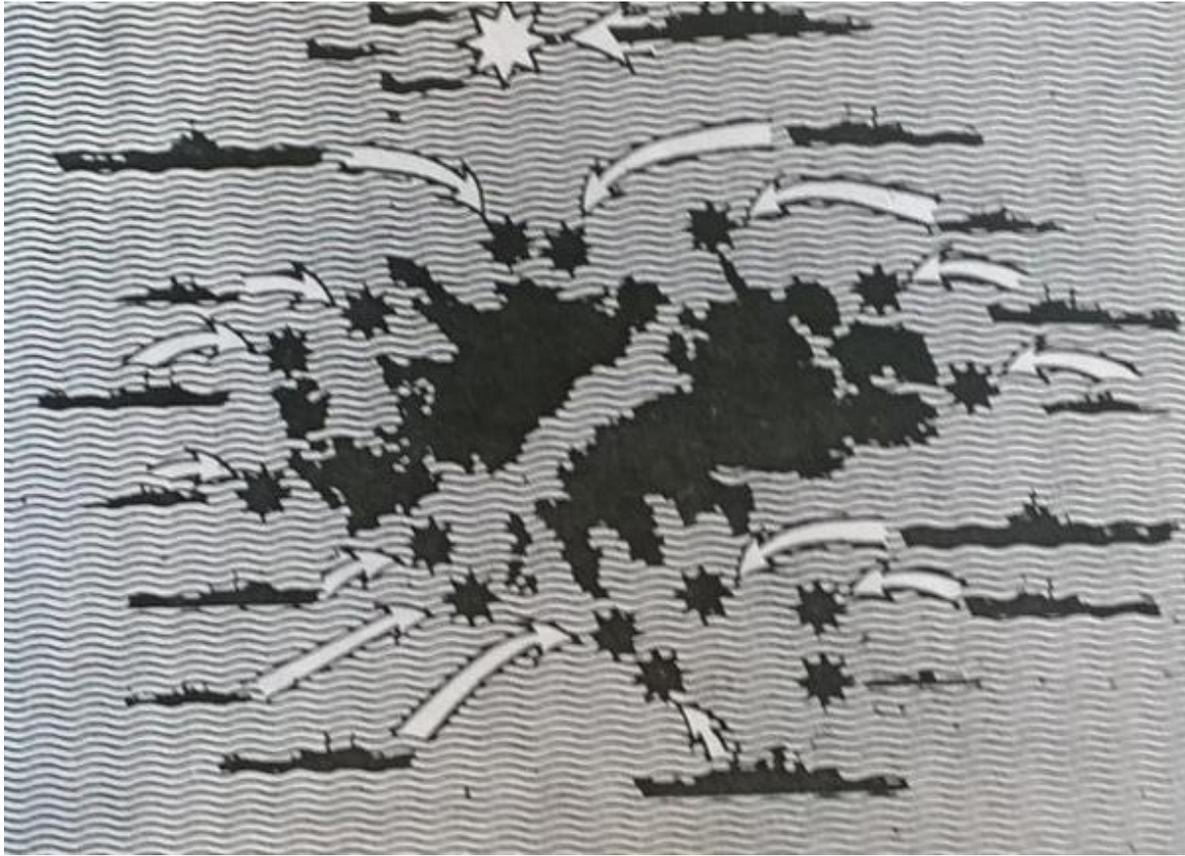


Image 7.2: Caption reads 'Step Two... BATTLE... Navy opens fire on enemy ships and planes. Islands are starved of vital supplies.' Source: *The Sun*, 06 April 1982.



Image 7.3: Caption reads 'INVASION... Mass landings by Marines and Paratroopers "The enemy would have lost heart anyway by then".' Source: *The Sun*, 06 April 1982.

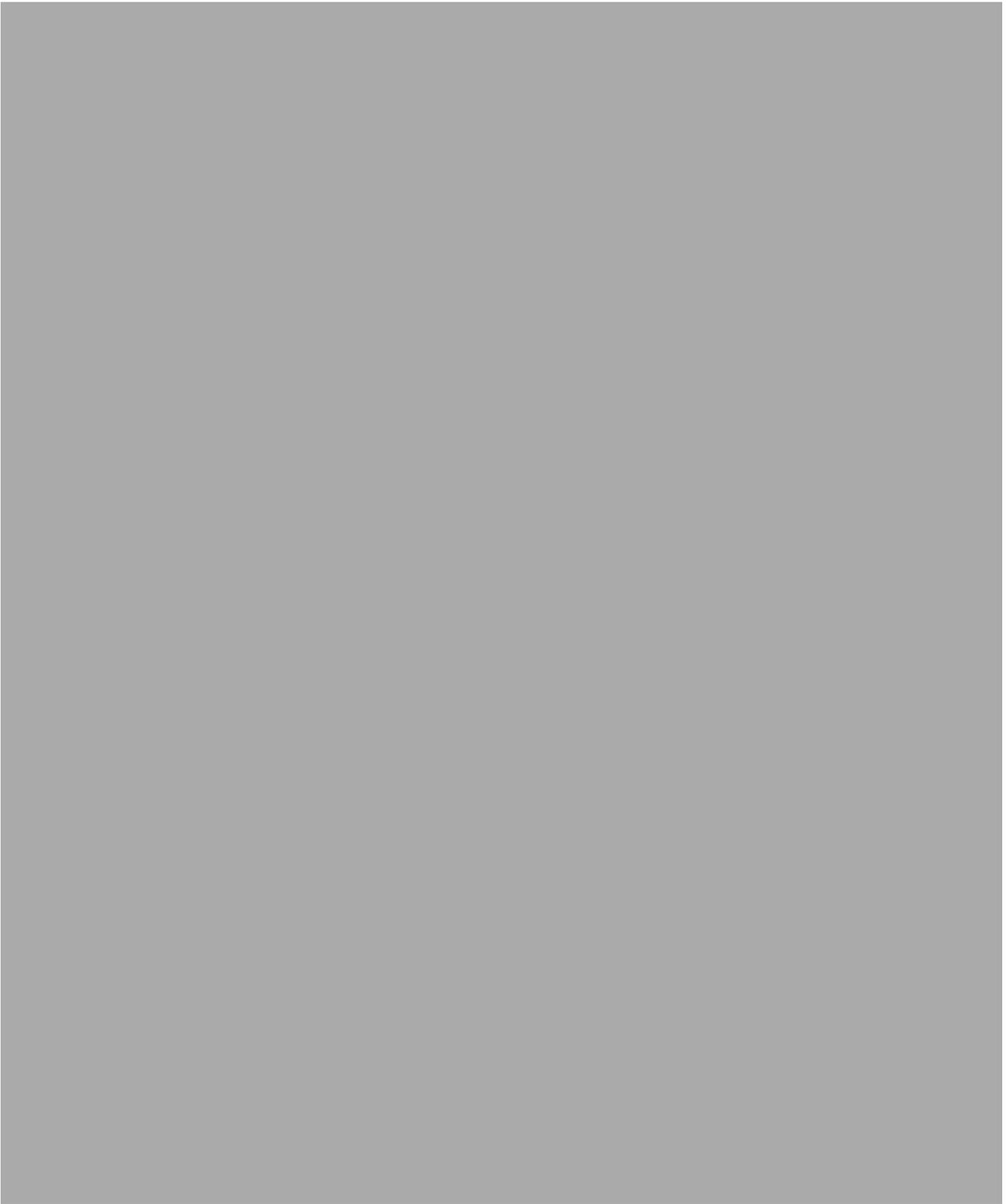


Image 8: *The Sun*, 'STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA', 20 April 1982.



Image 9: Prince Andrew returning home from the Falkland Islands to a warm welcome. Source: V. Adams, *The Falklands Conflict* (London, 1998), p.67.



Image 10: Cartoon by Michael Cummings. Caption reads 'I wish our all-conquering Field Marshall could liberate the British islands from the Union Junta!' Source: *Sunday Express*, 26 June 1982.



Image 11: *Spitting Image* depiction of Margaret Thatcher. Source: *ITV/Rex Features*.



Image 12.1: 'WHEN WILL MANKIND LEARN THAT THERE ARE NO WINNERS AT THIS GAME?' A collage produced during PTSD therapy at the Royal Naval Psychiatric Hospital, Haslar: Source: *Manchester Art Galleries, The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict* (Manchester, 1989), p.32.



Image 12.2: 'BEFORE' and 'AFTER'. A collage produced during PTSD therapy at the Royal Naval Psychiatric Hospital, Haslar: Source: *Manchester Art Galleries, The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict* (Manchester, 1989), p.32.



Image 12.3: '1982 OUR CONFLICT!' A collage produced during PTSD therapy at the Royal Naval Psychiatric Hospital, Haslar. Source: *Manchester Art Galleries, The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict* (Manchester, 1989), p.26.

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