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THE FUTURE OF THE FALKLANDS

Francis Bennion (May) says that "If British military action had not been taken, the Falklands would still be under Argentinian rule. . .," is a statement, It is not. It is a speculation. It is one of the tragic "ifs" of history: could less precipitate military action and more determined negotiation have solved the conflict without some 1,000 deaths? We shall never know.

The cynical can say that critics of such hasty military action took an "I'm all right Jack attitude"; equally it is easy to accuse Mrs Thatcher of taking a "Let's cover economic disaster with some patriotic flag-waving" approach. The difference in reality, is between those who judged that a dispute of that scale ought to be solved by negotiation and those who felt only military action could safeguard the lives of the Falklanders. This is an honest disagreement of judgement, There is also, perhaps, an Instinctive difference between those who would use armed action as a last resort and those who feel that military .action must always be swift and firm to be effective.

Does Francis Bennion's "unmuddled" thinking allow him to see that the war has not solved the dispute over the Falkland Islands, which geography and economics will prevent from remaining a British fortress for ever, In the long run a solution must be found which returns the Falklands to Argentina while preserving the rights and choices of the inhabitants, as with those British who choose to live in the Argentine mainland without, apparently, being ill-treated, or which offers the inhabitants compensation and a new life elsewhere, which would be a better deal than has been achieved for many in the desecrated wastes of 'Britain's industrial heartlands.

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