

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menendez

### The Queen's visit

*The British Empire is on a campaign to make Mexico a royal base for the "reconquest" of Ibero-America.*

**T**he Queen's leisurely sunshine cruise up the Pacific Coast of Mexico is smoothly and gently helping to renew British influence in Latin America in the wake of the Falklands war." Thus reported the London *Daily Telegraph* Feb. 21 from Queen Elizabeth II's yacht in cruise from Acapulco to Puerto Vallarta. The cruise was part of the visit by the Queen and her consort Philip to Mexico Feb. 17-22.

Although the de la Madrid government tried to downplay the royal tour as a non-official visit, British propaganda has put out a different word. "The trip is having the effect of putting the conflict [between Argentina and England over the Malvinas Islands] in perspective as an aberration caused by Argentina," said the *Telegraph*.

The Empire's organs have also recently boasted that an economically bludgeoned Mexico has agreed to submit its oil price policy to British manipulations of the market.

The Mexican government has nonetheless given no signs it is ready to help Britain clean up its colonial reputation on this continent. In welcoming the royal couple Feb. 17, President de la Madrid made one of his strongest calls for reversing the present world depression through reform of the Bretton Woods economic structure championed by England.

While censoring this speech, the British press made a big fuss over Foreign Minister Bernardo Sepulveda's prolonged discussions with Foreign Office chief Frances Pym aboard the royal yacht. Central America and oil

were the main topics on the agenda.

While Sepulveda did not give the press many details of his discussions, later during a meeting of Latin American foreign ministers in Colombia Feb. 25, he reaffirmed Mexico's support for Argentina in the Malvinas conflict. "Latin America will know how to respond in the face of common problems such as the Malvinas question, which is an unfinished chapter of the cohesion and solidarity effort in which the sub-continent is now immersed." Furthermore, Sepulveda added, the world economic crisis is "forcing Latin American countries to take concerted actions to achieve economic recovery."

As for the much heralded Mexico-Britain "oil alliance," the de la Madrid government has shown that, while willing to consult all oil producing countries including England, Ibero-American unity also has priority here. Before flying to Europe for discussions with British and OPEC officials, Venezuela's Energy Minister Humberto Calderón Berti visited Mexico in late February to consult both de la Madrid and the Energy Secretary Francisco Labastida. Calderón and Labastida are known to be consulting with the Ecuadoran government.

There is good reason to distrust the British on the oil question. On Feb. 14, the British ambassador Crispin Tickell called the press in Mexico City to publicize the Queen's visit, and he promised that England would not lower its oil prices. Two days later the British did just that.

As *Novedades* columnist Joaquin López Doriga, a source of information on government circles, said Feb. 27, the ambassador's doubletalk had only "confirmed the distrust which everybody should hold against the British. History has proven it."

More than a government representative, Tickell is known here as the International Monetary Fund's ambassador. Since early last year he has been the most outspoken foreign proponent of Mexico dismantling its industrial infrastructure and submitting to the IMF's "conditionalities." Political groups here demanded his expulsion after a press conference Dec. 20 where he said the deal with the IMF was not enough. Now, Tickell said in his Feb. 14 press conference, "Mexico has to join GATT," the British-led "free trade" system.

Britain and Mexico, Tickell said, "have a lot in common. Both are the most important oil-producing countries outside of OPEC and both know the International Monetary Fund very well."

Tickell leads a gang a colonial officials here who do not disguise their views. In a meeting Aug. 4, 1982 of the British-Mexican Chamber of Commerce, the chamber's president, a certain Mr. King, astonished the press by saying that Mexico's economic ills came from the fact that it "got drunk" on development. Now "the party is over and Mexico has a hangover." The only remedy, he said, is harsh austerity. As for the problems which this will create, such as massive unemployment, King advised, don't worry. "There is in Mexico a culture of unemployment. . . . It is known that some peasants work just for three days, and this is not because they are lazy. They are intelligent, they know that they just need to work three days a week in order to survive."