Reaction and isolation

Rodriquez and Antonio Poyato stood shoulder to shoulder in the main square of Alqueria. Historically a rare event with the leaders of the town's two factions showing anything like unity. Physically it was also rather difficult as Rodriquez is thirty centimetres taller than his Hill People's counterpart. They had jointly read the letter from the *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación* and acquainted the villagers with the startling fact that Alqueria was no longer part of Spain.

Reaction to the letter differed considerably.

The elder members of the community treated the news with total indifference. Why should it affect them? Would it make the wine any cheaper? The price of wine is a recurring theme within this demographic group. The ability to afford vast quantities of the stuff is the true measure of any government. The only question is whether the new autonomous government of Alqueria will have a subsidised wine policy for the elderly.

El Chanchullero the village bookmaker and resident spiv saw it as a golden opportunity. A tax free haven to rival Gibraltar. Put Gibraltar out of business then buy it from the British at a cut rate and turn it into a vertical theme-park. 'A Little Bit of Britain in the Med' and an ape sanctuary. The parallels are obvious.

Manuela, the unofficial leader of The Hill People has long been engaged in certain nocturnal activities, the legalities of which are frequently in question. If the new government could be persuaded to legalise or better still make her midnight pursuits compulsory then it would have her full weight behind it. Having Manuela behind one should not be taken lightly, nor is it at all unpleasant.

Antonio Poyato saw wonderful opportunities for his Remitroot crop. Without the Spanish Government's export ban due to it falling within the *Non-proliferation* of

chemical weapons' category he could sell worldwide. He saw Alqueria as the Remitroot capital of the world. Exporting the Root's by-products to the eager and Remitroot starved nations at premium prices.

As the chatter in the town's square subsided no one doubted the challenge that confronted the village. An interim government would have to be formed and a constitution written. Can the conflicting *barrios* of the village put their petty squabbles to one side for the greater good? Is a government of unification possible with so many vested interests?

That night a convoy of vehicles blocked all routes into and out of the village and Alqueria fell back on its own resources.