**Alqueria Hoy**
**(The free press of Alqueria)**

The freedoms offered by the new Republic of Alqueria include the freedom to lie, misrepresent and libel. The perfect environment for a daily tabloid newspaper to exist and Alqueria Hoy was born. A daily newspaper published weekly however, not a lot happens in the village.

El Baboso, a semi-literate and thoroughly disgusting man was the natural choice for editor. His only redeeming feature is a flair for inventiveness. A skill much needed if the pages are to be filled with anything other than mundane twaddle. To satisfy both the Newcomers and Hill People a dual headline system had to be employed. Hill People on the left, Newcomers to the right.

A recent round of redundancies at Rodriquez's olive mill produced the following two headlines.

The Hill People's read.
'Rodriquez sacks twelve at Olive Mill. Men forced to steal as wives forage in refuse bins. Daughters are forced into prostitution while several children have been taken into community care. The latest redundancies push the unemployment rate in Alqueria to 75%.'

The Newcomer's headline about the same story reads.
'Rodriguez streamlines Olive Mill. It's a good deal for Alqueria.'

Horacio Stranglardeganso, landlord of the Bar la Casa Devante writes the paper's agony column. His advice for apparently all requests for help is to drink strong liquor, preferably in his establishment until one's head spins. Advice eagerly taken up by a sizeable portion of Alqueria's population. Manuela's advice to the love-lorn had to be dropped. Even El Baboso wouldn't take the risk of publishing, no matter how imaginative her advice is.

The small ads are the usual attempts to devoid oneself of household rubbish by demanding extortionate prices. The weather forecast was simply reprinted from last year's El País. This proved so accurate that a team from the Meteorological Office in the UK was sent on a fact finding trip.

Someone somewhere decided to include a daily prayer. When one lives in Alqueria one certainly needs a daily prayer or some form of benevolent intervention. The village priest, known locally as Sacerdote del Semblante Lánguido is a tall cadaverous man, hook-nosed and sombre to the point of being utterly depressed. His first attempt to write the daily devotion was an utter disaster. He used the paper's platform to announce he was a closet Existentialist. Having 'come out' he now spends his time

sitting in cafés with his head in his hands depressing everyone with his view of the meaningless universe.

As Alqueria moves into complete and autonomous statehood its free press can proudly take its place amongst the tabloids of Europe.