

Andrew Canessa
Editor

Bordering on Britishness

National Identity in Gibraltar from the Spanish Civil
War to Brexit

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‘Franco Lives!’ Spanish Fascism and the Creation of a British Gibraltarian Identity

*Luis G. Martínez Del Campo, Andrew Canessa,
and Giacomo Orsini*

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L. G. Martínez Del Campo (✉)
University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU, Vizcaya, Spain
e-mail: luisgonzaga.martinez@ehu.eus

A. Canessa
University of Essex, Colchester, UK
e-mail: canessa@essex.ac.uk

G. Orsini
Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium
e-mail: giacomo.orsini@uclouvain.be

INTRODUCTION

A nation is usually described as a group of people who ‘share the same culture’ as well as reciprocal ‘loyalties and solidarities’ (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 6–7). The members of these ‘cultural artefacts’ imagine themselves as taking part in the same ‘limited and sovereign’ community (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 6). Therefore, nation formation requires at least imagined borders that mark the area of the nation and delimit the people who hold—or claim for—the sovereignty of that territory. Although these political and cultural divisions are artificial, nations are assumed to be natural phenomena by the members, who perform often unconsciously their ‘national identity’—understood as ‘a set of attributes shared by those who belong to a particular nation’ (Guibernau 2007: 11)—in daily ‘habits’ (Billig 1995: 8). However, these national axioms are neither fixed, nor completed, as nationalists’ essentialist discourses suggest, but in process.

As is the case of other identification processes, national identities are also constructed through ‘the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not’ (Hall 1996: 4). Thus, alterity plays a crucial role in raising awareness of who belongs to, or is excluded from, the nation. National identity is also created in the negative, that is when the members of a community define themselves through the differences they perceive ‘vis-à-vis other national communities’ (Smith 2010: 20). The clearest articulation of this differentiation process appears when members of the nation perceive the other as ‘an external or internal enemy – real, potential or constructed...’ threatening their status quo (Guibernau 2004: 135). Then, the other endangers what the community is and consequently engenders in members an emotional reaction to the threat. In addition to the nationalist discourse, those emotions—such as fear and hatred—that come from ‘the contact we have with others’ also shape community members’ identity (Ahmed 2004: 4).

Although otherness is a crucial concept of nationalist ideology, many scholars have suggested that the role of alterity in nation formation has not been addressed in sufficient detail (Triandafyllidou 1998: 596; Murray 2015: 79). This chapter aims to study this issue, exploring how ‘the other’ has shaped Gibraltarians’ national identity over the last century. Undoubtedly, Gibraltar is an interesting case study in which to analyse how the other(s) exert(s) considerable influence in the creation of collective identities.

In the early twentieth century, Spain had a significant cultural influence on the Rock's everyday life. At that time, in Gibraltar, the community was real and intense, rather than imagined. There was no need to make national distinctions between people who enjoyed a very fluid relationship across the border. Nevertheless, there were aspects of being Gibraltarian which were distinctive. Gibraltar was not only a British colony and military garrison but also a transit point at the gates of the Mediterranean. These features set Gibraltar apart from La Línea and other towns which were much more homogeneously Spanish. For this reason, perhaps, British politicians, who seemed to be exclusively interested in the military function of the Rock, made very few efforts to anglicise Gibraltar's civilian population in the early twentieth century. There was no free education system in Gibraltar at this stage, and although English was used as the medium of instruction in Gibraltar, the vast majority of Gibraltarians were Spanish speaking (Archer and Traverso 2004). However, this situation changed when General Francisco Franco staged a coup d'état inaugurating a fratricidal war in Spain.

The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939, immediately made national differences salient and obviously affected Spanish nationals differently. Gibraltarians took sides in the ideological struggle and helped those Spaniards who were closer to their political beliefs and social class. This conflict, however, was not their war. In fact, in interviews, people of this generation talk about 'their war' and 'our war', the former being the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Second World War (1939–1945). These two wars were experienced very differently by Gibraltarians and Spaniards. During the Second World War, being Gibraltarian meant being evacuated to the UK, Madeira, or Jamaica whether one was or not Spanish born. Many Spanish women married to Gibraltarian men, for example, shared an experience of Britain during the war which their Spanish kin never did.

In turn, many Gibraltarians—even those living in Spain—discovered that their Britishness protected them from the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Even if the war did not affect them directly, there was a clear sense that the border kept them safe. However, the Spanish Civil War had specific consequences for Gibraltar. While British colonial authorities and the UK government tried to maintain a good relationship with Franco, many Gibraltarians saw him as one of their enemies from the beginning as he almost immediately embarked on a campaign to retrieve Gibraltar which culminated in the closure of the border in 1969.

It was during this campaign when Gibraltarians, in the context of an external Spanish threat, developed the clearest articulation of a communal identity. They asserted their belongingness to the UK through a sovereignty referendum in 1967 and started to highlight what made them different from Spaniards. After the border closed in 1969, Gibraltarians were completely isolated from Spain for 13 years, and this intensified a concomitant growing antipathy to Spain and Spanishness, leading to a reiterated assertion of loyalty to the UK. It was also accompanied by a sense of a differing identity to Spaniards and a stress on non-Spanish ancestry which had hitherto not been socially significant.

If before the Second World War Gibraltarian identity was primarily a local one, embedded within a broader regional one, during much of the post-war period it was most clearly articulated as Britishness—understood as loyalty to British institutions, particularly the Crown (Langlands 1999: 63). Since the 1990s, however, there has been a growing assertion of a specific Gibraltarian national identity with a National Day, the adoption of a national anthem, and other public national symbols. Although Gibraltar retains strong links with the UK, the population has started to claim its own unique national identity and the right to self-determination within the European Union (EU) although the latter relation is, of course, under crisis due to Brexit.

With the UK voting to leave the EU, the issue of Gibraltar and the border with Spain could scarcely be more topical. In recent years, the Rock has not been a significant point of discord between Spain and the UK, which has strengthened their bilateral relations as members of the EU. In this context of mutual understanding, Tony Blair and his counterpart, José María Aznar, attempted to solve the long-standing diplomatic dispute with a proposal for joint sovereignty of the territory, which an overwhelming majority of Gibraltarians rejected in a referendum held in 2002. Although this attempt failed, cross-border relations were improved after the Córdoba Agreement (2006) was reached by Spain, the UK, and Gibraltar. In 2011, however, the tensions increased when the conservative party, the *Partido Popular*, came to power in Spain and the new Spanish Foreign Minister, García-Margallo, announced his intention to recover the Rock. In addition, border crossing was affected when the Gibraltar government commenced work on an artificial reef in 2013, with Madrid registering a strong complaint. These events and the outcome of the Brexit referendum when Gibraltarians overwhelmingly voted Remain has raised old tensions, a revival of those emotions that Franco's threat created,

and a concomitant rise of Gibraltarian nationalist discourse—which is usually accompanied by strong anti-Spanish feeling and a discourse of victimisation.

In the context of Brexit, the Spanish government has once again proposed joint sovereignty. Although this agreement would solve many problems that Gibraltar will face when Brexit is delivered, Gibraltarians have once again rejected the Spanish offer. This chapter sheds light on the historical reasons behind Gibraltarians’ rejection of joint sovereignty. We argue that Gibraltarians have built, and still build, their national identity in opposition to Spain. Furthermore, Franco, who was perceived as a real threat to the Rock, played an important role in Gibraltar nation formation, and the memory of the Spanish dictatorship still shapes the way Gibraltarians see both Spain and themselves and directly accounts for their antipathy to a joint sovereignty agreement.

This chapter is based on published and unpublished archival material, which is used to reconstruct how Franco’s campaign became a threat to Gibraltarians. However, the most important source is the set of *Bordering on Britishness* oral testimonies. This new primary source has allowed us to explore how Gibraltarians created their identity in opposition to Franco’s threat and how the memory of the Spanish dictator still determines their relationship with Spain.

‘WHEN THE PROBLEMS STARTED’: GIBRALTAR AND GENERAL FRANCO’S WAR OF DIPLOMACY

When the Spanish Civil War came, Franco got into power, that’s when the problems started.¹

A few months after the end of the Spanish Civil War, in 1939, Franco’s propaganda machinery made a first attempt to lay Gibraltar’s sovereignty on the table. The Falangist Party’s newspaper *Arriba* published a front-page article about the history and current situation of the Rock. In addition to commemorating ‘the Spanish heroism’ during the capture of Gibraltar by the British army in 1704, the paper maintained that one of the ideological goals of the new Spanish national movement was to get Gibraltar back—a clear reference to the fourth point of the founding

¹ *Bordering on Britishness* interview (4 September 2014), man born in Gibraltar. Canessa, A. (2017). *Bordering on Britishness*. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 852694, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-852694>

programme of Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (JONS), the Spanish national syndicalist organisation, that established the ‘immediate claim of Gibraltar’ (Sepúlveda 1995: 26). The ‘reconquest’ of that colony was described as a symbol of the new regime’s ‘will of Empire’—using the words of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the *Falange*, thus demonstrating how Gibraltar had become a crucial issue for the far right in Spain.²

A few weeks after this publication, the Second World War broke out, with Spain remaining neutral. Hitler and Mussolini had supported Franco during the Spanish Civil War, and Spain’s neutrality was strategic rather than reliable. In the following months, Franco played a difficult game, trying to align himself and his regime with the Axis but avoiding an armed confrontation with the Allies. In his diplomatic strategy, Gibraltar became a perfect pretext to justify Spain’s status in the war as a non-belligerent country.

This diplomatic game began in April 1940 at Westminster. Parliament was discussing possible measures to aid Spain, following the recent signing of an Anglo-Hispanic trade agreement. The then conservative government showed its interest in establishing a good relationship with the Franco regime, offering a loan of two million pounds for the reconstruction of Spain after their Civil War. Their aim was to counteract German propaganda in Spain and to maintain its neutrality. However, some parliamentarians stressed that the Spanish people were ‘kind but difficult’ and questioned the convenience of approaching a fascist dictator.³

A few days after this debate, the Spanish newspaper *ABC* published a series of articles under the title ‘Politics of England and Spain’. The author was Manuel Aznar Zubigaray, a Franco propagandist critical of Britain’s stance in the Spanish Civil War and grandfather of the former Spanish Prime Minister, José María Aznar.⁴ In the third article of the series, Gibraltar was mentioned in order to criticise those Spanish ‘expatriates’ who were willing ‘to relinquish, to sell, or to rent’ territories such as the

² ‘Historia y Actualidad del Peñón de Gibraltar’, *Arriba*, 12 August 1939, 1.

³ ‘Clearing Office (Spain) Amendment Order, 1940’, HC Deb. 24 April 1940, vol. 360, cc311–38. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1940/apr/24/clearing-office-spain-amendment-order#S5CV0360P0_19400424_HOC_364 (1940, accessed 26 June 2017).

⁴ ‘Política de Inglaterra y España, II’, *ABC*, 2 May 1940, 1.

Rock with the aim of appeasing the British. Aznar concluded wondering what England could offer to gain the friendship of the new regime.⁵

On 20 May 1940, Aznar received an answer from Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, who was interviewed by the *ABC* correspondent in London. Halifax made it clear that the British government welcomed Spain's 'declaration of neutrality (...) at the outbreak of war'. Their idea was 'to maintain and develop the friendly relations' that had previously existed.⁶ The Foreign Office (FO) was already working on the promotion of British-Spanish relations, proposing 'the extension of British Council activities in Spain' to counteract German and Italian influence.⁷ But the most important initiative came after Halifax's interview, when Samuel Hoare was sent to Madrid 'to undertake a special mission' and 'to improve' British relations with Spain (Hoare 1946: 14).

The reply to Halifax's letter came in the form of an article in *Arriba* by Aznar entitled: 'Gibraltar, Honour and Duty of the Spaniards'. Aznar wondered whether the only thing that London could offer Spain was a few commercial benefits. If the British wanted to strengthen their friendship with the Spanish—he added—they had to solve the first of Spain's 'great problems': The Rock of Gibraltar, which 'stands like a shadow (...) between England and Spain'.⁸ Over the following days, Spanish and British newspapers republished excerpts from this article, implicitly recognising that Aznar was acting as a spokesman for the Spanish government. *The Times* correspondent pointed out that Aznar's article was 'a reply to Lord Halifax' and suggested that 'this outburst'—Gibraltar was hardly Spain's greatest problem—might be an excuse to justify Spain's rapprochement to Rome and Berlin, which were 'quietly dangling with the idea of involving Spain in the war'.⁹ Events would confirm the *Times*' analysis.

On the afternoon of 1 June 1940, Hoare arrived in Madrid from Lisbon. On that morning, students had been demonstrating around the British Embassy in Madrid shouting 'Gibraltar for Spain'. The fact that the Spanish police did nothing to stop the crowds suggests the demonstration

⁵ 'Política de Inglaterra y España, III', *ABC*, 3 May 1940, 1.

⁶ 'Anglo-Spanish Relations. Lord Halifax's Message', *The Times*, 23 May 1940, 5. See also: 'Las relaciones hispano-inglesas vistas por Lord Halifax', *ABC*, 22 May 1940, 9.

⁷ 'Cultural Relations with Spain. Italian Institute Opened', *The Times*, 29 February 1940, 7.

⁸ 'Gibraltar, Honor y Deber de los Españoles', *ABC*, 1 June 1940, 5.

⁹ 'Spain and Gibraltar', *The Times*, 1 June 1940, 5.

happened with the connivance—and even support—of the Spanish government.¹⁰ Samuel Hoare immediately understood that this unfriendly welcome was not spontaneous. When asked if he needed ‘a larger police guard’, he replied: ‘No more police, please, but fewer silly young men’ (Hoare 1946: 21–22). However, his plea fell on deaf ears. During the first days of June 1940, similar demonstrations were held in a host of Spanish cities, repeating the same motto: ‘Gibraltar for Spain’. The Spanish press reported these protests in detail, and German and Italian newspapers published pieces supporting the Spanish claim over Gibraltar.¹¹

This propaganda campaign made Gibraltar the political pretext to Spain’s leaning towards the Axis, but prevented all-out war with the Allies. On 10 June 1940, in the middle of this propaganda campaign to recover the Rock, Franco changed Spain’s status in the war to that of a non-belligerent power. In theory, Spain remained neutral, but this new status foresaw Franco’s support for Hitler and Mussolini. As a British MP said, Spain became ‘neutral against us’.¹² When the Spanish government announced its new declaration, posters with the slogan ‘Gibraltar for Spain’ could be found on the main buildings in Madrid.¹³

In 1940, Gibraltarians were evacuated to London, Madeira, and Jamaica and were largely unaware of Franco’s first diplomatic campaign. Nevertheless he was already considered an enemy by many on the Rock. While British authorities tried to maintain good relations with Franco, one of our interviewees recalls how he associated the Spanish dictator with Gibraltar’s war enemies:

I remember drawing, at school, pictures that they used to put up, as it is the case of every kid, and I had... the Axis, as it was known, Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, although Franco was not involved in our war.¹⁴

¹⁰ ‘Sir S. Hoare In Madrid’, *The Times*, 3 June 1940, 5. See also: ‘Manifestaciones pro Gibraltar para España’, *ABC*, 2 June 1940, 8.

¹¹ ‘Gibraltar para España’, *ABC. Edición Andaluza*, 5 June 1940, 6. See also: ‘Los artículos de Aznar’, *ABC. Edición Andaluza*, 2 June 1940, 5.

¹² ‘SPAIN’, HC Deb. 02 February 1949, vol. 460, cc1750–95: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1949/feb/02/spain#S5CV0460P0_19490202_HOC_500 (1949, accessed 26 June 2017).

¹³ ‘Spanish Leaning to Axis’, *The Times*, 17 June 1940, 5.

¹⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (29 October 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1920s.

Although Franco's support for the Axis caused mistrust among Gibraltarians, what really made him their common enemy was the propaganda campaign that the Spanish government launched to demand the return of Gibraltar in the post-war period.

*General Franco's Anti-Gibraltar Campaign and Its Impact
on the Rock*

At the end of the Second World War, Gibraltarian evacuees were repatriated to the Rock, which was slowly returning to a state of normalcy, despite there being still many soldiers stationed and quartered there. The evacuation had had a significant impact on Gibraltarian society. In 1942, a group of Gibraltarians had founded the Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights (AACR) to support the evacuees. This organisation became the first political party on the Rock, and, under Joshua Hassan's leadership, they lobbied the British government to create local democratic institutions for Gibraltar.

After the war, due to Gibraltar's demands and Franco's threat, British colonial authorities undertook the task of making Gibraltarians more British. Post-war reconstruction was focused on the promotion of English-language learning in Gibraltar to strengthen the 'imperial connection' (Picardo 2012: 96; and Picardo Chap. 6 in this volume: 150). While this process was ongoing, Gibraltarians became aware of Operation Felix, Franco's and Hitler's plan to conquer the Rock. This information was used by the UN General Assembly to censure Franco's regime and isolate Spain.¹⁵

While Spain was marginalised internationally, the Spanish government paid little attention to Gibraltar. However, Franco did not forget the diplomatic utility of the Rock, and he put this issue on the table once Spain and the UK re-established relations in May 1948, when the British government signed a trade treaty with Spain (Lleonart 1985: 333). In 1949, the *Daily Telegraph* published an interview with Franco, who did not hesitate to repeat Aznar's words that described Gibraltar as a shadow over British-Spanish relations.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Franco did not relaunch his

¹⁵ 'Text of Report on Franco Investigation by the Security Council Subcommittee', *The New York Times*, 2 June 1946, 32.

¹⁶ 'Gen. Franco Defines his Policy', *Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1949, 1–4.

campaign until 1950, and on this occasion Gibraltarians were most certainly aware of it.

In November 1950, Spain's international isolation came to an end when the UN officially allowed member states to reopen their embassies to Madrid. Before the end of that month, Franco relaunched his campaign to reclaim Gibraltar. Franco's pretext was the Duke of Edinburgh's visit to the Rock for the official opening of the Gibraltar Legislative Council, a local democratic institution created to engage Gibraltarians with the governance of the colony. Although the Spanish press described the event in friendly terms, the regime considered the visit a provocation.¹⁷

Arriba published a pseudonymous philippic by Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's trusted right-hand man, who had designed Spain's neutrality strategy during the Second World War. His article was the beginning of a campaign in the Spanish press that had great international impact.¹⁸ The Spanish media considered it unacceptable that the UK government had granted some 'local independence' to Gibraltar with the creation of this Legislative Council. According to the colonial authorities, Gibraltarians received 'unsympathetically' this 'burst of unfavourable comments'¹⁹ and remembered that the Spanish government did not complain about the opening of the Gibraltar City Council in 1921 (Stockey and Grocott 2012: 98).

In March 1951, only a few months after the latest Franco outburst, the UK government sent John Balfour to restore British-Spanish relations. His welcome was scarcely warmer than that enjoyed by Hoare 11 years earlier. On the evening of his arrival, a group of young Falangists attacked the British European Airways Office in Madrid, smashing a window display that advertised a flight to Gibraltar, after *Arriba* had published 'a large front-page photograph' of the display with the following caption: 'An Insult to Spain'.²⁰ In press interviews, Franco promoted the idea that British-Spanish relations could be easily improved if, and only if, the UK ceded Gibraltar to Spain (Balfour 1983: 159).

¹⁷ 'Una Ceremonia Sin Precedentes en la Plaza de Gibraltar', *ABC*, 24 December 1950, 21.

¹⁸ 'Spaniards renew Gibraltar demand: Papers Pushing New Campaign for Return of 'the Rock' – Official Impetus Seen', *The New York Times*, 28 November 1950, 22.

¹⁹ 'Review of Events in Gibraltar. November 1950'. The UK National Archives. CO 537/6248.

²⁰ 'Spaniards wreck Gibraltar display', *The New York Times*, 5 March 1951, 7.

When Churchill won the election of 1951, the Spanish Ambassador to London, Primo de Rivera, said that Franco admired the new British Prime Minister. Behind the scenes Spanish diplomats tried to organise a secret meeting between Churchill and Franco's brother—Nicolás Franco—the Spanish Ambassador in Lisbon. Franco wanted to agree to 'some strategic arrangement which would include a revision of the status of Gibraltar'.²¹ Franco offered the UK inclusion in the US-Spanish defence agreement but the British declined to negotiate putting pressure on the US to avoid any discussion with Franco about Gibraltar.²² Franco thus resorted to his public campaign.

In February 1952, the Governor of Gibraltar, Sir Kenneth Anderson, sent John Balfour a letter to let him know that there was 'considerable public anxiety' on the Rock over Franco's 'anti-Gibraltar campaign'. Gibraltarian local leaders wanted the British government to make publicly clear that the UK has 'no intention of quitting Gibraltar'. The Governor informed Balfour that Gibraltarians were following the campaign on Spanish radio: 'There is no doubt that there is local anxiety over the violence and continuance of the radio campaign in particular, and silence on our side is taken as, if not consent at least a certain indifference'.²³

Although Gibraltarians were demanding an answer, the FO remained silent to avoid 'adding fuel to the flames of controversy and propaganda in Spain by making any public reaction to the Spanish campaign for Gibraltar'.²⁴ However, Lord Strabolgi, the opposition leader in the House of Lords, broke the silence telling Spanish journalists that an agreement might be reached, in similar terms to the one Franco's brother had proposed in a *Daily Express* interview some days before.²⁵ The FO did not welcome Strabolgi's remarks, which fell on deaf ears.

The Spanish campaign continued intermittently, and Franco started to consider new ideas to pressure the British government. In 1953, Federico

²¹ Report by John Balfour, 24 January 1952. The UK National Archives. FO 371/102020.

²² 'Possible Spanish Suggestion for a Meeting between General Franco and the Prime Minister'. The UK National Archives. FO 371/102020.

²³ 'Extract from a letter dated 11 February 1952 from the Governor of Gibraltar to H. M. Ambassador', The UK National Archives. FO 371/102020.

²⁴ Letter by J. S. Bennett to P. Pares (5 January 1952). The UK National Archives. FO 371/102020.

²⁵ 'En Inglaterra se atribuye al problema de Gibraltar un carácter sentimental', *ABC*, 27 February 1952, 20.

García Sanchiz's *Nuevo Sitio de Gibraltar* [New Siege of Gibraltar] was published. In this book, the author proposes putting pressure on the Rock, banning cross-border communication, and blocking the supply of basic goods.²⁶ It appears that Franco read the book because, from then on, he used the control of the border with the Rock in his anti-Gibraltar campaign. He had the first opportunity to apply restrictions in 1954, when the new Queen, Elizabeth II visited Gibraltar.

By this point the British Empire was in decline and the Commonwealth of Nations had been created in 1949 to maintain British influence over their former possessions. Elizabeth II's accession to the throne was considered the perfect occasion to organise a Royal Tour of the Commonwealth (1953–1954) with Gibraltar as one of the last stops in the itinerary. The Spanish government protested, announcing restrictions on the border, and closed the Spanish consulate on the Rock. One interviewee recalled the visit:

When the Queen's visit came, [the Spanish] were very unhappy about it, they were very unhappy. They took away any working passes for the Spaniards. So, after that they did not have a pass to come to Gibraltar to work. And they were rather strict with that.²⁷

Nevertheless, the Queen's arrival was warmly welcomed and Gibraltarians had the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the British Crown. This enthusiastic welcome was the first collective reaction to Franco's anti-Gibraltar campaign. Today, some of our interviewees recall this visit as an important event in their lives. 'The people were very happy. There was a huge commotion'—a witness remarked.²⁸ The visit served 'as a kind of cultural resource' that Gibraltarians 'would draw on in subsequent years, especially in the context of disputes with Spain' (Dodds et al. 2007: 389).

In successive years, press articles, diplomatic actions, economic blockade, and border restrictions promoted an atmosphere of animosity on both sides of the frontier. Diplomatic efforts sometimes worked such as when, as a US concession to Spain, the American Export Lines switched

²⁶ 'García Sanchiz, Federico: Nuevo Sitio de Gibraltar', *ABC*, 4 January 1953, 46.

²⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (8 June 2014), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

²⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (30 March 2015), man born in La Línea in the 1940s.

'the port of call of the Independence and Constitution from Gibraltar to Algeciras' in 1956, causing 'resentment and pain' on the Rock.²⁹

In 1957, Franco appointed Fernando María Castiella as his Foreign Minister with a strategic focus on the return of the Rock to Spain. This was the start of a campaign to obtain UN support for Spain's position. Joshua Hassan and Peter Isola, another Gibraltarian politician, travelled to New York to defend Gibraltar's interests. On their return, Gibraltarians organised a demonstration which today is remembered as 'The Triumphant Welcome'.³⁰ Gibraltarians were finding their collective identity in the opposition to Franco's attacks.

After the Royal visit in 1954, however, the most important shift was the restrictions that Franco applied on the border. The Spanish government did not issue new work permits, despite the 8000 Spaniards who daily crossed the border to work. These workers were 'the greatest sufferers' of Franco's measures.³¹

Border restrictions also affected Gibraltarians. One of our older Gibraltarian interviewees recalls how 'Spanish border officers were replaced' and new requirements were established to cross the frontier (e.g. a special notebook). Her family had a house in Algeciras, where they used to spend weekends and holidays. As soon as border crossings became problematic, they barely went to Spain, and, a few years later, her father decided to sell the property.³²

Another interviewee explains how tensions rose when Franco imposed serious border restrictions in 1964: 'There was normal tension between Spaniards and *Llanitos*, Gibraltarians. And I think that everything changed when Franco caused those problems in 1964'.³³

That year, Castiella persuaded the UN to recommend a British-Spanish agreement to decolonise Gibraltar, and Franco imposed stricter borders to pressure the UK government. In autumn 1964, these measures caused big queues at the frontier. Spanish customs officers carried out an exhaustive 'scrutiny of documents and cars', showing 'a general go-slow attitude'.

²⁹ 'Gibraltar Curbs by Franco Failing', *The New York Times*, 16 September 1956, 27.

³⁰ 'The Triumphant Welcome', *Panorama*, http://www.panorama.gi/localnews/headlines.php?action=view_article&article=3606 (Accessed 26 June 2017).

³¹ 'Gibraltar Curbs by Franco Failing', 27.

³² Bordering on Britishness interview (6 March 2015), woman born in the 1920s.

³³ Bordering on Britishness interview (27 March 2015), man born in Pakistan in the 1940s but living in Gibraltar.

Joshua Hassan—the then Chief Minister of Gibraltar—said that those ‘unfriendly acts’ could do ‘great harm’ to their ‘own neighbourly relations’. The vast majority of Gibraltarians stopped going to Spain as a boycott.³⁴ As the Governor, Sir Alfred Dudley Ward, stated in a report, these new restrictions caused increasing anxiety in Gibraltar:

In general, the morale of the people of Gibraltar is standing up well to this challenge, but people are beginning to express anxiety as to the future, and those who have invested heavily in the Tourist Industry and who earn their living from it, are becoming very worried.³⁵

The UK government could not do much to stop these ever-increasing border restrictions. However, Gibraltarians reacted to the Spanish campaign with spontaneous demonstrations, as one of our interviewees recalls:

I remember for example the house next to us was a consulate for Venezuela. And because Venezuela voted against Gibraltar in the United Nations there was virtually a riot, they’re almost burnt the house down once. I think they pulled the shield down...³⁶

Spontaneous and collective actions did not stop Franco, who continued to apply pressure. The long queues affected tourism: In the summer of 1965, a group of German tourists staged a sit-in to protest the delays to cross the border and were promptly arrested. A few days later, a French tourist was similarly arrested for complaining about the queue. By July 1966, only two cars were allowed to cross per hour.³⁷

Those Gibraltarians who continued crossing the frontier were considered traitors. One of our interviewees tells us how her mother kept going to visit their relatives in Spain, despite the restrictions and public opinion:

Some people stopped going immediately, but my mother kept trying to go and see her mother regardless of what people used to say [...] I remember

³⁴ ‘Frontier Boycott by Gibraltarians’, *The Times*, 9 November 1964, 9.

³⁵ Letter by the Governor of Gibraltar (30 December 1964). The UK National Archives. CO 926/1974.

³⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (1 April 2016), man born Morocco in the 1950s but living in Gibraltar.

³⁷ ‘Four Arrested on Gibraltar Border’, *The Times*, 27 August 1965, 8.

my father was a policeman at the time, and he used to feel a bit embarrassed because at the beginning we had sort of special passes, which very few people got... They felt a bit embarrassed or exposed, because they thought if you get these special passes and you go to Spain: '*Oh, los rabúos*,³⁸ *ahí van los rabúos van para allá*' [Oh, the Spanish ones, there they go, the Spanish ones]. And my mother couldn't care less [...] I mean nobody made any comments about us [...], but it's what you heard on the streets.³⁹

Franco's strategy also created tensions in Gibraltar itself. That year, for example, two Spanish workers had an argument with four Gibraltarian police officers about the Rock's sovereignty. The pair complained about police aggression, and 6,000 Spaniards who worked in Gibraltar went on strike for one hour in protest.⁴⁰

The campaign against Gibraltar continued in the Spanish media which was closely followed by Gibraltarians. Our interviewees remember the press campaign, and a few of them mentioned a Spanish presenter, Jesús Hermida, as the one who made the most offensive remarks. Gibraltarians countered this campaign with a local radio programme led by Manolo Mascarenhas, *Palabras al viento* [Words in the wind]. According to an interviewee, 'people identified fully with the sentiments expressed in' that programme.⁴¹

In 1967, Joshua Hassan granted an interview to the Spanish newspaper *ABC* arguing that the anti-Gibraltar campaign created a feeling of antipathy on the Rock against Spain and pushed them closer to the UK.⁴² This was confirmed on 10 September 1967—this date later became Gibraltar's National Day—when a referendum was held on the Rock to decide if the colony should be Spanish or British. Gibraltarians voted overwhelming to remain with the UK. Franco's campaign had the opposite effect than the one intended because it produced a reaction that made Gibraltarians 'more British than the British themselves'.⁴³

The referendum was a vehicle for resentment against the Spanish campaign but, although the strategy was clearly not working, Franco prepared

³⁸ *Rabúos* is a Gibraltarian pejorative term for Spaniard or pro-Spaniard.

³⁹ Bordering on Britishness interview (19 January 2015), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁴⁰ 'Gibraltar strike inquiry ends', *The Times*, 13 August 1966, 7.

⁴¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

⁴² 'Sir Joshua's replies to Spanish journalists', *Gibraltar Chronicle*, 22 May 1967, 1.

⁴³ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

to close the border. Some Gibraltarian businessmen were concerned at the prospect and used their social connections to contact the Spanish government to find a solution. They sent a letter to the editor of *Gibraltar Chronicle* explaining their intentions, signing it ‘The Doves’. When the Spanish television reported a possible agreement, a riot started, and the properties of the Doves, considered traitors, were attacked.

The riots scuppered any hope of an agreement, and Gibraltarians followed this by publishing a Constitution Order in May 1969. When Franco learnt about it, he ordered the border and all communications with Gibraltar shut. The campaign had come to an end resulting in the opposite effect to the one desired. Gibraltarians were now implacably opposed to Franco and Spain.

A CLOSED BORDER AND THE RISE OF AN ANTI-SPANISH IDENTITY

The Gibraltarian identity was made stronger because of the closed frontier.⁴⁴

With the closure of the border all communications with Spain—even telephone lines—were shutdown. In Gibraltar, any and every expression of ‘Spanishness’ was frowned upon. If Gibraltar’s Spanish connections were ‘frozen a bit’ after the Second World War as a reaction to Franco’s campaign,⁴⁵ the border closure meant that Gibraltarians started to elide their Spanish heritage and create their own unique national identity. Many of our interviewees hold that Spanish influence on Gibraltar stopped when Franco shut the border, to be replaced with British culture. For example:

When the border closed in ‘69, I think that our cultural ties with Spain broke then [...] I think what people did was look onto themselves. We became a very inward-looking community, but we definitely concentrated a lot more on the British side and British history and British culture and British feelings and British everything. We became terribly British, more British than the British.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (08 March 2016), man born in Gibraltar in the 1960s.

⁴⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (17 February 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1970s.

⁴⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

This narrative—found in many interviews—simplifies a complex identification process that had started earlier. Even before the border closure, British culture was viewed as offering prestige, whereas Spanish culture was associated with working-class people and with the private/domestic sphere. This intensified with the border closure, and British culture in general and speaking English in particular became tools to erase Gibraltarians' 'Spanishness'. As one interviewee pointed out, people started to change their surnames from, for example, Moreno or Blanco to Brown or White.⁴⁷ Although the vast majority of Gibraltarians were not entitled to full British citizenship until the 1980s, they maintained and expressed their loyalty to Britain in the face of Franco's threat.

The border closure promoted a strong feeling of antipathy to Spanish culture in Gibraltar, where any contact with Franco's Spain was understood as a betrayal of the whole community. A month after the frontier was shut, *El Calpense*—a Gibraltar newspaper partly written in Spanish—published an article attacking those British companies that carried on doing business with Gibraltar's 'enemies': Spain.⁴⁸ A few weeks later, the same newspaper proclaimed Gibraltarians' unity against their 'enemies both in the UK and Spain!'⁴⁹

The border closure created greater social cohesion because many of those living in Gibraltar's hinterland came back to the Rock and, of course, it was difficult to physically leave the Rock. In 1964, British authorities estimated that there were about 1,000 Gibraltarians living in Spain.⁵⁰ Repatriation caused many problems on the Rock, where there were already housing problems. In addition to the accommodation issues, these repatriates were under suspicion because they had lived in Spain for a long time and many did not speak English properly or at all. One of these repatriates recalls how his family was accommodated in Jumper's Bastion—an old fortification. In 1969, he was just a teenager who had spent his childhood in La Línea, where he had been bullied because his father was Gibraltarian. After they moved to Gibraltar, their new neighbours also bullied him and his mother because they were born in Spain.

⁴⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (20 February 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁴⁸ 'Patovich, Patovich shout down by the fun of the Chief', *El Calpense*, 12 July 1969, 1.

⁴⁹ 'Crossroads', *El Calpense*, 16 August 1969, 1.

⁵⁰ 'Report of Meeting held on the 22 December 1964 by Permanent Secretary'. The UK National Archives. CO 926/1974.

In those years, the atmosphere in Gibraltar was very ‘hostile’ to Spain. Even those Gibraltarians who had Spanish ancestors shared this antipathy to ‘Spanishness’:

I came from a closed border and hostilities with regards to Spain were rife and my parents like many other parents, the environment that I grew up in was an environment that was hostile towards... even though my grandmother was Spanish but she had lived most of her life in Gib(raltar). My parents felt hostility towards a neighbour that was regarded as an enemy, a particularly very fascist neighbour.⁵¹

Many Gibraltarians emphasise that ‘this sentiment’ of antipathy towards Spain ‘grew once the border was closed’ and they found themselves in ‘an enclosed community’. Until then, they had ‘a very natural relationship’ with their neighbours from La Línea.⁵² The majority of our interviewees blamed Franco for promoting a sentiment of enmity between two peoples who had had a close relation: ‘Franco. Franco was the dividing object’.⁵³

The border closure simultaneously reinforced Gibraltarians’ nationalist feelings as a reaction to the Spanish threat. In our interviewees’ words, it was that ‘sense of patriotism that surges in the people that feel threatened’. They needed to have ‘unity in order to survive’.⁵⁴ Gibraltarians were united against Franco, who made them ‘stronger for closing the frontier’ for 13 years.⁵⁵ Some of our interviewees went so far as to thank Franco for his decision:

I always thank Castiella and Franco for having closed the frontier because if they hadn’t closed the frontier, today we wouldn’t be Spanish but there would be a lot of Spanish influence here and we wouldn’t be Gibraltarians. By then closing the frontier, we were lost in nearly thirty thousand of us and we realised that we were people. We weren’t Spanish. We weren’t English. [...] And been given an identity and thanks to Castiella today, we are, where we are.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁵² Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁵³ Bordering on Britishness interview (20 June 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1920s.

⁵⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁵⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (3 July 2015), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁵⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (3 June 2014), man born in Gibraltar in the 1930s.

During the border closure, Gibraltar changed in many senses, even in small details such as smoking habits.⁵⁷ The most important transformation was the new ethnic composition of the society. After 1969, Gibraltar replaced Spanish cross-border workers with Moroccans who increased Gibraltar’s cultural diversity. This was commented on by many interviewees to underline Gibraltar’s ethnic and religious tolerance. In addition, Gibraltarians promoted their own way of speaking, *Yanito*, a kind of English-Spanish patois. In 1976, the first dictionary of *Yanito* was published with an introduction that mentions ‘the making of the Gibraltarian personality’ (Cavilla 1976: 3). Only seven years after the border closure, Gibraltarians already spoke about their own personality and worked on creating their own nation. With Franco’s death in 1975, Gibraltarians had held out hope of a border reopening that would allow them to see their relatives in Spain. One of our interviews recalls how happy she was when they knew that Franco died.⁵⁸

DEAD DOGS DON’T BITE, DO THEY?

Having an enemy is important not only to define our identity but also to provide us with an obstacle against which to measure our system of values and, in seeking to overcome it, to demonstrate our own worth. So, when there is no enemy, we have to invent one. (Umberto Eco 2012: 2)

Franco’s death on 20 November 1975 spurred the Spanish transition to democracy. Although Spain experienced an important transformation in a few years, there was little immediate change to the situation with Gibraltar. In 1980, however, the Prime Ministers of Spain and the UK, Adolfo Suárez and Margaret Thatcher, signed the Lisbon Agreement intended to improve communications between Gibraltar and La Línea (Gold 1994: 20–26). Gibraltarians were rightly sceptical about these agreements⁵⁹ and had to wait for the electoral victory of the Socialist Party (PSOE) in 1982, when the new Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe González, allowed pedestrians to cross and three years later, the border was fully reopened.

⁵⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (11 August 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1920s.

⁵⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (17 February 2014), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1960s.

⁵⁹ ‘Gibraltar sceptical over border opening’, *The Times*, 26 April 1980, 3.

As Gibraltar was opening itself up to renewed communication with the Spanish hinterland, Spain joined the European Economic Community in 1986, becoming an important ally of the UK. In the following years, British-Spanish relations were strengthened through new commercial and political links. Moreover, Gibraltarians could cross to Spain easily and freely, and a great number of Spaniards started to work in Gibraltar. Nevertheless, Gibraltarians remained distrustful of the Spanish.

Nowadays, many think that nothing has really changed for them because the Spanish attitude towards Gibraltar is still the same. One of our interviewees, who crosses the border daily, recognises that the frontier is psychologically closed because the relations between Spaniards and Gibraltarians are still determined by Franco's strategy of harassment.⁶⁰ Many locals remember how deeply Franco's decision to shut the frontier harmed both Gibraltar and La Línea, and that wound 'still hurts'.⁶¹ The dictatorship is recalled on both sides of the border, but this recollection is particularly alive in Gibraltar where the population built their national identity in opposition to the ideological basis of Franco's regime: 'We've always prided ourselves in freedom of speech, when in Spain under Franco you couldn't speak. We were proud of our democracy as well'.⁶²

During Franco's regime, Gibraltar adopted a democratic system that was inherited from the UK. Tolerance, freedom of belief, and other democratic principles became defining markers of what Gibraltarians were and are. These values made Gibraltarians different from Spaniards, who were under a totalitarian and undemocratic regime. Nowadays, this ideological distinction still operates, despite Spain becoming a democracy. One interviewee defined the authentic Gibraltarian as the one who 'stands for freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, being able to voice whatever we have to say, not finding that they are going... to hold it against you'. When the interviewer asked her if she thought that the same rights are enjoyed in Spain nowadays, she answered that 'the Spanish do not know how to use those rights' because they were under a 'strict dictatorship for 40 years'.⁶³

⁶⁰ Bordering on Britishness interview (21 June 2014), woman born in London in the 1960s but living in La Línea and working in Gibraltar.

⁶¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (26 August 2015), man born in La Línea in the 1970s.

⁶² Bordering on Britishness interview (1 June 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁶³ Bordering on Britishness interview (20 June 2014), woman born in Gibraltar.

Although many Gibraltarians recognise the economic development Spain achieved in recent years and the civil rights its population currently enjoys, they have doubts about Spanish democracy. One of our interviewees highlights that Spanish universities are not included in the list of the world's best higher education institutions. He suggests that the bad quality of Spanish education explains Spain's imperfect democracy.⁶⁴ A Gibraltarian woman in her 50s holds that Spain is 'still a fascist country'. She sees British police officers as 'protectors', but she gets 'so frightened' when she sees a Spanish policeman because she still considers them Gibraltar's 'military enemies'.⁶⁵

In recent years, Gibraltarians' opinion about Spanish democracy and institutions has taken a turn for the worse. Many point to the latest Spanish corruption scandals, which for them demonstrate the lack of democracy in Spain. From their point of view, corruption is rife, just as it was under Franco's dictatorship. A Gibraltarian woman described the former Spanish government and its then Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, as fascists and corrupt: 'This government has been the worst. Fascist, aren't they? Franco lives in them, in them, and they all corrupt! Oh, they are all corrupt! That's how you see they've got no respect for anything or anybody, they don't care'.⁶⁶

One of the interviewees argued that Spanish politicians would use Gibraltar as a smoke screen to divert attention from corruption scandals in Spain:

What can you expect from a government that was founded by a minister in Franco's cabinet? What can you expect from that except fascism? You cannot expect anything else. [...] I feel embarrassed for the Spaniards. I feel embarrassed when I hear about all this corruption and basically, they try to hide things away by waving the old flag, the Rock.⁶⁷

There is no doubt that for many Gibraltarians, the Spanish claim on Gibraltar sovereignty is associated with Franco and the persistence of this claim is described as a sign of continuity with the dictatorship. Various accounts make clear that Spanish political leaders follow Franco's strategy

⁶⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (21–22 January 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

⁶⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁶⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (27 February 2014), woman born in the UK in the 1940s but living in Gibraltar.

⁶⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (2 February 2015), man born in Gibraltar.

when they deal with the issue of Gibraltar. ‘Rajoy follows in Franco’s footsteps’—one interviewee says.⁶⁸ Another highlighted this continuity in Spanish politics, despite recognising Spain’s transformation after Franco’s death:

I’ve got absolutely nothing against the Spanish. I do have something against Spanish politicians. I don’t like any of them. Going back to Franco. Why? Because Spain is one of the fastest growing democracies in the world. They have managed to take a quantum leap from a dictatorship to the democracy with everything and with everyone, except with Gibraltar. With regards to Gibraltar, everyone, and I mean everyone, wears a dictator’s hat.⁶⁹

According to this interviewee, Spanish politicians’ stance on Gibraltar is not easy to understand nowadays because Spain is already a democracy. He thinks that it was ‘very simple with Franco’ because ‘he was a dictator’, and you could expect that he was against a democratic Gibraltar.⁷⁰ Other Gibraltarians go further, suggesting that Spanish politicians are backed by an important part of Spanish society who also follow Franco’s stance on Gibraltar. One interviewee said there is a kind of Spaniard who sees Gibraltarians through Franco’s eyes:

It also affects a bit Gibraltarians’ perception of many Spaniards. Today, young people are not like that, but when you come across that type of person, immediately, Franco lives and immediately we come back to the oppression that we have suffered as a people from Franco. And it is what is happening now in Spain again. I respect this government, but it could be called the Party of Franqui... the Fascist Party. It seems to me that it is completely a fascist party, in their behaviour... I mean the PP.⁷¹

Many Gibraltarians describe the former Spanish government’s policy on Gibraltar as a continuity of Franco’s strategy. In recent years, both the cross-border problems—particularly during the crisis of concrete blocks and the artificial reef in 2013 (Del Valle 2015: 136–37)—and Spanish right-wing politicians’ statements on Gibraltar have persuaded Gibraltarians of the former Spanish government’s enduring links to Franco’s ideas.

⁶⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (19 August 2014), man born in La Línea in the 1940s.

⁶⁹ Bordering on Britishness interview (16 March 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁷⁰ Bordering on Britishness interview (16 March 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁷¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (3 March 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1960s.

They also see border queues as a continuation of Franco's strategy: 'Who crosses the border on a daily basis knows that the queues are [...] a political mean to apply pressure [...] It is a tool that Spain is using to strangle Gibraltar's economy'.⁷²

Queues, border disputes, and public statements form Gibraltarians' opinions on the former Spanish conservative government. García-Margallo, a recent Spanish Foreign Minister (2011–2016), became the focus of anti-Spanish sentiment: 'Margallo could have been happy with Franco, his behaviour, his speech'—one interviewee states.⁷³ After her account of Franco's methods to recover Gibraltar, one of our interviewees emphasised that Spanish politicians still carry on with this strategy and added: 'Have you heard Margallo? I mean with the joint sovereignty and that nonsense'.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Gibraltarians do not see all politicians in the same way:

The Spanish position is completely undemocratic and it is the same one that Franco had, despite it being a democracy. The only party that was capable of... I mean, I do not support any party, but when PSOE was in power, everything was easier for Gibraltar.⁷⁵

Many Gibraltarians still recall how the PSOE opened the border when they were in office. In addition, Rodríguez Zapatero, the socialist Spanish Prime Minister from 2004 to 2011, created a trilateral dialogue forum that improved communications between Spain and Gibraltar. For this reason, a few Gibraltarians hope that Spanish left-wing parties will develop and encourage a new Spanish narrative on Gibraltar. Nevertheless, the majority of Gibraltarians are suspicious and sceptical about Spanish politicians. One interviewee thinks that Franco's ideas on Gibraltar are transversally spread throughout Spanish politics:

I think, you know, so far from what I heard is *Ciudadanos*, *Partido Popular* and *Partido Socialista* all are going under the same banner of recovering Gibraltar. No negotiations and just having a hard line on Gibraltar. *Podemos*, on the other hand, they would like to negotiate, although they

⁷² Bordering on Britishness interview (21 June 2014).

⁷³ Bordering on Britishness interview (21–22 January 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

⁷⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

⁷⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (16 March 2015), woman born in San Roque in the 1970s but living in Gibraltar.

are anti-capitalists anyway and they see Gibraltar like a tax haven economy or whatever. So, they use us politically in their country. They have to use it because they need to motivate the Spaniards, but in reality, they know that it's untrue, so it doesn't carry any weight. They only use that the same as Franco.⁷⁶

The conclusion is simple: Franco lives in Spanish politics and, especially, in Spanish politicians' stance on Gibraltar:

In Gibraltar, we have to eat and breathe politics on a daily basis. The thing is that... the hostilities that we suffered during the Franco era. In a sense, has it really ended? You look at the media that the politicians talking about us. It's still alive, still there.⁷⁷

This insistence on the survival of the Franco regime in Spain allows Gibraltarians to reaffirm their identity, which was largely built during their existentialist struggle against the Spanish dictator. The existence of such assumed continuity justifies the majority Gibraltarian assertion that the status of the Rock must be maintained without any modification. The argument is simple: If the Spanish government's view is still the same, Gibraltar should not change in any way. In other words: While Franco is still alive, Gibraltar will never be Spanish.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has demonstrated that Franco's campaign to recover Gibraltar's sovereignty has helped the construction of Gibraltar's national identity. When Franco came to power in Spain, the Rock became one of the main issues in his foreign policy, causing considerable anxiety in Gibraltar and breaking up the pre-Second World War cordial cross-border relations. Franco became Gibraltar's public enemy number one, and Gibraltarians began creating a unique identity through the collective opposition to the Spanish dictator. As a self-defence mechanism, Gibraltarians maintained and celebrated their loyalty to the UK and started a differentiation process from Spaniards in political and cultural terms.

⁷⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 December 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

⁷⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (4 February 2015), man born in Gibraltar in the 1970s.

Nowadays, Gibraltarians still use Franco and his legacy’s influence in Spain to explain what makes them different from the Spanish.

Gibraltarians usually recall the border closure as a key moment of this differentiation process. After years of intense cross-border communication, Franco’s decision isolated the Rock for 13 years, changing Gibraltarians’ view in relation to Spain and making them aware of their own identity. The frontier became a real demarcation which delimited socially and geographically what Gibraltarians were. Although the border was reopened, these shared experiences and the associated pain are not forgotten. Franco’s decision ‘created hate’, and recollection of that traumatic past still determines relations between Gibraltarians and Spaniards.⁷⁸

Gibraltarians’ public performances of their loyalty to the British Crown were also a reaction against this Francoist threat, and those events are now recalled as important Gibraltarian national symbols: The Queen’s visit (1954), the Triumphal Welcome (1963), the Sovereignty Referendum (1967), and the Constitutional Order (1969). Franco used the Rock as a diplomatic tool in British-Spanish bilateral relations, and, although his decisions would have made some sense to his foreign policy aims, Gibraltarians still think that Franco strategy was wrong, if what he wanted was to recover Gibraltar:

If Franco, instead of tightening Gibraltarians’ screws as he tightened them and the campaign of hate that he carried out in those years, he would have done the other way around. I think Gibraltar, I do not know if it would have been Spanish, but maybe some arrangement would have been made.⁷⁹

Franco’s campaign had the opposite effect: He created fear and anxiety in Gibraltar, whose inhabitants preferred to be secure under the Union Jack rather than hanker for the decolonisation of their territory, despite experiencing daily discrimination as colonial subjects. As Sara Ahmed points out, sometimes people are willing to ‘give up freedom in order to be free from fear’ (Ahmed 2004: 71).

Although Franco died over 40 years ago, he lives on for Gibraltarians. The persistence of border-crossing problems with frequent long queues, the dispute over territorial waters, and Spanish politicians’ comments

⁷⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (1 September 2015), woman born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

⁷⁹ Bordering on Britishness interview (19 August 2014), man born in La Línea in the 1940s.

convince Gibraltarians that Franco's strategy continues in modern Spain. It is for this reason that there is such a strong reaction to joint sovereignty proposals with Spain. Gibraltar's Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, in a recent interview struggled to explain how daily life in Gibraltar would be different under joint sovereignty,⁸⁰ and there is no question that Gibraltar faces serious economic disruption with Brexit. One year after the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, Gibraltar appears to be excluded from any transitional arrangements and so the Rock will leave the single market on March 2019 with no specific agreement in place. Joint sovereignty is, nevertheless, nothing short of anathema to Gibraltarians because they see it as a profound existential threat, a push into the unwelcome embrace of a still fascist and hostile neighbour. In another interview on the same day, Picardo said that the prospect of Anglo-Spanish shared sovereignty 'would strip us of who we are', and that 'it would be awful. Our home would be handed over to a party that has no claim to title'.⁸¹

This chapter has shown that Gibraltarian national identity was forged in opposition to Franco's hostility and continues to be formed by this history. The reason for such a visceral reaction to joint sovereignty proposals today is that, for many Gibraltarians, Franco indeed still lives.

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⁸⁰ Bordering on Britishness interview on the Andrew Marr Show, 2 April 2017.

⁸¹ T. Peck, 'Brexit Deal Giving Spain Power over Gibraltar Would "Strip Us of Who We Are" Says Territory's First Minister', *The Independent*, 2 April 2017.

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