



Consulado General de España

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THE ROCK

Last Sunday's issue of the "Boston Globe" included an article on tourism in Gibraltar, where Mr. and Mrs. Jack and Carol Baker collected some impressions about that tiny isolated place.

Certainly, as we are going to see, the inhabitants of the Rock have no much reason to be "proud" about how the fortress was taken in 1704, as some of them told the authors. The following quotation explains this admirably. It is not a Spanish, but a British text, taken from page 586 of Volume X corresponding to the word "Gibraltar" in "THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA", ninth edition, Edinburgh, 1879, and it runs as follows:

"In the course of the War of the Spanish Succession, however, it was taken by a combined English and Dutch Fleet under Sir George Rooke, assisted by a body of troops under Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt. The captors had ostensibly fought in the interests of Charles Archduke of Austria, afterwards "Charles III," but, though his sovereignty over the rock was proclaimed on July 24, 1704, Sir George Rooke on his own responsibility caused the English flag to be hoisted, and took possession in the name of Queen Anne. It is hardly to the honour of England that it was both unprincipled enough to sanction and ratify the occupation, and ungrateful enough to leave unrewarded the General to whose unscrupulous patriotism the acquisition was due. The Spaniards keenly felt the injustice done to them, and the inhabitants of the town of Gibraltar in great numbers abandoned their homes rather than recognize the authority of the invaders."

Such a text is nothing less than magnificent. It was brought to me, -volume included, as a present, by a Spanish, and political exiled!, professor at one of the most respected British universities, in 1953, while I was third Secretary at the Spanish Embassy, and I lost

1. They seem to repeat what the residents told them, some residents at least.



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no time, of course, in sending it to Madrid. It has, ~~been~~ subsequently, been widely diffused in all the languages of the world and included, in a footnote, in the Spanish "Red Book" about Gibraltar.

Now, how Gibraltar fell and why, needs more explanation. Queen Anne was not at all fighting "Spain". Quite on the contrary, she was the "King of Spain's" faithful ally. She merely was helping one Pretender against another, the Austrian Habsburg against the French Bourbon, at a moment when Charles II of Spain died (1700) without succession and, being many times related by his family to both the French and the Austrian Houses, left by his last will his throne to the nearest of kin, a grandson of Louis XIV of France by the name of Philip. It so happened that the realms of the King of Spain were such as to be sure of provoking an European war, since they included not only all the American continent, or New World, except Brazil, Jamaica and a few lands more, among them the British Colonies, but also those lands which are to-day Belgium and Luxembourg and some parts of France, the Dukedom of Milan, the Kingdoms of Naples, of Sicily and of Sardinia, five military bases at Tuscany, the governships of Oran and Mers-el-Kbir, other African places plus the Philippines and three other groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean. The War did break out and lasted 1700-1713 and 14, when Philip of Bourbon was acknowledged by all the Powers as the King of Spain.

Let us bring here another British irrefutable testimony as good as the one of the Encyclopaedia: Pages 105 and 106 of the first volume of "BATTLES OF THE BRITISH NAVY" published by Joseph Allen, R.N., in 1852. The British fleet alone, without counting the Dutch, included a ship of 80 guns, -the Admirals's, and fourteen of 70, that means not frigates but big men-of-war.



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Two decks of guns all of them and the "Ranelagh" probably a three-decker. The marines, including the Dutch, amounted to 1,800 men, Allen writes; "... under the orders of the prince of Hesse, who, "having posted his men, sent a summons to the governor to surrender "the fortress for the service of His Catholic Majesty Charles III " of Spain. The governor returned for answer that the garrison had "sworn to be true to their natural lord, King Philip V, and that, "as faithful and loyal subjects, they would sacrifice their lives "in defence of the place". Allen's words ended.

It is here necessary to say that although the name of the Prince of Hesse sounds most un-Spanish, he was related to the dead King Charles II and so very much at his service that he had been nothing less than Viceroy of Catalonia. Allen's text needs only a small correction: The garrison was not summoned to "surrender" but "to open your gates, the gates of my good and beloved and most loyal "city of Gibraltar" in the name of the King, -that is, the Austrian Pretender. Gibraltar had always been considered by the Kings of Spain as the key to the Mediterranean, Isabella insisted in her last will about it, and the title of "King of Gibraltar" was among the many of the Spanish sovereign. The small fortress was defended by captain Diego de Salinas and one hundred and fifty men, the City Council and the garrison were bent on fighting. "The cannonade", Allen writes, "was conducted with much spirit, 15,000 shots were fired in five or six hours' time against the town". The defenders had no chance of standing the storm after that, but they did very well, they exploded some mines, the British lost two lieutenants, one master and sixty soldiers, killed, one captain, seven lieutenants, a boatswain and 216 men were injured. "The ^{total} fleet under Rooke", adds Allen, "consisted of forty-five ships of the line, mounting 3,154 guns, and manned by 20,045 men". 3,700 guns and 23,200 men



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including the Dutch.

The city was entered, and surrendered "to His Catholic Majesty the King of Spain Charles III", the Prince of Hesse, not admiral Rooke, ^{taking} possession in the King's name and hoisted ^g His royal standard. Several days afterwards Hesse had to move to ~~the~~ other theaters of the war, ^{and} Rooke, against the useless protest of his Spanish allies, hoisted the Union Jack.

So much for "pride" about a military action where the underdogs gallantly fought a much stronger enemy (see the data, and how these my words are quite an understatement) and the enemy, throwing away the mask of amity, showed no much sense of honour.

Spain was forced into admitting the fact, article 10 of the Treaty of Peace of Utrecht, 1713, under which provisions "the city, fortress and haven of Gibraltar", and nothing more, were given in "property" to the King of England, providing some clauses that were subsequently violated (respect for the Catholic faith, no introduction of foreigners, etc.) Following a quite Spanish emotional outburst, the City Council and the majority of the inhabitants left for San Roque, where they are, with their municipal files of old, and their seal and flag.

We are nowadays living not in 1713 but in 1972, in an entirely different world, as Boston well knows, from the time of the first Georges. The British Empire belongs to the past as sure as the Spanish one, but although the British cover it under the splendid mantle of the Human Rights, saying "that they must stand by the population, which vast majority wants to remain British" - a will which nobody menaces as we are going to see, the obstinacy of the British has underneath a different, emotional, ground: They have lost almost everything and they consider the Rock as



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what? ~~it~~, as a Monument-To-The-Might-Of-The-British-Empire-Overseas and simply hate the very idea of giving it up, although they are quite conscious that it is the only Colony existing in Europe at the time of the Common Market and the Nuclear Age, -they would, first, rather sell Nelson's column at Trafalgar Square!

I wrote that nobody menaces the "Britishness" of the inhabitants willing to remain British, because Spain has offered ways for an amiable solution of this most absurd conflict among good neighbours (Great Britain and Spain) almost at the end of the XXth century, admitting, -but under the sovereignty of Spain, as many British citizens as they could be found there, and with a special status at that. Everything, of course, pushes both countries towards a true amity, the "Ingleses" have always, and for centuries, been esteemed in Spain as "gente seria y buena para amigos" (earnest, and good or honest as friends) and many millions go from the Isles to Spain and even some of them give up their former residence in their old land to retreat there, as everyone knows. Besides, scores of thousands of foreigners from different countries live permanently in Spain among the Spaniards and find no reason to regret it.

Why Spanish restrictions around Gibraltar? Why the closed gate? Gibraltar happens to be, as we Spaniards say jokingly, almost the One matter about which all of us think the same, from the very extreme left to the most ultraconservative right, monarchists, republicans, communists or others. Spain has finished by understanding that Spanish "inertia" about the Rock had caused, all along the XIXth century, only abuses. Eminently so when you find that if Gibraltar has an airport at all it is only because it has been built upon a ground, the neck of the



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bottle, that had never in the least been ceded in 1713 or lawfully afterwards, and absolutely belonging to the Spanish nation and people. One has only to read carefully the article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht and could, auxiliary, consult some excellent Dutch sea-charts and local maps of the XVIIIth century, as the one I found in Lisbon and, much later, offered to Sr. Castiella.¹ And the Treaty says that that property of "the city, fortress and haven" is given "without any communication on the side of the land". That is, exactly, why Spain closed the gates and why, as the travelers saw, the said gates are rusty and chained on the Spanish side. It is pure Utrecht. We in Spain believe that "better it is, late, than never" and our Government has, simply, reestablished around Gibraltar, and the terrific amount of smuggling arising from it, the very true measures that should have been always enforced there.

It is very innocent on the side of some inhabitants talking to Mr. and Mrs. Baker to say that "that way Spain loses more than we do". Oh, Lord, no! We lose nothing at all. We have tourists galore. This same morning, when I date this article, I have read, with some terror, in "The New York Times", that 26,7 million tourists visited my country in the whole of 1971 and that 27,4 million have already visited it in the first nine months of 1972! That, -and this is a personal appreciation, is too much for a country having not yet reached 35 million inhabitants.

I want my readers to believe me when I say that I like the British. I do, very much indeed. I grew to like them during two very happy, and too short, years in London, 1952-1954, and it was not, at all, that difficult for a Conservative at heart with some deep Christian notions of social justice, and a monarchist.

1. Where it is written GEDDELT VAN SPANJE, belonging to Spain, on the soil immediate to the very beginning of the fortress; i.e., the old "Hispaniae Pars" used in older maps.



7.

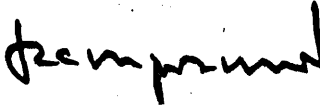
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Around 1962 and from Morocco, I sent to what I call "my" newspaper in that land, "The Daily Telegraph", a letter ~~was~~ as courteous as it was unexpected", as Peterborough wrote, commenting on something about Whitby Abbey and including a photograph of an old painting I had -which finally proved to be Tynemouth Priory! My correspondent added words to this effect: "It seems that Sr Campoamor must have kept rather good recollections of his time at London, when serving here his first post abroad, since he tells me that he got the idea of sending me this picture because of what I had recently written about Whitby and because of his affection for this country". And he used the words "Affection from Morocco" to title it all.

Yes, I like the "Ingleses", and would most certainly not say so if I did not like them, we Asturians are rather dry about flattery and you could safely say that we hate it. Now, that is one thing, and another is how possibly could I like the "Ingleses" at Gibraltar, - unless it be most happily and peacefully, under Spanish sovereignty and going to the "corridas" to Seville?

As sure as the apples fall, and the dry leaves now in New England, that will come to happen, and the unique and most absurd point of friction between "Inglaterra" and us Spaniards will, then, provide an additional matter for deeper friendship.

BOSTON, November 1, 1972.


JOSE MARIA CAMPOAMOR,
CONSUL GENERAL OF SPAIN.