

(Continued from opposite)

of an election. I think this is undemocratic and a British subject who has lived away from the United Kingdom for several years can have no conception of the politics in the constituency in which the vote is being cast.

That said, I think it is equally undemocratic for a Gibraltar living outside Gibraltar to vote in any election or referendum held on the Rock. I believe that residency is the key to determine who votes in an election. It is the residents who must determine the political future and not expatriate Gibraltarians. It is my belief that anyone who lives on the Rock and registers to vote becomes a Gibraltar by that very action. This is more important than having been born there. I consider that expatriate Gibraltarians might well have their own outdated view of the kind of Gibraltar they wish to see evolve in the new millennium.

Gibraltarians need to trust the people who have chosen to live on the Rock; this is called democracy. I cannot understand how you do not appear to trust such citizens to vote on the future of the territory in which they live and where their children are being born. Your argument is similar to those who opposed black immigration into the United Kingdom. This is a racist argument and is a point of view that I will have no truck with. I repeat that your wish to restrict any referendum to registered Gibraltarians is deeply racist.

BRUSSELS AND THE AIRPORT AGREEMENT

I will restrict myself to saying that I can understand the concerns of the majority of Gibraltarians.

THE FUTURE

I think that the future for Gibraltar is very bright and the Gibraltarians are right to have such confidence in the economy. You need to look to the future with that confidence. I can assure you that the many people who have moved to the Rock have no wish to be Spanish. They did not travel to Gibraltar for it to become part of Spain. I would say that after they have lived there for a period of time they become as good a Gibraltar as any I met in Main Street.

I do not want to see battles between British and Spanish gunboats; that is the politics of yesterday. The politics of today and tomorrow have got to be to persuade the Spanish Government to see sense and I hope this will be sooner rather than later."

Paul Keetch, 38, was educated at the Boys' High School, Hereford and the Hereford Sixth Form College and is married to Claire Baker. They have one son. His first job was with the Midland Bank and then moved to various water hygiene companies. In 1995 to 1996 he was political and media advisor to Lithuanian and Bosnian political parties. In 1997 he was elected Member of Parliament for Hereford and is the chairman of the All Party Albanian Group and a member of the All Party Defence Studies Group.