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**Mujeres Libres – Free Women of
Spain - I**

Lead: The Spanish Civil War provided a window of opportunity for the reformation of society. Among the most aggressive groups seeking fundamental change was a feminist organization emerging from Spanish anarchism, Mujeres Libres, free women of Spain.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Political parties in the United States traditionally have been big tent consensus parties. While

extremism left and right has certainly been a part of the American political spectrum, the nature of politics here pushes this sentiment to the margin. Extremists have influence, but must become a part of one of the major parties to exercise power. In Europe the development of democracy allowed a much more brilliant display of political variety, particularly up to the middle of the twentieth century. Political parties proliferated and often reflected narrow, extreme opinion.

Consider if you will, anarchism. Anarchists, who have played a role in political theory since the English Civil War, hate authority. They advocate the end to all social, government,

religious, and corporate control over peoples' lives. Extreme anarchists often use violence to advance their cause. In 1901, immigrant Polish anarchist, Leon Czolgosz assassinated President William McKinley.

In Europe anarchism had its greatest impact on labor unions, pushing the unions beyond merely the improvement of working conditions to more radical social and political reforms. At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, much of that part of Spain remaining loyal to the Republic was taken over by local anarchist political groups. This was a source of great social strength, but also divided the Republican forces as they resisted the rebels under

Francisco Franco. Next time: free women and the end of marriage.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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