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Spanish Cultural Diversity – II

Lead: Attempts to suppress cultural and religious diversity have been one of the hallmarks of modern Spain. From the work of the Spanish Inquisition to the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, these efforts have only lightly covered over real differences. In 1978 Spain tried a new way.

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

Content: For thirty-six years, the last caudillo, Francisco Franco held his thumb in dike of progress. It was a valiant, but futile attempt at

keeping parts of Spanish life, religion, culture, and politics under wraps, while opening the way to economic innovation, outside markets, and prosperity. Franco failed, but it remained to be seen how post-Franco Spain would deal with the changing world outside as well how it would accommodate long-standing and suppressed internal regional conflict.

In reality Spain is a polyglot, a mixture, a rich tapestry of diverse culture, language, religion and politics. If one sees the nation as the face of a clock with Madrid at the center, moving clockwise from the Basque country at 12:30, you quickly encounter Navarre and Aragon in the Northeast, Catalonia and Valencia in

the east, Andalusia in the south, Extremadura in the West, Galicia in the Northwest, with Castile and Leon and Castile-La Mancha occupying the heartland. In each of these regions, language and culture to one degree or another are in marked contrast to the others.

With Franco out of the picture, the new Spain was forced to deal with long standing regional and ethnic demands for more autonomy, less centrifugal forces rip the nation apart. One of the most innovative parts of the Constitution of 1978 resulted in the creation of seventeen Autonomous Communities, a single province or group of contiguous provinces banded together and were

**granted certain independent powers
and control over parts of community
life. Next time: regionalism at work.**

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

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