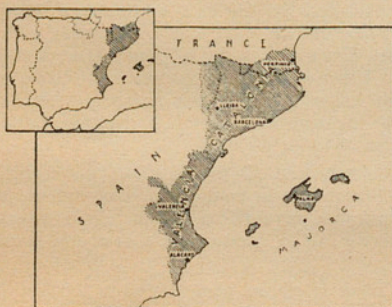


FREE CATALONIA

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CATALONIA is situated on the northeastern side of the Iberian Peninsula, as shown in the above map. Catalan territories include all the shaded areas, which together form Greater Catalonia, with a population of over 6,000,000 people.

CATALONIA existed as a free Nation until 1714, when she was incorporated by force into the Spanish unitarian State.

CATALONIA has a language of its own—Catalan—belonging to the Romance group or neo-Latin languages and as independent from Spanish as French is from Portuguese or Italian.

CATALONIA aims to be again a Free Nation and to freely govern herself. After regaining her national independence, she will be in a position to consider a Confederacy of Iberian Free States, on the basis of a voluntary association of free peoples of the Iberian Peninsula, which would include Catalans, Basques, Galicians, Spaniards, and Portuguese, if they so desire. Catalonia identifies herself with the cause of the United Nations.



A SOLUTION FOR THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

The Peninsular Nationalities*

IT IS not often realised that four distinct languages are spoken in the Iberian Peninsula: Basque, Catalan, Castilian and Portuguese (with its older form, Galician), in addition to Gascon, heard in a small valley in the Catalan Pyrenees, and English at Gibraltar. Language forms the most obvious difference between the four nationalities in the Spanish state. But there are other differences which go very deep; they date from a remote past, and are full of implications for the future.

Let us look at these distinct national groups. If anyone asks where the Basques came from, the answer is that they have always been where they are. They are descended direct from the Pyrenean race, one of the oldest of prehistoric Europe, and among their ancestors must have been the artists who made the beautiful cave paintings of the Cantabric coast and the northern valleys of the Pyrenees. Their language has no connection with any other, and in some of its features seems to have had roots in the Stone Age. In later prehistoric and early historic times the Basques covered a much larger area than they do now; they spread much farther east, and well to the north of the Pyrenees as well as the south. In fact, traces of this early Pyrenean element are to be found in the ethnic composition of northern Catalonia, in archaeological remains and even in place names. But since the beginning of history the habitat of the Basques has constantly shrunk. They now occupy mainly the western end of the Pyrenees; besides the pure Basques who still use their own language they include others who do not, in regions such as Navarre. The present population of the Basque countries, including Navarre, is about 1,400,000.

The central zone of the Peninsula is entirely occupied by the Castilian-speaking or Spanish peoples. Their ethnical elements are not widely different in nature, but only in proportion, from those of the peoples on the Mediterranean coast. The Iberian element is smaller, and the Castilian character was considerably affected by the warlike Celtic tribes who reached the central plateau of the Peninsula from North-West Germany about 600 B.C., and later by the Visigoths, a military aristocracy who established a kingdom with its capital at Toledo. Arab influence in the southern half of Spain is, of course, very strong.

The Castilians possess outstanding qualities, in particular an authoritarian and warlike spirit, which was their greatest asset in the conquest of the New World, and in the achievement of hegemony over the other nationalities in Spain. Their uncompromising outlook on life, inspired by a sort of fanatical mysticism, was exemplified in the wars all over Europe connected with the counter-reformation. The conquest of a New World and the waging of these crusades were the two greatest achievements of the Castilians, of which they are proud, and which are the basis of what some of their writers now call Spain's "mission" in the world. The Castilians unquestionably possess the qualities of a ruling race, but these are often marred by their lack of practical sense in the application of these qualities. They take a grave and sombre view of life, and are strangely fascinated by the concept of death.

To-day this central region of the country is mainly devoted to agriculture and stock-rearing. It is thinly populated, averaging only 15 to 40 inhabitants per square kilometre. Apart from Madrid, the capital since the time of Philip II (1563), Valladolid is the only town with over 50,000 inhabitants, while in the periphery of the Peninsula there are 22 towns with from 50,000 to 1,500,000. Most of the towns of the plateau retain a mediaeval charm; life seems to have stood still within their old walls. Valladolid was the cradle of Falangism, and Falangist writers maintain that their ideas embody the true spirit of Spain as

* By J. M. Batista i Roca, Ph.D., LL.D.—Condensed from "FREE EUROPE", London, April 23 & May 7, 1943.

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