



Barcelona graffiti: "Woman is beautiful and marvellous – Lesbians' Committee."
Credit: Clara Valverde

parties was quite important. Thus when the Socialist party won the election in 1982, a government Women's Institute was created. It does not quite meet the European standards, but it has been an improvement when compared with what the previous government had done. Organizations of this sort have been created at the local government levels.

In order to analyze the impact of feminism on politics, several factors must be stated.

- There did not exist a suffragette tradition in Spain, for the suffragette movement was rather small and did not have the support of many women. The vote was granted because it was a legitimate *international* cause which the progressive parties could not ignore.
- The years in which the movement was strong were the years in which there existed an important mobilization of the population and of political groups demanding democracy. They were the years in which the political democratic transition was taking place.
- The social situation of women, measured by any standards, is marked by stronger discrimination. Women participate less in economic, social, cultural and political activities. Women have not had a

tradition of struggling for their individual rights.

This means that the situation of women in Spain was not similar to the one in the countries where feminism had been strong. In this sense, the main issues and goals discussed in the movement dealt more with the "personal is political" aspect than with concrete political demands. The women's movement did not become an organized pressure group that could negotiate benefits for women during the transition. In spite of this, the constitution and the new laws did incorporate demands for women's participation. The constitution establishes that there can be no discrimination on the basis of sex. The most discriminatory laws were repealed. But all these laws can remain only theoretical unless a strong women's movement is developed.

The second problem that feminism is facing today is its relationship with women and with the rest of society. The movement has to have an important organization and ways of influencing public opinion. The movement, however, has not built this organization. Its emphasis on non-organization, which has been common to the movement elsewhere, has not proved to be efficient in the Spanish context

where important political changes are taking place – changes which will design the state institutions that will probably last for several decades. But the movement never developed a political strategy to deal with these issues. Thus the Spanish feminist movement has not built a political theory and strategy of its own, and has not created mechanisms that will allow for negotiations in favour of women.

This has become specially noticeable since the socialist government has been in office. In principle, they do support women's issues more than the previous center-right government did. Recently an anti-feminist wave, generated by women from the rightist parties, threatens to set back the women's cause. If there is no pressure from women themselves, no concrete measures to improve our status will be taken. In the field of salaried work this is very important, given the economic crisis striking the country.

If feminism is a proposal for democratization, it has to develop its own strategy during the following years so that the institutions that are being created will permit this process to develop. The modern state has an important influence in civil society, especially in a situation like the Spanish, where forty years of dictatorship have destroyed the social organization. Nothing can be taken for granted. Unless the feminist movement develops a new strategy in this direction, it will probably lose force.

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Judith Astelarra is with the Department of Sociology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

APRIL SUN

With the first spring furrow
the warm brown earth
turns over on its back
and like a heavy cat resting,
basks lazily
in the morning sun.

Florence Tormey
Montreal, Quebec