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Contemporary Western European Feminism

Gisela Kaplan

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"[A]n exciting, theoretically sophisticated and excellently documented contribution to feminist literature . . . . a timely case study of the feminisms that have emerged in response to national, ethnic, class-based, and international pressures throughout Western Europe . . . . politically astute and methodologically impeccable . . . . The scope is clearly stated; the goods promised are all delivered; the author's awesome linguistic skills have allowed for the use of particularly rich source materials not normally available to English speaking readers; and the very impressive bibliography allows what is a coherent whole to serve also as a stepping stone to further explorations . . . . a unique contribution to the comparative understanding of social movements. It will be indispensable for women's studies courses and should be read by all feminist theorists."
—Jan Branson
author of *The Other Half*

This is a major new history that introduces the reader to the development of feminism as a social and ideological movement in Western Europe during the late twentieth century. The volume begins with an overview of the specific character and evolution of European feminism and continues with a lengthy discussion of the status of women vis-a-vis technology, domestic work, politics, labor, and civil liberty.

Kaplan, herself fluent in seven languages, outlines the relevant postwar history of each country—Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland—drawing on numerous primary documents to provide the most comprehensive analysis to date of women's movements in this region of the world. Illustrating the kaleidoscope of European women's movements in their historical and political context, this book is essential reading for:
—students of women's studies and activists, as an introduction to European feminism with a vast bibliography for further reading;
—social movements scholars for its discussion of the various ways movements in individual countries evolved and for its analysis of different paradigms of action;
—theorists and single country specialists for whom the book provides a rich basis for comparison.

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