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# ***Vindicación Feminista*: Translating feminism across national and historical boundaries during the Spanish Transition to Democracy**

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## Abstract

This dissertation will examine Spanish feminist activism through the lens of *Vindicación Feminista*, published monthly 1976-1979. *Vindicación Feminista* was the first feminist magazine to emerge in the period which would become *la transición* from dictatorship to democracy. Within a relatively short lifespan, the periodical made a significant impact on both a national and international scale, becoming a key platform for the Spanish women's movement at that time. Published in 2009, the full collection provides a wealth of insight into the women's movement of the period and the transnational connections which were forged between activists and publications. Chapter I will first place *Vindicación Feminista* within its historical and political context. Analysis will then turn to the ways in which the publication presented itself as transnationally connected. Chapter II focuses on the transatlantic representations of *Vindicación Feminista*, focussing primarily on the connections made between *off our backs* in the United States and *Spare Rib* in the UK, comparable publications in terms of significance to each country's respective women's movement as well as their international focus. Together, these sections serve as a case study in transnational feminist exchanges and power relations, as portrayed by some of the most prominent publications of 'second-wave' women's movements.

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I dedicate this to my sisters.

## Introduction

This dissertation will examine Spanish feminist activism through the lens of *Vindicación Feminista*, a monthly journal, in print between 1976-1979. First published just six months after the death of Franco, *Vindicación Feminista* emerged at the early stages of what would become Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy. Within its relatively short lifespan, the magazine became a key forum for feminist voices and debate, making a 'significant contribution to the feminist cause' in Spain.<sup>1</sup> Fuelled by an ambition to radically redefine women's role in Spanish society, the magazine's founders appeared to concentrate their efforts on two key areas: connecting readers with international feminist developments and uncovering the repressed memory of earlier women's movement activity in Spain. The first chapter will focus on *Vindicación Feminista*, placing the magazine within its historical and political context. Divided into two parts, *Chapter I* will analyse selected issues from *Vindicación Feminista*. In *Chapter II* the focus will shift to an examination of British and North American publications, drawing on *Spare Rib* and *off our backs* respectively as case studies through which to explore the international reach of the Spanish women's movement and *Vindicación Feminista*. All three publications are comparable in terms of their contribution and significance to their respective women's movements. Furthermore, each manifesto declared their shared commitment to international feminist solidarity. Together, these chapters can offer an insight into the transatlantic exchange between feminist activists and their writings, revealing common strands as well as some of the underlying power dynamics of 'second-wave' internationalism.

In the context of feminist movements, magazines have occupied a particularly significant place as sites of encounter and debate. Through the format of the magazine, women could take control of their own narratives, creating a platform for views often with the aim of inspiring feminist action. In one of the most iconic essay collections of 'second wave' feminism, Robin Morgan described her writing as 'an action'.<sup>2</sup> For many feminists, writing

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret E.W. Jones comments that it held an 'important place in Spanish women's history [...] it made a significant contribution to the feminist cause', '*Vindicación Feminista* and the Feminist Community in Post-Franco Spain' in *Recovering Spain's feminist tradition*, ed. Lisa Vollendorf (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2001), p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 1.

and activism were inextricably linked.<sup>3</sup> The familiar and accessible format of the magazine provided readers and contributors with the opportunity to directly engage in dialogue, particularly through the comment and letter sections. Feminist publications were often produced and edited collectively, challenging notions of hierarchy which were perceived as 'patriarchal'. *Vindicación Feminista* shared these characteristics, yet was shaped by its particular context. As Mary Nash has highlighted, the context of the Transition is essential to our understanding of the magazine, as Spanish feminist activism was deeply rooted in 'las políticas de resistencia a la dictadura.'<sup>4</sup> Like the broader movement, then, *Vindicación Feminista* was catalysed by anti-Franco resistance and the urgent need to readdress women's status in the country's fledgling democracy. Franco's dictatorship had stunted the development of feminism in Spain. Following his death, political upheaval and the prospect of a new constitution presented an opportunity for women to renegotiate their status in Spanish society. Pamela Radcliff notes, 'periods of political and social transition offer a fertile space for the (re)construction of citizenship practices and ideals. At these moments, individuals' relationships to the state and to each other can be questioned and re-negotiated.'<sup>5</sup> As Radcliff comments, both male and female relationships to the state would be 'reframed', yet they had operated under very different restrictions. The political and social climate of transition allowed feminist activists the potential to directly affect societal change in a more tangible form than their counterparts in other countries. Falcón, Alcalde and their contributors seized this unique opportunity to use their magazine to provide a forum for women's voices in this process and this urgency was captured in the content and tone of *Vindicación Feminista*.

The politics of the Transition, as Kaplan has stated, 'made the question of single and double militancy of feminism perhaps more virulent than in other countries'.<sup>6</sup> This question, essentially, over how women could best renegotiate their position, features prominently in the pages of *Vindicación Feminista*. Emerging 'independent' or 'autonomous' feminists argued that change was only possible out with the political

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<sup>3</sup> Jaime Harker, and Cecilia Konchar Farr, eds, *This Book Is an Action: Feminist Print Culture and Activist Aesthetics* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2016), p. 212.

University of Illinois Press, 2016), pp. 1-20. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt17t75xc.4](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt17t75xc.4).

<sup>4</sup> Mary Nash, 'The Politics of Resistance to the Dictatorship', in *Represión, resistencias, memoria: las mujeres bajo la dictadura franquista* (Granada: Comares, 2013), p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Radcliff, 'Citizens and Housewives: The Problem of Female Citizenship in Spain's Transition to Democracy.' *Journal of Social History*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2002, pp. 77-100, [www.jstor.org/stable/3790567](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3790567). p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Gisela Kaplan, 'Revolutions and radicalism in southern Europe: Spain' in *Contemporary Western European Feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), pp. 179-185, p. 180

system.<sup>7</sup> They advocated ‘single militancy’, seeing feminism as the ‘true revolution’, an approach which rejected established political parties. Feminists working within left-wing opposition parties encountered resistance as members often viewed socialism as a more urgent political priority than women’s liberation. From early 1976 until the June 1977 general election, ‘the debate between the activists within the Left and autonomous feminists heated up’.<sup>8</sup> They shared certain common goals including, most urgently, the restoration of women’s civil and political rights, yet they had very different views on strategy. As María Ángeles Duran and María Teresa Gallego have noted, ‘the political parties, eager for recognition and for votes, were quick to see the potential in the women’s issue’.<sup>9</sup> Feminists, including Falcón and Alcalde, ‘realised that the pre-election period was the time to state their claims forcefully and have their demands incorporated into the programmes of political parties’.<sup>10</sup> The debate featured prominently in *Vindicación Feminista* and also reached international publications, including *off our backs* and *Spare Rib*. In *Vindicación Feminista*, contributors bolstered their position, usually on the ‘single militancy’ side, by framing this as an ‘international issue’ as well as a transgenerational one.<sup>11</sup> Radical feminists in particular, including Alcalde and Falcón, questioned whether they could trust male-dominated parties which had been formed under the patriarchal constructions of Francoism. They used the platform of *Vindicación Feminista* to advocate their ‘single militancy’ approach, drawing on historical and international case studies to provide inspiration for domestic campaigns.

Prior to Franco’s dictatorship, during the period of the ‘Second Republic’ (1931-1939), Spanish women had seen significant progress in their position within society. A series of legislative changes had, ‘put the country at the forefront of gender equality measures in Europe.’<sup>12</sup> Women had constitutional equality, the right to vote, increased access to education at every level, and the right to divorce and abortion.<sup>13</sup> Franco’s dictatorship reversed each of these policies. Divorce was no longer an option and married women could

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<sup>7</sup> Lynn Savery, *Engendering the State: The International Diffusion of Women’s Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> *Engendering the State*, p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> María Ángeles Duran and María Teresa Gallego, ‘The Women’s Movement in Spain and the New Spanish Democracy’ in *The New Women’s Movement*, ed. Drude Dahlerup (London: Sage, 1986), p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> Duran and Gallego, ‘The Women’s Movement in Spain’, p. 213.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 25, July 1978, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> L. Predelli et al, *Majority-Minority Relations in Contemporary Women’s Movements: Strategic Sisterhood* (Chippenhams: Springer, 2012), p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Monica Threlfall quoted in L. Predelli et al, *Majority-Minority Relations in Contemporary Women’s Movements: Strategic Sisterhood* (Chippenhams: Springer, 2012), p. 42.

not sign contracts without their husband's consent, limiting any financial independence.<sup>14</sup> Abortion and use of contraceptives were also illegal and children born out of wedlock faced discrimination. Groups and organisations had to be state-sanctioned in order to meet publicly. The only officially endorsed women's organisation was the *Sección Femenina*, founded in 1934 as the women's section of the Falange party. The organisation enforced a narrow model of Spanish womanhood, based on 'an amalgam of traditional Catholic and Falangist' values which emphasised domesticity and women's 'sacred duty' as mothers.<sup>15</sup> As stated by founder Pilar Primo de Rivera: 'la única misión que se le asigna la mujer de Falange en las tareas de la Patria es el hogar.'<sup>16</sup> Against this background, the development of a Spanish women's movement during the years of dictatorship was inevitably stunted.

Following his death in 1975, Franco's policies largely endured in the early stages of the Transition and this included censorship. It is important to acknowledge, therefore, that the constraints within which *Vindicación Feminista* operated differentiated the magazine from many of its contemporaries including *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*. The regime had exercised stringent control across all Spanish media and although there had been a 'modest liberalization' under the 'Ley de Prensa e Imprenta (1966)', throughout the 1970s journalists and publishers continued to face the very real threat of magazine closure, harassment, and imprisonment.<sup>17</sup> Falcón and Alcalde were keenly aware of these threats when they established *Vindicación Feminista* as both had already faced repercussions for their published writing.<sup>18</sup> In a period characterised by political uncertainty, *Vindicación Feminista's* content and tone was radical. Contributors sought to break taboos by writing about subjects such as divorce and sexuality in unapologetic terms and regardless of consequence. A case in point was the confiscation of the magazine's fifteenth issue, for its alleged violation of the 'Ley de Prensa'. Fuelled by the injustice of these events, Falcón stated that 'libertad de expresión queda todavía muy lejos de ser una realidad

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Victoria L. Enders and Pamela B. Radcliff, *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 376.

<sup>16</sup> 'In the work of the Fatherland, the only mission assigned to women is the home.' in 'Las mujeres de Falange', *Yugo*, 18-VII-1939, p. 5, cited in Sofia Rodríguez Lopez, *La sección femenina y la sociedad almeriense durante el franquismo* (Almería: Universidad de Almería, 2005), p. 242.

<sup>17</sup> Eamonn Rodgers, 'Press Law' in *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Spanish Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 420.

<sup>18</sup> Both had contributed to a special edition on 'Marriage' for the influential cultural and political weekly magazine, *Triunfo*. The magazine was suspended for 3 months as a direct result of their article. For more details see: *La mujer en la historia: a través de la prensa: Francia, Italia, España S.XVII-XX*, ed. By Mercedes Roig Castellanos, Instituto de la Mujer (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, 1989), p. 363.

democratica'.<sup>19</sup> Just as Morgan framed her book as 'an action', contributing to *Vindicación Feminista* was also a call to action and an act of defiance in itself.

To date, *Vindicación Feminista* has been the subject of a relatively limited body of academic research. Certain key figures involved in its publication have achieved wide recognition and Lidia Falcón, in particular, is renowned as the 'omnipresent' voice of the Spanish women's movement.<sup>20</sup> Her publication, however, has received less scholarly attention, especially in the English language. The magazine's significance is acknowledged in collections such as the *Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula* and *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Spanish Culture*, the only magazine to receive special mention in the latter's section on feminism. Lidia Falcón is singled out as 'perhaps the most prominent feminist writer since the 1970s'.<sup>21</sup> Few scholarly articles on the magazine appear in English and no translated anthologies or essay collections are available. A notable exception can be found in *Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition*, edited by Lisa Vollendorf, a collection which made a significant contribution to bridging the gap between English and Spanish language scholarship on Spanish women's movements. As Joan Hoffman stated, by translating Spanish quotations and articles into English, Vollendorf's collection allowed for the 'discovery of[...]pioneering women by feminists and others who may be quite familiar with Mary Wollstonecraft or Gloria Steinem but know nothing of Josefa Amar y Borbón or Lidia Falcón.'<sup>22</sup> By making articles available in English, the collection has contributed to the 'de-marginalization of Spain within the international feminist discussion and allows these remarkable women to speak across time to a global audience'.<sup>23</sup> Margaret Jones, historian of twentieth century Spain, has highlighted *Vindicación Feminista* as a 'priceless time capsule of information about Spain and about the various directions that feminism was taking during the period immediately after Franco's death.'<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> 'Freedom of expression remains far from being a democratic reality', 'Secuestro del No 15 de Vindicación', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 16, October 1977, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Anna Caballé, *El feminismo en España: la lenta conquista de un derecho* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2013), p.205.

<sup>21</sup> Rodgers, 'feminist writing' in *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Spanish Culture*, p. 179.

<sup>22</sup> Joan M Hoffman, 'Review: Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition by Lisa Vollendorf' in 'Letras Femeninas.' punctuation in this reference? *Letras Femeninas*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2002, pp. 203-205. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23021320](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23021320).

<sup>22</sup> Caballé, *El feminismo en España*, p. 275.

<sup>23</sup> Hoffman, 'Review', p. 203.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, 'Vindicación Feminista and the Feminist Community in Post-Franco Spain', p. 332.

*Vindicación Feminista*'s treatment in Spanish language scholarship has varied widely. Recently, the magazine featured prominently in *El feminismo en España: la lenta conquista de un derecho*, ' el icono más representativo de esta emergencia feliz, aunque también cargada de tendencias y de reproches.'<sup>25</sup> This description reflects the contradictory place *Vindicación Feminista* has occupied within Spanish feminist literature. The magazine and its contributors were often at the centre of controversy, facing criticism not only from the Spanish media at large but also from within various factions of the Spanish feminist movement. A case in point is the expulsion of three of its prominent contributors, Regina Bayo, Anna Estany and Falcón from Barcelona's feminist collective.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Nancy Vosburg suggests that the work of Falcón, including *Vindicación Feminista*, was silenced in certain accounts of activism during this period.<sup>27</sup> Falcón's exclusion from Editorial Cero's 1982 edition on Spanish feminism and a feminist bibliography published by the government-sponsored Women's Institute, she argues, evidences the 'concerted effort from certain sectors within Spain to dismiss [Falcón]' and by extension, her magazine.<sup>28</sup> Since Larumbe's anthology was published in 2009, *Vindicación Feminista* has been revisited by scholars working on a range of topics. Rosalía Cornejo Parriego, for example, has drawn on *Vindicación Feminista* to explore lesbianism during the Transition.<sup>29</sup> In both English and Spanish language scholarship, however, there is a notable lack of detailed analysis on the publication's transnational focus, as well as comparative studies between the journal and its contemporaries, a gap which this dissertation will address.

This research will contribute to an understanding of Spanish feminist activism and *Vindicación Feminista* in particular, by approaching the material from a different angle, rooted in the Leverhulme funded research network 'Translating Feminism: Transfer, Transgression, Transformation (1945-1990)'.<sup>30</sup> The network promotes original, interdisciplinary research focussing on the global reach of feminist writing and women's movements. Through a historical case study approach, researchers explore the ways in

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<sup>25</sup> 'The most iconic representation of this happy emergence, although also charged with criticism and bias', *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> See *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 11, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Nancy Vosburg, 'On Post-Transition Politics, *Picardía*, and Power: Lidia Falcón's El alboroto español' in *Spanish Women Writers and the Essay: Gender, Politics and the Self*, ed. by Kathleen Mary Glenn and Mercedes Mazquiaran de Rodríguez (Missouri: University of Missouri Press 1998), pp. 198-211, p. 199.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Rosalía Cornejo Parriego, 'Lesbianismo De (La) Transición En *Vindicación Feminista* (1976-1979)', *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, pp. 49-65. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/23055667](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23055667).

<sup>30</sup> 'Translating Feminism' <<https://translatingfeminism.org>> [Accessed on 15/07/2017]

which feminist activists have communicated with each other across different national and cultural settings, read and translated each other's texts and applied them to their particular context. The development of this network coincides with a renewed interest in the intersection of feminist and translation studies. Within the last year, collections such as Luise von Flotow's *Translating Women* and *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives* highlight the significance of these themes in current interdisciplinary scholarship.<sup>31</sup> Lori Chamberlain, at the forefront of the 'Canadian School' of feminist translation studies wrote in 1988 that, 'for feminists working on translation, much or even most of the terrain is still uncharted'.<sup>32</sup> In the decades since, as Olga Castro has highlighted, academics and translation practitioners have explored connections between feminism and translation across 'conceptual, historiographical and critical planes' in multiple disciplines.<sup>33</sup> Although the terrain can no longer be described as 'uncharted', Castro's call to arms highlights the fertile ground that remains to be explored at this intersection, including 'the extent to which translation has contributed to the expansion of feminist movements around the world', which this dissertation, and the 'Translating Feminism' network more broadly, seeks to address.<sup>34</sup>

*Vindicación Feminista's* unique position within the Spanish feminist press of this period, and its consistent reporting on domestic and international affairs from an explicitly feminist perspective, provides rich material for a 'Translating Feminism' case study. To mark thirty years since its final monthly issue, the magazine was fully digitised in a project involving the University of Zaragoza and the Instituto Aragonés de la Mujer. Led by María Ángeles Larumbe Gorraitz, the anthology features selected extracts from various issues, analysis from Larumbe Gorraitz and an epilogue by co-founder Lidia Falcón.<sup>35</sup> Crucially for this study, it also includes a DVD with all 29 issues. As Larumbe Gorraitz acknowledges in her introduction, part of the impulse behind the project was the growing interest in understanding the process of change during the Transition and a desire to uncover its lesser-known protagonists.<sup>36</sup> The project has reinvigorated interest in

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<sup>31</sup> See Olga Castro and Emek Ergun (eds), *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2017) and Luise Von Flotow and Farzaneh Farahzad, *Translating Women* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> Lori Chamberlain, 'Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation', *Signs*, Vol.13, No.3, Spring, 1988, pp. 454-472, p. 471.

<sup>33</sup> Olga Castro, '(Re-) Examining Horizons in Feminist Translation Studies: Towards a Third Wave?' in *MonTI*, 1 (2009), pp. 59-86 (Translation by Mark Andrews).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> María Ángeles Larumbe Gorraitz, *Vindicación Feminista: una voz colectiva, una historia propia: antología facsímil de textos (1976-1979)* (Zaragoza: Prensas De La Universidad De Zaragoza, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

*Vindicación Feminista*, making the magazine accessible on a much wider scale than had previously been possible. The digital archives provide a wealth of primary material for interdisciplinary research on a broad range of themes from the Spanish women's movement to the politics of the Transition. As Pilar Fernandez has noted, its quality and consistency separated it from its shorter-lived contemporaries, rendering it an unparalleled resource in the study of Spanish feminism during the period of Transition.<sup>37</sup>

Magazines have enjoyed a new prominence as sources for historical and interdisciplinary study, as part of the growing interest in Periodical Studies in recent years. The field is characterised by an 'insistence' on interdisciplinary scholarship as well as extensive use of digital media.<sup>38</sup> This 'virtual explosion' in the study of magazines in the last two decades has been driven by a number of factors, including increased access to collections via digitisation projects, allowing scholars access to collections on an unprecedented scale.<sup>39</sup> Rather than looking at texts on specific topics this dissertation will also consider the magazine as a whole, including aspects of production, distribution, images and adverts. Certain constraints apply in the use of magazines for research. Archival collections vary in terms of access rights, for example, which can delay the digitisation process and lead to incomplete digital collections.<sup>40</sup> Fortunately, for this research, all published copies of *Vindicación Feminista* have been fully digitised. The scanned pdf format of each issue, however, carries no search function. By contrast, *off our backs*, hosted by JSTOR, can be easily searched, allowing for more focussed research on selected criteria.

Rooted in the aims and approach of the 'Translating Feminism' research network, this dissertation considers the feminist magazine in its entirety. The initial stages of this research adopted a systematic approach, examining the complete run of *Vindicación Feminista* and analysing each article in its original context, as a means of establishing patterns and connections. Findings were then categorised by country and theme which

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<sup>37</sup> Pilar Zaragoza Fernandez, 'Introducción', in Larumbe Gorraitz, *Vindicación Feminista: una voz colectiva*, p. 12

<sup>38</sup> Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, vol. 121, no. 2, 2006, pp. 517-531. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25486329](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486329) p. 518.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> For an example of this, see the British Library's *Spare Rib* archive, 'Update on the Digital *Spare Rib*: Important Information for researchers' <<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/socialscience/2016/04/update-on-the-digital-spare-rib-important-information-for-researchers-and-contributors.html>> [Accessed 28/08/17].

revealed certain trends in the magazine's significant references to the women's movements in the UK, USA, France and Italy in particular. The results also indicated two overarching but never explicitly stated goals within *Vindicación Feminista*: the need to reconnect with the outside world and global 'second wave' feminism in particular as well as with the legacy of Spain's own women's movements. A close reading of selected articles which fall into each of these two categories forms the basis for Chapter I. In order to narrow the project's scope, in line with space and language restrictions, articles featuring North American and British women's movements receive particular attention. In this analysis, quotations from *Vindicación Feminista* generally appear in the 'original' Spanish with my own translation in footnotes in order to foreground the voices of the activists themselves.

The second aim of this dissertation is to examine the extent to which feminist ideas from Spain had a transatlantic reach. The next stage, then, was to identify comparable feminist publications from North America and the UK. *Spare Rib* and *off our backs* offer interesting case studies as both were prominent during the period of the Transition. They were also similarly consistent, issued on a monthly basis and both were the longest running feminist news journals in their respective countries. Finally, both sets of magazines have been digitised with easy search functions, allowing for research on specific criteria, which suited the purpose of this dissertation. Firstly, each reference to Spain in both magazines digital archives was collated and, once again, analysed for any emerging themes and patterns. From there, a more specific search for references to *Vindicación Feminista* revealed further insight into the dialogue which took place between feminist publications. Chapter II analyses key examples from this research in two sections, based on *off our backs* and *Spare Rib* and finally comparing their portrayal of Spanish feminism.

## Chapter I: Transatlantic and trans-generational feminist connections in *Vindicación Feminista*

From the magazine's inaugural issue and throughout its three years in print, *Vindicación Feminista* was framed in the context of international women's liberation and a need to recover the repressed history of Spain's earlier feminist activity, as this chapter will demonstrate. *Vindicación Feminista* was the first feminist journal to emerge in Spain following Franco's death. Articles were written by a core collective of around twenty women, including founder Lidia Falcón and editor Carmen Alcalde.<sup>41</sup> Falcón is considered one of the most prolific feminists of the last forty years and is often referred to as Spain's 'leading feminist'.<sup>42</sup> Her work to date includes over a thousand articles across Spanish and international newspapers and journals, as well as an extensive collection of academic publications, plays and autobiographical works. When *Vindicación Feminista* first went to print in 1976, Falcón was already a nationally renowned lawyer, journalist and author. As a political activist, she became increasingly prominent within oppositional movements throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, known particularly from her time as a political prisoner in the final years of Franco's dictatorship.<sup>43</sup> As well as founding *Vindicación Feminista*, she later established *Poder y Libertad*, a journal dedicated to feminist theory. Previously a member of *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE) she went on to form Spain's first feminist political party, *Partido Feminista*, legalised in 1981 after a two year struggle to gain recognition from the Spanish government.<sup>44</sup> Falcón developed the idea for a monthly, feminist journal during her time in prison and entered into dialogue with Alcalde shortly after her release in the summer of 1975.<sup>45</sup> Alcalde was also a well-known journalist in her own right, having been published in many leading Spanish newspapers.<sup>46</sup> She shared Falcón's enthusiasm for feminist writing, with a particular interest in the recovery of Spain's feminist past. In the same year as founding *Vindicación Feminista*, Alcalde

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<sup>41</sup> María Ángeles Larumbe Gorraitz, *Vindicación feminista: una voz colectiva, una historia propia: antología facsimile de textos (1976-1979)* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2009), p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Nancy Vosburg, 'On Post-Transition Politics, *Picardia*, and Power: Lidia Falcón's El alboroto español' (Missouri: University of Missouri Press 1998), p. 198.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> 'Communist Party of Spain', 'Feminist Party', Kaplan, 'Revolutions and Radicalism in Southern Europe: Spain', p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> Larumbe Gorraitz, *Vindicación Feminista*, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> As mentioned, her work for *Triunfo* alongside Falcón and others had been the subject of censorship controversy. For more details see: *La mujer en la historia: a través de la prensa: Francia, Italia, España S.XVII-XX*, ed. by Mercedes Roig Castellanos, Instituto de la Mujer (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, 1989), p. 363.

released a book named *La Mujer en la Guerra Civil Española*, a theme which would feature regularly in the magazine.<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, this chapter will show how examples of both global and historical activism were adopted as a way to invigorate and legitimise action on a national level.

### I.I. Connecting to Transatlantic Feminisms

*Vindicación Feminista* declares an international focus on the front cover of its first issue, published in July 1976. The title itself is rooted in translation, an homage to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. In their opening statement, Alcalde and Falcón pay tribute to Wollstonecraft's work as 'el primer manifiesto feminista'.<sup>48</sup> Translated into Spanish as '*Reivindicación de los derechos de la mujer*' and in French as '*Défense des droits des femmes*', they argue that neither are particularly 'faithful' to the original meaning.<sup>49</sup> Their chosen title would reflect the Anglo-Saxon and Latin roots of 'vindication', to obtain liberty, and serve as rallying call for women's liberation in Spain. From its first issue, then, a connection to feminisms both trans-generational and transnational was firmly established. As Nancy Vosburg has noted, Falcón's 'international perspective' has been a defining feature of both her writing and her feminism, situating 'Spanish women's struggle for civil, political, and labour rights within a broader cross-cultural and historical context.'<sup>50</sup> In their manifesto, Falcón and Alcalde set out one of their key aims as 'informar y recibir información, sobre, y de, los movimientos de liberación de la mujer en todo el mundo'.<sup>51</sup> Although the collective aimed to engage with 'todo el mundo', emphasis is often placed on feminism in the USA, UK, France and Italy.<sup>52</sup> Given space and language restrictions, this analysis will focus on extracts foregrounding the exchange between North American, British and Spanish feminisms.

Despite a stated aim to connect 'con todo el mundo', the magazine did not treat every country on equal terms, suggesting a hierarchy between countries and women's movements. Although they claimed that 'existen grupos de liberación de la mujer en casi

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<sup>47</sup> 'Woman and the Spanish Civil War', Carmen Alcalde, *La Mujer en la Guerra Civil Española* (Madrid: Cambio 16, 1976).

<sup>48</sup> 'The first feminist manifesto', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Vosburg, 'On Post-Transition Politics', p. 198.

<sup>51</sup> 'Inform and receive information about, and from, the women's liberation movements throughout the world', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

todos los países del mundo', not every country was featured in the same detail.<sup>53</sup> Following the end of the dictatorship, Spanish feminists had a lot of ground to make up, in terms of international feminist developments. The magazine often compared the Spanish women's movement to more the more 'developed' movements in the UK and North America, as well its European neighbours France and Italy. Reflecting on its first two years in print, Issue 24's editorial opens with a run through of some of the key relationships: 'Hace veinticuatro meses que vamos, día a día, tomando luz y razón, difundiendo el estallido feminista en España. Como hace diez años se hizo en América y Canadá; como hace cinco se hizo en Francia y en Italia.'<sup>54</sup> This retrospective, then, is firmly framed in a context of transnational feminism, foregrounding certain countries and pointing to a hierarchy of women's movements in which Spain appears at the bottom. North American women appear as feminist ancestors, initiating the international women's liberation movement and leading the way for European countries to follow. France and Italy, by comparison to Spain, are presented as having more developed women's movements. Closer to Spain geographically, linguistically and culturally, they are presented as a model for Spanish feminists. Spain, they argue, has historically been 'siempre tan muerto de miedo' but in following the example of their North American and European 'sisters', Spanish women are changing this narrative.<sup>55</sup> Women, they claim, are no longer afraid, 'Hoy, en España. Hace ya años, en el mundo.'<sup>56</sup> It is a rallying call to show the strength and progress the Spanish women's movement, couched in a broader international narrative. Reflecting on her magazine in a 1983 interview, Falcón reinforces the strong connections between *Vindicación Feminista* and the work of feminists in Italy and France, stating that she always 'took into account what is being published in France, in Italy.'<sup>57</sup> The hierarchical relationship between the countries mentioned recurs throughout *Vindicación Feminista's* three years in print. Each time, Spain is somewhat set apart, although closer to Italian and French feminisms than any other countries in terms of their movements' culture, language and approaches.

In foregrounding international examples, *Vindicación Feminista* linked these to domestic priorities. A pattern emerges, *Vindicación Feminista* drew on global case studies to shape

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<sup>53</sup> 'There are women's liberation groups in almost every country in the world', *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> 'In the last 24 months ago, we've been going, day to day, with light and reason, spreading the feminist explosion in Spain, as they did 10 years ago in the USA and Canada and 5 years ago in Italy and France', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 24, June 1978, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> 'Always so scared to death', *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> 'Today, in Spain. Years ago, across the world', *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Lidia Falcón et al., 'International Interview: FEMINISM IN SPAIN,' *off our backs*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1983, pp. 8-9. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25774903](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25774903).

domestic campaigns and bolster the magazine's ideological positioning within the women's movement. Though feminists represented conflicting approaches and identities, as well as being divided along 'single' and 'double' militancy lines, Kaplan has argued there was one demand on which they broadly agreed: 'the dismantling of the authoritarian regime's discriminatory legal system.'<sup>58</sup> *Vindicación Feminista* prioritised demands for equality in key areas, primarily 'el adulterio, el aborto, el divorcio', which Falcón and Alcalde perceived as the most pertinent issues facing Spanish women.<sup>59</sup> They used their platform to put pressure on political parties in the run up to the June 1977 election.<sup>60</sup> These themes recurred in the magazine's domestic and international features. The treatment of women in prison, female sexuality and lesbianism were also regularly featured. They also aimed to connect with women beyond traditional author/reader boundaries, dismantling hierarchies in the process and starting an interaction 'entre las lectoras y nosotras'.<sup>61</sup> The language excluded men from the conversation entirely, by using the feminine plural forms, further framing the publication as an intimate exchange between women. From the outset, the magazine was staffed entirely by women, with no male contributors other than as occasional participants in interviews, unlike comparable publications, such as *Spare Rib* or *Ms*, for example, which included male writers in their early stages.

*Vindicación Feminista* presented a clear ideological position within Spanish feminism, which was bolstered through use of international and historical case studies. According to Falcón, however, the magazine aimed to encompass the views of feminists from all backgrounds, serving as 'el núcleo de unión de todas las mujeres que quisieran compartir el ideal feminista'.<sup>62</sup> She attempted to present the magazine as autonomous, with no affiliation to external organisations. In efforts to display this non-partisanship, *Vindicación Feminista* published transcripts from roundtable discussions on key priorities within the movement, including women from a cross-section of organisations and political parties.<sup>63</sup> Despite purported inclusivity, a review of the magazine reveals a clear ideological line and contributors had strong links to external groups, particularly Barcelona's 'Coleciu

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<sup>58</sup> Kaplan, 'Revolutions and radicalism in southern Europe: Spain', p. 179.

<sup>59</sup> 'Adultery, abortion, divorce' in 'En la Calle Se Conjuga el Verbo Vindicar', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 7, January 1977, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Lynn Savery *Engendering the State: The International Diffusion of Women's Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 129.

<sup>61</sup> 'Between the readers and us', *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> 'The nucleus of union between all women who want to share the feminist ideal', Larumbe Gorraitz, *Vindicación Feminista*, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> For round table discussions see, for example, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 8, February 1977, p. 15.

Feminista', which Falcón had founded. Falcón and key contributors were advocates of 'single militancy', believing that the established political parties could not represent women's interests. Through use of their editorials, Falcón and contributors took sides in internal divisions.<sup>64</sup> The debate between 'single' and 'double' militancy in Spanish feminism was portrayed as an international one, 'el problema internacional de la doble militancia política y feminista ha creado no pocos problemas a los partidos italianos.'<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Falcón positions herself as a radical feminist, free from the ties of political parties. In Issue 10, shortly before the first post-Franco election, Falcón decries 'la ofensiva contra el feminismo, contra el llamado feminismo radical', making her position as a radical feminist clear.<sup>66</sup> This position, of single militancy, radical feminism, would be foregrounded in a variety of international and historical case studies, including in the subsections 'Mujeres del Mundo' and 'Hemeroteca', as this chapter will evidence.

### **'Mujeres del Mundo': connecting with transnational women's movements**

*Vindicación Feminista* featured a number of subsections, which dealt exclusively with international themes. The most consistent and explicit in their international focus were: 'Internacional', 'Buzón de Noticias Internacional' and 'Mujeres del Mundo'. Firstly, 'Internacional' largely focussed on foreign politics, often but not always relating this to women's movements. Several early issues, for example, focussed on the political climate in the USA, with minimal reference to the women's movement.<sup>67</sup> North America dominated international news in Issues 3 and 4, with a particularly lengthy feature in Issue 5 including a statistical analysis on the intersections of race, gender and poverty in the USA.<sup>68</sup> In these 'Internacional' features, one particular country was the focus of a long a form article, which could be from one to several pages in length. A range of countries and topics were represented, from the kidnapping of Italian politician Aldo Moro to Chilean women's anti-fascist resistance.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, 'Buzón de Noticias Internacional', as indicated by its title, took the form of a news bulletin, featuring headlines and short

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<sup>64</sup> See, for example, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 11, May 1977, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> 'The international problem of the double militancy of politics and feminism has created problems for Italian political parties,' *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 25, July 1978, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> 'The offensive against feminism, against the proclaimed radical feminism' Lidia Falcón, 'La ofensiva contra el feminismo', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 10, April 1977, p. 17.

<sup>67</sup> Falcón, 'Norteamérica: El segundo acto del drama' *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 22.

<sup>68</sup> *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 26.

<sup>69</sup> 'Internacional/ Francia' in *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 21, March 1978, p. 26., 'A Aldo Moro no le quiere nadie' in *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 23, May 1978, p. 18, 'Lucha antifascista de la mujer chilena' *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 26/27, September 1978, p. 18.

paragraphs. This feature provided brief updates from several countries and their women's movements. In later magazines, from Issue 21, 'Rueda de prensa feminista' would provide short updates on international and domestic feminist publications.<sup>70</sup> Alone, these explicitly 'international' sections appear consistently, interspersed throughout each issue, supporting Falcón's claim that 'el movimiento feminista ha tratado siempre de actuar a nivel internacional'.<sup>71</sup>

'Mujeres del Mundo', led primarily by Regina Bayo, dealt most directly with exchanges between international women's movements and is therefore of particular interest to the aims of this research. The feature formed a significant proportion of each issue, averaging between six to ten pages. In their opening feature, Bayo and Saavedra underline their aim to contextualise the Spanish women's movement within international feminism.<sup>72</sup> Firstly, they emphasise the transatlantic origins of women's liberation: 'A partir de 1965 aproximadamente empezaron a organizarse en U.S.A y en Gran Bretaña los primeros grupos de liberación de la mujer, que pronto tendrían eco en los demás países de la Europa Occidental.'<sup>73</sup> According to the writers, this international echo did not reach Spain until the early 1970s, several years later than many of its European contemporaries including Italy and France.<sup>74</sup> They also made a strong claim that 'existen grupos de liberación de la mujer en casi todos los países del mundo', though the feature tends to focus on the 'West'.<sup>75</sup> The format of 'Mujeres del Mundo' remains broadly consistent throughout each issue. It was formed of two parts, the first focussed on the situation 'En España', sharing information and contact details for Spanish feminist groups and activities. The second part is dedicated to women's movements 'En el Mundo' and during its three years in print, it featured articles on Peru, Ireland, Venezuela, Germany, UK, USA, Italy, France and many more countries. The balance in space dedicated to domestic and international affairs varies throughout. In its first issue, for example, three pages are dedicated to the Spanish movement compared to one on international movements, with particular reference to France. Connecting with 'Mujeres del Mundo' continued to be a priority throughout each issue and there is a noticeable increase in the 'En el Mundo'

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<sup>70</sup> 'Rueda de prensa feminista' first appeared in *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 21, March 1978, p. 19.

<sup>71</sup> 'The feminist movement has always aimed to operate on an international level', 'Contrainformación Feminista', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 18, December 1977, p. 59.

<sup>72</sup> Regina Bayo and Paloma Saavedra 'Mujeres del Mundo', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 56.

<sup>73</sup> 'From around 1965, the first women's liberation groups began to organise in the USA and Great Britain, which would soon have an echo in the other countries of Western Europe', *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> 'There are women's liberation groups in almost every country in the world', *Ibid.*

section, featuring more detailed international news as the publication expanded and made links with foreign publications.

Articles in 'Mujeres del mundo' regularly connected various countries together on a shared theme. In Issue 16, for example, the section reflects the issue's overarching theme of sexual violence: 'Ante la violación: Los movimientos feministas acusan'.<sup>76</sup> The article is framed in an 'international', once again North American-focussed, context: 'Hace muchos años que esta polémica está abierta en Norteamérica y unos cuantos en Europa'.<sup>77</sup> Bayo and Encarna Sanahuja explain their process of collating 'diversos aspectos de la lucha internacional ante este fenómeno no menos internacional, para ofrecer una panorámica que podría adelantarnos lo que nuestras hermanas de clase están intentando construir o destruir en otros países'.<sup>78</sup> The writers have explicitly stated in this instance an approach which can be inferred throughout the publication: 'hermanas' throughout the world are presented as having unified goals.<sup>79</sup> International figures and movements provide inspiration for Spanish feminists in their campaigns around key issues such as violence against women, abortion and divorce reform. The article opens with a reference to Susan Brownmiller's work *Rape*, and then provides an update and figures on sexual violence in the USA. It features sections on the UK, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and very briefly, Latin America. Once again, France receives significant attention, reflected in the coverage, over a page in length compared to other countries which only receive one or two paragraphs. A protest in Germany is also highlighted and a German protest song is provided in Spanish translation. Finally, although its title suggests a 'Latin American' update, the article only specifically mentions the situation in Caracas, Venezuela. Using the context of Caracas to highlight several themes, the section then related back to the situation 'en nuestro país', in a clear example of a global case study as a route in to exploring domestic issues.<sup>80</sup>

From its earliest stages, *Vindicación Feminista* sought to connect with similar publications operating in other countries. As Bayo stated in first issue, *Vindicación Feminista* would be

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<sup>76</sup> 'Vindicación Feminista, Issue 16, October 1977, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> 'This controversial subject has been open for many years in North America and for a number of years in Europe', *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> 'Different aspects of the international fight against this no less international phenomenon, to offer a panoramic which could bring us closer to that which our sisters in class are trying to build or destroy in other countries', *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> 'Sisters', *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> 'In our country', *Ibid.*

a growing platform for organisations and publications as information reached contributors.<sup>81</sup> By issue 21, *Vindicación Feminista* had a more structured approach to bringing these publications to their readership via the new subsection, 'Rueda de Prensa Feminista'. The feature was established in response to the overwhelming amount of news on emergent feminist media received by *Vindicación Feminista*: 'De la explosión del Feminismo contemporáneo nos dan testimonio constante los medios de comunicación creados.'<sup>82</sup> 'Rueda de Prensa Feminista' would serve as a platform for the selected publications from this 'explosion' of feminist media. Although it only appears sporadically throughout the remaining issues, this column highlights the more formalised connections being forged between feminist publications throughout Europe at this time, facilitated by organisations such as the international bulletin 'ISIS'. In the second instalment of 'Rueda de Prensa Feminista, the bulletin takes centre stage, described as informative on 'cuestiones feministas' and available in various languages.<sup>83</sup> ISIS is described as an important site for feminist exchange, facing financial difficulty and in desperate need of support. *Vindicación Feminista* readers are therefore urged to subscribe to the bulletin ('ISIS necesita tu ayuda').<sup>84</sup> These explicitly 'international' sections alone do not offer a complete picture of the transnational connections in the magazine. Regular features such as 'Notas', 'Cultura', 'Entrevista' and 'Rendez-vous' and 'Sin Miedo a Volar', for example, also dealt with international themes, showing that the lines between 'domestic' and 'international' affairs were fluid.<sup>85</sup>

### **'Sin Miedo a Volar': Connecting with transatlantic literature**

Marta Pessarrodona, a Catalan author and translator, plays a key role in connecting *Vindicación Feminista's* readership to transatlantic feminist texts. Her role as translator is central to each of her contributions to the magazine and she uses her platform to increase awareness of her favourite international authors to a Spanish readership. The most prominent example of this approach is her monthly feature, 'Sin Miedo a Volar'. The title of the section demonstrates Pessarrodona's particular links to 'Anglo-American' literature, incorporating a play of words on Erica Jong's novel, *Fear of Flying*.<sup>86</sup> The feature showcases the lives and works of inspirational women and, perhaps unsurprisingly, places

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<sup>81</sup> Bayo, 'Mujeres del Mundo', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 54.

<sup>82</sup> 'Rueda de Prensa Feminista', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 21, March 1978, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> 'Rueda de Prensa Feminista', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 22, April 1978, p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> 'ISIS needs your help', *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> 'Notes', 'Culture', 'Interview', 'Without Fear of Flying'.

<sup>86</sup> Ana Becciu and Pessarrodona, 'Sin Miedo a Volar: Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 62.

a strong emphasis on North American and British literary figures. Translation is foregrounded in each feature, written predominantly by Pessarrodona with occasional contributions from fellow translator Ana Becciu. Throughout her pieces she frequently expresses her disbelief that particular canonical feminist works are unavailable in Spanish or any of the other languages spoken in the 'penninsula'. She makes it clear that, by her estimation, a true feminist must be well read in 'Anglo American' literature. In each article she includes a full bibliography, clearly stating whether or not 'hay traducción española' available.<sup>87</sup> To this end, her role within *Vindicación Feminista* appears to be focus on bringing international (predominantly 'Anglo-American') literature to a Spanish readership. From Issue 3, 'Sin Miedo a Volar' appears as a monthly feature, paying tribute to women who have taken risks in either their personal or professional lives.<sup>88</sup> In her opening article, Pessarrodona discusses the column's namesake, Erica Jong, described as 'poeta/novelist a norteamericana a la que nos referiremos extensamente en el futuro.'<sup>89</sup> Guest contributors, including Ana Moix, seem to share Pessarrodona's affinity with 'Anglo-American' literary figures. Moix foregrounds the work of Natalie Clifford Barney, a North American playwright.<sup>90</sup> Although the column also features occasional Spanish figures, such as Concepción Arenal, North American and British women feature in the first five issues and remain the key focus throughout. Spanish writers seem to occupy a secondary position in comparison to authors such as Kate Millet, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sylvia Plath.

Appropriately, given the magazine's title, Mary Wollstonecraft is the first woman 'Sin Miedo a Volar'.<sup>91</sup> In her introduction, Pessarrodona writes that the article cannot begin to do justice to 'un personaje de tal magnitud histórica' as Wollstonecraft.<sup>92</sup> Disclaimer in place, she then reflects on the paradox of summarising Wollstonecraft's work when 'no existe en nuestro país ni una sola traducción de sus obras'.<sup>93</sup> In preparation for her article, she had consulted the 'Biblioteca de Catalunya', amongst other resources, and found no copies of Wollstonecraft's work. Reiterating her point she states: 'Debemos insistir sobre el hecho de que, en el mercado editorial nacional, no encontramos ni tan siquiera su

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<sup>87</sup> 'There is a Spanish translation' see, for example, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 12, June 1977, p. 40.

<sup>88</sup> 'Without Fear of Flying', Pessarrodona, 'Sin Miedo a Volar', *Vindicación Feminista* Issue 3, September 1976, p. 48.

<sup>89</sup> 'North American poet/novelist to whom we will refer extensively in the future', *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Ana Moix, 'Sin Miedo a Volar: Natalie Clifford, la amazona', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 4, October 1976, p. 48.

<sup>91</sup> Pessarrodona, 'Sin Miedo a Volar', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 3, September 1976, p. 48.

<sup>92</sup> 'A character of such historic magnitude', *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> 'Not a single translation [into Spanish] of any of her works is available in our country', *Ibid.*

famosa *Vindication* traducida a alguna de las lenguas peninsulares'.<sup>94</sup> In '[el] mundo anglosajón', however, Wollstonecraft was experiencing 'un *revival* espectacular'.<sup>95</sup> Pessarrodona argues the case for greater recognition and availability of her works in Spain for a number of reasons. Firstly, she states, '*Vindication of the Rights of Women*' marks the first systematic study of women's condition. Furthermore, Wollstonecraft occupies a key place in the English literary canon. The implication is that, as a key text in the Anglo-American feminist and literary canon, it must be made accessible to Spanish readers. The article includes a biography, a timeline of her life as well as an analysis of where she fits into current feminist thought. She maps the various waves of interest in Wollstonecraft's work in the 'mundo anglosajón'. Quoting Virginia Woolf for the first of many times, she references a 1920 article penned by Woolf which stated that Wollstonecraft's spirit is alive in the voices of those she has influenced.<sup>96</sup> She refers to Jane Austen as a 'genial novelista' though she lacked Wollstonecraft's restlessness with the state of the world.<sup>97</sup> Following on from the article, an advert for Editorial Labor appears, featuring their upcoming publication of Wollstonecraft's work.<sup>98</sup> The combined effect of prominent adverts for her newly translated novels, alongside frequent references to work highlight a particular enthusiasm for Wollstonecraft's work.

In keeping with the first two features, the third 'Sin Miedo a Volar' showcases Sylvia Plath, the renowned 'poeta norteamericana'.<sup>99</sup> In her introduction, Pessarrodona introduces Plath as an icon in the 'Anglo-American' feminist press: 'todas las revistas feministas anglosajonas se han apropiado de su obra y persona'.<sup>100</sup> Given her prominence in international feminist movements, Pessarrodona believes that Plath's work must also feature *Vindicación Feminista*, in Spanish translation. The main body of the article is written by guest columnist, Ana Becciu, described as a fellow translator and 'concedora y divulgadora en lengua española de la obra de Sylvia Plath'.<sup>101</sup> Becciu provides a detailed biography complete with a list of her key works, stating whether they were available in

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<sup>94</sup> 'We must reiterate the fact that, in the national publishing market, we could not find not even her famous *Vindication* translated in any of the peninsula's languages', *Ibid*.

<sup>95</sup> 'Anglo-Saxon world....a spectacular revival', *Ibid*.

<sup>96</sup> 'M.W está viva y activa, discute y experimenta, oímos su voz y rastreamos su influencia en este instante entre los vivos', *Ibid*.

<sup>97</sup> 'A great novelist', *Ibid*.

<sup>98</sup> 'Editorial Labor', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 3, September 1976, p. 50.

<sup>99</sup> Ana Becciu and Marta Pessarrodona, 'Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, p. 62.

<sup>100</sup> 'All of the Anglosaxon feminist magazines have appropriated her work and persona', Pessarrodona 'Sin Miedo a Volar', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> 'Connoisseur and divulger of Sylvia Plath in the Spanish language', *Ibid*.

Spanish. Her poetry had not yet been translated where as Becciu herself had translated Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*.<sup>102</sup> She closes with an extract from her own translation of *Ariel*.<sup>103</sup> In this way, both Pessarrodona and Beciu use translation to bring previously unavailable canonical women's writing to *Vindicación Feminista's* readership.

Outwith 'Sin Miedo a Volar', Pessarrodona often steers conversations to Anglo-American literature in her interviews and features. In her interview with Glenda Jackson, for example, the purpose was to discuss the UK's National Abortion Campaign (NAC) yet she also uses the opportunity to ask Jackson for her views on her favourite feminist texts. For the benefit of her Spanish readers, Pessarrodona includes parentheses that detail whether or not these works were available in Spain. Not only is this informative but it also serves to highlight the gaps in knowledge of these texts, caused by a lack of available translations in Spanish. Her first question relates to *The Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer, which she refers to as 'libro comentado y recomendado en los círculos feministas internacionales', remarking that it is unavailable in translation.<sup>104</sup> She proceeds to mention several other authors: 'Brica [sic] Jong (que algún día glorioso llegara a la lectora española), sobre Virginia Woolf (que al cabo de treinta o más años empieza a llegar) Simone de Beauvoir (más afortunada que las anteriores respecto a lectoras peninsulares).<sup>105</sup> Erica Jong's 'Fear of Flying' had yet to arrive in Spanish translation, Virginia Woolf had only recently been published in Spain and Simone de Beauvoir already had an established Spanish audience. To Pessarrodona, at least, these works are essential feminist reading and should be widely available to Spanish audiences. Her tone suggests outrage that such esteemed writers are inaccessible to Spanish speaking audiences.

Pessarrodona was not alone in showcasing the work of 'Anglo-American' literary women. Prominent references to Virginia Woolf, for example, further illustrate the tendency to foreground North American and British novelists as key to Spanish women's feminist education. Woolf is referenced in almost every issue of the magazine, within articles and

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<sup>102</sup> Becciu, 'Sylvia Plath', Issue 5, p. 62.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>104</sup> 'Recommended and cited book in international feminist circles', Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> 'Brica [sic] Jong (who will reach the Spanish reader one glorious day), about Virginia Woolf (who has begun to arrive after over thirty years or more) Simone de Beauvoir (more fortunate than the previous two with regard to Spanish readers), 'Entrevista', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 54.

advertisements.<sup>106</sup> The first full-length feature on Virginia Woolf appears in Issue 2.<sup>107</sup> In her article, Ana Moix describes Woolf as ‘una figura tan insólita dentro de la historia de la literatura’.<sup>108</sup> Like Pessarrodona, she expresses her outrage that Woolf’s work had only recently been translated into Spanish. Until a few years earlier, she states, only Jorge Luis Borges’ translation of *Orlando* was available to Spanish speaking audiences.<sup>109</sup> Editorial Lumen, a Spanish publishing house largely dedicated to translation, began to take an interest in Virginia Woolf ‘en esmerdas traducciones’.<sup>110</sup> Lumen published ‘La muerte de Virginia Woolf’, with a translation and prologue by Pessarrodona, who was to emerge as an authority on Woolf. Moix gives the translation a glowing review: ‘que ha llevado a cabo su labor con un esmero y delicadeza que deja traslucir su admiración y dedicación estudiosa sobre Virginia Woolf y el grupo de los Bloomsbury’.<sup>111</sup> Translation is once again foregrounded, as a fragment of Pessarrodona’s rendering of Leonard Woolf’s autobiography is featured, in order to bring Spanish readership up to speed with the ‘la gigantesca mujer, feminista y escritora’.<sup>112</sup>

In the same issue, further references to Woolf interspersed across a range of features including several advertisements, in conversation for ‘Entrevista’ as well as under the ‘Cultura: Teatro’ section, highlighting her influence on the magazine’s contributors.<sup>113</sup> Pessarrodona draws extensively from Woolf in her ‘Notas’ and ‘Sin Miedo a Volar’ features. In a review of her work, Pessarrodona is framed, once more, as an authority on Woolf, writing ‘con la seguridad que da el haber recorrido y amado con obscenidad casi la obra woolfiana.’<sup>114</sup> For Pessarrodona, Woolf was preeminent among Anglo-American authors and in issue 11 she describes Woolf as one of her most prominent influences.<sup>115</sup> In the following issue she elaborates further, stating that ‘me enamoré de Virginia Woolf (ninguna

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<sup>106</sup> Maite Goicoechea, ‘Rendez-vous: Recuperar a Virginia Woolf’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 22, April 1978, p. 13.

<sup>107</sup> Moix, ‘Virginia Woolf y El Grupo de los Bloomsbury’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 2, August 1976, p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Such an extraordinary figure within the history of literature’, *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> ‘Only *Orlando*, in the splendid version by Borges, edited in South America’, *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> ‘In carefully executed translation’, *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> ‘Who has carried out her work with a care and delicacy that brings out her admiration and studious dedication to Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury group’, *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> The formidable woman, feminist and writer’, Maite Goicoechea, ‘Rendez-vous: Recuperar a Virginia Woolf’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 22, April 1978, p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> See for example ‘Teatro’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 16, October 1977 and ‘Rendez-vous’, *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>114</sup> ‘With the security of having gone over and loved Woolf’s work to almost an obscene degree’, ‘Rendez-vous’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 22, p. 13.

<sup>115</sup> Pessarrodona, Issue 11, p. 49.

feminista puede orillar).<sup>116</sup> A true feminist, by Pessarrodona's assessment, must necessarily be a Woolf aficionado. Once again, in Issue 17, in her discussion of a recent visit to the UK, she speaks of her affinity with the 'mundo anglosajona' and Woolf's writing in particular.<sup>117</sup> When reviewing contemporary texts, such as Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks*, Woolf appears as a point of comparison.<sup>118</sup> When making a point regarding translators and gender, Pessarrodona once again draws on Woolf as an example. She rejects the notion that female authors should be translated by female translators, citing Borges's translation of Woolf as an example. Without Jorge Luis Borges, *Orlando* would not have arrived to a Spanish-speaking readership, once again implying that Woolf was essential reading for feminists.<sup>119</sup>

As well as foregrounding canonical female literary figures such as Plath, Wollstonecraft or Woolf, contributors to *Vindicación Feminista* also conveyed a sense of being up to date with the international feminist texts. A key example is Shere Hite's, *The Hite Report*, one of the most frequently mentioned North American texts. First published in 1976, *The Hite Report* was the result of a controversial research project on women's sexuality by Shere Hite. In issue 17, for example, Pessarrodona's 'Notas' feature includes a photograph of Shere Hite alongside the caption 'La ayudaron mas de tres mil mujeres'.<sup>120</sup> The same issue contains an advert for her latest work, in its Spanish translation: 'Shere Hite Sinceridad sexual: así nació el informe hite'.<sup>121</sup> The implication here is that the 'informe Hite' was already widely known by *Vindicación Feminista's* readership and needed no further introduction. In Issue 20, Hite's name appears once again under a list of key texts which had been translated in 1977, which the authors dubbed as the 'Year of feminist publications'.<sup>122</sup> The Hite Report is one of 'lo mas significativos del movimiento extranjero'.<sup>123</sup> Subsequently, the book appears in the 'Libros' review section of the following issues under the title 'El informe Hite: Tres mil americanas vindican su

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<sup>116</sup> 'I fell in love with Virginia Woolf (as no feminist can avoid)', Pessarrodona, 'Notas', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 12, June 1977, p. 42.

<sup>117</sup> 'Civilised Anglosaxon area (read England)', Pessarrodona, 'Notas', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 17, November 1977, p. 26.

<sup>118</sup> Pessarrodona, 'Libros, Kinflicks de Lisa Alther', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 23, May 1978, p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> 'More than 3,000 women helped her', Pessarrodona, 'Notas', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 17, November 1977, p. 26.

<sup>121</sup> 'Shere Hite Sexual Sincerity: how *The Hite Report* was born', Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> 'Hacia una alternativa teórica feminista', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 20, February 1978, p. 11.

<sup>123</sup> '[one of] the most important in the foreign movement', Ibid.

cuerpo'.<sup>124</sup> The review comments on the criticism of Hite's methodological approach, agreeing that that results cannot be described as conclusive. Despite criticism, the review celebrates Hite's work as a significant development for feminism and 'el primer paso para celebrar y reivindicar nuestra sexualidad.'<sup>125</sup> Homage to Hite cumulates in *Vindicación Feminista's* penultimate issue, a special single-theme edition on 'sexualidad'.<sup>126</sup> The main content presents findings of the magazine's own commissioned research project, described as the first ever attempt to explore the 'realidad sentida y vivida de las mujeres de nuestro país en su parcela mas intima e inexplorada hasta hoy'.<sup>127</sup> Falcón and Alcalde's aim was, in short, to create 'el primer 'informe Hite' a la española', highlighting the influence of Hite's work on informing the approach and content of their magazine.<sup>128</sup>

In various issues, North American and British women's movements are presented as firmly linked, and occasionally interchangeable, under the banner of 'Anglosaxon'. As has been well documented by Lucy Delap, amongst others, British and North American feminists and their writings were undoubtedly in close dialogue from the early twentieth century.<sup>129</sup> Issue 8's 'Mujeres del mundo', for example, features a summary of the Women's Liberation movement in the UK, foregrounding this close relationship.<sup>130</sup> According to the article, British Women's Liberation began as a series of small, consciousness raising groups which were inspired by the activities of 'sus sisters norteamericanas que iban conociendo gracias a la difusión que se hizo entonces de ellas'.<sup>131</sup> The movement is growing 'tanto en GB como en otros paises (fundamentalmente U.S.A)'.<sup>132</sup> British feminism, and Spanish by extension, is placed within this international context, although international is often read as 'USA' as is the case here. Within the same edition, the 'Buzón internacional' includes a short update on abortion in the USA and women's industrial action in the UK.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, British and North American women's writing often appears a homogenous category. In

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<sup>124</sup> 'The Hite Report: 3,000 women vindicate their bodies', Carmen Grau, 'Libros: El informe Hite: Tres mil americanas vindican su cuerpo', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 21, March 1978, p. 8.

<sup>125</sup> 'The first step in celebrating and liberating our sexuality', *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> 'Sexuality', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 26/27, September 1978.

<sup>127</sup> 'The lived and felt reality of women in our country in their most intimate and unexplored area until now',

*Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 28, September 1979, p. 14.

<sup>128</sup> 'The first Hite Report, for the Spanish woman' *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>129</sup> Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-garde: Transatlantic encounters of the early twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>130</sup> Bayo, 'Mujeres del Mundo: Gran Bretaña: El Feminismo viene de lejos', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 8, February 1977, p. 55.

<sup>131</sup> 'They were beginning to know about their North American sisters, thanks to the communication that took place between them then', *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> 'In Great Britain as well other countries (predominantly USA)', *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> 'Buzón Internacional', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 8, February 1977, p. 57.

*Vindicación Feminista*'s fifth issue, Pessarrodona makes such a generalisation, stating that 'todas las revistas feministas anglosojonas' adopted the work of Sylvia Plath's in their issues.<sup>134</sup> In other instances, however, she makes a point of differentiating between British and North American styles and language. Her interview with British activist, Glenda Jackson, serves as a case in point. They discuss a number of iconic English language texts including *Fear of Flying*, which Jackson notes as 'un libro difícil (es americano)'.<sup>135</sup> Pessarrodona's parenthesis highlights an awareness of the cultural translation between British and North American contexts. In doing so, she seems to acknowledge that despite the shared English language, women were operating in very different contexts.

## I.II. Reconnecting with the past: Recovering Spanish Women's History

As well as looking outward to their feminist counterparts in other countries, *Vindicación Feminista* took an introspective approach, reconnecting with Spanish feminist history in order to establish and legitimise the current movement's demands. Women intellectuals prominent during the Spanish Civil War were particularly foregrounded, as Linda Gould Levine observed in 1983, 'The names of civil war intellectuals as Margarita Nelken, Victoria Kent and Federica Montseny are essential in this rediscovery of Spanish feminism'.<sup>136</sup> Yet, even in returning to their own country's past, articles were still framed in the context of international feminism. Carmen Alcalde in particular invoked the transnational in order to write about the transgenerational. As Laura Lee Downs has argued, writing feminist history was a political act. If politics was the '...motor that drove the rapid expansion of women's history after 1968', particularly in the UK and North America, it could similarly be argued that a rejection of Francoism catalysed interest in recovering of Spanish women's history.<sup>137</sup> In the context of what Mary Nash has described as 'collective historical amnesia', as imposed by Franco's dictatorship, the content of women's history reflected in *Vindicación Feminista* inevitably focussed on the 'Republican' cause and criticised women's role in organisations such as *La Sección Femenina* was severely critiqued.<sup>138</sup> As Monica Threlfall has written, 'it was not that

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<sup>134</sup> 'All of the Anglo-Saxon feminist magazines', Pessarrodona and Becciu, 'Sin Miedo a Volar: Sylvia Plath' *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 62.

<sup>135</sup> Pessarrodona, 'Entrevista: Glenda Jackson', *Vindicación Feminista* Issue 5, November 1976, p. 53.

<sup>136</sup> Linda Gould Levine, 'The censored sex: Woman as Author and Character in Franco's Spain' in *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols*, ed. by Beth K. Miller (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 291.

<sup>137</sup> Laura Lee Downs, *Writing Gender History* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, 1995), p. 3.

women's struggles had no history but that they had shared it almost entirely with men. The past with which women could relate to was the same as that of the male left and the labour movement.'<sup>139</sup> In many ways, *Vindicación Feminista*, in their 'Hemeroteca' and historical features, sought to construct a history of Spanish feminist activity, by recognising the lives and achievements of political and labour movement women activists, which had been overlooked by the organisations in which they had participated.

Articles situated the recovery of past Spanish feminist activity to a broader North American and European interest in women's history and 'Feminist Studies'. In Issue 26/27, for example, Italian women's historian, Joyce Lussu Salvadori, is interviewed by Alicia Fajado.<sup>140</sup> Salvadori and Fajado discuss the need to 'recuperar la presencia de las mujeres en la historia' in Spain, Italy and globally.<sup>141</sup> Continuing this theme, in the following issue adverts appear for a new book by Guiliana Difebo on 'Resistencia y movimiento de mujeres en España 1936-1976'.<sup>142</sup> The book is billed as uncovering 'la Resistencia, lucha y condición de la mujer bajo el franquismo a través de sus principales protagonistas y movimientos', with clear parallels to Salvadori's work on the Italian context.<sup>143</sup> A more general update on the academic discipline of 'Feminist Studies' is provided in Issue 16's 'Buzón de noticias internacional', with particular information from a North American correspondent: 'de nuestra corresponsal en USA, Deborah Simcovich'.<sup>144</sup> According to the article, 'los Estudios Feministas se expandieron por suelo norteamericano de manera vertiginosa'.<sup>145</sup> Simcovich cites 600 courses across a range of universities as well as twenty specific 'feminist' degree programmes. From the early 1970s, a growing number of courses had also become available 'en los países del Reino Unido y Canadá, donde se hacia sentir la fuerte influencia del Feminismo estadounidense', with the implication that curriculums in Spain are once again falling behind.<sup>146</sup> The first step therefore is to provide an 'Introduction to Feminist Studies' course. Courses include 'una revisión de la historia' as

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<sup>139</sup> Monica Threlfall, 'The Women's Movement in Spain' in the New Left Review 1/151 May-June 1985 <<https://newleftreview.org/1/151/monica-threlfall-the-women-s-movement-in-spain> > [Accessed 05/10/2017].

<sup>140</sup> Alicia Fajado and Joyce Lussu, 'Internacional/ Italia', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 26/27, September 1978, p. 20.

<sup>141</sup> 'Recover the presence of women in history', *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> 'Women's movement and resistance in Spain 1936-1976', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 28, July 1979, p. 82.

<sup>143</sup> 'The resistance, struggle and condition of women under Francoism as shown through the key protagonists and movements.', *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> 'From our correspondent in the USA...', 'Buzón de Noticias Internacional', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 16, October 1977, p. 62.

<sup>145</sup> 'Feminist Studies rapidly expanded throughout North America', *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> 'In the countries of the UK and Canada, where the strong influence of US feminism is felt', *Ibid.*

well as politics, literature, psychology and ‘todas las disciplinas’ which had up until that point been studied from the perspective and reflected the interests of men. Feminist studies have experienced ‘una expansión de carácter nacional’ in the USA, hailed as an example for European educational institutions to follow.

From the first issue, Carmen Alcalde draws on historical examples, framed in the context of international feminism, in order to further advocate for her ‘single militancy’ approach.<sup>147</sup> In her section on ‘Mujeres Sepultadas en el Olvido’ during the Spanish Civil War, she argues that the women involved in communist, socialist and anarchist movements failed to recognise that feminism as the true revolutionary cause.<sup>148</sup> She highlights the work of María de Echarri, founder of *Acción Social Femenina*. Describing the 1920s as, ‘los tiempos del titubeante feminismo ibérico’ she emphasises the transfer of feminist thought from abroad, ‘las corrientes revolucionarias de las mujeres inglesas, americanas y francesas habían llegado a España.’<sup>149</sup> In the parallels drawn between 1920s and 1970s Spanish women’s movements, they share the common characteristic of lagging behind British, North American and French ‘sisters’. Spanish women were late to adopting foreign feminist ideas, she argues, due to, ‘el temor social’ and the rigid ideas of family enforced by the Catholic Church.<sup>150</sup> Having consulted innumerable books on anarchist, socialist and communist activism, Alcalde concluded that female activists had been largely overlooked. In a clear link to the double and single militancy debate which dominated much of the narrative around Spanish feminism, she connects the silencing of women activists in political parties of the past with the need for radical feminism in the present: ‘Entender que el feminismo es política, es política, la única que es para la mujer su razón de lucha, costara en nuestro país todavía quizá largos años.’<sup>151</sup> Once again reconnecting 1970s feminism with women’s movement activity in the 1920s, she argues the current debates were a continuation of the same struggle: ‘El debate que es hoy enconado se prolonga desde antiguo aunque no los sepan’.<sup>152</sup> This statement summarises her mission throughout

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<sup>147</sup> Alcalde, ‘Mujeres Sepultadas en el Olvido- Guerrilleras del 36’, *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 18.

<sup>148</sup> ‘The notion that feminism is politics, which is the only reason for women’s fight, will take perhaps many more for our country to understand.’ Alcalde, ‘Mujeres Sepultadas en el Olvido- Guerrilleras del 36’ Issue 1, p. 18.

<sup>149</sup> ‘They were the times of hesitant Iberian feminism’, ‘The revolutionary currents from English, American and French women had begun to arrive in Spain’, *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> ‘Social fear’, *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> ‘The notion that feminism is politics, which is the only reason for women’s fight, will take perhaps many more for our country to understand’, *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> ‘The current debate has been raging since the past even if they [Spanish women] are not aware of it’, *Ibid.*

her articles, and indeed in her own publications: to bring women's histories to new generations of feminists.

The focus of this recovery was the experiences of women during the Spanish Civil War. Issue 3, for example, was dedicated to 'Liberación Femenina: Nuestras mujeres en la Guerra Civil', featuring two female activists on the front cover.<sup>153</sup> This heading implies that women experienced a liberated role within anti-fascist activism in the Civil War. The issue serves to foster a sense of inter-generational intimacy by discussing 'nuestras mujeres' and foregrounding the stories of ordinary, relatable women taking on extraordinary war-time roles. In her introduction, Antonina Rodrigo acknowledged the trend of recovering feminism of the pre-revolutionary period 'es corriente, cuando se habla de los movimientos feministas que actuaron en el pasado en España, que se piense, ante todo, en el periodo pre-revolucionario...y en particular en el que se extiende a lo largo de nuestra guerra civil'.<sup>154</sup> The issue features lengthy interviews with three women who had been activists during the period. Each of them reflected a different ideology within the broadly 'Republican' side: Marxist, Catalan nationalist and an anarchist from *Mujeres Libres*. Later in the issue, 'Requiem por una sardinera' eulogises Norma Mechaca, a civil war 'miliciana' who died fighting for the 'Republican' cause. Taken together, these stories emphasise the active role women played during the Civil War as an example for 1970s feminists. They overlook, however, women activists on the broad-based 'Nationalist' side, focussing instead on women whose ideologies were in keeping with the founders' views.

Throughout each issue, the 'Hemeroteca' section was a key platform for displaying forgotten publications from Spanish, and predominantly Catalan, women's history. Edited by Anna Estany, from the first issue onwards, 'Hemeroteca' appears in almost every magazine.<sup>155</sup> Unlike many of the other regular features, there is no general introduction to indicate its explicit aims. From its title, and a review of the series, the idea of recovering archives long forgotten is evoked. Materials range from children's publications to electoral

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<sup>153</sup> 'Female liberation: our women in the Spanish Civil War', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 3, September 1976, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> 'When one speaks of the feminist movements that had taken place in Spain in the past, commonly one thinks, above all, of the pre-revolutionary period...and in particular the one which lasted throughout our Civil War', Antonina Rodrigo, 'La Guerra Civil', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 3, September 1976, p. 29.

<sup>155</sup> Anna Estany, 'Hemeroteca: La Prensa infantil en Catalunya', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 5, November 1976, p. 64.

documents. Estany selected mostly Catalan language publications and the content does not always focus on women. The format remains largely the same, featuring quotes in Catalan with footnotes and translations into Spanish. A range of historical periods are represented but once again the more recent history of the Second Republic and the Spanish Civil War receive particular attention. The first 'Hemeroteca', written by Inés Alberdi Alonso, brings to light a publication from 1841 titled 'Gobierno representativo y constitucional del bello sexo español'.<sup>156</sup> The author, who remains anonymous, used her writing to criticise the political system and advocate for women's rights. Alberdi Alonso forges links between this early feminist writing and the current movement, stating that the style and arguments 'parece actual'.<sup>157</sup> The satirical publication imagines a women's government, with its own separate laws and taxes. In closing, Alberdi Alonso asks: 'Qué nivel de conciencia feminista había en España en 1841 para que apareciera este escrito? Fue un grito solitario de una adelantada de su época?'.<sup>158</sup> Whether the feminist ideas espoused by this anonymous author were a 'un grito solitario' or indicative of wider views, Alberdi Alonso lets the reader decide. In her view, the fact that feminist ideas so closely reflecting 1970s views made it into print as early as 1841 is significant in itself.

'Hemeroteca' evokes the recurring debate of 'single' versus 'double militancy' by presenting literature which portrays women as being manipulated by political parties. These examples serve to bolster *Vindicación Feminista's* 'single militancy' stance in the debate between party allegiances or autonomous women's groups. In her first feature, she makes a point of differentiating between 'women's and 'feminist' publications. Using the example of a weekly women's magazine *Or I Grana*, the colours of the Catalan flag, she concludes that the magazine's primary function 'no era otro que el aprovechar a las mujeres catalanas para la causa de la defensa de Catalunya'.<sup>159</sup> Estany returns to this theme repeatedly: women were mobilised to meet the needs of a male dominated movement. *Or I Grana* is placed in an international context, with Spanish feminists once again perceived as falling behind many of their European 'sisters': 'realmente llevabamos cuarenta anos de retraso respecto a Europa, en cuanto a lucha feminista se refiere'.<sup>160</sup> Estany argues that the magazine ultimately served to catalyse support to increase Catalan

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<sup>156</sup> 'Representative and constitutional government of the fair Spanish sex', Inés Alberdi Alonso, 'Hemeroteca: Utopia Feminista en 1841', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976 p. 66.

<sup>157</sup> 'Seem present day', *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> 'What level of feminist awareness has there in Spain in 1841 that this writing should appear? Was it a solitary call from a woman ahead of her time?', *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> 'Was none other than to take advantage of Catalan women for the cause of defending Catalunya', Estany, 'Hemeroteca', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 2, August 1976, p. 62.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

men's dominance, rather than liberate women in their own right. The same theme, though later time period, is reflected in Issue 3. During the Civil War, the featured Catalan women's magazine had been used to summon women to their duty: 'Es Necesiten 100.000 Dones'.<sup>161</sup> Reinforcing the unstated aim of the column, Estany writes: 'oigamos a estas mujeres que lucharon sin pasar nunca en la historia.'<sup>162</sup> In a later issue she deals with the election of the 'frente popular de izquierdas' in 1936.<sup>163</sup> Estany highlights that of 473 seats won, only five were occupied by women, among them Margarita Nelken, Victoria Kent and Dolores Ibarruri. These three women in particular appear throughout *Vindicación Feminista* as icons from a Spanish context. Yet even they, according to Estany, did not represent 'fundamentalmente los intereses de la mujer' due to their allegiance to male-dominated parties.<sup>164</sup> A similar message is repeated drawing in each issue, using different contexts and eras. In Issues 21 and 22, for example, Estany discusses 'la prensa obrera' during the Second Republic and the Civil War. Estany states 'una revolución que como tantas otras se hizo con mujeres pero no para las mujeres'.<sup>165</sup> In the following issue she continues to analyse 'la prensa obrera' this time during the Second Republic. In her column she repeatedly asks, 'y las mujeres?', in this case concluding that it was 'difícil encontrar un texto en que se habla de las mujeres' in worker's movement archives.<sup>166</sup> Male strikers, she argues, were all too happy to ask for women's support and solidarity when it suited their interests. However, as she evidences, their publications failed to report on any specific issues facing women highlighting a broader disinterest in 'women's issues' within industrial and political groups.<sup>167</sup>

Articles on past Spanish feminist activity were often framed as less successful or sophisticated than 'first wave' activists in countries such as the UK and France. The British Suffragette movement receives particular mention in several issues of *Vindicación Feminista*. In Issue 9, for example, a ten page 'Documento' by Anna Estany is dedicated to international campaigns for women's suffrage under the title: 'Sufragismo: Las españolas brillaron por su ausencia'.<sup>168</sup> The title sets the tone for the piece, which implies that the

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<sup>161</sup> Estany, 'Hemeroteca', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 3, September 1976, p. 52.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Estany, 'Hemeroteca', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 13, July 1977, p. 22.

<sup>164</sup> 'Did not fundamentally represent the interests of women', Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> 'A revolution that like so many others was informed by women but not for women', 'Estany, 'Hemeroteca: Lámparas 'z'', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 20, February 1978, p. 53.

<sup>166</sup> 'And what about the women?', 'Difficult to find a single text which dealt with women', Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Estany, 'Hemeroteca: Prensa Obrera Durante la II República', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 21, March 1978, p. 44.

<sup>168</sup> 'Sufragism, Spanish women are notable in their absence', Anna Estany, 'Sufragismo: Las españolas brillaron por su ausencia', *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 9, March 1977, p. 29.

Spanish suffrage movement lagged behind the successful British and French movements. Estany argues that Spanish 'sufragismo', 'llego tarde, con poco impetus, castrado y con tintes de catolicismo'.<sup>169</sup> In fact, 'nuestro feminismo no llego nunca a formar lo que se llama un movimiento' according to the author Campo Alange.<sup>170</sup> The early twentieth century is described as a period in which 'el sufragismo se extendia por Europea y America'.<sup>171</sup> Estany draws on Carmen Alcalde's work *La mujer en la Guerra civil española*: 'Tardaron mucho en hacerse acción los ecos de las Olimpia de Gouges, de las Pankhurst'. According to Alcalde, when the influence of these foreign activists finally reached Spain, their ideas were filtered through and limited by the conservative teachings of the Catholic church.<sup>172</sup> Writing in 1905, A. Pestana stated, 'como siempre, las españolas brillan por ausencia' and that 'no parece que las mujeres de este país tengan la menor conciencia' of the benefits collective action could engender. From collecting these, and various other statements on the (lack of) Spanish suffrage movement Estany claims: 'podemos afirmar que durante todo el siglo XIX no hubo movimiento político femenina' although individual voices did emerge.<sup>173</sup> In fact, she argues, it was not until well into the twentieth century when women in North America, the UK, New Zealand, Australia and Italy had won the vote that Spanish women began to take the first steps towards feminism.<sup>174</sup> The message of a shared, trans-generational struggle is clear: 'nuestras abuelas, aunque tímidamente, habían empezado a andar por el camino de la revolución.'<sup>175</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed a selected representation of articles which connected key themes of emergent Spanish feminism with transnational and historical examples. References to international women's movements and key figures permeate the publication, across the majority of its regular features. The differentiation between 'national' and 'international' content is far more fluid than the titles of each subsection suggest. A focus on explicitly 'internacional' features would offer an incomplete picture of transnational connections in the magazine. Regular features such as 'Notas', 'Cultura',

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<sup>169</sup> '[...] arrived late, with little impetus, castrated and with hints of catholicism', Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> 'Our feminism never managed to form what one could call a movement', Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> 'Suffrage extended throughout Europe and America', Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> 'It took a long time for the echoes of Olimpia de Gouges, the Pankhursts to be put into effect', Alcalde, Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> 'We can confirm that during the entire nineteenth century, there was no female political movement', Estany, Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Alcalde, 'Sufragismo', Issue 9, p.29.

<sup>175</sup> 'Other grandmothers, however timidly, had begun to walk along the road to revolution', Ibid.

'Entrevista' and 'Rendez-vous', for example, are frequently concerned with international figures or themes. Marta Pessarrodona's articles, particular her regular 'Sin Miedo a Volar' feature, highlight the vital role of translation in disseminating canonical feminist texts, predominantly written by North American and British women writers. The interspersed nature of international content reflects the magazine's unstated aim, to firmly root Spanish feminism within the context of international women's liberation. Through positioning their own work to align with Anglo-American authors, from Virginia Woolf to Erica Jong, *Vindicación Feminista* further legitimised their claims, building on a movement with transnational and transgenerational roots. Furthermore, Alcalde and Estany foregrounded historical and literary case studies, recovering the repressed memories of earlier Spanish feminist activity. References to earlier Spanish feminisms, however, were still often framed in comparison to 'first wave' British or North American activity. The following chapter will explore the extent to which this interest was reciprocated by North American and British feminist media, drawing on *off our backs* and *Spare Rib* to examine the transatlantic reach of Spanish feminist writing.

## Chapter 2

### *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*: Connecting with Spain

This chapter will examine the transatlantic reach of Spanish feminist activity and *Vindicación Feminista* in particular. A review of two comparable feminist news journals, *Spare Rib* from the UK and *off our backs* from the USA, will provide an initial case study, exploring the ways in which transatlantic publications represented the Spanish women's movement and connected with activists. All three publications played a vital role in their respective country's women's movements. Each of their manifestos states a shared aim to fill a gap in women's print culture. They situate themselves firmly in the context of international feminism, explicitly aiming to make connections, provide contacts and disseminate information to transcend national boundaries and reach as many women as possible. Though they cannot be viewed as representative of entire movements, they do provide useful insights into trends and indications as to what information was reaching audiences in various countries, which connections were being made. The ways in which they cross reference and acknowledge each other reveals many subtle and constantly changing dynamics. As collectives developed and priorities shifted, the tone of publications and their relationships with other movements also changed. *Spare Rib* and *off our backs* can offer an insight into the power dynamics at play within international 'second wave' feminism, so often 'Anglo-American' dominated. This section will firstly examine references to Spain in *off our backs* then *Spare Rib*, with a particular focus on the way that both magazines represent Spanish feminism and their relationship with *Vindicación Feminista*. This will reveal the many contradictions and unequal power relations at play in this exchange. As will be seen, although both publications adopted Spanish issues as a rallying point for solidarity and activism, they often failed to offer a platform for the voices of Spanish women themselves.

#### II.1. *Spare Rib*

*Spare Rib*, in print 1972-1993, has been widely recognised as the most iconic magazine of the 'Women's Liberation Movement' in the UK. According to the British Library, 'Few titles sum up an era and a movement like *Spare Rib*'.<sup>176</sup> The magazine's founders originated

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<sup>176</sup> 'Spare Rib Magazine Goes Online for the First Time' <<https://www.bl.uk/press-releases/2015/may/spare-rib-magazine-goes-online-for-the-first-time>> [Accessed 25/08/2017].

from the 'underground' press movement of 1960's Britain and Australia. Rosy Boycott and Marsha Rowe began *Spare Rib* as a reaction to the sexism they had experienced working for various magazines in the 'underground' scene.<sup>177</sup> In their manifesto, they set out to create 'The Alternative Women's Magazine' stating a commitment to reach all women.<sup>178</sup> They felt strongly that the best way to do so was to ensure *Spare Rib* could compete with 'existing commercial magazines' and be widely available on newsstands throughout the country.<sup>179</sup> In order to do so, they retained the 'traditional women's magazine format' as a vehicle for delivering their 'radical content'.<sup>180</sup> Securing national distribution via mainstream outlets, like John Menzies and WHSmiths, allowed *Spare Rib's* first issue to sell 20,000 copies, selling out 'almost immediately'.<sup>181</sup> The format was established as a 48-page monthly news magazine, retailing at fifteen pence a copy. The eight-page news section would appear in the centre, printed on coloured paper and attractive visuals including powerful photography would take priority.<sup>182</sup> The magazine itself was 'semi-glossy', although its format occasionally varied as the group could not always afford to print in full colour.<sup>183</sup> For the first year, *Spare Rib* matched the fees paid by major British newspapers, paying contributors one pound per hundred words.<sup>184</sup>

In its early years, *Spare Rib* featured writing by canonical figures including Betty Friedan, Kate Millet and Germaine Greer. In terms of politics, the original manifesto emphasised a commitment to remain as non-partisan as possible in order to attract more women to their cause, which they felt could not be achieved by 'pushing a strongly political line'.<sup>185</sup> By the magazine's eighteenth issue, however, the organisers revised its format and political tone. From 1975, *Spare Rib* began to run as a collective, developing a closer connection to the activism of the British Women's Liberation Movement. Fashion, Food and Beauty features were eschewed in favour of more politically and internationally focussed news coverage. The magazine no longer featured articles by men and 'glossy cosmetic'

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<sup>177</sup> Ruth Wallsgrove, 'Spare Rib, 1972–1993: Sweet and Sour', *off our backs*, vol. 23, no. 5, 1993, pp. 4-19. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/20834433](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20834433).

<sup>178</sup> 'Facsimile of Spare Rib manifesto' <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/facsimile-of-spare-rib-manifesto>> [Accessed 25/08/2017].

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Katie Campbell, 'Boning up on Spare Rib.' *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 1, no. 9, 1984, pp. 17-18. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/4019568](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4019568) p. 18.

<sup>182</sup> 'Facsimile of Spare Rib Manifesto' <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/facsimile-of-spare-rib-manifesto>> [Accessed 25/08/2017].

<sup>183</sup> Wallsgrove 'Spare Rib, 1972–1993: Sweet and Sour', p. 4.

<sup>184</sup> Campbell, 'Boning up on Spare Rib', p. 18.

<sup>185</sup> 'Facsimile of Spare Rib Manifesto'.

advertisements were also cut.<sup>186</sup> In keeping with this new approach, from 1975 onwards *Spare Rib* was increasingly focussed on international affairs, refusing to remain neutral on political issues.<sup>187</sup>

By 1982, *Spare Rib* had already been anthologised by Penguin Books in ‘The *Spare Rib* Reader’, a sign of the influence and status it had achieved in its first ten years of publication.<sup>188</sup> More recently, in May 2015, the British Library recognised the historical importance of the publication and made every issue of the magazine available to be ‘viewed by anyone online for free.’<sup>189</sup> They also curated a website featuring selected extracts as well as articles written by former contributors, academics and activists. The website provides a link to the online platform, Jisc, hosting all 239 issues, with a search function which allows users to search and locate material easily.<sup>190</sup> Prior to this digitisation project, the complete *Spare Rib* collection was only available in hard copy in a limited selection of archives, primarily the British Library reading rooms. By June 2016, however, the British Library was forced to redact around twenty percent of the content on its *Spare Rib* website due to ongoing copyright issues.<sup>191</sup> According to the Project Lead, the magazine had over 4,700 individual contributors, rendering the task of securing copyright permissions for each article published an extremely difficult process.<sup>192</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, results are based on the digital archive material and are therefore not exhaustive. Nevertheless, the digital archive offers a thorough and important insight into the women’s movement in Britain and worldwide and can provide an interesting point of comparison between *off our backs* and *Vindicación Feminista*.

### Transatlantic connections: *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*

Firstly, there were undoubtedly close links between *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*. As the ‘most important bulletin board for the movement in Britain,’ *Spare Rib* became a

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<sup>186</sup> Campbell, ‘Boning up on Spare Rib’, p. 18.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Marsha Rowe, *‘Spare Rib’ Reader* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982).

<sup>189</sup> ‘Spare Rib Magazine Goes Online for the First Time’ <<https://www.bl.uk/press-releases/2015/may/spare-rib-magazine-goes-online-for-the-first-time>> [Accessed 25/08/2017].

<sup>190</sup> ‘Journal Archives: Spare Rib’ <<https://journalarchives.jisc.ac.uk/britishlibrary/sparerib>> [Accessed 25/08/2017].

<sup>191</sup> ‘Update on the Digital Spare Rib: Important Information for researchers’ <<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/socialscience/2016/04/update-on-the-digital-spare-rib-important-information-for-researchers-and-contributors.html>> [Accessed 28/08/17].

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

consistent and reliable source for international publications, including *off our backs*.<sup>193</sup> 'Info from Spare Rib' appears frequently in the international news section of *off our backs* over the years.<sup>194</sup> The reverse is also true: *off our backs* was a regular source for *Spare Rib*'s 'Foreign News'. There is, however an interesting distinction in this interaction. It would appear that *Spare Rib* used material from *off our backs* to provide specific updates on the women's movement in the USA.<sup>195</sup> *Off our backs*, by contrast, drew on material from *Spare Rib* more broadly. It served not only as a mouthpiece for the British women's liberation movement, but for international feminist news. The frequent use of *Spare Rib* articles in a wide range of *off our backs* articles suggests it was valued as a reputable international news outlet.

A direct dialogue between the two publications is further revealed by frequent cross references as well as in explicit letters and editorials. In an open letter published in *off our backs* in 1980, the *Spare Rib* collective stress that many of their group 'read *off our backs* avidly', lamenting the occasional delay in receiving the magazines, 'your issues take some time to reach us in Britain'.<sup>196</sup> The letter aims to set the record straight on *Spare Rib*'s connection to American radical feminism. The authors are keen to discredit any suggestion that *Spare Rib*, or British feminists in general, were 'willing to sell out our feminism to the left' or were in any way 'ignorant and mistrustful of American radical feminists'.<sup>197</sup> Motivated by their frustration at Leah Fritz's *Dreamers and Dealers*, the *Spare Rib* collective criticise Fritz's sweeping commentary on 'the state of European feminism'.<sup>198</sup> They argue that Fritz was ill-informed and based her limited knowledge of Europe on, 'a short visit and a few letters'.<sup>199</sup> The collective state that *Spare Rib* had been misrepresented and that 'European feminism' was not a homogenous category, pointing to some of the difficulties in the cultural and linguistic translation of feminist ideas. Despite many shared values and goals, this instance highlights the ways in which feminism could be somewhat 'lost in translation', even between English speaking countries. Furthermore, it exemplifies the problematic nature of presenting a unified 'international women's

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<sup>193</sup> Polly Toynbee '23 July 1982 A Day with Spare Rib', in *Women of the Revolution: Forty Years of Feminism*, ed. by Kira Cochrane (London: Guardian Books, 2012), p. 152.

<sup>194</sup> See 'info from Spare Rib' in, for example, 'Belgium: Abortion Trials', *off our backs*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1982, p. 16. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25774202](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25774202). and 'Japan: Rape Belittled', *off our backs*, vol. 15, no. 8, 1985, p. 16. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25775576](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25775576).

<sup>195</sup> 'USA: some revolution?', *Spare Rib*, August 1976, p. 19.

<sup>196</sup> 'Spare Rib collective', *off our backs*, vol. 10, No. 8, 1980, p. 26.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

movement', without recognising the distinct approaches and challenges faced by women according to their individual circumstances.

### ***Spare Rib* and Spain**

The first notable mention of Spain in our corpus of *Spare Rib* is in the March 1975 issue.<sup>200</sup> Spain appears twice in the same 'Shortlist' section, raising two key themes of abortion and amnesty campaigns which would recur throughout *Spare Rib*'s reports on Spain. Firstly, a reader asks 'what do we know about abortion laws in Spain?'.<sup>201</sup> Secondly, they report on an upcoming Amnesty International conference organised in solidarity with women from over 90 countries. Once again, as in the case of *off our backs*, Lidia Falcón has been brought to the attention of the *Spare Rib* collective via the Amnesty International campaign for her release. 'Lydia [sic] Falcón' is described as 'a Spanish feminist and lawyer' who had been tortured and was awaiting trial.<sup>202</sup> Readers are informed of the first planning meeting to organise in solidarity and provided with a phone number for further information, which recurs as a common method for putting activists in touch with each other. These first two references are indicative of the key issues which had reached an international audience, abortion laws and treatment of women prisoners, recurrent themes in almost every article on Spain.

The topic is taken up two months later by Mary Haigh in her article, 'Spain: Where only Silence is Safe'.<sup>203</sup> At half a page in length, this marks the first significant attention to feminism in Spain.<sup>204</sup> The piece provides a detailed account of Falcón's imprisonment as a 'terrorist', noting that no formal charges had been filed to date.<sup>205</sup> They list Falcón's achievements, including her extensive writing on women in relation to the family, labour and society, which have 'appeared in all major magazines and newspapers'.<sup>206</sup> Her latest book *Cartas a una idiota española* is described as a 'current bestseller' rendering her the leading 'theoretician of the emerging Spanish women's liberation movement'.<sup>207</sup> Haigh stated that from a Spanish perspective, a feminist 'is almost always first a socialist' alluding to the recurring 'single' or 'double' militancy debate without elaborating further. She paints a picture of an oppressive political climate, in which Falcón stands out as an

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<sup>200</sup> Jill Nicholls, 'Short List', in *Spare Rib*, Issue 33, March 1975, pp. 6-7.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>203</sup> Marie Haigh, 'Spain: Where only silence is safe', *Spare Rib*, Issue 35, May 1975, p. 22

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> 'Letters to a Spanish idiot', *Ibid.*

anomaly for speaking out: 'In a country where only silence is safe, Falcón's words are everywhere.'<sup>208</sup> The article closes with information on a 'week of international solidarity with these and all Spanish political prisoners' to take place from April 26- May 1 1975. The contact details of the Spanish Solidarity Committee in London are provided.<sup>209</sup> From this first reference, Spanish feminist activity appears to be dominated by the 'omnipresent' Falcón. These extracts suggest that *Spare Rib*, like *off our backs*, became aware of her work through the Amnesty International campaign which focussed on her release from prison. Falcón acts as a powerful symbol for the oppression of Spanish women and a rallying point for international solidarity.

### ***Spare Rib* and *Vindicación Feminista***

*Vindicación Feminista* makes its first appearance in *Spare Rib*'s November 1976 issue, in the 'Review' section.<sup>210</sup> The reviewer highlights several themes from *Vindicación Feminista*'s first issue: 'from women guerrilla fighters in the Sahara to Spain's economic situation and international politics', a topic which had also caught the attention of *off our backs*.<sup>211</sup> They also state that the magazine provides practical information, including the names and addresses of women's groups. Whilst acknowledging the presence of 'some very interesting articles' on the key topics of abortion, divorce, industrial strikes and female prisoners, the review contains certain criticisms.<sup>212</sup> The layout is judged as 'rather monotonous' and overall lacking in 'visual support'.<sup>213</sup> The reviewer predicts that the writing style, which 'tends to be a bit obscure and long-winded' will threaten its mass appeal.<sup>214</sup> Lack of engaging visuals serve to emphasise the 'glossy full page colour ads for soap and perfume', a feature which the reviewer deems worrying.<sup>215</sup> Finally, they concede that 'in a country like Spain with a heavily patriarchal culture backed up by an authoritarian church and state', the publication of 'such an outspoken magazine, with strong, libertarian and feminist ideals' is 'an exciting breakthrough'.<sup>216</sup> Ultimately, the first impression *Spare Rib*'s readership receive of the Spanish publication is a decidedly mixed review. The reviewer creates links between *Vindicación Feminista* and *Spare Rib*'s

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Begonia Tamarit, 'journals and articles', *Spare Rib*, Issue 52, November 1976, p. 25.

<sup>211</sup> For similar *off our backs* article see Jan, 'Sahara: Women Fighting for Freedom' *off our backs*, vol. 6, no. 7, 1976, pp. 6-7., JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25784400](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25784400).

<sup>212</sup> Tamarit, 'journals and articles', *Spare Rib*, p. 25.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

mainly British readership, by providing the magazines price in Spanish and British currencies as well as a contact address, thus facilitating subscriptions from the UK. However, the format and production of the *Vindicación Feminista* is criticised. This particular criticism seems particularly strong as it fails to account for the financial restraints placed on *Vindicación Feminista* and does not acknowledge the fact the *Spare Rib* included similarly 'glossy' advertisements in their early years in print.

In line with this early criticism, it appears that *Spare Rib* kept greater distance from the Spanish publication throughout the years than *off our backs* did. A case in point is the July 1977 feature, 'We are all criminals: Women's Liberation in Spain'.<sup>217</sup> The authors, Anita Bennett and Jill Nicholls, wrote their piece '...after talking with women from Barcelona and Majorca and with each other.'<sup>218</sup> The authors' assessment of the Spanish women's movement reads as a mixed review. Initially, they celebrate the 'burgeoning women's liberation movement' which has 'exploded onto the scene' and 'flourished' since Franco's death.<sup>219</sup> The authors argue that the movement in Spain had arrived with 'greater force and seriousness than in any other European country' attributing this to women having been 'so oppressed for the last 40 years'.<sup>220</sup> Once again, Falcón and *Vindicación Feminista* take centre stage, both visually and in references within the text (see Figure 1). The article highlights the work of the 'Colectivo', founded by Falcón in Barcelona, as one of the most 'active tendencies in the movement'.<sup>221</sup> *Vindicación Feminista* is described as a monthly magazine with a circulation of around 30,000, organised primarily by Falcón and 'a couple of other women from the Colectivo'.<sup>222</sup> Yet, the article makes it clear that *Vindicación Feminista* is not the official journal of the Colectivo, who '...as a whole don't feel represented by it.'<sup>223</sup> The adultery case of María Ángela Muñoz is the main feminist issue to receive attention. The authors bemoan Spain's 'male-dominated press' which had portrayed the case from the 'victimised' father's perspective.

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<sup>217</sup> Anita Bennett and Jill Nicholls, 'We are all criminals', *Spare Rib*, Issue 60, July 1977, pp. 19-21.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



Figure 1. Source: Anita Bennett and Jill Nicholls 'We are all criminals', *Spare Rib*, Issue 60, July 1977, p. 20.

Finally, the article firmly links Spanish feminism to the 'international women's movement'. They describe international feminist activism as 'instrumental' in the release of Eva Forest.<sup>224</sup> There is a clear sense of feminist ideas travelling in one direction: 'the international movement has also contributed considerably to the growth of feminist consciousness inside Spain', a statement which is not substantiated with any concrete examples.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, the tone of the article appears to be critical of radical Spanish feminists, ostensibly Falcón and the 'Colectivo', claiming that they leave much of the 'hard grind' of legal campaigning to the more liberal 'reformists'.<sup>226</sup> The overall impression, then, emphasises the influence of 'international' feminist thought in Spain whilst portraying the Spanish women's movement as deeply divided.

*Vindicación Feminista* reappears in a 1977 article on 'Launching Herstory' in what seems to be the first account of a direct exchange between the two publications at the European Feminist Press conference.<sup>227</sup> Representatives from seven European countries came together in Paris in March of that year to discuss their shared experiences. *Spare Rib* attended as representatives from the UK and *Vindicación Feminista* and *Dones de la Mar* from Spain alongside, reportedly, around two thousand women. According to the account, the attendees ended the conference stating their 'intentions to keep more in touch' and

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Di, 'Launching Herstory', *Spare Rib*, Issue 58, May 1977, pp. 19-21.

to meet again in October with a view to ‘setting up a feminist news network’.<sup>228</sup> Clearly, there was a desire for a more joined up approach to transnational communication between activists and publications. Part of this aim was to make direct links to comparable feminist news publications across geographical and linguistic boundaries. Interestingly, this is the final mention of *Vindicación Feminista* to appear in the *Spare Rib* corpus. In line with the initial review of *Vindicación Feminista*, *Spare Rib* seems to retain a certain distance and critical view of the magazine’s work. *Off our backs*, as the following section will demonstrate, offers a contrasting perspective on communication between feminist publications.

## II.II. *off our backs*

*Off our backs*, founded in 1970, has been the longest running North American feminist news journal to date and regarded as one of the most widely respected publications of the international women’s liberation movement. The scale of its readership rendered it ‘the most widely circulated and best-known newspaper’ of the Anglophone ‘...radical feminist “family”’.<sup>229</sup> A 1974 survey of feminist editors, for example, cited *off our backs* as the most well regarded and best-produced publication in the feminist movement.<sup>230</sup> From its early stages, the publication was widely available on newsstands of its native Washington DC, gradually expanding into cities throughout the country via feminist bookstores.<sup>231</sup> *Off our backs* signalled a break from organisations on the ‘New Left’, from which many of its founders had originated. Co-founder Marilyn Webb had been working for the *New York Guardian*, a prominent left-wing newspaper, but grew increasingly frustrated at the ‘consistent blackout on feminist news’.<sup>232</sup> *Off our backs* was part of a burgeoning ‘women’s liberation’ print culture which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The exact number of radical feminist publications is unknown but each tended to be short-lived and financially unstable.<sup>233</sup> Like Webb, many members of magazine collectives had

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>229</sup> Kathleen L. Endres, Therese L. Lueck, eds, *Women’s Periodicals in the United States: Social and Political Issues* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. 266.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>232</sup> Marilyn Webb, ‘Marilyn Webb: Co-founder of oob’, *off our backs*, February 1980, p. 5.

<sup>233</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, ‘Feminist News Media’ in *Encyclopedia of Journalism* (California: SAGE Publications, 2009), p. 579.

grown disillusioned with established left-wing organisations, believing that a socialist revolution would not necessarily bring about an end to patriarchy.<sup>234</sup>

Martha Allen has identified the key elements which characterised radical feminist journalism including, ‘women speaking for themselves; preference for the collective structure, a non-competitive sharing perspective; analysis of the media’s role toward women and their media[...] an “open forum” emphasis, infusion of information not related in other media; and an activist orientation.’<sup>235</sup> In line with these characteristics, *off our backs* was collectively edited and produced. Throughout most of its history, the journal adopted an iconic lowercase headline style and black and white print.<sup>236</sup> The result was a ‘Do it Yourself’ rather than polished style, in comparison to more commercial contemporaries such as *Ms.* magazine. The collective’s lack of formal structure aligned with their overall vision of deconstructing patriarchal hierarchies of power.<sup>237</sup> From its earliest stages, *off our backs* rejected individual leadership in favour of loosely defined, shared roles.<sup>238</sup> The collective itself was ever-changing and factional in-fighting led to a number of controversies and staff changes throughout its years in print. Members who presented themselves to the wider press or external organisations as spokespeople or leaders faced expulsion. Webb herself was ultimately ousted from the collective, as a prominent case in point.<sup>239</sup> Despite its many controversies and financial instability, *off our backs* proved to have more staying power than any of its contemporaries.

Like *Vindicación Feminsita*, the *off our backs* collective declared a commitment to internationalism in their manifesto. Operating under the tagline ‘a women’s news journal’, *off our backs* provided international news coverage as well as information on North American and global women’s movements. Co-founder Marlene Wickes explained the significance of the news journal’s title, linking North American women’s liberation to a global movement: ‘We wanted to be off our backs in terms of being the backbone of *America or every society and culture with no power.*’<sup>240</sup> Transnational solidarity, then,

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<sup>234</sup> David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America* (Los Angeles: J.P Tarcher, 1981), p. 230.

<sup>235</sup> Sterling, ‘Feminist News Media’, p. 600.

<sup>236</sup> Endres and Lueck, *Women’s Periodicals in the United States*, p. 271.

<sup>237</sup> Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms*, p. 230.

<sup>238</sup> Webb, ‘Marilyn Webb’, p. 5.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> Alice Echols, *Daring to be bad: Radical feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 343. (Emphasis added).

was an embedded principle from the publication's founding. The core aims included: 'to provide news and information about women's lives and feminist activism; to educate the public about the status of women around the world, to serve as a forum for feminist ideas and theory; to seek social justice and equality for women worldwide.'<sup>241</sup> News coverage was imbued with a strong purpose rooted in social justice and equality for women worldwide, echoing the 'second wave' feminist rallying call: 'sisterhood is global'. However, as this chapter will highlight, emphasising shared experiences across cultures and languages under the unifying category of 'woman' was problematic and often overlooked the voices of Spanish women.

### ***Off our backs* and Translation**

Clearly, communication between women across different contexts proved to be a challenge and the politics of translation as the case of *The Hite Report* exemplifies, *in off our back*.<sup>242</sup> According to *off our backs*, in Spain, alongside Germany, France and Japan, the translations were originally carried out by men and deemed 'inadequate'.<sup>243</sup> As a result, Hite herself contacted women in each country to 're-translate or make extensive corrections' of the translations.<sup>244</sup> The Spanish translation in particular was 'not merely inadequate' but has allegedly been '...manipulated to reflect male ideas about women's sexuality.'<sup>245</sup> In response, a feminist translator had sent the Spanish publisher a corrected version which was rejected as commercially unviable.<sup>246</sup> Protestors from women's groups, amongst them 'Colectivo Feminista', carried out protests with banners stating 'Down with macho publishers. We will fight against those who want to commercialise our sexuality and our struggle'.<sup>247</sup> According to the report, the Spanish publisher agreed to issue an inexpensive edition using a translation by 'another feminist, Carmen Grau' as a direct result of this pressure.<sup>248</sup> Though presented as a win for Spanish feminists, the article brings to light the many challenges faced in attempting to share feminist works across languages and cultures. Translation was clearly essential to an equal exchange between feminists and the role of translator was a powerful one in contexts of developing international movements. In the following issue, a response from Shere Hite and Andrew

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<sup>241</sup> 'Off our backs collective' <<http://offourbacks.org>> [Accessed on 04/06/2017].

<sup>242</sup> 'Hite Protests', *off our backs*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1978, pp. 2-3. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25792643](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25792643).

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

Dworkin appear in the letters section. Hite describes the ‘instant understanding and solidarity I found with women all over world who usually did not consider themselves “feminists”’.<sup>249</sup> This immediate connection allowed for some ‘decent and sometimes wonderful translations in ten countries, with dignified covers and publicity in eight countries’ which she describes as a ‘miracle’. Dworkin goes further in her response to the translation issue, stating ‘in the case of Hite, her work has been violated in Italy and elsewhere’.<sup>250</sup>

The importance of translation in feminist exchange is foregrounded in *off our backs*, as the collective began to receive an increasing number of publications and magazine cuttings from various sources, becoming an established forum for international ‘second wave’ feminist activism and news. In a 1983 announcement section, for example, ‘Chicken Lady’ notes that *off our backs* receives feminist publications in French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Finnish and Swedish.<sup>251</sup> As a result, she calls for volunteers, ‘fluent’ in any of the mentioned language who could read and occasionally translate these materials.<sup>252</sup> This highlights an increasingly clear awareness of the importance of translation in connecting activists across geographical boundaries.

### ***Off our backs* and Spain**

In its first years of publication, Spain received very little attention in *off our backs*. Between 1970-1973 there are no full length articles dedicated to Spanish women or the situation in their country. In the journal’s first edition, February 1970, Spain receives a cursory mention as ‘Frankie, former Generalissimo of Spain’ was a current prisoner in the fictional ‘Criminal Male Mind Revamp Center’.<sup>253</sup> Limited representations of Spain in this period are often framed in a narrative which associates Catholicism with oppression, betraying sectarian undertones. Spanish women often appear in a passive role, with their unique experiences remaining unacknowledged, as Spain is listed amongst countries

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<sup>249</sup> Shere Hite and Andrea Dworkin, ‘Feminist Writers: Publish & Perish’, *off our backs*, vol. 8, no. 5, 1978, p. 22. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25772814](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772814).

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Chicken Lady, ‘Chicken Lady’, *off our backs*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1983, p. 31. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25774830](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25774830).

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Heidi, et al., ‘WOMEN POWER FOR ALWAYS’, *off our backs*, vol. 1, no. 9/10, 1970, pp. 11-12. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25771107](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25771107).

deemed 'usually less developed and progressive than their protestant counterparts.'<sup>254</sup>

The first significant space dedicated to Spanish women comes in February 1974 in an article titled 'not so sunny spain'.<sup>255</sup> The article includes the following introduction:

*'Sometime in August we received a letter from a woman in Spain asking for some sample copies of off our backs. Aware of the repressive political situation in Spain we sent the oob's [sic] in a plain brown wrapper along with a letter asking about the state of female liberation there. Four months later we received this letter from her nephew. (The following is a translation).'*

Given the tenuous nature of this source, it is clear that there was a lack of direct, established contacts between *off our backs* and Spain and reports rely instead on second-hand accounts. No further background information on the 'nephew' is given, short of his self-description as somewhat 'conservative'.<sup>256</sup> He describes Lidia Falcón as one of Spain's 'most enthusiastic feminists', which sets the tone for future references to Falcón and her role in Spanish feminism as depicted in *of our backs*.<sup>257</sup> From this point onward, few articles on Spain or the Spanish women's movement appear without reference to Falcón. As in *Spare Rib*, Falcón appears as a convenient figurehead for feminism in Spain, although rarely on her own terms, in her own words.

In the same article, Mecca Reliance condemns the author's 'patent chauvinism' in his assertion that 'in Spain, there is no realistic concept of Women's Liberation and the feminism of its associates'.<sup>258</sup> Whilst acknowledging the limitations under which feminists operate in Spain, Reliance argues that 'female liberation is very much alive but very underground in Spain'.<sup>259</sup> Her source for this statement is a *Ms.* Magazine article from October 1972, which featured an 'anonymous communication from a Spanish woman'.<sup>260</sup> She gives no further details and does not include any quotes from the Spanish woman herself. Once again, it is clear that there is little information available on the situation in Spain as she draws on a source obtained from another publication. Although the original *Ms.* archive was unavailable for consultation, further information about its contents can be

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<sup>254</sup> Mecca Reliance, 'Not so Sunny Spain', *off our backs*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1974, p. 9. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25783770](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25783770).

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

gleaned from the journal *Hispania*.<sup>261</sup> The Ms. article was entitled ‘The Birthplace of Machismo’ and had been written by a Spanish women who preferred to remain anonymous ‘because of possible political harassment’.<sup>262</sup> She refers to the ‘Sección Femenina’, Spain’s only officially recognised women’s group, and the frustrations of attempting to build a Spanish Women’s Liberation Movement under these circumstances.<sup>263</sup> Despite Reliance’s efforts to convey a sense of solidarity in recognising the work of Spanish feminists, she fails to bring the voices of Spanish activists directly into her narrative. This silence has broader implications, pointing to an imbalance in the power relations between Spanish and North American activists. Prior to the publication of *Vindicación Feminista* in 1976, *off our backs* had limited contact with women active in the Spanish women’s movements.

Furthering the narrative of Spanish women as oppressed and lacking agency, Spain makes an appearance in ‘women repressed in...’, an international news section, alongside Chile and West Germany.<sup>264</sup> Of the three countries, Spain is painted as most in need of international solidarity. The information provided in the article comes from ‘direct reports’ from unnamed ‘sources in Spain’, presumably anonymised for their safety.<sup>265</sup> The collective had received reports of ‘massive arrests, torture of jailed women and persecution of feminists and their families in Spain.’<sup>266</sup> Once again, Falcón stands out as ‘a leader of the Women’s Liberation Movement in Spain’ and ‘frequent public speaker’ on feminist themes.<sup>267</sup> According to the source, Falcón ‘has been a feminist for many years’ and arrested several times for her opposition to the government.<sup>268</sup> The article concludes that ‘our Spanish sisters need our support’ and urges readers to call or write to the Spanish embassy to enquire about Falcón’s condition. They call for a ‘general information/protest campaign’ alongside a more targeted approach to specifically aid the ‘feminist community, legal community and Spanish departments around the country’.<sup>269</sup> Spain receives the most prominent call to action in the entire issue and by extension Spanish women appear as victims desperately in need of international support. From 1974, Falcón’s and Forest’s arrests and subsequent mistreatment served as an international

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<sup>261</sup> Winston A Reynolds, ‘Hispanism in Ms. Magazine’, *Hispania*, vol. 57, no. 4, 1974, pp. 965-969. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/339776](http://www.jstor.org/stable/339776), p. 965.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> Ann, ‘\_\_\_ in Spain’, *off our backs*, vol. 4, no. 11, 1974, p. 19. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25772036](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772036).

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

rallying point for feminist solidarity campaigns. Both published writers in the Spanish language, once again accounts in *off our backs* fail to translate their words to an English speaking audience. Without translation, an understanding of Spanish women's experiences, the basis of a genuine transnational solidarity as set out in the *off our backs* manifesto, becomes difficult.

By contrast, an article published later in 1975 foregrounds the voice of Eva Forest. Spain began to receive significantly more coverage in the pages of *off our backs* from 1975, at the early stages of what would become the Transition. Between 1975-1976 the content of these articles centres on the situation in Spanish women's prisons. In February 1975, for example, under the heading 'torture in Spain' they list further details of Lidia Falcón's and Eva Forest's torture and imprisonment.<sup>270</sup> This time, the collective have received news from an unidentified 'source in Spain' informing them of the situation in Spanish prisons.<sup>271</sup> In this instance, a translation of Eva Forest's statement forms the main body of the article, sent to *off our backs* by the 'NOW International Feminist Task Force'. The translation process is unclear and the article does not name a translator. Forest's account of torture is graphic and impactful. She details the 'continuous humiliation' and 'beating' she experienced over seventeen interrogations, whilst in police custody. The authors of the piece follow this emotive account with a call to action, including a petition for Spanish Women Political Prisoners which states 'We will not turn away from our sisters in need'.<sup>272</sup> In the following issue, an update on the 'crisis situation of the Spanish women' is provided, with details of an Amnesty International campaign.<sup>273</sup> The article reiterates the call to contact the Spanish embassy in Washington in protest.<sup>274</sup> Both articles tend to frame Spanish women as victims of an oppressive regime and legal system, in desperate need of international intervention. In the first instance, however, more space is given to Forest's own account of her experience. The prominence of Forest's statement, albeit in translation and lacking in context, represents an effort to foreground the voice of Forest over the North American reporters. Despite this, her description of 'torture', 'interrogation' and 'humiliation' at the hands of a group of 'young men' do not counter the impression that she and other Spanish feminists are victims.

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<sup>270</sup> 'Torture in Spain', *off our backs*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1975, p 5. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25772101](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772101).

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> Bernice, 'Keeping an Eye on Iwy in the Midwest', *off our backs*, vol. 5, no. 6, 1975, p. 23. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25772288](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772288).

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

Interestingly, similar solidarity campaigns can be traced back to international mobilisation during the Spanish Civil War. A further article published in 1975 shares details about ‘first wave’ North American feminists and their support for Spanish women.<sup>275</sup> Domestic activism was closely tied to solidarity campaigns, for example, ‘Julie’ was ‘one of many Americans who had become involved in the political activity concerning Spain’ during the Spanish civil war.<sup>276</sup> The two main protagonists, Ethel and Julie ‘became intensely involved in the support of the Spanish people’ by ‘collecting signatures on petitions urging the US government to take a stand against the Franco rebellion and raising funds to aid the anti-fascist fight’.<sup>277</sup> In fact, the identification felt by many ‘radical women and men’ with the Spanish Republican cause ‘led them to a more general and militant anti-fascist position’.<sup>278</sup> By this account, Ethel and Julie were part of an international solidarity movement which politicised a number of North American women on an unprecedented scale. *Off our backs* portrays these women rallying together the 1930s, in support of their ‘oppressed’ Spanish sisters in very similar terms to the context of 1970s. In articles reflecting these two separate periods, Spanish women lack agency and appear as politicising concepts for North American activists to rally around.

### **Off our backs and *Vindicación Feminista***

From 1976, Jan Braumuller appears as the main author of Spanish features in *off our backs*. Although little detail about Braumuller herself can be gleaned from the publication or secondary material, it is clear that she had access to Spanish and closely followed *Vindicación Feminista*. Between 1976-1979 the majority of her articles appear to be based on her contact with the Spanish publication, which she consistently credits in a footnote ‘info from *Vindicación Feminista*’.<sup>279</sup> The first instance is in the October 1976 issue, which is essentially a translated summary of *Vindicación Feminista*’s first ‘Documento’ feature on Saharan women.<sup>280</sup> Braumuller credits Soledad Balaguer’s ‘Sahara: las mujeres luchan por su libertad’ and makes her role as translator clear, stating ‘the quotes which appear in the article are my direct translation of the material contained in ‘Sahara: Las mujeres

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<sup>275</sup> Elli Meeropol and Beth Schneider, ‘The Ethel Rosenberg Story’, *off our backs*, vol. 5, no. 8, 1975, pp. 5-23. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25772313](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772313)., p. 5.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Jan, ‘Sahara: Women Fighting for Freedom’, *off our backs*, vol. 6, no. 7, 1976, pp. 6-7. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25784400](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25784400)., p. 7.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

luchan por su libertad' by Soledad Balaguer.<sup>281</sup> The article argues that Saharan women are 'totally conscious' of their struggle on two fronts: the liberation of their country and their own liberation as an oppressed class. When asked how women in Spain could support their Saharan 'sisters', the response was: 'You ought to continue in your struggle for your liberation as women. This is the best help. We too are helping you while we fight for our liberation.'<sup>282</sup> *Spare Rib*, *off our backs* and *Vindicación Feminista* seem to use the same Saharan report to position their publications as reaching out beyond 'Western feminism' by connecting with 'third-world' sisters, who despite their differing contexts apparently share common goals. In this way, each individual country is portrayed as part of the larger, collective women's liberation movement.

Indicating a change of tone, more detailed information about feminism in Spain began to appear, reflecting a change in sources. Braumuller's 1977 article on 'Feminism in Spain', for example, presents a much more nuanced account of women's situation in Spain, based entirely on 'info from *Vindicación Feminista*'.<sup>283</sup> She states that the feminist movement in Spain had experienced a 'glorious rebirth after nearly forty years of restless hibernation under Franco's fascist regime'.<sup>284</sup> She recognises the legacy of Spanish feminism prior to the Civil War in a more thoroughly researched report than many previous *off our backs* features on Spain. The article presents an optimistic view on the state of Spanish feminism, as evidenced by the 'rapidly' growing number of women's organisations in the previous five years. Once again, Lidia Falcón takes centre stage and is the only named Spanish feminist in the article. She appears as a representative for 'Colectivo Feminsita' in a report on the round table discussion which took place amongst Spanish feminists representing different factions. Taking on a leadership or 'representative' role and speaking for a collective in this way, was a deeply contentious issue for the *off our backs* collective, as previously mentioned. This portrayal of Falcón as a spokesperson may have contributed towards more critical attitudes towards her which appear in later issues of *off our backs*.

Braumuller draws on *Vindicación Feminsita* to state her advocacy for a 'single militancy' approach to feminism. She describes the split between 'double' and 'single' militancy as a

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Jan, 'Feminism in Spain', *off our backs*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1977, p. 4, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25792301](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25792301).

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

‘dead weight on the feminist movement in Spain’.<sup>285</sup> She states that ‘the strength and perseverance of the feminist movement at this point in its development depend upon autonomy and single militancy’, echoing the message advocated by Falcón and *Vindicación Feminista*.<sup>286</sup> The article emphasises the common challenges faced by Spanish and North American women, stating ‘the major problem which confronts the feminist movement in Spain (as in the US and other countries) is precisely how to coordinate all the woman-energy and how to work with women of diverse political and class backgrounds.’<sup>287</sup> She draws clear parallels between Spanish and North American feminisms, stating that when Spanish women attempt to organise ‘outside the confines of their respective political parties’ they fail ‘to be taken seriously, if at all (sound familiar?!)’. Her parenthesis engages readership in an intimate exchange, building a sense of solidarity and suggesting that women experience the same attitudes regardless of geographical location. She also recognises the diversity in approaches within Spanish and US feminism ‘‘[there are] numerous independent feminist organisations in Spain which are as varied in degrees of reformism and radicalism as our US groups’.<sup>288</sup> Once again, the connectedness of international women’s movements aims and experiences are emphasised as opposed to the clear contextual differences of each movement. The impression given is one of a global sisterhood, where women’s liberation movements in Spain and the USA share common purpose.

In contrast to Braumuller’s close references and apparent alignment with the principles of *Vindicación Feminista*, the next feature on the Spanish women’s movement takes a more critical view of the magazine. ‘Feminism and Spain’s political revival’ appears as a three-page feature in the April 1980 issue, giving a summary of some of the central themes in contemporary Spanish feminism as well as some historical context. Braumuller’s usual sign off as ‘jan’ does not appear in the article, implying her lack of involvement in the piece. The authorship of the article is instead framed as a process of collaboration and translation. Highlighting the importance of informal, personal networks of communication in this exchange, the introduction states: ‘Marie-Claude Riguardias, a French woman living in Spain working with Spanish feminists sent four articles to an American friend Carolyn Morrissey. Carolyn translated the articles for off our backs and provided an

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

introduction.<sup>289</sup> Morrissey's introduction, in turn, draws on multiple sources, without explicitly naming individuals or organisations. Translation is firmly established as a collective act of consciousness raising as well as a tool for facilitating solidarity: 'the articles have been edited to make the translations read more easily, hopefully without losing the author's intent.'<sup>290</sup> She states her sources as a series of interviews with Spanish feminists in the summer of 1978 in Madrid, Valencia and Seville, Spanish magazines published 1975-1980 as well as a range of print material including flyers, pamphlets and letters. She also cites 'some of the many books about feminism' which had appeared in Spain over the previous five years, without offering specific authors or references.<sup>291</sup> This represents an effort to bring awareness of the Spanish feminist movement to a wider transnational audience. Morrissey, however, misses a vital opportunity to bring the actual voices and texts of Spanish feminist writers to an English-speaking readership.

In terms of international links, the article recognises that 'the feminist movement in Spain is different from the US and other European movements', primarily due to the politics of the Transition.<sup>292</sup> Women's legal status in particular is described as 'worse than in many other European countries'.<sup>293</sup> At the same time, it seems to emphasise the influence of North American and European feminism on the development of the Spanish women's movement, stating 'feminist ideas from Europe and the U.S invaded the Iberian peninsula between 1970 and 1975.'<sup>294</sup> While the article mentions two Spanish magazines, there are no suggested readings or Spanish feminist texts mentioned in stark contrast to comparable features on North American or European women's movements in *Vindicación Feminista*.<sup>295</sup> Falcón and Alcalde's 'Ediciones Feministas' Spanish language book series, for example, go unmentioned. Falcón's statement in a later interview with *off our backs* that North American readers know very little about Spanish feminist texts or theory rings true in this feature.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> 'Feminism & Spain's Political Revival', *off our backs*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1980, pp. 2-23. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2577321](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2577321), p. 2.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> '*Vindicación Feminista* Barcelona, July 1976 Oct. 1978, and special issues since then...Xiana, Barcelona, one issue only, Aug 1979', *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>296</sup> See Lidia Falcón et al. 'International Interview: FEMINISM IN SPAIN', *off our backs*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1983, pp. 8-9. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25774903](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25774903).

This article also marks the first direct criticism of *Vindicación Feminista* to feature in *off our backs*. Highlighting the ongoing debate on the autonomy of women's groups, Morrissey states that 'the democratization of Spain forced feminists to define themselves solely as feminists or work within political parties', remarking that most Spanish women tended towards 'double militancy'.<sup>297</sup> She describes radical Spanish feminists, in particular members of the 'Colectivos' and later, the Partido Feminista (both co-founded by Falcón) as '...more inclined to theoretical discussions (with all the risks involved for the groups' cohesion) than to organising the fight'.<sup>298</sup> Singling out *Vindicación Feminista* and its founders in particular, it states '...this tendency is obvious when reading *Vindicación Feminista*, a magazine meant to publicise the radical theories and demands'.<sup>299</sup> She claimed that the magazine focussed on 'lesbianism, prostitution and drug addiction', which were not topics 'with which Spanish women can easily identify'.<sup>300</sup> Whether this criticism came from Morrissey directly or had been communicated through her sources, there is no attempt to counter this with evidence or direct quotations from a radical feminist perspective. As a result, *off our back's* readership do not get a balanced view or hear directly from Spanish women on their own terms.

It is only in 1983, in fact, that a direct exchange between *off our backs* and the protagonists they feature takes place, almost ten years after the initial 'not so sunny spain' article. Rather than simply writing about Spanish women and key activists, Lidia Falcón has a chance to present her experience and view on the state of feminism in Spain.<sup>301</sup> The interview, 'conducted in Spanish and translated by Caroline Morrissey', had taken place whilst Falcón was visiting the USA in October 1982.<sup>302</sup> The opening question 'Besides abortion, what issues seem basic to Spanish feminists now?' emphasises the fact that much of the international focus on women's liberation in Spain has centred on abortion.<sup>303</sup> Falcón presents a decidedly negative outlook on the state of Spanish feminism in 1982: 'the majority of women in the movement are not doing anything right now'.<sup>304</sup> From 1978 onwards, she argues, feminist groups found themselves in a 'worsened' state resulting in a growing weariness and many women 'dropping out' of the movement

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<sup>297</sup> 'Feminism & Spain's Political Revival', *off our backs*, p. 2.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> Lidia Falcón et al. 'International Interview: FEMINISM IN SPAIN', *off our backs*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1983, pp. 8-9. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25774903](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25774903).

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

altogether. She attributes the demise of her magazine to the general apathy amongst Spanish feminists and presents a distinctly negative view of the current state of the women's movement.

The article implies that feminist thought and writing travelled in one direction, from the USA to Spain, with no real impression that this is an equal process of exchange. The choice and wording of their questions, for example, 'Is feminist theory from the US known and read in Spain? What is found to be the most interesting and useful?' betrays an assumption that US feminist theory is disseminated, read and relevant to the lives of Spanish women. Falcón describes the lack of Spanish feminist theory, which her magazine *Poder y Libertad* sought to address.<sup>305</sup> She confirms their assumption, in part, stating that 'much more American theory is read in Spain than vice versa'.<sup>306</sup> She mentions Kate Milet, Shulamith Firestone, Betty Friedan and *off our backs* as having reached Spanish audiences. Furthermore, she continues, 'we know what is being written in England, America, France, Italy etc', countries which, as discussed in *Chapter 1*, receive particular attention in *Vindicación Feminista*. By contrast, she argues, North American publishers 'are not interested in the writings of other countries, of France or Italy', highlighting the difficulty in reaching English speaking audiences whilst reinforcing the connections between French, Italian and Spanish feminisms. She ends by emphatically stating 'there is an enormous lack of knowledge on the work we have done'.<sup>307</sup> Throughout the interview, Falcón firmly places *Vindicación Feminista* and Spanish feminism more broadly, alongside Italian and French feminism, as outlined in *Chapter 1*. On the subject of *Vindicación Feminista*, for example, she describes it as 'a magazine like no other in the world that took into account what is being published in France, in Italy'.<sup>308</sup>

The production of this particular article thus raises interesting questions about the power dynamics at play between 'Anglo-American' and Spanish feminisms. Furthermore, an image of protesters (see Figure 2) appears as part of the feature under the caption, 'Spanish women demonstrate for abortions'.<sup>309</sup> The women pictured, however, carry banners with slogans in Italian not Spanish. The image is credited as taken 'from *Vindicacions*', in a misspelling or perhaps attempted Anglicisation of *Vindicación*

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<sup>305</sup> 'Power and Liberty', *Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

*Feminista*, providing no issue number or publication date in the reference. The image had been incorrectly captioned in its ‘translation’ from one publication and language to another. It had originally appeared in a *Vindicación Feminista* article on an Italian abortion rights campaign.<sup>310</sup> Interestingly, *off our backs* recognise this error in their May 1983 issue when prompted by a reader’s letter.<sup>311</sup> The reader highlights that ‘the posters the women carry are in Italian: D’Ora in Poi Decido Io’ (From now on I decide) and ‘Io ho abortito’ (I have had an abortion) so they must be from an Italian women’s demonstration for abortion, even if the picture is from ‘Vindicacions’.’<sup>312</sup> This example indicates a lack of oversight or knowledge of the Spanish language amongst the *off our backs* collective. Whilst they recognise the need for ‘translators’ there are clearly editorial gaps and oversights in reporting on Spanish feminism. This language barrier and the prominence of the English language within ‘second wave’ activism points the difficulties of language in the fostering of international solidarity.



Figure 2. Source: *off our backs* March 1983 p9

<sup>310</sup> Regina Bayo and Paloma Saavedra, ‘Mujeres del Mundo’ *Vindicación Feminista*, Issue 1, July 1976, p. 56.

<sup>311</sup> Rita Arditti ‘Universal Language’, *off our backs*, vol. 13, no. 5, 1983, p. 31. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/25793997](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25793997).

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusions

Whilst neither *off our backs* nor *Spare Rib* appeared to have a systematic approach to reporting on Spain, a number of overarching themes emerge from both publications. Overall, there are far fewer direct references to *Vindicación Feminista* in *Spare Rib* compared to *off our backs*. From an initially mixed review onwards, *Spare Rib* retained a certain distance from *Vindicación Feminista* and did not tend to refer to the magazine as a source in articles on Spanish feminism. In both publications, the mistreatment of Spanish political prisoners acts as an important rallying call for solidarity campaigns both past and present, from the politicisation of North American women involved in Spanish Civil War campaigning to the petitions and protests around women prisoners in the 1970s. Yet, this inclination to portray Spanish women as in constant need of international support reveals the complicated power dynamics in this unequal exchange. In *off our backs*, interest in Spain is initially framed by the memory of Civil War activism and amnesty campaigns with women often depicted as victims of oppressive machismo and Catholicism. As news of Spanish feminist engagement reached *off our backs*, the journal highlighted emerging feminist campaigns, with abortion law as the most frequently referenced issue. In both *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*, Falcón emerges as the central figure of Spanish feminism, gaining more significant attention than any other Spanish activist. There is a clear awareness of translation and articles tend to clearly reference the translators and their sources. The journal also called for contributors to assist in translating foreign feminist publications, highlighting an understanding of the vital role translation played in forging transnational solidarity. Yet, as the example of the mistranslated caption of Italian rather than Spanish protestors demonstrates, there were clearly challenges and limitations in translating feminism between the two publications.

## Conclusion

*Vindicación Feminista* set out to inform and shape the direction of Spanish feminism. The magazine, as evidenced in the first part of this dissertation, operated within a very different context to its contemporaries in the UK and USA, *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*. In 1976, Spain was emerging from forty years of authoritarian rule, international isolation and censorship, the threat of which endured throughout the Transition. Articles in *Vindicación Feminista* were therefore imbued with a sense of urgency and a need to radically change the status of women in Spain. Contributors looked to international women's movements as well as Spain's own feminist legacy for inspiration, providing examples to inform current, domestic debates. Chapter I presented key examples of *Vindicación Feminista*'s approach to advancing the Spanish feminist movement, through drawing on global and historical activism and literature. Prominent contributors such as Marta Pessarrodona and Ana Becciu brought their roles as translators to the fore, championing the work of North American and British literary women. Through 'Sin Miedo a Volar', in particular, 'Anglo-American' literature was foregrounded and key figures such as Wollstonecraft, Plath and Woolf. This feature not only offered examples of women taking risks in their lives, stepping out with the confines of gendered roles but Pessarrodona also showcased extracts of her own and others' translations. Whilst certain Spanish women were also featured, there was an undeniable focus on international texts, representing Pessarrodona and others' desire to 'educate' her Spanish readership on key texts which had been only recently become available, through translation. Yet, as documented in the second part of Chapter I, the magazine also looked to Spain's past, drawing on the forgotten or repressed legacy of women activists. Predominantly focussed on the recovery of recent history, the Second Republic and Civil War, a similar narrative featured in each 'Hemeroteca' article. A key recurring message is that Spanish women in the present, as in the past, would be better served in autonomous 'single militancy' groups rather than adhering to the established political parties. Historical examples served to bolster the magazine's position in the domestic debate of 'single' versus 'double' militancy.

Chapter II has drawn on *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*, as an initial case study, in order to explore the reach and representation of Spanish feminism in North American and British feminist media. Both magazines engaged with the developments of Spanish feminism, although the tone and content varied even from article to article in each publication.

*Spare Rib* mentioned *Vindicación Feminista* in various articles, although did not tend to base articles entirely on information from the Spanish magazine. By contrast, Jan Braumuller from the *off our backs* collective seemed to rely heavily on *Vindicación Feminista* as a key source. In later years, however, *off our backs* seems to take a more critical view of the ‘radical feminism’, which, it was argued, *Vindicación Feminista* represented. As has been evidenced, articles in *off our backs* and *Spare Rib* raised awareness of growing Spanish activism yet often failed to recognise emergent Spanish feminist publications and theory. In emphasising the influence of the ‘international feminist movement’ on Spanish women, *Spare Rib* and *off our backs*, appeared to overlook both historic and current Spanish feminist literature. In both publications, Spanish women are often portrayed as lacking in agency and in need of international intervention and many articles lack direct engagement or input from Spanish women themselves.

*Spare Rib*, *off our backs* and *Vindicación Feminista* proclaimed many shared aims and each collective sought to connect with feminist movements beyond their own national and linguistic contexts. These publications were, as Robin Morgan has stated, ‘an action’.<sup>313</sup> Informing their readerships about women’s movement activity taking place in international settings served as examples to inspire action on a domestic level, and an attempt to shape the direction of their respective movements. By foregrounding key examples from selected countries and presenting women as sharing common goals globally, they sought to strengthen their own ideological approaches and activism in their respective countries. This dissertation has highlighted, however, it was not a straightforward process of exchange. As Sonia Álvarez has stated, ‘...translation is politically and theoretically indispensable’ in the formation of feminist alliances.<sup>314</sup> Whilst *Spare Rib* and *off our backs* both engaged with Spanish feminists and, to an extent, their publications, this dissertation has demonstrated that the pitfalls of transferring content from one publication to another in the name of solidarity have not always been avoided.

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<sup>313</sup> Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>314</sup> Sonia Álvarez, ‘Enacting a Translocal Feminist Politics of Translation’ in Sonia Álvarez et al (eds) *Translocalities/translocalidades: feminist politics of translation in the Latin/a Americas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press: 2014), p. 1.

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