

## What Feminism for Tunisia

by  
Hafidha Chekir

Hafidha Chekir, who teaches law at the University of Tunis and is very active in feminist and syndicate movements, raises some important questions concerning feminism in Tunisia: **What is the nature of feminism in relation to political engagement? Are the two closely linked or is woman's liberation a social project able to attain its aim through legislative, political, economic and educational reforms within women's struggles?**

**In a situation dominated by cultural, political and socio-economic identity crises, what should the priorities be? Can women's oppression disappear through their own struggle, independent from others?**

Hafidha Chekir sees three kinds of feminist movements:

- 1) The reformist which seeks to improve women's condition,
- 2) The radical which goes beyond mere reforms and attacks the foundation of patriarchal society, and
- 3) The ideological which mixes class with sex struggle.

She believes that Tunisia ought to combine all three movements for a more «militant» triple action: a feminist struggle for the acquisition of full citizenship in a democracy and for a change of the socio-economic structures.

She remarks that the Tunisian contribution is not fully applied today due to the strong dominant patriarchal ideology. She sees the misogynous attitudes and, above all, the Islamic revival movement, as the most serious threats to women wanting to achieve equality and obtain their rights.

Finally, she notices that feminist movements in Tunisia appear to have the necessary components for the transformation of the entire society, because their



Hafidha Chekir centre, with Hayet Gribba left and Evelyn Accad, right.

struggle combines the fight against social exploitation, political imperialism and the specific oppression of women.