

participating delegations were indignant at this objection, whereas our proposal to make such an addition was greeted with applause. We were disappointed with Isam's position because she has a long history of struggle. She justified her position by saying that the Amman accord is an internal Palestinian affair. However, we feel that it is as dangerous as Camp David. It is our national duty to take a position side by side with the progressive forces of the world, and to project the correct political line. Among the 11 resolutions issued in Prague, there was a special one about the Middle East, where we were able to add denunciation of the Amman accord.

Current situation in the GUPW

Despite the problems that I mentioned earlier, the GUPW, until 1983, was the most democratic of all the Palestinian unions. It included all political views while at the same time maintaining a patriotic line supportive of the progressive line in the Palestinian revolution. The second and third congresses issued progressive political statements, although the Palestinian arena was experiencing a crisis. The second congress occurred at the time that the line of political settlement was being propounded, but the GUPW statement rejected the political settlement. Progressive Fatah women participated enthusiastically with other progressive organizations, especially the PFLP, to have this statement adopted, rejecting anything that would harm the Palestinian National Charter and cause.

After 1982, all Palestinian institutions were affected. The exodus to Syria and other Arab countries dispersed things. The GUPW general secretariat decided to place its headquarters in Damascus. In the beginning of 1983, things were running smoothly. Then, towards the end of 1983, differences began to emerge once more in the Palestinian arena, affecting all Palestinian institutions. Arafat's visit to Cairo and his subsequent capitulationist policy brought division to the GUPW. Eight members of the GUPW secretariat were in Damascus, five in other Arab countries. There were conflicting decisions because those outside Syria were with Arafat's trend. Those in Damascus were against his policy and with the progressive liberation cause of the Palestinian revolution.

We never wished or called for a split in the GUPW, but tried always to overcome its crisis. However, Arafat's followers were adamant. They made the organizational mistake of trying to collect signatures for holding a meeting of the administrative council, to expel those present in Damascus. They did not succeed, and the PFLP played a prominent role in foiling this attempt. Palestinian women and our cause generally will be the only losers from a split in the GUPW. We would lose international credibility, because the international unions and the socialist countries would find it awkward to deal with two separate unions. The more we preserve the cohesiveness of the GUPW, the better will be our image in world public opinion, especially in terms of our membership in the WIDF.

The Aden-Algiers agreement, signed in the summer of 1984, between the Democratic Alliance and Fatah's Central Committee, eased the differences in the GUPW. An administrative council meeting was held in Algiers. We played an important role in rallying the participation of all forces in this meeting. A good political communique was issued. However, the Palestinian right began taking more steps. They held the Amman PNC which affected not only the situation for women's work, but the whole Palestinian situation. The members of the secretariat outside Damascus convened a meeting and crossed out the names of nine GUPW members of the PNC. They

substituted other names to fill the quorum for the PNC, disregarding all political and organizational rules.

After the PNC, we still participated in the general secretariat where we expressed our opinion against the suspension of the nine. We told the other members of the secretariat that they themselves were free to attend the PNC, but they had no right to suspend the membership of others, based on their political opinions. Still we as the PFLP tried to act as mediators between the two sides (women affiliated to Fatah's Central Committee and those affiliated to the National Alliance). We did so due to the importance of all forces participating in the union. However, the rightists were adamant and wanted the women of the PFLP and the DFLP to serve as a cover for their divisive policy in the GUPW. Our main purpose was not to lose the progressives in the union, for example, the general secretary and the responsible for foreign relations who had been suspended, and women from Popular Struggle Front and General Command, etc. PFLP members were accepted, but this is not the point. The point is the presence of all. Now, left organizations (DFLP and Palestinian Communist Party) are represented in the general secretariat, but they will not be able to take positive decisions when the majority (two-thirds) are with the right-wing policy. In this case, the participation of left organizations in the leadership of the union will only provide a progressive image for the right wing's policies.

We have first-hand experience with the right wing. When we were six organizations, it was only with extreme difficulty that reasonable decisions could be made. When such decisions were made, they were most often countered by the rightists. So how will it be now when the general secretariat is dispersed among several countries? There is one meeting a month, and then all of a sudden we find that those affiliated to the right wing in Tunis have made and implemented their decisions. Of course, we have a flexible policy for working in unions, and we are ready to participate even when the union is not led by the progressives. However, the political line is the primary consideration. We have to look at what political line is

Palestinian mother commemorates Sabra-Shatila martyrs.



Woman in tr...

