

Other prongs of this repressive campaign are cutting the water and electricity supply to many camps, imposing food blockades, and trying to force merchants to reopen their shops at the time designated.

Despite mounting repression, the momentum towards total civil disobedience remains unbroken. This was obvious in Call No. 15 which gave a final warning to those policemen and village and town councillors who have yet to resign. In this call, the United National Leadership said that the moves so far against those who defy the will of the uprising are only warnings. There are more severe actions to come. ●



Friday demonstration at the mosque

## Eyewitness Report

Phyllis Bennis, Middle East correspondent for the progressive US biweekly, *Frontline*, visited occupied Palestine in the first week of April. Below we record some of her observations about the uprising, concentrating on two topics: the role of women and self-sufficiency.

My strongest impression after a fairly short visit to Palestine is that the uprising has changed things in a way that nothing since 1948, has done...

The role of women in the uprising has been extraordinary to see. Women were leading the demonstration from Al Aqsa mosque when I finally got to see it from the Temple Mount. They were the ones chanting and carrying the Palestinian flags. The young men are more vulnerable to immediate arrest and beating, though it should be noted that as of this last week, the first women administrative detainees have been taken. There are about a dozen, and they are anticipating more.

Women have played an extraordinary role in several ways. One is that in the actual confrontations with soldiers in the demonstrations, women have consistently played a leading role - organizing, mobilizing and participating. Second, and in a certain way more important, the women's committees which

existed before have grown in the course of the political mobilization brought about by the uprising. These committees have been a key part in institutionalizing the uprising. They play a major role in organizing the popular committees, the medical relief committees, child-care cooperatives, production cooperatives, etc.

In the village of Deir Amar in the West Bank, there is a women's cooperative which we visited. It now employs 19 women in preserving food - pickles, hot peppers, egg plant, etc. It serves as a major source of employment for women in the village. It provides a major market for crops which would ordinarily not be able to get to market, especially now. Part of the Israeli economic strategy in the territories is to prevent the land from being cultivated and preventing people from making a living from agriculture; part of that means not allowing produce to be trucked from town to town or village to village.

Women's demonstration, Beit Sahour

