

especially after 1982, have put major emphasis on work in the occupied territories, especially with a view to strengthening mass organization; this phenomenon has clearly borne fruit under the uprising.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

A similar reservation can be registered concerning the section on society. This is the most provocative part of the book, where women speak about the oppression imposed by conservative trends in their own society. To some extent, it is disorienting that these views, i.e., contradictions within the Palestinian society, are dealt with before the chapter on occupation, which gives the overall framework. It is also disorienting to be presented with widely divergent views ranging from one woman who regards housework as a form of resistance, to another who advocates separatist organization for women. An integrated view of how women can work for their own liberation in the context of the overall national liberation struggle is not presented, even though this is the approach adopted by virtually all prominent Palestinian women activists.

Despite these reservations, the chapter on society is useful in evaluating the conditions for struggle in the Gaza Strip; it pinpoints critical issues to be addressed by the Palestinian revolutionary forces.

Along with other new realities created by the uprising, changes have most certainly occurred vis-a-vis these social questions since the book was written. For example, one woman told Cossali and Robson: «The effect of occupation on women is worse than on men because they lived under social restrictions before occupation... Women are more likely to be kept at home because of the occupation and those women who work for Israelis will be exploited in the same way as men are. But most women hardly have any direct contact with the occupation. The impact is usually indirect.» This woman would surely want to modify her evaluation in view of the high degree to which Palestinian women have entered into the direct confrontation of the occupation forces during the current uprising. All in all, *Stateless in Gaza* has begun many subjects which we

hope the authors or other friends of the Palestinian people will follow up in the light of the experience of the uprising.

## FOR A DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

The interviews in the book also accentuate what the Palestinians are fighting for. For example, an UNRWA teacher and avowed leftist explains the solution he envisions for the Palestinian problem:

«I've lived in this camp - I was born in this camp - what compromise can I make?... The very nature of Zionism precludes compromise. We will live with those Jews who accept that the Palestinian refugees can return to their homeland and live together in a democratic secular state. I know quite a few Israelis now and I reckon a lot of them are victims of Zionism just as we are...

«Lots of people here think that having a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state would solve all our problems... I think this is not only unacceptable, but also unrealistic. If Gaza was independent tomorrow, I'd still be living in this camp. I'd still be as far away from my village as I am now. There will be no peace without justice

and no justice without the return of the refugees. I'm looking for a one-state solution and I'll tell you why. The whole political reality has progressed beyond the two-state solution. We are already too intertwined whether we like it or not. Even if the Israelis had the political will to agree to an independent state in Gaza and the West Bank, they wouldn't be able to allow it to happen. We are now their second biggest market and a vital source of cheap labor and water. It's not about defence, religious nationalism or things like that: it's about economic survival. And how would they hold together all those different communities if there was no Palestinian people as a common and unifying enemy? To talk about a two-state solution is a red herring and unrealistic. We've wasted a lot of energy discussing it. I don't want to have two highly nationalistic and antagonistic states living alongside each other. I want to be part of a state which is progressive, secular and based on justice.»

We of *Democratic Palestine* would like to thank Paul Cossali and Clive Robson for giving a broad spectrum of Palestinians the chance to speak out to the international audience.

Family in Jabalia camp, 1984.

