

push Palestinians to emigrate. Students were arrested prior to exams, teachers expelled and universities closed. There were efforts to rob and distort the Palestinian national heritage. Later, on the political level, the so-called civil administration was imposed, while the national associations and municipalities were repeatedly attacked.

Nevertheless, Palestinian women played a greater role in the national struggle in this period. This was basically a continuation of their previous role, yet with broader activities and greater commitment. It was now clear that the national cause was a question of the very existence of the Palestinian people as a whole. Furthermore, the rise of the Palestinian resistance organizations gave new inspiration and opportunities for struggle. In this period, Palestinian women's struggle within the revolution was characterized by the following:

- a) Women participating in all fields: political, ideological, military, economic, social, educational, cultural.
- b) Broader participation by an increasing number of women in activities everywhere, whereas such participation had previously been limited to vanguards. This was especially marked in the 1948 occupied territories, where the struggle there was now linked to the overall Palestinian struggle.
- c) Leadership passed to politically educated and working women of the lower strata of the petit bourgeoisie.
- d) A rise in women's motivation to struggle.
- e) Broader participation of women in rural areas, which are most endangered and in sharpest confrontation with the Zionist plans to confiscate the land, expell the population and build settlements.
- f) Attention given to women's liberation by the leftist organizations, and more support to their general and personal social matters.

Military activity

Women were active militarily as compared to the foregoing periods and the traditional role of the Arab woman. Yet this was still limited to a number of vanguards. In addition to storage and transport of weapons, women now started to carry out operations. In October 1967, Fatima Bernawi was arrested after planting a bomb in a cinema in Tel Aviv. On November 21,

Women campaign against illiteracy



1968, Shadia Abu Ghazale was martyred while preparing a time bomb; she was the first woman martyr at this stage. In February 1969, a number of women (Rasmieh Odeh, Aisha Odeh, Mariam Shakshir, Latifa Hawari, Rashide Obeid) were arrested, accused of planning and executing two of the greatest military operations at that time: the explosion at the Supersol supermarket and the attempted explosion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Women such as Leila Khaled, Amine Dahbour and Therese Halasa participated in special operations. Other women were arrested while transporting weapons, like Abla Taha. Women played a great role in the experience of the early seventies in the Gaza Strip, when the freedom fighters controlled the Strip by night. Women also took part in attacks on Israeli patrols, throwing molotov cocktails and stones, which is considered a new form of resistance by many observers. In July 1968, many women were arrested in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accused of aiding the resistance fighters. Others were expelled: Isam Abdul Hadi, Abla Taha, Huda Abdul Hadi and Nawal Titi. During 1968, the number of women in Nablus prison reached sixty, forming 20% of the inmates. Women prisoners were subjected to monstrous physical and psychological torture.

Political activities

Realizing that a conscious, organized, leading role cannot be maintained unless guided by revolutionary organization, women began to join the organizations of the Palestinian Resistance, as well as forming women's unions, syndicates, clubs, associations and social committees.

Women became more active in demonstrations. The most outstanding was that of April 1968, in Jerusalem, where women dressed in black protested against the planned Israeli military exposition. Women have been active in the mass uprisings and strikes, in distributing political publications and slogan-writing on the walls. Women were active in the first Land Day demonstration in the Galilee in 1976, when Khadije Shawahne was martyred. Other women have been martyred in demonstrations of solidarity with political prisoners, and protesting the Sabra-Shatila massacre: Lina Nabulsi, Muntaha Hourani, Taghrid Batmeh, Ihsan Abu Draz, Maysoun Kastanawi, Aziza Hussein, Elham Shahbari. Many others were wounded. In a month of mass uprisings from March 12th to April 12th, 1982, sixty women were wounded, while the number of women imprisoned rose to 150.

Economic activities

The number of working women has increased during the last ten years and reached 17% of working-age women. Women carry out a major part of the agricultural work. Increasing interest in higher education can be noted, giving women more employment opportunities. The percentage of women doctors, engineers, teachers and other professionals has