

Palestinian Women Boycott the Right Wing

Against a background of conflict and division characterizing the Palestinian arena, involving the nationalist forces on the one hand, and representatives of the deviationist trend on the other, preparations have been under way for holding an illegal conference of the General Union of Palestinian Women, in Tunis on 30 April, 1985. In view of the necessity to safeguard our mass organizations and their nationalist role as one of the bases of the Palestinian Revolution, we stress the following:

1-Holding such a conference on unsound organizational bases under the present political circumstances dominated by political division and squander resulting from the policies of the right-wing PLO leadership, makes it impossible for the General Union of Palestinian Women to remain united and preserve its nationalist line.

2-The fact that, in various meetings of the General Secretariat and Administrative Council of the Union, the right-wing representatives refused to stand with the Union in rejecting King Hussein's proposal (land in exchange for peace), or denouncing the Hussein-Arafat accord, is a proof of the right-wing's insistence on diverting the militant line of the Union.

3-We consider that the intention of the right-wing PLO leadership, which has relinquished the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the PLO's right to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, is to bring about, through this conference, a statement which would support its deviationist line.

4-The right-wing line of deviation was expressed in organizational procedures, which transgressed the internal regulations of the Union on both the leadership and grass-roots level. This was clear during the illegal session of the Palestine National Council in Amman, when an arbitrary decision was taken to strip a large number of the Women's Union members of their membership. Other transgressions included bypassing the basic regular procedure, which

Text of the press release issued by members of the General Secretariat, the Administrative Council and representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Women boycotting the illegal conference to be held in Tunis on 30 April, 1985.



demands that the Union branches necessarily hold their local conferences and elect their representatives to the general conference, before the latter can convene. In the same way, membership lists of representatives of certain branches have been arbitrarily increased with the addition of new names. This procedure and others clearly represent serious constitutional offences, which jeopardize the legitimacy of the conference.

5-In spite of the decision by a number of political forces and members of the Union's General Secretariat, including the Secretary-General herself, members of the Administrative Council and branches, to boycott the coming conference, in spite of the great and sincere efforts exerted by leading members of the Union and friendly Arab and international women's unions to warn the right-wing against the dangerous consequences of such a conference, the right-wing persisted in going ahead with their plan, thus proving their intention to undermine the achievements realized by the Women's Union through long years of militancy.

6-Considering the above points, and motivated by a deep concern for safeguarding the unity of the Union and its militant goals, we declare our intention to boycott the coming conference, and demand instead that it convene on sound political and organizational bases, which would guarantee the Union's nationalist line. A line which would continue to defend the Palestinian National Charter, its political programme, as well as our people's national legitimate rights, including the right to return, enjoy self-determination and establish an independent state, on the whole national soil of Palestine.

7-Declaring our intention to withhold our participation in this conference, we remain confident that our Palestinian sisters in general, and our comrades in the Union in particular, will help preserve the Palestinian woman's militant role within an active, united, nationalist context. This is of special importance this year, as 1985 happens to be the 20th anniversary of the establishment of our Union, whose nationalist, anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist and anti-reactionary line we pledge to defend and continue to protect.

8-We appeal to friendly and sisterly women's unions to support our demand that this conference be postponed, in order for the General Union of Palestinian Women to preserve its unity and militant line.

Union members boycotting the Tunis conference:

General Secretariat: Jehan Helou-International Relations Officer; Samira Salah-Arab Relations Officer; Siham Rahal-Information Officer & Treasurer. Administrative Council: Samira Jibril, Laila Khaled, Rasmia Oudeh, Nuweirah Dajani, Bushra Hamid, Adiba Jafawi, Mora Jaber.

Union branches boycotting:

Syria; Libya; most members in Kuwait, Lebanon, the occupied territories and Jordan; members in Qatar. (The branches in Iraq and the USA are illegal.)