



and about the Israeli practices in the prisons. There were two workshops on Lebanese women, which also tied into the question of Palestinian women and the whole question of the struggle against Israeli occupation.

When you talked with other women delegates, what was the most important thing you stressed about Palestinian women?

Our most important task, as well as that for other liberation movements, was to fight the US plan to depoliticize the conference. When we dealt with our liberation struggle in workshops, it was important for us to point out that we as women cannot isolate our struggle from the national struggle. We said that we could not discuss the question of women without discussing the whole question of national oppression. Our main battle is in the occupied territories. Our dispersal throughout the Arab world is a result of the occupation. We compared notes with other women involved in liberation struggles, and we showed our solidarity with them. We also wanted to teach women something more about our struggle since this was the first international women's conference since the war in Lebanon in 1982. We really felt strength from comparing notes with other women on the details of their struggle and how they fight their enemies. We felt a real boost.

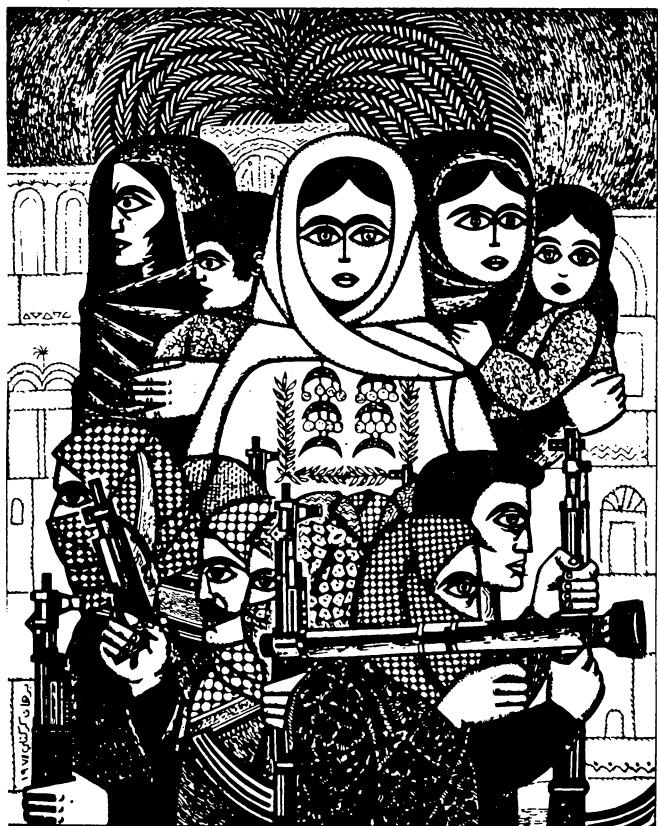
We told people about the effects of the war in Lebanon on Palestinian women and children. There were terrible losses for mothers, sisters and all family members. We talked about the role of Palestinian women in the war - how they participated socially in preparing meals for the fighters, organizing committees for missing persons, making links between family members, trying to relocate people whose homes were destroyed, and how many women participated in the fighting itself. We talked about the political-organizational work of Palestinian women during the war. We talked about women who were kidnapped by the Phalange and were raped and tortured, or captured by the Israelis. We dealt with how women reorganized themselves after the war by opening schools and day-care centers for children or by just carrying on with the tasks of creating a new base for existence.

Did you have the opportunity to speak with women from other liberation movements about common problems you face as women in a national liberation struggle?

With the African National Congress we discussed how you manage as women within a national liberation movement to achieve a political-fighter role for women. We face this problem. We live in a situation where we are often separated from the extended family, where childcare is a problem and you can't just throw your kids on your mother or mother-in-law's lap. They have similar problems but less than ours, because they are more established than we are. The ANC has kindergartens that are open all day long. On their days off, they don't stop the kindergartens; the staff still works. They have revolutionary schools for the children and they organize trips. It really alleviates a lot of burdens for the mother and also brings up the children in a way in which they develop socially critical opinions. We are not able to do that yet because of the difficult conditions in which we live.

In your discussions with members of other liberation movements, did you find that the question of women's social status within transforming societies was being resolved?

We all still suffer from some form of oppressive discrimination. We all expressed that. This is a historical condition which will be difficult to eliminate even after the establishment of a socialist state and the resulting resocialization. It would be unnatural to be living in our difficult social situation and not to



have these contradictions. The pressure of the general situation creates pressure on you. We have to put the problems in a political context and distinguish the main contradictions and realize that this is a process that we have to struggle with. The male attitude within the movement is much better than the one outside it.

What did you feel was the main accomplishment of Palestinian women at the conference?