

# "Femmes de la Mediterranee," *Peuples Mediterraneens*, No. 22 - 23, Paris, 1983

This double issue of *Mediterranean People* is devoted to women of the Mediterranean. It includes eighteen theoretical and descriptive articles from various countries around the basin, as well as some poems by Amina Said. It is directed and introduced by Monique Gadant who underlines that "she tried to give a platform to women in whom is embedded real possibilities for change" (p. 6)

The first article entitled "Becoming liberated in Beirut" by Khaoula Mokhtar, tells in vivid words her struggle to become free, first from her

traditional village background, then from the war in Lebanon. The second are three interviews of three contemporary Algerian women. The third is about the "Spanish Feminist Movement during the Civil War" (1936-38), coming out mainly from the working class and claiming to be anarchist. The fourth, by Fadwa El Guindi, is on "Veiled Activism", an explanation of a return to the veil by some Egyptian women belonging to the Islamic resurgence movement. The fifth is on "the Inner Revolution of a Khomeyni Activist", the views of Sakiné, a 16 years old Iranian maid who became

engaged in militant activities against her father's will and in the name of Islam. The sixth is a "Survey of the Feminist Movement in Italy" with long excerpts from interviews and a bibliography. The seventh and eighth are on Palestinian women: interviews with Samira Khoury, the Palestinian leader of the Democratic Movement of Women in Israel, two other Palestinian women, and May Sayegh, the President of the Union of Palestinian Women.

The ninth article of this journal is based on discussions with Turkish immigrant women interviewed in France. It analyzes the major movements in the Turkish women's liberation before and after the Ataturk period. The tenth shows the ambivalent attitudes between tradition and modernity affecting Tunisian women, often looked upon as exceptional in the Arab-World because they benefit from a code of personal status. The eleventh, on "Being a Woman in Yugoslavia", shows the contradictions women face under communism. In the twelfth, Evelyne Porrett writes about the life she shared with Egyptian peasants in the Fayoum district. Over the years, she wrote down conversations she had with men and women who confided in her. The thirteenth asks questions about the identity of Corsican women. The fourteenth describes the "Role of Women in Maghrebian Communities in Southern France". The fifteenth analyzes genealogies, the history of marriages and the system of transferring land and how it affects the condition of women in a Southern Italian Village. The sixteenth article studies "Aures", an Algerian women's poetic

creation and the relations between history and ideology. The seventeenth by Yamina Fekhar describes a childbirth in Algeria showing the value placed on childbearing in Islam.

Finally the last and possibly the most important article in this issue is by Rossana Rossanda who questions feminine culture and how out of pure negation, feminism can become the positive principle of a new relationship with others. For that, she develops an interesting and significant argument by using the unusual equation of power passion rather than reason, to throw new light into man's idealized "logos". She also puts psychoanalysis and the concept of androgyny as means to an identity under new scrutiny. Moreover, she shows how, throughout history, the right of women to be different has tended to identify them with their subordinate status.

My only criticism to this excellent compilation of information on Mediterranean Women is that not enough articles are written by the concerned women themselves, instead, there are only transcriptions of interviews or of life-story recordings of these women.

This criticism is appropriate in this issue of *Al-Raida* where we are precisely dealing with the problem of how to communicate, receive and transmit information more effectively, and how to involve more women from various Arab countries in this process.

Evelyne Accad