

# The Bigger Picture

The Apartheid Wall is the concrete manifestation of the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and yet another method of carrying out a policy of expulsion and transfer of the Palestinian people. It will incorporate into Israel a number of Palestinian villages and a huge portion of very fertile land full of olive groves, greenhouses, vegetable fields and water resources, continuing on a huge scale Israel's policy of land annexation. It will cut off other villages and towns from access to remaining farmland, and centres of trade, education and culture. It will intensify the ongoing environmental destruction and degradation taking place in the occupied territories. It will legitimize Israeli settlement policy. It will mean the end of any hope for Palestinian autonomy and control over their own lands, which, despite the peace process and the road map, has still never been realized.

The Apartheid Wall, therefore, is not about 'security' or just another aspect of the Occupation. Israeli officials have hinted that the planned expansion of the Apartheid Wall will provide the outline of the possible borders of a Palestinian 'entity' when the 'road map' is unveiled. It cannot be at the negotiating table as the starting point for a 'road map' to peace since it will not bring peace and will destroy any possibility for creating a Palestinian state.

The war against Iraq, a rival of Israel for economic and political power in the region, and the intensification of the military occupation of the Palestinians are the means by which the U.S., Israel and their allies want to guarantee control over the Middle East as a whole. Ariel Sharon announced the expansion of the Apartheid Wall once the war against Iraq started. It is no accident that the U.S. promised Israel additional billions of dollars in aid that will assist in building the wall at the same time as Sharon made his announcement. They are hoping that the world will not pay attention to their plans and will say nothing as the Wall strangles life in one community after another in the West Bank and Gaza.

"It is a tragedy for all of humanity that such forms of oppression are done against the poor and the defenceless, all the while the oppressor is heard and believed as he justifies and cheats other nations and cultures. And under the slogans of "security" and "terror" the crimes are committed. How can people give their blessing to this oppressor, as he acquires the financial support to establish this Wall and to commit his crime." These are the words of the people in the district of Qalqiliya whose lives have been devastated by the Apartheid Wall.

We are all aware how the Apartheid system in South Africa was intended to rob black South Africans of their social, economic and political freedom. A military Occupation which manifests itself in an Apartheid Wall is attempting to do the same thing to the Palestinian people. The fact that the Wall has been constructed without universal outrage even though it breaks international law and contravenes human rights principles, increases the responsibility of those who understand its real purpose to make sure the truth about the Apartheid Wall becomes clear to the world.