

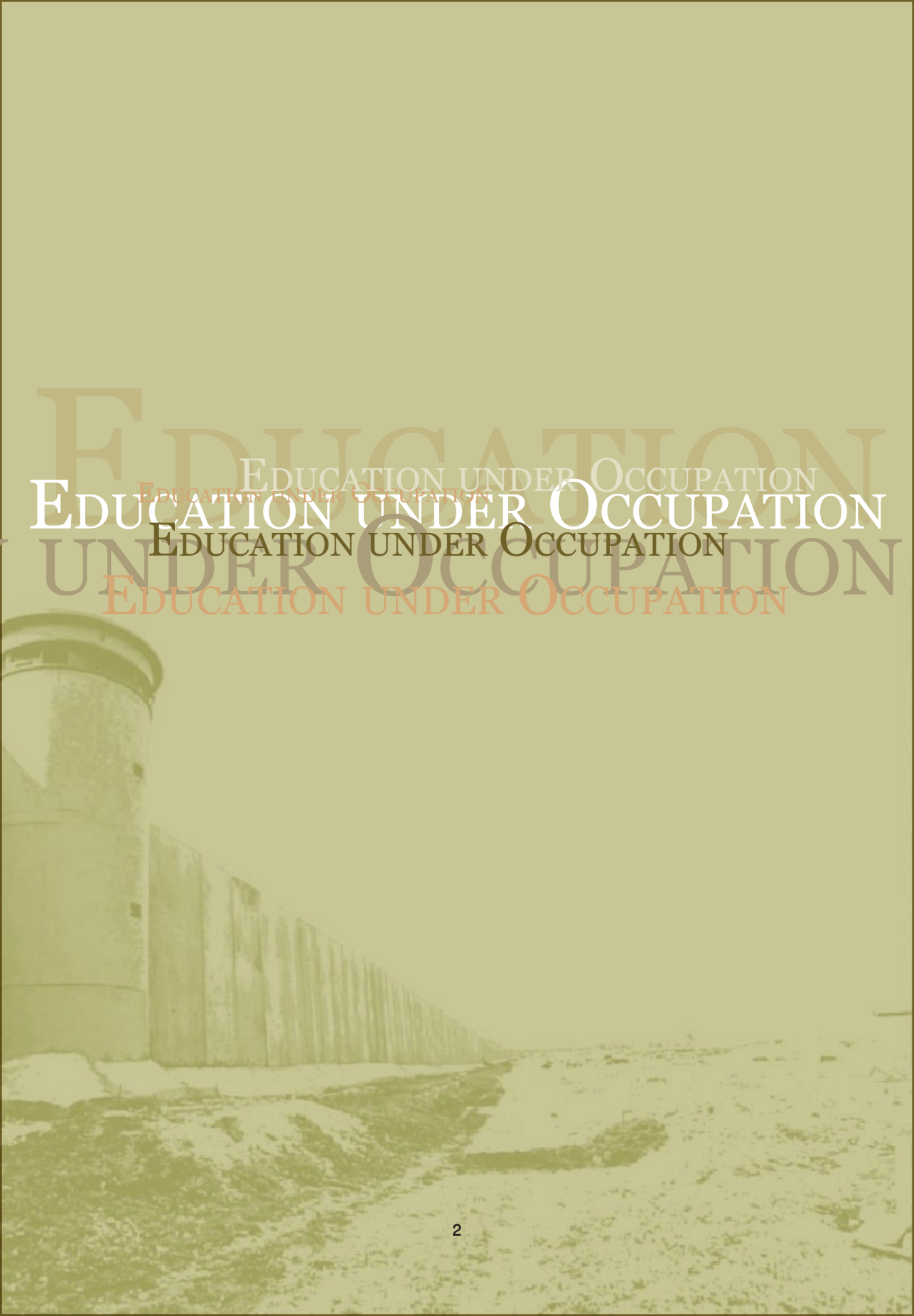
EDUCATION UNDER OCCUPATION



Stop the Wall

The Palestinian Grassroots Anti Apartheid Wall Campaign

September 2007



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**Palestine 48 denominates "Israel", the part of historic Palestine that fell under Israeli control in 1948.*

PREFACE

The situation of the youth and education is at the heart of the Palestinian resistance. We, the youth and students, have since the beginning been on the frontline of the struggle. We have renewed our strategy and vision generation after generation.

The Palestinian struggle to liberate their land from colonialism started in the early decades of the last century, against the British mandate and its support to the Zionist policies to take over our land. In 1948, with the establishment of the state of Israel and the ethnic cleansing of large parts of our land and cities in the Nakba, the catastrophe, national resistance became a matter of existence.

The resistance started in the refugee camps, preserving national identity and forcing the world to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded and in the face of massacres, persecution and sacrifice, we have continued to claim our land, rights and return. With the first Intifada, our people all over Palestine rose up and in the West Bank and Gaza in protests, strikes and boycotts which lasted for over five years. Only the false promises of Oslo of Palestinian statehood were able to calm the popular uprising.

Almost 60 years on from the Nakba, 6 million Palestinian refugees – making up the majority of our people – are still living in refugee camps or are dispersed around the world, while the conditions for our people in our homeland are daily worsening. Today, we are fighting a

tightening system of repression and apartheid combined with occupation and ethnic cleansing policies, culminating in the construction of the Apartheid Wall, on either side of the Green Line.

Over almost a century, education has become a vital element of our resistance. It offers us pride and self-confidence in the face of oppression and continuous harassment; it helps us to continuously develop our identity, struggle and vision for a free Palestine despite fragmentation and walls aimed to imprison our lives and souls.

Our families endure great sacrifice to invest in our education and future so that we can bring our struggle to victory and lead a better life. As the generations before us, we owe strength and steadfastness to our people and will continue to oppose the attempt to destroy and disperse our people with our energy, creativity and imagination.

This book gathers insights from the youth on a life under occupation and apartheid in Palestine; and the manifold forms of our resistance. It aims to break through the walls and isolation imposed on us, reaching out and building ties of solidarity with the youth and justice seekers around the world.

The compilation of this report would not have been possible without the cooperation of the students, youth activists and university administrations all over the West Bank and our international supporters. We greatly appreciate their vital contributions to this study.

Mohammad Othman
Youth Coordinator, Palestinian Grassroots
Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

INTRODUCTION

“The arrested students who worked for the Student Council focused solely on providing local academic support for students and nothing else. In reality, these arrests serve to discredit and obstruct the work of the Student Council as an institution and are not about providing security for Israel”

The work in this report was guided by research carried out by student and youth activists working on the ground in the West Bank, drawing on anecdotal evidence and personal testimonies. It reflects a grassroots perspective of the Occupation’s effect on the Palestinian education system.

We have supported the activists’ testimonies with secondary material sourced by researchers based in the Stop The Wall office.



Student activists face great challenges in their work. Anecdotal evidence from workshops and meetings suggests that students who engage in political activism are specifically targeted by the Occupation. Of one group of students we met on Tuesday 21 August at the Arab-American University in Jenin, five out of six members had been in jail for between one and two years for taking part in demonstrations, and two of their friends were currently in Israeli jails serving sentences of five and eleven years. Many more university students were abducted or arrested by the Occupation forces. On 1

August, 5 members of the Birzeit Student Council were arrested by Occupation forces. Fadi Ahmad, president of the Student Council said:

“The arrested students who worked for the Student Council focused solely on providing local academic support for students and nothing else. In reality, these arrests serve to discredit and obstruct the work of the Student Council as an institution and are not about providing security for Israel”

The anecdotal evidence about arrests is corroborated by figures from the Palestinian Authority showing a large increase in numbers of Palestinians abducted by Occupation forces. While there are no up-to-

date figures relating specifically to students, 5,671 Palestinians were seized by the Occupation in 2006, compared to 3,495 seized during 2005 representing a 62% increase in one year alone.

Youth activists face a twofold threat: the harassment that is a daily part of Palestinian life, and targeted oppression, as in the case of the Birzeit Student Council and the students from Jenin university. Education Under Occupation aims to highlight their voices, and present the emerging strategy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions as a key tool in the Palestinian youth struggle.

THE APARTHEID WALL—FACTS AND FIGURES

The work of Palestinian youth activists

Central to this report is the work of young activists working with the Campaign. Eight activists from the West Bank provided material which has been incorporated into the report, and a further 30 returned observations on the challenges of student life in answer to a Campaign questionnaire. Much of this evidence is anecdotal and based on personal experience. Education under Occupation therefore presents the youth activist work in three ways:

Quoting the student research at length, providing supporting information and analysis where appropriate.

Quoting a number of students within the context of more extended analyses written by Stop the Wall researchers.

Reworking some of the students' longer pieces of work into a substantive analysis piece.

It is perhaps not surprising that a number of activists asked us to remove or change their names in this publication. To preserve anonymity, we refer to the student activists by only by their gender and region except when quoting statements that are already public. All activists quoted are between the ages of 19 and 26.

In the West Bank, the route of the final Wall will be approximately 730 km long. In residential areas it is 9 – 12 meters high of concrete; in the rural areas it is a maze of fences, razor wire and cameras and up to 100 meters large, swallowing enormous strips of Palestinian agricultural lands. Over 400 km of the Wall were finished by January 2007.

The first stage of the project in the West Bank began in Jenin district in mid-2002. Construction cut deep into Palestinian lands, running southwards from the north-western side of the West Bank. The second stage of the Wall saw this process continue further south, through the districts of Ramallah, Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Bethlehem and Hebron, where construction is still ongoing. The total western route of the Wall, confirmed by the Occupation Forces in January 2005, isolates Palestinian communities from their land and bars Palestinians from their capital, Jerusalem. In the east of the West Bank, a third stage of the Wall project is taking shape, enabling the annexation of the Jordan Valley to the Occupation.

With the completion of the Apartheid Wall project the Occupation will bar almost half the West Bank from access for Palestinians and de facto cleanse this area from its indigenous population. Meanwhile, a Wall built in the 1990s already imprisons Gaza's population of 1.3 million. The Wall here is not built on the 1949 Green Line but on Gazan land. This seals the Strip's status as the world's largest open-air ghetto and steals 17% of its land for an inaccessible "seam zone".

The entire project results in the creation of

4 hermetically closed Bantustans (northern, central and southern West Bank and Gaza Strip), the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem and a series of unsustainable enclaves doomed to be depopulated. Palestinian presence is to be reduced via a series of ethnic cleansing measures to 13% of their homeland.

While Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are forced into Bantustans, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are living under daily worsening conditions of apartheid. Entire Bedouin villages in the Naqab (Negev) are slated for destruction. 180 Palestinian houses have been destroyed in 2007 alone, approximately 13,000 Palestinian houses are currently under orders

for demolition and 29,000 are in court fighting the threat of demolition. Access to education and jobs discriminates clearly against the Palestinian indigenous population and allocation of state money for urban planning largely excludes or discriminates against Palestinian areas. Walls to “separate” Palestinian quarters and towns from Jewish ones have been built with state support in different areas.



Children gather in the playground of Sharkha Girls School in Qalqilya district. There are 500 pupils at the school, studying under the shadow of the Apartheid Wall

The background of the page is a faded, olive-green photograph. It depicts a long, high concrete wall that stretches from the left side of the frame towards the horizon. In the foreground, there is a rough, unpaved road or path that runs parallel to the wall. The overall tone is somber and documentary.

Chapter 1

THE WEST BANK GHETTOS

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THE WEST BANK GHETTOES

EDUCATION IN THE GHETTOES

Schools within the West Bank are locked in ghettos behind walls and checkpoints, making access to education extremely difficult. Two female activists from Tulkarem interviewed students attending Al-Khadouri Agricultural College in Tulkarem, who come from all over the West Bank. Here they report on the ghettos in Jubara, Qalqiliya, Jenin, Al-Quds, and Bethlehem, with analysis by Stop The Wall.

Jubara and Ruman

“In Tulkarem district, there is a Palestinian village on the other side of the Wall called Jubara. Jubara has a population of 309, including 93 students.

“The students are isolated in the village. When they want to go to school or to university, they have to go through the gates in the Wall; there is no school in the village - most of the students study in the two nearby villages of Kafr Sur and Ar Ras.

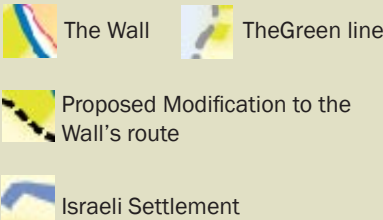
“Movement for the students is extremely difficult. They have to wait for hours at the Apartheid gates. The gates in the Apartheid Wall control their daily lives; the Wall affects the whole village, not just the students.

“Sometimes the soldiers close the gates for one or two days. The schools in Palestine have a period in the morning when they allow pupils to register at school, for example between 7.00 and 8.30 in the morning. But the army opens the gate only after the school’s registration time is over, so it is not possible for the students to reach the school”

“Movement for the students is extremely difficult, because they have to wait for hours in front of the Apartheid gates”



Map 1: The Wall in Jubara, and proposed new route 2006-2007



Jubara

Governo- rate	T o t a l Popula- tion	Refugee families	Schools	Health Centers
Tulkarem	309	8	No	No

Source: UNRWA, The Impact of the First Phase of Barrier on UNRWA-Registered Refugees

Analysis: Jubara

As the youth activists describe, the Apartheid Wall has isolated Jubara since its construction in 2005, causing huge problems for students, who are isolated from educational facilities.

In 2006, the Occupation proposed a modification to the route of the Wall, indicated on the map on page 9. Stop the Wall met the villagers to discuss the implications of the modification. While the new route would mean that the students would find it easier to access their schools in Ar Ras and Kafr Sur, it would completely isolate the villagers from their lands to



the west and destroy a further amount of land for the footprint of the Wall, decimating the main source of income for the village. It would also cut the traditional link with the Palestinian town of Taybe to the west, which aside from the cultural and fam-

ily links, is a major employer. Whatever route the Wall takes, the consequences for Jubara will be catastrophic. The Wall is being used to attack Palestinian culture, livelihood and education. Minor alterations to its route do not alter this fact.

"In Jubara, the Ministry of Education was looking for a solution for the students, and determined to build a school inside their village. But they were refused a permit from the Israelis because Jubara is in Area C.

"The Ministry of Education fear for those students who are isolated on the other side of the Wall, in Tulkarem and Jenin districts: their future is not secure because of the system of gates.

"For example, in Um Al-Rehan village, in Area C, a new school was necessary due to the natural development of the village - as the village has grown, it has

become more difficult for all the students to travel to other villages. The village received a permit from the Israeli government to commence building and they built the first floor and the second floor. However, then the Israelis began to construct the Apartheid Wall here, the villagers were issued with an order from the Israeli government to stop building. They did not stop, so the army came and destroyed the ceiling of the second floor.

"During this period, the Israeli soldiers severely abused the people in that area. After they built the Wall, the Israelis came and demolished the whole

school.

This is one of the things that destroy the life and future in Um Al-Rehan. The students again had to suffer traveling to the other villages, and it has become more difficult than before because they now have to wait at the gates."

"Um Al-Rehan is Area C ... The village received a permit from the Israeli government before the construction of the Wall, and they built the first floor and the second floor."

Analysis: Building schools in Zone C

The student researchers report that the Palestinian Authority needs permission from the Occupation forces because the village was in 'Zone C', referring to the division of control of the West Bank under the Oslo Accords.

Although most Palestinians in the West Bank live in Areas 'A' or 'B', which means that they are theoretically under the administrative jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, most available building land lies on the edges of towns and villages in Area 'C'. There, the Occupation authorities force the people to obtain permissions in order to build on their own land. Yet, these permissions are rarely forthcoming. Between 1996 and 1999 only seventy nine such permits were granted leaving residents no choice but to build 'illegally'.

On 5 August 2007, Stop The Wall helped laying the groundwork for a new school for the Palestinian village of Fasa'il in the Jordan Valley. The villagers hope it to provide an education for the young people of the village, but

the project is also a statement of defiance: On October 19, the Occupation forces have already handed out the first demolition order. In the Jordan Valley, the Occupation has refused to grant permits since 1967.

The project is part of Stop the Wall's 'Education Not Occupation' initiative in the Jordan Valley, and has the support of international solidarity groups and international organisations. The struggle for the survival of the school has already started.

The bulldozing of educational establishments is an important part of the Israeli policy of preventing the expansion of Palestinian concentrations within the West Bank. In the example of Um Al-Rehan, described by the activists above, the Israeli authorities actually issued a permit, which was subsequently withdrawn.



For the first time in 40 years of occupation, Fasa'il children will have a school ... but how long until the Occupation bulldozes it?

"The villagers hope is to provide an education for the young people of the village, but the project is also a statement of defiance. In the Jordan Valley, the Occupation has refused to grant permits since 1967."



Solidarity activists from Brighton, UK, are taking part in the construction of the school in Fasa'il.

Bethlehem and Qalqiliya

“The problem in Bethlehem and Qalqiliya is the same as in all the Palestinian districts: the gates and the checkpoints.

“In these two districts teachers are particularly suffering because of gates, checkpoints, and the Wall.

“Usually, Palestinian teachers are not from the same town as the schools in which they are teaching. They are from several villages in the same area. Most of those teachers live in the villages on the Palestinian

side of the Wall.

“For example, in Ras Tira, south of Qalqiliya, most of the teachers and students have to go through the gates every day. According to the Ministry of Education these teachers suffer a daily ordeal trying to reach their schools. It depends on the political situation, which changes every day.

“The situation in Qalqiliya area is not different from that of Jenin and Tulkarem, three population centers are isolated by the Wall: Ras Tira, Khirbet Dhaba’a and Arab Al-Ramadin,

with a combined population of 700 people. One school for Ras Tira and Khirbet Dhaba’a that has 60 students from Khirbet Dhaba’a and 73 from Ras Tira is also isolated. Also, around 260 students have to pass every day the gates in the Apartheid Wall to study in higher grade schools in neighboring communities. Five teachers have to travel outside the Wall to teach in other areas, and eight teachers have to travel into these small communities to teach in their schools.”

Analysis: Bethlehem

The northwest section of the Wall around Bethlehem isolates the city from Jerusalem and cuts deeply into the Bethlehem lands to annex them for the illegal Israeli settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo. The Wall continues to the northeast of Beit Sahour, Al-Khas and Al-Nu’mān villages to annex land for the Har Homa settlement and secure its expansion on Al-Nu’mān lands. From the other side, the Wall will continue from the northwest until southwest of Al-Khadr, trapping Palestinians between parallel Walls.

In total, 71,000 dunums of land are taken in Bethlehem district and the Apartheid Wall encroaches into the heart of the city, in order to annex Rachel’s Tomb. Checkpoints built into the Wall and the fenced in settler-only highways secure the complete ghettoization of Bethlehem.

Ghettoization impacts severely on teachers. The Palestinian Ministry of Planning confirms that:

“In the Bethlehem governorate, approximately 450 teachers will soon have problems accessing seven isolated villages with a combined student population of 5, 675.”



The Apartheid Wall in Bethlehem: the surrounding villages are isolated from the major educational and cultural hub.

“In the Bethlehem governorate, approximately 450 teachers will soon have problems accessing seven isolated villages with a combined student population of 5, 675.”

Analysis: Occupation brutality against students in Bethlehem and Qalqiliya

All across the West Bank, students are targeted by the Occupation. As the student activists have focussed particularly on Bethlehem and Qalqiliya, it is worth highlighting some specific examples of violence against students in these areas.

On June 13 2007, *Stop The Wall* reported that Ayed Mara'beh, 21 years old, from the village of Ras Tira was



beaten by the Occupation soldiers at the gate that leads to Ras Tira, isolated behind the wall.

The Occupation forces said that Ayed did not have the required permit and began beat him until he fainted.

Ayed was taken to hospital in Qalqiliya. Occupation soldiers

on Ras Tira's gate have attacked Palestinians attempting to pass the gate on numerous occasions since it was erected between 2003 and 2004.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), recording human rights abuses carried out by the Occupation forces,

reports that in July 2007 a 19 year-old Palestinian youth had been beaten to death at a checkpoint in the town of Taqu'a near Bethlehem. Educational establishments have been subjected to raids and attacks. In March 2007 PCHR reported that Occupation forces had raided and searched offices of the Almsgiving Committee and a kindergarten in Beit Fajjar village, south of Bethlehem, confiscating computers and documents and ordering the closure of the offices and the kindergarten.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem)

"In the Al-Quds area, the Wall severely affects the education system, such that the students cannot get to their universities and schools. The education system in Al-Quds is separated into two administrative areas: Al-Quds and Dahiat al-Barid under the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

"However, the building of the Wall and enforcement of movement restrictions have divided the education system in Al-Quds into five separate areas. Palestinian teachers with green West Bank ID cards are no longer allowed to exit the Palestinian areas, designated by the Israeli government.

"The Palestinian Ministry of Education has had to find 152 teachers who carry the blue Al-Quds ID cards to teach in the areas on the other side of the Wall in Israeli-annexed Jerusalem. Teachers suffer daily from having to go through the gates in the Wall. Some have started to consider leaving their houses to live on the other side of the Wall in the West Bank."

"Ayed Mara'beh, 21, a student from Qalqiliya, was beaten by Occupation forces until he fainted."

Analysis: The Ghettoization of Al-Quds

The Palestinian Ministry of Education was created in 1994, with the Authority assuming nominal control of the education system in East Jerusalem. However, its efforts are frustrated by the system of ghettoization the activists describe.

Jerusalem district is home to 411,516 Palestinians; 225,700 of them are isolated in 5 Ghettos: Abu Dis (47,000); Anata (47,400); Al-Ram (65,000); Bir Nabala (15,000); North West Jerusalem (51,300).

The devastating impact of the Wall in Al-Quds can be seen clearly in Al-Ram, where the Wall runs through the main road of the town. 40% of businesses have closed; small factories which provided vital employment have shut down.

In 2004/2005, after the completion of the Wall, many families were forced to move to the Western side of the Wall. 10,000 people have left the area and over 20% of the houses are

now empty. This has led to a drain of pupils and teachers from schools in Eastern Al-Ram. Additionally, students from Old Beit Hanina, Al-Jib, Judeira, Bir Nabala and other surrounding villages who previously attended schools in Al-Ram are no longer able to do so.

Educational institutions are suffering greatly. There are around 26 schools and kindergartens in Al-Ram, a number of which are on the main street by the Wall. For example, the Bridge School, a modern private school, has been forced to close as have a number of other schools in the area.

There are around 7,000 students from Al-Ram studying in Al-Quds schools. Around 4,000 of these are from Eastern Al-Ram, and must now pass through checkpoints in the Apartheid Wall every day in order to attend classes.

Although the situation is particularly severe in Al-Ram the pattern is repeated across the city. According to OCHA, "of the 33,000 students and 2,000 teachers in East Jerusalem schools, 6,000 pupils and more than 650 teachers face difficulties reaching their schools."

Case study: Education in Jerusalem under attack from Apartheid Wall

The Lutheran World Federation has operated in Jerusalem since 1910 and runs a vocational training centre in Beit Hanina which opened in 1949. During the school year 2005/2006, 180 students between 16-18 years were registered at the centre, acquiring skills such as auto mechanics, carpentry, electronics and telecommunications. Yet the Occupation brought the training center at the verge of collapse.



The Apartheid Wall that cuts through Beit Hanina runs only 150 meters in front of the building in Dahyat Al-Barid resulting in most of the students being barred access to the centre and education.

In 2005/6, 120 of the students were not allowed to cross the Wall and reach the training centre as they did not hold Jerusalem ID. 22 of the 30 employees of the center faced the same problem.

The Occupation closed the passage across the main street of Beit Hanina at the beginning of 2006 and began imposing the permit system. Initially 70 three-month permits for students without Jerusalem ID were issued. At the time of renewal only 40 were given out and for the last term, at the time of renewal, the Occupation Authorities handed out just 20 permits for 120 students. Out of the 22 staff members without Jerusalem ID, only 12 were granted permits. In order to allow staff and students to complete the school year, the training centre has had to offer accommodation in the hostel of the school.

The end of the semester was to be celebrated with a graduation party on July 23rd. However, out of the 120 non-Jerusalem ID holders, 80 were not able to attend while families of the students were also prevented from attending the celebration. The majority of potential new students were barred from crossing the street in Beit Hanina by the Wall and permit system and thus denied their right to apply for courses in the college. With the closing of the registration nearing, not more than 40 students - and only 5 of them without Jerusalem ID - had been able to reach the school to register for courses in the new year. At the same time the Occupation authorities cancelled the tax exemption status the center had held already under Jordanian rule, thus jeopardizing the economic

sustainability of the school in this time of crisis. The centre feared it had held its last graduation party.

Yet, the management of the center was not willing to surrender. Public campaigns and continuous lobbying has saved the school until today. For 2006/7, the Occupation was forced to give out 108 special permits for non Jerusalem ID card holders out of the 128 requested.

The case of the vocational training centre in Beit Hanina is a common tragedy in Jerusalem where schools, hospitals and other service centers for Palestinians are closing and mere survival becomes an act of resistance. Via the permit system the Occupation seizes the prerogative to decide which Palestinians have the right to education and to curtail it at whim. Sealing off the city from its people has devastating social, economic and cultural effects for Jerusalem and is subjecting Palestinians to life in caged-in ghettos.

Jerusalem hosts 5 vocational training colleges, with only 1-2 vocational training institutes located in each West Bank city. The heritage of Jerusalem is left under severe threat as Palestinians who have been at the centre of life in the city for centuries are cleansed from their capital.

CHECKPOINTS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND HUMILIATION

Young Palestinians attending schools and universities in the West Bank face routine attacks at checkpoints. They are commonly held for hours, forced to take off their clothes or simply denied passage. The issue of genderized harassment is often hidden because of the stigma attached to such incidents. However Palestinians report that this sexual harassment is frequent and traumatic. One student told us: "They keep searching me, it makes me feel nervous and confused, and sometimes when I see the Israelis searching the Palestinian girls, it makes me wish that I would die before I see them doing this to the Palestinian girls." Here youth activists report stories of harassment.

ORDERED TO KISS AT THE CHECKPOINT

"As you know, in Palestinian culture, the women wear the veil. In the middle of this Intifada, it was the hardest time for the students to travel from their villages to the universities and vice versa. The soldiers were treating the girls especially bad, and asking them to remove the veil, or to take off their clothes, because they said they suspected they were carrying explosives strapped to their bodies.

"The families started to worry about their girls. Soldiers tried to humiliate their children many times, though the girls would refuse to take off their veil or to remove their clothes. This has had a massive psychological effect on Palestinian girls. Families began to worry, and often girls were forced to quit attending university because this is the honor of the family.

"I have a short story, and I will not mention the names of the two students.

"One day at Hawara checkpoint, early in the morning, two students, who did not know each other were on the service [bus] on their way to university.

"The soldiers asked for their ID. They gave them the ID, and they checked it carefully, then they asked them to get out from the car, and the



students did, and they told them, if they wanted to pass the checkpoint, they had to kiss each other. As you know, it is forbidden in Palestine, because we are Muslims; it is forbidden because of our culture. The two students refused. The soldiers took their ID and forced them to wait hours and hours.

"Those two students were going to an exam. They lost the exam that day, because they refused to kiss each other, and the soldiers refused to let them past the checkpoint, and told them to go home.

"This is one of the hundreds of stories of students that has not been published, and will not be published because of our culture, and our religion, and our honor." (Youth activist from Birzeit University)

"They told them, if they wanted to pass the checkpoint, they had to kiss each other. As you know, it is forbidden in Palestine, because we are Muslims; it is forbidden because of our culture. The two students refused. The soldiers took their ID and forced them to wait hours and hours."

A FATHER AFRAID TO SEND HIS DAUGHTERS TO SCHOOL

"This is a story about one of the Bedouin families isolated on the other side of the Wall.

"This family is the only family living on the other side of the Wall in Jayous village. There are five boys and four girls in the family. They live on the south side of Jayous. They go through the gate three times a day; in the morning, in the midday and in the afternoon.

"One day I was at the gate, with some internationals. We were watching the gate and the two girls from the Abu Sharib family were waiting there after they had finished school, to pass through the gate and go to their house.

"The soldiers that day started to make fun of the girls, aged 16 and 19. The soldiers asked them for ID and permits. They showed them the ID and permits and they

were fine, there was no problem with them.

"But the soldiers wanted to make a problem for them. They asked them to take off their clothes, accusing them of carrying explosives. The girls refused, and they asked for my help, me and the internationals, I went and I talked with the soldiers, who told me they would not let the girls pass the gate before searching them.

"The soldiers said:

'Not the male soldiers; the female soldiers will search them.'

"They would only search them in public. We refused. We started to contact the Palestinian district coordination office and the Red Cross. After a while the Red Cross came, and succeeded in convincing the soldiers not to search the girls.

"When their father heard about it, he stopped them from going to university and to school." (Youth activist from Jayous)

"But the soldiers wanted to make a problem for them. They asked them to take off their clothes..."



Women waiting in line at the Qalandiya checkpoint.

STRUGGLING FOR EDUCATION: THE GRUELING PATH TO SCHOOL OF THE STUDENTS IN BEIT UR

In December 2006, Stop the Wall interviewed twelve year-old Hamaam Ismael about the difficulties facing his school in Beit Ur. The school administrator describes the practical difficulties of running a school under the Occupation.

Twelve year-old Hamaam Ismael sits down leaning against a massive tree that died after it was uprooted by an Israeli bulldozer to prepare the land for the footprint of the Apartheid Wall. The young boy wonders about his and his family's future.

Hamam shares these burning questions with some 250 students in his school. Each day they go home worried about the fate of their school, houses, and village of Beit Ur. The village is being isolated from neighbouring villages by the Wall. Hamaam says: "Our daily suffering is great but it becomes worse every winter. We are forced to walk on foot for half an hour to reach school. The new road opened by the village council is sandy but at least allows us to reach our goal: Education."

The school in Beit Ur is totally surrounded by the Apartheid Wall on one side and the walled-in settler-only Road No. 443 on the other. Further, the settlement of Beit Horon encroaches on the western



part of the school. The 'alien' infrastructure of Zionist colonization creates fear, trauma and suffering for the villagers and the students.

The students are regularly chased by settlers or Occupation forces stationed along the Wall, the apartheid road or the settlement. The path to school has become dangerous and the education system in the village is threatened.

Students from a nearby village called Tira attend the same school. These students also suffer every morning from the same illegal Apartheid Wall.

Occupation forces have forbidden Tira students from crossing the settler by-pass road. If any of them try, he or she will be arrested. Therefore, the students use a drainage hole below the wall to reach school. This hole was built to prevent rain

"Our daily suffering is great but it becomes worse every winter. We are forced to walk on foot for half an hour to reach school. The new road opened by the village council is sandy but at least allows us to reach our goal: Education."



Beit Ur school is surrounded by the Apartheid Wall and settler-only Road No. 443.

water from flooding the area and, in winter, crossing under the wall becomes an unbearable task.

Issa Ali Issa, the administrative manager of the school, said: “First, the Wall was built around our school then the Occupation forces imposed restrictive rules upon the students. The students are no longer allowed to come to school or go back home, so they are forced to move in big groups with a teacher accompanying them.”

The situation escalates when the Occupation forces learn that a group of students went home from school without the company of teachers. “At that point, the military comes and starts interrogating the teachers and threatening the administration,” Issa explains. “The walkway through the drainage hole that the students use is not even suitable for animals to pass. In winter, the water rises up to 30 cm high. That is very dangerous. “The Occupation forces once came and destroyed the pole where the Palestinian flag is raised. Now it is forbidden to hoist the flag. In addition, they closed all the school gates other than one small opening for the students to enter.”

Every now and then, additional ‘procedures’ are taken against the school. Sometimes the Occupation forces cut the water supply to the school. Recently, they narrowed the sand road that was previously used to bring children to school. Now no bus can reach the school.

The school administration has decided to attempt to minimize the threats that the students and the entire educational system are facing

in the area. Lessons for basic levels (until grade 6) have been moved to a new building further away from the Wall. High school levels remain in the old building. This solves part of the problem, at least for the younger students, and hopefully will help to secure their education.

However, the villagers are not willing to give in to threats by the Occupation forces to close the school and take away the land. The area where the school is located has been slated for settlement expansion. Thus, the Occupation has tried its best to persuade the school administration and the villagers to give up the school and the land around it. Once, they even offered to buy the land for a large sum of money and another time they offered to build a new school for the village in an area far away from the old school.

The school was built in the early fifties. It has a longer history than the occupation of the West Bank itself. In 1955, the school even ranked first in an honorary certificate awarded by the Ministry of Education of the Hashemite Kingdom for the care that they took in gardening and beautifying the surroundings of the school. Now the green has become the grey of the Wall. Visitors to the school will only be able to see the cement towering over the school and the barren land from which all trees have been uprooted.



Pupils get to school via a walkway through a drainage hole.

“The walkway through the drainage hole that the students use is not even suitable for animals to pass. In winter, the water rises up to 30 cm high. That is very dangerous.”

THE OCCUPATION'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR

Checkpoints and walls are only the most obvious signs of the Occupation's war on the Palestinian youth. As this activist from Birzeit University describes, the military authorities are engaged in a long-running war to break the Palestinian spirit, with arbitrary arrests and attempts to infiltrate West Bank universities.



Children intimidated in Hebron.

"Sometimes you wait for one or two hours, sometimes soldiers just tell people to go back home. It depends on their mood."

CHECKPOINTS

"I am studying business administration at Birzeit University. It is a three year course, but I have been studying here for four years, for reasons that I will explain.

"The checkpoints are the main reason that I now live in Birzeit. To go from [my family home in] Nablus to Birzeit before the checkpoints took three quarters of an hour, so for anyone coming only to study you didn't need to live in Birzeit. Now, as a result of the checkpoints, you are very lucky to reach Nablus in three hours. For the students like me who have voluntary work or other activities, it means arriving home very late.

"Once, a year ago, I faced twenty four checkpoints in one day while I was travelling to Birzeit. Of course it was not actually twenty four checkpoints, it was just one military jeep driving in front of us. He would drive for ten minutes, and then stop. I left Hawara checkpoint at nine in the morning, and I reached Birzeit at six in the evening.

"At the checkpoint, often the

soldiers tell people to take off their clothes. If the soldiers don't want someone to pass, they will just stop them and not let them through. Sometimes you wait for one or two hours, sometimes soldiers just tell people to go back home. It depends on their mood."

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

"My father runs a small business. He doesn't make much money - only enough to pay the simple expenses and it's certainly not a life of luxury.

"When I first came to university I studied computer programming. I was good at it but I had to stop after three years for a number of reasons. Firstly, I didn't have the money for course expenses. As well as the course fees, there are other expenses for computer programming. You have to take other courses out of the university, which had course fees ranging from \$300 up to \$1200, in addition to the other costs of the university course. I just could not afford these additional expenses. So I completed computer programming as a secondary subject, and majored

in business administration because it is cheaper and easier to find work after you graduate.

“All students face financial problems at the beginning of the semester and we forced the university administrators to lower the fees, by having a strike at the beginning of each semester.

“After one month without having official classes we can get behind in the program of study, which causes academic problems.

Students who could afford it had paid the 500 dinar and registered at the start of the term. So I was forced to change to different subjects. Because I was late registering, I will be behind in the programme of study.

“The whole university is affected. The university operates under a very limited budget because the students are not able to pay the fees and also there is no funding for the things that they need. If the college has one professor specialising in one subject, he may well leave the university because he earns less than a third of the salary of professors abroad.

“For the students, because we don’t have enough money we’re not able to spend enough time on our studies. If the student focuses all his attention on study, he will have difficulties finding the money to pay the rent, bills and other expenses.”

ARRESTS AND INFILTRATION

“The most significant problem in education is the arrest of students. If you are involved in any student movement under the student council, which works for the university, the Occupation considers it as working against their military law.



“Every new semester, usually the first semester when there are new students, the Israeli intelligence officers appear. The students are scared of them. They come in the middle of the night, 12 o’clock, 2, 3 o’clock in the morning.

“I was arrested by them. They entered my house; there was an officer with them. He asked me to come with him, not because he wanted me in particular, but because he asked many to come. They took personal photos and collected personal

“There were more than seventy students crammed into an armoured bus with no seats. They put blindfolds on everyone and tied their hands and took them to Al Farr military camp”

information about each student and made a file.

"They wanted to interrogate the students about their social backgrounds, and to know from this if they can deal with them.

"I went with the officers. There were more than seventy students crammed into an armoured bus with no seats. They put blindfolds on everyone and tied our hands and took us to Al Farr military camp.

"When we got to Al Farr, they released the blindfolds and there was a nice officer, not in military uniform and very different to soldiers you see at the checkpoint. He spoke to us very calmly. He asked many details about my life, and asked me some questions that don't seem related. They wanted to make students collaborate with them. They ask you to find out what your reaction will be, to find out if you want to be a collaborator."

THE WALLS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRISON

"If the students are afraid to use their imaginations and develop, it is because they know that the Occupation might come and arrest them at any time. They don't know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable to the soldiers: sometimes students can be arrested for doing nothing.

"The Israelis want people to be ignorant. If you follow only basic education and don't engage in voluntary work or other activities, then you are ready only to work, and your work will not be useful in comparison to someone who has knowledge and experience. At the same time, as students we are sacrificing and struggling to make the Occupation's policies fail. It is a continual struggle.

"The Occupation wants to destroy you, while the students want to resist and to stand against the Occupation. We will pay this price

until the Occupation is ended.

"The Wall also impacts on the education system because education is affected by the political situation in the country. It has prohibited some people from reaching their university. If not in a direct way, like by a wall or checkpoint, it is by the obstacles that I mentioned: by the economic issues. Some students come from families who live off their land which, if it is confiscated behind the Wall, makes it impossible for them to complete their studies - especially as Palestine is an agricultural economy.

"The Wall is a building and a culture. As a building it stops people from moving and has an economic impact as you can't get your products to markets past the checkpoints and gates. As a culture, it makes students frustrated. I see it as a prison: not only a physical prison but one that is intended to close your mind, close your future and close your hopes."

WAGING WAR ON PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES

In addition to the checkpoints and economic hardship enforced on students, the Occupation has waged a war on the institutions of education themselves since the establishment of major Palestinian Universities in the early 1970s. In this piece, we outline the historical context to the repression described in detail by the activist in 'The Occupation's psychological war'.

Since their inception and as they became formidable institutions, Palestinian universities have been harassed and assailed by the Occupation forces.

In 1980, by decree of Military Order 854, Israeli authorities were given control over Palestinian curriculum, textbooks and other teaching materials, student admissions, and the contracting of faculty. This order also mandated that all “foreign” university faculty, which referred mainly to Palestinian professors who did not have Palestinian IDs because of birth abroad or absence during the 1967 Israeli military census of the Palestinian population, take an “oath of loyalty” to not



Universities have been centers for student activism.

cooperate in any way with forces “hostile” to the Israeli state, especially the P.O.

As a result of these restrictions, universities were often deprived of basic academic journals, and of teaching staff (many of whom were forcibly deported for not signing the “loyalty oath”), as well as being subject to periodic and arbitrary closures of the entire university campus. Birzeit University for example was closed 15 times between 1973 and 1987.

After the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987, restrictions on universities became more

severe than ever and by February 1988 all six Palestinian universities, thirteen colleges and five training schools were closed by military order, as part of the overall closure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Closure of universities lasted until 1992. More closures lasting nearly a year were ordered in 2003 for Hebron University and the Palestine Polytechnic University.

Birzeit was strangled by a checkpoint on the road to the campus for almost three years starting in 2001, and still to this day is subject to “flying checkpoints” which

“Since the start of the second Intifada, there have been close to 300 incidents of shelling of schools with eight of the eleven Palestinian universities having been shelled at some points since February 2000”

require faculty and staff to be searched and identified before being able to enter the university.

Since the start of the second Intifada in September 2000, there have been close to 300 incidents of shelling of schools with eight of the eleven Palestinian universities having been shelled at some point since February 2000; 1599 students (450 of them under the age of 18) and approximately 200 teachers have been arrested; and over 3500 Palestinians up to the age of 29 have been killed.

In East Jerusalem, the construction of the Apartheid Wall has artificially isolated dozens of Palestinian communities, severely limiting or barring the residents' access to their jobs, schools, places of worship, families, etc. Students in Abu Dis' New Generation School, for example, who live within blocks of their school, are now forced to commute 23 kilometers around the Wall that was erected in the midst of their neighborhood.

Palestinian Jerusalemite students and faculty already endure an Israeli educational system that blatantly discriminates against them, but now many of these students and teachers along with their families who reside in areas that have been segregated behind the Wall will be forced



to choose between passing through unpredictably long and brutal checkpoints every day, relocating to an area outside the Wall, which will most likely be prohibitively expensive, or losing their Jerusalem residency forever.

Palestinian Jerusalemite students and faculty studying outside the Wall (27% students attending Bethlehem University, 85% of faculty from Birzeit University) will similarly face a bleak choice of enduring daily checkpoints, or abandoning the major Palestinian universities in Bethlehem, Ramallah (Birzeit), and even Al Quds University, located in Abu Dis.

The destruction of the Palestinian economy created by land confiscation, the ghettoization of villages and towns, and the prohibition against Palestinians working in the Israeli labor force to act as anything but exploited,

low-wage manual labor in Israeli industrial zones, means that parents often cannot afford school costs nor the mounting transportation costs to move around the fractured West Bank.

Al Quds Open University's institutional structure is able to offset some of the costs of a university education. However, other traditional universities are struggling with how to accommodate a growing student body population when costs directly associated with the destruction wreaked by the Occupation (both as loss of international aid that has been redirected to humanitarian projects, as well as repairing the damage to universities caused by Israeli military assaults that amount to an estimated 7.9 million dollars) are increasing at the same time as Palestinian income is in free fall.

Further, the stretched capacities of Palestinian universities

are further burdened to develop initiatives to support their student and academic body targeted by the Occupation. Birzeit University, for example, has used its Human Rights Center to advocate for and provide educational resource to detained students, which have numbered close to 100 at the same time, including 2 presidents of the Birzeit University Student Council and several Student Council members, many of them without charges. A series of Palestinian universities have developed outreach and exchange programs involving

students in advocacy against the Occupation. The practices set in place by the Occupation are geared towards making education unattainable, and life unbearable. Pessimistic about their future prospects in a country where arriving at school is a triumph, more and more students (55% of Birzeit students according to a recent survey) are considering moving abroad once they complete their studies, which would deprive Palestine of both the talent it has worked so hard to invest in, and the future generation of leaders.

Open Education

46,453 (24,055 female; 22,398 male) attend Al-Quds Open University, which was established in 1991 and is government-run.

University Colleges

6,034 students (3,353 female; 2,681 male) attend 13 colleges, which are mainly government-run, and were established between 1930 and 2004.

Community Colleges

9,002 students (3,932 female; 5,070 male) attend 19 colleges, a mixture of public, government and privately run, which were established between 1952 and 2000.

Palestinian Primary Education in the West Bank and Gaza, including Jerusalem

There are 48,674 teachers teaching 1,078,488 pupils. There are 2,276 schools and 31,001 classes.

Traditional Universities

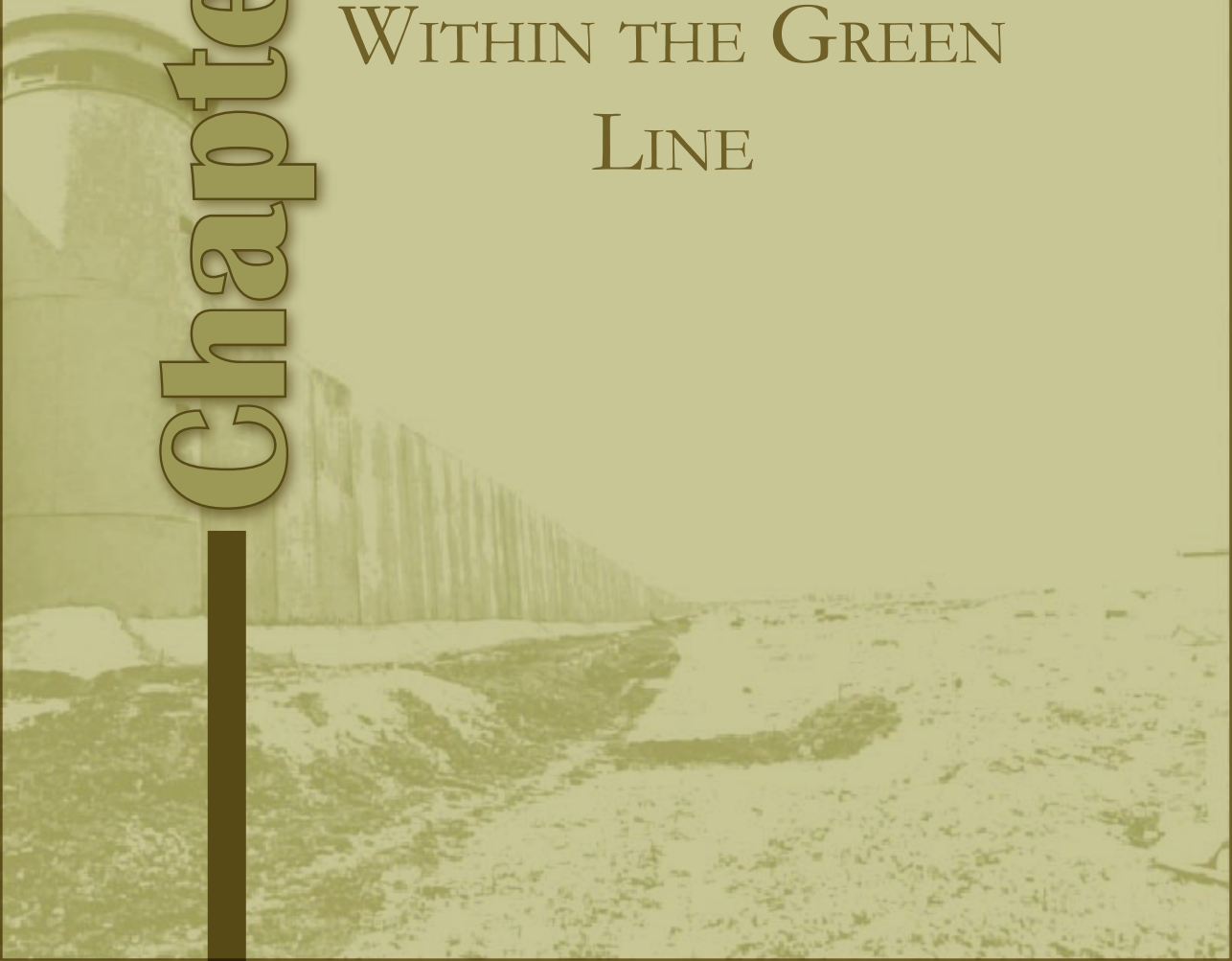
Total students: 76650 (40,250 female; 36,400 male)

University	Supervision	Established	Location
Al-Azhar	public	1991	Gaza
Islamic University	public	1978	Gaza
Al-Aqsa	governmental	1991	Gaza
Hebron	public	1971	Hebron
Polytechnic	public	1978	Hebron
Bethlehem	public	1973	Bethlehem
Al-Quds	public	1984	Al-Quds
Birzeit	public	1972	Birzeit
An-Najah	public	1977	Nablus
Arab American	private	1997	Jenin

Data from: Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Chapter 2

WITHIN THE GREEN LINE



Chapter 2

WITHIN THE GREEN LINE

“WE NEED A TOTAL CHANGE OF THE RACIST REGIME”

Stop The Wall interviewed a recent female graduate from Nazareth, an Arab city in the North of Palestine 48 and currently living in Yafa about her experiences in the education system within Palestine 48. She describes her experience of the Israeli University system.

“I had to work a year prior to university and after finishing high school in order to be able to afford the university and living costs away from my parents. There are very few scholarships [available to Palestinians], because most of them are conditioned to military service, which we don’t do, and will not also. The only scholarship that I was granted was conditioned to “part-time” work that I did to my community. Others are offered by external bodies, embassies like the American or the British one, for studying abroad only.

“I would have preferred to go to an Arab university for my Bachelor degree. It’s very important for me to study in Arabic, and to use my language in academic research, and not be hindered by the need for translation.

“A major problem that I see is the language. As a Palestinian who grew up in an entirely Arab environment and who used only Arabic to communicate with people, it was very hard to get used to a different language – Hebrew, used in the

Israeli universities and without taking into account our needs and rights as the indigenous citizens of this state. Also, I had to change a department after the first semester, were I was studying political science because I heard several racist comments from my professors about the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. In the end I would say, that as a Palestinian student, I felt during my three years in the university a stranger, not connected to the environment, language or culture and mostly unwelcome.

“The whole process of accepting Palestinians into universities is discriminatory, if that be in explicit or implicit form. The psychometric exam, which determines a student’s acceptance to a department, is in itself a major obstacle, since it is translated from Hebrew, and doesn’t take into account the differences between the two communities, the language and the studying level of the schools. The curriculum of theoreticians in political science or in sociology has never

“It was very hard to get used to a different language – Hebrew, used in the Israeli universities and without taking into account our needs and rights as the indigenous citizens of this state.”

included Arab philosophers, writers or scholars.

“We had to ask the security for permission every time we wanted to gather even for a small demo. And sometimes you had to wait to obtain this permission for a long time, until the event itself became irrelevant. This was one of the ways used by the university administration. Other ways, can involve violence from policemen, although we were demonstrating inside the university, a place the civil police is not allowed to enter!

“Palestinians should support and call for boycott, divestment and sanction. It was proved right in South Africa, and it should work here, since the Israeli economic situation can be harmed and then it might be forced to end the occupation. The university alone can not be changed without a total change of the racist regime in Israel and its definition as a Jewish state. As long as it remains like that, all the rules will remain discriminating and racist.”

“The university alone can not be changed without a total change of the racist regime in Israel and its definition as a Jewish state.

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Palestinian children going to school in Palestine 48.

Analysis

In 1948, the Zionist movement drove 780,000 Palestinians from their homes to make way for a Jewish state, destroying over 500 villages in the process: an event referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba—the catastrophe.

The area behind the international ‘green line’ that demarked the border with the West Bank and Gaza strip became ‘Israel’, a state established for the benefit of the immigrating Jewish community and relegating the Palestinians who remained to second class citizens. Historic Palestine is now divided into the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Palestine 48. In Palestine 48, the education system is used to enforce on young Palestinians this status of second class citizenship:

- *Haiifa University gives preferential treatment in the allocation of dormitories to former members of the Occupation forces. Almost all Palestinians are excluded from and refuse to participate in the Occupation forces.*

- *Tel Aviv University’s medical school has a new requirement for 2007 that new students must be 21 or older. Palestinians, who do not serve in the military, will be unable to enrol immediately when they finish school.*

- *Akbara School in Safad, the only Palestinian school in the area, is to be closed at the start of the 2007/2008 school year by the Ministry of Education. Elementary school aged children will have to travel 50 km per day to and from school.*

Discrimination in the education system is not a symptom of state ‘neglect’, it is part of a deliberate racist program to promote and maintain the Jewish-only character of Israeli institutions. The Shin Bet intelligence agency openly claims its right to attack those who challenge the ‘Jewishness’ of the Israeli state. In spring 2007 the Shin Bet asserted that it “is required to thwart the subversive activity of entities seeking to harm the character of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, even if their activity is conducted through democratic means.”

EDUCATION WITHIN PALESTINE 48: SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Within Palestine 48, the education system is predicated on the policy of completing the Judaization of the Israeli state. In some areas this means simply refusing to recognize the existence of Palestinians; elsewhere it means the denial of educational resources.

The administration of the Israeli education system in Palestine 48 is based on the principle that Palestinians cannot be full citizens in a Jewish state, a point which is emphasized by Zionist academics. Dam Sheuffer, a 'Middle East expert' at Haifa University, describes his approach to the question of Palestinians within Palestine 48:

"Everybody today understands and certainly the Israelis want the line of the state of Israel to include as many Jews as possible and as few Arabs, who are not citizens of Israel, as possible"

In this Zionist vision, many Palestinians who cannot be physically removed from the Jewish jurisdiction are simply 'unrecognized'. Where the state has no choice but to admit the existence of Palestinians, they are starved of resources and efforts are made to suppress culturally Palestinian aspects in the curriculum.

UNRECOGNIZED PALESTINIANS

The most striking example of the denial of Palestinian citizenship is in the Naqab,



An 'unrecognized' Palestinian village in the Naqab (Negev) desert. Palestinian schools in the Naqab are often deprived on basic amenities.

where the authorities simply refuse to recognize the existence of many Palestinian Bedouin villages.

As they do not fall under any municipal authority, it is impossible to obtain building permits for new schools or other infrastructure: in a mirror image of the Occupation's policy towards Zone C in the West Bank, any such constructions are liable to be demolished.

Even within Palestinian conurbations in the Naqab that are grudgingly accepted by the Israeli government, recognition does not extend to equal distribution of resource-

es. In August 2007, the Arab Education Forum threatened to strike over the Israeli government's extreme discrimination against Palestinian schools in the Naqab. Dr. Awad Abu Farih, said that the strike is a protest against the "state of the infrastructure in these educational institutions, which endangers the pupils' safety, and the absence of sufficient new construction [of schools], which is causing terrible crowding."

Many Palestinian schools in the Naqab are deprived even of basic plumbing and electricity.

DENYING RESOURCES

In Palestine 48 more widely, the approach is to maintain a “separate and unequal” school system.

For the most part, schools are separated into Palestinian and Jewish schools. The difference in monetary support for Palestinian children versus Jewish children is striking: the Israeli government reported in February 2001 that in 1991, the total government investment per Palestinian pupil was only 60% that of a Jewish child, and because of the lower socio-economic status of Palestinians in general, the total educational investment per Palestinian child was only one-third that of a Jewish child.

Across the board, all types of Palestinian schools have sub-standard facilities. While schools for Jewish children may be equipped with theatres, playgrounds, art studios, gymnasiums, and more, schools for Palestinian children usually have few specialized facilities. Furthermore, one third of Palestinian children study in flammable and dangerous structures.

In 1998 a suit was brought against the Israeli government asking the Israeli Supreme Court to halt a program of designating certain localities as “National Priority Areas” (NPA). Among the 550 villages and towns designated as NPAs, meaning that

they would receive greatly expanded financial support from the government to improve their educational system, only four very small Palestinian villages were included. After 8 years of litigation, the Supreme Court finally sided with the petitioners in the case stating that

NPA funding was a clear case of discrimination against the Palestinian citizens of Israel. The Court gave the government 1 year to phase out the program by 2007, but as the date approached for the government to comply with the Court’s ruling, the Israeli government requested an extension so as to avoid harming Jewish towns that had come to rely on this extra state funding, and the Court immediately agreed.

Even access to schools can be limited and difficult. Often, children will have to walk far distances to reach school or even the school bus stop. If buses are provided, they are usually dangerously crowded and are not provided with seat belts. Once at school, children face overcrowded classrooms and even a much lower number of overall teaching hours per class than the national average.



The walls between Palestinian and Jewish communities within Palestine 48 enforce the divisions in apartheid Israel.

A POLICY OF EXCLUSION

The Israeli educational system excludes Palestinians at every level.

Of non-teacher positions, less than 1% of those employed by the Israeli Ministry of Education are Palestinian, and not one Palestinian is involved in Arabic language curriculum.

This exclusion is in part the natural result of discrimination lower down the system: in 1998-1999, 44.7% of Palestinian applications to university were rejected, compared to only 16.7% of Jewish students.

In a self-reinforcing process, the exclusion of Palestinians from the education system results in the maintenance of policies of exclusion. In September 2005 the Minister of Education cancelled an education program because it included articles by Edward Said and Arab Member of

Knesset Dr. Azmi Bishara. Textbooks used in Palestinian schools are often old and are developed to inculcate Palestinian pupils with Zionist ideology. They deny Palestinian culture and confront the child with the models of the oppressor to study and emulate.

ALIENATING THE DISADVANTAGED

The learning environment for Palestinian children with special needs is in such a devastating state that even Zionist organizations denounce the situation. According to a survey by the Brookdale Institute, the proportion of children with special needs is higher in the Palestinian community than in the Jewish – 8.3% versus 7.6%, and yet facilities for Palestinian special needs children are lacking. There were only 44 Palestinian Special Education schools compared with 222 Jewish ones, and only 45 special education kindergartens in the Palestinian sector versus 484 in the Jewish sector. When Shatil submitted a report surveying the special education schools available in 1998, they disclosed that 30 out of 36 Palestinian institutions were not properly equipped to meet the needs of the children.

Because of this situation, at least 250 Palestinian toddlers up through age 5 with special needs stay in their homes instead of going to special schools or any other educational framework and 5,232 Palestinian students from first to ninth grade that should attend special schools attend instead regular schools. 30% of children *needing* special education were Palestinian, while only 18% of children *receiving* special education were Palestinian.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Under these conditions, many Palestinian students fail to attain even high school graduation. The Israeli Department for Welfare and Education, part of the Education Ministry, does not cover Palestinian schools and therefore their drop-out prevention programs do not apply. In the face of heavy discrimination in the access to jobs, there is little incentive to study and thus in the 1998-1999 school year, there was a 31.7% drop-out rate by age seventeen for Palestinian children. This is a striking figure when compared to the drop-out rates not greater than 3.8% in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Only 27.5% of Palestinian seventeen-year-olds passed

the Bagrut (Israeli university entrance exam) in the 1999-2000 school year, compared to 45.6% of Jewish students. While Palestinian students within the territories occupied in 1967 are walled into physical ghettos, Palestinian students in the 1948 territories are trapped in a ghettoized education system that denies their Palestinian identity, harms their learning and impedes their access to jobs. The educational process in Israel is yet another tool to deprive Palestinians of their rights and relegate them to second class citizenship.

THE ZIONIST CURRICULUM: REWRITING THE HISTORY OF PALESTINE

Like other totalitarian ideologies before it, Zionism places great importance on education policy. In Jewish schools, the Zionist agenda promotes hatred and fear of Palestinians. Though largely attending separate schools, both Jews and Palestinians pupils are inculcated with a version of history from which the experience of Palestinians is deleted, minimized or vilified.



Al Bustan, Silwan, Jerusalem, where 88 Palestinian homes are under immediate threat of demolition in the Zionist effort to purge Jerusalem of the Palestinians

RETELLING THE MYTHS OF ZIONISM

The education system within the Green Line is instrumental in the fabrication of the Zionist historical narrative. This narrative, with which children are inculcated from a young age, provides ongoing justification for attacks on Palestinian rights and land.

The late Palestinian writer Edward Said described “...

how the history of ancient Palestine was gradually replaced by a largely fabricated image of ancient Israel, a political entity that in reality played only a small role in the area of geographical Palestine.”

Ismael Abu-Saad, a Palestinian academic in the Department of Education, Ben-Gurion University of the Naqab (Negev), takes the analysis further:

“The Zionist movement

portrayed Palestine as a ‘land without a people, for a people without a land’ With the rise of the nation-state in Europe in the 19th century, textbooks - and history textbooks in particular - were used by the state to glorify the nation, consolidate a national identity, and justify the state’s social and political systems ... The curriculum in Jewish Israeli schools has been instrumental in explicitly and

implicitly constructing racist and threatening stereotypes and a one-sided historical narrative that, through the educational system, is internalized in the Jewish Israeli psyche”

This Zionist narrative shapes every aspect of education within the Green Line.

‘A LAND WITHOUT A PEOPLE FOR A PEOPLE WITHOUT A LAND’

The Zionist narrative hinges on stereotyping Palestinians as inferior and backward, and on denial of historical Palestinian claims to the land.

The main focus of Zionist curriculum is the delegitimization of Palestinians’ emotional, political and historical claims to the land they had been living on for millennia. Palestine is portrayed as empty or misused until the Jews arrived to reinvigorate it. The effects of Jewish colonization on the indigenous non-Jewish population are simply written out of the textbooks.

In Palestinian schools within the Green Line, pupils are given lessons in which their own history is erased. In June 2007, there was a fu-

rious row within the Zionist establishment when an Israeli history textbook for Palestinian children made reference to the *Nakba* — the catastrophe, in which 780,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes to make way for Jewish settlers. The text was drafted by a Zionist academic, Ya’acov Katz — a professor of education at Bar-Ilan University

and a settler in Gush Etzion bloc. The text gave the conventional Zionist version of Palestinian history, in which the ‘Arab side’ is blamed for initiating Zionist attacks on Palestinians in 1948. However, the textbook attracted widespread criticism from the Israeli establishment for not being Zionist enough. The offending sentence was: “The Arabs call the war

In their own words ... The myths of Zionism

Palestine is portrayed empty or misused until the Jews arrived to reinvigorate it:

“Joseph and some of his men thus crossed the land [Palestine] on foot, until they reached the Galilee. They climbed mountains, beautiful but empty mountains, where nobody lived... Joseph said, ‘We want to establish this kibbutz, and conquer this emptiness. We shall call this place Tel Hai [Living Hill]... The land is empty; its children have deserted it... They are dispersed and no longer tend it. No one protects or tends the land now.’”(What Story I will Tell My Children)

“The shayks looked at each other and said, ‘God speed, kawaja. Welcome. This land is not our land. We heard it belongs to the Jews.’” (The People of the Beginning, Eliezer Semoli.)

While our land was occupied by aliens it was also turning into a wasteland. The children of Israel lived in diaspora with their eyes fixed on their land, for they wanted to return to the land of Israel, their beloved homeland. (The Independence of Israel, A. Dani)

‘nakba,’ a war of disaster and loss, while the Jews call it ‘The War of Independence.’”

Zionist politicians and commentators attacked the textbook, arguing that it should not have referred to the ‘Palestinian version’ at all. A commentator in the Jerusalem Post who defended the inclusion of the text did so on the basis that the text was subtly framed to counteract the ‘distortions’ of the Palestinian version:

“the textbook does not itself endorse or justify the use of the term “nakba.” Anyone reading the chapter would conclude that Jews and Arabs suffered greatly from a war that the Arab side chose and started ... Far from presenting the Arab “narrative,” the text seems to be designed to open minds to the Jewish narrative, while including accurate points of reference, such as the costs of the war, that might help reconcile the distortions these students receive from their environment with the facts.”

The debate was not whether the ‘facts’ offered in the Zionist curriculum were accurate; and commentators took it for granted that it was reasonable for the educational establishment to

engage in the silencing of Palestinian history, and to encourage Palestinian pupils to ignore the lessons they learn at home and in their life of daily oppression. The only debate was whether the Ministry of Education’s tactics for doing so were effective.

The Zionist programme is extremely successful in its indoctrination: in a recent survey of fourth to sixth graders in Haifa, 75% of the children described ‘Arabs’ as murderers, kidnappers, criminals or terrorists; 80% saw ‘Arabs’ as being dirty with a terrifying face; and 90% of the children “stated they believe that Palestinians have no rights whatsoever to the land in Israel or Palestine.”

DESTROYING PALESTINIAN HISTORY IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

The reach of Zionist education and the rewriting of history, however, do not end in the Israeli education system.

Since the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities have been doing whatever they can to ensure that Palestinian education

*Zionist indoctrination:
in a recent survey of
fourth to sixth graders
in Haifa, 75% of
the children described
‘Arabs’ as murderers,
kidnappers, criminals
or terrorists; 80%
saw ‘Arabs’ as being
dirty with a terrifying
face; and 90% of the
children “stated they
believe that Palestinians
have no rights whatsoever
to the land in Israel or
Palestine.”*

is stunted both in terms of materials and content.

When Israel took control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the authorities took care to “purge” the Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks they had been relying on since 1948 of any “offensive” nationalistic teachings, most notably the excision of the word “Palestine” which was replaced in all text books with “Israel”. This miscarriage of history and education produced historical absurdities, including reference to “when the Crusades came to Israel in the 11th century”. More importantly, it is symbolic of the idea that has permeated Israeli control of Palestinian education: literally to wipe Palestine off the map.

In 1994 the Palestinian Authority assumed nominal control of Palestinian education under the Oslo Process. The Ministry of Education partnered with UNESCO to begin to develop a new curriculum, emphasizing a recent history of disinheritance, colonization and oppression, which by any reasonable standards are accurate descriptions of what Palestinians have faced in the last century. This came under fire almost immedi-

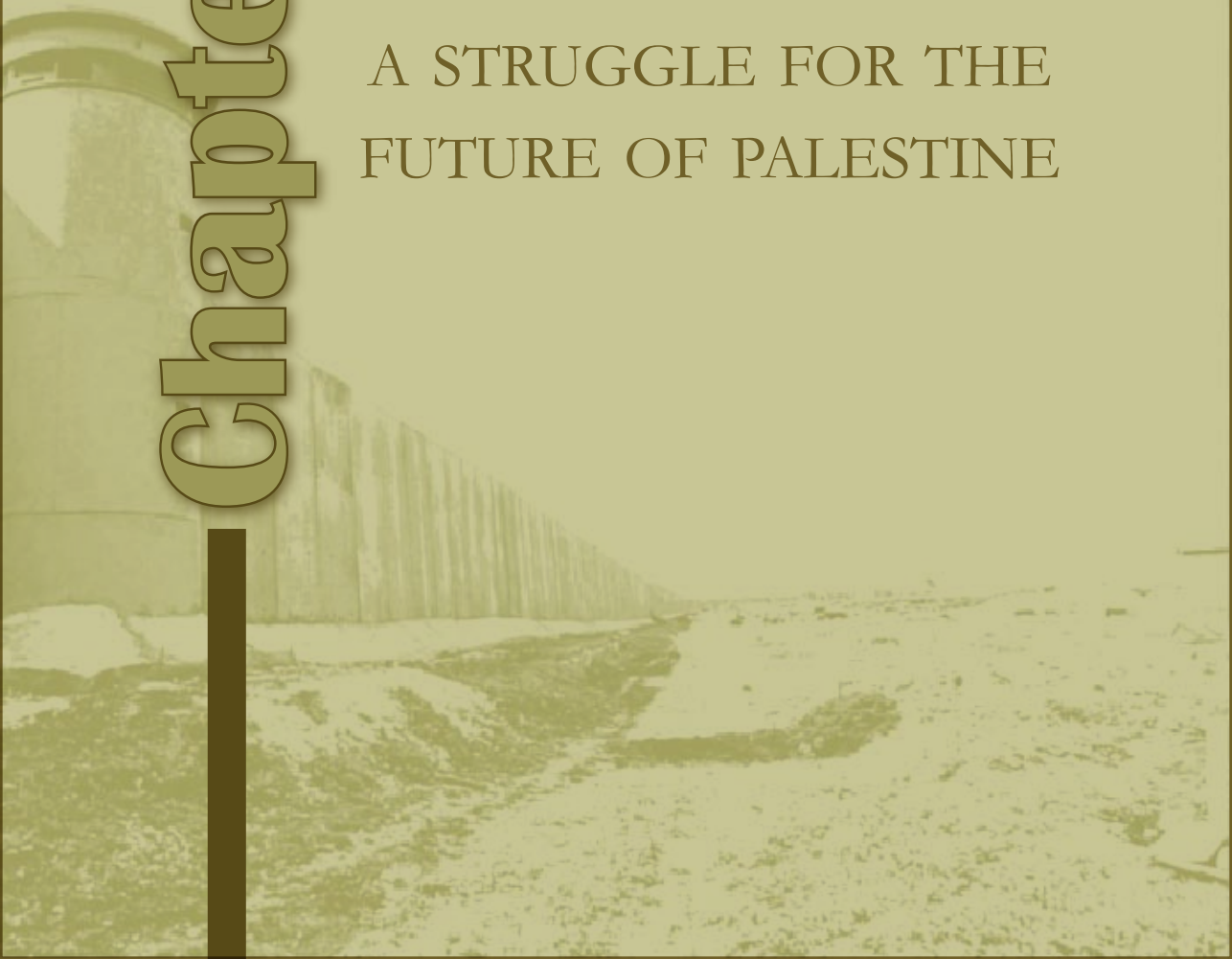
ately for not conforming to a strictly Zionist interpretation of history.

Subsequently, rather than simply condemning the Palestinian curriculum, the Occupation found a more effective way to silence the Palestinian historical narrative: reversion to their previous policy of closing Palestinian schools and bulldozing or isolating them behind walls. On either side of the Green Line, Zionist education policy is an integral part of the Occupation.

“The history of ancient Palestine was gradually replaced by a largely fabricated image of ancient Israel.” - Edward Said

Chapter 3

YOUTH ACTIVISM: A STRUGGLE FOR THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE



Chapter 3

YOUTH ACTIVISM: A STRUGGLE FOR THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

THE CHALLENGE OF NORMALIZATION

In this final chapter, we look at the response of the Palestinian youth to occupation and apartheid, looking at students movements from the past and the new challenges to youth activism.

During the 70s, 80s and early 90s, the student movement was vibrant and closely linked to the Palestinian national project. Much of the activism was organized along the lines of the parties in the PLO, all of whom had associated youth movements. The secular Communist and pan-Arabist movements were particularly strong.

In addition to mobilization against the Occupation, a crucial part of the political activism was a broad program of voluntary work. One activist from the 1980s recalls:

“Students did lots of voluntary work – helping farmers in the olive harvest season, paving roads in refugee camps and villages, cleaning the streets and terraces, helping farmers to bring in their harvest, particularly in the Jordan Valley around Jericho. We had to do around one hundred and twenty hours of community service in order to complete our degrees and graduate, but we did much more, it was like a competi-

tion! I did over a thousand hours.”

Historically, voluntary work is deeply rooted in Palestinian culture: the concept of *Al 'uneh* – ‘giving a hand’ – is woven into the fabric of traditional Palestinian social life. In poor agricultural communities, where it was often impractical to hire workers to bring in the harvests and to build houses, these tasks fell to a community effort. This was strong in the early decades of the twentieth century, and started to become institutionalised in the 70s and early 80s as voluntary work organisations began to appear, often organised by political parties. The student movement was part of a vibrant national project, committed to resisting Israeli occupation and keeping Palestinian culture alive.

OSLO AND
NORMALIZATION

Since that time, the student movement has been thrown

into disarray. The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s threw leftists and liberation movements around the world into turmoil.

In 1994, the signing of the Oslo accords and establishment of Palestinian National Authority (PNA) out of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) saw normalization at a national level. The PNA became involved in a bargaining process that saw them pressured into abandoning resistance in return for a bogus ‘peace process’ that did not bring peace, and put it increasingly in hoc to international donor governments, particularly in the EU and US. The paralysis of the PNA and loss of direction

“Students did lots of voluntary work – helping farmers in the olive harvest season, paving roads in refugee camps and villages, cleaning the streets and terraces, helping farmers to bring in their harvest”

“I DON’T EXPECT ANYTHING FROM THE AUTHORITY”

The need for a popular struggle against the Occupation has become even more urgent in light of increasing failure of the PNA to represent Palestinian interests. The students who attend Stop the Wall workshops describe the Authority as ‘weak’ with ‘no authority whatsoever’. During the discussions on strategies to revive the boycott experience of the first Intifada again in Palestine, youth attending the workshops responded overwhelmingly that it was the responsibility of ordinary Palestinians, rather than the PNA. One student when asked about whether he thought the Palestinian Authority should support the BDS strategy responded sarcastically “there is a Palestinian Authority?” One student said simply “I don’t expect anything from the Authority”.

One student described the key reason for the weakness of the PNA, that it has locked itself into agreements with the Occupation. Referring to the 1994 Paris Agreement, which is the economic part of the Oslo Agreements, he noted that “The Palestinian Authority cannot work in boycott because they have signed up to a process with the Israeli government that means that they cannot work on boycott of Israel, particularly after the Paris contract between them and the Israelis.”

As the students are keenly aware, the Authority is effectively powerless in the West Bank. In areas designated as Zone C under the Oslo Accords, it has no jurisdiction whatsoever. Under the latest ‘peace’ proposals offered by the Occupation most of Zone C will be permanently annexed to the Israeli state. While Palestine is staring down the barrel of a second Nakba, the youth is devoid of political guidance and leadership for the national liberation movement. The Authority is increasingly being seen as irrelevant by the Palestinian youth.

among Palestinian political parties has been mirrored in the student movement, in both student activism and youth volunteerism.

Special attention is given by many donors to sponsorships of youth organizations to promote their agenda of pacification under occupation. Mirroring the PNA, Palestinian volunteer organizations have seen strong pressure to turn into NGOs dependent on overseas donors, and therefore foreign

interests. For example, Palestinian NGOs now receive a combined average of around \$140 million in funding each year only from USAID, the US government funding body. Any organization it deals with must sign an agreement that they will not support ‘terrorism’ (as defined by Israeli/US intelligence schemes) and submits to a “vetting” process that forces them to provide names and ID numbers of their employees to a centralized US run

database, triggering a system of collaboration with US intelligence services. In some instances, USAID demands that it must be the exclusive donor for these organizations, particularly where they deal with youth volunteers. The aim of exclusive funding by USAID is to exert political control over the activities of the organizations, their programs and the political leanings of their volunteers and contacts. In one example, follow-up interviews with volunteers are taped: volunteers are told that they are allowed to say whatever they like, provided that they mention that they are being sponsored by USAID within the first twenty seconds. Volunteers unwittingly become instruments of American foreign policy. After the election of Hamas in February 2006, USAID cut funding to a number of bodies working with youth volunteers because they had contacts with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, the Minister for which was a member of Hamas. Funding was been returned only when the organizations submitted to even greater levels of vetting and control over their activities.

Currently, ‘peace’ programmes such as those organized by the Peres Center for Peace are attempting to



Exhibit of student work about the Wall at Jenin University

edge out Palestinian mobilization by providing summer camps, sporting events and workshops for young political leaders to promote normalization. These typically include youth factions of various political parties, including Kadima, Meretz and Labor on the Israeli side, and Fatah on the Palestinian side. The meetings replicate on the level of youth engagement the hypocritical discussions of a 'peace process' while down the road Occupation forces bulldoze Palestinian homes.

However, Palestinian youth expresses a strong political maturity unmask the propaganda, resist monetary temptations and to imagine and develop alternative organizing which actually serves Pal-

estinian interests. One of the interviewees stated:

"The [youth] work in Qalqiliya district is very, very weak. It is weak because there are so many who call themselves youth organizations but do not work directly with the youth. They call themselves youth organizations in order to get funding from inside or outside. Qalqiliya district has a problem with these organizations. We hope that they will realize that they are using the youth, and change their programmes to meet the needs of the youth in Qalqiliya district, and give them the chance to be something."

WHERE NOW?

The challenge for youth activists is how to engage in a constructive program of resistance against the Occupation, in the face of massive international pressure for normalization with the occupier and a lack of political national guidance.

However, in reshaping a youth and students movement, the new generation are able to count on a historic heritage of Palestinian struggle and youth leadership within it. Building on this and their own experience of daily repression and resistance, Palestinian youth is well equipped to move the struggle to a new generation, a new era and to continuously create new alternatives of resistance.

PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES: FOUR DECADES OF RESISTING ISRAELI OCCUPATION

Written by Stop The Wall, drawing on evidence from student researchers at Al Quds Open University, we describe the creative approaches taken by Palestinian Universities to provide education in the face of the attacks of the Occupation.



Children at the student demonstration Bethlehem, 2007

Up until the Six Day War in 1967 and subsequent Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, higher education in Palestine was limited as Palestinian students tended to study at universities abroad, usually in Lebanon or Jordan for higher education degrees.

However, because of the travel restrictions imposed by the Israeli Occupation, travel and extended stays abroad became increasingly dangerous for Palestinian students. As a response to this, starting in the early 1970s pre-existing Palestinian learning

centers began to transform and establish themselves as full fledged universities so that young people would not have to face the choice of attaining higher degrees at the risk of being prohibited from returning to their land and families. Hebron University was established in 1971, followed by Birzeit University in 1972 (although the four-year curriculum was not completed until 1975), Bethlehem University in 1973, An-Najah University in Nablus in 1977, and the Islamic University of Gaza in 1978.

WORKING FOR PALESTINE

From the start, the vision of Palestinian universities was not merely to fill an educational vacuum but also to create Palestinian institutions that would be an integral part of a national struggle for liberation.

The universities developed academic programs in response to community needs, integrating social and political issues that had emerged as a result of the Israeli Occupation.

Birzeit University community programs in health, human rights and women's studies have evolved into vital institutions, and Birzeit continues to retain its initial impulse that the university must remain engaged with the community, by requiring its students to complete 120 hours of community work in order to earn their degree. Bethlehem University has developed a strong community-linked education department as well as hosting the Institute for Community

“Under no circumstances can you teach, in houses or anywhere else. If we find anyone teaching, or any students carrying books we will take appropriate measures.”

Partnership. Similarly, Hebron University states as part of its mission to “contribute to the development and improvement of the cultural, social and economic status of the Palestinian society.”

RESISTING THE OCCUPATION

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Israeli authorities to block higher education for Palestinians, students and their universities have over the years found innumerable and often very creative ways to resist the eradication of their educational opportunities.

During the first prolonged closure of universities in the late 1980's, students and teachers organized themselves often ad hoc to continue their studies through “underground” classes in homes, offices, religious and civic centers. This adaptation was not without its risks and teachers and students were often arrested in army raids.

In April 1989, after an Israeli army raid on the YMCA of Ramallah uncovered Birzeit University administrative offices, a written warning was delivered to the university: “Under no circumstances can you teach, in houses or anywhere else. If we find

anyone teaching, or any students carrying books we will take appropriate measures.”

The pursuit of a university education became a banner of resistance for Palestinian students. Former Israeli Prime Minister and war criminal Ariel Sharon expressed his awareness of this phenomenon, when he said, “Palestinian education and propaganda are more dangerous to Israel than Palestinian weapons.”

Another form of resistance to Israeli efforts to shut the doors to academia in Palestine has been the creation of Al Quds Open University. Offering degree programs that can be completed as a distance degree, was first proposed in 1975 as a way of providing Palestinian students access to higher education, even as the Occupation barred them from physically reaching the university, and from having the funds to pay for university tuition.

The Open University started classes in 1991 and today has 13 campuses with a student body of 50,000 in 2005. This makes up 34% of the total number of Palestinian students enrolled in universities according to the most recent Ministry of Education statistics. Its

objectives, reflecting the reality in which it was established and exists, are to create a democratic educational model where socio-economic status, geographic barriers, family and/or employment responsibilities, age, or previous hardship in accessing higher learning do not become insurmountable obstacles to attaining a high quality education that emphasizes programs and areas of study relevant to the Palestinian experience, both in traditional forms of livelihood, as well as in response to the current political and economic situation.

Traditional universities have seen a dramatic decrease in students who come from distant areas of the West Bank or Gaza, as travel becomes a harrowing ordeal and the plummeting Palestinian economy makes it near

impossible for students to afford apartments near their universities. Universities, which are supposed to be national institutions which facilitate the intersection of ideas and people from all over the country (and world as well), are forced to become “neighborhood” schools, reflecting the fractured reality of Palestinian geography in its student body.

The Open University is able to partially address this issue by offering a disparate but networked community at a time when the Apartheid Wall is continually separating and isolating people from each other. Other tactics have been the opening of online university portals of “attendance based” universities so that students and teachers can stay in contact even during closures and curfews.



MEETING THE CHALLENGE: STOP THE WALL'S WORK IN MOBILIZING THE PALESTINIAN YOUTH

Since autumn 2006, the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign has organized seminars and tours with university students all over the West Bank.

The courses include lectures on the history of the Palestinian struggle and the roots, aims and tactics of Zionism in implementing apartheid and expulsion policies in Palestine. The students discuss ways in which their studies and research can contribute to the national liberation struggle and what forms of action can be taken by the youth to fight Israeli colonialism and apartheid and to take ownership within the Palestinian struggle.

Youth attending the workshops share their experience and analysis of occupation. They have a highly developed understanding of the Zionist agenda, having experienced its ravages first hand.

“Our enemy is building the Apartheid Wall in the Palestinian land for many reasons – these are political reasons for the Israeli government, not for security as they justify to the outside world. One of the most important reasons for them is that they are achieving the dream of the Israeli state empty of Arabs. Secondly, they aim to exert control by building the Wall around the Palestinian villages and cities and stopping the movement of the Palestin-



JERICHO STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE ON PRISONERS DAY

APRIL 17TH, 2007

The students of Jericho Open Al Quds University and the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign organized a 3 day event on their campus to educate the students about the Wall and reinvigorate the spirit of resistance in the university.

The three days of activities included exhibits, speeches, cultural performances and a final demonstration.

Up to 400 students and members of the public from Jericho attended the opening ceremony and were met by an impressive encampment of tents which the students had arranged in the university yard. The tents were hosting photo exhibits of the Wall, a cultural exhibit and a collection of caricatures designed by students. A special section was dedicated to the struggle of the almost 10 000 Palestinian political prisoners to mark Palestinian Prisoners Day on April 17.

The opening ceremony included speeches by the Students' Council and the Campaign and then the tents were formally opened, staffed by volunteers who discussed the issues at stake in each tent with their fellow students. The ceremony ended with an endorsing speech by the rector of the university, and in the evening activities continued with concerts, songs, poetry and traditional dabke (dancing) performances.

STUDENTS SUPPORT PROTESTS AGAINST THE WALL IN UM SALAMUNA

MAY 11 2007



Students from Al-Quds Open University joined the people from Um Salamuna (West Bethlehem) in confronting Occupation forces on the construction site of the Apartheid Wall which is destroying and confiscating their lands.

After a tense standoff with the Occupation forces the protest marched onto the lands on the other side of the path of the Wall where they were joined by a contingent of students carrying flags. Prayer was held on the threatened lands and followed by speeches by the mayor of Um Salamuna and representatives of the popular committee against the Apartheid Wall in South Bethlehem, which is organizing the popular resistance and protests against the Wall in the area.

ian people and giving the chance to the settlers to travel free in the Palestinian historic roads. Thirdly, they want to turn the Palestinian people into refugees in their own land. Fourthly, if the economic situation will be very bad, this will exasperate and create problems between the Palestinian people and poverty may drive many people to be spies for Israel."

Another workshop participant describes the aim of the Occupation "to isolate the West Bank and Palestine 48 from each other, to try to destroy any trace of peace and at the same time to confiscate the water resources in the West Bank, and to try to avoid the decision of the UN, resolution 338 and 242 that the Palestinian have a right to live in their own land."

Another describes how the Occupation intends "to transfer the Palestinian people, and cut all kinds of communication and relationships in those areas that are on the other side of the Wall; and to put the Palestinians in small towns with big jails."

The Campaign's approach is to encourage the youth to take decisions about their lives for themselves, as they are the ones suffering under the apartheid system, and will be the ones leading the future struggle. The voice of the youth must be heard within Palestine and beyond.

The Campaign believes that through sharing their analysis, the Palestinian youth can start to put together a coherent anti-colonial coalition to struggle against the occupier.

VOLUNTARY WORK

Key to the development of a popular youth movement will be the development of voluntary work, as the basis for a genuine movement for the good of Palestine and its liberation. Youth activists emphasize the importance of youth work, not just from the point of view of its social usefulness, but in a broader sense as a part of a wider national program.

One student told us:

"The voluntary work sometimes gives the youth an alternative to having nothing to do, especially in the small towns and the villages. It gives them a chance to do something, like planting trees in the village, and cleaning posters off the walls. This is the first step for the voluntary work, you start in the village and then it gives you the chance to do it all over Palestine."

STUDENTS' "FREEDOM EXHIBITION" AMPLIFIES THE VOICE OF JENIN NOVEMBER 28 2006



Student artwork at the Freedom Exhibit.

The Youth Toward Freedom Initiative in coordination with the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign launched a three day 'Freedom Exhibition' at the American University in Jenin.

The student group built an impressive exhibit on a mock wall on the university campus. Visitors must pass through reconstructions of the gates of the Apartheid Wall while students acting as Occupation forces harass the visitors. The exhibit itself consists of a collection of images demonstrating the damage caused by the Wall in Jenin district including different villages around Jenin, uprooted trees, destroyed houses and

markets, checkpoints, gates, beatings and humiliation.

The governor of Jenin opened the exhibit by cutting through an iron bar and razor wire with large metal bolt-cutters. Following the inaugural ceremony, the students held a conference entitled 'The political future for Palestine after the Wall and the current political changes' which was widely covered by the national media.

In the opening speech, a representative of the Youth Initiative warned all those who had gathered that "this Wall is not the first Nakba and it won't be the last Nakba if we don't end the Occupation".

YOUTH PROMOTES BOYCOTTS

Currently, the boycott movement is gaining considerable strength in various West Bank universities. Students in the Arab American University of Zababde, Qalqiliya Open al Quds University and Birzeit University have organized a consumer boycott of Israeli goods, banning these products from the campus cafeterias. Further campaigns are under way or planned in other West Bank universities.

Yet, the path to the enforcement of the boycott was not easy. Though

Palestinian students can count on a successful boycott experience during the first intifada where the population almost completely adhered to the boycott call from the Unified Leadership of the Intifada, today many institutions and a good part of Palestinian establishment are reluctant to revive the experience. Too many ties reproducing the oppression have been forged with the Occupation during the years of Oslo. Yet, the students have united in the struggle and already won over the majority of universities in the West Bank.

NETWORKING

The Campaign organizes student tours of the West Bank, with two goals; first, the tour allows students to see the different areas that are actively being devastated by the Apartheid Wall. This provides the participants with a comprehensive understanding of what the Wall means for the future of Palestine. Second, the tours bring together students from different areas of the West Bank, fostering student contacts and networks. This is especially important given the movement restrictions imposed by the Occupation.

In addition meetings are organized to ensure active students and youth organizers from all over the West Bank can meet and discuss their experiences, strategies and visions.

Our work together with a large range of Palestinian youth groups and organizations is to promote and protect the Palestinian struggle and youth movement, and continue to listen to their voices. The struggle is a fight for our culture, identity and rights, against occupation.

The dream of the Palestinian youth is for genuine self-determination, and to have their voices heard. The Campaign works to educate young people and give them the space to discuss the harsh reality of Israeli apartheid and occupation.



Stop The Wall tour for students from Jericho to the Wall in Al Quds, 2 February 2007.



Stop The Wall tour for students from Birzeit to the Wall in Ras Tira, 15 April 2007.



Student workshop in Jericho, 6 February 2007.

OUR GOALS

We aim to integrate youth into our resistance movements, rather than to separate youth issues from our national struggle. We thus want to support young leaders and activists who can take up the heritage of our struggle, continuously renewing and strengthening it until justice and liberation is achieved for all of us.

We aim to:

- give the youth spaces for decision making
- strengthen their spirit of resistance
- give them the tools and knowledge for effective struggle against the Apartheid Wall and Israeli Occupation.

OUR STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

We base our work with the Palestinian youth on a range of priorities:

- education in Palestinian history and resistance and global struggles via lectures and exhibits
- development of critical research capacities
- support of initiatives decided upon and organized by youth and students
- stimulating mobilization in the universities and districts
- promoting the call for boycott among the youth and in the universities
- organizing tours to challenge the fragmentation of the West Bank
- organizing and supporting networking meetings and youth camps with participants from different universities and youth organizations
- international outreach to students and youth movements.

The Wall is an integral part of the Zionist project to remove Palestinians from Palestine. We strongly believe that it can be torn down, and with it, the racist ambitions of Zionism. We know that our struggle will not be won tomorrow, and we are not in a hurry. Our road ahead is long, and so we must build a strong foundation of resistance by staying honest and true to our principles. Generation after generation, we have to provide the youth with the lessons, guidance and trust they need and deserve so that they can continue to lead our struggle until one day we will be free and able to return to our homes.

The Palestinian struggle is, at its core, a basic human instinct and drive for self-determination. It is a fight against expulsion and subjugation under Occupation. We ask the world to recognize this and support our path towards liberation without imposing conditions upon this aim. With this understanding and commitment, the dehumanization of our struggle will no longer be possible, and the rights and aspirations of Palestinians can, finally, be realized.

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS: A STRATEGY FOR RESISTANCE FOR THE YOUTH

The strategy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is emerging as one of the key ways for Palestinians to resist the Occupation, and mobilize international solidarity.

BDS, and specifically academic boycott and campus divestment, are particularly appropriate strategies for Palestinian and international students because they are in a uniquely strong position to communicate the damage wreaked on the Palestinian education system by the Occupation.

THE CALL TO BOYCOTT

The Academic Boycott call was first made in April 2004 by the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), while over 170 Palestinian organizations issued a comprehensive call for BDS on 9 July 2005, on the first anniversary of the International Court of Justice's decision on the illegality of the Wall. The Academic Boycott of Israel has as its aims:

- Ending local normalization programs
- Halting and preventing future joint and cooperative work with Israeli institutions
- Ending Israeli study

abroad programs, appointment of Israeli professors and reciprocal arrangements for students and academics to Israel

- Stopping guest lecturers from Israel speaking abroad

- Ending participation of students and academics in conferences, programmes and activities, from and to Israeli institutions

TULKAREM REFUGEES CALL FOR ISRAEL BOYCOTT IN TRADE FAIR

SEPTEMBER 21 2006

In conjunction with the groups in Tulkarem refugee camp, Stop the Wall organized the first Tulkarem Palestinian goods fair.

Traders gathered in the refugee camp to buy and sell Palestinian products in a statement

of boycott and resistance to the Israeli Occupation. Goods produced in the camp itself were on sale, including carob energy drinks, children's clothes and packaged cakes. Local people browsed the stalls while children from the camp entertained onlookers with drumming and dancing.

The speakers addressing the public meeting that launched the market included representatives of the refugee camp, of the city of Tulkarem and the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign.

The Tulkarem refugee camp, on the edge of the West Bank town of Tulkarem dates from 1949 in the wake of Nakba (the Catastrophe) when thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee from their homes in what is now territory occupied by Israel.

The camp has been attacked by Israeli forces numerous times since 2000 and the dilapidated sports hall that will house the Palestinian goods market is plastered with posters of martyrs from the camp who have died during the Israeli Occupation.



Products of local cooperatives are displayed in the trade fair

THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY WORK

Student activists such as the Birzeit Right 2 Education Committee, with whom the Campaign works closely, are strongly committed to the international BDS initiative.

As shown previously, the determination of the students to take on their own institutions to enforce a boycott of Israeli goods within their universities evidences the students' belief in the necessity of economic measures to fight the Occupation. However, the Campaign has found a clear lack of awareness about the ongoing international BDS movement within West Bank universities. Of thirty students who completed surveys as part of the courses organized by the Campaign, only two were aware of BDS as an effective tool for international mobilization.

This is a clear call for activists on the ground and globally. One of the key areas for development of the youth resistance movement is the forging of solidarity links with international activists: solidarity work not only puts the Occupation under pressure from abroad, it also strengthens the resolve of youth activists on the ground. Solidarity activists need to build concrete

links to ensure their actions are in interaction, guided and clearly perceived by the students in Palestine.

THE CASE FOR BDS

The BDS movement is about defending Palestinian's rights through resistance and solidarity with that resistance.

Education is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and within numerous international agreements and declarations. The 2004 ruling by the International Court of Justice, affirmed that the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognizes the right of education for everyone and the agreement by signatory states to promote and develop educational opportunities, is binding on Israel, a party to the Covenant, in the Occupied Territories and within Palestine 48.

Israel has over 60 years violated fundamental Palestinian rights and international law; "peace processes" have been misused to further colonize our land. It is time to stop Israeli occupation and apartheid and for Palestinians to see a new generation growing up

in freedom and equality in their homeland.

The international community, which has so far supported Israeli apartheid with 'business as usual' is called upon to withdraw their support and to treat Apartheid Israel as what it is: an outlaw and war criminal.

As boycott, divestment and sanctions against South Africa strengthened in the 1980s, they created pressure and sparked debate that was crucial in raising the issue of apartheid on the international stage. A similar movement is now beginning to shape.

Updates are on the boycott movement website: www.bdsmovement.net

BACKGROUND: ACADEMICS AGAINST APARTHEID

UK, 21 July 2007 *The British Medical Journal* opens a debate on BDS.

UK, May 30 2007 - *The University and College Union*, passed two motions supporting BDS against Israel.

Ireland, 16 September 2006 *Academics for Justice* publish a letter in the *Irish Times* on the anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacre calling for BDS.

January 20 2007 *The social movements declaration at the World Social Forum* calls for BDS

December 11 2006 Prominent Israeli academic Illan Pappé reiterates his support of boycott of Israel to *Electronic Intifada*

UK, May 2006 Professor Richard Seaford, from the University of Exeter, UK, refuses request to write article for Israeli journal, saying he is taking part in the academic boycott of Israel.

UK, May 2006 the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) passed a motion recommending its members boycott Israeli academics and institutions that do not publicly

declare their opposition to the Occupation and Israel's racist policies.

July 2005 – the Palestinian United Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Apartheid Israel, signed by 170 Palestinians organisations across Palestine and in the diaspora.

In **April 2005**, the Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals (TAUWP) passed a resolution 24-2 to divest from companies supporting Israel.

UK, April 2005 The Association of University Teachers (AUT) adopts a motion urging academics to "boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid." A boycott motion is passed against Bar Ilan and Haifa universities. Due to intensive pro-Israeli lobbying this motion is rescinded shortly afterwards.

On **April 11, 2004** the Student Council of Wayne State University passed the country's first university divestment resolution with 9-7 votes approving divestment from Israeli apartheid.

April 2004 The launch of the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

November 2003 Israeli academics establish a forum to fight the international boycott.

October 2003 The first Palestinian call for a boycott from Academics for Justice.

UK, July 2003 An Oxford University Professor dismisses an application from an Israeli student on the grounds that he had done service in the IDF.

The US movement organized two national divestment conferences in **2003 and 2004**.

April 2002 120 academics endorse call for moratorium on EU funding for scientific projects in Israel.

Spring 2002 Some one hundred Australian Academics endorse the call for boycott

July 2002 Call for boycott of Israeli Scientific Institutions read out by Professor Steven Rose (Open University UK) on *Newsnight* (UK TV programme)

UNIVERSITIES FOR BOYCOTT AND SOLIDARITY

Academic boycott is emerging as one of the major approaches to solidarity with Palestinian students, as part of the wider campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Apartheid Israel. The movement is causing a storm of controversy as it grows.

ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

The call to academic boycott is currently causing a storm of controversy.

Most recently, in the UK, on May 30 2007, the British Academic Union, UCU, passed two motions supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. UCU represents over 120000 academic teachers. On 21 July 2007, the British Medical Journal, the magazine of the British Medical Association opened a debate about a possible future boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

As well as those critical of the proposals, there has been a flood of positive responses, with academics from all disciplines rallying to support the isolation of Israeli apartheid.

The gathering movement has got the government of Israel extremely rattled: in June 2007, they commissioned a

new task force charged with combating the movement.

As has been outlined in this publication, Israeli academia is not merely complicit in the crimes of the Occupation, it plays a central role in justifying and maintaining it. Academic institutions produce the research, arguments and new leaders for the Occupation, in addition to serving as the scientific centers where weapons and technology are developed for use against Palestinians.

Israeli academia was silent when in June 2007 the Knesset cut by 24 percent educational allowances for children whose parents have not served in the army, actively discriminating against Palestinians within the Green Line. They were silent when Israeli forces bulldozed the educational studies campus of al-Aqsa University in Gaza on 16 March 2004. They say nothing when the Occupation rides roughshod over the 4th Geneva Convention and the

Convention on the Rights of the Child by preventing Palestinian children from accessing schools.

Israeli academics who have a unique responsibility to promote awareness of human rights abuses perpetrated by their government, are failing to do so. Israeli academics cannot exempt themselves from boycott on the grounds of 'academic freedom' while they fail to speak up for the academic freedoms of Palestinians. Between 2003 and 2004, only eight of the 133 sociologists (6%) in the five largest universities in Israel took a moral stand against the Occupation, with just 4% part of any protest movement, and 5% signing petitions. 5% of historians, 9% percent of philosophers spoke out against Israel's human rights abuses.

It is time for a global academic boycott of the Occupation in support of Palestinian students and their struggle for liberation.

DIVESTMENT

The aim of a campus divestment campaign is to encourage and pressure your university to shed their investments in Israel in order to curb the profits of Israel's war and apartheid economy. It raises awareness about Israel's policies and true nature in universities, and encourages them to use their economic influence.

Campus divestment campaigns can instill broader values of corporate responsibility. The tactic of withdrawing investments, if successful, can start a downward spiral in which investing in Israel will simply become too risky a prospect. This happened in South Africa once financial institutions started to withdraw and played an important role in supporting the free-

dom struggle. Divestment as a solidarity strategy can hurt a regime or company economically, but moreover, it may trigger reflections as to why it has been singled out. In this respect divestment advocacy work, even if unsuccessful financially, can bring about changes to the overall climate.

STUDENT ACTIVISM

Students activism can involve a large range of other activities. They can build up educational and twinning initiatives with Palestinian youth or universities. They can support the wider consumer boycott campaign or prevent visits of Israeli guest lecturers and tours.

Historically, students have always had considerable influence and control over their af-

fairs but have also shown they are willing to take up various causes and struggles from different parts of the world. High school and college students can work towards the passing of pro-Palestinian resolutions including those which take up the BDS call.

Student campaigners, as well as teaching staff, should also consider offering honorary degrees or awards to Palestinian freedom fighters and recognizing their sacrifices by naming buildings in connection with the Palestinian struggle and find creative ways to ensure places of learning are provided with information, literature and magazines that present the reality and the Palestinian struggle truthfully to the students. This can challenge the Zionist bias displayed in schools, particularly within the US and Europe, and play a role in building perceptions of Palestine within the contexts of liberation, human rights and just struggle. There is the potential for a whole generation of youth in educational institutions across the world to become aligned with the Palestinian cause and freedom struggle. Investing energy and efforts into building solidarity work and campaigns at a student level can pay dividends at numerous levels, especially as



"The Wall will not fall without resistance".

students mix with the wider community or move into different jobs, careers and activities.

The democratic power enjoyed by students at most universities, through student unions or committees, ensures they can determine what products and goods the union purchases. Some unions even own external franchises and hold a variety of financial concerns. Thus, a comprehensive ban on Israeli products can have far reaching effects and ramifications.

Moreover, direct action by students themselves can root the aims of the BDS movement within campus consciousness. Other boycotts have been made official policy in some parts of the world – such as policy against Nestlé or promoting Fair Trade – resulting in purchasing departments of student unions having to meticulously source every article, service and product connected to the union. Other unions have implemented ethical policies which need to be utilized in support of BDS campaigns. A boycott against Israel at this level could help to accumulate detailed facts on business and commercial links to Israel and contribute to the information required by the wider consumer and secondary boycott campaigns.

Over one thousand Birzeit University students and over 110 faculty members signed an open letter in support of the 61 Irish academics who called for a moratorium on EU aid to Israeli universities until Israel abides by international humanitarian and human rights laws. The signatures were collected by the Right 2 Education Student Committee and the letter is reprinted here.

Birzeit students and lecturers call for academic boycott

Open letter in support of Irish academics,

We, the undersigned, members of the Birzeit University's community of students, teachers, faculty staff and employees, congratulate and thank the group of Irish academics who called for a moratorium on the European Union's financing of Israeli academic institutions until Israel withdraws from the occupied Palestinian territories and abides by international humanitarian and human rights laws, including the right of return.

The recent attacks and re-invasion of Gaza and Lebanon expose the contempt with which Israel treats the UN, its resolution and its own bilateral agreements. We strongly condemn the death, chaos and destruction inflicted upon Gazans and Lebanese, and call upon the students, academics and staff of universities worldwide to collectively condemn these acts and take action to support us in our struggle to end Israeli military aggression and occupation.

The objective of such military force is to control and subjugate Palestinian society in order to sustain Israel's Jewish demographic supremacy and enforce its unilaterally declared boundaries. As a result, Israel has built an apartheid system of controlling the Palestinian population both inside Israel and under the occupied territories. Economically, the occupied territories served as cheap-labor reserves until the building of the Wall, now it serves to make daily life unbearable so that Palestinians decide to leave, continuing

“We therefore urge international civil society and the academic community to join our call to comprehensively boycott Israeli academics who contribute or refuse to stand up against the occupation”

the ‘silent transfer’ of the indigenous population. The Israeli civil and military bureaucracy also obstructs the development of an independent Palestinian economy through its control of borders, immigration, collection of taxes and restriction on movement inside the territories. Racially, Palestinians in Israel are consistently denied equal access to social services, housing and education, and since 2005, denied equal rights to family. In Jerusalem and the occupied territories, Palestinians are segregated by different permits based on their residency at the time of issue, and each ‘category’ is granted different freedoms of movement – at the bottom of this structure are Gaza permit-holders, who cannot move from Gaza to the West Bank, nor inside the West Bank itself. This system of control is parallel to the racial hierarchy and control during Apartheid South Africa.

Israeli academic institutions have close links with the state, and the vast majority of Israeli intellectuals and academics either contribute directly to the Israeli occupation through research that justifies or improves the mechanisms of Israeli apartheid, or are complicit through their silence about it. As Shahid Alam, Professor of Economics at North-eastern University in Boston, has pointed out, “through their links with the military, the political parties, the media, and the economy, they (Israel’s universities) have helped to construct, sustain, and justify the Apartheid (policies of the occupation).”

We therefore urge international civil society and the academic community to join our call to comprehensively boycott Israeli academics who contribute or refuse to stand up against the occupation, until: Israel withdraws its military from the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem; removes all its colonies in those lands and agrees to United Nations resolutions relevant to the restitution of Palestinian refugees rights.

International students wanting to support the Palestinian struggle do not need to build their movement from scratch. A number of Student Unions have passed motions in support of Palestinian students, building effective campus solidarity movements on which others can be modelled. Below is an example of such a motion, from Sussex Students in the United Kingdom.

SUSSEX UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY

TWINNING DECLARATION

As an important step in the Brighton & Tubas Friendship Solidarity Project, a delegation of Sussex University students met with Al-Quds Open University Tubas Study Centre students and staff and launched the following declaration.

On Monday 9th April 2007, Al-Quds Open University in Tubas officially endorsed the “Universities of Resistance” programme. An eleven point action-plan was written to launch unified resistance against the illegal occupation of Palestine. The initiative is to include a scholarship programme for Al-Quds Open University students to study at Sussex and to educate the world about the situation the Palestinians face. The twinning is a profound and defiant move for Al-Quds University and the University of Sussex students, aiming to give full support to Palestinian students resisting oppression and occupation, as part of the international Palestine-solidarity student movement.

Sussex students will spread the importance of standing shoulder to shoulder with Al-Quds Open University students affected by the Israeli occupation. Together we will raise awareness and provide practical

support to facilitate the higher education of students who may otherwise not have the opportunity. Sussex University students recognize the need for practical action to combat Israeli human rights violations. WE will campaign to dismantle the wall and to end the illegal occupation. Over the coming years, information, stories and photographs will be exchanged between Sussex and Tubas students will be organized. Palestinian produce will be sold and the boycotting Israeli goods will be investigated on Sussex University campus. Al-Quds Open University will continue to implement its policy of boycotting Israeli goods.

Students everywhere have the right to receive a decent education. The time has come for students to come together and stand in solidarity to resist the Israeli apartheid regime.

Signed

*University of Sussex Students' Union President
Tubas Study Centre Director
Tubas Student Council President
Sussex Students' Union Communications Officer
Brighton Tubas Friendship & Solidarity Group
Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign*

ONE YEAR PLAN

1. Freedom of Movement

To set up exchanges, visits, delegations and a scholarship for staff and students.

2. Communication

To set up a website which Sussex University students and Al-Quds Open University students can participate in. To upload videos on the situation of students from both sides onto YouTube. To organize video conferences between both sides and encourage students to write blogs on the "University of Resistance" website. To create notice boards at both campuses to inform students about the twinning initiative.

3. Translation

To translate articles and resources.

4. Revealing the Atrocities

To regularly exchange information on Israeli human and environmental right violations.

5. Furthering Research Cooperation

To link the students and staff in relevant departments for research purposes.

6. Resource Sharing

To share resources - to contribute towards the development of library provision and the English language training resources at the Al-Quds University.

7. Partners in Tactical Resistance

To share skills on resistance tactics, including academic boycott of Israel and the boycott of Israeli on campus, and to work towards joint actions against the occupation.

8. Cultural Exchange

To use music, arts and drama as a tool for communication, expression and resistance.

9. Prisoners Issues

To highlight the plight of the political prisoners from Al-Quds Open University, to visit their families and to set up video conferencing between the families and the Sussex students.

10. Linking Women's Groups

To establish relationships between the women's groups of the two Universities.

11. Establishing Follow-Up Groups

To set up diverse organizing groups within both Universities to further the relationship between Sussex University and Al-Quds Open University, in order to continue the "University of Resistance" project.