Anarchists Against the Wall

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Anarchists Against the Wall (in Hebrew: Anarchists Against the Fence) is an Israeli action initiative supporting the popular Palestinian struggle against segregation and land confiscation in the West Bank.

The initiative started in April 2003 when farmers from the village of Mas'ha invited Israelis and internationals to establish a protest camp on their land, which was about to be confiscated for part of the Israeli government's Separation Barrier. Over four months the camp was visited by a thousand people and became a center of information and struggle against the occupation.

The Palestinian non-violent campaign proliferated and the fluid group of Israel anarchists mobilized to support popular committees in villages including Budrus, Salem, Anin, Biddu, Beit Awwa, Deir Balut, Beit Surik, and Beit Likia. The presence of Israelis and internationals usually forced the army to avoid lethal repression, and forged an unprecedented binational alliance on the ground. In addition to demonstrations and human blockades, in several actions entire lengths of the fence were destroyed.

Attacking what it described as a policy of ethnic cleansing, the group's direct actions intended "to open a gap in the wall of hatred and to provide with our actions a living, kicking alternative to the apartheid policy of the Israeli government." It declared that "justice and equality are achieved by voluntary agreement between people ...the State is only an aggressive tool of dominant ethnic/class groups" (Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici 2004: 49).

From February 2005, the group mainly supported weekly demonstrations in the resilient village of Bil'in, a mobilization sustained in numbers for three years despite violent repression. Over this period the group's composition changed almost entirely, and the anarchist discourse somewhat receded. Media attention increased after near-lethal injuries to Israelis (nine Palestinians have been killed in the campaign), while the physical and emotional impacts of regularized violence weakened the initiative's sustainability. Yet the initiative has succeeded in eroding Israeli enthusiasm for the fence, and established the alternative of joint non-violent struggle, which stood in the background of the few court cases that led to changes in sections of the fence (e.g., Beit Surik, Budrus, Bil'in).

As of 2008, Anarchists Against the Wall was rejuvenating as a more decentralized action network. Active relations continue with Bil'in, with popular committees in the Bethlehem area, and with villages demonstrating on Route 443, a major Israelis-only road in the West Bank. Ac-

tions inside Israel have included barbed-wire blockades in Tel Aviv, and support for the public campaign marking 40 years of occupation in the West Bank.

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