

Trees not Walls

Call for Eco-Justice Bloc at Million Worker March, Oct. 17, 2004

Because from Washington DC to Palestine, workers pay the price of ecological decline!

Calling all refuseniks! Come all who conscientiously object to the capitalist transformation of Earth into industrial wasteland! All who till soil in community gardens and organic farms, defend local watersheds and forests, fight toxics in their factories, resist racist zoning that spews pollution at neighborhoods of color, support indigenous struggles against colonial theft of land and natural resources, and reject the economic logic that asks us to choose between viable jobs and a livable environment – come join us! In defiance of Walls designed to divide and displace us, on October 17 in Washington DC, before, during and after the Million Worker March, we invite you to join the Eco-Justice/Palestine Solidarity Bloc to participate in a powerful, long-overdue fusion of movements!

**ECO-JUSTICE/PALESTINE SOLIDARITY BLOC AT THE MWM MARCH
MEET @ AFL-CIO HEADQUARTERS (16th and H St. NW) at 11:00 AM**

ECOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION HURTS WORKERS!

When runaway development and over-exploitation degrades ecosystems, local workers suffer the consequences of ecological destruction as much as any non-human species! Few cases reveal this as starkly as Israel's construction of a massive, militarized concrete "separation" Wall through the heart of Palestine's West Bank. Armed with watchtowers, trenches, electronic fences and sensors, and patrol routes, the Wall creates a zig-zagging 700-kilometer-long, 200-meter-wide environmental "dead zone" that obliterates the landscape's ecological integrity. The Wall disrupts the hydrology of watersheds, altering surface water flow and increasing erosion; it fragments animal populations, diminishing overall levels of wildlife; and Israeli earthmovers have uprooted hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees, "shaving the land" to clear the path for the Wall's erection ...

The Wall's primary purpose is to maximize the amount of water and fertile Palestinian farmland on the side annexed to Israeli control, and the number of Palestinians on the other! Annexing over 11 % of the West Bank and cutting tens of thousands of Palestinian families off from their ancestral land and each other, the Wall converts peasants and farm workers into the newly unemployed. This is a late stage of Israel's ongoing war against Palestine's economy, which forbids Palestinians from trading products outside the district in which they live, even as Israeli products inundate Palestinian markets. Under siege, the West Bank's unemployment rate has skyrocketed to over 50% and poverty to over 67%, handing Israeli capitalists an irresistible opportunity for profit ...

AGAINST CAPITALISM, IMPERIALISM AND APARTHEID ...

International legal language defines 'apartheid' as "a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one [ethnic] group over another ... and systematically oppressing them." The 1973 International Convention on Apartheid specifies acts – including the creation of ghettos, land confiscation, and prohibition of freedom of movement – that constitute Apartheid. By totally encircling Palestinian towns like Qalkilya and Tulkarem, illegally seizing huge swaths of land, and filtering all domestic travel through a rigid system of gates and checkpoints, Israel's Wall administers Apartheid. But the Wall is also a capitalist tool, imposing Israel's version of NAFTA. On the Wall's 'Mexican' side, Israel plans to establish numerous 'industrial estates' where Israeli companies will put Palestine's landless and unemployed to work at sweatshop wages. Ehud Olmert, Israel's Minister of Industry, has said: "The industrial estates resolve both the problem of Palestinian unemployment and that of the high cost of labor for Israeli businesses ... and they do it without risk, since the Palestinians won't be crossing the Green Line."

AND NO COLLABORATION WITH MILITARY OCCUPATION!

As progressive and revolutionary workers, we must unite to oppose the collaboration of organized labor with these forces of injustice! The institution of Apartheid in Palestine presents unions with the historic duty to become leaders in the international struggle for justice by building connections of mutual aid with Palestinian labor, and by withdrawing economic links with Israel until the structures of Apartheid and Occupation are dismantled. Labor unions that invest heavily in Israeli bonds, such as the AFL-CIO, must be shown that divestment is the just and humane alternative to financially sustaining the infrastructure of oppression! Gathering at AFL-CIO's headquarters, we will call upon American labor to set a standard of solidarity against Apartheid!

In Israel, while the majority of the Left has either acquiesced to or openly supported the construction of the Wall, Anarchists Against the Wall has led the fight against it, working with international civilians to create alliances with Palestinian communities directly affected by the Wall, such as Budrus, and engaging courageously in non-violent direct action to stop it. In solidarity with them, and with anarchists everywhere who put their bodies on the line to defend the Earth from the ravages of corporations and governments, we will join the anarchist feeder march into the Million Worker March!

BUILDING A MOVEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ...

In October 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit convened in Washington DC, and ratified 17 Principles of Environmental Justice. Among other Principles, the Summit affirmed that environmental justice "opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures." In 2004, with the environmental racism of Occupation increasingly apparent – trees and wells destroyed, Palestinian watersheds polluted by Israeli settlements discharging untreated waste, relocation of toxic factories (like Geshuri) illegal inside Israel to the West Bank, plus the "scorched earth" pillage of the Wall – and in contrast to so much international silence regarding these violations of a nation's life support systems, we renew this call for environmental justice! By building an American movement for environmental justice in Palestine, we aim to unite solidarity activists with radical biocentrists who oppose all injury to the Earth, whether it occurs in the name of profit or "security," organized labor who stand against Israeli abuse of the natural rights of Palestinian workers, and interfaith groups who object to the despoliation of a Land traditionally seen as Holy

WITH AUTUMN SOLIDARITY BEYOND OCTOBER 17!

Because olive workers bear the biggest burden of the latest destructive phase of Israel's decades-long Occupation, we are calling for a national autumn campaign of solidarity with their 2004 olive harvest. As international civilians converge in the West Bank to help Palestinians defend their right to harvest their fields and groves, we will mobilize solidarity in our own communities! From October 17 until the end of November, Trees Not Walls Solidarity Network will sponsor benefit concerts, each weekend in major East Coast cities, to aid the non-violent struggle of Palestinian olive workers against Apartheid. We want to expand our network of solidarity! We invite individuals and organizations across America to bring the "Trees Not Walls" Tour to a venue near you, or to organize your own benefit event! To participate in this action, email treesnotwalls@riseup.net. And in the meantime ... join us October 17 at the Million Worker March to say:

"Rise Up! Resist! Squash the capitalists! No submission, no retreat! Democracy is in the streets!"