

feedback by CPA-member on Evil Brain's Wall (see below), published in The Westender, November 6-13, 2003

Dear editor,

Kudos to columnist Brian Peterson for his insightful and much needed column regarding Israel's construction of an apartheid fence or wall around the occupied Palestinian West Bank.

Apart from inspiring increased armed resistance, including terrorism, by illegally encroaching on more Palestinian land and water resources, the fence also demonstrates the utter bankruptcy of Zionism.

It is now 107 years since Theodor Herzl et al. held the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland and 55 years since the first mass expulsion of Palestinians and the creation of Israel. After all the suffering it has brought to the Middle East and the hundreds of billions of dollars expended on its behalf, all Zionism can offer Jews is another ghetto. How bitterly ironic.

Yours Sincerely,
Gary D. Keenan

Erecting walls has never helped bring people to peace

By Brian Peterson

Evil Brain

We were concerned about security in our backyard. So we crowned the six-foot wooden fence with formidable-looking racks of rusty iron-spear points and spikes. In no time a bicycle had been stolen off the back porch. Good fences may make good neighbours but they're no real impediment to someone determined to make it to the other side. So what if I decided I needed a bigger security zone and rebuilt my fence so that it cut deep into the neighbour's yard? Such a wall would enrage the neighbours denied access to their land and make me liable for prohibitive legal and labour charges for fence removal, mental and physical cruelty. But if I had the neighbourhood bully bankrolling the wall's construction, arming me to the teeth and dominating the block association meetings-my neighbour's only avenue of complaint- what incentive would I have to tear it down?

Of course, I'm talking about the Israeli apartheid fence being rapidly erected around the West Bank. Its advocates maintain the fence is a temporary measure necessary to keep suicide bombers out of Israel. But while the northern portion of the fence roughly follows the internationally accepted Green Line, the new southern sections are slated to cut deep into Palestinian lands to encircle Israeli settlements deemed illegal by any measure of international law. Critics call it a blatant theft of some of the best Palestinian agricultural lands and hundreds of wells; That's no small matter; since the start of the latest intifada, access for Palestinians to work in Israel has been severely curtailed and agriculture is critical for survival. The wall makes isolated Palestinians increasingly dependent on Israeli gatekeepers who have the power to harass and delay passage of those affected to their land, hospitals, schools.

A UN Security Council resolution calling for the wall's dismantling was vetoed earlier this month by the U.S. because it did not expressly condemn terrorism in strong enough language. However, a UN General Assembly resolution calling for the wall's demolition was overwhelmingly passed with only four dissenters. Predictably though, not one Israeli bulldozer paused in its work of razing Palestinian villages and uprooting orchards for the wall's construction. Not that I'm criticizing Israeli government policy. No one should ever criticize Israel because...uh...that makes one an anti-Semite or a Holocaust denier or insensitive to the suffering of Israelis-which is obviously more profound than anyone else's? I dunno; pick one. No, as usual I'm criticizing the United States' refusal to enforce its own laws on how the massive amount of taxpayer-funded military and economic aid delivered to Israel each year is spent.

The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act reportedly prohibits military assistance to any country "which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." Under The Arms Export Control Act the U.S. can only supply weapons that are used "for legitimate self defense." The Proxmire Amendment bans military assistance to any government that refuses to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to allow inspections of its nuclear facilities. According to reports, Israel is currently in violation of all these agreements. Secretary of State Colin Powell, fronting for an administration stuffed full of rabidly Zionist neo-conservatives, recently called the wall "troublesome." Whew! I guess we can all relax now. For those not satisfied by that condemnation, Nov. 9 has been deemed an International Day of Action Against the Wall. Try www.stophthewall.org for more details.