

MOVIE REVIEW:

The Iron Wall

THE STRUGGLE OF PEOPLE FOR THEIR LAND

Name of Film: The Iron Wall

A film by: Mohamed Alattar

Released: 2006

Running time: 58 minutes

Reviewed by: By Mahomed Kamdar

The Iron Wall is film exploring the struggle of the Palestinian people to get back their land.

A film on Palestine seldom omits reference to the political parties in Palestine. So what does the 'Iron Wall' have to say about Palestine? It simply tells us what it is like to live in Palestine – a story told with such enviable eloquence and simplicity, yet uncompromising in detail. The movie is unprecedented, simply because many of its commentators and interviewees are Jewish.

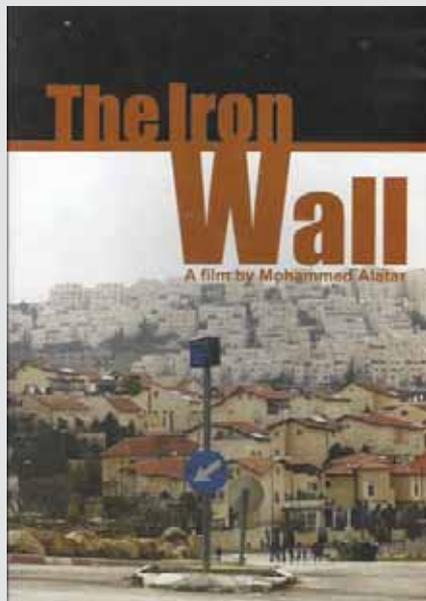
The ANC's interest in the Middle East issue has always been intense. So it is not surprising that the ANC branches, throughout the country, screened this movie. The storyline is a vivid account of the creation of the 'colonies' or settlements within Palestine, and the wall which separates Jews from Palestinians.

Israel has not only expelled over 700 000 Palestinians from their homes and controlled what is left of Palestine through military occupation, but seeks to annex additional territory within Palestinian land.

Over the last decade, Israel annexed many 'pockets' of land within Palestine; populated the area with Jewish citizens from Israel. These Israeli colonies, known as 'settlements', are no longer mere settlements but have become so large – almost equivalent to small-size towns, and have complex a network of connecting roads reserved for the use of Israeli citizens only. It is possible to travel from a major city in Israel to one of these

settlements in Palestine, via a well-constructed highway without realising that one has crossed over an internationally-recognised border between two countries.

This experience is familiar to black South Africans who are acquainted with the 'Group Areas Act'. Palestinians are not allowed to use these roads unless they are in receipt of special permits which are difficult to obtain. Settlements are established on hill-tops, on prime property and between major Palestinian cities. This re-



enactment of the old 'group areas' for White South Africans, copies a practice that led to apartheid being declared a 'crime against humanity'.

The 'settlements' as evil as they are, are not the end of the story in Palestine.

Israeli authorities are not content with their current violation of human rights, and violation of international borders, but added another imposition: the 'cherry on the top' is the building of the Wall.

The size of the Wall exceeds the boundary between the two states that signifies a blatant thieving of another's land. The length of the Green Line – the border between Israel and the West Bank – is 315 km. The contour of the wall is 670 km long. One would have thought that through experience, people are historically well informed and would learn from history. The famous (or should we say, infamous!) Berlin Wall which divided East Berlin from West Berlin, did not survive, earned the wrath of Germans, and collapsed in December 1989.

The Israeli Wall is four times the length of the Berlin Wall and three times as high.

This movie was made almost a year ago. Check the website (stopthewall.com) for an update on the wall.

Although the apartheid state in South Africa was brutal in its destruction of people, it did not build an apartheid wall.

The Israeli 'colonies' and the construction of the wall has devastated the Palestinian people.

It takes away their livelihood, destroys their homes and up-roots indigenous olive groves and plantations.

The movie depicts the real-life destruction of a nation. This movie is essential viewing, both for those with faint acquaintance with middle-east politics, as well those deeply committed to the liberation of Palestine.