ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide has been developed by Palestine-Israel Program staff members of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). AFSC is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. The Palestine-Israel Program works to create awareness and support for social change initiatives leading to a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine.

This guide is intended to help facilitate discussion about the film 5 Broken Cameras by social action groups, classes, and other interested parties. We hope that discussion of this important film becomes a vehicle for developing a greater understanding of the issues involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and nonviolent resistance in Palestine. The film guide is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief summary of the film and brief background and context information about the village of Bil’in. The second section provides brief background information on Palestinian nonviolent resistance to Israel’s occupation. Section three includes sample questions which can be used to guide discussions about the film and information about resources that interested individuals and groups can use to find out more about the situation in Bil’in, in Israel and Palestine, and about actions they can support that will help bring change. The final section is a case study developed based on interviews conducted by AFSC in Bil’in.

ABOUT THE FILM

The first-ever Palestinian film to be nominated for a best Documentary Feature Academy Award, the critically-acclaimed 5 Broken Cameras is a deeply personal, first-hand account of life and nonviolent resistance in Bil’in, a West Bank village surrounded by Israeli settlements. Shot by Palestinian farmer Emad Burnat, who bought his first camera in 2005 to record the birth of his youngest son, Gibreel, the film was co-directed by Burnat and Guy Davidi, an Israeli filmmaker. Structured in chapters around the destruction of each one of Burnat’s cameras, the filmmakers’ collaboration follows one family’s evolution over five years of village upheaval. As the years pass in front of the camera, we witness Gibreel grow from a newborn baby into a young boy who observes the world unfolding around him with the astute powers of perception that only children possess. Burnat watches from behind the lens as olive trees are bulldozed, protests intensify and lives are lost in this cinematic diary and unparalleled record of life in the West Bank. 5 Broken Cameras is a Palestinian-Israeli-French co-production.

We hope people will put aside pre-judgments and approach the film with fresh eyes. We think it is easy to shut down when watching a film that deals with such pain and controversy, and reduce the experience to a series of binaries: right and wrong, good and bad, Palestinian and Israeli. We urge viewers to set aside these oversimplifications to fully embrace the complexity, beauty, and emotion of the circumstance.

—PERSONAL STATEMENT FROM GUY DAVIDI AND EMAD BURNAT, CO-DIRECTORS OF 5 BROKEN CAMERAS
ABOUT BIL'IN

Bil'in is a small agrarian Palestinian village with approximately 2,000 residents, located in the West Bank. Despite its location three miles east of the Green Line, the Israeli government began constructing portions of the wall on Bil'in's agricultural lands in 2004. The construction route effectively annexed 60% of Bil'in to the nearby settlement Modi'in Illit.

Bil'in lands were first confiscated by Israel during the 1980s and early 1990s in order to build settlements now linked into the Modi'in Illit settlement block. Expansion of the East Mattityahu settlement in 2001 resulted in additional land confiscation, and in 2004 new land confiscation orders and orders for the construction of the wall on village land were issued. In response village members set up a Committee for Popular Resistance (Popular Committee) in January of 2005, and began a popular resistance campaign against the construction of the wall and confiscation of village land. During the first months after construction started the Popular Committee organized daily nonviolent demonstrations on or near the land being confiscated. Demonstrations were later cut back to once a week.

Village activists have been joined in their struggle by both international and Israeli solidarity activists. Bil'in's resistance to the wall quickly became recognized for its creativity. For instance, in response to the building of a new Israeli settlement outpost on village land, villagers created their own "outpost" in order to bring attention to the one-sidedness of the Israeli occupation's legal framework. Demonstrations incorporate different themes each week, often featuring theatrical elements and messages of solidarity with other struggles. The Israeli military has responded to these protests using excessive and disproportionate force resulting in the deaths of 2 demonstrators and the injury of many more. In an attempt to stop demonstrations, during 2010 the Israeli military declared Bil'in a “closed military zone” on Fridays, effectively banning all non-residents from the village on the day when protests occurred. Outside activists have continued to sneak into the village for protests which continue to this day. Regular arrest campaigns are also carried out by the military in the village as part of Israel's ongoing effort to stop the protests, with many villagers imprisoned for extended periods of time.

Bil'in has become a major hub for popular resistance movements in the West Bank. Other villages across the West Bank including Na'alin, Bidu, Jayyous, Budrus, Beit Liqya, Nabi Saleh, and Beit Ommar have joined Bil'in in mobilizing against further annexation of their lands. Since 2006, Bil'in has hosted an annual conference on popular resistance against the Occupation. Eight years after the first demonstration, Bil'in continues to actively engage in nonviolent resistance. The village's achievements have not only regained so of their land, but also inspired a growing movement of Palestinian popular resistance against the occupation.

For more information on a history of the protests in Bil'in see: http://www.bilin-village.org/english/discover-bilin/
PALESTINIAN NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE TO INJUSTICE AND THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

5 Broken Cameras tells the story of Bil’in and the development of a nonviolent movement to resist the building of the wall and settlements on village land. Many viewers of the film may find that the story it tells challenges their preconceived notions about the conflict and that it presents a picture of Palestinian civil disobedience and resistance not often publicized in the US. It is therefore important to place the protests in Bil’in within a context of historic Palestinian nonviolent resistance to injustice and occupation.

Palestinian nonviolent resistance dates back to the Ottoman and British Mandate periods. While the story of armed Palestinian resistance is known, the equally important history of nonviolent resistance is largely untold. Nonviolent resistance has taken many forms. At times it conforms to a traditional American view of what nonviolent protest looks like—protest marches, hunger strikes, work stoppages, tax revolts, protest villages, economic activism, etc. At other times this resistance is more subtle and perhaps harder for an American audience to understand. This is the daily resistance of laborers who circumvent checkpoints to find work, of families who build homes without permits knowing that they risk demolition, of villagers who remain on their land despite being denied access to water, electricity, health and education services, and other basic needs. This is the resistance of average people who refuse to accept and cooperate with discriminatory policies and laws.

While media presentations of the conflict highlight acts of violence, the truth is that Palestinian resistance to occupation and injustice is overwhelmingly nonviolent. Not only has Palestinian nonviolence been ignored, but since the British mandate nonviolent protests have been brutally suppressed and leaders have been imprisoned, exiled, and killed. Nevertheless, nonviolent resistance continues. When one generation sees its attempts to establish new forms of resistance violently suppressed, the next generation begins again and they invent new strategies of resistance.

For more information on Palestinian and Israeli nonviolent resistance to occupation and injustice see: https://afsc.org/resource/faces-hope-learn-about-palestinian-israeli-conflict
Below are examples of just a few of the types of nonviolent actions that Palestinians have engaged in on a nearly daily basis.

- **March 30, 1976**: Thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel take part in strikes and nonviolent demonstrations in response to the Israeli government’s plan to expropriate 60,000 dunams of Palestinian-owned land in the Galilee. Israeli military and police forces shoot dead six unarmed protesters and injure another 96. To commemorate this incident, Palestinians observe Land Day every year as a day for action and protest.

- **1987–1993**: Palestinians participate in the first intifada (Arabic for “shaking off”), protesting Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Protests against Israeli military rule and oppression took many forms including a refusal to pay taxes, economic boycotts, organizing community schools when the military ordered all schools closed, hunger strikes, and labor strikes. Israeli forces attempted to repress this resistance by jailing and exiling Palestinian political leaders. In the absence of leadership, Palestinian grassroots organizations filled the void and established popular committees to fulfill the duties of official institutions. Women’s committees, trade unions, youth movements, and prisoner organizations provided education, healthcare, and other basic services to Palestinians living under occupation. These committees allowed Palestinians to continue resisting through protest and non-cooperation and to continue to function as a cooperative society despite military crackdowns.

- **1989**: Beit Sahour, a village in the West Bank, initiates a total tax revolt, refusing to pay taxes to the Israeli civil administration stating that the taxes were used for the maintenance of their occupation. Israeli authorities placed the village under siege for six months, until the strikers’ steadfastness and international outcry forced an end to the renewal of administrative detention orders.

- **2002–Present**: Israel begins construction of the wall within the West Bank, confiscating huge amounts of Palestinian land. Palestinian villages in the path of the wall launch regular nonviolent demonstrations. Several villages have succeeded in rerouting or delaying construction of the wall, including Bil’in. Today, popular committees continue to resist acquisition of land from the wall and settlements through weekly demonstrations in villages across the West Bank.

- **2005**: Over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations join together and issue a call for the use of boycott, divestment, and sanctions tactics to bring freedom, equality, and justice to Palestine and Israel, sparking a global BDS movement. Since the call’s inception, targeted campaigns around the world have challenged corporations and cultural and academic institutions that reinforce Israel’s occupation and the denial of Palestinian rights.

- **2012**: Thousands of Palestinian detainees participate in hunger strikes to protest the Israeli use of administrative detentions, which can be applied without charge or trial and renewed indefinitely. Individual strikers are released from detention over the course of the year. In May 2012, Israel agrees to several terms of the strike, including an end to renewal of administrative detention. However, to date Israel continues to hold prisoners in administrative detention without charge or trial.

- **January 2013**: Palestinian activists erect Bab al-Shams, a protest village in an area slated for settlement development. The protest site draws international attention to the confiscation of Palestinian land through settlement construction. Israeli authorities remove the village after two days, but this action inspires the establishment of other protest villages in the West Bank as part of an effort to call attention to land confiscation, settlement building, and settler violence.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The questions below have been developed to help facilitate a discussion about the film 5 Broken Cameras. We hope that these questions will help open conversations and increase understanding about the situation in Israel and Palestine.

1. Have you ever lived in or visited Israel or Palestine? Has someone you know? What impressions do you have of both societies? Were your impressions challenged by the film?

2. How did watching this film make you feel? What scenes in particular resonated with you, or struck you as memorable?

3. Did you learn something new about Israel and Palestine from watching this film? Do the events in 5 Broken Cameras change the way you understand what is happening in Israel and Palestine?

4. Were you familiar with the events in the film previously? Do you feel that media coverage adequately covers the events shown in this film?

5. The focus of the film is the protests organized in Bil‘in against the building of the wall and the resulting destruction and confiscation of village land. Did the film impact your understanding of why Israel is building the wall? Why do you think Israel is building the wall where it is?

6. In addition to its focus on the wall, the film highlights the ongoing expansion of nearby illegal Israeli settlements and the resulting confiscation and destruction of village land. How did what you saw in the film conform to or challenge your understanding of settlements?

7. What did you know about Palestinian nonviolent resistance before watching 5 Broken Cameras? What has this film taught you about Palestinian nonviolent resistance?

8. The film shows Palestinian and Israeli activists working together to challenge and resist the building of the wall and the occupation. How does this form of “co-resistance” differ from more traditional ideas about promoting “co-existence”?

9. During one scene in the film, Israeli soldiers uproot olive trees using Caterpillar construction equipment. Despite their well documented use in systematic human rights violations, Caterpillar machines are sold to the Israeli military through the Foreign Military Sales Program, which is in place to facilitate the sales of weapons to US allies. The cost of their purchase is subsidized by US monetary assistance to Israel. Given this situation, do you think that we as Americans bear any responsibility for the injustices documented in this film or other injustices in Israel and Palestine?

10. What can we do about what we saw in this film? What are actions we can take or campaigns we can support in order to challenge the Israeli occupation of Palestine?
MORE INFORMATION AND WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

If you would like more information about any of the topics covered in *5 Broken Cameras* or ways that you can get involved in Israel and Palestine activism, check out the websites below:

**SOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND NEWS ABOUT ISRAEL AND PALESTINE**

- http://www.mondoweiss.net
- http://www.electronicintifada.net
- http://maannews.net/
- http://www.haaretz.com/
- http://www.alternativenews.org

**INFORMATION AND ACTIVIST RESOURCES ON ENDING US MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL**

The US gives Israel $3 billion each year in military aid. Lobby your congressional representative, create a campaign around ending US military aid to Israel, and/or learn about how funds might be used differently in your community.

- http://www.twopeoplesonefuture.org/
- http://www.aidtoIsrael.org

**INFORMATION ON BOYCOTT AND DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGNS AND WAYS THAT YOU CAN GET INVOLVED**

The following corporations are connected to the injustices documented in *5 Broken Cameras*:

- Elibit: Israeli company contracted to construct the wall.
- Caterpillar: weaponized bulldozers destroy olive trees, homes
- G4S: contracted to run Israeli detention centers for Palestinian prisoners (including children)
- Veolia Environnement: provides segregated waste, and transportation services for the benefit of settlers.
- SodaStream: manufactured in a settlement industrial zone; made with Palestinian labor.
- The We Divest campaign targets TIAA-CREF, a retirement fund held by many educators and health care providers, which has holdings in the above five companies, and thus profits from the Israeli occupation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE CORPORATIONS AND DIVESTMENT, VISIT:**

- http://www.wedivest.org
- http://sodastreamboycott.org/
- http://globalexchange.org/economicactivism/campaigns
- http://www.endtheoccupation.org/
- http://www.whoprofits.org
- http://www.bdsmovement.net/

The AFSC, a Quaker peace and social justice organization established in 1917, has worked to build a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine since 1948. Since 1970 AFSC has carried out education, advocacy, and policy work in the US to push for a just end to the conflict and changes in US policy. This work is based on the Quaker belief that there is that of God in each person and a commitment to nonviolent action for social change. Based on these beliefs and within the framework of human rights and international law, the AFSC strives for a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians and for freedom from occupation and self-determination for all people living in the region.
AN EYE ON BIL‘IN: WHERE POPULAR NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE LIES AT THE HEART OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

In 2004, the Israeli Government ordered the confiscated of 4,000 dunums* of agricultural land belonging to the Palestinian village of Bil‘in in order to build the separation wall. Bil‘in is a small agricultural village and many villagers relied on the crops they produced on this land for their livelihoods. The residents of Bil‘in responded to this confiscation order by setting up a Popular Resistance Committee which organized and used both nonviolent protests and legal strategies to oppose the building of the wall and settlements on their land.

The popular non-violent resistance in Bil‘in has gained support from both international and Israeli activists. Every Friday villagers march peacefully towards the wall in an attempt to reach the land that has been taken from them. They are joined by international and Israeli activists. At nearly every demonstration, international, Israeli, and Palestinians protestors are detained or arrested. Most of the internationals and Israelis detained are released after only a few hours later, but many of the Palestinians arrested remain in prison for periods that range from only a few days to weeks or months.

As a result of the villager’s protests and legal challenges, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered the route of the wall changed in 2007. This resulted in village residents

*A Palestinian, Turkish or Jordanian dunum is equivalent to about 0.25 acres. One acre is equivalent to 4.047 dunum.
regaining access to 1,200 dunums of the land which had been confiscated. However, the same court upheld the Israeli government’s right to continue building settlements on other village land. Approximately 2,800 dunums of village agricultural land remains inaccessible to village residents.

Since construction of the wall started, many people in the village have lost a great deal, among them is Subhiyeh Abu Rahmah. In April 2009 an Israeli soldier shot and killed her son Basem* while he was participating in a non-violent demonstration against the wall. In December 2011 her daughter Jawaher died of asphyxiation after inhaling tear gas fired at her by an Israeli soldier while she observed, from a distance, nonviolent demonstrations near the village. Ashraf, another of her sons came to the attention of the world when a video of an Israeli soldier shooting him in the leg with a rubber bullet from close range while he was bound and blindfolded was released by the Israeli human rights organization B’tselem. Ashraf is currently in prison after being arrested for participating in the weekly nonviolent protests.

Speaking about Ashraf’s arrest, Subhiyeh told AFSC that, “the Israeli forces arrested Ashraf in broad daylight. He is now in Magiddo prison, gets beaten regularly, and we don’t know what the verdict in his case will be. I pray every day for his safe return.”

As is the case for nearly every family in the village, the Abu Rahmah family lost access to their olive groves and agricultural land. Speaking again, Subhiyeh said, “we have lost our source of livelihood, and it is very depressing to see the big modern buildings hovering over your land. We no longer have any cattle because we were forced to sell them due to not being able to access our grazing pastures. Today, I only have access to a very small part of our land on which I can continue to plow and grow crops when possible.”

Yusra Yusef also lives in Bil’in. Her husband, who passed away four years ago, was the head of the village council when it initiated its legal struggle against the wall. Age 54 and a mother of nine, one can still see deep sorrow in her eyes when she speaks of her late husband and his struggles. She explains: “The legal case was submitted under my husband’s name, and lots of pressure from the Israel side was exerted against him to withdraw the case, to put a halt to the peaceful demonstrations. This is what killed him in the end.”

Unlike Subhiyeh, Yusra’s family lost all of their land to the Separation Wall and adjacent settlement. She can no longer work in the field and has lost an important source of both food and income.

The popular resistance committee has now been in existence for eight years. Dr. Rateb Abu Rahmah, spokesperson and media coordinator for the committee in Bil’in, explains: “We have managed through our peaceful resistance to shift the process. The High Court has decided to return part of our land, about 1200 dunums, however we need to relentlessly continue our peaceful resistance. Peace requires bridges, not walls. Much harm has been done to the villages and its residents [by the wall].”

The confiscation of land and loss of income have not been the only impacts of the wall on the village. Dr. Rateb told AFSC that academic performance in village schools has also dropped significantly since the wall was built. While village students used to have some of the highest scores in Palestine on the General Certificate Exam that is taken by all students before they graduate from high school, today students’ performance is very low. Only one out of 15 passes the exam. He links this to the enormous psychological trauma and fear children and young adults are exposed to day after day as a result of military raids, arrest campaigns, and other actions taken against the village.

Despite the hardships they face, village residents remain committed to continuing their struggle and to sending out a message to the world that peace and justice will only prevail when the rights of all are respected.