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*
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'ālin, 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/