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Documentary spreads news of nonviolent protests in Palestine

Mary Ann McGivern | Apr. 1, 2013 NCR Today

Every Friday for the last eight years, the Palestinian village of Bil?in has engaged in nonviolent actions to protest the Israeli occupation. Their resistance was documented in the Oscar-nominated film ?5 Broken Cameras [1].?

That resistance has spread to other villages in the path of the fence. Just Foreign Policy [2] has been following the construction of small tent villages on confiscated farmlands on Fridays since January. Israel?s Supreme Court had ruled that these villages deserve the same protection from immediate dismantling that settlers? outposts receive.

I participated in a demonstration in Bil?in in January 2006. I was an observer in the Palestinian elections with the Nonviolent Peace Force [3]. Afterward, on Friday, a dozen of us went to Bil?in. After noon prayers, the men came out from the mosque, welcomed us and a few other internationals and Israelis, and led us in a walk through the olive orchards and as close as we could get to the path being bulldozed by Israeli construction workers.

We couldn?t get to the path because Israeli soldiers lined it. At a distance behind us, some boys threw stones and the soldiers lobbed tear gas above our heads. We stood and talked with the protesters, hearing stories of arrests, of women?s actions, of broken bones and an eye put out by a rubber bullet. Residents had built a shack in the path, the way the settlers do, to gain territory. It was the first Supreme Court ruling that the army could not tear it down. The ruling didn?t last, but the action has led to today?s creative moments.

When the press mentions nonviolent resistance at all, it bemoans its absence. See ?5 Broken Cameras.? At recent Friday protests, the soldiers have fired real bullets as well as tear gas and rubber bullets. But the people still walk through their confiscated fields and the boys still throw stones.

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Links:
[1] http://www.kinolorber.com/5brokencameras/
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