

RAGE, RAGE AGAINST THE DYING OF THE LIGHT: A CONTINUING JOURNEY TO THE LEVANT

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By addressing the issues of water inequity, resource management, and waste, Skip Schiel is...creating a body of work that has both immediate and future relevance far beyond the Middle East.

—Sara Burke, co-editor, Peacework magazine

I plan to return to Palestine/Israel in the summer of 2009 for another 3-month residency. As on my previous 4 journeys of discovery since 2003, I will volunteer my photography to organizations in the region, such as the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information and the American Friends Service Committee. For them I make photos; and I use a set to portray conditions and struggles—conditions of danger and oppression, struggles for freedom, justice, peace, secure living, and reconciliation. I agree with the eminent Israeli scholar, activist, and writer, Jeff Halper, that a new Middle Eastern Confederation is possible, drawing together contending parties into a union based on compassion and synergy. Think Europe prior to 1945 with its seemingly endless wars; and think the European Union, hopefully burying war as an instrument of change.

I'll continue with my usual themes: hydropolitics, Bethlehem, Gaza, youth, non-violent resistance, holy sites, and Quakers. I assemble exhibits, slide shows, publications, a website (teeksaphoto.org) and a blog (skipschiel.wordpress.com). In the fall and winter of 2008 I traveled for 10 weeks on the West Coast from Alaska to California and the South from North Carolina to Florida, presenting my new multi media shows—more than 60 venues to some 2000 audience members (teeksaphoto.org/Pages/PublicPresentations.html). Plans are underway for returns to the South in fall 2009 and in 2010, New Orleans, the Gulf Coast, and the Deep South. In addition, people have been encouraging me to have a professional video team construct a DVD of one or more of my presentations, enabling wider distribution of my photos.

Light attracts me—the light of the Mediterranean region and the light of all the wisdom teachers, the luminaries, of that region. With an open heart, I hope to deepen my eye, my vision, to encompass both Palestinians and Israelis as they struggle against seemingly intractable forces to right the wrongs and correct the errors in the many legacies playing out in this region—“rage, rage against the dying of the light,” as Dylan Thomas wrote.

Chief among the legacies besetting the region and the world: colonialism, the Jewish *Shoah* (holocaust) with its millennia-old predecessors in Christianity, the Palestinian *Nakba* (the catastrophe coinciding with the founding of the Israeli state in 1948), the role of the United States giving its unswerving validation of Israel, and the lack of beneficence from Arab states to the Palestinian movements for justice. In the new era of Obama-Biden, perhaps we can realistically hope for constructive change.



After an Israeli attack, Gaza City



Writing workshop, Gaza City



Rafah, Gaza Strip



Separation Wall, West Bank, Bethlehem

With funding from private donations, grants, and money I raise through my slide shows and print sales—and with the irreplaceable support of my Quaker community—I will only ask my hosts for housing and a food stipend. If this is not feasible, I shall simply donate my services.

The cost of this upcoming journey—fees, airfare, photo equipment and supplies, uncovered housing, food, and local transport while in country, and postproduction expenses—is approximately \$10,000.

I'd deeply appreciate any sort of contribution, large or small, whether money, airline ticket benefits, equipment (photographic or computer) or prayers. I welcome your suggestions about making this journey. You could also help by organizing a showing of my slides or photos in the fall and winter of 2009. Please visit teeksaphoto.org and skipschiel.wordpress.com for examples of my photography and writing on various themes.

In the struggle is the hope,

—Skip

What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow—this is the whole [Torah] Law, go and learn.

—Rabbi Hillel

Most recent photos, October - January 2008

teeksaphoto.org/Levant2007/Pages/Levant07.html

Slide shows & print exhibits available:

teeksaphoto.org/Levant2006/Pages/Offerings_8_2006.htm

Photo albums, writing & reports:

teeksaphoto.org/Levant2006/Pages/Albums.htm

Testimonials:

teeksaphoto.org/Levant2006/Pages/Testimonials.html



Bethlehem, West Bank, Palestine



Dheheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem, Palestine



Tomato harvest, West Bank, Palestine



Nasser Pediatric hospital, Gaza City



Nasser Pediatric hospital, Gaza City



Funeral, Bureij refugee camp, Gaza Strip



Wadi Fukin, West Bank, Palestine



Untreated Israeli sewage, West Bank, Palestine