

3-Rachel Corrie Deserves Justice

Rachel Corrie was a 23-year-old American girl who was murdered by the Israelis. She was standing on a large mound of earth trying to stop an Israeli bulldozer from smashing the home of a Palestinian doctor in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli bulldozer plowed right over her and then backed up, further crushing her frail, young body.

Of course, the Israelis claim it was an accident. But there are photographs, taken by her companions

as it was happening, that clearly show she was perfectly visible to the bulldozer driver. You see

them on the Internet.

The question for us is, are we going to seek justice for this idealistic American girl, or are we going

to allow the spineless, corrupt government in Washington to accept, without investigation, Israeli excuse, as it always does? It just so happens that Israel has apparently decided to drive out international observers. The Israelis killed Rachel; they shot another international observer in the face a third one in the head — all within the past few weeks. These are not "militants." They are idealistic young people trying in a nonviolent way to protect Palestinians from Israeli violence.

The Guardian, a British newspaper, printed a number of Rachel's e-mails to her family (strikingly how gutless the American press is when it comes to Israel). They are a very sad read. She told her mother she had nightmares about bulldozers and tanks, and in one prophetic paragraph said:

"When I come back from Palestine, I probably will have nightmares and constantly feel guilty about not being here ... coming here is one of the better things I've ever done. So when I sound scared or if the Israeli military should break with their racist tendency not to injure white people, please pin the reason squarely on the fact that I am in the midst of a genocide."

Speaking of the Palestinians, with whom she was living, she wrote: "I know that the situation gets to them — and may ultimately get them — on all kinds of levels, but I am nevertheless amazed at their strength in being able to defend such a large degree of their humanity — their laughter, generosity, family time — against the incredible horror occurring in their lives and against the constant presence of death.

"I'm witnessing this chronic, insidious genocide and I'm really scared, and questioning my fundamental belief in the goodness of human nature. This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything and devote our lives to making this stop. ... I still really want to dance around to Pat Benatar and have boyfriends and make comics for my co-workers. But I also want this to stop. Disbelief and horror is what I feel."

Well, this lovely young girl will never have a chance to dance or have boyfriends. Her death, of course, went minimally noticed by a news media so adamantly determined to play the tough monkey (see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil) when it comes to Israel. After all, merely telling the truth will get you labeled an anti-Semite.

What the Israelis are doing to the Palestinians is a crime against humanity, and our government is an accessory because the politicians in Washington are too damned gutless to criticize it. I read another e-mail a year or so ago from a young American girl working in Ramallah with a children's theater group. When she presented her American passport to an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint, he wiped his bottom with it and sneered, "This is what we think of your American passport."

I've begun to think, however, that there is no cure for stupidity and cowardice. Palestinian children will stand in front of a tank and bounce a stone off the turret, but Americans, living in the land of freedom, will say, "Well, I agree with you, but I'm afraid to say anything." Afraid of what? Being slandered? Getting death threats? Take it from me, they don't hurt one bit. Freedom isn't worth a damn if you're afraid to use it.

=====