

Mocking Rachel Corrie

Rachel Corrie was the **International Solidarity Movement** member who was accidentally killed by an Israeli bulldozer as it was attempting to seal tunnels used to smuggle weapons for use in terrorist murders. **E.Nough** provides a superb **analysis** of the morality of various reactions to her death – reactions ranging from crude mockery to indifference to near-worship as a saint.

But for the sake of clarity of exposition, E. Nough has analysed a situation that differs in small but significant respects from the real one, and in doing so, he has let Corrie off too lightly. He says:

Corrie wasn't out to fill mass graves; she was ultimately just a severely misguided fool who let the heat of the moment get the best of her, and paid for it with her life.

[...]

she really was: a dumb, pitiful klutz without enough sense to not stand between a bulldozer and a terrorist tunnel

But in fact, she did not blunder into that situation: it was a calculated risk. That it ended up killing her is no evidence that she was either stupid or incompetent. Warfare involves risk, and even intelligent, competent soldiers sometimes get killed. Moreover, every volunteer in even the most unjust and atrocious of wars is in some sense driven by misguided benevolence, and a vision of a world in which such atrocities will no longer be 'necessary'. So that is not an exculpatory circumstance either. That Corrie was also filled with boiling and sharply focused **rage** against innocent people is an inculpatory one though.

Those tunnels were (like the **Golan Heights**) weapons, just as a gun is a weapon even though it never touches the victim and only the bullets that pass through it ever hurt anyone. And a person who knowingly or recklessly sets out to protect weapons, currently in use, is a combatant. And if they are currently in use for murder, she is an unlawful combatant and an accessory to murder.

We should not, in general, make a mockery of the deaths even of unlawful combatants in an unjust and murderous war. For why we should in this case, see E. Nough's article.

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