

Maybe now Iran won't need any more Nedas to die

BY MARYAM ANTIKCHI AND SABER MIRESMAILI, SPECIAL TO THE SUN JUNE 26, 2009



A shrine mourns Neda Agha Soltan, a young woman killed during the demonstrations protesting the results of the recent Iranian election.

Photograph by: Mike Blake, Reuters, Special to the Sun

Neda Agha Soltan was born in 1982. We have been thinking about her and all that we went through. Maybe her biggest childhood fear was the fact that she might lose her parents during the Iran-Iraq War.

Maybe she learned the alphabet in front of the TV when she was six because the schools were closed while Saddam Hussein -- the enemy -- was bombing Tehran and she got confused when Iran's president called Saddam a Muslim brother few years later during the Gulf war.

Maybe she also hated that she had to stand in line rain or shine at school for hours while school officials made the kids read versus from the Koran or prayers or make them say Down With U.S.A.

Maybe she didn't like the fact that she could not wear nail polish to school.

Maybe Neda's mom had also asked her not to speak her mind at school to stay out of trouble.

When she was 14, maybe she also felt that Mohammad Khatami was different and might bring good

change.

Maybe she even carried posters of Khatami to school and put them up on the walls and got caught and went to detention.

Maybe on Election Day for Khatami Neda showed up at the polls but was sent away because she was too young to vote.

Maybe Neda also followed every news conference that President Khatami held; and maybe she was always wondered why he didn't support students when the Basij militia attacked the dorms.

Maybe Neda hated that school principal searched students' bags everyday and took away music CDs, video tapes, and love story novels.

Maybe Neda was excited to go to university and sit in the same class with boys for the first time although she knew that all top students will eventually leave the country.

Maybe Neda was embarrassed to have a Holocaust denier like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president and felt ashamed of being an Iranian when Ahmadinejad said that he is going to wipe Israel off the map or claimed that Iran doesn't have any homosexuals.

Maybe Neda thought that in a country with so much sun why can't we use solar power instead of nuclear power.

Maybe Neda was amazed that Ahmadinejad's government sent money to rebuild Lebanon while Iranian people in the city of Bam were still living in tents and containers many years after the earthquake. Maybe Neda was tired of being looked at as a terrorist by all nations and being told that all nations are our enemy by the Supreme Leader Ali Hoseyni Khamenei.

Maybe Neda was frustrated to be counted as a second class citizen just because she was a woman.

Maybe Neda was tired of police giving her warnings to fix her hijab on every street corner.

Maybe Neda was hoping that a slightly reformist candidate could rebuild relationships with other countries and fix the economy.

Maybe she was offended when she found a bag of potatoes at her door sent by Ahmadinejad to buy her vote.

Maybe Neda decided to vote for reform and even took her 80-year-old grandmother in a wheelchair to vote and ensure a better future.

Maybe her dreams were also shattered on June 12 when state TV announced that Ahmadinejad has won the election.

Maybe she felt there is something terribly wrong when state TV broadcast a congratulatory message from Khamenei only one hour after they closed the polls.

Maybe she felt unsafe with the massive number of police in the streets of Tehran on the election night.

Maybe Neda was offended by Ahmadinejad calling the opposition "dirt" and "dust".

Maybe Neda could not tolerate the humiliation of living under a government that was based on so many lies.

Maybe Neda knew that she might die after Khamenei directly ordered the Basij to shoot and kill the protesters in Friday prayer.

Neda died in the streets of Tehran on June 20,2009 with a bullet in her chest. Maybe her last thoughts were:

Will we be free at last?

Would this be the last generation that has to die for freedom in Iran?

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