

Nobel Hypocrisy

Peace Prize Awards to War Criminals

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Alfred Nobel was a wealthy nineteenth century Swedish-born chemist, engineer, inventor of dynamite, armaments manufacturer and war profiteer who remade his image late in life by establishing the awarding of prizes in his name that includes the one for peace. This most noted award was inspired by his one-time secretary and peace activist, Bertha von Suttner, who was nominated four times and became the first of only 12 women to be honored.

Since it was established in 1901, the Peace Prize was awarded to 95 individuals and 20 organizations. Some recipients were worthy like Martin Luther King, Jane Addams and Albert Schweitzer but too many were not including this year's honoree. Al Gore joins a long list of past "ignoble" recipients like warrior presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and supporter of rogue regimes Jimmy Carter. He's also among the likes of genocidists Henry Kissinger and three former Israeli prime ministers - Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin - along with former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who never met a US-led war he didn't love and support. So much for promoting peace and what this award is supposed to signify. More on this below.

Almost anyone can be nominated for the prize and look who were but didn't get it - Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin and more recently George W. Bush, Tony Blair and Rush Limbaugh laughably. In contrast, one of the most notable symbols of non-violence in the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi, was nominated four times but never won. More recently, anti-war activist Kathy Kelly, co-founder of Voices in the Wilderness, now known as Voices for Creative Nonviolence, got three nominations but was passed over each time for less deserving candidates. Her "reward" instead was to be sentenced in 2004 to three months in federal prison for crossing the line into Fort Benning, Georgia in protest against the School of the Americas, now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation that's commonly called "the school of assassins."

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Henry Kissinger was likely the most noted war criminal ever to win the Nobel Prize (in 1973 with Vietnam's Le Duc Tho who declined his award saying there was no peace in his country). The sheer scope of his crimes is breathtaking:

- three to four million Southeast Asian deaths in the Vietnam war,
- the bloody overthrow of a democratic government in Chile and support for Latin American dictators,
- backed Suharto's takeover of West Papua and his invasion of East Timor killing hundreds

of thousands,

- supported the Khmer Rouge early on and its reign of terror rise to power,
- backed Pakistan's "delicacy and tact" in overthrowing Bangladesh's democratically elected government causing a half million deaths, and much more around the world as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State for Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the world body he represented won their award in 2001 "for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world." It wasn't for what Annan did in his various UN roles. Early on, he had a position in the Secretariat's services department in New York. He then got subordinate responsibility for the Middle East and Africa in the "special political affairs" department. There his support for Washington's call for troops to be sent to Somalia in the early 1990s helped put him in charge of all peacekeeping operations in February, 1993. In that role, he prevented measures from being taken to stop the impending Rwanda slaughter he was warned about in advance that caused around 800,000 deaths on his watch. He also kept the Security Council uninformed of what was coming.

At the behest of then UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright and without consulting Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros-Ghali, Annan sided with the Clinton administration's authorization of NATO to illegally bomb Serb positions in Bosnia in 1995. It got him the Secretary-General's job in January, 1997 in which one observer noted he "courted the wrath of the developing world by rejecting anticolonialism in favor of moral principles cherished in the West."

Kofi Annan's Nobel award is a testimony to hypocrisy for a man whose ten years as Secretary-General failed to fulfill the mandate he was sworn to uphold: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights; to establish conditions (promoting) justice....equal rights of men and women (in all nations and respect for) international law (and) social progress....to ensure....armed force shall not be used."

During his ten year tenure in the top UN job, Annan:

- supported Iraqi economic sanctions that caused around 1.5 million deaths including over one million children under age five;
- backed the Bush administration's illegal 2003 Iraq invasion and occupation that's now taken an additional 1.2 million or more lives;
- supported the illegal Afghanistan war and occupation;
- remained mute on the possibility of a wider war with Iran even if it includes first strike nuclear weapons;
- made no efforts to work for peace in the Middle East including in Occupied Palestine nor did he denounce Israel's 2006 war of aggression against Lebanon;
- remained loyal to the West and ignored the plight of his own people throughout the African continent including the immiseration of South African blacks post-apartheid;

— allowed thuggish paramilitary Blue Helmets to occupy Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Ivory Coast and Sudan. More on UN peacekeeping below.

Kofi Annan's sole achievement was his uncompromising complicity with the Clinton and Bush administrations' worst crimes of war and against humanity. His loyalty earned him the Nobel award that signified nothing to do with peace he disdained.

UN Peacekeeping Forces got the Nobel award in 1988 for missions the UN defines as "a way to help countries torn by conflict create conditions for sustainable peace." Blue Helmets supposedly are sent to conflict and post-conflict areas to perform multiple services that include as top priority restoring order, maintaining peace and security and providing for the needs of people during transitional periods until local governments can take over on their own.

Most often, Blue Helmets end up creating more conflict than resolution and function mainly as unwanted paramilitary enforcers or occupiers. At other times, they become counterproductive or ineffective and end up doing more harm than good. Since 1948, over five dozen peacekeeping operations have been undertaken. Most were dismal failures including the first ever UNTSO mission during Israel's so-called "War of Independence." The operation is still ongoing after nearly 50 years, peace was never achieved, Blue Helmets are there but play no active role, and the world community is silent in the face of Israeli crimes of war and against humanity.

The same condition is true in Haiti where for the first time in UN history MINUSTAH peacekeepers were deployed to enforce a coup d'état against a democratically-elected president. They disdain peace and stability and function instead as paramilitary occupiers indiscriminately terrorizing and killing unarmed civilians in service to Western capital.

Three former Israeli prime ministers also got Nobel Peace Prizes - Menachem Begin in 1978 and Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres in 1994. All three men committed crimes of war and against humanity as did all other Israeli prime ministers since David Ben-Gurion took office May 14, 1948 after the new State of Israel declared it independence as an exclusive Jewish state. Nonetheless, the Nobel Committee awarded them its highest honor for furthering the cause of peace they disdained by using their position to inflict on the Palestinian people what Edward Said once called Israel's "refined viciousness." Menachem Begin was a particularly virulent racist and Arab hater calling Palestinians "two-legged beasts" and saying Jews were the "Master Race" and "divine gods on this planet."

Then there's the current Nobel Peace Prize honoree, Al Gore. CounterPunchers Alex Cockburn and Jeff St. Clair wrote the book on him in 2000 titled "Al Gore: A User's Manual." It's a critical account of a "man whom his parents raised from birth to be president of the United States" and who always put politics over principle. He built his credentials for the high office around pro-business, pro-war, anti-union and phony environmental advocacy as no friend of the earth then so who can believe he's one now.

His 1992 book "Earth in the Balance" was more theater than advocacy. In it, he assessed the forces of planetary destruction that included air and water pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, overpopulation, ozone depletion and global warming. He highlighted the impact of auto emissions and need to phase out the internal combustion engine but made no effort in office to do it.

Then as vice-president he used his “green credentials” to sell the pro-business, anti-worker, anti-environmental NAFTA to the environmental movement. He also supported clear-cutting logging practices including in old-growth areas. He ignored an assessment that this practice risked the extinction of hundreds of species. He backed a 1995 spending bill “salvage logging rider” that opened millions of National Forest lands to logging and exempted sales of the harvest from environmental laws and judicial review for two years. He and Clinton further allowed South Florida’s sugar barons to devastate thousands of Everglades acres and gave away consumer Delaney Clause protection that kept carcinogens out of our food supply.

Throughout his political life, Gore supported Big Oil and was tied to Occidental Petroleum Company and its “ruthless tycoon” chief, Armand Hammer. In return for supporting company interests, he got political favors and patronage from Hammer and his successor, Ray Irani who was a major DNC contributor and got to sleep in the Lincoln bedroom as a bonus reward. He’s also been a shill for the nuclear industry that won’t solve or even alleviate global warming and the threat it poses according to nuclear expert Helen Caldicott. Commercial reactors discharge huge amounts of greenhouse gases along with hundreds of thousands of curies of deadly radioactive gases and other radioactive elements besides being sitting ducks for retaliatory terror attacks experts believe will eventually happen.

Earlier in the House (1977 - 1985) and Senate (1985 - 1993) and as vice-president Gore also shilled for the Pentagon and defense contractors. He “played midwife to the MX missile,” opposed efforts to cut defense spending, and backed the Reagan administration’s Grenada invasion and Central American wars. He partnered with Clinton’s Balkan wars in the 1990s that destroyed Yugoslavia so NATO could expand into Central and Eastern Europe for its markets, resources and cheap, exploitable labor. In Kosovo, he collaborated with Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) paramilitary thugs against Serbia and ignored their connection to organized crime. He earlier traded his vote for the Gulf war for prime time coverage of his speech.

He then backed ousting Saddam by coup or any other means and supported the most comprehensive genocidal sanctions ever imposed on a country that killed a likely 1.5 million or more Iraqis including over one million children under age five.

Cockburn and St. Clair fill in more blanks about a political opportunist who supported Big Tobacco, “exploited his sister’s death and son’s (near-fatal) accident for....political advantage; became a soul brother of Newt Gingrich; race-baited Jesse Jackson; pushed Clinton into destroying the New Deal; plotted to stop Democrats from recapturing Congress in 1996” so “his rival Dick Gephard” wouldn’t become Speaker; “leached campaign cash from nearly every corporate lobbyist” in town, and, as already covered, lied about being a friend of the earth by disdaining environmentalism through his actions.

Does this man deserve a Nobel Peace Prize (let alone to be president) along with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.” The Nobel Committee ignored Gore’s environmental record and went on to say “for a long time (he’s) been one of the world’s leading environmental politicians (through) his strong commitment, reflected in political activity, (that) strengthened the struggle against climate change.” Contrary to his easily accessed public record, not his posturing, The Nobel Committee blindly added “He is probably the single individual who has done most to create greater worldwide

understanding of the measures that need to be adopted.”

In point of fact, throughout his political life, Gore’s actions betrayed the public’s trust and still do. He and his wife live in two large energy-consuming homes: a 10,000 square foot, eight bedroom one in Nashville and a 4000 square foot one in Arlington, VA. The Gores also own a third home in Carthage, TN. In both Washington and Nashville, utility companies offer a wind energy green alternative to customers for a small per kilowatt hour premium. Gore can easily afford it, but public records show no evidence he’s does it in either residence. Alex Cockburn gets the last word on a man who shills for privilege, has plenty for himself, and like George Bush disdains the public interest: “Al Gore distills in his single person the disrepair of liberalism in America today, and almost every unalluring feature of the Democratic Party” that’s mostly indistinguishable from the other side of the aisle in a city where the criminal class is bipartisan.

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