

Letters on the “Nobel War Prize”

13 October 2009

On “The Nobel War Prize”

Dear WSWS,

Bill Van Auken’s article “The Nobel War Prize,” is the most penetrating, comprehensive, historically-informed and politically contextualized piece that I have read (and I’ve been reading them all day) on the Obama Nobel Peace Prize award. As Van Auken makes abundantly clear, the award can be seen only as the endorsement of war by the European powers, a piece of their “unilateral” hopes of getting a piece of the imperialist pie in the oil- and gas-rich Eurasian corridor.

Only a socialist perspective can make comprehensible the otherwise bewildering contradictions that we are witnessing during this severe crisis of capitalism. Militarism poses as peace, ruthless cuts in wages and living standards pass as “change we can believe in,” fines for the poor who can’t afford the health care “insurance” proffered by the corporate insurance giants passes as “reform,” and the imperialist world’s most active war criminal is awarded its highest prize for peace.

The evidence of the capitalist system’s inability to contain its own glaring contradictions is so overwhelming that its own media must blush at this latest farce. Unfortunately the farce will also entail tragedy, exacerbating the misery of many hundreds of thousands.

Thank you, WSWS, for your most important analytical grip on reality.

Michael R
New York, USA
9 October 2009

I was hoping for a posthumous Nobel Peace Prize to Pol Pot, but Obama will have to do for his great courage in attempting to narrow the Afghanistan fighting to “Al Qaeda” rather than the Taliban.

Michael G

California, USA

9 October 2009

The European elites have their “interests.” If a Nobel prize persuades Obama to take these into account, he’s been bought at a bargain basement price. However, the next down payment will be made in troops for Afghanistan. And what will they actually get for their euros? Alliance with a power that everyone acknowledges is in decline. A power whose “go it alone” days have apparently gone. The course that makes most sense for the European elites is disengagement, covered in traditional European hypocrisy. A cloud of phrases asserting “solidarity” and “our common heritage,” As they begin to look elsewhere for the next rising star.

Chris
Ireland
9 October 2009

I’ve been waiting to see what WSWS would say of the Nobel Peace prize going to Pres Obama. Comrade Bill delivered a damning indictment of everything connected with these awards. As Robert Browning said, “Praise for the living is tainted praise.” That goes double for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize. Awarding this prize to Obama as he tweaks his plans for war in Afghanistan buggers, not just boggles, the mind.

Larry L
Pennsylvania, USA
9 October 2009

Highly informative article, especially because it answers many questions beyond “What has he done to deserve the Nobel Prize?” The idea that the Nobel Peace Prize reflects the political stand of the European elite is enlightening.

Can I forward it to the newspapers in my country that are missing the essential points?

Prabhakar
India
9 October 2009

Orwell's 1984 has fully arrived. The message boards have been filled with right-wingers complaining about how Obama is a socialist because, unlike a good capitalist, he is gifting the public till to the banksters. Their argument is that good capitalists always let the free market do its magic. So the term "socialist" now means an evil capitalist.

The message boards are also filled with plenty of posters who are outraged any time a black person makes a complaint of racism. Such people are now deemed by the right-wing to be racists. So the new definition for "racist" is one who complains about the racist treatment he and other members of his race have historically encountered.

Today, I ran across a handful of postings suggesting that G.W. Bush, George Bush and Ronald Reagan should have all won the Nobel Peace prize since they brought freedom and liberation to so many people.

Under the new definition of peace, Hitler would have been the world's leading peace provider—followed closely by a plethora of American politicians, of course.

Brian M
9 October 2009

Of course the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Barack Obama is political. It fits in well with the entire PR facade surrounding Obama and everything he does. As a marketing tool, it can't be beaten.

Looking back at the awarding of the prize to Henry Kissinger, Jimmy Carter and Al Gore is illuminating. Kissinger, of course, is the most egregious example of putting lipstick on a pig. Compared to him, Carter and Gore needed only to have their hair combed.

After all, it cannot come as a surprise that in a culture of constant advertising and obsession with the minutiae of celebrities' lives, the slickest PR campaigns become reality for a great mass of people. Why should the criminal aims of the ruling class and their military/industrial minions be any different? The Nobel Peace Prize has become the latest blockbuster movie or novel. Once accepted by the equivalent of the *New York Times Book Review*, the current political aims of the government become bestsellers. Everyone is reading

them or pretending to have read them so as to fit in with the chitchat at the local wine bar or self-congratulatory charity do.

This is how the undermining of opposing views is accomplished. Those who see the nakedness of the Emperor are admonished for contradicting the accepted script. Meanwhile, those who, like the European governments, applaud the awarding of this prize to someone eminently undeserving of anything relating to peace, hope that their acclamation will let them in on the benefits that accrue to all sycophants: a share of the spoils and a hedge against bad times in the future when the paradigm shifts once again.

The working class citizens of the world must not be taken in by this pantomime, although I have seen commentary on the internet indicating that many have done just this. "The business of the advertiser is to see that we go about our business with some magic spell or tune or slogan throbbing quietly in the background of our minds," said Marshall McLuhan. It is worth asking whether the music we hear is a death march.

Carolyn
California, USA
9 October 2009



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