



PeaceWomen Across the Globe
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde
Женщины мира за мир на земле
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo

DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO

ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち
全球和平妇女

Dr. Faiha Abdul Hadi

The Nobel Prize: Grey is between black and white

To continue my article discussion on «the Nobel Peace Prize 2005: Limiting Violence vs. Human Security», I wish to clarify some points which were mentioned briefly in that article and to comment on certain views that came out of discussions with my friends on this subject. First of all I wish to express my pleasure at exchanging views with those interested in the subject, especially when they have a different or opposite opinion, since ideas are always richer when discussed, and discussion, I believe, is an important and healthy tool of writing, as criticism is a strong weapon in literature and cultural development.

One of the arguments made against my last article was that it did not recognize that the 2005 award decision devalued the Nobel Prize, the critic stated that the 2005 award was biased and unconditionally served the USA and Israel. The critic added that the Nobel Committee as elected by the Norwegian Parliament is also biased toward the USA and Israel in its selection of the 2005 winners, and regretted that the role of women in peacebuilding had again been ignored.

I feel it necessary to make two points. The first concerns the significance of the Nobel Prize, and the second regarding the continuation of the project for 1000 PeaceWomen. I believe that the Nobel Prize does have global importance, and that those who win that prize achieve recognition that exceeds their homeland's borders. Their work, whether literary, political or scientific, becomes known and translated, which also leaves a significant footprint of their nation. I also believe that this prize does not manufacture writers or scientists or philosophers. If we might find that sometimes people are selected for the prize who do not deserve it, such as Thomas Shiling and Robert Oman, we may also see that the prize was given to people who really deserve it, such as Nageeb Mahfouz, Garcia Marquez, Marie Curie, Irene Juliot Curie, Ernest Hemingway, Günter Grass, and Bertrand Russell.

I do not believe in absolute objectivity in the selection of Nobel Prize winners. Even though an academic scientific committee tries to go by certain standards of absolute objectivity there are always personal motives and biases. Thus, even though the Nobel committee members are not given instructions for selection, they are certainly affected by many factors; including ever changing world politics, which can make them politically biased. This occurrence has led several well-known winners to reject the Nobel Prize when offered to them. These include Jean Paul Sartre who rejected the Literature Prize in 1964 and the Vietnamese writer Le Duc Tho who rejected the peace Prize in 1973 because he would have had to accept and share it with Henry Kissinger.

As for the Arab World, it has always viewed the Nobel Prize through a political lens and looked for political conspiracies, and not looked for the ideological, literary, or scientific achievements of winners. The scientific achievements of Zewail, the literary works of Mahfouz, Barad'i's stance against American



Unter der Schirmherrschaft der Schweizerischen UNESCO-Kommission – Under the patronage of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO

aggression; all indicate that being selected for a Nobel Prize has little to do with the Committee being biased to the USA.

As for the 1000 PeaceWomen project, although these women did not win the Nobel Prize, they did not accuse the Prize's committee of a biased stance against them. Instead they congratulated El Barad'i and recognized his stand against US pressures at the UN, and his refusal to endorse the US attack on Iraq. They made clear their opinion and their difference from Barad'i's philosophy, and recommended a revision of the IAEA's guidelines that involve curbing nuclear weapon usage and at the same time allowing this weapon to be developed and improved. They also requested the World Health Organization (WHO) to become responsible for determining the health impact caused by nuclear technologies. Those 1000 PeaceWomen continued their work

The Nobel Prize was a means to a greater goal, which is the recognition of women's roles as peacebuilders, and the documentation of their peace work. The book «1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe», published by Scalo in Switzerland, the travelling exhibition, the electronic website with database, and the initiation of research and studies, all prove that the project has still been successful.

The book presents stories, visions, and working methods of 1000 PeaceWomen, which is of particular value to non-governmental organizations and universities. The travelling photo exhibition consists of 1000 large postcards that present each PeaceWoman's photo and brief biography, including the candidates' photos and stories about their work which gives an opportunity for the exchange of experiences.

The new project from 2006 is «PeaceWomen Across the Globe». This project will aim to increase the visibility and support for women peacebuilders, to facilitate connections between PeaceWomen, channel solidarity and help expand knowledge and skills; and to popularize the PeaceWomen concept of peace and peacebuilding.

The whole world could read Harold Pinter's response to winning the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. He responded that the USA should be awarded a prize for innovation: «You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis.» He criticized those that do not make scandals of the USA's crimes against humanity, noting that documents to prove such crimes are scarce and questions where our moral sensibility now lies.

In conclusion, I see grey as that color between black and white.

Al-Ayyam, 18 Dec 2005