

Gandhi and the Nobel Peace prize

Nobel Centennial Special Covers at Chicagopex 2001

Chicagopex 2001 was held at the Rosemont Convention Center in Chicago, Illinois (USA) November 16th to 18th, 2001. The show chose to honor the 100th Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize with a special show cancel and related commemorative cachets. This theme presented an opportunity to bring closure to one issue that has cast a shadow on the Nobel Peace Prize's first Century- the fact that the Peace Prize was not awarded to Mahatma Gandhi. Several distinguished writers associated with the Nobel institution have raised the issue in their writings, for example:

Øyvind Tønnesson, Nobel e-Museum Peace Editor, 1998-2000: Gandhi (1869-1948) has become the strongest symbol of non-violence in the twentieth century. It is widely held – in retrospect – that the Indian national leader should have been the very man to be selected for the Nobel Peace Prize. He was nominated several times, but was never awarded the prize. Why?

Geir Lundestad, Secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee since 1990: No prize will be able to establish a "perfect" historical record, whatever that might be. Most observers will agree that the omission of Gandhi from the list of Nobel Laureates is a serious one, but it might be the only one of such a nature... Gandhi was, however, nominated five times and he was put on the committee's short list three times. In 1948 the committee awarded no prize; it indicated that it had found "no suitable living candidate", a reference to Gandhi.

While historians will continue to analyze the motivations and reasons behind this fact, it should not distract us from recognizing that the power of non-violent civil disobedience and its effect on changing established institutions has since been recognized by the Nobel Peace Prize committee several times. To commemorate this fact, a set of eight special covers was prepared and serviced at Chicagopex 2001. All covers included the 34c Nobel Prize stamp (2001) and one or both of the Champion of Liberty Gandhi stamps (1961).

Examples of Nobel laureates who admired Gandhi's principles of non-violence while he was alive or followed them to achieve great results since his death include: Albert Einstein, George C. Marshall, Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, The Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela. Quotes from the laureates about Gandhi or a note about their association with his beliefs are included in the covers for each of these seven Nobel laureates. The two quotes listed above, from Øyvind Tønnesson and Geir Lundestad were the basis of the eighth cover. The Einstein, Marshall and King covers also included stamps of these laureates, issued by the USA. A faint image of Gandhi and a clear image of each of the Nobel laureates is part of the pre-printed color cachet.

The covers were cancelled with the special pictorial cancel that shows a wreath and reads **THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 1901-2001** with the circular date stamp reading **Chicagopex Station - Rosemont IL - 60018 - Nov XX 2001**. Also on the covers is a special pictorial show cachet from the United Nations Postal Administration that shows the Chicago Skyline and reads **CHICAGOPEX '01 16-18 NOVEMBER ROSEMONT, IL UNTIED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION**. The Nobel cancel is in black and the UN cachet in blue.

Only five sets of these covers (total 40 covers) were prepared and serviced at the show. One set is now in the collection of Dr. Reuben Ramkisson, President of the Chicago Philatelic Society and Winner of the 2001 Newbury Award and the Marcus White Award at Chicagopex 2001. The second set will be presented to the Nobel Museum, and the third to the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence in Memphis, Tennessee, USA (founded by Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Mr. Arun Gandhi). Images of these covers are shown in the following pages.

Nobel Prize Centennial

One Nobel Peace Prize that was NOT awarded: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

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"Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth!"
Albert Einstein on Gandhi

1921 Nobel Prize in Physics: Albert Einstein
"for his services to Theoretical Physics, and especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect"



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"Mahatma Gandhi has become the spokesman for the conscience of mankind."
General George C. Marshall.

1953 Nobel Peace Prize: George Catlett Marshall
...President American Red Cross, Secretary of State and of Defense, UN Delegate, originator of the "Marshall Plan"

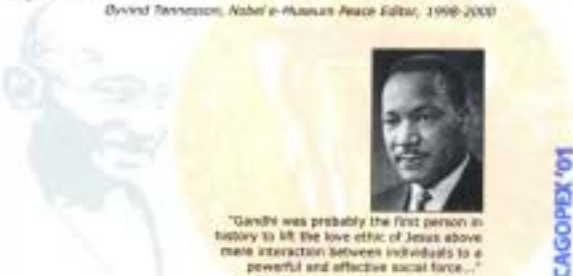


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"Gandhi was probably the first person in today's world to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force..."

1964 Nobel Peace prize: Martin Luther King Jr.
"...the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence."



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Sylvain Tesson, Nobel e-Museum Peace Editor, 1998-2001



"Well, I get very uncomfortable when I am compared with great people such as Gandhi, but, yes, most of us working in South Africa have of course been influenced by him and what he did here and in India."
Desmond Tutu on Gandhi

1984 Nobel Peace Prize: Desmond Mpilo Tutu

"In recognition of the courage and heroism shown by black South Africans in their use of peaceful methods in the struggle against apartheid."



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"principles of non-violence, his simplicity, his way of life, the level of modern education he achieved. At the same time he remained a true Indian, within the tradition. And that's good."
The Dalai Lama on Gandhi

1989 Nobel Peace Prize: The 14th Dalai Lama

"developed philosophy of peace from a great reverence for all things living and upon the concept of universal responsibility embracing all mankind as well as nature."



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Aung San Suu Kyi is the daughter of Burma's liberation leader Aung San and Daw Khin Kyi, Burma's ambassador to India. Suu Kyi attended high school and college in New Delhi and showed an early interest in Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent protest.

1991 Nobel Peace prize: Aung San Suu Kyi
"... for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma."



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"Gandhi's magnificent example of personal sacrifice and dedication in the face of oppression was one of his many legacies to our country and to the world. He showed us that it was necessary to brave imprisonment if truth and justice were to triumph over evil."
Nelson Mandela on Gandhi

1993 Nobel Peace Prize: Nelson R. Mandela
"for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa."

