



Civil Courage News

Journal of the Civil Courage Prize

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For Steadfast Resistance to Evil at Great Personal Risk

In Keynote, Lord Hurd Says Individuals are Vital to More Freedom

“We should have learned that it is not possible to impose freedom by force,” said Lord Hurd in his keynote address at the ceremony for the award of the Civil Courage Prize to the Egyptian author, Ali Salem. The former British Foreign Secretary underlined his belief that the key to the spread of democracy is the active citizen “who operates in his or her own country.”

Saluting Salem, Hurd said the playwright had been a “stalwart defender of peace and freedom, always testing the possibilities and seeking to move the boundaries put in place by authority between what is allowed and what is forbidden.”



Hurd continued, “We can show judges that law need not be the servant of government, army officers that they can be proud of military service which is not the instrument of tyranny, and administrators that they can take pride in governance without corruption or bullying.”

2008 Winner Ali Salem Calls for Broad Dedication to Civil Courage in Seeking Ways to End Conflict in the Middle East



Ali Salem receiving the Civil Courage Prize Medal from Nina Train Choa

Showing in his acceptance remarks determination and spirit leavened by the cheerful wit so characteristic of his writing, Ali Salem, the Egyptian author and winner of the 2008 Civil Courage Prize, dedicated the prize “to my fellow intellectuals in the Arab world and in the Middle East in general.” Salem spoke after the award was received, at a ceremony held on November 19, 2008 at Winfield House, the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s.

He called upon all Arab governments “to create similar prizes, to convince intellectuals in our region that human courage is rewardable...so that they do not take refuge in silence or surrender to despair.”

“Civil courage, he said, “is that soft emotion pushing civilization forward. It is the

sound of reason and the music of human souls...You cannot defend life unless you fall in love with it.” The young, he said, feel “a strong tendency to...do something courageous, something heroic...In that stage we must...educate him that he will be courageous not when he kills himself and others, but when he lives in peace with them...when he declares his thoughts without fear.”

“I am calling for Arab governments to think of a new prize for civil courage at all levels, the country, the city, the village, even hamlets,” he said. Describing himself as a playwright, dramatist, columnist and “sometimes a satirist, when I am sad enough to create satire,” he said, “it is not easy to transfer your sadness and anger unless they are carefully packed in laughter...the most effective way to convey *continued on page 2*

Remembering Solzhenitsyn

2008 was the year Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn died. For some of us he was one of the greatest men in the world.

When I lived in Paris half a century ago most French intellectuals of the first rank were communists or fellow travellers. The Soviets were winning. Stalin’s monstrous crimes—tens of millions of murders—were either disbelieved or waved aside. “You can’t make an omelette without breaking some eggs,” said Sartre.

Eastern and Central Europe had already been scooped up by the Soviet Empire, and the huge Communist votes in France and Italy made the future of western Europe highly uncertain.

But after *Ivan Denisovich* and the vast record of the *Gulag* revealed the ghastly reality, Stalinism became indefensible. The whole feeling changed.

Expelled from Russia after many years of persecution and acute suffering, including cancer, Solzhenitsyn made his way to Cavendish, Vermont, where he lived surrounded by birches and snow, like his beloved Russia. But after some years he began running low on money. I proposed him for the Templeton Prize, worth about \$1.5 million in today’s money, and flew him over to receive it in Buckingham Palace. President Ford had refused to see him, but in England he was welcomed by the Prime Minister and other grandees.

Back in America, I wondered about the right word for the virtue—steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk—that Solzhenitsyn so heroically exemplified, and concluded that there was none in English but that there needed to be. I eventually coined “civil courage,” a necessary quality in a good society, and formed the present prize to celebrate it. I asked Solzhenitsyn if he would like to receive the prize, or have it named after him, or help judge it, and he chose the latter. He did so until this year. So in a way this award is also a memorial to that great man.



John Train

Winner Ali Salem Calls for Promoting Dedication to Building Understanding

continued from page 1 the truth. A joke is a judgment, a playful judgment. It is a judgment issued by the collective subconscious of the people...”

Illustrating his point, Salem said, “*Us*, for many people, extremists in particular, means the good guys. *Others* means the bad guys. But the Egyptians see this classification in a different way. He then told the story of a man who found himself surrounded by an angry mob, “screaming and shouting in madness.” The man was terrified when they asked, “Are you with us or with the others?” He then asked, “to whom do you belong; to us or to the others?” After being told to shut up, the man ventured, “I belong to you, not the others.” Before finishing his sentence the man was killed, while the mob shouted and sang, “We are the others.”

Analyzing the joke, Salem said, “Beneath the laughter you will find judgments, playful yet serious. One of them may be ‘when you are afraid don’t lie to yourself or others’...If you talk, don’t be afraid...I have been trying all my life to follow this rule; however, I

admit that on many occasions I failed to be unafraid.”

“When people are injected with a big dose of stupidity and hatred,” Salem said, “they



will have only a burning desire to kill...poets, thinkers and artists.”

Concluding, Salem recalled that “Exactly six days ago there was a meeting at the United Nations attended by all the Arab leaders and kings. Mr. Perez, too, the Israeli President attended the same session. It was under the title, ‘The Culture of Peace.’ I hope that they all have discovered or are about to discover that there is no *Us* and the *Others*. There is only *Us*, the tribe of the human race. The only tribe that lives on this earth.”

Former Winners Faced Mixed Fortunes in Past Year

Emadeddin Baghi

Emadeddin Baghi, 46, of Iran, winner of the 2004 Prize, who had been hospitalized, was released from prison in October 2008. He had been serving a three year sentence. However, new charges against him are pending that relate to his criticism of the Iranian authorities’ treatment of another human rights defender.

Min Ko Naing

Min Ko Naing, 46, of Burma, winner of the Prize in 2005, and eight other activists were sentenced in November 2008 to 65 years in prison. The long terms were the latest in a series of tough verdicts on dissidents, including Buddhist monks, who participated in peaceful anti-government protests in 2007. The White House condemned the regime’s persistent repression and lack of due process.

Anna Politkovskaya

Three men charged with the murder of 2005 Prize-winner Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 were acquitted in a Russian court in February, while the alleged hitman and a suspected accomplice were never arrested and apparently remain in hiding. The jury’s verdict left Ms. Politkovskaya’s supporters discouraged at what they believe to be the failure of the authorities to pursue the case effectively. However, the day after the acquittal, the presiding judge ordered the case reopened.

Patrons’ Gifts Aid Activities Related to Award-Winners

The Trustees acknowledge with gratitude the generous support of:

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Ceremony Held at U.S. Ambassador's London Residence For Award of Civil Courage Prize to Egyptian Ali Salem



1. Ambassador Tuttle, Kathy Koll, Jennifer Keller, Rich Keller and Mrs. Tuttle
2. Ali Salem receiving the prize
3. Guests including Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Johnson and Mr. Jeremy Paulson-Ellis
4. Lord Gladwyn and Dr. John Chipman
5. Ali Salem and his wife, Hassan Elnaggar
6. Members of the Train Family

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† = deceased

Past Honorees

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| 2008 | Ali Salem
<i>Egyptian author and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East</i> | 2002 | Vladimiro Roca Antunez
<i>Champion of freedom, Cuba</i>
Gustavo Arcos Bergnes
<i>(Honorable Mention)</i>
<i>Early democracy activist, Cuba</i> |
| 2007 | Phillip Buck
<i>Imprisoned in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom</i> | 2001 | Paul Kamara
<i>Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone</i> |
| 2006 | Rafael Marques de Morais
<i>Journalist who exposed the slaughter of Angolans and the plundering of national assets</i> | 2000 | Natasa Kandic
<i>Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade</i>
Sergei Khodorovich
<i>(Honorable Mention)</i>
<i>Solzhenitsyn collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia</i> |
| 2005 | Min Ko Naing
<i>Imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma</i>
Anna Politkovskaya
<i>Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated</i>
Munir Said Thalib†
<i>Exposed disappearances and corruption in Indonesia, assassinated</i> | | Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer†
<i>Anti-Nazi martyr</i>
Judge Giovanni Falcone†
<i>Assassinated while prosecuting the Sicilian Mafia</i>
Rosemary Nelson†
<i>Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland</i>
Neelan Tiruchelvam†
<i>Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict</i>
Raoul Wallenberg†
<i>Saved thousands of Jews from extermination</i> |
| 2004 | Emadeddin Baghi
<i>Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals</i>
Lovemore Madhuku
<i>Lawyer persecuted for demanding constitutional reform in Zimbabwe</i>
Abdul al-Latif al-Mayah†
<i>Iraqi political scientist and human rights advocate, assassinated</i> | | |
| 2003 | Shahnaz Bukhari
<i>Battler against the burning and other abuse of Pakistani women</i> | | |

† = posthumous



The Civil Courage Prize honors civil courage—steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk—rather than military valor. The acts so recognized should have taken place deliberately over time.

Nominations for the Prize are solicited primarily from non-profit, non-governmental organizations worldwide. Further information may be obtained from our website: www.civildCourageprize.org.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

—Edmund Burke



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