

Nobel Savages



With the exception of Jean-Paul Sartre, maybe, everyone would love to win a Nobel Prize. But what does it take? By stipulating that awards should go only "to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind," demolitions tycoon Alfred Nobel in 1901 staked out award-giving's moral high ground: recipients are rewarded not merely for brilliance but for character as well. Yet as any junior-high-science-fair veteran knows, the smartest, nicest kids with the worthiest, most ingenious projects don't always win; some-



BURGESS



GALE



HAMMER



NIXON



REAGAN



WIESEL

times the guy whose father helps him build the cool-looking model or the one with the slickest oral presentation beats out the mumbly whiz kid. While self-nomination disqualifies you for a Nobel, the rules say nothing about a little self-promotion. For example:

Anthony Burgess: A recent work of the hugely talented author of *A Clockwork Orange* concerned nuclear war and peace. Critic George Steiner has described him as one who has "written 'toward Stockholm.'"

Dr. Hector DeLuca: Despite the fact that his research on how vitamin D works in the human body was shown to be fraudulent, he is known for boasting to colleagues that the Nobel Prize for Medicine will one day be his.

Dr. Robert Gale: A man with abundant talents in both medicine and hustle, he made an ostentatious beeline for the Soviet Union after the Chernobyl accident. While he saved a number of lives, he also found time for a little unembarrassed self-promotion—such as jogging in front of news cameras every day—in an effort, it seemed, to make himself a Peace Prize contender.

Armand Hammer: The lifelong sycophant-to-the-Soviets and admitted felon maintains a file of nominating letters and is a perennial Peace Prize candidate. "If [a Nobel] can be bought," former National Security Council head Zbigniew Brzezinski has observed, "his chances of winning are quite high."

Rev. Jesse Jackson: Longs for Martin Luther King Jr.'s stature. His jack-in-the-box appearances at the crisis of the week may plausibly be interpreted as efforts, in part, to position himself as a 1990s Peace Prize winner.

Richard Nixon: In 1973, White House schemer H. R. Haldeman started a letter-writing campaign to support Nixon for the Peace Prize—the Vietnam peace accord was the pretext. Nixon played down his campaign when word leaked that Haldeman was behind it, and the president was further humiliated when the prize was split between Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho.

Ronald Reagan: It is widely believed that he expected to share the Peace Prize in 1988 with Mikhail Gorbachev for his work on the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. When he was passed over, a former Reagan aide said, "Nancy must be wearing black."

Elie Wiesel: Observers believe that simply in order to shut him up, the committee gave in to Wiesel's perpetual, unsubtle campaign (which involved friends' asking congressmen to write letters of nomination for him) and awarded him the Peace Prize in 1986.

—Michael Hainey