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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Nobel Peace Prize (1964) | [Next entry](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_nonviolent_resistance) | |
| On the morning of 14 October 1964, Martin Luther King, sleeping in an Atlanta hospital room after checking in for a rest, was awakened by a phone call from his wife, [**Coretta Scott King**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_king_coretta_scott_1927_2006/), telling him that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Although many in the United States and abroad praised the selection, segregationist [**Eugene ‘‘Bull’’ Connor**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_connor_theophilus_eugene_bull_1897_1973/) called it ‘‘scraping the bottom of the barrel’’ (‘‘Cheers and Scorn’’). Presenting the award to King in Oslo, Norway, that December, the chairman of the Nobel Committee praised him for being ‘‘the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races’’ (Jahn, ‘‘Presentation,’’ 332).  The Nobel Prize was endowed in 1895 by Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist and the inventor of dynamite. Annual awards in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace began in 1901. The winner of the Peace Prize is selected by a committee appointed by the Norwegian Parliament from nominations submitted by past winners and other select persons. King was nominated by the [**American Friends Service Committee**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_american_friends_service_committee_1917/), which had received the prize in 1947.  King departed for Oslo on 4 December 1964, stopping in London for three days to preach at St. Paul’s Cathedral and meet with leaders of the peace community. He was accompanied on his trip by a group of [**Southern Christian Leadership Conference**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_southern_christian_leadership_conference_sclc/) (SCLC) staff and members of his family. King accepted the prize on 10 December, in the name of the thousands of people in the civil rights movement who constituted what he termed a ‘‘mighty army of love’’ (King, ‘‘Mighty Army of Love’’). He called the award, ‘‘a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence andoppression,’’ and discussed ways to overcome the evils of racial injustice, poverty, and war (King, ‘‘Address,’’ 106).  Recognizing that SCLC played only one part in the movement, King shared the $54,000 monetary prize with leading civil rights groups, giving $25,000 to the [**Gandhi Society for Human Rights**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_gandhi_society_for_human_rights/), $12,000 to SCLC, and splitting the remainder among the [**Congress of Racial Equality**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_congress_of_racial_equality_core/), the [**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_association_for_the_advancement_of_colored_people_naacp1/) (NAACP), the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the [**National Council of Negro Women**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_council_of_negro_women_ncnw/), the [**National Urban League**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_urban_league/), and the [**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_student_nonviolent_coordinating_committee_sncc/).  King was feted at events in Europe and at home, where he praised the volunteers in the movement who would never be publicly recognized but who were critical to the success of the nonviolent struggle. King described the award as a reminder to civil rights workers that ‘‘the tide of world opinion is in our favor,’’ and pledged to ‘‘work even harder to make peace and brotherhood a reality’’ (King, ‘‘Mighty Army of Love;’’ King, 27 January 1965). When King decided to speak out against the [**Vietnam War**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_the_vietnam_war_1961_1975/) in April 1967, he reflected on this promise, calling the prize a ‘‘commission,’’ that required him to go ‘‘beyond national allegiances’’ to speak out for peace (King, ‘‘Beyond Vietnam,’’ 145).  **Sources**  ‘‘Cheers and Scorn for Nobel Award,’’ *New York Time*s, 15 October 1964.  Gunnar Jahn, ‘‘Presentation,’’ in *Nobel Lectures*, eds. Haberman, vol. 3, 1972.  King, ‘‘Acceptance Address for the Nobel Peace Prize,’’ in *A Call to Conscience*, eds. Carson and Shepard, 2001.  King, ‘‘Beyond Vietnam,’’ in *A Call to Conscience*, eds. Carson and Shepard, 2001.  King, ‘‘Mighty Army of Love,’’ *New York Amsterdam News,* 7 November 1964.  King, ‘‘The Struggle for Racial Justice,’’ 27 January 1965, NF-GEU. |