

Possible – A Nobel peace prize for Hitler ?

By Manila C. Mohan

Nobel Peace Prize for Adolf Hitler ! A heading which may read ridiculous in all times, to every intelligent discourse; an implicit assumption or phantasmagoria anybody would hate to imagine. But if at any point of time this is possible, then a similar headline reading 'world food prize for Monsanto' could also be possible. But this headline was no fancy or fantasy. Robert T. Fraley the executive vice president and chief technical officer of the American monolith won that prestigious award this year! it was Fraley who engineered the first ever herbicide resistant soybean in 1996. The prize foundation clearly states that the award is conceived to recognize the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world.

If the Nobel peace prize was awarded to Adolf Hitler (whether posthumous or when alive) it would definitely have been an intelligent conspiracy. Without doubt it would be a political design to induce in history impossible credence and acceptance to the principles of the racial politics, cruelly executed by the dictator. A Hitler awarded with Nobel prize will automatically erect a new figure marginalizing all criticism against him.

Even New York Times has described this years award as a public relations work intended for sidelining the disapproval that has risen globally against genetically modified food. This treacherous deliberation is more exposed when we realize that the major sponsors of the award are Monsanto and Syngenta foundation. The paradox is that this year the award is received by these bodies that in fact commissioned it!

The award was established in 1987 by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Norman E. Borlaug. On June 19, announcing the awards for this year, World Food Prize Foundation president Kenneth Quinn said: "Climate volatility is a game changer for farmers from Iowa to India . The question is whether it would be possible to feed all of the people on our planet without biotechnology and genetically modified crops, especially given the dramatic challenges farmers may face from climate volatility".

We may consider the comments from Francis Moore, winner of Right Livelihood Award and author of the book 'Diet for a Small Planet', a fitting reply to Quinn. He said: , "The honourees of the World Food Prize are contributing to the problems that keep us locked in a world where hundreds of millions of people are hungry while there is plenty of food."

The proclaimed criterion for the award "improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world" never tallies with the genetically modified foods as these foods along with seeds are banned or rejected in more than fifty countries so far. Farmers' collectives elsewhere are fighting a life's struggle for the survival. Eminent environmentalist from India, Vandana Shiva says: "Not only are GMOs unsafe, they are destroying biodiversity, increasing

farmers' dependency on seed and chemicals and leading to the emergence of super pests and super weeds. This is a recipe for food insecurity and non sustainability."

This year's declaration of the award coincides with another disastrous move directly affecting the food safety of the people of India. India is trying to clear the path for genetically modified seeds by introducing the notorious BRAI Bill in the parliament. Indian bureaucrats who never show any sympathy to the farming millions, could use the award given to Monsanto to justify and promote their designs. The massive varieties of indigenous and traditional seeds suitable with an autochthonous climatic diversity will be sidelined once genetically modified seeds are politically accepted in a country where the livelihood is such an important pillar that sustains agriculture. The peasantry of the biggest democracy will be forced to live at the mercy of the multinationals.

By giving the world's most prestigious food award to Monsanto, both science and humanity have been abused and cheated alike. Great ideals and principles of science are hijacked by the profit making minorities. It is not at all amazing that Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, founder of India's failed green revolution was one of the juries for the prize this year. The times when agriculture was treated as culture and a farmer as a human being are changed forever. And in a time when agriculture has become a mere industry and the agriculturist nothing more than a consumer, Monsanto will be the Messiah of cultivation, Hitler will become the Lamb of God!

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