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Trends. The Myth of Apolitical Humanitarianism: The Nobel Prize and Doctors Without Borders

Editor
Many humanitarians believe that their role and their mission—humanitarianism—is above, beyond, and without politics. They believe that they should attempt to provide for all who are in want and in need. That at no time should "sides" be taken or blame be apportioned. These humanitarians have problems with the recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the medical relief organization Doctors Without Borders.

Doctors Without Borders—besides providing much needed medical and health-related services—has identified perpetrators of violence and disaster, elucidated untoward consequences of succoring the morally, ethically, and legally guilty, and explicated the enmeshed, problematic nature of a political world. And this is as it should be. Any action or nonaction has a political consequence because of or regardless of intent. In a world of infinite need and finite resources, any action or nonaction is intrinsically imbued with politics because of or regardless of consequence.