Chinese Author Yu Jie Wins 2012 Civil Courage Prize for Leading Freedom and Pro-democracy Efforts in China

Yu Jie, of Chengdu, China, will receive this year’s Civil Courage Prize Medal and a prize of $50,000 granted by The Train Foundation. Mr. Yu, an award-winning writer, is a notable figure in Chinese pro-democracy and freedom efforts and a co-author of Charter 08, a manifesto calling on the Communist Party of China to adopt an independent legal system, eliminate one-party rule, respect human rights and enact other reforms.

Yu Jie is well known as a close associate and biographer of the 2010 Nobel Peace Laureate, Liu Xiaobo. Though long a target of negative attention from the Chinese authorities, Mr. Yu has suffered from a lengthy period of constant harassment, a year of house arrest and eventually life-threatening torture, beginning shortly after the announcement of Mr. Liu’s Nobel Prize. Mr. Yu’s abuse included brutal physical beatings and burns, and death threats which eventually led, on his release, to his move earlier this year to the United States, where he has applied for asylum and now continues to write. Mr. Yu speculates that he was allowed to leave the country because the authorities believed he would be less of a threat living abroad during this year of leadership change in China. He has promised to use his new-found freedom to “put forth my voice on the broader international platform on behalf of the struggle for democracy and freedom in China”. He has stated that he plans to continue his influence in China through the use of the Internet and his Twitter account, which has over 38,000 followers.

Mr. Yu’s multiple writings are censored in China, he having been put on a blacklist of banned authors, but continue to be published abroad. Mr. Yu has been described as ‘very blunt about the shortcomings of Chinese politics and society’, with one of his essays comparing China to the story of the Emperor Who Had No Clothes with the Chinese people ‘so cowed by political intimidation that they dare not speak simple truths’. His first book, Fire and Ice, was reviewed as a ‘scathing work of social and political criticism’ and he was subjected to many interrogations and...
Letter from the Chairman

When the Civil Courage Prize began, inspired and encouraged by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, our great national strategic concern was the threat presented by the Soviet Union, which had gobbled up much of Europe, and was applying tremendous pressure to many if not most other countries. We helped Solzhenitsyn get the Templeton Prize, worth as much as the Nobel, and accompanied him to Buckingham Palace to receive it. Solzhenitsyn’s writings did a lot to destroy the reputation of communism.

Times have changed, and according to this year’s Civil Courage Prize winner, with the Soviet Union gone, China is the next threat. Here is what he writes:

“I arrived in the United States a month ago, thinking that I had escaped the reach of Beijing, only to realize that the Chinese government’s shadow continues to be omnipresent. Several U.S. universities that I have contacted dare not invite me for a lecture, as they cooperate with China on many projects. If you are a scholar of Chinese studies who has criticized the Communist Party, it would be impossible for you to be involved in research projects with the Chinese-funded Confucius Institute, and you may even be denied a Chinese visa. Conversely, if you praise the Communist Party, not only would you receive ample research funding but you might also be invited to visit China and even be received by high-level officials. Western academic freedom has been distorted by invisible hands.

I believe that China is a far greater threat than the former Soviet Union ever was: unfortunately, the West lacks visionary politicians, such as Ronald Reagan, to stand up to this threat.

The Chinese Communist Party remains a tiger that will bite. For working on human rights with Liu Xiaobo, after he was awarded the Nobel Prize, I was tortured by the country’s secret police and nearly lost my life. Since then, dozens of lawyers and writers have been subjected to brutal torture; some contracted severe pneumonia after being held in front of fans blowing cold air and then being baked by an electric furnace. The secret police threatened me, saying that they had a list of 200 anti-Communist Party intellectuals whom they were ready to arrest and bury alive. Over the past year, the number of political prisoners in China has increased, and the jail sentences have become longer, yet Western voices of protest have become weaker.

Harsh internal repression and unrestrained external expansion are two sides of the same coin. The Chinese Communist Party recently vetoed the U.N. Security Council’s resolution on Syria because killings, not unlike those committed by Damascus, continue in Tibet.”

My own view is that China, like Russia formerly, has much to fear from internal unrest, but that the U.S. and China are not natural enemies, and should be friends.

Bobitt to Deliver Keynote Speech at Civil Courage Prize Ceremony

The author of many essays and articles and of seven published books, Professor Bobitt’s works include: Constitutional Fate: Theory of the Constitution; The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History; and, most recently, Terror and Consent: the Wars of the Twenty-First Century. His forthcoming book, My Robes of State: Machiavelli and the World He Made, will be published in 2013. He is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
Recent News of Past Winners

2005 CCP winner Min Ko Naing of Burma, who had been sentenced to 65 years in jail, was finally released from prison in January of this year. Min Ko Naing, a prominent leader of the 1988 student protest movement, was probably the most important dissident still in jail to be released by the extensive government amnesty of political prisoners. President Thein Sein said the newly freed prisoners could “play a constructive role in the political process”, and the move was hailed by many as a significant breakthrough for reform by Burma. Nevertheless, there was some concern as to how much freedom the released prisoners would have and opposition groups noted that there were still more than 1000 political prisoners in custody. Min Ko Naing, himself, was met by a crowd of well-wishers on his release and spent the next few days thanking supporters, but also urging that they continue to press for further, tangible reform.

2011 CCP winner Lydia Cacho Ribeiro of Mexico has reported receiving new death threats from, as yet, unknown sources, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which called on the Mexican government to increase their efforts to ensure her security. Ms. Cacho has also reported the closing of her women’s shelter in Cancun due to a shortage of funds to maintain it. In more positive news, Ms. Cacho was a recipient of the 2011 Olaf Palme Prize for International Understanding and Common Security for her “tireless and often lonely effort to expose criminal networks despite great personal risk”.

With Special Thanks to Civil Courage Prize Nominators 2011-2012

Andrew Apostolou of Freedom House
Alberta Arthurs of Arthurs.US
David Asman of Fox News
Matarr Suraa Baldeh of Education for All Campaign Network, The Gambia
Jeff Cassin of Breshow & Walker, LLP
Patsy Davis of Baptist World Alliance Women’s Dept
Atine Denish of Akale Poverty Reduction Organisation
Bob Dietz of Committee to Protect Journalists
Estelle Disch of University of Massachusetts, Boston
Joyce Dubensky of Tannenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

Mahmood Elahi of Pakistani Holamand Khatwateen Network (PHKN)
Fernanda Katz Ellenberg of Robert F. Kennedy Center
Giovanni Ferrero Former Italian Ambassador
Karen Fitzgerald of Ashoka
Christian Fuller
Vartan Gregorian of Carnegie Corporation of NY
Nouha Ghosn of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
Smitha Hanumantha of Ashoka
Jane Harman of Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Kyle Horner/ Sharon Kelly of Connect Church/Wave Church

Imaad Al-Islam of Islam Channel
Muska Klebnikov of The Train Foundation
Perry Link of University of California, Riverside
Cat Lucas of English PEN
Jharna Mishra of Bharat Integrated Social Welfare Agency
Justice VS Malimath former Chief Justice of Karnataka and Kerala High Courts
Jay Nordlinger of National Review
Michael Posner of US Department of State
Nancy Prager Kamel of Strategic Expansion Partners
Melissa Pros of HQ US EU COM

Samuel Augustine Quashie of Mt. Sinai Methodist Church, Lapaz
Prudhui Raj of Blue Cross Youth Sava Sangham
Tashir Rashid of Vite-a-Hope
Carter Roberts of World Wildlife Fund
Mahesh Ruparelia of Rescue Foundation
Thomas A. Russo
Gaurav Saigal
Maria Salazar-Ferro of Committee to Protect Journalists
Jessca Sally of Russell & Volkening, Inc.
John Silbersack of Trident Media Group
Mickey Spiegel of Human Rights Watch
Willy Mushing Tamfu of University of Ngaoundere Adamawa Region

Rev Robert and Mrs. Maurine Tobin of Episcopalian Diocese of MA
John Train of The Train Foundation
William J. vanden Huevel of Allen & Company
Marcel van der Heijden of Hivos
Robert Varenik of Open Society Justice Initiative
Janet Walsh of Human Rights Watch
Eli Weisell of Boston University
Sarah Leah Whitson of Human Rights Watch
Christoph Wilcke of Human Rights Watch
Paul Wolfowitz of American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research
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Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Past Honorees

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Triveni Acharya</td>
<td>Defender of Victims of Human Trafficking in India</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Andrew White</td>
<td>Steadfast advocate for peace in the Middle East</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Aminatou Haidar</td>
<td>Champion of the non-violent campaign for self-determination in Western Sahara</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Ali Salem</td>
<td>Egyptian author and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Phillip Buck</td>
<td>Imprisoned in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Rafael Marques de Morais</td>
<td>Journalist who exposed the slaughter of Angolans and the plundering of national assets</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Min Ko Naing</td>
<td>Imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Emadeddin Baghi</td>
<td>Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Shahnaz Bukhari</td>
<td>Battler against the burning and other abuse of Pakistani women</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Vladimir Roca Antunez</td>
<td>Champion of freedom, Cuba</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Gustavo Arcos Bergnes</td>
<td>(Honorable Mention) Early democracy activist, Cuba</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Paul Kamara</td>
<td>Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Natasa Kandic</td>
<td>Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Sergei Khodorovich</td>
<td>(Honorable Mention) Solzhenitsyn collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer†</td>
<td>Anti-Nazi martyr</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Judge Giovanni Falcone†</td>
<td>Assassinated while prosecuting the Sicilian Mafia</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Rosemary Nelson†</td>
<td>Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Neelan Tiruchelvam†</td>
<td>Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Raoul Wallenberg†</td>
<td>Saved thousands of Jews from extermination</td>
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† = 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.civilcourageprize.org.

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

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