

# Nobel Peace Prize Information

Peace is one of the five prize areas mentioned in Alfred Nobel's will. The will was, however, partly incomplete. Nobel simply stated that prizes be given to those who, during the preceding year, "shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind" and that one part be given to the person who "shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses."

## Why a Norwegian Nobel Committee

Alfred Nobel himself never told anybody why he didn't give a Swedish body the task of awarding the Peace Prize. Consequently, we can only speculate what, in 1895, made the cosmopolitan Swede decide to give the task of selecting the peace prize committee to the Norwegian Parliament. There have been a number of suggestions: Nobel admired Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian patriot and leading author; the *Storting* was the first national legislature to vote support for the international peace movement; Nobel may have wanted to distribute the tasks related to the Nobel Prizes within the Swedish-Norwegian union. Nobel may also have feared that the highly political nature of the Peace Prize would make it a tool in power politics and thereby reduce its significance as an instrument for peace. A prize committee selected by a rather progressive parliament from a small nation on the periphery of Europe, without its own foreign policy and with only a very distant past as autonomous military power, may perhaps have been expected to be more innocent in matters of power politics than would a committee from the most powerful of the Scandinavian countries, Sweden. In his will Nobel wrote: "It is my express wish that in awarding the prizes *no consideration* be given to the nationality of the candidates, but that the most worthy shall receive the prize, whether he be Scandinavian or not." During the 20<sup>th</sup> century eight Scandinavians have become Peace Prize laureates. There have been five Swedes and one Dane; only two Norwegian nationals. The geographical distribution of laureates would appear to reveal little or no Norwegian or Scandinavian chauvinism; on this point the Norwegian Nobel Committee may be said to have observed the provisions in Nobel's will. In accordance with Alfred Nobel's will, the Peace Prize is awarded by a committee of five, appointed by the *Storting* (the Norwegian Parliament), but without the committee being formally responsible to the *Storting*.

To decide who has done the most to promote peace is a highly political matter, and scarcely a matter of cool scholarly judgment. The task requires an ability and a will to view conflicts in the world community as objectively as possible while keeping a strong commitment to certain common moral and political principles.

## How is a person or institution nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize?

Any one of the following persons is entitled to submit proposals:



- members of national assemblies and governments;
- members of international courts of law;
- university chancellors; university professors of social science, history, philosophy, law and theology;
- leaders of peace research institutes and institutes of foreign affairs;
- former Nobel Peace Prize laureates;
- board members of organizations that have received the Nobel Peace Prize;
- present and past members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee; (committee members must present their nomination at the latest at the first committee meeting after February 1);
- former advisers at the Norwegian Nobel Institute.

Observing the rules given in the statutes of the Nobel Foundation, the Committee does not publish the names of candidates.

The Nobel Peace Prize may also be accorded to institutions or associations.

The nominators are strongly requested not to publish their proposals. Proposals should be sent to:

The Norwegian Nobel Committee

Drammensveien 19

NO-0255 OSLO

Norway

