

Nomination Jan 30, 2015, by Nils Christie
Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo
Translation from Norwegian

Nobel peace prize 2015 –

Hereby, I respectfully allow myself to again nominate **Steinar Bryn and/or Nansen Dialogue Network** for the Nobel peace prize.

Below please find my grounds for the 2014 nomination followed by additional information from Steinar Bryn about the peace work he and Nansen Dialogue Network are now engaged in.

As a professor of criminology at the faculty of law in Oslo, I have worked with the issue of "alternative dispute resolution" for a number of years. The main focus here is to involve the parties in dialogue instead of continued conflict, or that one party will receive punishment, while the other party very often will feel in poorly secured position. The establishment of mediation councils (konfliktråd) in Norway is completely in line with this idea. The law on mediation councils in Norway is the first of its kind in Europe, and I think I can say that its implementation has been a significant success.

But it is clear that these ideas and desires are even more important on the international arena. Steinar Bryn and Nansen Dialogue have created a model that shows that reconciliation, settlement and peace-building is possible, even within where large and fresh post-war wounds still exist. This is vital experiences and ideas of the greatest value for the effort of global peace-building which Nobel had as the aim of the prize; it is new knowledge deserving recognition and the attention that a Nobel Prize will give.

In the aftermath of the conflict in the Balkans, Bryn and Nansen Dialogue have developed innovative methods and experiences on how to heal the war-wounds and overcome conflicts. Nansen Dialogue has chosen to work in the most difficult and traumatized communities with the greatest number of victims during the wars in the Balkans; Vukovar, Prijedor, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Stolac, Mostar, Mitrovica, Kosovo Polje, Obilic, Presevo Valley, Jegunovce. Today, these communities have strong Nansen groups, consisting of leading local politicians, teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists and others who carry reconciliation efforts forward.

During the last 17 years of dialogue efforts they have worked with and developed a method that shows that the most hateful enemies can reach each other and reconcile. Among the most significant outcomes one must mention school integration (including the establishment of the first bilingual school in Macedonia as a result of collaboration between four villages that had been at war in 2001), the return to mixed villages in Kosovo, work to create multiethnic political cooperation at the municipal level.

The current situation is that 50 people are in steady work for reconciliation in war-affected areas. This helps preventing the break-out of new wars and promotes fraternization. In addition, they have held conferences about "Norway in War" - where both Gunnar Garbo and Jan Reksten participated, and about "Norway in Peace" about the role of dialogue in peacebuilding.

The book "Dialogue - more than words," published for the Nansen project's 10th anniversary, contains an account of the project history in. Today there are 10 Nansen Dialogue offices spread across the Balkans. The work has been done in collaboration and with the support of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. It started in 1995 with the following objectives 1) "to use dialogue as a concept and methodology, empower people living in conflict situations to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution and democratic development" and 2) "to create a neutral and open space where the actors from serious conflicts can meet face to face ... destroy the enemy images and increase understanding of each other's views, interests and needs." The aim was not to determine guiltiness, but "how we build respect for

democratic principles, human rights and conflict resolution in peaceful way. These principles are alternatives to national chauvinism and ethnic loyalty."

A simple illustration of the concept of dialogue can be found on page 27 in "Dialogue - more than words". In debate and negotiation the goal is to win, in dialogue to understand; in debate you try to argue and convince, in dialogue to tell your stories; in debate you talk, in you dialogue listen; in debate you search for the weak arguments, in dialogue for the strengths of the other party; in debate you seek to make your counterpart uncertain, in dialogue feel safe; in debate moral judgments in dialogue tolerance and self-discipline, in debate it confrontational body language while in dialogue inclusive body language; in debate a change of opinion is a sign of weakness, in dialogue a sign of strength.

To my understanding a peace prize for this important work will be entirely in the spirit of Alfred Nobel. This has become more evident than ever through the clarifying work of Fredrik S. Heffermehl on the aspirations Alfred Nobel formulated in his will.

Here is an extract from the letter I received from Steinar Bryn today:

"Today Nansen Dialogue has dialogue centers working for reconciliation and to prevent new violent conflicts in Vukovar, Prijedor, Srebrenica, Mostar, Mitrovica and numerous other places. The first five years of the dialogue workshops were mostly dedicated to understanding the reasons of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the consequences of this breakup (1995-2000). The next 10 years of the work we had focus on reconciliation and to find out whether we can live together after what happened. The last five years Nansen Dialogue has focused on integration.

This is Europe's main challenge. Observers from Brussels, Switzerland and Tøyen school [in Oslo] come to us today to watch and learn from our integration projects in the Balkans. Because they realize that we have a good understanding of the difference between integration and assimilation. Integration is to respect each

other's differences, at the same time to come closer to each other through the dialogue, to become visible and to build better relationships with each other.

When the war in Ukraine broke out, I realized that our experiences from the Balkans was very relevant, I've had dialogue meetings in Moscow, Odessa and Kiev. I'll have new meetings in 6 major Ukrainian cities over the next 6 weeks. I was involved in initiating a dialogue conference in Odessa in December with a main goal to create a national dialogue strategy.

Nansen Dialogue has developed a methodology which is an important corrective to Norwegian (and western) efforts in peacebuilding, where the focus is on changing regime and building new states. The focus is dialogue and reconciliation between people who live in the state, a prerequisite to build a common loyalty to the same state.

Nansen Dialogue maintains patient focus on people and their needs to reconcile with the past and each other to be able to build a common future. "

Oslo 30-01-15
Nils Christie