

Evidence-Based Approaches  
to Peace and Conflict Studies 3

Stein Tønnesson *Editor*

# Lives in Peace Research

The Oslo Stories



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# Evidence-Based Approaches to Peace and Conflict Studies

## Volume 3

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Stein Tønnesson  
Editor

# Lives in Peace Research

The Oslo Stories



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*“The Oslo Stories is an indispensable source  
to the history of peace research.”*

*—Dr. Olav Njølstad, Director, The Nobel  
Institute, Oslo.*

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# The PRIO Peace Files

## Introduction by Henrik Urdal

The Peace Research Institute Oslo, internationally renowned and acclaimed under its acronym PRIO, is an institution that for more than 60 years has investigated, provoked, engaged, challenged, educated, and advised on issues central to peace and conflict. The genesis of PRIO can be traced back to June 1959, when it was launched as the Department for Conflict and Peace Research at the Norwegian Institute for Social Research. Seven years later, in 1966, PRIO became an independent, self-governed research institute. Over the years, the institute has housed a great number of remarkable individuals. This book presents the stories of 24 such individuals and their personal involvement with PRIO, ranging from the institute's founding until the present day. Among them is my own interview with PRIO founder Johan Galtung. Interviewed or portrayed by PRIO colleagues and peers, all the individuals behind the stories told in this volume have contributed to shaping PRIO into what it is today. I am proud and happy to be able to present their contributions.

The purpose of this book is to share these personal PRIO stories. My own arrival at PRIO was far from straightforward. As a political science student interested in environmental protection and the reduction of global inequity, I spent years on and off alternating between academic study and practical work for political youth organizations. As was the case for quite a few others, my entry to PRIO, and to research generally, was quite coincidental. With a particular interest in the political dimensions of global population developments, I had worked briefly one summer as a research assistant at Statistics Norway, projecting future fertility rates for Norwegian women.

Later, in 1999, I spent nearly a year as an investigation assistant at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague, working for a Norwegian demographer, Helge Brunborg. Using various demographic sources, I built up a list of named individuals killed in the 1995 Srebrenica massacres. We combined this list of deceased individuals with data on missing persons compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Physicians for Human Rights to generate a list of the Srebrenica missing. We then systematically compared these names to the pre-war census files and the postwar voters' register in order to counter claims that the Srebrenica missing had never existed, or that they had survived and turned up voting after the war. The resultant report demonstrated that a total of nearly 7500 individuals, mostly boys and men from the ages of 14 up to almost 90, had been killed in what the court later ruled was an act of genocide. The victims had been rounded up and executed in schools and other public spaces, or killed

while fleeing through the woods after Bosnian Serb forces overran the UN-protected Srebrenica enclave. Disturbing as this work was, the meaningfulness of applying rigorous scientific methods to investigate the gravest human rights violations with a view to indicting and persecuting war criminals awakened me to the possibility that research could have important, real-world impact.<sup>1</sup>

Still, when returning to the University of Oslo from the Hague to write my MA dissertation, my ambition was never to end up in academia. Feeling far too impatient, I was hardly attracted by the seemingly lonely life of researchers sitting behind closed office doors producing research papers for a small circle of peers. My aim at that point was to complete my master's degree and move on to what I considered to be more fulfilling, practical responsibilities. In my search for a supervisor who took an interest in the same issues as myself, I sent off an e-mail to PRIO Research Professor Nils Petter Gleditsch, whom I had never spoken with and only dimly knew about, but whose wife was a well-respected demographer at Statistics Norway. Receiving his positive reply within an hour, I was invited for a chat and a lunch seminar with the mostly quantitatively oriented Conditions of War and Peace Department. I ended up writing my MA thesis at PRIO under Nils Petter's able, supportive, and engaged supervision.

Encouraged and inspired by the generous, open, and collaborative research environment at PRIO, I ended up applying for, and receiving, doctoral and later postdoc funding from the Research Council of Norway funding facility for environmental and development research (FRIMUF). Moreover, the beginning of my doctoral project coincided exactly with PRIO's extraordinary achievement of being awarded one of the very first Norwegian Centres of Excellence. The Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW) was the only Centre among the original 13 that was awarded within the social sciences. As a Ph.D. student and an aspiring researcher presented with a chance to engage with brilliant peace and conflict researchers from all over the world through PRIO's extensive global network, I could not pass up this opportunity. I ended up staying on at PRIO.

Only five years junior to PRIO itself, the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)* has become an institution within the institution. The journal was edited by Nils Petter Gleditsch for 26 years and has gained the position as one of the globally leading journals in its field. Indeed, *JPR* and *Security Dialogue*, PRIO's other academic journal, make up a pair of leading International Relations journals, which have both in recent years been ranked in the top 10 globally. Strong publishing practices, data sharing, and high research standards have become an inherent and important aspect of the PRIO way.

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<sup>1</sup> The report on the Srebrenica missing was used as evidence in the court cases against Bosnian Serb leaders Radislav Krstić—the first person to be convicted of genocide by the ICTY—and Radovan Karadžić, and was also scheduled for inclusion in the court case against Slobodan Milošević, who died while in custody. The documentation of the work on the Srebrenica report, and further analysis of the data, was later published as Helge Brunborg, Torkil Lyngstad & Henrik Urdal (2003) 'Accounting for genocide: How many were killed in Srebrenica?' *European Journal of Population* 19(3): 229–248.

*JPR* offered another formative PRIO experience for me. Having been recruited as book review editor in 2005, while still working on my Ph.D., I was invited to join the Editorial Committee and later became one of several associate editors. In 2010, I had the privilege of taking over as editor in chief after Nils Petter Gleditsch, a position I held for seven years. My long tenure with *JPR* has not only offered a unique view into the exceptionally diverse and thriving field we call peace research, but has also earned me a deep appreciation for the important role that the collectives around ‘society journals’ have in providing stimulating intellectual homes and quality assurance mechanisms that are essential to scientific inquiry.

Having served in many different positions at PRIO, and having got to know the inner workings of the institute and the particularities of its key partners, I was trusted with the daunting task of presiding over the organization as its director in July 2017. Following in the footsteps of a long line of highly respected predecessors, the PRIO I was set to lead was an exceptionally well-run, high-achieving research organization. I feel exceptionally privileged to be able to work with and help guide such a remarkable collective of bright people. My ambition is to inspire and further develop the unique PRIO culture of collegiality, sharing, and research excellence and, as my mentors did for me, to pay it forward to new generations of peace researchers.

PRIO’s full name encapsulates its various aims. PRIO is committed to conducting *research* on the conditions for *peaceful* relations between states, groups, and people. It is *international* in orientation, in its staff, and in its academic networks and engagement with stakeholders. Finally, it is situated in the city of *Oslo*. It is not the Norwegian Peace Research Institute. It is the Peace Research Institute in *Oslo*. Oslo has earned its reputation as a city of peace by hosting the Nobel Institute. For 120 years, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded in Oslo. PRIO’s presence has in no insignificant way contributed to strengthening Oslo’s peaceful image, together with the Nobel Peace Center, the Oslo Center, the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF), and the Oslo peace agreement of 1994. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, situated in the heart of Oslo, has a separate section dedicated to ‘Peace and Reconciliation.’ Oslo’s tradition as a city of peace has prompted the University of Oslo, the Municipality of Oslo, the Nobel Institute, the Nobel Peace Center, and PRIO to join forces and organize the Oslo Peace Days from 5 to 12 December every year.

PRIO is an integral part of Oslo. Over the years, the institute has had no less than nine different addresses.<sup>2</sup> Its birthplace in June 1959 was in the Institute for Social Research (ISF) at Arbins gate 4, between the Royal Palace and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Only a few months later in August 1959, while still being an ISF Department, PRIO was accepted as a tenant at Polhøgda, the former home of Norwegian explorer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Fridtjof Nansen. The address was Fridtjof Nansens vei 17 at Lysaker, Bærum, a few hundred meters outside of the city borders. This is the only time that PRIO has resided outside the city itself.

In the first few years of its existence, PRIO led a fairly nomadic teenage life, rejoining its mother institution ISF after two years at Lysaker due to disagreements

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<sup>2</sup> Thanks to Nils Petter Gleditsch for providing a detailed overview of the historical PRIO locations, as well as the anecdotes that form the basis for this section.

with the Nansen Foundation that owned Polhøgda. By that time, ISF had moved into new offices on Munthes gate 31, a modern brick building. Opposite the Vigeland Sculpture Park (Frognerparken) at Frogner, close to Majorstua, this is still the home of the ISF. The cohabitation did not last. In the beginning of 1964, PRIO moved again, leaving the safe womb of the mother institution for good. The move was motivated by an expansion of staff, made possible by the first state financial support for PRIO through the newly established Council for conflict and peace research (*Rådet for konflikt- og fredsforskning*). The Council soon became the main source of funding for the institute. PRIO's new location was at Gydas vei 8 in Majorstua, only about 15 minutes by foot from Munthes gate, and close to the new Blindern campus of the University of Oslo. The property was developed for the Work Research Institutes (then an umbrella organization for three institutes). PRIO was allowed to stay there for about two and a half years.

At the time of the move to Gydas vei in early 1964, the then ISF Department took the name *Institutt for fredsforskning*, in English *Peace Research Institute, Oslo* (with a subtitle indicating its continued relationship with ISF), and the abbreviation *PRIO*. When PRIO finally became an independent entity in 1966, after the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) had been founded, the word 'International' had to be added also to the *International Peace Research Institute, Oslo*, but the acronym remained untouched. To simplify things, and since no one could harbor any doubt concerning PRIO's internationalism, 'International' was dropped again in 2010, together with the comma, so that the institute name would match completely with its by now famous acronym: the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

The fourth move, in the fall of 1966, took PRIO even deeper into the wealthy western parts of the divided city, to Frognersterveien 2. An old, privately owned villa that was vacated following a bankruptcy was made available to PRIO for a moderate rental fee by philanthropist and PRIO co-founder Erik Rinde, Director of the Institute for Social Research. The move into more spacious offices enabled a strong increase in PRIO staff, mostly through the recruitment of students, visiting researchers, and a steady stream of conscientious objectors. The house remained in PRIO's use for three and a half years until the property was sold and the house was to be demolished to give way to a new one. PRIO's grand old man, Nils Petter Gleditsch, vividly recalls that right up until the move around the end of 1969, those who remained working from their offices at the ground floor level used wood debris from the floors above to light the fireplace and keep warm.

The fifth move took PRIO back to Frogner, in a neighboring house of the Institute for Social Research, with the address Tidemands gate 28. Another old distinguished villa, the childhood home of peace activist and ISF researcher Bente Lund, was purchased for a reasonable amount using a private loan from the Rinde family. While the institute now finally owned a property that would allow for some permanency, a key challenge was that the house was listed as a private home, not allowing for office use. Despite strong political support that bought the institute some time, it became clear that the property could not be permanently rezoned for office use and hence PRIO could not stay there indefinitely. In 1976, six years after moving into Tidemands gate, PRIO made a fairly lucrative swap deal with a developer, exchanging

the property for a renovated office building on Rådhusgata 4. The property was quite close to what is today the Central Station in downtown Oslo, and which was then the East Railway Station (the tunnel between the West and East stations was not opened until a few years later, in 1980).

The offices on Rådhusgata became PRIO's stable seventh home for the next 11 years, seeing the birth and later departure of a new institute, the Institute for Human Rights, established by PRIO researcher Asbjørn Eide and Professor of Law at the University of Oslo, Torkel Opsahl. Becoming independent in 1986, what was originally a PRIO project is today the most vibrant human rights research environment in Norway: the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo.<sup>3</sup>

Over the years, traffic in the area around Rådhusgata increased significantly, and by the early 1980s the traffic noise had become a major problem.<sup>4</sup> The property investment had paid off, however, leaving PRIO with a significant equity capital. Sverre Lodgaard, who returned to PRIO from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) to become PRIO Director in 1986, started the search for a new PRIO location. The property that was finally chosen was Fuglehauggata 11, just across the street from the Institute for Social Research on Munthes gate, and hence for the third time PRIO moved to a location within a quite small area of Frogner. A once converted block of private homes, the property was already approved for office use. It was also considerably larger than what PRIO needed. At the time of the move to PRIO's eighth location in 1987, the top floor at Fuglehauggata was rented out to another research institute.

PRIO stayed there for more than 17 years, until 2005. By then, the property had become so worn down that a complete and costly refurbishment was required. The house was also starting to become too small for the needs of an expanding research environment, and there was a market, especially in this area, for converting office space into private housing. It was decided that the property be sold on the open market, and PRIO moved into new rented offices in an annex to the Norwegian Red Cross Headquarters, on Hausmanns gate 3, in the summer of 2005. After 46 years in various locations in the western part of the city, PRIO ended up in the eastern part of the city center, close to multicultural and socially diverse Grønland and Grünerløkka. Originally, the old city gasworks hall, the refurbished and modernized brick buildings that are PRIO's ninth home had been housing the slot machine department of the Norwegian Red Cross for a number of years. Coming under increasing public scrutiny and criticism for causing gaming addiction, the Red Cross and other Norwegian humanitarian organizations succeeded in striking a deal with the Norwegian state, transferring the slot machine monopoly to the state in exchange for increased direct funding. In 2022, Hausmanns gate 3 will be tied with Fuglehauggata 11 for the longest serving PRIO home.

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<sup>3</sup> As of 2021, the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights is again an important PRIO collaborator through a strategic collaboration agreement and preferred partner in a joint PRIO University of Oslo and NTNU Trondheim Ph.D.-level research school.

<sup>4</sup> Festningstunnelen, the tunnel leading thoroughfare traffic below the central parts of Oslo, was not completed until 1990.

The individuals whose life histories are told in this book populated the institute throughout these years and locations. The interviews, essays, and portraits were collected and published as part of PRIO's 60th anniversary celebrations in 2019 and are also available on the PRIO Web pages under the heading *PRIO Stories*. This volume allows us to connect them all in one big PRIO Web, celebrating their individual and collective achievements, while at the same time presenting their deeply concerned peace perspectives on the armed conflicts and the peacemaking that have characterized world history since the Second World War. The early chapters are dedicated to the PRIO founders, Johan Galtung, Ingrid Eide, and Mari Holmboe Ruge, and to philanthropist Erik Rinde. The volume reveals the institutional histories of pioneers like Nils Petter Gleditsch, Asbjørn Eide, Marek Thee, and Helge Hveem. Further portraits cover the directors of 'modern era' PRIO, following what is at PRIO often referred to as 'the wilderness years,' starting with Sverre Lodgaard in 1986, and including Hilde Henriksen Waage, Dan Smith, Stein Tønnesson, and Kristian Berg Harpviken. During this period, Administrative Directors Grete Thingelstad and Lene K. Borg were absolutely instrumental for the success of the institute. PRIO's strong international ties are represented by Peter Wallensteen, Senior Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala and many-time visiting researcher and long-term PRIO friend and collaborator, as well as Mete Hatay, long-serving researcher at the only international PRIO office, the PRIO Cyprus Centre. Finally, the book covers the stories of a number of PRIOites who over the years have been strong and important voices in the public and academic domains, including Wenche Iren Hauge, Helga Hernes, Åshild Kolås, Scott Gates, Inger Skjelsbæk, Pavel Baev, and Henrik Syse.

The chapters of this book represent the stories of some of the individuals who have exercised the greatest influence on PRIO. Yet, they represent only some of the many remarkable individuals who have made up and continue to shape PRIO as the globally oriented, collegial, dedicated, high-quality research environment that we represent today. I hope their stories will continue to inspire research aimed at bringing us closer to a world in which peace is the norm, and violence a rare exception.

**Henrik Urdal** (1972) is Norwegian Political Scientist and the current Director of PRIO.

**Note from the Editor** The interviews published in this book are abridged and language-edited versions of audio recordings undertaken in connection with PRIO's 60th anniversary in 2019. The original interviews were made during 2018–19 and published on the PRIO website under the heading *PRIO Stories*. In some cases, material based on new conversations and e-mail exchanges was included before publication. Full transcripts of the original audios were also made available on PRIO's website. Most of the chapters in the present volume have been somewhat revised or updated in consultation with the interviewees to reflect world developments up until August 2021. We must emphasize, however, that the interviews are almost uniquely based on the memories of individuals, and have not undergone any systematic editorial review.

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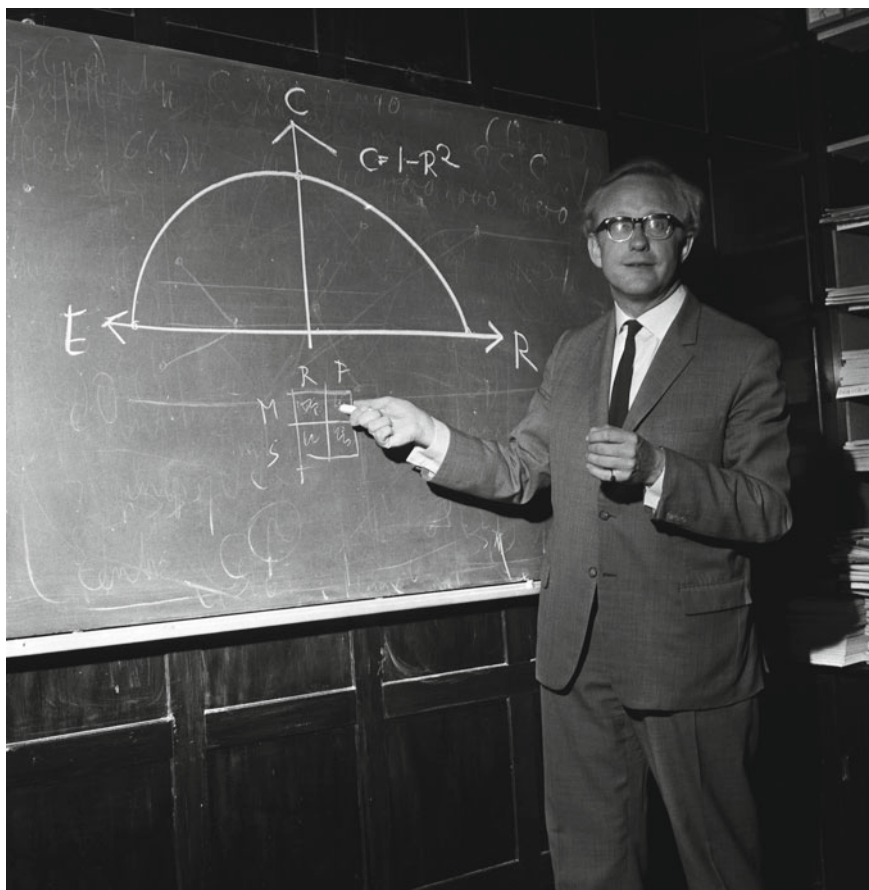
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# Chapter 1

## Inspiration from a Father: Johan Galtung



Interviewed by Henrik Urdal



Johan Galtung at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in 1968 © Henrik Laurvik/NTB/Scanpix

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The Second World War had a lasting effect on me. Especially because my beloved father was imprisoned at Grini (west of Oslo). And we were informed that every time there was a British bombing, prisoners would be shot. So, every night the air raid siren went, my mother and I would run out to the air raid shelter and sit there with only one thing on our minds. And my mother never wanted to go and get the paper the day after in case the headline read: ‘Dr Galtung shot this morning in retaliation for last night’s bombing raid’.

**Henrik Urdal:** *You were born six years before the war came to Norway. Could you tell me a bit about your childhood? What sort of influence did your father and mother have on you?*

**Johan Galtung:** My father’s educational background had a real influence on me. He’d attended the Norwegian Military Academy and received top marks in tactics, something he was very proud of. So he knew quite a bit about war and that sort of thing. And, of course, he’d completed a medical degree. And, on top of that, he’d studied political economy. As a politician in the 1920s, a deputy mayor and acting mayor at one point, he’d felt he needed a better understanding of economics. All of which is to say that he was, in effect, fully qualified in three distinct fields. And I suppose I’ve copied him to some extent. Studying one subject shouldn’t stand in the way of studying another. So, when I chose to take both a cand. real. degree in mathematics and a mag. art. degree in sociology, you could say I was following in my father’s footsteps.

It all comes back to my beloved father—he always supported me. He also had a daughter, of course, my sister Ingegerd, who was a strict conservative. She idealized people like Salazar and Franco, while I stood for the complete opposite. She wrote in *Morgenbladet* and I wrote in *Dagbladet*. My father would try to reconcile this conflict by praising our writing: ‘You both write such elegant Norwegian!’ You might say he was a bridge builder. But there was, of course, also something of the politician in this approach. At the same time, he supported me completely when I terminated my membership of the state church. He was a devout Christian and went to church every Sunday, but he understood that when I left the state church, it was the state and not the church I was rejecting. It was my view that the state and the church should have nothing to do with each other.

*It’s interesting to try to understand how the historical context in which you grew up was formative for you and for your perspective on peace research. Let me return to the impact of the Second World War. How would you say your childhood experiences and your experience of war contributed to your views on social change and on the significance of peace work?*

Since my mother was afraid of finding news in the newspaper that my father had been shot, it became my job to collect the paper each morning. Pretty intense, but it is a memory of war. Another memory I have is of visiting my father in Grini. We were allowed to visit him twice a year. We were pale and exhausted, he was brown, sunburnt from working on the commandant’s *Kräutergarten*, a medical herb garden. The war played an enormous role in my life and had a considerable effect on my

views on peace research. My sense of the madness of war was very much focused on my father: no-one was allowed to take my beloved father away from me.

But then I entered a period of my life in which another figure would play an increasingly important role, and that was Gandhi. When he was shot on 30th January 1948, I found myself crying—much to my puzzlement and dismay. I was 17 and 17-year-olds don't cry. And a boy to boot. And it wasn't a habit of mine to cry. Somehow or other, Gandhi's message had affected me so deeply that I reacted in this unexpected way. So I emerged from the war with a palpable disgust for war, primarily because the war had stolen my father from me, even if he ultimately came back. The war was over, and Gandhi's message was that there was an alternative.

When [Gandhi] was shot on 30th January 1948, I found myself crying – much to my puzzlement and dismay. I was 17 and 17-year-olds don't cry. And a boy to boot. And it wasn't a habit of mine to cry. Somehow or other, Gandhi's message had affected me so deeply that I reacted in this unexpected way.

### ***When did you discover Gandhi?***

In '48. I knew about him before then, of course: I kept myself informed, like any bright teenager. But I had no idea that he had affected me so deeply that I would cry when he was shot. And out of '48 came '51, when I became a conscientious objector. I've told this story many times before, but if it hadn't been for obligatory military service in Norway, I wouldn't have become the campaigner for and specialist on peace that I am today.

My father had always told me not to just go along with what you're supposed to do, but to be conscious of everything you do. And he was a first lieutenant in the Army Medical Service, which isn't an especially high rank, but even so. With his medical background and education from the Military Academy, he'd become an officer. So, I took his advice seriously and decided to try to find out more about it. Coincidentally, I'd receive a stipend that month to study in Finland. So this was how it all started: as a former big man on campus, with a succession of positions in student politics under my belt, I was awarded this stipend, at the same time as I was very unsure whether to carry out my military service or become a conscientious objector.

### ***It was quite popular to be a conscientious objector at the time, wasn't it?***

It wasn't that uncommon, that's true. But a lot of objectors were Jehovah's Witnesses. There was a community of them in Vennesla, north of Kristiansand, where a lot of the conscientious objectors came from. But objecting to military service on political grounds was still quite rare, although it was starting to become less so.

‘Well, that’s interesting,’ I thought. ‘Peace studies doesn’t exist’. And the idea struck me that perhaps this would be my life’s work.

Anyway, while I was in Helsinki, I went to the library. I didn’t tell the librarian that I was being conscripted or anything like that. I just asked: ‘Do you have any good books on peace studies?’ ‘No, but I’ll ask our parent library in Uppsala’. Finland had been a Swedish colony. ‘Come back tomorrow’. Well, Uppsala said that we don’t have anything as silly as peace studies, but we do have a brilliant book on war studies. ‘Well, that’s interesting,’ I thought. ‘Peace studies doesn’t exist’. And the idea struck me that perhaps this would be my life’s work.

### *And you were twenty?*

It was actually more or less on my twenty-first birthday that this happened. The 24th of October. There were various elements that coincided here: my military service was a very important element, but also this librarian who searched the catalogue for *rauhantutkimus*, the Finnish word for ‘peace research’. The first book in Finnish on *rauhantutkimus* was written by me, and that was published ten to fifteen years later. When I returned to Norway from Finland in ’51, I’d made a decision: I was going to dedicate my life to peace, and I was going to do it through research. I had some sort of intuition that I ought to combine the word ‘peace’ with the word ‘conflict’: peace and conflict research.

So, in ’51, this defining decision was made. But I’d also made another decision. I’d read an awful lot in preparation for a potential application for transfer from military service to alternative civilian service. And something that had really struck me was that the arguments against war were very clear, but there seemed to be very little on peace and arguments for peace. This is the difference between negative and positive peace, a key conceptual distinction that I went on to formulate in 1968.

What I took from this lack of work on peace was that if I was going to do this, if this was going to be my life, I’d have to start from scratch, from nothing. Not accept or reject any of the things I’d heard or read, but simply try to free myself from all presuppositions and begin again from zero. This is impossible, of course. You can’t be ‘pure’. That is, a Buddhist monk sitting in front of a white wall is trying, but it seems to me that Buddhist monks all arrive at the same conclusion in the end, and that makes me sceptical. So, what ended up happening is that I *jobbet med saken*, as we say in Norwegian—I worked on it. As the years passed and I made my way through my education, it rapidly became clear to me that if you’re going to work on peace, Johan, a degree in mathematics isn’t going to be sufficient. You’re going to have to learn something about these so-called social sciences as well.

Arguments against war were very clear, but there seemed to be very little on peace and arguments for peace. This is the difference between negative and positive peace, a key conceptual distinction that I went on to formulate in 1968.

***But when you chose to study mathematics, did you see this as part of the process of equipping yourself to study peace, before you changed tack and turned to the social sciences? Did you see maths as a useful tool for studying peace?***

Maths taught me to think. This way of thinking could be applied to anything. I knew full well that one way in which mathematical thinking had been used was the development of nuclear weapons, but it could also be used to develop peace. And after a while, the ball really got rolling. One question I needed to consider was which social science to study: psychology, down at the level of the individual; sociology, in the middle; or international relations on top? I thought I'd go for the middle. And that's how I ended up taking two degrees in parallel at two different faculties.

***You were studying both at the same time?***

I didn't make it easy for myself.

***No, that's ambitious.***

I found my time as a student incredibly rewarding. In the end, I majored in mathematics with a minor in physics for my cand. real. in natural science and majored in sociology with a minor in philosophy for my mag. art. in social science. I completed the first in 1956 and the second in 1957. And in the autumn of that same year, I was appointed assistant professor at the Department of Sociology at Columbia University.

At that time, Columbia was the Mecca of Sociology. Two greats of the discipline, Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, both wanted me to be their successor. I was granted tenure in 1960. I gave a speech and thanked my colleagues—I was deeply grateful and it had been a fantastic year—but my job now was to return to Norway and continue work I'd set in motion to establish peace research as a field of study. And this would never have happened if it wasn't for the Rinde family: Erik Rinde and Sigurd Rinde. Sigurd Rinde was the CEO of Norske Skog. In other words: capital! Erik had a law degree, but he was completely uninterested in business. His passion was for social science. His father provided him with funds to set up the Institute for Social Research, ISF.

***And this was in 1950, the establishment of ISF?***

They've played a huge role. So then I joined the institute.

***How did that come about? Did you already know the Rinde family?***

No.



***They contacted you while you were still at Columbia?***

I had a free semester autumn 1958, and that's when I travelled to Norway to establish peace research. It was a question of where and how. Erik was very keen to bring me to the institute as a researcher. He was pretty horrified when I told him I wanted to set up a department for conflict and peace research. He wanted to have me there as an individual specialist. I got the department.

And we worked very well together, Erik and I. And a little while later, when we needed more funding, Erik said: 'I think you ought to have a meeting with my father. He makes the decisions'. I'll never forget that meeting. Sigurd Rinde was a strong and very capable man, self-assured, like me. We sat there and looked at each other. He opened with the problem, as he saw it: 'What is this conflict and peace research?' Afterwards, he told his son, Erik: 'I didn't understand much of what he said, but what I did understand was that this Galtung is an entrepreneur, and as a businessman I appreciate that. He'll get his funding'. It was as an entrepreneur, someone who sets things in motion and gets things to work, that I secured the funding we needed. So, in the beginning, we had private funding from the Rinde family.

***Who perhaps weren't people you'd expect to harbour much of an interest in this topic? They weren't motivated by a desire to contribute to a political process?***

No, neither Sigurd nor Erik. But what they were interested in was a strong institute for social research, and if conflict and peace research had to be a part of social research, so be it. I never had any good conversations with Erik about international issues or anything like that. He was an entrepreneur. In any case, he had Sverre Lysgaard, Vilhelm Aubert, and then Sverre Holm, who was professor at the Department of Sociology, as a rather small, rather innocent counterpoint.

***And when was this, Johan?***

In the early '50s. In the summer of 1952, I'd refused military service and was called up for alternative civilian service. I had a motorbike, and I was very happy that our camp was at Havnås, near Mysen, an hour's drive from Oslo. And I remember I often asked myself: 'Johan, be honest, would you have become a conscientious objector if the camp was halfway up a mountain in Østerdalen?'

***And what's the answer to that question?***

I prefer not to think about it. Because I have no idea what the answer would be. Anyhow. I ended up on these motorbike rides. And every Saturday and Sunday I was at home in Oslo. And every Saturday morning I taught Sverre Holm maths, and every Saturday afternoon I taught statistics at the Institute for Social Research. Throughout my civilian service I kept this up. And I recall that Hansen, the leader of the camp at Havnås, was sceptical to this set-up, but went along with my having four Saturdays a month off instead of just three. I was very grateful to him for that. It all worked out in the end, with a bit of help from my motorbike.

I'd refused military service and was called up for alternative civilian service. I had a motorbike, and I was very happy that our camp was [...] an hour's drive from Oslo. And I remember I often asked myself: 'Johan, be honest, would you have become a conscientious objector if the camp was halfway up a mountain in Østerdalen?'

***Havnås was the central camp for civilian service in Norway at that time?***

And Hustad, which is further north, up near Molde, Åndalsnes, around there. That was the camp for the northern part of the country. Havnås was for Southern and Eastern Norway.

***So if Havnås had been a little further north, the situation for peace research in Norway might have been considerably worse?***

That's the question I'd rather not answer. Obviously, I weighed up the pros and cons, and some self-interested considerations played a role there.

***Of course.***

But anyway, we know how things turned out in the end. And I must say that these Saturdays were unbelievably fulfilling for me. At just 21 years of age, I was teaching a full professor maths every Saturday morning, and giving lectures on statistics for a bunch of researchers double my age. It was very challenging.

***There are loads of exciting things I'd like to ask you about, Johan. We touched on your childhood and formative years.***

Ask whatever you like!

***You've had an international orientation in your professional life from an early stage. But since we've been talking a little bit about personal things and family: how has it been for you to be so rootless, to not be connected to a place? It's clearly opened up possibilities, but has it also had personal costs? Is there anything you've found challenging in terms of family, social life, that sort of thing?***

There are women in every country. There are attractive women in every country. I got to know, and know well, a fair few of them. My first marriage was Norwegian. That lasted 12 years. My second and last marriage is Japanese, and we're celebrating our 50th anniversary next year. Why didn't the Norwegian marriage last as long as the Japanese marriage has?

Well, one answer is that there's no difference in class between me and my Japanese wife. We both come from old, lower aristocratic families. Her family were samurai, while mine were Norwegian Viking petty nobility. My Norwegian wife and I had the same nationality, but came from different classes. I came from a Norwegian upper class, socially if not economically. She came from a family who had worked their way up from a spartan existence in Western Norway. For them, the Labour Party had

provided a social ladder to climb, whilst I saw the Labour Party as a tool of American imperialism. So, we had some different viewpoints where my Japanese wife and I had a shared viewpoint. But it was also a matter of the difference between class and nation. Perhaps it's more important to have the same class background than it is to have the same nationality. So, an East–West project, from Japanese samurai to Norwegian lower Viking nobility, has worked well. We've had our ups and downs, like any marriage. But it works and has done now for nearly 50 years.

***But what you're saying is that, on a personal level, it's harder to overcome class background than cultural and linguistic differences?***

Yes, in my experience.

***Has your international orientation made it difficult to keep in touch with your children or with friends?***

Well, I remember somebody asked one of my children if it's difficult having a strong father. And their response was: 'Well, he is very strong, but one advantage is that he travels so much, so he comes in small doses!'

***I wondered whether we could talk a little bit about the creation of PRIO. We've dated the origin of PRIO to 1959, the date when we, or rather you, started the department at ISF. You've talked about how the creation of this department was the result of your ultimatum to Rinde, that you would only be willing to come to ISF if he was willing to fund a department.***

Yes, not just an individual, but a whole department.

***How big was this department at that time?***

It consisted of me, my wife, Ingrid, and her best friend, and wife of my best friend, Mari Holmboe Ruge, who became my assistant. She lagged a bit behind Ingrid in her education. We three were the core of the department. But we made connections with others from disciplines we wanted to bring on board. I'm thinking of Arne Martin Klausen, an anthropologist, and Sivert Langholm, a historian. So we ended up being five people. And that was the department.

***Were they based at ISF already? Did you recruit them?***

Yes, they were there already. But the department got stronger and stronger as more people came on board. And, in many ways, we were more dynamic than many of the other departments. So eventually we became such a strong department that we had a basis for a discussion with Erik about maybe becoming an autonomous institute.

***Were there many internal conflicts about this at the institute at that time?***

On the contrary. I think there were more than a few who were happy to see the back of us.

***Because this was a milieu that must have been important, something of a flagship for ISF?***

Yes, but we were so strong and dynamic, more than the others, although their work was also extremely strong, especially in industrial sociology and that sort of thing, no doubt about it. But I'm pretty sure they saw us as competitors and that people were really quite pleased to see us go. I've always had an innate drive for independence, and I still find it difficult having any kind of authority over me making decisions on my behalf.

***Was it always your plan to form a separate institute?***

Not right from the start, no. But an independent department, yes. But as the department grew, it became pretty clear that it was beginning to look more and more like its own institute. Erik and I entered negotiations and talked about how brilliant our collaboration would be, how this wouldn't be affected by our becoming an independent institute. We needed a name, and I came up with Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO, which worked very well internationally. At the same time, PRIO stood for priority. And that was that.

***And this was around the same time SIPRI and COPRI were created, although they were a little later?***

They came later, yes.

[They] believed in peace through numbers and data, the thought being that if you could just document how much money we waste on armaments, people would lose the taste for them. I was far more interested in whether this hypothesis was right or wrong, and my view was that it was wrong. If anything, people quite often seem to be of the view that we should pay our way out of our problems if we can.

***As I understand it, PRIO was an important source of inspiration for them?***

That's my understanding, yes. Some people think SIPRI came first, but that's not the case. I sat on the board, and SIPRI was very important, but they had a completely different orientation. Gunnar Myrdal and Robert O'Neill believed in peace through numbers and data, the thought being that if you could just document how much money we waste on armaments, people would lose the taste for them. I was far more interested in whether this hypothesis was right or wrong, and my view was that it was wrong. If anything, people quite often seem to be of the view that we should pay our way out of our problems if we can.

***You say the orientation is different, is this still an orientation SIPRI has today, towards publishing this kind of data?***

Yes, with the yearbook and that sort of thing. And it's a great yearbook, but it's based on the idea that if we can just get all the facts out into the open, we'll put people off the arms race.

***Whereas you had a slightly broader idea of the social sciences producing knowledge that could alleviate society's problems—and specifically the ultimate societal disease that is armed conflict—just as medical research can alleviate health problems and the natural sciences can address natural-scientific problems.***

That was the idea, without a doubt. Absolutely. And, in fact, you've brought up an idea that was even more crucial, which was the similarity with medical research. My father and grandfather were both doctors. Jørgen Ulrik Galtung: if you take a trip to Moss, you'll find a street called 'Doktor Galtungs vei'. It was my grandfather who'd left Torsnes, where my family came from, and settled in Moss as the county doctor for Smaalenene. The County of Smaalenene, as it was called then, what we call Østfold today, with Vestfold on the other side of the Oslofjord. And here, at the mouth of the fjord, a body of medical knowledge accumulated. And it was this medical knowledge that was passed on to me as a model.

That's my father's side of my intellectual inheritance, but my mother's side was also important. She was a nurse. You could say that a nurse is somewhat subordinate to a doctor, but her father was considerably superior to a doctor, he was a medical director. And so he—Mikael Holmboe—was of course a central figure in all this. And this is where governmental and organizational perspectives enter the frame. I grew up with all these models, and I absorbed this medical knowledge—one consequence of which is my impeccable health, even at the age of 88.

***Let's return to the topic of the milieu at PRIO in the early days, Johan. The institute formally became independent in 1966. This was a time when political divisions were becoming more rigid, I'm thinking perhaps especially of the '70s, but also the '60s. Critics of peace research, on both the left and the right, were becoming more vocal. At the same time, there was a certain degree of political breadth at PRIO, at least in the '70s. Was this a deliberate aim?***

No, I wouldn't say so. We were pretty uninterested in party politics. It was clear to us that foreign policy in Norway was developed and implemented over the heads of the political parties. I was actually part of a movement called "Foreign Policy at the Ballot Box", and we were harshly and dismissively criticized for sowing division that could be exploited by the nation's enemies. Our response was of course that you can be pretty sure that an attack on Norway would have a unifying effect, and that the risk of attack is in any case not a good reason not to discuss how to ensure that we aren't attacked in the first place. But that debate never got us anywhere. Foreign policy is still removed from the purview of party politics and handed over to secret meetings of the Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs and Constitutional Affairs. When it comes to foreign policy, democracy is suspended in favour of secret meetings.

***Something I want to try to get a handle on is the attitude to political contacts and allegiances at PRIO at that time. It's interesting to think about this in terms of dialogue. PRIO was characterized by collective decision making at this time, which had internalized and institutionalized a dialogue between people with different ideas about how PRIO should be run. You've said that this wasn't a reflection of party politics or an attempt to ensure that a range of views were represented. But PRIO, and you personally, had good political contacts in the government and the Norwegian parliament at that time, who played an important part in establishing PRIO and ensuring a sufficient level of political and financial support for the institution.***

You could say that. Look, I didn't even know where people at PRIO stood in terms of their allegiances to political parties. I wasn't interested. I didn't think about it. I was only interested in the quality of their research.

***But could you say something about how important your network of contacts was for securing PRIO's existence during its formative years?***

Torstein Eckhoff, he was an extremely important person. His contacts were very important. He had contacts at the ministries and good political contacts in parliament. I also had a good relationship with the Norwegian authorities at this time. My own network was primarily through Knut Frydenlund, who was the Norwegian Foreign Minister for many years. He was a close personal friend of mine. Our friendship was based on total disagreement, except on all the really important things in life—love, life and death, that sort of thing—on which we agreed completely. We were particularly in agreement on the sexual element of life and death.

There were three of us who often ended up sat in a room at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, making plans: Knut Frydenlund, Halvard Lange and myself. Knut had been the MFA's representative on the so-called Galtung committee, which had been looking at setting up a Norwegian peace corps, something I'd come up with in 1960, a couple of months before Kennedy. And supposedly he was very impressed by how I'd managed to organize a debate in which the different sides all got to have their say and together arrive at a conclusion that they could all live with. I took great care to make sure that each participant's main point had been heard. This has always been my approach. Everyone should feel at home: 'that's me, I remember that sentence, that was my best sentence'. I suppose I have a certain talent for identifying each person's best statement and for merging all these together. In any case, Knut was impressed by this, and involved me quite heavily in the development of Norwegian foreign policy. For a while, I occupied a position that was frankly undemocratic.

***As a sort of unofficial adviser?***

Exactly. I had a great deal of influence. I don't think I did anything wrong, I don't think so. But there certainly wasn't an open debate on foreign policy, that's for sure.

***Did you feel like you made any real breakthroughs?***

Oh yes, to some extent.

The so-called Galtung committee [...] had been looking at setting up a Norwegian peace corps, something I'd come up with in 1960, a couple of months before Kennedy

***Can you give any examples that aren't confidential?***

Not confidential! Well, for example, I said that Algeria would very quickly gain independence. In the wake of the Évian Accords, it'll happen any day now. We know from social research that there is something called imprinting, that a new born life's first impression is extremely important. This applies to animals and it applies to humans. Whether, for example, a baby is treated with love and warmth or is treated harshly is something that will have a lasting effect on its life.

A new country was born in 1962, Algeria. Make sure Norway is one of the first in line with a gift. And that's what Norway did. We gave them some good-quality Norwegian wooden houses that could be placed up in the Atlas Mountains. And this created a positive impression of Norway in Algeria that I believe has persisted to this day. The so-called 'imprint', the impact of a first impression: this was applied social-scientific research.

***Did this happen on any other occasions?***

It's just an example.

***Did you contribute to changing the way people thought at the MFA?***

That's a good question, but I wouldn't want to hazard a guess.

***These are interesting processes.***

I remember someone high up at the ministry lectured me once on the three pillars: the embassies, the consulates and the ministry. You circle upwards between these three pillars. You progress from secretary to the consul, to consul general to the counsellor, to ambassador, to director general and finally secretary general. And as the secretary general, you're in effect the deputy foreign minister. But you'll never become the foreign minister. As one of them said: 'That job goes to someone who's been drinking coffee at the party headquarters since he was 20 years old'. He's the one who gets to be foreign minister. There's plenty of coffee drinking to be done at the party headquarters. And another thing he told me is that it doesn't matter that much in any case, as it's the secretary general, the consul general, and the ambassador who really run the ministry. So this was the sort of picture I had of things. There was no end to my insider knowledge of the workings of the Norwegian state and this was something I made use of. I wasn't out to involve myself in any political drama. My aim was to show what could be achieved directly through positive action.

***How long did you have this unofficial role as adviser?***

That's an important question. With a very clear answer. And that answer perhaps doesn't cast me in an especially good light. I had a very close collaboration with Knut Frydenlund, as I've said. What happened was that Ingrid and I got divorced. Knut had always got on very well with Ingrid. And then I married my lovely Japanese wife, Fumiko, who Knut also got on with. But you could say that I married out of a Norwegian reality and into an Asian reality. And then came Norway's support for NATO's decision on the Vietnam War, that Norway would unambiguously pledge support for the Americans in Vietnam. And the people the Americans were killing in Vietnam had the same skin colour as my wife. They looked like my wife. So I sat in Knut's office and said, 'Knut, they've got the same skin colour as my wife. I'm not with you on this one'. 'Yes, but Johan, you must understand, Johan, we can't go against the US. If we do that, we'll have no guarantee that they'll be on our side "when the Russians come"'. Not if the Russians come, but *when*.

***And when was this?***

This was right after Fumiko and I got married, so in 1969. That was the end of my close collaboration with Knut. Not the end of our friendship, but certainly of our collaboration. We were separated by a racial divide, and by lines of conflict.

***So, from your point of view, it was you who withdrew from the relationship?***

I was the one who withdrew, and I don't think I should have done. I've regretted it since.

***Why is that?***

I think I ought to have stayed and discussed the details with Knut, tried to find some kind of overarching perspective.

***But that was difficult because this was also something personal for you?***

Yes, exactly. There wasn't any pressure from my Japanese wife, not at all. I think she would have been more willing to collaborate than I was, in fact. Maybe I made too much of it. But the Norwegian support for the US was very strong. And here, Knut had two stories that were important for him. Let me see if I can remember them. He was sitting and talking with the American ambassador, and they're talking about some conflict or other in Europe. And Knut says to him, according to Knut himself, 'our ambassador doesn't quite agree with you there'. And the American ambassador replies: 'Your ambassador is ill-informed'. And so Knut asks, 'Ok, how can he be better informed?' And the American ambassador says, 'We can't reveal our sources'. And so Knut responds, 'But we're a close ally'. 'I can't reveal our sources'. That made a real impression on Knut, and not a positive one.

And then the other story. This same American ambassador says to Knut: 'We're in trouble now in Vietnam. We know it and we're being criticized around the world. If you also criticize a friend in trouble... Well, we're the friend and we're in trouble. You don't criticize a friend who's in trouble, but if you do, then we can't guarantee



American support when the Russians come.’ This was at the very foundation of Knut’s worldview. I argued that you’re better off without that kind of help, and that a much better approach would be something like Gerhardsen’s foreign policy from ’45–’49, a foreign policy aimed at building good relations with both sides simultaneously.

***But his attitude was coloured more by what he perceived to be realism than by idealism?***

If you want to use those terms, then yes. I find these terms a little difficult, as idealism often strikes me as more realistic than realism, which often seems to me more like submission than realism. You can talk about concrete policies and concrete things and their effects, and then observe the effects. It’s a matter of how good you are at predicting the future. A future I predicted was a Norway even more subjugated to the US, and that’s the Norway we’ve ended up with, and to an ever increasing extent. It’s gone so far that Norway is in effect occupied by the US, with American military bases positioned at all the most important points. A Norwegian foreign policy in any way in conflict with American foreign policy is in practice inconceivable.

***Can I ask you about one last thing, if we spool back in time a little. I’ve had the pleasure of enjoying another fruit of your labour, namely the Journal of Peace Research. I took over from Nils Petter Gleditsch as editor, and had this role from 2010 to 2017.***

Such a long time?

***Yes, I decided not to try to beat Nils Petter’s record—he was the editor for 26 years. The journal has changed over the years, but we’ve certainly found it very rewarding to be able to build on the visibility and international standing that the journal achieved under your leadership, as a result of the way it was established as an international journal with the goal of making an impact on its field. Could you say something about the background for the development of the journal? This is something I’ve personally wondered about, and that you perhaps haven’t talked so much about previously.***

We had something quite simple in mind. We’d established a peace research institute, which had initially been a department, but which was in the process of establishing itself properly in 1965. The *Journal of Peace Research* was part of this struggle for independence. Of course, the journal could have been based at a department at the Institute for Social Research. But by establishing a journal, we distanced ourselves from the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs. Not that we were against them, but we were something else. They had their own publications, of course, but by establishing the journal, we also in effect signalled PRIO’s status. So for me, the journal was a sort of predecessor to our becoming an independent institute. And this is basically what I wrote in my first editorial, where you can also read a fair bit about the things I’d later try to achieve.

It has of course upset me to see how the journal has, as many people have pointed out, effectively become an American journal, with the majority of articles written

by Americans. And I remember mentioning this to Nils Petter, who pointed out to me that ‘Americans have the enormous advantage that they know how to write an article. They have footnotes and lists of references, all ready to go. Ask a European, or especially a Norwegian, to write an article and they don’t know where to start, there’s an awful lot of work to be done’. So that’s one aspect of it, and I know what Nils Petter was saying. It’s true, Americans know how to write, they’ve had a better academic upbringing than Norwegians. But another aspect is Americanization, and if you take a look at the *Journal of Peace Research* and count the number of American and non-American contributors, it becomes very clear that it’s an American journal.

***Actually, they’re in the minority now.***

Are they? Maybe something’s happened recently. But it was certainly that way for a long time.

***This has been a very interesting conversation, Johan. Just one final question. It seems to me that you’ve to a large extent succeeded in using your research skills, your thinking, your intellectual inheritance and your experience in a way that is increasingly practical, although still clearly anchored in your earlier research. Is this your impression too, or do you feel you’ve made a definitive move from research to practical politics?***

I’d put it slightly differently. We have an empirical reality, the actually existing world. And when it comes to understanding this reality, I’m an empiricist, a sociologist, and I work in the same way as any other researcher to try to understand it. But we also have another world, the potential world. And if you look at history, it’s the history of how the potential world supplants the old empirical world. Look at how the Middle Ages supplanted the Roman Empire, or how modernity supplanted the Middle Ages, to use a European example. And there are corresponding examples from other civilizations. In light of this, the potential world becomes very real, as opposed to what we might call the non-world. An example of something non-worldly is a unicorn. There are no unicorns. Animals only ever have two or more horns, never just one. And it then becomes an interesting question to ask why this is the case. And this is where I’m more interested in the potential world.

But that isn’t to say that I’m unempirical. I draw parallels from history and geography. I look at other epochs of Western history and other locations and ask, “Why couldn’t that have happened here?” That isn’t unempirical, but it isn’t necessarily empirical in the society in which we find ourselves. There’s historical knowledge and geographical knowledge that needs to be grounded in your having really been there. That’s why my method has been conversations, dialogue, all over the world. Unfortunately, it isn’t possible to have a dialogue with the past, but you can have a global dialogue with the present. I see this as empirical research, but you also need critical and constructive research. We have critical research in medicine, we critique illnesses, we want to do something about them. We have it in law, we critique the law and breaches of the law, we want to do something about them. And, in my view, this also applies to war, violence—these are things we critique and want to do something about. So, not just empirical research, but critical and constructive research. And this

is where we get this triangle of data, theory and value. If you draw a line between data and theory, you get empirical research. You can start with data and develop a theory, or you can look at the data to see if it matches your theory. That's empirical research. Then you have data and value, and I'm thinking of law and medicine in particular. Here you have values, for example obedience to the law, or good health, and you can investigate how the data fits with these. And on this basis, you can critique reality and suggest that something needs to change. Reality is data. And then you have the exciting relationship between value and theory. It's here we can talk about being constructive. Say I want a more egalitarian society, more equality in international collaborations, with reciprocity and equal utility for all parties. Then we have all sorts of theories, and the question is what kind of theory we need to build the society we want.

*Thank you very much, Johan.*

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## Chapter 2

# Uniting Nations for Peace: Ingrid Eide



Interviewed by Stein Tønnesson



Ingrid Eide at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in 1968 © Henrik Laurvik/NTB/Scanpix

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When people ask what peace is, I urge them to tell me what they associate with war. They answer death, destruction, battles, arms, hatred, uniforms, suffering, fear, anxiety, loss, misery, and much else, all of which are bad and sad. Then I suggest that peace could be the opposite: life, construction, debates, tools, friendship, a colourful dress, thriving, safety, serenity, gain, prosperity, all of which are good and enjoyable. The exact meaning of peace will differ from one person to the next, but it is always the opposite of war. This is how I saw it after the War, and this is how I see it today.

*Ingrid Eide receives me at her home in Bjerkealléen (The Birch Alley) at Grefsen, Oslo, the neighbourhood where she grew up. She sits down in front of a painting of her mother, the teacher and peace activist Ragnhild Hjertine Haagenen Eide (1901–91), who also grew up at Grefsen. They resemble each other. I get a feeling of listening to both at the same time, speaking to me with a warm, firm, compelling voice.*

**Stein Tønnesson:** *When you say, ‘the War’, I suppose you mean the Second World War, when Germany occupied Norway. You grew up with that war. How did it form you as a sociologist and peace researcher?*

**Ingrid Eide:** I had turned seven when the war came to Norway, and had started school at Grefsen. I was twelve before the war was over. Those five years gave me so many memories. I believe they were decisive for my later dedication to the mission of the United Nations and my enthusiasm for developing peace research.

In 1938, my family had moved from Bergen, where I spent my first four years, to Grefsen in what was then an Oslo suburb, with only some villas and many open fields. We had a garden full of apple trees. It helped feed us through an extremely cold winter and through the years that followed. We had many rabbits, and we cultivated as many vegetables and potatoes as we could in our garden, and in some of the open fields, which we shared with our neighbours.

My parents were decidedly anti-German. So were most of our family friends. When Norwegian teachers refused to comply with instructions to Nazify our schools, my father was among those arrested. He was interned along with his colleagues at Kirkenes in the Norwegian far north, near the Soviet border, but was released and sent back to Oslo with the others before Christmas 1942. I can still see before my eyes the skinny man who reappeared at our house, weighing 45 kg.

Shortly afterwards, it was my turn to be sent away. I was dispatched to Western Norway because I knew too much. One of my mother’s former pupils, Tore Gjelsvik (1916–2006), had taken up a central role in the Resistance. One day, he came running through rain and slush in his slippers and an unbuttoned jacket, and took refuge in our house. Unfortunately, I got to know his real name. Since I was just a child, the grown-ups couldn’t rely on me to keep it secret. Another former pupil of my mother, the geographer Tore Sund (1914–64), also came to stay with us.

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through rain and slush in his slippers and an unbuttoned jacket, and took refuge in our house. Unfortunately, I got to know his real name. Since I was just a child, the grown-ups couldn't rely on me to keep it secret.

So, I was sent by train to Bergen with some dry bread to eat. One of my father's sisters took me from Bergen up to Vadheim by boat. The boat sailed in a convoy with German naval vessels. They were not meant to protect us, it was the other way around: the Germans thought the British would hesitate to bomb their vessels if they were in the company of Norwegian civilian ships. From Vadheim I got on a bus to Naustdal, then boarded a truck, and was finally taken on a horse cart to a small farm, where I was received by my paternal aunt, my uncle, and four female cousins I had never seen before.

The rural society that instantly embraced me was so different from anything I had seen in Bergen or Oslo. There was running water in the house but no electricity, and the community did not even have its own church. Notably, there were no Germans around. Yet there was a small school, where my uncle was the only teacher. We received a mostly non-religious education, although we did sing psalms and pray in the morning before the lessons began.

In my later life, when working with development issues, I have often thought about the country life I experienced as a child at Fimlandsgrend in Sunnfjord, with dirt roads, animals, wells, toilets in the barn—and ancient customs. I was chosen to be Jonsokbrud (Midsummer Bride). The tallest boy in my class acted as priest and symbolically married me to a classmate, Morten Fimland. We walked in a procession from one farm to another, inviting everyone to celebrate our marriage. This was probably a kind of fertility rite.

I am grateful for having received this countryside experience, although it did not last long. After six months, I could go back to Oslo, at a time when my mother had taken over a post as teacher from the wife of General Olaf Helset (1892–1960). The General's wife had been compelled to flee to Sweden. Now, my mother would pretend to be her.

Bestum school, the one I first went to, was upper class. I think all the children had parents with some higher education, except Judith, who lived in an orphanage. At Christmas time, the whole class visited her home, so I got to see what an orphanage looked like. Then, when the Germans requisitioned Bestum school, we were taught in private homes.

I also got to know Lilleborg school, where my mother had once been a pupil, and where she was now teaching. That school was purely working class. To get to know so many different school environments between the ages of seven and twelve was enlightening. So, you see that my war time experience was instructive. I got to know some opposite sides of Norway.

***What were your feelings during the Liberation in 1945?***

I was euphoric. We had become used to seeing German soldiers marching in the streets, acting as if they owned the place. Now they were gone. We could tear down the blinding curtains and use them for a bonfire in a park. We saw hundreds of Norwegian flags being hoisted. People had kept them hidden for five long years. On the 13th of May, Crown Prince Olav (1903–91) returned from England and was sitting in an open car. We joined the crowd lining the streets to watch the Allied soldiers parade past us.

We threw flowers at them, and people whispered to each other to be careful to economize so we would have some flowers left for the Russians. After their release from captivity, they had been given a chance to clean themselves, and came marching in clothes made to vaguely resemble their former uniforms. Little did we know the fate that awaited these prisoners of war upon their repatriation to the Soviet Union. The Russian prisoners of war had been a part of our urban environment for the last three years. They did slave work at Grefsen railway station. Now, they would do slave work in the gulags.

Little did we know the fate that awaited these prisoners of war upon their repatriation to the Soviet Union. The Russian prisoners of war had been a part of our urban environment for the last three years. They did slave work at Grefsen railway station. Now, they would do slave work in the gulags.

These are just some glimpses of my war years. The war had a decisive influence on my life. It created an unshakable conviction in my mind that nothing similar must ever happen again. The world has to be organized in a different way, so that everyone can relate to each other as fellow human beings and form a common future in peace.

***Did you believe in the United Nations when the new world organization was established in 1945?***

Yes, with fervour. After the war, I was part of a group of high school students who saw the UN as immensely important, so we contacted the new UN Association of Norway (*FN-Sambandet*) and created a UN Youth Group. Many children of *Motdagists* joined the group (*Mot Dag* was a group of young Marxist intellectuals who were active during the years 1921–1940. Many of its members joined the Resistance during the war and became resourceful members of the Norwegian Labour Party in 1945).

A particularly important member of our UN Youth Group was Berthold Grünfeld (1932–2007). He was among the Jewish children whom the psychiatrist Nic Waal (1905–60) was able to save when Norwegian Jews were collected by the Norwegian police in October–November 1942 and deported to the Auschwitz extermination camp. Berthold was an extremely talented and knowledgeable young boy who later became a professor of psychiatry. He had been brought to safety in Sweden, and had benefited from being part of the Swedish-Jewish community.

I became a member of this fabulous group of young people. We established study groups at Norwegian high schools, and in 1950, we initiated so-called Nansen camps (named after the scientist, explorer and humanitarian activist Fridtjof Nansen, 1861–1930). We met in various places, such as the Nobel Institute, where the UN Association of Norway had office space on the top floor. Our young group could meet there and do our homework in the library on the first floor, with its beautiful interior in carved oak.

Famous people like (the psychiatrist) Johan Scharffenberg (1869–1965) might come to the library and sit next to me, just like that. We formed a very special group of 16–17-year-olds who wrote our essays and looked stuff up in encyclopedias while witnessing intellectuals like (the physician, publicist and health director) Karl Evang (1902–1981) arrive on his regular visits to read the latest international newspapers.

While working in the library, I discovered (the American political scientist) Quincy Wright (1890–1970) and his book *A Study of War* (University of Chicago Press, 1942), which played a significant role for our thinking on war and peace.

***The Nobel Institute had been the central place for Norwegian peace work and peace studies since the beginning of the twentieth century, with Christian (Lous) Lange (1869–1938) as a key figure. Did you, when working and studying at the Nobel Institute, consider yourself to uphold an intellectual tradition from before the War, with emphasis on neutrality and bridge-building? Did you read about and discuss the successes and failures of the League of Nations?***

We saw August Schou there (historian, 1903–84), who became Director of the Nobel Institute in 1946 (and kept the position until 1973), but I cannot remember that we studied the works of Christian Lange. As you may know, he was the father of Halvard Lange (1902–70), our foreign minister after the War. As for your question, I remember us as being engaged in something new—a new beginning, rather than a continuation of a tradition.

I do not recollect that any of us studied the experience of the League of Nations, but we were aware of its failure, and we understood that the UN Security Council, with its five veto powers, had been created in order to prevent the United States from failing once again to live up to its international responsibilities. The biggest weakness of the League of Nations had been that the US remained outside from the beginning. We were told that the veto system was a lesser evil than the risk of US abandonment.

I remember us as being engaged in something new—a new beginning, rather than a continuation of a tradition.

***Who do you represent when you say ‘we’, apart from yourself?***

I mean the UN Association of Norway Youth Group, Berthold (Grünfeld) and the children of the *Motdagists*, and also some other pupils at various high schools, notably the Oslo Cathedral School. I myself went to the Grefsen High School.



***Was Johan Galtung also a member of your ‘we’?***

No, not yet. He was born in 1930, so he belonged to an older cohort and did not take part in any of the Nansen camps.

I did not know him at that point, but once I enrolled at the University of Oslo to take preparatory exams in philosophy, I met (philosophy professor) Arne Næss (1912–2009). He talked about Gandhi and non-violence.

***In one of your publications you call the Cold War ‘the frozen peace’. Did you react against the east–west division of Europe?***

The idea behind the Nansen Summer Camps was to match a group of Norwegian students with an equal number of students from abroad, and a special mission was to reconcile Norwegian and German youth. Hence, we invited many Germans, although mostly if not uniquely from West Germany (which became the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949). We intended to also include students from Eastern Europe, and I took part in meetings in Warsaw and Prague. We formed and engaged actively in a Committee for International Student Cooperation: *Komiteen for internasjonalt studentsamarbeid* (KISS).

The late 1940s and early 1950s were a rather special period for students in Oslo. Many young men and some women whose studies had been interrupted by the war came back to the university (which had been closed during 1942–45) to finish their education. We who were younger could thus enjoy the company of more mature students with a wide range of war time experiences. The Cold War, however, divided us. Our group wanted to stay in touch with Eastern Europe. Yet this was controversial.

We were sad to see that some prominent student leaders, many of whom would later take up key positions in the Norwegian government, decided to follow Labour Party guidelines, and refuse any contact with communist countries.

At this time, I personally developed a particular animosity towards Labour Party Secretary General Haakon Lie (1905–2009), who wrote a horrible book called *Kaderpartiet* (*The Cader Party*, 1954). Although I was “a political animal”, I promised myself and those close to me that I would not join the Labour Party as long as he held power. I kept my promise until 1969, when he was finally forced to step down. Then two of my friends, the Labour Party politicians Reiulf Steen (1933–2014) and Knut Frydenlund (1927–87) reminded me of my promise. I joined the Labour Party and have remained an active member ever since.

***Why did you decide to become a sociologist?***

After having passed the preparatory exams at the University of Oslo, I was accepted into the Teachers’ College (*Oslo Offentlige Lærerskole*). It was disappointing. I soon realized that the college’s pedagogy was outmoded. Graduates from that college would be ill-prepared for the challenges I had witnessed at the various schools I knew from the war years. I completed the Teachers College and then went back to the university and opted for the new discipline sociology.

I did a survey of my mother’s primary school Lilleborg, where for a short time I also practiced as a teacher. This led to my dissertation for the Magister degree: *Noen*

*skolesosiologiske problemer, en organisasjonsanalyse av en folkeskole i Oslo i 1959* ('Some Pedagogical-Sociological Problems: An Organizational Analysis of a Primary School in Oslo, 1959', Oslo, published in August 1962). I found through my survey that there was virtually no cooperation among the teachers, and that many of them underestimated their pupils. I also found massive support among the pupils for going to school. If they had been free to leave the school, they would not have done it, and the main expectation they had of their teachers was that they should be just.

***In the mid-1950s, with your UN engagement, your participation in international student cooperation, your studies in sociology and psychology, and your interest in school reform, what brought you to take part in developing a programme for peace research? Even the term 'peace research' was new at the time. Wasn't it?***

Yes. This was a long and multi-faceted process where Johan [Galtung] played the central role. He joined the Committee for International Student Cooperation (KISS), which had grown out of the Nansen camps, with the aim of developing a science of peace. We formed a group around him. He had a great talent for writing, and he quickly published a book on non-violent defence, peace research and peace brigades, as we called them. Later on, they became the peace corps.

Our ideas, inspired by Johan, were disseminated through the peace movement. We met in the Galtung family's dining room beneath the enormous portraits of his illustrious seventeenth century ancestors and wrote up radical programmes for a new peace-promoting science.

***Who were the members of this group?***

Above all Mari Holmboe Ruge (1934–) and Herman Ruge (1928–2019), and to some extent Per Schreiner (1932–2005). Johan had finished high school long before me and my friends. He did his obligatory service as a conscientious objector and met Herman. They had both specialized in the natural sciences. During Johan's time as a conscientious objector, and also during his time in prison (after having refused to serve more than the twelve months that soldiers needed to serve), he had time to think through the principles of non-violence.

He got in touch with Arne Næss, and before his time in prison they decided to work together on Gandhi's activist thinking. This led to their jointly written book, *Gandhis politiske etikk* (*Gandhi's Political Ethics*, Oslo: Tanum, 1955). While they were working on the manuscript, we often went to Kolsås, west of Oslo, where Arne had a cottage. We spent the weekends there so Johan and Arne could work undisturbed. Through this I got to know Arne's wife at the time, the psychologist Siri Næss, who remains a very good friend.

***How did you define peace?***

I began to conceive of peace as the opposite of war and all its characteristics, rather than its absence.

While in prison, Johan observed it as a social system. This resulted in an empirical study: *Fengselssamfunnet: et forsøk på analyse (The Prison Society: An Attempt at Analysis)*, which was evaluated by Nils Christie and Vilhelm Aubert for Johan's 1958 social science degree and published in 1959. As for myself, I was at first chiefly concerned with avoiding war, while Johan was keen to promote freedom and justice through peace. Yet I shared his conviction that peace could not be only the absence of war. I began to conceive of peace as *the opposite of war and all its characteristics*, rather than its absence. I still find this to be a fruitful approach.

### ***How did the new peace research find its first institutional homes?***

Some of the meetings in the UN Association's Youth Group were held at the Institute for Social Research (*Institutt for samfunnsforskning – ISF*) in Arbiens Street, close to the Nobel institute, and (the sociologist) Vilhelm Aubert (1922–88) was highly supportive. I got a position as research assistant at the Institute of Sociology, University of Oslo, and was asked to study the youth clubs that had recently been established in various parts of the city: did these clubs enable the youth to overcome divisions of class?

So, I split my time between the University of Oslo and the Institute for Social Research (ISF), which after some time got a delightful new building in Munthes Street, whose architects (Molle Cappelen, Per Cappelen, Trond Eliassen, and Birger Lambertz-Nilssen) are said to have been inspired by the European monastic tradition.

In the first years, however, from 1959 to 64, our peace research group was located at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute at Polhøgda, near the Fornebu airport west of Oslo. We had promoted Nansen's ideals, so it felt natural for us to be located in what had been his home. The board of the property did not, however, appreciate an analysis Johan wrote of (Soviet leader) Nikita Khrushchev's visit to Norway in 1964, so we were thrown out. This allowed us to get office space in Munthes Street. Later on, we moved to a big villa in Frognersterveien, where there was enough space for a number of political science students (see the Introduction).

### ***Who were PRIO's founders?***

Apart from Johan, Mari and me, we must count Erik Rinde (1919–94) and Sigurd Rinde (1889–1972) (see Chap. 4). They were the ones who made it possible for us to receive office space at the ISF. For a long time, Erik Rinde was the ISF Director and also served as chair of its board (1950–74, again from 1988), and as a member of PRIO's Board (1966–1979). The role of Mari Holmboe Ruge was crucial (see Chap. 3). Johan and I had married in 1956, and we travelled a lot together.

Mari remained in place—held the fort, to use a military expression—and received letters from Johan with incredibly demanding requests concerning which students to

help, whom to call, which prominent people to invite, funds to raise, publications to prepare, conferences to organize, etc., etc. Mari kept the institute alive.

***So, the male founder travelled around the world in the company of his wife, and another female held the fort. How would you characterize gender relations in this innovative environment? Were you a feminist at the time?***

Only in the sense that I wanted both women and men to play an active part in peace research, so it would not become a uniquely masculine enterprise. Still, Mari and I took up some traditionally female roles. We felt that someone had to take responsibility for the infrastructure, and while Johan's publications quickly filled whole bookshelves, Mari's and my writings remained limited in number.

We adhered to the principle of 'peace relevance'. For me, that meant I wanted to do research on the work that the UN was undertaking in the field, and on how the idea of international solidarity was communicated to and accepted by the Norwegian population. Mari and I contributed a lot to seminars; we read and commented on people's manuscripts, mimeographed our publications and walked around and around tables, collecting sheets of paper, combining them and stapling them into A4 booklets.

We shared a commitment to developing peace research. Peace researchers of both genders felt that we were doing something important together—and we hired a male secretary!

***A male secretary, at that time?***

Yes. We hired Erik Ivås (1937–2017), a man who had spent a long time in prison. He was a great asset for PRIO and stayed with the institute well into the 1980s.

***How did PRIO affect your research?***

It required relevance to peace, so I abandoned my research in Norwegian School Pedagogics and concentrated on my UN engagement. I wanted to study how the UN functioned in practice and how the idea of a shared effort for development was disseminated among a population. I felt that it was highly relevant from a peace research perspective to look at attitudes towards international cooperation, so this led me to write an article about technical assistance and public opinion in the first issue of the *Journal of Peace Research*. I also examined how UN experts interacted with each other, with the UN system and with national authorities, thus contributing to nation-building. We called this phenomenon the 'international man'.

Subsequently, UNESCO undertook a massive research initiative under the headline East–West Major Project and collected evidence among students from three 'Eastern' countries studying in three 'Western' countries. This gave us a 3 × 3 matrix that was used for comparing how the students adapted themselves.

This became the basis for a book I edited during my time at PRIO: *Students As Links Between Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Survey Based on UNESCO Studies* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Books, 1970), with chapters by, among others, the Canadian born psychologist Otto Klineberg (1899–1992), who was an important participant in PRIO's research in the early period, and the British sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall (1893–1981), who played an important role in creating UNESCO. I myself

wrote an analysis of the evidence collected from the students. This was a huge task since the material was quite disorganized. Yet the work was done; one finding was that the students from India both had the strongest collective identity and benefited the most from their studies in the ‘West’.

***With Johan, you spent quite a lot of time in the US. What did you think of it?***

During our first stay, I got a chance to work at Columbia University and could attend lectures by the most famous American sociologists. We lived on 118th Street, near Harlem at 125th Street. We had virtually no money at the time. I became pregnant, and in 1958, when it was time to give birth three weeks early, I went to our Jewish bookshop and asked where one could deliver a baby without paying, and I was directed to St. Luke’s, where I was given a bed in a huge room with women from all parts of the world.

When they offered anaesthetics, I said I did not want to get drugged, so they collected a group of students to watch a so-called ‘natural birth’, apparently a rare phenomenon. Afterwards they wanted to give me a number of pills, including one to inhibit lactation, which I refused, so I was the only woman in the hall who could breastfeed my child. Yet they insisted that I take with me a gallon of artificial milk when I left. So, this was how my son Andreas was born.

***Did this form your image of the US?***

Yes. The United States has this curious mix of freedom and coercion. There was no welfare state, yet the US society had some heavy means of social control. Later on, during 1987–89, I would work for two years at the New York headquarters of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), so I think I have spent some five years in New York altogether.

Something that also determined my view of the US was a research programme Johan developed about racial conflict. We went to Charlottesville at a time when the state of Virginia had decided to maintain segregation by closing public schools since the Supreme Court had decided that they were under obligation to accept black students.

It was a tough conflict. We interviewed a number of black people. This was at the time when I was pregnant, so at one point when I was walking down the street alongside a young black man, I felt a need to sit down and have something to drink. Then I realized that this was impossible. There was nowhere a white woman and black man were allowed to sit down together. We had to enter a grocery store, buy some water and drink it in the street.

***You were married to Johan Galtung from 1956 to 68 (PRIO Director 1959–69) and then to Sverre Lodgaard from 1969–96 (PRIO Director 1986–1992), and have two children with Johan—Andreas (1958–) and Harald (1962–)—and one with Sverre—Christian (1972–)—so you have been able to closely watch two of Norway’s leading peace researchers for long periods of time. How do they compare?***

I should first add that in later years, former Minister of Finance and Director General of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Per Kleppe (1923–2021), was a very special friend. We got to know each other when he was Minister of Finance and I was State Secretary in the Ministry of Ecclesiastic and Educational Affairs (1973–76) and while we were both members of the Labour Party's Central Committee, and we became close friends after his wife of many years died. These are three rather interesting men, who have contributed to forming my life as an adult.

It is extremely difficult to compare Johan and Sverre (see Chaps. 1 and 10). They are so different. Johan lived under the impression of his noble heritage. When I married him I was included in the Danish list of nobility. His ancestry gave him a self-assurance, allowing him to advocate a rather extreme form of democracy both nationally and internationally. As an aristocrat he would represent the downtrodden. We lived with that ambivalence.

When we married it was unthinkable that I could keep Eide as my family name. I had to become a Galtung (with Eide as just a middle name), and when we divorced it was just as evident that I had to give up the Galtung name and become Eide again, although I had two children by the name of Galtung. There could be only one Mrs Galtung: his new Japanese wife.

Johan [Galtung] lived under the impression of his noble heritage. [...] His ancestry gave him a self-assurance, allowing him to advocate a rather extreme form of democracy both nationally and internationally. As an aristocrat he would represent the downtrodden. We lived with that ambivalence.

Sverre's background was almost the opposite. He came from a small-holder farm in the countryside and his father was a carpenter. Sverre was a highly respected colleague and also very young and attractive, and since I knew that he did not belong to anyone else, we became a couple, we married and we had a child together: Christian Eide Lodgaard.

In the beginning, we lived in that house over there [*Ingrid points at a neighbouring house, where a nephew lives today*]. While I was married to Johan, we had renovated and enlarged the house, which belonged to my parents, so we could have a big seminar room. An infinite number of international conferences and seminars were organized in that house during my first marriage.

Perhaps understandably, however, Sverre soon got tired of living in a house constructed for my marriage with Johan, so we moved to an apartment higher up on the hill, where I felt insanely miserable. So did my son Harald. (Andreas had gone to live with the Ruge family). It worked out for as long as Harald was a child, but when he became a teenager he left the apartment to live with my parents.

Then I decided that I needed another place to live with all my children. This was at a time when Sverre moved to Stockholm to work at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). I was then a deputy member of parliament (meeting permanently 1979–81), so I got a five-year contract on a parliament apartment on

Fritzners Street. Then I could have all my three sons under one roof for a period of almost five years.

***Let me now return to the beginning. After Norway's liberation from Nazi occupation, you saw the United Nations as a means to create a world of peace. Has your belief in the UN faded over the years, or have you retained your identification with the UN while getting to know it from the inside?***

I remain a strong supporter. Just look over there [*she points at the wall*]: I keep the UN flag in my home next to our Norwegian flag. This is the same Norwegian flag my family had during the occupation. As you can see, it is now rather faded. To keep those two flags next to each other is of symbolic importance to me.

During my first period in New York, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) contacted me and appointed me as its representative to the UN headquarters. It was a charmingly open time. I drove our wreck of an Oldsmobile into the UN garage, walked the corridors with my little name tag and could have access everywhere and to each and everyone. I met Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962; US liberal activist and widow of president Franklin D. Roosevelt). We tried to assist the governments of newly decolonized states in learning how to operate within the UN system.

Years later, we also engaged the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in supporting the new international peace research community. PRIO undertook some projects funded by UNESCO. UNESCO had supported the Nansen camps, and now PRIO did research on racial conflict and strategies of integration. In the 1960s, Johan also engaged in UNESCO-funded cooperation with the Latin American School of Social Sciences (*Facultad latinoamericana de ciencias sociales—FLACSO*) and this put us in touch with a fascinating world of radical Latin American intellectuals.

My early UN experience made me well prepared for serving as Director of the UNDP's programme for Women in Development (WID) during 1987–89. I used my directorship to promote the role of women across the board and raise a number of women's issues. At the end of my term, I was elected to UNESCO's Executive Board 1989–93, and subsequently served as leader of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO 1991–98.

My election to the Executive Board required heavy lobbying not just through formal networks but also through my own informal ones and those of the (liberal politician and former member of the Executive Board) Gunnar Garbo (1924–2016). So yes, my UN engagement has remained with me, and I was given a chance to work for the UN in many capacities.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) [...] appointed me as its representative to the UN headquarters. It was a charmingly open time. I drove our wreck of an Oldsmobile into the UN garage, walked

the corridors with my little name tag and could have access everywhere and to each and everyone.

*Your mother Ragnhild passed away in 1991. At the funeral you spoke lovingly about her, and your speech was later printed in a book that Mari Holmboe Ruge edited for your 75th birthday. Your mother is right there behind you on the wall as we speak. You were always close to her, weren't you?*

Yes, I was. When I taught at Lilleborg school, where my mother had gone to school herself and later taught, there were some who called me Ragnhild, since they thought I resembled her. I liked that.

My parents, both my mother and father (Olav Martin Eide, 1902–85), were always supportive. Both of them had studied natural sciences and remained teachers all their working lives, but they did not oppose my choice of sociology. They were always tolerant and supportive. When Johan was out travelling and I stayed at home, they helped me take care of my children. Without their help I could not have completed my studies so quickly.

In the late 1960s, when my mother retired from her job as a teacher at Berg high school, she told me that she wanted to use her time and her administrative skills to work for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. So she did for the rest of her life. She and Dagny Skauge (1911–2004) from Eidsvoll kept the League alive through a difficult period, at a time when it lost its office and funding. There were many meetings in this room where we are sitting. My mother also engaged herself in Grandmothers for Peace.

My mother's sister Ingrid died at the age of 17. Mother never stopped thinking about Ingrid's un-lived life. I was named after her. Mother and I shared the same sisterly engagement for peace until the day she died, and then I moved into her house.

*Thank you very much, Ingrid.*

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# Chapter 3

## Organizing for Peace: Mari Holmboe Ruge



Interviewed by Kristian Berg Harpviken



Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge working at PRIO © Mari Holmboe Ruge

*Mari Holmboe Ruge's life has been guided by the radical vision of a peaceful world, and a pragmatic conviction that robust organization is the key to achieving it. Mari played a critical role in PRIO's first decade—analyzing, administering, advocating—to build the foundations for a knowledge-based global order. She later held posts in research funding, research policy, and research administration, where the same basic commitments prevailed. Throughout it all, in parallel to her professional career,*

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*Mari has been actively engaged in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).*

*Born on 20 July 1934, Mari was a child of 11 at the close of the Second World War. During the war, her father was a leading figure in the non-violent Teachers' Resistance. Her future husband, Herman Ruge, became a conscientious objector despite descending from a family of military officers—as did Johan Galtung, who was a close friend of the family and a prime force in founding PRIO.*

*Interviewing Mari Holmboe Ruge at her home in Oslo on 19 December 2018, I sensed the contours of a radical student collective, rooted in networks of family and friendship, and highly active in the debates of the Norwegian Students' Society. It was this collective that became the core of PRIO.*

**Kristian Berg Harpviken:** *Thanks, Mari, for agreeing to be interviewed. I have looked forward to this conversation—more so the more I have read up on your career. It is really exciting to get to talk to you. You played such an important role for PRIO during a critical period.*

**Mari Holmboe Ruge:** Well, of course. Looking in the rear-view mirror one does of course realize that, doesn't one? I have also been thinking about how it was the very first job I ever had. And I hadn't finalized my studies, either, when PRIO was founded and I started there.

***I understand. But I had thought that by then, you had completed your studies at Columbia University?***

I did depart from Columbia that same autumn. Herman and I both got one of these Fulbright scholarships to take a year in New York. He was at the physics lab there, he got a minor assistant post at the lab. He had completed his cand. real.<sup>1</sup> exam in physics and had already worked at Sentralinstituttet for industriell forskning (the Centre for Industrial Research) on the emerging science of automation. I had not completed my studies. I had taken geography and started with French, which I put aside because I didn't like it, and I planned to pursue studies in history. But then things happened and I took sociology, still a young discipline at the time.

And then there was this opportunity, so we left on the America boat in 1958, during the summer, and lived there until the following summer. There, we rented a room in the university flat that Johan Galtung and Ingrid Eide had, right by campus. We moved twice, but stayed in that area.

I started my master's in sociology. You know, when one is in the middle of it... Later, you realize that the teachers you had are the ones that appear in the footnotes and that sort of thing. Then there was Otto Klineberg,<sup>2</sup> and there were a few people like that, I didn't really understand who they were... then, wow, there he was! And then that autumn I got pregnant and my eldest daughter, Lotte, was born on 22 August. I had to return by boat because they did not allow me to fly. So, I got home around 1 August, and she was born on the 22.

And then I started [at PRIO], in fact, could it be on 1 November? It was quite... I hadn't finished by then, hadn't completed my thesis as I should. I only got around to

doing that the following year, when I completed my master's degree. So, I was still a student when I began working at PRIO under the wings of Johan.

### **Mari Holmboe Ruge—professional and activist engagements throughout life**

Mari Holmboe Ruge was born 20 July 1934. She was married to Herman Ruge (1928–2019). A peace activist already in her teens, Mari was part of the initial team in the Department of Conflict and Peace Research, set up at the Norwegian Institute for Social Research (ISF) in 1959.

In late 1967, she left the institute to take up studies for an M. Phil degree (*magistergrad*) in Political Science at the University of Oslo (she already held a Master's in Sociology from Columbia University). Shortlisted for a PhD scholarship at the department, her first submission of the dissertation did not pass, and she had to resubmit the following year.<sup>3</sup> She then held a position at Møre and Romsdal University College in Molde, commuting—which she describes as a tiresome period.

In 1973, she joined the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF), where she spent most of the next decade. 'The way it was organized back then', says Mari, 'you had considerable influence as secretary for the social science area'.<sup>4</sup> She identifies three main clusters of her work while at NAVF: (1) Supporting a new research agenda on women<sup>5</sup>; (2) supporting the establishment of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD); (3) supporting research in clinical psychology.

After a decade at NAVF, Mari applied for and was offered a position as Principal Officer (Byråsjef) at the Ministry of Local Government, responsible for their research on the work environment. During her time at the Ministry, she was also deeply engaged with a work environment agenda, in the International Labour Organization (ILO), based in Geneva, including serving as a Norwegian representative on the board.

After another decade in governance, there was time for another shift. She became Administrative Director for Project Alternative Future (Prosjekt Alternativ Framtid—reorganized under the name ProSus—Program for forskning og utredning for et bærekraftig samfunn in 1996)—a research initiative focusing on sustainable growth, initiated by a coalition of 17 civil society organizations. Mari spent 5 years at the research centre before taking early retirement.

Since retirement, Mari has devoted significant time to voluntary work for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which she has been associated with since the mid-1950s.<sup>6</sup>

***So, what was the topic of your dissertation, then?***

It consisted of a content analysis of racial conflict in the United States. We went on fieldwork to Charlottesville, which today is remembered for the white supremacist demonstrations in August 2017.

[My dissertation] was a content analysis of racial conflict in the United States. We went on fieldwork to Charlottesville [...] At Columbia's sociology department there was a, if not radical, at least liberal environment. I can't recall that there were any black students among us though.

At Columbia's sociology department there was a, if not radical, at least liberal environment. I thought it was nice to be a part of that. I can't recall that there were any black students among us though. I can't... I have never thought of that before, but I don't believe there were.

So, there you see. We lived in New York's 118th street, close to a steep park, which we had to walk through to get down to Harlem. And, on the southern side of campus, you found the Puerto Rican quarter. But around Columbia? The people living there seemed all to be descendants of European Jews, wasn't that so? We didn't live in Harlem but we spent some time there. And we went there for shopping, and I noticed that in almost all of the shops the shopkeepers were white.

We knew very little about what kind of society surrounded us, but I can't remember that I ever found it unpleasant. Once, I forgot my handbag in one of these drug stores where we had been sitting down to have a bite. When we returned three hours later, it was still there, and it contained everything we possessed in this world. I remember our stay there as a very positive experience.

***Were you satisfied with your studies there?***

Yes. But it was very course-based. A lot of statistics. I do not now remember much of the actual content. But there was a lot of learning by heart. The courses were not supposed to lead to a Ph.D. Like I said, we returned home late in summer, when Lotte was born.

**The Pioneer Years*****By then, did you already know Johan well? Did the two of you go home at about the same time?***

He and Ingrid had gone home already the year before, after their son Andreas had been born. They had not planned to travel home with a newborn, but it didn't quite work out as planned. Andreas was born three weeks early, on 6th December. They got home by Christmas, with the baby in a bag. And they surprised all the grandparents, who had no idea that a child was on its way.

And we came home the following autumn, or summer. Our friendship with Johan went far back. While Johan and Herman were two years apart, they had both attended Vestheim high school, and their parents knew each other. General Otto Ruge (1882–1961), the brother of my father-in-law, was a very close friend of Johan’s father. Yet Johan and Herman only really got to know each other at university. They were fellow students, but I don’t think they were ever friends during their school days.

***And they both studied mathematics?***

Yes. Herman became a physicist, and Johan was also a mathematician. This must have helped them get to know each other so well. Ingrid and I had met each other during our school stays at an international school camp (*skoleleir*), which Ingrid was involved in organizing.

***So Herman and Johan, and you and Ingrid, knew each other independently?***

Yes, we did. So we were friends from earlier. That was also the reason we ended up accompanying them to New York. And surely also the reason I found my way to sociology. That wasn’t something I had been thinking about before.

***And sociology was a young discipline in Norway in 1959, wasn’t it?***

It was, and what brought us to it was our general interest in international issues. We had all—I am sure you have too—written essays on how the world could become a better place. My father was an engaged teacher (*skolemann*).

***If we move forward to 1958–59, how did PRIO come into being, the way you see it? You were in the midst of it, present at its creation.***

Yes, I was in the midst of it. I had not however had any contact with the Rinde family, who made it possible financially. I came in as a research assistant for Johan. And that became a part of my everyday life.

***Were you recruited already during your stay in New York?***

Yes, in fact I was. He was very eager that I should start as soon as possible. But my child was, as I said, born on 22 August, and then it became...

***I realize this was anything but an extended maternity leave?***

No, as you can understand, it was not. And we did have some scholarships and some other arrangements, but then Lotte’s sister Ellen was born on 1 December 1960—in other words, only 15 months later. So, if I have been somewhat hesitant to talk about all of this, it is because it was a rather exhausting period. I may have subdued—no, not just ‘may’, I really have repressed a lot of this. I have been thinking: how did we manage? There were no kindergartens. We had a nanny, who came to help, and I worked part-time. At that time, we were out at Lysaker, and that was also rather cumbersome.

If I have been somewhat hesitant to talk about all of this, it is because it was a rather exhausting period. [...] I really have repressed a lot of this. I have been thinking: how did we manage? There were no kindergartens.

***You were at Polhøgda?***<sup>7</sup>

Yes, we were at Polhøgda. In reality, I had the sense that it was a continuous hurdle race where you always had to be on time for this or that.

It is the case, I guess, with all pioneer projects, that there is no limit to how much time you can invest.

It is very much like that, isn't it? And Ingrid had Andreas, who was eight months older than Lotte. Ingrid spent a lot of time at the office. Amongst other things so that she could breast-feed him. This is how our children became siblings forever. They have become very fond of each other and have a lot to do with each other, as siblings and friends. And that is very nice. So, our collegial friendship was passed on to a new generation.

My days at the time were by and large taken up with reading proofs, calculating coefficients, things of that sort. It was meaningful in a way. And, with time—because Johan and Ingrid travelled a lot—I was the one who was present. I went to lots of our conferences. They lived abroad, which I couldn't and really didn't ...

***So, they had long stays abroad, the two of them?***

They lived in Chile for quite a period. That is where I know they stayed the longest. But their second son, Harald, was born in Morocco. They were away a lot. And I, well, we didn't have an institute secretary or anything, so that was very much the role I took on—a role that somebody had to fill. In addition, I did a number of other things. In terms of research, I worked on content analysis, with categories and things like that. My thesis, as I said, was based on that. And then we wrote the much-cited article in the *Journal of Peace Research* on the 'Structure of Foreign News'. I checked: I was googling a little yesterday, and then I saw that—oh wow, it is really everywhere!

It's important for me to say—because many things can be said about Johan, and we will not spend much time on that—that in those situations he was, which was remarkable at the time, extremely generous. He included me as a co-author. What I had done was the groundwork, to examine the data, tick off boxes, things like that. Yet he did include me as a co-author!

***So, you did much of the coding?***

I did all of the coding, we didn't have anybody else who could do that. He didn't need to include me as co-author, but he did.

***You also collaborated with US researchers, didn't you? With [J. David] Singer and others? On US-funded projects? I have noticed that you co-authored several articles.***

Yes, that was the way, and that was how it had to be. I learned the discipline much more thoroughly that way, didn't I? So, I have benefited greatly as well.

***Then there were lots of people coming to Oslo, as well, in order to be part of the new environment?***

That is precisely what happened. I don't know what others have said about this, but people came to Oslo because they wanted to work on the topics we were working on. So, because we are back in the 1960s and early 1970s, the political agenda was at the forefront. It is significant that it came to be named the 'Peace Research Institute'—that 'conflict' was not included in the name.

***That is what it was called from 1966, when it became fully independent?***

That is when it happened. Exactly. It was an important statement. In the Netherlands, a similar initiative was taken, but they used an entirely incomprehensible name—The Polemological Institute. It means exactly the same thing, and sounds very nice, but reflects a wish to avoid the political concept of peace. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) is also a part of this story. NUPI became the foreign policy institute. PRIO and NUPI were ... I don't know if we should call them adopted siblings. Some supported one, others the other, and both have done well. But, being a peace researcher—that was to make a political statement.

Then there were these strong Nordic connections. They came to us, almost like refugees, university refugees, because of what Johan stood for, which was an interdisciplinary approach.

It is significant that it came to be named the 'Peace Research Institute' – that 'conflict' was not included in the name. [...] Being a peace researcher – that was to make a political statement.

***Yes, I do know some of those who came to Oslo in the 1960s—including Raimo Väyrynen, Peter Wallensteen—and they speak about their Oslo experience as having been formative.***

## **Non-Violent Resistance**

In the aftermath of the Second World War, my father, Haakon Holmboe (1905–80), was very interested in international affairs, and obtained a UNESCO scholarship



for travelling in the US and around Europe to investigate what they did in terms of international education. He was part of a group of history teachers who contributed to cleaning up German history books.

He was also a part of the first cultural delegation that visited the new People's Republic of China in 1950 and wrote letters home. During the German occupation of Norway, he had played a role in the Teachers' Resistance and been among those interned at Kirkenes.<sup>8</sup> I have written about all of this, in a little book distributed among members of my family.<sup>9</sup> But, regardless, these are threads that take us far back. In that way, things are interconnected.

***The Second World War and your father's engagement must have had quite an impact on your family and yourself?***

Yes, you know, it did. Not the least for my mother. That is the way it was.

***I have frequently brought international visitors to the Resistance Museum in Oslo, and although I don't know a whole lot about it, it is my clear impression that the Teachers' Resistance is rather meagerly represented in the history of Norwegian resistance overall.***

It was a non-violent campaign, after all. My father was a member of the Resistance Museum's first board. He had then become a grandfather (to my children), and I remember that he had small boxes put in place so children could climb up and look into the cabinets. You may be right that the Teachers' Resistance has not been given all the attention it deserves, but what is even less known, for sure, is the Parents' Campaign. Very little work has been done on that. It was not included by the leadership of the Resistance Museum, clearly because it was a campaign run by women. So, it is barely known at all that a quarter of a million Norwegian parents wrote protest letters against the Nazification of Norwegian schools.

They signed: 'My child shall not!' The male resistance leaders were so worried about this campaign, that some link in the chain might crack, because it was women who travelled around carrying those letters... So, there were in fact two separate organizations. There was the Teachers' Union and the Female Teachers' Union. And they had a foundation also in a network of priests. So, they travelled around and distributed information about what was going on. And they managed to keep it secret. Apparently, full laundry baskets with letters arrived at the ministry that were never counted. And now they are gone. This is a fantastic effort that is barely known.<sup>10</sup>

Very little work has been done on [the Parents' Campaign]. It was not included by the leadership of the Resistance Museum, clearly because it was a campaign run by women. So, it is barely known at all that a quarter of a million Norwegian parents wrote protest letters against the Nazification of Norwegian schools.

***What was the thinking behind the reluctance of the Resistance movement (Hjemmefronten) to recognize the Female Teachers' Union?***

From what I have understood, the Teachers' Protest—which, at least when it came to arrests, concerned only male teachers—had contact with the leadership of the Resistance. They knew each other. My father was in Oslo and picked up directives (paroler, as they were called) in a matchbox. And he got cash that he would carry and distribute to those who needed it.

But the female teachers' campaign didn't have such help. They never got any authorization from the Resistance leaders. It was truly a non-violent campaign. You know, these were Women's League people [i.e. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF]. And they knew what they were doing. I knew Helga Stene [who played a key role in organizing the Female Teachers' protests], or I got to know her, through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), but I knew nothing then about what she had been engaged in. I have tried to read up on this, pick up things here and there. It seems that two generations had to pass before we could start talking seriously about the war. That I understand. Because I have it in me as well. And that which holds something personal in it, is not easy to put aside.

## **The Second World War and Early Peace Research**

***Can you say more about the impact of the Second World War on your engagement with peace research?***

It has been there all the time. And in a way, it was amplified by the fact that I married Herman. Not so much because of his uncle Otto Ruge, who followed a long family tradition of engaging with the military. In the days of the Danish-Norwegian state, young Ruge boys were sent to Copenhagen at the age of ten or so to become military officers. For me, it was far more important that Herman was a pacifist. He objected to military service. He and I have basically followed each other throughout.

***So, how important do you think the war experience was for shaping PRIO's origins? Was it just there as an unspoken backdrop? Was it made explicit?***

We did not make these things explicit. The wars that we studied were not the recent one we had experienced ourselves, but duels in the Middle Ages and the conflicts of the period after the Second World War.

***So, you actually stayed away from the recent Norwegian war experience?***

I don't think this was a conscious decision. It was just...

***If one had addressed it directly, would it have become difficult?***

Yes, this was at a time in history—the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s—when, for example, being the child of a Nazi collaborator was a really difficult theme to bring up.

***Right. But the key decision-makers in Norwegian society had been formed by the war experience, by what they did during the war?***

Absolutely, yes. I mean, they had all been involved, in one way or another, but drew different conclusions. This was politicized within the debate.

This had less to do with research than with politics. For those who opposed Norwegian membership in NATO, it was important to bring on board people who were known for having played a role in the Resistance. To bring them along. It was Karl Evang<sup>11</sup> who took the initiative to get that debate started in the 1950s. And, concerning Vilhelm Aubert,<sup>12</sup> a lot of people were unaware of his prominent role in the Resistance. I did not know until I attended his funeral and discovered that he was given full military honours. Well, he had been a key member of XU [the Norwegian Resistance intelligence unit].

It was strange seeing that. Here you sat with those who had had him as a teacher, those who held him as a friend. I was surprised. But it was also a cultural thing. For me, when I attended the funeral of Herman's uncle, Otto Ruge, there were so many people there, I wondered if they would be able to get in at all. The parliament and everybody else were there. Wow! Is that what it was like? I had met him at Christmas family parties, and I knew who he was, but not how central he was.

So, I have basically lived my life in an environment where the war experience was important, but without really lifting it up to examine it. I think that is the right way to describe it. For me, it has been important to engage in things related to international peace.

## **Peace Activism**

Ingrid and I were both recruited into the WILPF in the mid-1950s. At that time, we were both students. And this was just after a plane crash had occurred, an accident that killed virtually the entire leadership of the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights.<sup>13</sup>

They were on a delegation trip to the Soviet Union. The plane crashed. That included the leader of the Women's League and many others in the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights. They lost their entire leadership. The Women's League wanted to bring in younger members—Ingrid's mother was part of that milieu—so we did not have to do the dishes, we were taken straight into the national board. And, in a way, we got right into international work on a fast track.

***So, this means that you were both peace activists before you became peace researchers?***

Yes, absolutely. That went hand in hand. Herman, after all, was one of the students who distanced himself from the pro-NATO camp and attended these East European student festivals. He went to Bucharest, and we went together to a student festival in Warsaw in 1953. And at that time, a resolution was adopted in the Students' Association (*Studentersamfunnet*) that this was something Norwegian students should not do.

***A resolution promoted by whom?***

Well, they controlled the student organizations. It became known later that the student associations were supported by the CIA. It was a tiny little university environment, where we knew each other. Our parents had also known each other as students, and so on.

***And the Students' Association was an important meeting place at the time?***

Yes, very important! We attended Saturday meetings at the Students' Association for many years. That was what we did. We did of course also drink beer, but that was where the debates unfolded. And they could be rather heated. It was the main platform for the open exchange of views.

**Non-Violence as Pragmatism**

***Now, talking about the war, or rather about what the war meant for the research environment: a few years back, I had a long conversation with Gene Sharp, the author of so many key texts on non-violent activism. This was when he visited Norway to receive the Prisoner's Testament Prize from Travel for Peace (Aktive fredsreiser). I was privileged to have him with me in my car all the way down to Risør. That was very interesting, we had a long conversation.***

That must have been interesting. Absolutely.

***And he, amongst other things, was preoccupied with your father.***

Yes, he had heard about the Teachers' Resistance and wanted to interview... he came here because he wanted to meet Johan and learn about what he stood for. Sharp was among several PRIO student visitors who rented a room in our house, where I still live.<sup>14</sup> Through this, he got to know about my father.

***Gene was extremely keen to talk about his conversations with your father. At the time, I had no idea that I would be talking to you today, so I was not the one drawing attention to your father's role.***

He saw this as a non-violent campaign. And, in that way, not as part of the Norwegian Resistance Movement, which included a military wing (*Milorg*).

***In our conversation, he went as far as saying that much of what he had been working on later in life was inspired by what he had learnt in Norway, about non-violent protests in the course of the war.***

Yes, I can imagine he did. Non-violence was, as my father said, the main weapon we possessed. But for him it was not a moral principle. He said it was what it became, and that it worked. But my father also conducted exercises with Sten guns with his high school pupils.

Non-violence was, as my father said, the main weapon we possessed. But for him it was not a moral principle. He said it was what it became, and that it worked. But my father also conducted exercises with Sten guns with his high school pupils [...] what he called ‘German lessons’

Jacob Jervell <sup>15</sup> has since told stories... And Jacob, whom I came to know quite well, had my father as his teacher for five years. He was inspired by him, they were both the sons of priests. But Jacob has an account of what he called ‘German lessons’ [i.e. gun practice].

So, my father was not a pacifist. He also went to the Trysil mountains and received airdrops. And it was after one of these trips that he got arrested. That was quite some time later than the teachers’ protests. He did not want to talk about this later, but that was what happened.

***So, his use of non-violent tactics was a pragmatic choice?***

Yes, it was. It was what he saw as possible. I believe he writes that, during the transportation of the arrested teachers by ship to the north, there were two who resisted—I am not sure how, but on a principled pacifist basis—and they were locked into a room of their own so that they would not influence others.

The women-led Parents’ Campaign was of course entirely without weapons. Ingrid and I met Gene Sharp again when he attended the Films from the South festival. His interest in the non-violent aspects of the Norwegian Resistance probably gave us a new understanding of it as well. Yet, strangely, the work of Gene Sharp and that of Johan—who had also collaborated with Arne Næss<sup>16</sup> on Gandhi—did not become connected. Johan’s work on non-violence was very theoretical—I’m referring to the work on Gandhi’s political ethics.

***You are referring to Johan Galtung’s project with Arne Næss becoming overly theoretical? Is that what you are thinking?***

Yes, it had to be. But then, Arne Næss had also been active in XU during the war. So, I’m wondering what role the war actually played. I believe that it is only now that we can see the contours of that more clearly. Many of those who I met in the Women’s League, who were then adult women, were active during the war, but also before the war. They were politically active, they understood where things were heading. So, they had been anti-Nazis for a long time.

I think that generation—particularly those who had spent time at Grini [a detention camp close to Oslo, run by the occupation forces from June 1941 to May 1945]—wanted to leave the experience behind. They probably hoped that it would kind of fade. Herman’s sister, who is five years older than him, spent 15 months at Grini in her early twenties. She was arrested for distributing illegal newspapers. She said that it took many, many years before she could bear to talk to her children about it. It was only towards the end of her life that she found the energy to write some of it down.

## Pensioner and Activism

So, by now, I have actually been a pensioner for 20 years. But overall, you may say that my whole professional life has revolved around the connection between research, politics and society. I don't know if it has left many traces, but I, at the very least, have had quite a variegated experience, and I think my professional life has been interesting.

***For sure it has. It must have been extremely interesting to relate to research as a political factor from so many different vantage points. In the governance structure, within research policy advice, and as a researcher.***

But I have not always been sufficiently good at maintaining a sustained focus over time to stay committed to more comprehensive research engagements. And, there is something else: I grew up in a family of teachers, but I never enjoyed teaching. I look at the youth sitting there, and then I think: 'My god, what do I know that I can tell you?' No, I have instead thrived in offices—with a screen, a phone—and with writing stuff.

A lot of what I have spent time doing after I retired, before health issues became more prevalent, was working full time for the Women's League. It never had the resources to pay anybody. And I thought it made sense. It worked well for me. I had this as my main engagement for at least a ten-year period.

***The Women's League! Its focus has been on peace, more than on women's rights, has it not?***

Yes, and that is also interesting in its own way. That there is an association, an organization of women, but not primarily for women's issues. I find that it becomes more and more interesting when I ponder how the founders were thinking. These were women with a background in the Women's liberation movement. They organized the fight for voting rights, but in 1915, when the First World War raged, they realized that without peace the right to vote would have little value. So, the first conference stated very clearly that although it was intended to be a conference on voting rights, due to the war it changed into a conference on peace, and they managed to pull this off even though it was 1915. And it is said in that statement that all participants had to declare their support for women's right to vote. In a number of countries, the women who had been fighting for voting rights put that struggle aside, and worked for peace. Then later they picked up the struggle for the voting rights again.

Five years ago, we had our centennial, and I wrote a bit about this. When reading up on the subject, I realized that these women actively—and I believe very early on—took issue with the conception of war as a kind of heroic affair. So, after the horrors of the trench war became widely known, many saw that they were right, but they had written about this already in 1915.

Today, the League is an explicitly feminist organization, otherwise we could probably not have survived, but it was always an association for women. They wanted to

present a mirror image of conventional diplomacy to demonstrate that women had the ability to organize and to contribute to decision-making.

This small organization had elaborate rules for conducting its activities, in contrast to most women's organizations. I didn't appreciate such formalities until many years later, but the women that I met were pioneers and had practised them since the very beginning, in order to be taken seriously by the male community. They mastered this fully. It was bothersome, but the formalities sustained the organization.

This was the first generation of women who had access to higher education. But then, they could not get a job! Or, they could get a job, but not a career that corresponded to their qualifications. So, what these women have done—and I have looked rather carefully at the Norwegian ones—is to use their competence, their language, their money, to build, to travel, to construct an organization.

And many of them never married. So, they didn't have to ask anyone for permission to do what they did, right? For this reason, only some of them have children and daughters succeeding them, while most do not. But they were doctors, lawyers, businesswomen. They hail from a range of political parties. So that was also very clear, all the way up until I would say 1946, '47, '48: to work for peace, that was something all decent people did.

We have had Conservative Party women, and many Christians, in the Women's League. They have felt at home there. The exception is the Labour Party—their women had their own organization.

***In all these years that you have been engaged with the Women's League, what have been the most important questions for you?***

We very much need organizations for connecting things. I have been out in marches and demonstrations and that sort of thing, but to me, it was always the broader, organized interaction that was most important. It might not be the sexiest of things, but not much would get done without it.

For me it is, if you ask for political issues, then it is related to organizing. Far more than any singular issue. There are of course many important issues, but no single issue has been at the centre of my attention. So, my answer here is rather generic: there are certain environments where I feel at home. I like to be in the head office of a well-functioning organization.

And it should have a value-based international orientation. We very much need organizations for connecting things. I have been out in marches and demonstrations and that sort of thing, but to me, it was always the broader, organized interaction that was most important. It might not be the sexiest of things, but not much would get done without it.

*Thank you very much, Mari.*

## Notes

1. Abbreviation for *Candidatus Realium*, used in Norway for higher degrees (level of M.Phil.) in the natural sciences, abolished 1985.
2. Otto Klineberg (1899–1992) was a Canadian social psychologist, and the first chair for Columbia University’s social psychology department. Klineberg was a key figure in social psychology for well over half a century, described as a ‘leader in cross-cultural and international studies’. He played a major role—under the UNESCO umbrella—in setting up the International Social Science Council and the International Union of Psychological Science. See: Holtzman, Wayne H. and Roger W Russell (1997) ‘Otto Klineberg: A Pioneer International Psychologist’, *International Journal of Psychology* 27: 364–365.
3. Ruge, Mari Holmboe (1972) ‘Decision-Makers as Human Beings: An Analysis of Perception and Behavior in a Cross-Cultural Simulation Experiment’, M.Phil. thesis (*Magistergrad*), Department of Political Science, University of Oslo.
4. See Eirinn Larsen (2019) ‘Sekretariat for norsk statsfeminisme’ [Secretariat for Norwegian State Feminism], pp. 263–290 in Thomas Brandt et al., *Avhengig av forskning: De norske forskningsrådenes historie* [Research-dependent: The History of the Norwegian Research Councils]. Oslo: Fagbokforlaget.
5. See Chap. 14. On the initiative to start a new programme in women’s research, see: Hanne Haavind (1997), ‘Den første utredningen om kvinneforskningens muligheter og ambisjoner i de samfunnsvitenskaplige fag’, *Kvinneforskning* 3–4: 8–13.
6. See also article in the Norwegian daily *Klassekampen* [*The Class Struggle*] on Mari’s 70th anniversary: ‘Kvinnen bak’.
7. A house originally built by the explorer, humanist and scientist Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930), where the Fridtjof Nansen Institute has been situated since it was established in 1958.
8. Holmboe, Lotte Skou (2009) ‘Læreraksjonen 1942 i historiografisk perspektiv’, *Fortid—Historiestudentenes tidsskrift* 2: 35–40.
9. Ruge, Mari Holmboe (2001) *Fra Bispehaugen til Hønskollen: Lotte og Haakon Holmboe—liv og arbeid*, Oslo: Mari Holmboe Ruge.
10. Hatledal, Kristin (2011) *Kvinnekamp: Historia om norske motstandskvinner*. Oslo: Samlaget. See in particular Chap. 1—‘Kvinnene bak foreldreaksjonen’, by Helga Stene and Aasta Stene.
11. Karl Evang (1902–1981) was a physician and a public intellectual, with a clear socialist commitment, who served as Director in Norway’s Directorate of Public Health from 1938 to 1972.
12. Johan Vilhelm Aubert (1922–1988) was an influential Norwegian sociologist, active in the XU anti-Nazi resistance intelligence during the Second World War, a co-founder of the Institute for Social Research, and a major supporter of the founding of a new department devoted to peace and conflict research.



13. A small passenger plane crashed near the city of Voronezh on 6 August 1955. Everybody on board was killed in the accident, including ten Norwegian citizens, all leaders of Norwegian women organizations who were on an official delegation to Moscow.
14. The Ruge property, centrally located on the western side of Oslo, consists of two houses facing each other. It was bought by Herman Ruge's parents in 1946, from a distant relative.
15. Jacob Jervell (1925–2014) was a Norwegian theologian and a professor at the University of Oslo, active in the public debate.
16. Arne Dekke Eide Næss (1912–2009) was a Norwegian Philosopher, best known internationally for his work on 'deep ecology'. Næss was active in XU during the Second World War, and played a key role in the founding of the social sciences in Norway after the war—including in backing the establishment of the Institute for Social Research in 1950, as well as its Department on Conflict and Peace Research in 1959.

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# Chapter 4

## Pioneer and Patron of Social Science and Peace Research: Erik Rinde (1919–1994)



Portrayed by Lars Even Andersen

### Erik Rinde—Timeline

**1919** Born 17 March 1919.

**1943** Cand. jur. degree (roughly equivalent to an LL.M.) conferred by the University of Oslo.

**1949** Founder of the International Sociological Association; serves as secretary general for the first four years of the association's existence.

**1950** Founder of the Institute for Social Research (Institutt for samfunnsforskning, ISF).

**1959** Founds the Department for Conflict and Peace Research at ISF, together with Johan Galtung, Ingrid Eide, and Mari Holmboe Ruge.

**1960** Builds premises for ISF at No. 31 Munthes gate, Oslo.

**1966** The Department for Conflict and Peace Research separates from ISF to become an independent research institute (the Peace Research Institute, Oslo—PRIO). Rinde becomes chair of the board.

**1972** Rinde resigns as director of ISF but joins its board.

**1976** Conferral of an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo.

**1979** Rinde resigns as chair of PRIO's board.

**1994** Dies on 28 May 1994.

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Erik Rinde outside the Institute for Social Research in Oslo © Jan Nordby/NTB/Scanpix

## A Family with Traditions

Erik's paternal grandfather was Peder Eilertsen Rinde (1844–1937). Peder served as mayor of the Skåtøy and Sannidal municipalities in lower Telemark. As the owner of several large rural estates, he identified strongly with Søren Jaabæk's *Bondevennerne* (lit. 'The Friends of the Peasants'), a rural political movement aligned with the liberal opposition. He represented the Liberal Party (Venstre, lit. 'Left') in the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) almost consecutively from 1877 to 1918. He was also a shipowner and timber trader.

Peder Rinde was one of the leading figures in the group backing Johan Sverdrup prior to the introduction of parliamentarianism in Norway in 1884, and was an active member of the organized rifle corps that was formed to support the radicalization of the Storting. His conduct during the power struggle between the king and parliament during the 1880s created the impression among those loyal to the government and monarchy that Rinde was a dangerous revolutionary. For many people, the fact that he appeared several times in the company of Norway's most prominent radical agitator, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, confirmed this impression. Rinde was also a member of Norway's first parliamentary investigative committee, the 'Midnight Commission', which investigated (without coming to any conclusions) the extent to which the Swedish-Norwegian king had planned to use military means against the Norwegian parliament in connection with the constitutional disputes in 1884 and 1893.

In the final years of the nineteenth century, however, Rinde marked himself out as a strong opponent of the militarization that was strongly favoured by many activists, whether they were for or against abolishing the Union with Sweden.

Peder's son Sigurd Rinde was born in 1889. As a young man Sigurd became general manager of Handelsbanken in Trondheim, but later founded his own industrial group, the *Norsk Elektrokemisk Aktieselskab* (NEA). In the years leading up to

World War II, NEA acquired several local businesses in the power-generating and wood-processing sectors, and when peace came in 1945, the Rinde group included Trælandsfos, Holmen-Hellefos and Vafos Brug, two power plants (Dalsfos and Tveitereidfos), and several large farms and forests in the areas around Kragerø and Drangedal.

Rinde had bought several of these companies during the war, when they were far from risk-free investments. Some of the facilities had to be mothballed for long periods because the Germans confiscated the coal that the facilities needed for paper production. A chronic lack of spare parts also caused constant technical problems and frequent halts in production. On other occasions the plants were targeted by saboteurs, for example when the authorities decided that the paper produced by the plants should be used for German propaganda newspapers (some have also suggested that the Rinde family assisted with efforts to sabotage their own businesses). It was clear that these investments would not be profitable in the short term. At the same time, it turned out that Rinde had a good nose for a strategic investment, as his investments started to make good returns as soon as peace was declared and the situation began to return to normal.

Starting in 1948, Sigurd Rinde expanded into shipowning, and at its peak his shipowning business operated six custom-built vessels. These ships enabled the group to control the whole value chain for wood pulp, from production to delivery to the end-users, who were often located in distant parts of the globe.

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 initially caused great uncertainty about the market for wood pulp. It soon became apparent, however, that the tense international situation was a goldmine for Sigurd Rinde. The whole world was stockpiling commodities, and wood pulp and paper were no exception. Prices rose to unprecedented levels, and Rinde reaped enormous profits in his dual roles as manufacturer and exporter. In 1951, for example, the Holmen-Hellefos plant alone generated pre-tax profits of NOK 12 million—an unheard of amount at the time.

These profits would eventually make a valuable contribution to supporting innovative social science research environments in Norway. Among other things, they financed the construction of the building close to Frogner Park that ever since 1960 has been home to the Institute for Social Research.

### **No. 31 Munthes gate**

The Institute for Social Research (*Institutt for samfunnsforskning*, ISF) was founded on 9 February 1950. For the first 10 years it was located at No. 4 Arbiens gate, but in 1960 the institute moved to its purpose-built brick building at No. 31 Munthes gate, where it has been located ever since.

The developer and owner of the new building was Erik Rinde's father, Sigurd Rinde, and the building remained in the hands of the Rinde family until ISF bought it in 1992. A slightly awkward situation arose when Erik Rinde, who was both chair

of the ISF board and owner of the building, had to negotiate the sale with himself. The situation was resolved in all parties' best interests, however, and one of the terms of the agreement was Rinde would keep his office in return for a peppercorn rent. Naturally enough that office is now the director's office, currently occupied by Tanja Storsul.

Phase 2 of the building project, comprising the north-east section of the building, was completed in 1980. The developer for the new part of the building was ISF, as represented by its then-director, Ted Hanisch. At the time, the situation was that the Institute for Applied Sociological Research (INAS), which had been spun off from ISF in 1966, and which was later merged with a couple of other research organizations to form the Norwegian Institute for Research into Childhood, Welfare and Ageing (NOVA), had ended up on the University of Oslo campus at Blindern under the directorship of Nathalie Rogoff Ramsøy. INAS was finding its premises increasingly cramped, however, and reached an agreement with ISF to move into the new extension once it was completed. Initially the building work was funded by loans secured on ISF's founding capital, but soon after the work was completed the building was purchased by the Norwegian Directorate of Public Construction and Property (*Statsbygg*), which had suddenly identified some spare funds towards the end of its financial year. It was only in the 2000s that ISF was able to buy back Phase 2 from *Statsbygg*. At that time, NOVA was still occupying the premises. NOVA moved out in 2014, however, when it became part of Oslo and Akershus University College (now Oslo Metropolitan University or OsloMet).

The building was designed by the architects Trond Eliassen, Birger Lambertz-Nilssen, and Molle and Per Cappelen. The following information is inscribed on a plaque, which was installed at the entrance to ISF in connection with the 75th anniversary of the Oslo Architects' Association in 1981:

- This building is the concentrated result of the opinions of the above four architects regarding good architecture.
- Early in the planning phase it became clear that the building should blend in with the surrounding neighbourhood of detached houses. Accordingly, the building is designed in rectangles around an atrium, reflecting the researchers' desire for the tranquillity of the solitary cell combined with opportunities for a game of table tennis or strolls around the garden.
- The architects chose rustic materials with the aim of achieving simplicity without bleakness and sensory experience without unnecessary flourishes. A fine balance between the plain and the complex.
- We can confidently assert that the building has enriched the area.
- The architects designed the entrance and arranged the elements of the building with a sure hand. Among other things, the front garden is raised a couple of metres above street-level in accordance with the existing architecture of the area.
- Unusually for a new building, the garden was completed at the same time as the building was ready for occupation, and over the past 20 years it has matured very well, enriching the building and providing pleasure to passers-by. The final phase

of the building was completed in recent years and the ring around the atrium was completed.

- When the first phase of the building was completed, the architects commented that it is difficult to design a building without first making a life-size model.
- The building has been awarded the Sundt Prize for Architectural Excellence.

Erik Rinde was one of the pioneers of social science research in Norway, perhaps even the most important. Many people looked up to him, which was natural enough, also given that he was the owner of the building where ISF was located. Rinde enjoyed great respect both within ISF itself and more generally within the social sciences in Norway and abroad.

## **Erik Rinde and Social Sciences**

As we have seen, Rinde came from an industrialist family, which not only owned wood-processing businesses but also controlled the whole value chain. It might seem surprising that someone from this background—the commercial private sector—would become a pioneer in such a different area as social science. Nonetheless, despite the Rinde family's industrial focus, members of the family had always had other interests. As a member of parliament, Erik Rinde's grandfather, Peder Rinde, for example, had a long and distinguished track record of involvement in social and peace-related issues.

In the following, I will first describe Erik Rinde's life and achievements in relation to Norwegian social sciences in general and the Institute for Social Research in particular. I will then discuss his importance for peace research.

Erik Rinde was born in 1919. He managed to attend lectures on sociology at the London School of Economics before the war, so his interest in the subject was already established at that time.

Rinde also studied law, earning an LLM from the University of Oslo in 1943, shortly before the university was closed down on 30 November.

The 1945 peace brought new ideas and visions for a new society. The nation was to be rebuilt, in ways that were new and better. Central figures were the philosophers Arne Næss and Harald Ofstad, as well as the lawyer Vilhelm Aubert, the political scientist Christian Bay, the psychologist Harriet Holter and a cluster of other academics in the early stages of their careers. They wanted to advance Norwegian social science research, in order to foster the creation of a new Norway. Sociology was to be a scholarly tool for these practical endeavours. The group had held more-or-less secret discussion meetings during the war and had become a close-knit circle.

Attitudes among the group's members about strategies for resisting the German occupation had differed widely. Both Aubert and Næss, for example, had been members of XU, a clandestine intelligence organization. At the age of just 22, Aubert had become XU's head courier, reporting directly to the Norwegian High Command in London and risking his life on several occasions. Others, including Harald Ofstad,

held fast to their pacifist convictions and wanted the post-war trials to be conducted as leniently as possible. We can also well imagine that the “scholarly coordination” of the group was made more difficult by the fact that its members came from a broad range of disciplines. On the other hand, a heterogenous group will often be the best equipped to shed light on relevant topics from several different perspectives, applying them to identify the best possible solutions. This is why *diversity among the staff* is a strategic objective of most social science research environments. Arne Næss and his compatriots undoubtedly understood this, and thus deliberately cultivated their differences.

Erik Rinde came into contact with Næss’s circle in the summer of 1945, and quickly became interested in its work on specific sociological issues. At that time, Rinde had an office at No. 4 Grev Wedels Plass. Over the following years the circle, which the group had now dubbed the Philosophical Club, regularly held evening meetings at Rinde’s home in Makrellbekken, a suburb north-west of the city centre. Their wartime experiences were fundamental to the circle’s ideas, and Rinde was instrumental in steering the philosophical discussion towards specific societal challenges:

How can we know X and Y? What should we do now to create a better society? What must be developed, and in what way can scholarly research become a part of general cultural values?

These evening meetings began Rinde’s role as a practical facilitator and entrepreneurial organizer of research for Næss’s circle. In particular, Rinde and Aubert developed a life-long loyal friendship. Aubert would become one of ISF’s first board members and researchers, remaining there until his death in 1988.

In 1947, Erik Rinde obtained NOK 15,000 from his father. Among other things, the money was to be used to pursue plans for an institute for social science research, as had been proposed even before the war in a report by the University of Oslo’s strategic committee. This was the Rinde family’s first financial contribution to the broad field of social sciences, which was envisaged as being conducted in close association with the university. A young student, Stein Rokkan (1921–1979), who would later become one of the most-cited Norwegian social scientists in international research literature, was assigned the task of awakening public interest in sociological studies and thus securing the status of the field in Norwegian academic life.

Norwegian researchers looked to the United States, where social sciences were most advanced, for inspiration. Aubert estimated that in 1950, at least 10 American universities had faculties of social sciences. In 1947–1948, both Aubert and Rinde had held research fellowships at Columbia University in New York, at that time considered the world leader in the relatively new disciplines.

In addition, there were several visits by guest researchers from Columbia in 1948–1950, all funded by the Rinde family. Of these, we should mention in particular Professor Paul Felix Lazarsfeld (1901–1976). Lazarsfeld is considered the founder of modern empirical sociology. He had been heavily involved with the social democratic movement in Vienna before he emigrated to the United States in 1933. Lazarsfeld succumbed to the temptation of a six-month fellowship in Oslo because he saw the ambition for a centrally-planned economy that was fundamental to the post-war

reconstruction of Norway under democratic government, as an incredibly interesting socio-economic experiment, which he was keen to observe at close hand. Lazarsfeld lent important assistance to the research milieu in Oslo; although his visit did not give rise to much in terms of specific research outcomes, it was highly significant for the continued vitality of the environment which in time would become ISF.

In autumn 1948, Rokkan and Næss spent time in Paris in connection with an assignment for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Rinde and Lazarsfeld paid them a visit, with the aim of obtaining UNESCO's support to establish the International Sociological Association (ISA) and the International Political Science Association (IPSA). As a first stage, they wanted to arrange a joint congress in Zurich in 1950. Rinde stayed in a luxury hotel and is reported to have been considered snobbish, but the visit proved a success, as UNESCO resolved to give their application its full support. In his efforts with UNESCO, Rinde obtained useful assistance from the Norwegian sociologist Arvid Brodersen (1904–1996). During the war Brodersen had played a key role as a contact between the Norwegian resistance and German officers opposed to Nazism, and now headed UNESCO's department of sociology. Accordingly, with UNESCO's support Rinde founded the International Sociological Association in 1949, serving as its secretary general for the first four years, with ISF acting as secretariat. Rinde organized the first International Sociological Congress in Oslo in September 1949, while the International Sociological Association's first World Congress was held in Zurich on 4–9 September 1950, with more than 120 delegates from 30 countries.

The Institute for Social Research was formally established in an office building in Arbiens gate on 9 February 1950. Stein Rokkan was the first director, but Rinde took over the post when Rokkan moved to the United States in autumn 1954.

At first, Rinde's family was an important financial backer for the institute. Sigurd Rinde was a staunch supporter, providing founding capital of NOK 200,000 and a further NOK 500,000 two years later. Thereafter he provided operational funding of NOK 100,000 per annum. In addition to these funds, the institute soon managed to obtain support from the Ford Foundation. As time went on, the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF), which was founded in 1949 and was one of the precursors to today's Research Council of Norway, would also emerge as an important funder.

It was essential to Erik Rinde that the institute included researchers who represented a broad spectrum of disciplines: lawyers, economists, psychologists, philosophers and, of course, sociologists. We also see traces of Rinde's background in industry. In an interview with the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* on 27 February 1954, he expressed the hope that the institute's activities could be directed towards industrial research, "intensive studies of well-being and efficiency in industrial organizations" to "serve the needs of the state and commerce".

We will return below to the founding of PRIO, which took place in and around 1959.

Rinde and Aubert felt that sociology was generally neglected in Norway at this time. This was despite the fact that the University of Oslo's Department of Sociology had been founded in 1950 under the leadership of Professor Sverre Holm.



For very many years, however, Holm was the only sociology professor in Norway, and his approach attracted varying degrees of enthusiasm among ISF researchers. Accordingly, Rinde and co. took the initiative to establish the *Institute for Applied Sociological Research*—INAS—in 1966.<sup>1</sup>

Next was the Psychoanalytic Institute, which was founded in 1967 with Harriet Holter's husband Peder as its general manager. The objective was to "conduct research and train psychoanalysts". At that time, psychology was seen as a basic discipline in the social sciences, far more so than is the case today, and Rinde was of course involved and contributed funds to the founding of this institute as well.

Despite the researchers' periodic criticisms of Professor Holm, and the fact that in general their interests lay more in applied research (as was usual in the research institute sector), it was both natural and strategically desirable for ISF to cooperate closely with the University of Oslo. Similarly, both the Institute for Applied Sociological Research and the Psychoanalytic Institute, although they were autonomous research institutes, were established with a view to such cooperation. For reasons connected with organizational culture, it proved difficult to achieve strategic cooperation agreements with the university at an institutional level, but at an individual level there was always a lot of contact, especially when it came to teaching capacity. The connection was enhanced by a 'revolving door' between ISF and the university—many researchers at ISF had come from positions at the university, while others moved from ISF to such positions, and some also worked simultaneously part-time at both.

As time went on, Rinde moved away from actual research, focusing more on management and leadership, roles that he mastered very well. Rinde does not seem to have contributed to scholarship after the 1950s. He never completed a doctorate. In contrast, the roles of director and board member, where it was necessary to adopt a more strategic perspective, came naturally to him. This was how he could best complement Aubert, Næss and Rokkan, among others, on their paths to scholarly stardom.

Even so; precisely that fact that Rinde himself did not have a long list of publications, in some ways served as an advantage, as it made him independent of different scholarly trends and interests. He was an exponent of a pure, genuine interest in the field, without any personal territory to defend.

The family's annual funding contributions continued until Sigurd Rinde's death in 1972. At that point, the future of ISF became very uncertain. Erik Rinde resigned as director, and instead joined the institute's board. Willy Martinussen and William Lafferty were employed as the leadership team, with Ted Hanisch (born 1947) as institute secretary.

Fortunately, ISF obtained government funding in 1975. At that time, Ingrid Eide was state secretary in the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs in the Bratteli government, and was no doubt very helpful in securing a stable flow of funds for the institute at a time of critical need.

In addition to this core funding, the institute was of course dependent on ongoing project funding to pay its researchers' salaries. Ted Hanisch took over as director in 1976 and lay the groundwork for a transition to a project-based business model.

NAVF was an important source of project funding. The institute's researchers had good contacts and friends there, among them Mari Holmboe Ruge, who had been one of PRIO's founders in 1959, and served as secretary of the NAVF's Social Science Council for ten years from 1971.

In the same year, Rinde was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oslo. No doubt this was not based on scholarly merit in the conventional sense, but rather a recognition of his contribution to the advancement of social sciences in Norway, both financially and as a research entrepreneur. Rinde was also awarded the Grand Cross of St. Olaf for his achievements.

Some years later, in 1986, Hanisch took a leave of absence from ISF to serve as a state secretary in Gro Harlem Brundtland's government. Vilhelm Aubert then contacted Helga Hernes (born 1938) and Fredrik Engelstad (born 1944), and suggested that in the interim Hernes and Engelstad could run the institute together. Hernes was appointed research director, while Engelstad took on most of the managerial responsibility. Hanisch did not return to ISF after his term as a state secretary. Instead he became director of the newly established Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO), and Engelstad was appointed permanently as institute director. The position of director was not converted to a fixed-term post until Engelstad retired, 21 years later.

The most important reforms introduced by Engelstad involved a transition from a flat to a hierarchical structure, and setting an operational goal of making enough profit to build up a capital fund. Reforms were also made in the area of human resources. Previously only administrative employees had had employment contracts, while academic staff had had 'membership'. In 1986, however, the researchers became employees. By now the institute's operations were entirely project-based, and funding was obviously a precondition for the employment of new staff.

As a board member whose background lay in the for-profit industrial sector, Rinde no doubt appreciated this more professional approach. At the same time, the transition to a project-based organization meant that the institute became even more involved in applied research. In fact, ever since the 1970s this trend towards applied research had meant that the more theoretically-oriented Rinde had become more distanced from the institute's tactical research orientation.

As time went on, Rinde took more of a backseat role at ISF. In his later years he was involved only to a limited extent in research activities, and only rarely ate lunch with the rest of the staff. For most of the younger researchers, Rinde gradually became an *éminence grise*. Nonetheless, some researchers often met up with him to exchange views in one-to-one discussions. Geir Høgsnes was one of these. Høgsnes worked at the institute for almost two decades, conducting research in economic sociology, a field in which Rinde was no doubt particularly interested, given his professional background. In addition, the institute secretary, Karin Sunde, had a close working relationship with Rinde. Sunde had been at ISF almost since it was founded, and she and Rinde were always on the same wavelength.

Rinde's colleagues at ISF generally did not know much about what other irons Rinde had in the fire during his last years there. Most of the work he conducted from

this office involved buying up companies, restructuring them, and selling them again at a profit.

As a person, Erik Rinde is described during this period as entirely amiable, and with a great passion for the social sciences, but at the same time correct and professional to an extreme. He spoke rarely or never to his colleagues about their families or other topics of a personal nature, and was not the type of person one would go to for personal advice.

Rinde remained a member of ISF's board right up until his death. For the last six years, after Aubert's death, he was chair of the board. In this period, however, he was no longer a starry-eyed idealist. The initial stages of establishment and development were long in the past, and he now prioritized security, consolidation and the further professionalization of the institute.

Rinde died on 28 May 1994, survived by his wife and two children.

## Rinde's Attitude to Research-related Dilemmas

Conversation with Fredrik Engelstad, director of the Institute for Social Research 1986–2007.

*LEA: When one conducts research in the social sciences, one often encounters points of intersection and dilemmas. What kind of research did Erik Rinde prefer? Qualitative or quantitative research, for example?*

FE: Quantitative research was foreign to him. Non-quantitative research was the fashion in the 1950s, when he was most active as a researcher. At least from a contemporary perspective, his preferences lay clearly in qualitative research.

*LEA: At PRIO, we say that we must be both relevant and scholarly. Citation counts are an expression of quality, which we see as the absolutely most important thing, but at the same time our research must be disseminated to users in order for us to fulfil our societal mission. In contrast, the most important thing for think-tanks is to be noticed, while the quality of what is said sometimes seems less of a priority. Can you tell us a little about how Rinde as a facilitator for social science research positioned himself at the intersection between quality and relevance? Should ISF function as a think-tank, or should it be more like a university, where scholarly results are the prime concern?*

FE: Scholarly considerations were not of overriding importance. I would say that there was, and still is, an ambition to unite scholarly and societal relevance. Initially, researchers at the institute felt they were seeking new methods for building a society. In other words, **relevance** was the key consideration: now they were going to crack the code for how society functions, in order to build it well.

The *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning* [The Norwegian Journal of Social Research] was founded in 1960. If you look at the early years, there was a lot of applied research there. There was also some philosophy, but tending very much in an applied direction.

See also an article about ISF published in the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* on 26 October 1963, written by Eva Lie, who later joined the institute's administrative staff following her journalistic career. Titled *Til menneskets indre—i klosterinspirert hus* [To humanity's interior—in a monastically-inspired building], it was reproduced on pages 51–57 of the institute's 50th-anniversary *Festschrift*.

*LEA: How did this orientation towards applied research fit with the goal of obtaining funding from the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF)? If we look at how the Research Council of Norway operates today, it typically funds scholarly research, while government ministries tend to be more oriented towards applied projects.*

FE: Well, it's not really that simple. It's certainly correct that in ISF's first decades, the Research Council of Norway—at that time the NAVF—was a key source of funding. But the Research Council funded and continues to fund very many applied-research programmes. The majority of the programmes are funded by government ministries, which accordingly also define the research questions (but not, of course, the findings and solutions). Finding a balance between scholarly and societal ambitions is, and has always been, one of the most important challenges for the leadership of the institute. There is always a danger that there will be too little time for in-depth research, when the demand to stay relevant is there all the time.

*LEA: PRIO has at times, at least until Sverre Lodgaard's reforms in the 1980s, been described as a "nest of radicals", who leaned far to the left politically. Was Erik Rinde a Left-wing radical?*

FE: Ha ha! No, absolutely not!

*LEA: Another dilemma that research environments may encounter is the need to maintain favour with the authorities who are funding the research, while at the same time one may need to be critical of them. How did Rinde and ISF deal with this ever-present tension?*

FE: They were in favour of being critical, that was completely clear. You can see this clearly reflected in the book *Tenk en gang til* [Think one more time] about peace and defence. The book emerged from the research environment around ISF and was published in 1952.

*LEA: Okay, until 1972 ISF got funding from Sigurd Rinde, so then perhaps they could allow themselves to criticize the government. Did things change when the institute became dependent on annual basic state funding? Did one have to become more cautious?*

FE: No, I never experienced any kind of bowing and scraping to the government, not at all. And most of our research was Research Council-funded; very little was directly funded by individual ministries. And on the Research Council sat people who were friends of the people running the institute. So the funding circulatory was a bit different at that time.

*LEA: When were the portraits of Erik Rinde and Vilhelm Aubert hung in the room over there?*



FE: They were painted after Rinde's death. It was Hans Normann Dahl (1937–2019) who painted both pictures. They're very good, particularly the one of Vilhelm Aubert. Dahl was a very good caricaturist. He was also a close friend of Aubert. In general, Aubert exuded great authority, he was completely reliable, everyone trusted him. He was also a kind of grandfather figure in political environments, while Erik Rinde was a little more distanced from people outside our innermost circle. So Dahl didn't have any kind of personal relationship with Rinde, and painted the portrait from photographs. The portraits turned out to be very good likenesses—Aubert with flaming red hair, and then Rinde looking slightly more reserved.

## Peace Research

The *Peace Research Institute Oslo* (PRIO) would also benefit from Rinde's entrepreneurial skills and financial muscle. In many ways, it may seem paradoxical that the profits the family made from war enabled the founding of a peace research institute. Perhaps Rinde was eager to make some repayment, to the right environments?

*Johan Galtung* was born in 1930, and accordingly was slightly younger than the other academics associated with ISF. In the early 1950s he served a six-month prison sentence for refusing to do his military service, because he objected to completing the part of his civilian national service that would have made it longer than ordinary

military service. Galtung used his time in prison to work on his master's degree, and joined ISF after his release.

In 1955, Galtung published his book *Gandhi's Political Ethics* in collaboration with Arne Næss. This was a study of the ethics of nonviolent conflict resolution, where the dominant perspective was philosophical, but where one of the intentions was to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration by deducing hypotheses that social scientists could subject to empirical testing.

We put 1957 as the year when Rinde and Næss began to develop plans for a research programme in the field of "nonviolent conflict resolution". Internationally the concept of peace research had existed ever since the war, and Columbia University was particularly active in the field. Galtung had taught on a course on conflict research at Columbia in the academic year 1957–1958, and drew inspiration to advance this field of research from Professors Otto Klineberg (1899–1992) and Paul F. Lazarsfeld.

In 1958, ISF arranged a *Seminar on Conflict Research* in collaboration with the Philosophical Institute, where Næss was based. Rinde and Næss hoped this initiative would reveal a social-sciences perspective on opportunities for empirical and comparative research into the hypotheses encompassed explicitly and implicitly by Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence. Contributors to this seminar included American guest researchers at ISF such as Daniel Katz, Alvin Zander and Irving Janis, as well as Gene Sharp and, of course, Johan Galtung. The seminar led, among other things, to the publication of an article titled "Toward an international program of research on the handling of conflicts" in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (3) 1959, in which the authors, Rinde and Rokkan, described their visions for the programme.

At Christmas 1958, Rinde gave the green light for the establishment of a Department for Conflict and Peace Research at ISF. The department was established formally at a board meeting on 29 May 1959, but in practice the department had already been up and running since the start of the year, under Galtung's leadership. Other members of Galtung's original team included his wife Ingrid Eide (born 1933) and Mari Holmboe Ruge (born 1934).

Rinde was enthusiastic and provided invaluable financial assistance. Initially, he provided operational funding for a three-year period. Later there were occasions when half of the Rinde family's annual funding to ISF was earmarked for its conflict and peace research.

Once the initial three-year period of "guaranteed" funding expired, it became necessary for the peace researchers to look for other sources of income, both for their research projects and for core operations and strategic development. Work on obtaining such funding culminated in Rinde and some researchers meeting with prime minister Einar Gerhardsen, foreign minister Halvard Lange, and education minister Helge Sivertsen on 18 January 1962 in order to seek state funding for a "fund for scholarly research targeted at constructive work towards peace". This meeting resulted in the establishment of the *Council for Conflict and Peace Research* (RKF) which, despite the fact that the council's funds were not earmarked for specific institutions, in practice secured a steady stream of funding for Galtung's department from the national budget. The first tranche of RKF funding arrived in the 1964 financial

year and comprised NOK 120,000. The ability of the research milieu to attract political support at such a high level bears witness to good preparation, contacts, and strategic skills.

In January 1964, the department moved to separate premises at No. 8 Gydas vei, on the other side of Oslo's Majorstua neighbourhood. The department was growing quickly and there was not enough space in the ISF building.

As time went on, there became talk about the peace researchers separating from ISF to form their own legal entity. This was a natural consequence of the department's growing maturity and the fact that it now had its own income stream. There was also recognition that from a strategic perspective it was natural, not to say necessary, for it to be separated officially.

Rinde was still very positive about the department, but recognized that ultimately it had become ready to leave the nest. Rinde even sent a letter, co-signed with Galtung and others, to the RKF in the spring of 1965, in which he argued that the peace researchers' annual funding should be made permanent, and that this increased degree of predictability would allow the department to become an autonomous institute. As mentioned above, the research environment had good political contacts, and accordingly a justifiable hope that the proposal would be taken up. However, a change of government in the autumn of 1965 meant that it came to nothing at the time.

The 'divorce' took place nevertheless, with effect from 1 January 1966. Naturally Johan Galtung took on the role of director, while Rinde became chair of the board.

At the same time, the new institute would not be economically independent for some time yet. Funds from Rinde were essential to accomplish the move that same year to No. 2 Frognersterveien—a wooden chalet that has long since been demolished to make way for the South Korean ambassador's residence. But there seems to have been an element of homesickness, because in 1970, PRIO moved back to the same neighbourhood, taking up residence at No. 28 Tidemands gate. At the time, Galtung had just left PRIO to take up the newly created Professorship of Peace Research at the University of Oslo. PRIO bought the building relatively cheaply from the Onsager shipping family.

Originally there had been an old, yellow Swiss-style chalet on the ISF plot, with the main entrance from Fuglehauggata. Aubert and the sociologists had their offices in this villa. It was nicknamed Katanga after the province that attempted to break away from Congo in 1960. The chalet was demolished in 1978 to make way for the second phase of the ISF building. Rinde and ISF also had at their disposal a brick villa right next door, at No. 29 Munthes gate, which was home to the Psychoanalytic Institute. During this period, the researchers at ISF, the Institute for Applied Sociological Research (INAS), Katanga, the Psychoanalytical Institute and the peace researchers no doubt saw themselves in many ways as a collective. The founding objectives of the different institutes were to a large extent similar, and all the researchers remained part of an inner circle in neighbouring premises. Rinde negotiated leases and purchases of the premises as time went on, and it became a kind of idyllic research community.

Accordingly, the fact that Erik Rinde for a long time sat on the board of ISF while also serving as chair of the board at PRIO did not constitute a problem. There were never any conflicts of interest. On the contrary, there were many collaborative

projects, and Rinde was important in promoting connections that helped facilitate and harvest from their synergies.

At the same time, it is important to stress a significant distinction between the institutes in this period. While ISF ever since its foundation had the specific goal of building up the university sector and acting as a provider of professors in the social sciences, PRIO never explicitly had a similar objective. Like ISF, PRIO belongs to the sector of autonomous research institutes, and it has never been tempting for it to become part of the university system. The peace researchers wanted to go out into the world and build up a base of knowledge about peace, and from that point of view Norway was less important as a catchment area. This almost activist orientation was quite foreign to Erik Rinde, who was interested primarily in theoretical research. In addition, there was the paradox that the research environment had emerged from the collaboration with Columbia, but as time went on had become fairly critical of the United States, including the latter's involvement in the nuclear arms race and the Vietnam War. Galtung first found himself at the point of intersection when he was working with established theories and models, but gradually moved in a more radical direction, a development that Rinde did not view with any great enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup>

This is because Erik Rinde was a straight-laced man who prioritized keeping in with the Establishment. Unlike the young scientists, and particularly the peace researchers who never wore ties, Rinde was always impeccably dressed; it would have been unthinkable for him to wear jeans. This was no doubt useful for meetings with the Research Council, government ministries and so on, as it served to counteract PRIO's periodic reputation as a nest of radicals.

We do not know whether Rinde ever made public his political views. Like many others at PRIO, he may have sympathized with the Socialist People's Party (SF—a splinter of the Labour Party that existed from 1959 to 1973). But his business-like demeanour meant that he was generally believed to support the Conservatives. And at ISF he imposed a clear rule that no one should be affiliated with the Marxist-Leninist Workers' Communist Party (AKP m-l), which he viewed as a threat to democracy.<sup>3</sup> But in the great scheme of things, Rinde was not particularly interested in party politics.

At the same time, Rinde understood and supported PRIO's commitment to 'engagement' quite simply because he was very concerned about peace.

Rinde was chair of PRIO's board for 13 consecutive years after the 'divorce' from ISF. This is a record at PRIO, although Bernt Aardal came somewhat close to it in the years 2007–2016.

Rinde resigned as chair of PRIO's board in 1979, when he got cold feet from the prospects of legal prosecution against Nils Petter Gleditsch and Owen Wilkes. This did not cause any particular problem, as Torstein Eckhoff, a professor of jurisprudence who had been a board member since the start, was willing to take over. Accordingly, Rinde and PRIO parted as friends.



## Financial Stratagems under Erik Rinde's Chairpersonship

Related by Nils Petter Gleditsch

After just a few years of department-based financial support from the Rinde family, PRIO secured annual funding from 1964 onwards from the Council for Conflict and Peace Research (RKF). While this eliminated the need for ongoing operational funding, Rinde remained positively disposed and continued to make contributions over the following years when circumstances suggested it.

One such occasion arose in 1970 when PRIO wanted to move back to its old neighbourhood after six years in exile, and decided to buy office premises at No. 28 Tidemands gate for NOK 600,000. Since PRIO had no capital of its own, and needed a little extra money to fit out the offices and buy office equipment, the purchase was funded with a loan of NOK 540,000 from Fellesbanken and a private loan of NOK 100,000 from the Rinde family. In other words, the building was mortgaged beyond the hilt.

When Sigurd died in 1972, however, funding from the Rinde family dried up for good. In addition, there was an acute financial crisis when the other members of the family wanted repayment of the NOK 100,000 loan. Nils Petter Gleditsch was director of PRIO at that time, and he resolved the situation as follows:

*NPG: First Erik Rinde got us an extension (of six months, I think) for paying the money back. Then four of us took out personal loans of NOK 25,000 each to repay the loan. Then we opened an account at Fellesbanken and paid into it all the available cash. Next, we didn't pay any bills until just before debt collection proceedings began, so that we would build up a good customer relationship with the bank. Remember that at that time 'customer relationship' was the magic concept when it came to getting a loan. Then I had a friendly chat at the bank with Bjørn Piro, the company secretary and the younger brother of my old classmate at elementary school (who was also my neighbour) Christian Piro, and so we got the necessary additional loan approved by Fellesbanken. And so we got through the crisis.*

The building at No. 28 Tidemands gate was actually classified as residential, and when PRIO bought the building, there had been an assumption that an application to reclassify the building for office use would go through. It didn't. After a while, all the formal and informal dispensations had expired, and PRIO was really on borrowed time when it relocated again in 1976, this time to No. 4 Rådhusgata.

PRIO also made good use of the reimbursement arrangements for VAT (value-added tax):

*NPG: At the suggestion of Inge Samdal (who originally did his civilian national service at PRIO and went on to become a research assistant in the 1970s), we registered ourselves for VAT. Since our VAT-liable income was limited (sales of publications), but we bought many VAT-deductible goods that were used to produce these publications (paper, office equipment etc.), we got a VAT refund that far exceeded the VAT we had to pay on our income. Given how hard up we were at this time, not*

least due to the purchase of the building in Tidemands gate, this money was very useful.

Erik Rinde, who was still chair of PRIO's board, was very concerned about financial propriety, and no doubt he was not particularly enthusiastic about these stratagems, even though he let them pass.

*NPG: Rinde was concerned on several occasions about our financial and organizational manoeuvres. He thought, no doubt with some justification, that we were bending the rules. Even so, we got it approved by our auditor, who was also the auditor for ISF, so there wasn't much he could do about it.*

Alas, in 1979, when it was apparent that Gleditsch and Wilkes were going to face legal charges for breaching the national security provisions of the Penal Code with their 'rabbit report',<sup>4</sup> Rinde had had enough and resigned as the chair of PRIO's board.

More than 50 years after the 'divorce', PRIO's historically close links to the Institute for Social Research are still reflected in PRIO's by-laws, which provides that in the event of PRIO's dissolution, any residual assets would go to ISF.

*Translation from Norwegian: Fidotext.*

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## Notes

1. It was to Sverre Holm's credit that he discovered the relevance of Alfred Whitehead to the field of sociology, in the pioneering company of the sociopsychologist G. H. Mead and the sociologist G. C. Homans. And Holm was the first sociologist in the European context to understand how Whitehead provided the keys for solving this basic sociological concern: the de- and reconstruction of sociology as a science about interaction through formal model-building and

clarification of certain fundamental questions for sociological and psychological theories of (inter)action and understanding.

What was to become Holm's life's work nonetheless fitted poorly with the prevailing views during the student uprising in 1968, and he was "swept aside in the faculty's day-to-day activities." (*Sosiologen* 2017).

2. Perhaps Galtung's most important contribution in this phase was his book *Theory and Methods of Social Research*, which was published in 1967 and is still considered a ground-breaking work in sociology. Galtung's theory about "the mechanisms of Imperialism" (*Journal of Peace Research* 1971) can be seen however as his first step towards a radical critique of society and the United States, at a time when he was no longer a director of PRIO, but still wielded great influence among its researchers.
3. It is not known whether Rinde imposed the same rule at PRIO. A small number of Marxist-Leninists did in fact work at PRIO on short-term contracts, but the ideology never played any important role among the research staff.
4. Gleditsch and Wilkes were charged with revealing information damaging to national security after they published a report in 1979 about US-funded signals intelligence operations in Norway. Two years later, just before the trial, they published the report in the form of a book titled *Onkel Sams kaniner* [Uncle Sam's Rabbits] (Pax Forlag, 1981). In this context, 'rabbits' referred to the people working at the listening station in Vadsø, who were known locally as rabbits because they had 'long ears'. Each of the researchers received a six-month suspended prison sentence, a fine of NOK 10,000, and a costs order for the same amount. Both the prosecutor and the defense appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court, which upheld it, although two of the five judges wanted to impose custodial sentences (see Chap. 5).

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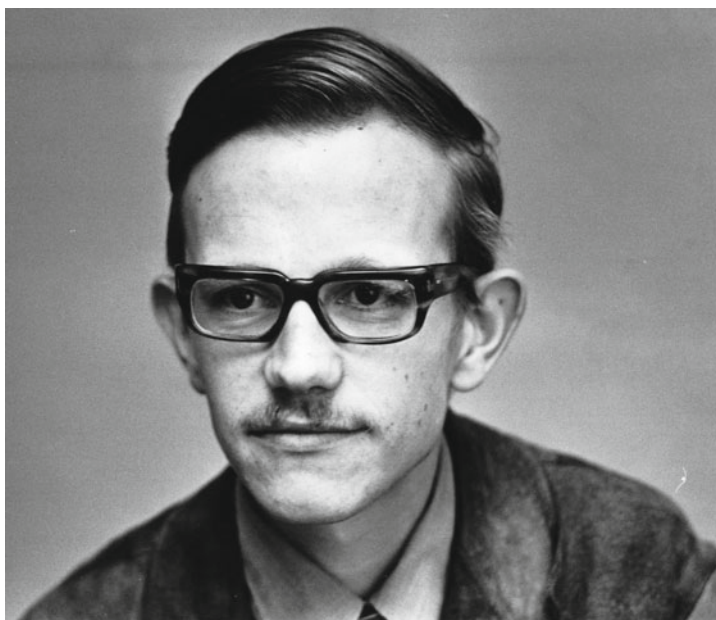


## Chapter 5

# A Social Democratic Peace: Nils Petter Gleditsch



Interviewed by Hilde Henriksen Waage



A young Nils Petter Gleditsch © PRIO

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A CV and list of publications for Nils Petter Gleditsch may be found at <https://www.prio.no/staff/npg>.

The following book may be downloaded for free from the publisher's website. It contains nine of his scholarly articles, a list of publications and an auto-biographical essay: Nils Petter Gleditsch (ed.) (2015) *Nils Petter Gleditsch—Pioneer in the Analysis of War and Peace*. SpringerBriefs on Pioneers in Science and Practice (29). Heidelberg: Springer. xx + 171 pp. ISBN 978–3–319–03819–3/ISBN 978–3–319–03820–9, <https://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319038193>.

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S. Tønnesson (ed.), *Lives in Peace Research*, Evidence-Based Approaches to Peace and Conflict Studies 3,  
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If you read my older publications, you will find very little about democracy, but a lot about equality, justice, and peace. The idea of a liberal peace, built on ties through international trade, became a major theme in peace research at the end of the 1990s. I was actually skeptical in the beginning, even after I had embraced the idea of a democratic peace. But I have come to realize that economic cooperation and development are important drivers of peace. ... Thinking of all the crimes committed in the name of socialism, I find it difficult today to call myself a socialist. However, I have no problem calling myself a social democrat. ... I have actually tried to launch a new formula for stable peace, 'the social democratic peace', combining democracy, a strong state, economic development, international political and economic cooperation, and a policy of non-discrimination of minorities. I think this makes a lot of sense as a policy, but I must admit that as a slogan it has fallen flat.

*The above programmatic statement comes from my long-standing supervisor and colleague at PRIO, Nils Petter Gleditsch. In connection with PRIO's 60th anniversary, I was asked to interview him.*

*On my very first visit to PRIO in November 1983, I attended a meeting for students who had applied for scholarships. The then head of the institute, Asbjørn Eide, told me that I—meaning my historical research—was of 'no interest' to the institute. PRIO, Eide assured me, would not be focusing on historical studies in the future. As I was heading out of the building, Nils Petter approached me:*

*'Don't leave—come here, I would like to talk to you', said the famous (to me, at least) Nils Petter out there in the corridor. Thirty-five years later, we were sitting in my office at PRIO, conducting this interview. We both still work at PRIO.*

**Nils Petter Gleditsch:** In other words, you are not exactly a neutral observer?

**Hilde Henriksen Waage:** *Well, I would like the readers to know that we know each other very well. I have gone through the whole gamut of roles at PRIO—from student to director—and you have been here all the time, correcting my various research drafts in handwriting with a green felt-tip pen.*

*So, let's start. How was your childhood—your upbringing, the environment you were born into?*

In a sense, I was born into the labor movement. Both of my parents were active in the socialist organization Mot Dag. Both were active in the solidarity movement for the Spanish Republic during the Civil War at the end of the 1930s. My mother spent long periods in Spain, helping to channel aid from Scandinavia to a hospital in Alcoy as well as an orphanage in Oliva. At the orphanage she became attached to a young girl, Christobalina, whom my parents eventually adopted.

This background from the labor movement shaped my political views in my youth. When I was sixteen years old, I joined the Socialist High School Association (*Sosialistisk Gymnasiastlag*), affiliated with the youth section of the Norwegian Labor Party. I have been a member of that party since then, except for some years in the 1960s when I was a member of the break-away Socialist People's Party (SF).

A second aspect of my background is that both my mother and father came from upper-middle class families with names going back to resourceful immigrants. Carl August von Gleditsch was a German officer who served with the Danish-Norwegian army and was stationed in Norway from 1790. My mother was a Haslund, the name originating with two brothers who immigrated from Denmark in the middle of the 1700s.

A third aspect of my background is science. My father was a civil engineer, educated at Norges Tekniske Høyskole (NTH) in Trondheim, today a part of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). His oldest sister, Ellen Gleditsch, was Professor of Chemistry and Norway's second ever female professor.

My father, who probably could have pursued an academic career, left it when he became politically active. However, he returned to his old professional background when he became director of the Norwegian Geographical Survey after the Second World War. Both he and other family members took it for granted that I was going to study science. These are background factors that have shaped my life.

***You once told me that your godfather was none less than the first UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie. Why did you need a godfather? The labor movement, in which your parents were solidly planted, was usually critical of the church and often no friends of Christianity?***

You're right that the labor movement, and its left wing in particular, had a non-religious profile. For example, the famous Norwegian author, Arnulf Øverland, also a member of *Mot Dag*, gave a much-publicized lecture in 1933 called 'Christianity—the Tenth Plague'. However, when I was born, it was not unusual—even for the non-religious—to baptize their children and then leave it up to them to leave the church later, if they wanted to. Indeed, at the age of 15, this is precisely what I did, in one of my first political decisions.

But how did I become a member of the Norwegian church in the first place? Well, my parents worked for the Norwegian government in exile in England during World War II, and my mother worked for the then Norwegian Foreign Minister Trygve Lie. When Lie was told that my mother was pregnant and that her due date was close to his own birthday, he insisted that he should be my godfather. Lie was known for having strong persuasive abilities. Every Christmas after the war, 'uncle Trygve' sent me fifty kroner. I never told him, however, that one of the last times I used the money to buy a share in the left-oriented journal *Orientering*, which was in opposition to the foreign policies of the Norwegian Labor Party, not entirely to Trygve Lie's liking.

***How come your parents ended up in England during the war?***

After the German invasion of Norway in April 1940, my uncle Fredrik Haslund was asked to take charge of the evacuation of Norway's gold reserves. He asked my parents, among others, to assist him, and they helped to bring the gold to Tromsø, and later to England. My father, who had studied in France, was recruited as an interpreter for the French forces fighting the Germans in the Narvik campaign. As a result, he missed the last boat to England and had to travel around the globe—the other way!—to get to England. He walked across the border to Finland, then went

via Sweden through Russia and Japan. He was denied transit through the United States, and had to travel through Canada before finally reaching England. There he worked for the security service, and also on the preparation of maps of Norway for the eventuality of a ground invasion.

***So, you were born into an active, socialist/social-democratic upper middle-class family? But there must have been many conservatives in your environment?***

I cannot remember that I interacted a lot with conservatives ... although some relatives and some of my classmates' parents in the part of Oslo where I grew up must have been conservatives. But this was not something we talked about very much.

***You went to high school at the prestigious 'Katta' (Oslo Katedralskole)?***

I was just 13 when I went to high school, after starting primary school one year early. My parents were ambitious on my behalf, and their ambitions included expectations for a higher academic education, preferably in science. I was playing with the idea of studying chemistry, most likely inspired by my aunt, the professor of chemistry. But my interests quickly went in a different direction—social sciences.

***So, you started to study at the University of Oslo?***

Yes, I started up with some preliminary courses, including a couple in mathematics but, frankly, I was fed up with studying, and I got incredibly bad marks. I went to England with very vague plans about what to do there.

***I don't believe it! So, you did what is so popular these days—you took a gap year?***

You can call it that, if you like. During my high school years, I had become a member of a pacifist organization, Folkereising mot krig (FMK), the Norwegian section of War Resisters' International. In many ways, I think that I was more of a pacifist than a socialist.

In the spring of 1961, FMK asked me to be the Norwegian participant in a peace march from San Francisco to Moscow, organized by a US peace organization called Committee for Nonviolent Action. I joined the march in London, and we set out for Moscow. We were blocked twice from entering France, walked through Belgium and West Germany, entered East Germany, and arrived in East Berlin precisely when the construction of the Berlin Wall began. The East German authorities were not interested in having us there during at such a time of unrest, so we were sent back to West Germany. We started off again at the Polish border, from which point we walked to Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

[We] arrived in East Berlin precisely when the construction of the Berlin Wall began. The East German authorities were not interested in having us there during at such a time of unrest, so we were sent back to West Germany. We started off again at the Polish border, from which point we walked to Moscow.

I have asked myself several times: why was a US pacifist organization allowed to walk through Eastern Europe with a pacifist message? It may have been due in part to the fact that the group had walked for six months clear across the United States and in this way established some sort of credibility for not being a one-sided anti-Soviet initiative. Also, the Soviet Union seems to have adopted what I call the Lyndon B Johnson thesis: 'Better inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in'. The Soviets probably reckoned that they could control us.

***What happened in East Germany?***

We were scheduled to arrive in Berlin on 13 August 1961, which was when the East German government started to build the Berlin Wall. The authorities had found a way to delay us so that we would arrive in Berlin a bit later than originally scheduled. They fabricated an excuse that took us on a detour around the city of Berlin. Allegedly, we had to enter the capital of 'the workers' and peasants' state' first, before we entered 'revanchist' West Berlin.

When we arrived at the border between East Germany and East Berlin, our East German hosts told us that there were some disturbances in Berlin, so we could not go there. They had a bus, they said, that would take us to the Polish border.

***So, you were sent to Poland by bus?***

No, we refused. We insisted that we still intended to go to Berlin and to get there by walking, not by bus. Our East German so-called supporters carried us onto the bus, which took us to Helmstedt on the West German border, and then we were dumped there. We made it to West Berlin on an ordinary transit visa and waited for a few days, before a bus took us to Poland. From there, we walked to Moscow.

***Was it in connection with this march that you met Johan Galtung? Did he participate as well?***

Johan Galtung was then the chair of FMK, which had sponsored my participation. There were costs for such things as food and transportation etc., even though we generally slept on the floor in schools and assembly halls. When I returned home, FMK organized a public meeting, where I and other participants talked about the march to Moscow. This meeting was led by Johan Galtung, and it was there that I got to know him.

At the same time, I met Tor Bjerkmann, another man of a great entrepreneurial spirit. He wanted to establish a new journal for FMK called Pax. From 1962, Johan was the editor, at least nominally. Tor was the assistant editor, and I was on the editorial committee and later became editor. Tor's ambitions grew. He wanted to start a publishing house, and in 1964 the first books from Pax publishing house saw daylight, with the three of us still involved in various ways.

***But when did you start your studies, and when and how did you come to PRIO?***

In 1959, Johan Galtung established PRIO as a section of the Institute for Social Research (ISF). Initially, not many people were attached to PRIO full time. Basically, it was Johan Galtung, his wife at the time Ingrid Eide, and Mari Holmboe Ruge. After



years of lobbying, public funding was secured from 1964. Johan hired two new research assistants, and I was one of them. By then, I had begun to study sociology at the University of Oslo.

***So, your research career started as Johan Galtung's research assistant before you had completed any of your studies?***

Yes, and after a while, I embarked on a degree in sociology. After some discussion back and forth with Johan, who had many ongoing projects, we settled for a project on international interaction, and international aviation specifically. We coded all international flights, using a thick book *ABC World Airways Guide*, which contained all international flight schedules.

***What do you mean by coding?***

We recorded which countries were connected through international flights. An inspiration for the project was Galtung's observation that if, for instance, you travel from one country in Latin America to another, it is often easier to travel via the United States. This is an example of what Galtung called the feudal structure of interaction; you go from the periphery to the top of the hierarchy, and then back to the periphery. If you had to go from the capital of Colombia to the capital of Venezuela, it might be easier to fly via Miami than to find a direct flight.

***And this is what your thesis degree was about?***

Yes, among other things. Some of my left-wing friends thought the choice of topic was weird. They wondered why I didn't rather write about imperialism or the Vietnam War. But I comforted myself with the knowledge that a leading left-wing socialist politician, Berge Furre, a friend of mine from our days in student politics, had written a history thesis on the Norwegian dairy cooperatives. If Berge could write about agricultural cooperatives, then I could write about airline schedules!

***Why did you choose sociology?***

For me, sociology was the natural choice. This was partly because Johan Galtung was a sociologist, but also because sociology at that time seemed more progressive than political science. In Norway, sociology had started to use quantitative data and statistical methods. Political science was more traditional, a mixture of law, history and political theory. This changed later, and I eventually 'converted' to political science. But in the middle of the 1960s, sociology was, for me, the obvious choice.

So, with Johan Galtung as my supervisor and mentor and, after a year at the University of Michigan, I completed my sociology degree at the University of Oslo in 1968. By now, Johan had launched an international career and was engaged in intensive scholarly globetrotting. But he was full of ideas and a very generous mentor for young social scientists.

These also included aspiring peace researchers in the other Nordic countries, like Peter Wallensteen, who later became the Dag Hammarskjöld Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at the Uppsala University and who established the Department of Peace and Conflict Research there. And Håkan Wiberg, who came to play an

important role within Swedish as well as Danish peace research. Both had Johan Galtung as their main mentor (see Chap. 9).

***To summarize, we have now reached the end of the 1960s. PRIO has existed for ten years, but it is still a small institute?***

In 1966, PRIO became a fully independent institute. We had grown because several researchers had received funding from the Council for Conflict and Peace and the Research Council for Science and the Humanities (Norges Almenvitenskapelige Forskningsråd). These included—in alphabetical order!—Egil Fossum, Ottar Hellevik, Helge Hveem, Tord Høivik, and Per Olav Reinton. Others, like Asbjørn Eide, participated in research projects at PRIO, but held positions at the University of Oslo.

***The 1960s may be characterized as a period of calm before the storm. In the 1970s, the political radicalism of PRIO researchers—with you in the vanguard—was thrust into the limelight.***

Before we move into the turbulent 1970s, I would like to underline two important things: Firstly, in 1969, the University of Oslo had responded to numerous calls and established a professorship in peace and conflict studies. Johan Galtung was appointed to the position. He still took part in research activities at PRIO, but stepped down as director. To fill his shoes, PRIO established an arrangement whereby the institute would be headed by an elected leader on a rotating basis. First came Asbjørn Eide in 1970, then Helge Hveem in 1971, and then me in 1972. This strengthened PRIO's independence, as we had to stand on our own feet, and not only live in the shadow of Galtung's fame (see Chaps. 6 and 8).

In addition, the 1968 student revolt had a great impact on all of us, not only in terms of politics in general, but also by affecting attitudes to peace research. Suddenly, it drew criticism for being 'bourgeois'. In its analyses of conflict, peace research dealt with the oppressors and the oppressed on a symmetrical basis instead of clearly identifying itself with the oppressed. At the same time, peace research was more concerned with the East–West conflict and seemed to ignore the North–South conflict. In response to such criticism, Johan Galtung started to re-orient his research.

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First, he introduced the term 'structural violence'. He still defined peace as the absence of violence, but now focused on different forms of violence. One form of violence is 'direct violence', as—for instance—if I hit you or if a country attacks another. But then there is also 'structural violence', which leads to people dying

because they lack resources, even though there are sufficient resources available globally. In other words, the violence is caused by the social structure. If people die because there is an uneven distribution of food or because the political system fails, then it is structural violence. Johan Galtung presented this idea in an article ‘Violence, Peace and Peace Research’ in *Journal of Peace Research* in 1969. By September 2020, this was JPR’s most cited article. In 1971, he published his article, ‘A Structural Theory of Imperialism’, also in *Journal of Peace Research*. For many years, this was his most cited article.

Two years later, he published his most-cited article ever, ‘A Structural Theory of Imperialism’, also in *Journal of Peace Research*. This re-orientation also influenced the research program at PRIO. Initially, it opened up new and exciting areas for peace research. But it also led PRIO into several projects with a rather peripheral connection to peace research, and the field seemed to lose some of its identity.

We had a project, for instance, where the theory of imperialism was used on Norwegian regional policy. This somewhat wide approach was later narrowed down, even though PRIO might still endorse projects with a rather loose connection to peace research.

*We have now been through two major themes: (1) your childhood, family background and youth; and (2) when, how and why you came to PRIO and your relationship to PRIO’s founder Johan Galtung. Now we have come to a third wide-ranging theme: (3) the political radicalization in the 1970s, and what I have named your ‘historical–critical period’, for want of a more precise term.*

*When I came to PRIO in 1984, you were (in)famous—a public figure in Norway. For years, newspapers, radio and television had been covering your various research projects, along with the media storm that they stirred, and finally the 1981 trial in which you were convicted of a violation of national security. Even I—with my background from the Salvation Army and other evangelical environments—knew who Nils Petter Gleditsch was, long before I dreamt of setting foot in PRIO. Moreover, PRIO was regarded as a leftist institute inhabited by radical hippies. Two—partly inter-linked—sub-themes need to be addressed here: (1) the internal governing structure at PRIO; and (2) the fight against secrecy, including the content of the secrecy—to what extent Norway was a part of US nuclear strategy.*

*So, let us start with the governing structure at PRIO. In a so-called ‘flat’ structure, there was an institute leader, elected on a rotating basis from among PRIO’s permanent research staff. There was the staff meeting, which constituted the highest decision-making body, and a secretary who had a top salary—and then, eventually increasing unrest and opposition toward a system that all of you had participated in creating. What was all this about, and why did it cause so much trouble?*

When Johan Galtung left PRIO in order to become professor of conflict and peace research at the University of Oslo, there was no obvious candidate to inherit his mantle. So, Asbjørn Eide, the oldest of us, became the director in 1970. However, strong egalitarian currents were emerging, and they led us to decide that the director should be elected among the research staff for one year at a time.

We even changed the Norwegian title from direktør (director) to instituttbestyrer (institute leader), although we still used the form executive director in English. Helge Hveem became the head of PRIO in 1971, I myself in 1972, Kjell Skjelsbæk in 1973–1974, Ole Kristian Holthe in 1975–1976, and then I again in 1977–1978. It continued like this until 1986, when Sverre Lodgaard returned from a long leave of absence at SIPRI in Stockholm and became director for two three-year terms.

Staff meetings were not unusual at the time. This practice was common in many research institutes. Johan had used such meetings to inform the staff about his whereabouts and other happenings and to ask the staff for advice. But after a while, a desire to give the staff meeting more formal power emerged.

Consequently, PRIO's statutes were changed, making the staff meeting the highest decision-making body, relegating PRIO's board to a more controlling and advisory function—almost reducing it to a subordinate body. In reality, though, the board had only in a formal sense been above Johan Galtung.

Then, in 1971, the question about salaries was raised. This issue came up because there was a difference between the salaries paid to PRIO staff members by the Research Council for Science and the Humanities and the Council for Conflict and Peace Research. Should not this disparity be harmonized?

These employees had the same positions and did the same work at PRIO. And then someone, I cannot remember who, raised the broader question of equality: should not *all* salaries at PRIO be harmonized? In the 1970s, this idea was not far-fetched, and it gained ground. However, it was not obvious how to reorganize the salary structure.

The result of our internal discussion was not that everyone got the same salary. Instead, a common 17-step ladder was established, where education played a role in determining where you started out on the ladder, while advancement was based uniquely on seniority. With higher education, you would start out somewhere in the middle of the ladder. If you were a secretary, with less education, your starting position would be lower down on the ladder.

However, because seniority was the only way up the ladder; a secretary who chose to stay for many years at PRIO would reach the top and receive a higher salary than a researcher with low seniority. The system was financed by an internal taxation mechanism, which harmonized the salaries fixed by external funders by transferring parts of salaries from some of the staff to others. This system was accepted by everyone. It says a lot about its robustness that it survived for 15 years.

However, despite much egalitarian rhetoric, no other academic institution followed PRIO's example. In the 1980s, support for egalitarian principles waned and personal ambitions grew among the researchers. Several withdrew their commitment to the egalitarian salary system and decision-making procedures. This led to unpleasant internal strife. So, the system was abolished in 1986, as a precondition for Sverre Lodgaard to return to PRIO and take up the position of director. He demanded to come to a cleared table (see Chaps. 10 and 19).

*I came to PRIO in 1984, and this coincided with the period when all of these egalitarian arrangements were abolished. If I have understood you correctly: all*

***PRIO staff initially supported the elected, rotating institute leadership, the staff meeting as PRIO's highest body, and the egalitarian salary system, and thought these were good arrangements from a governing, political and ideological point of view—well suited to the radical 1970s. But after a while, it became apparent that researchers like Asbjørn Eide, Helge Hveem, Sverre Lodgaard and Marek Thee no longer supported these arrangements?***

These four withdrew their support. Tord Høivik and I still supported the system. It would not have been possible to introduce such arrangements at PRIO in the early 1970s if it did not have near-unanimous support from the research staff. All of this was based on ideology, inspired by the radical currents in the 1970s. Such ideas were shared by many in academic life.

Another factor that favored the egalitarian tradition in decision-making was that our research was—and still is—to a large degree driven by individual curiosity. It is not as if a big boss tells you, 'here's a project, now you are going to do this'. It is the individual researcher who most often initiates the project and struggles to get it funded.

The initiative comes from below, from the researchers, and they also run their projects themselves. Consequently, it is not such a far-fetched idea that the researchers should also decide and run the entire institute. As long as you abide by the law and do nothing that is illegal, the staff meeting should decide, and the board should only have a controlling function. I am proud that we managed to get the authorities to accept our radical salary system. The trick was to conclude a collective wage agreement. All our staff joined the civil servants' union (Norsk Tjenestemannslag). Our counterpart in the wage negotiations was the employer, and that was the staff meeting! So, the same people were on both sides of the negotiations, but in different roles. The wage agreement was signed by the institute leader, on behalf of the staff meeting, and by the leader of the local branch of the trade union, who was never the same person. This system was eventually recognized by the authorities.

[O]ur research was – and still is – to a large degree driven by individual curiosity. It is not as if a big boss tells you, 'here's a project, now you are going to do this'. It is the individual researcher who most often initiates the project and struggles to get it funded.

***Would you say that you supported these radical principles longer than the other researchers at PRIO?***

That's right. Among the six researchers with permanent positions, four withdrew their support from the system around 1980. Then, in the middle of the 1980s, Tord Høivik changed his mind. I tried to persuade him and the others to continue with the flat structure, and I probably used some harsh words that I should have avoided, but it was in any case a lost cause.

***We have now definitively reached the peak of your academic—and public—life: the struggle against secrecy, which includes of course the object of this secrecy—to what extent Norway was a part of the American nuclear strategy and which Norwegian politicians knew or did not know about this highly sensitive issue. This is a complicated matter, so I suggest that you inform us step by step about both stages: first, the one beginning in 1971, and then the stage from February 1979. The first part of the drama was about Omega and Loran-C, Anders Hellebust, the Schei report and a book published by Pax.***

As you say, we were fighting a battle on two fronts: On the first, it was important to us to convey to the public that Norway was more integrated into the United States' nuclear strategy than the Norwegian government wanted to admit. My main target was actually not the Norwegian membership of NATO, but the bilateral relationship between Norway and the United States. On the second front, we were fighting against exaggerated secrecy in Norway, where military information was routinely classified even though it could be found in open sources in the US. Politically, like many other leftists, I was opposed to Norway's membership in NATO. We were above all critical of the nuclear doctrine which allowed a possible first strike. Omega was the first concrete case that I worked with.

### ***What was Omega?***

Omega was a US system for global navigation, which became operative in the beginning of the 1970s. The very-long-frequency radio waves from Omega could pass through water and the system was therefore suitable for sending signals to submarines in a submerged position. I was made aware of this through correspondence with some people in New Zealand, who had contacted an American friend of mine at SIPRI in Stockholm. The New Zealanders had concluded that Omega had been deployed in order to send navigation signals to strategic submarines with nuclear weapons directed against targets in the Soviet Union.

Why did the submarines need this? Because when a long-range missile is fired from a submarine at sea, rather than from a land base, the submarine does not know precisely where it is. It needs advanced systems of navigation in order for its missiles to hit even extended targets such as Leningrad or Moscow. When I started to look into this, I found that the Norwegian government decision to permit the building of an Omega station in Norway had been made in the absence of any public debate. This was surprising, given that the Omega station could integrate Norway directly into US nuclear strategy.

***What is fascinating with you is how you come to be interested in such topics in the first place. You talk to an American researcher at SIPRI who knows someone in New Zealand—and then, you start reading Norwegian Parliament documents to figure out whether this had caused any debate in Norway ... right?***

I had been interested in Norwegian alliance policy for some time, and I had written a book together with Sverre Lodgaard called *Krigsstaten Norge* (Norway, the Warfare

State). I also knew something about such topics from home. As director of the Norwegian Geographical Survey, my father was upset because the mapping of Norway had been changed due to military considerations. Coverage of two poorly mapped areas, in Sunnmøre and in Setesdal, was postponed because NATO and the US wanted newer and better maps in other and militarily more important parts of Norway. Prioritization of Norway's own mapping was thus to a large degree dictated by US military considerations.

When I learned about Omega, I thought that here we had another example of military considerations getting first priority. But to what degree did such projects influence Norwegian security? After all, they were in support of missile submarines with nuclear warheads. Ten years earlier—at the end of the 1950s—there had been a huge public debate about whether Norway should permit peacetime stationing of nuclear weapons. The conclusion was a 'no'. Now I thought that Norway was perhaps indirectly contributing to American nuclear strategy through the Omega system, and I asked this question in an op-ed in *Dagbladet* [a major Norwegian newspaper].

***Nothing more happened, I believe, until Anders Hellebust showed up at the next stage of the story?***

Anders Hellebust was a former Secretary General of the Conservative Party's youth organization. He had graduated from the Defence College (Krigsskolen), and he now worked for military intelligence. However, the Norwegian military wanted its staff to acquire higher academic education. For this reason, his employer sponsored Hellebust to take a graduate degree in political science.

For his thesis, he chose to write on the development of military infrastructure in Norway, with three cases: Omega, Loran-C, and the decision to locate Trondheim airport at Værnes. When Anders contacted me, I was obviously interested in his topic.

Loran-C was also a navigation system, but it had shorter range and its low frequency signals did not go as deeply into the sea as Omega. Two Loran-C stations had been built in Norway in the 1958–1960 period. Neither we in Norway nor our contacts in New Zealand knew about this. But after a while, I started to cooperate with one of the New Zealanders, Owen Wilkes, who was more familiar with military navigation systems than I was. Later I brought him to PRIO.

We found that although Omega was initially meant to help the submarines navigate, it was not accurate enough to allow missiles to be properly targeted. Then we discovered that the Loran-C stations in Norway were built as a part of the US strategic submarine program. Specifically, they were meant to contribute to precise navigation for the Polaris submarines, the first generation of submarines carrying long-range ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads.

Two Loran-C stations were built on Norwegian soil—one in Bø in Vesterålen and one on Jan Mayen island. By interviewing a number of officials in Norway, Anders Hellebust concluded that the building of these two stations were built in support of the Polaris program. Through technical journals like *Journal of Navigation* and hearings in the US Congress on the defense budget, Owen Wilkes unearthed information that substantiated this claim.

In 1966, the United States had passed a Freedom of Information Act which permitted the public to request the declassification and release of documents from government agencies. After the Watergate scandal and all the revelations of misconduct by US intelligence, the law had been strengthened and had become a very important tool for extracting information from US sources. We contacted various US government agencies with requests for the release of documents on Loran-C and other military systems of relevance for Norway.

[W]e discovered that the Loran-C stations in Norway were built as a part of the US strategic submarine program. Specifically, they were meant to contribute to precise navigation for the Polaris submarines, the first generation of submarines carrying long-range ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads.

In the first pile of documents we received from the US Department of State, there were several minutes from conversations between the US Ambassador to Norway and Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvard Lange. But everything concerning the Polaris program had been blanked out, except the headline on the very first telegram. It read: 'Subject: Polaris Program'. We moved on from there and were able to get more information released.

In the meantime, in 1974, Anders Hellebust's dissertation had been completed, and he wanted to publish his main findings. They were published in a major article in the Labor Party newspaper *Arbeiderbladet*. The article created a huge stir, not least because of Anders Hellebust's military position. This outdid—by a wide margin—an op-ed in *Dagbladet* by a leftist peace researcher like me.

The Norwegian authorities made an unsuccessful attempt at collecting all copies of Hellebust's dissertation, but I made extra copies and handed them over to members of parliament and others, in order to prevent the dissertation from 'disappearing'. This was, of course, before the days of the internet, where everything can easily be distributed worldwide.

The uproar caused by the dissertation's findings was so loud that the government found it necessary to begin a formal inquiry into the whole affair, led by a committee headed by Supreme Court Judge Andreas Schei. Professor of History Magne Skodvin was also a member of the committee.

The committee concluded that in 1958, when the first Loran-C station had been built, no one in Norway knew that it was related to the Polaris program. In 1960, though, the Americans found out that the coverage from the existing stations did not provide sufficient accuracy. Consequently, and in a hurry, a new station was built on Jan Mayen. When the building of this new station was approved by Norway, the government's security committee received some information about the Polaris program.

Among others, Einar Gerhardsen, Prime Minister at the time, had noted that it would be possible for Norway to 'help with defensive arrangements of this kind'. In other words, the use of nuclear weapons was seen as a defensive arrangement.



The report from the inquiry was classified and only an unclassified summary was released to the public. In this version, the sensitive reference to strategic submarines had been excised. The report concluded that the decision-making process had been satisfactory, and that there were no grounds for criticism.

However, all members of the Norwegian parliament (Stortinget) received the full, classified version of the report. Before it was discussed in parliament, Finn Gustavsen, an MP from the Socialist Left Party (SV) consulted me. He asked me to read the classified report. I pointed out the sensitive issues, as well as where and why the edited, censored, report was misleading. But how could we get this information out to a broader audience?

The debate in parliament would take place behind closed doors. First, a small leak appeared in the Socialist Left Party's newspaper *Ny Tid*, probably due to another member of parliament from the Socialist Left Party. Then I decided that I wanted to get the entire classified report published. I managed to obtain a copy of Finn Gustavsen's copy of the report, put a lot of work into removing his comments in the margins, and then released a copy to Pax publishing house.

***You copied a classified report on your own initiative?***

I understood, of course, that copying a classified report was controversial, and might even be deemed to be illegal. The classified report was published as a book and all the classified sections were marked, so that readers could see what had been removed from the published summary. A vertical line and an H [for '*hemmelig*', meaning 'secret' in Norwegian] pointed out all the most sensitive sections.

This made for very intriguing reading. I did not at the time admit publicly that I was the source of the release of the classified report, but I wrote a postscript to the book. In 2009, in Gudleiv Forr's book *Strid og fred*, written for PRIO's 50th anniversary, I finally confirmed my direct responsibility for publishing the secret report.

I understood, of course, that copying a classified report was controversial, and might even be deemed to be illegal. The classified report was published as a book [...] This made for very intriguing reading.

***To put it mildly, there are more intriguing details to this story. Pax published the Schei report as a book on the same day as the two parliamentarians Finn Gustavsen and Berge Furre started to read aloud from the secret report?***

The two of them decided to breach their duty of secrecy, and the party organized a public meeting in Oslo where they read aloud from the classified report to a large audience. They did not know that the book would be published at the same time.

***Because that was a result of your personal decision. Your work behind the scenes?***

This was a result of my independent initiative. Finn Gustavsen said many years later that he had not understood that it was his copy of the report that had been copied. The Minister of Defense quickly went public with a statement that the publication of the classified report did not pose a risk to national security. As a consequence, there was no basis for any trial against anyone involved in publishing the book.

However, the politically sensitive question at the core of this story is: did the Labor government, including Foreign Minister Lange, know why the US wanted a Loran-C station built in Norway in 1958?

On 19 May 1958 the US Ambassador [Frances E Willis] visited Halvard Lange with an urgent request: the US wanted to build a Loran-C station in Norway. She told Lange that this was related to the Polaris program. In the telegram she sent to the State Department after the meeting, she affirmed that she had only said this verbally to Lange. Nothing about Polaris had been included in the written memorandum she handed to him. The Schei committee cited this memo extensively, and there was nothing in it about the Polaris program.

But because Owen Wilkes and I used the US Freedom of Information Act to get access to the correspondence between the US Embassy and the State Department, we found confirmation that Polaris had indeed been mentioned in the meeting. We also found that, in 1960, the same Ambassador came to Lange and asked for permission to have one more station built, in the Jan Mayen island. In a second meeting on this request, Lange if this was related to the program they had discussed two years earlier. Thus, it seems that Lange either remembered the previous discussion or had a memo of his own about it. And it was this information—in 1960—that finally found its way to the government's security committee.<sup>2</sup>

What remains unclear is how many people Lange shared this information with in 1958. Did he inform Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen, or did he not? Anders Hellebust concluded in his dissertation that Norwegian civil servants had misled the politicians, since many officials were aware of the connection between the Loran-C and the Polaris program. However, Hellebust did not at that stage know that Halvard Lange had been informed by the US Ambassador.

My interpretation is different from Hellebust's: this was cleared at the top political level. If anyone was misleading anyone, it was Halvard Lange who misled the rest of the government. But this we do not know. It has not been possible to verify. But it was definitely not a case of civil servants leading the politicians astray.

My interpretation is [that] this was cleared at the top political level. If anyone was misleading anyone, it was Halvard Lange who misled the rest of the government. But this we do not know. It has not been possible to verify.

***I imagine that the more sensitive part of this story is linked to Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen's speech at the NATO meeting in 1957. In this speech, he proposed***

***postponing the decision over whether bases for intermediate-range nuclear missiles should be established in Europe. It is also linked to the Labor Party's decision at its National Convention in 1961 that nuclear weapons should not be deployed on Norwegian soil in peace time.***

Yes, and with explicit reference to Gerhardsen's 1957 NATO speech, the so-called Easter Revolt took place in 1958, when a majority of the Labor Party's parliamentarians signed a petition initiated by socialist students against the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe.

Obviously, when the US Ambassador shortly after the Easter Revolt asked Halvard Lange for permission to build a navigation station in Norway that was related to strategic nuclear weapons, this was very sensitive. So, I understand perfectly well that he kept this secret, but ...

***... this was unacceptable to the peace researcher Nils Petter Gleditsch?***

At least 19 years later it was.

***So, you decided to reveal something that was highly politically sensitive? You wanted to disclose these secrets as you saw them as a breach of Norwegian nuclear and base policy?***

At least undermining it. When it was revealed that Norway had participated in a project that was related to strategic nuclear weapons, this created a stir. But the political elite in Norway were unapologetic. They were in favor of this arrangement. I have always claimed that the main reason for this was that the politicians saw this as a kind of exchange: Norway is a member of NATO, and we receive our military protection from the United States.

So, to a certain degree, we live under the US nuclear umbrella. It is not surprising then that the US wants something in return: they want help from Norway and other member states to maintain the nuclear deterrent. But the Norwegian political elite was reluctant to admit that this was the case.

***The second part of this drama started in February 1979?***

Actually, it started a little earlier. After we had been working with Loran-C and Omega, we looked around for other projects and installations in Norway that might be connected to US nuclear strategy. Then we were inspired by the so-called 'lists case'. Ivar Johansen was an activist in the peace movement. He had gathered a lot of material on the Norwegian intelligence services and had mapped out where several military intelligence stations were situated by using the phone book, the number of votes in ballots in certain sections of the civil servants' trade union published in their journal *Tjenestemannsbladet*, as well as other sources.

He and several others were put on trial accused of a violation of the national security clauses in the Norwegian penal code. We were asked to testify in the trial and wanted to follow up and use the same methods as Ivar Johansen. We did so a bit more systematically and recorded our findings in detail. Among other things, we visited the office where Televerket (the national phone company) held their collection

of old telephone directories in order to find out when the various stations started up. We just perused the catalogues and worked our way backward until they appeared.

***These were military installations?***

They were installations for various kinds of signal intelligence, radio signals, and other forms of electronic information. In Karasjok in the far North, we found a station registering radioactive fallout from nuclear tests. They were generally listed in the phone book as ‘Defense stations’.

***Did you travel around to take a closer look at these stations?***

Yes, we did. As a point of departure, we reckoned that what could be seen from publicly available places could be regarded as open sources. Then we combined what we were able to see with information from military handbooks, technical journals, and US congressional hearings. We wrote a report as a basis for my testimony as a witness called by the defense lawyers. The idea was to show that the information that Ivar Johansen and others had collected could not be characterized as secret. The detailed report was released just before I went to testify at the trial. Two years later, the report was published in a book, *Onkel Sams kaniner* (Uncle Sam’s Rabbits<sup>3</sup>) by Pax.

All hell broke loose. We were accused of being traitors, and very few dared to support us—or at least to say so in public. Since Norway’s policy on foreign bases precluded the establishment of foreign military bases in Norway in peacetime, Norwegian authorities remained cautious about allowing too many US military personnel to stay in Norway at the same time.

Therefore, these stations were mostly operated by Norwegian personnel, although they were built on US initiatives, and the operating expenditures were fully funded by the US. We assumed that the collected data were transmitted directly to the US. We also tried—on the basis of military and technical literature—to assess what military function each station might have, and we came up with the hypothesis that one of them tapped radio traffic from foreign embassies in Norway. All of this was basically unknown to the Norwegian public.

However, when the report was published, it also caused major problems at PRIO. The majority of the researchers were strongly critical of our report. They were the same people who by then were opposed to the egalitarian salary system and who were critical of my role in getting it prolonged. Therefore, the publication of the report exacerbated the polarization at PRIO.

It was suggested that I should take an unpaid leave of absence; luckily, I turned this proposal down, and decided to ride out the storm. Those days were difficult and tough. In retrospect, I can see that I had not been sufficiently careful to inform the other researchers at PRIO about what we were doing. In addition, there was a genuine fear among several of my colleagues that PRIO would suffer, politically and even economically.

***So, you found yourself in the eye of the storm, internally at PRIO as well as beyond?***

Definitely! After a while, I was called for questioning by the police, and then both Owen Wilkes and I were formally charged with violating the penal code provisions on national security. It took well over two years before our case came to trial in May 1981.

***As you saw it, what created this storm was that you had put together publicly available information, using open sources?***

The crucial point was that even though each piece of information was publicly known, when the pieces were put together a picture emerged that had to be kept secret, according to the government, out of concern for national security. This was the so-called ‘pieces of the puzzle’ principle. On its own, each piece was innocuous, but put together they created a picture that was classified as secret. Before the ‘lists case’ and our case, the puzzle principle had been invoked in the national security cases against Soviet spies, in 1954 and in 1968. In both cases, the accused were found guilty, and their convictions were upheld by the Norwegian Supreme Court.

As I saw it, the principle was highly problematic, whether seen from a perspective of freedom of speech or freedom of research. As noted, in 1979, few people supported our view. However, when our case came to court in 1981, public opinion had changed to some degree. Some parliamentarians, like Reiulf Steen (who had just stepped down as leader of the Labor Party) and former parliamentarian Gunnar Garbo from the Liberal Party, supported us. So did some newspapers, which agreed that the puzzle principle was problematic.

However, we had done one thing that was actually more directly illegal: we had taken pictures and drawn sketches of the antennas we could see from publicly accessible places, and compared them with the ones we could find in *Jane's Military Communications* and other handbooks. This was in breach of another law, a law on military secrets from 1914. At these places, there were signs saying that the law on military secrets was applicable. I have to admit that I had never bothered to read the law on military secrets because I regarded it as being of no interest.

It was first when I understood that we actually would go to trial that I realized that technically we had broken the law. Normally, such a violation of this particular law would not have led to a very severe reaction. But when this violation was combined with the puzzle principle, the prosecution had a stronger case for applying the national security sections of the penal code. As one of our sources was illegally obtained, the combination of publicly available information was no longer the only issue.

We managed to contribute to the debate about official secrecy. But regrettably, we did not manage to generate much discussion about the extensive intelligence activities that were taking place on Norwegian soil, funded by the United States for strategic purposes, outside of the NATO framework. In Oslo City court we received a suspended sentence, six months in jail, and we had to pay the legal costs.

***Because of the report on intelligence stations, right?***

The sentence was appealed by us as well as by the prosecution. The case came up for the Supreme Court eight months later. The city court verdict was upheld, but two of the five judges voted for an unconditional prison term.<sup>4</sup> The money for the fine and court costs was collected by our supporters.

***What was it like to be in the eye of the storm—how did you cope? It must have been a burden on your shoulders, and for PRIO, too, which after the trial was branded as a hippie, radical, spy institute?***

There were moments when I wondered whether PRIO would be shut down as a result. It soon became clear that the Labor government would not withdraw the public funding for PRIO. But in the autumn of 1981, Norway got a new Conservative government. The Ministry of Culture and Research appointed a committee to evaluate Norwegian research in international relations and peace. The mandate of the committee was not designed to shut down PRIO. In its recommendations, the committee made several critical comments about PRIO, including criticism about its governing structure. But the criticisms did not point out any major problems. We had been nervous that it might. And it was a heavy burden for me, of course it was. I should not pretend that I'm tougher than I am.

***These must have been trying times for you personally. After all, your colleagues at PRIO criticized you publicly. You must have felt stabbed in the back by your colleagues and employer? I find this rather extraordinary ...***

But I also had support from many at PRIO. And this public dissociation from a majority of PRIO's tenured researchers could be seen as an attempt to protect PRIO and make sure that the public criticism would only target me. In a way, this could be seen as successful because the government's financial support to PRIO was not cut off even though I was put on trial and convicted.

***But still, you must have felt betrayed and stabbed in the back?***

Yes, but in retrospect I see that I should have kept my colleagues better informed about my activities.

***But were they not informed about your research projects? Did they not know what you were up to?***

Of course they knew, in particular Sverre Lodgaard, with whom I had cooperated closely on various publications about Norway's base and nuclear policy.<sup>5</sup> But I think that when they saw the report and how detailed it was, they were genuinely surprised. If they had known beforehand, I might have been advised to cut some detail, making the report just tolerable for Norwegian authorities. This might have been sound advice.

Anyhow, this was the only time in my career that I became a public figure in Norway to the extent that my name appeared on humor pages and in newspaper

quizzes. In one, readers were asked: ‘Who is Chief of Defense in Norway: Sverre Hamre, Sven Hauge or Nils Petter Gleditsch?’<sup>6</sup>

*You were indeed a public figure. Even in my Christian, bourgeois town of Drammen, everyone knew who you were, including me. Long before I knew that I would come to PRIO and have you as my supervisor, I may not have known who the Chief of Defense was, but I certainly knew that it wasn't you.*

*I will never forget that, in the summer of 1984, I sent a letter to Haakon Lie (Secretary of the Labor Party 1945–1969) asking for an interview. After weeks with no answer, I acquired the courage to call him. Before I even got the opportunity to explain why I wanted to interview him, he abruptly said: ‘I know who you are, I have read your letter. I will not talk to anyone coming from that institute and certainly not the so-called researcher Nils Petter Gleditsch’. ‘That’s my supervisor’, I answered, and quickly added: ‘But you have never talked to me.’ ‘Right’, Haakon Lie said. ‘That doesn’t make it any better,’ and hung up.*

*Three minutes later, the phone rang in my office, and when I heard the voice, I almost fell off my chair: ‘Hi Hilde, it’s Haakon. I have been thinking about what you said about PRIO and that I had never talked to you. Please, come to see me at once, before I change my mind?’.*

*After challenging extensive government secrecy and US strategic operations on Norwegian soil, your research moved away from this critical examination of the recent past? You started to work with the economic consequences of disarmament, and did so for the next ten–fifteen years, until you delved into the research area where you are now best known internationally: democracy and peace. You became a quantitative political scientist and made a huge breakthrough as an internationally recognized, topnotch researcher?*

Much of this happened in parallel. The economic consequences of disarmament was a topic where PRIO had done some work in the mid-1960s. At the end of the 1970s, this topic returned to the public agenda, particularly in the United Nations, which focused on the relationship between disarmament and development.

I now think that tying development to disarmament was a dead end, but the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was very interested in it. This opened up a source of research funding, and I published several articles and two books together with Olav Bjerkholt and Ådne Cappelen at Statistics Norway (SSB).<sup>7</sup> You know, I have always had a tendency to work on many things at the same time and have been criticized for spreading my research interests too thinly.

*I would like to add that the rest of us at PRIO, behind your back, always talked about ‘Nils Petter time’, as opposed to normal time. The reason was that you always work long hours and get more done and published than the rest of us. But I*

***digress! To return to your conversion to a quantitative political scientist exploring the democracy-and-peace theme, when, how and why did all this start?***

In 1991, I was asked to step in for Peter Wallensteen for three months. He was Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, and he was going on a sabbatical abroad. I had already been playing with the idea of returning to the core area of peace research: the study of armed conflict.

Peace researchers in Uppsala had been collecting data on armed conflict, though they only had data for a few years. Another problem was that they had no threshold for the amount of violence needed to categorize a dispute as an ‘armed conflict’. Therefore, Uppsala’s list of armed conflicts included some with only one fatality or ‘probably one fatality’. Some of their best students were working on this project, and we agreed it made sense to set a threshold of 25 battle deaths in one calendar year. Peter Wallensteen agreed as well, and that became the norm. As editor of *Journal of Peace Research*, I took the initiative to publish an annual update of data on armed conflicts.

The problem that remained, was the short time series, so there was little basis for looking at trends over time. However, a few years later the economist Paul Collier was appointed head of development research at the World Bank and started an ambitious project on civil war. PRIO was associated with that project and we received funding to expand the conflict data and in close association with Uppsala backdated the time series to 1946.

The idea was to create a new standard tool for empirical research on armed conflict. The field already had the data from the Correlates of War Project, but they covered only conflicts with a minimum of an accumulated thousand deaths over its full duration. We wanted a much lower threshold (25) in order to include more conflicts into the dataset, and we used the calendar year as our time limit, counting conflicts as ‘active’ only in years when they reached the 25 battle deaths threshold.

The article where we launched our new dataset, published in 2002, is by far my most frequently cited work. It is also the most cited article by Peter Wallensteen, in the *Journal of Peace Research* and by anyone at PRIO. The dataset became a standard tool, and researchers cite our article as a reference article for the dataset.<sup>8</sup>

Another thing connected with my stay in Uppsala turned out to have long-lasting implications. As part of a research seminar series, I decided to give a lecture on democracy and peace. I had been a bit reluctant to accept the thesis that democracies do not go to war against each other. However, when I read up on it I eventually concluded that the thesis was quite plausible.

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Work that I published with my research assistant Håvard Hegre—who today holds the Dag Hammarskjöld professorship in peace and conflict research at Uppsala University—generated a lot of interest. Our results were published just as the debate about the democratic peace really came to the fore.

*This gradual change of your research interests probably also had to do with how you—as a political human being—were influenced by the changes in international politics at the end of Cold War... new themes came up under new conditions ...*

Yes and no. For me, this was partly a return to my earlier use of statistically oriented approaches.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the end of the Cold War led to an increased understanding of what has been named ‘liberal theories’ on international politics, and a declining emphasis on power politics which had dominated the so-called ‘realist school’.

*As a result of all this, a huge number of publications written by you or under your leadership and supervision, many of them in the Journal of Peace Research where you were editor from 1983 to 2010, linked democracy and peace, studied civil war, climate changes and conflict—and more.*

After the end of the Cold War, there was renewed interest in the study of civil war. For years, peace research had mostly focused on inter-state conflict, perhaps since the Cold War raised the specter of a gigantic interstate conflict between East and West. But the number of interstate wars went down during the Cold War, while the number of civil wars increased and remained high even after the end of the Cold War, with several civil wars in the former Yugoslavia. Consequently, most battle deaths now occurred in civil wars.

Of course, the Korean War and the Vietnam War—the two bloodiest wars after the Second World War—also started as civil wars. In 2001, when the Research Council of Norway announced new funding for ‘Centers of Excellence’, we decided to apply for support for a ‘Centre for the Study of Civil War’. This turned out to be a winner and the Center was established at PRIO, led by my colleague Scott Gates. This led to the recruitment of many new prominent researchers, and many outstanding publications in the following ten-year period.

*But this was your international breakthrough as researcher?*

Yes, you might say that. PRIO was already well known among leading international peace and conflict researchers. But it was a bit like ‘there is something going on in Norway as well’. From the beginning of the 1990s onward, our research was taken seriously internationally and accepted as an important contribution on its own merits and not only as a ‘Norwegian contribution’, as it is sometimes called in Norwegian journal articles. And *Journal of Peace Research* regained much of the prestige it had had in its first years, when it had been among the very few journals dealing systematically with issues of war and peace and had published several groundbreaking articles by Johan Galtung.

***You were the driver behind much of this research internationally. Suddenly, researchers all over the world looked to the Journal of Peace Research, to PRIO—and to you. And in this context, I don't know how you do it, but you have this tremendous ability—or instinct—for picking up the most talented young people for your projects.***

Well, that's something I may have picked up from Johan Galtung, who was a mentor for my generation. But it is probably also related to limited ability to say no. When people come to my office, I am reluctant to say, 'sorry, I have no time, I have a lot of work to do', instead of listening to what they have to say. One example is Indra de Soysa, now professor of political science at NTNU in Trondheim. At the end of the 1990s, the reception at PRIO called me one day and said: 'There is a guy from Sri Lanka who would like to talk to you.' Our initial conversation led to years of fruitful cooperation. This goes for several people, whom I have 'picked up', to use your wording.

***Well, I am another example. And there are several people you can add to the list of young aspiring historians who all had you as their supervisor: Stein Tønnesson, Tor Egil Førland, Olav Njølstad, Nils Ivar Agøy, Odd Arne Westad, and others!***

I cannot take any credit for Stein Tønnesson or Odd Arne Westad. Their supervisors at PRIO were Marek Thee and Tord Høivik ...

***OK, minus Stein and Odd Arne, but what about all the people you recruited to quantitative political science?***

Oh, that is related to something else that happened in 1991. One day, Ola Listhaug from NTNU came into my office and said that he was going to start up studies in political science in Trondheim. Like me, Listhaug was a sociologist who had converted to political science. He sought my advice as to whom I could recommend as applicants to the new positions. There was also a part-time chair (Professor II) in international relations.

After some discussion, Ola asked if I wouldn't consider applying myself. I answered, as was true, that I did not even have the foundation course (grunnfag) in political science, but Ola Listhaug said that this did not matter. I got the position and created a new course called 'causes of war'. To our surprise, there were lots of students in Trondheim who were interested in international relations generally and war and peace specifically. Several of them, such as Helga Malmin Binningsbø, Halvard Buhaug, Ragnhild Nordås, Siri Aas Rustad, Håvard Strand, and Gudrun Østby (again, in alphabetical order!) were at some point recruited to PRIO.

***What about PRIO's current director, Henrik Urdal?***

That is a different story. He was a student in Oslo and had decided that he had spent enough time in politics—among other things, he had been secretary of the Socialist Left youth organization—and he needed to find a suitable topic for his master's thesis. So, I suggested a theme that suited his background as a demographer. I knew of him because he had worked as a researcher in Statistics Norway SSB, where my

wife had been his boss. I have occasionally teased my wife by telling her that I stole one of her most skillful recruits (see the introduction to this volume).

*Well, I insist that what you call coincidence, is a knack for recruiting clever researchers. You know, I have never escaped from your little green felt-tip pen, correcting everything I wrote, giving valuable comments, down to where I should put the comma. You understood structure, you understood how to make an argument, you understood what I had the necessary evidence to claim or not, and you understood the importance of publishing internationally long before most others in academia in Norway. I remember you told me: ‘Hilde, your Norwegian books are good, but now you must stop writing in Norwegian and publish your findings in English-language journals internationally.’ In addition, you stressed the importance of getting research funded.*

I agree as far as international publication is concerned. I was keen to get our work out to the international research community.

*To conclude: is it a coincidence that your research can be divided into phases that coincide with political developments internationally?*

No, that is no coincidence. We have talked about democracy and peace, and if you read my older publications, you will find very little about democracy, but a lot about equality, justice, and peace. The idea of a liberal peace, built on ties through international trade, became a major theme in peace research at the end of the 1990s. I was actually skeptical in the beginning, even after I had embraced the idea of a democratic peace.

But I have come to realize that economic cooperation and development are important drivers of peace. Therefore, I have moved in the direction of supporting liberal principles. I find it difficult today to call myself a socialist given all the crimes that have been committed in the name of socialism. However, I have no problem calling myself a social democrat. The idea of the liberal peace was followed, for some, by the capitalist peace. The reasoning is that a market economy is a precondition for democracy, and market economies are a precondition for economic cooperation internationally.

I have actually tried to launch a new formula for stable peace, ‘the social democratic peace’, combining democracy, a strong state, economic development, international political and economic cooperation, and non-discrimination of minorities. I think this makes a lot of sense as a policy, but I must admit that as a slogan that it has fallen flat.

*If you look at the political realities, the wind does not seem to be blowing in the direction of a social democratic peace.*

At least not as a political program. In 2016, when I published my book on a more peaceful world,<sup>10</sup> which in many ways may be regarded as my intellectual testament, I had learned that when you publish a book you need to promote it actively. I managed to publish three op-eds on themes from the book in leading outlets like *Aftenposten*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, and *forskning.no*.

But my fourth op-ed was rejected. It was about the social democratic peace, which I sent to the labor newspaper *Dagsavisen*. I never got it published. It is still on my hard disk in the ‘unpublished’ folder.

***Thank you very much, Nils Petter.***

## Notes

1. For an account by two historians, see Günter Wernicke & Lawrence S Wittner (1999) ‘Lifting the Iron Curtain: The Peace March to Moscow of 1960–1961’. *International History Review* 21(4): 899–917.
2. For more detail, see Owen Wilkes & Nils Petter Gleditsch (1987) *Loran-C and Omega: A Study of the Military Importance of Radio Navigation Aids*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, in electronic form at urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\_digibok\_2016062708041.
3. The staff of the largest signals intelligence station, in Vadsø, were locally known as ‘rabbits’, presumably because they had ‘long ears’.
4. Nils Petter Gleditsch (ed.) (1981) *The Oslo Rabbit Trial: A Record of the ‘National Security Trial’ against Owen Wilkes and Nils Petter Gleditsch in the Oslo Town Court, May 1981*. Oslo: Solidarity Campaign for Gleditsch and Wilkes and Nils Petter Gleditsch (ed.) (1982) *Round Two: The Norwegian Supreme Court vs Gleditsch & Wilkes*. Oslo: PRIO.
5. Nils Petter Gleditsch, Sverre Lodgaard, Owen Wilkes & Ingvar Botnen (1978) *Norge i atomstrategien* [Norway in the Nuclear strategy]. Oslo: Pax, available in electronic form at urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\_digibok\_2007070204070.
6. Sverre Hamre was Chief of Defense in Norway 1977–82 and testified in the trial against Owen Wilkes and Nils Petter Gleditsch. He was succeeded by Sven Hauge (1982–84).
7. Nils Petter Gleditsch, Olav Bjerkholt & Ådne Cappelen (1994) *The Wages of Peace: Disarmament in a Small Industrialized Economy*. London: SAGE, in electronic form at urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\_digibok\_2016110148064 and Nils Petter Gleditsch, Olav Bjerkholt, Ådne Cappelen, Ron P Smith & J Paul Dunne (eds) (1996) *The Peace Dividend*. In: *Contributions to Economic Analysis*, 235. Amsterdam: North-Holland, in electronic form at [www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/book/10.1108/S0573-8555%281996%29235](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/book/10.1108/S0573-8555%281996%29235).
8. Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallenstein, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg & Håvard Strand (2002) ‘Armed conflict 1946–2001: A new dataset’. *Journal of Peace Research* 39(5): 615–637.
9. See, for example, Nils Petter Gleditsch (1969) ‘The international airline network: A test of the Zipf and Stouffer hypotheses’. *Papers, Peace Research Society (International)* 11: 123–153.
10. Nils Petter Gleditsch (2016) *Mot en mer fredelig verden?* [Towards a More Peaceful World?] Oslo: Pax.

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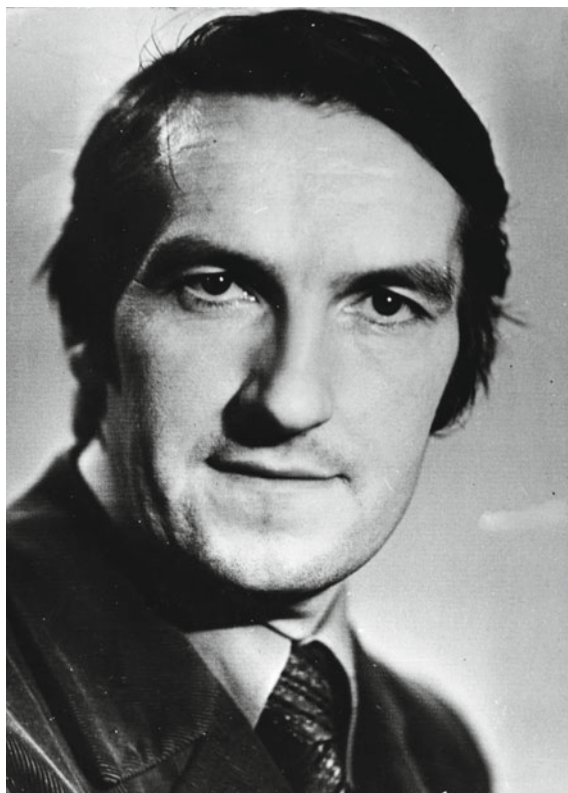


## Chapter 6

# Peace with a Human Rights Perspective: Asbjørn Eide



Interviewed by Helge Øystein Pharo



Asbjørn Eide in 1973 © NTB/Scanpix

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*Former PRIO Director Asbjørn Eide was only seven years old when he experienced war at first hand. In a surprise attack on the morning of 9 April 1940, the Germans began to invade Norway. As a result, Norwegian forces in the Bergen area retreated eastwards towards Voss. At Bulken, the Germans were temporarily halted. They retaliated by firebombing Vossevangen. Within a few days, the Eide family found the situation so precarious that they left for Eksingedalen, somewhat west of Voss. After two days of walking through deep snow, they reached the family farm. In retrospect, Asbjørn Eide muses that his interest in the causes of conflict and how they may be prevented can probably be traced back to that harrowing experience of April 1940.*

*Asbjørn Eide came to PRIO as director in 1970 and worked at the institute until 1987. In 2018, I met with Asbjørn Eide in a temporarily vacant office at PRIO in downtown Oslo. We were greeted by younger PRIOites who appeared pleased at the appearance of two old timers joining forces at the Institute.*

**Helge Øystein Pharo:** *I understand that your family remained at Voss for the duration of the War and then moved east in 1946, settling in a rural area, Jessheim in Ullensaker, an hour or so north of Oslo. What was school like in these new surroundings?*

**Asbjørn Eide:** I completed primary school at Hovind school in Ullensaker, and then went on to a local junior high school (*realskole*). At the time there was no senior high school (*gymnas*) in the area where we lived, so I applied to and was accepted at Eidsvold Landsgymnas.

Eidsvold was too far away for me to live at home. I had to move there and rent a room there, as did most of the other students at Eidsvold. My parents were not well off, so I did struggle a bit to get by. I was awarded some modest scholarships and worked during the summers. All things considered, it worked out quite well. I graduated in 1952 as *preseterist* [from the Latin *prae ceteris*, praiseworthy above others].<sup>1</sup>

***Eidsvold was clearly intellectually stimulating. Did it also impact your thinking about issues of war and peace?***

Yes, the milieu encouraged intellectual debates both in class and in the student extracurricular clubs and the student assembly (*gymnassamfunnet*). As for my later academic interests, I remember an episode where we discussed the Korean War (1950–53), where I was supposed to have pronounced that the Americans would fight to the last Korean. I was very critical of the war and the role of the Americans in particular. However, the debates that took place, in particular in the student assembly, were pursued in an orderly and academic fashion. The years at Eidsvold quite clearly reinforced my interest in issues of war and peace. By the way, it dawned on me in later years when teaching in Washington D.C. and visiting the Korean War Memorials that this war was quite traumatic also for the Americans.

## Pre-PRIO Career

### *Did you go straight from high school to studying law?*

No, I joined the Army for 16 months of compulsory military service and spent one year in Germany in the Norwegian brigade that was part of the British occupation forces during 1952–53. The brigade was based in Flensburg close to the Dano-German border. That city was only moderately damaged, but even so we gained a clear understanding of the devastation caused by Hitler's war, and the poverty and distress that reigned in the occupation zone. Hamburg was something else, a city that had completely collapsed in ruins. After returning from the military I worked for a while as a lumberjack in the Løvenskiold forests far north in Nordmarka [the woods adjoining Oslo to the north] to finance my studies, and also as a bank clerk in the summer. I started law school in the autumn of 1954.<sup>2</sup>

### *When you started your undergraduate studies, were you then particularly concerned with international law and those fields that were later to be at the forefront for you as a researcher and teacher?*

No, not really. Starting out I was primarily concerned with finishing my studies on time. Subsequently I was drawn into student politics, and was elected leader of the Norwegian Student Union [at the time *Norsk studentsamband*, *Norsk studentunion* since 1964], a national organization created in the interwar years to cater for the interests of students at Norwegian universities and colleges. In 1961, the year after I completed law school, I was elected president of the Oslo University Student Assembly (Det norske studentersamfunn) [founded 1813], representing a centre-left coalition of two different socialist student associations, the Liberal student association and a number of political independents.

### *After your graduation in the spring of 1960, you worked in the Ministry of Justice for a year?*

Yes, I graduated at the top of my class, and was hired to fill a temporary position in the Legal Division of the Ministry. This is one of the most sought-after places to work for aspiring jurists. I had, however, no desire to remain there.

The following year, the Law Faculty at the University of Oslo approached me to enquire whether I would be interested in a position as university lecturer. I held this position from 1962 to 1965.<sup>3</sup> From 1965 to 1969 I held a University Fellowship, and during that period spent one year at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London and one year at Columbia University in New York. While in the Legal Division I worked on strictly Norwegian legal questions, so it was only in the following years that I moved into international law and human rights issues in particular.

I was strongly influenced by Torkel Opsahl, whom I suppose may be considered my mentor.<sup>4</sup> The two of us shared an interest in human rights and the role of international organizations in promoting and protecting human rights. At the time, I was particularly concerned with UN peacekeeping operations, and subsequently with international human rights protection. Torkel was a member of the Human Rights



Commission of the European Council and subsequently also of the UN Human Rights Committee. I believe he is the only one to have been a member of both. We also both engaged in the struggle against nuclear weapons in the early 1960s, and jointly authored the article 'Atomvåpnene i folkeretten, i FN og i NATO' ['Nuclear weapons in international law, in the UN and NATO'].<sup>5</sup> Our cooperation lasted until his untimely death in 1993.

## Attitudes to the Cold War

*First, let me ask: Despite your scepticism to—or rather opposition to—nuclear weapons, you were never an outright opponent of Norwegian NATO membership?<sup>6</sup>*

No, I was not actively engaged against membership, but I was certainly a sceptic. I tended to see the alliance as creating conflict rather than preventing it by means of deterrence.

Many years later, when I started to study in depth the dual origins of the Cold War, I came to understand more fully the origins of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, NATO's opponent involving Central and Eastern Europe.

I trace it back to January 6, 1941, when the newly re-elected President Franklin Roosevelt held his State of the Union address to the US Congress. There were two messages in that address, and the final part is the most celebrated. That final part contains the visions of a new world order to be created when World War II comes to an end. That part was subsequently followed up by the Atlantic Declaration, resulting from a meeting between Roosevelt and the Prime Minister of Great Britain in August 1941 and later pursued through the Declaration of the United Nations [a term chosen by Roosevelt] on January 1, 1942.

This became the origin of the United Nations, which initially was an alliance between the states that fought the Axis [consisting of Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany and the militarized and aggressive Japan together with some minor European powers].

The crucial point in this context is that when the United Nations was established at the San Francisco conference in 1945, one of its main purposes was—and is—to develop international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

It is on that basis that the United Nations has developed a comprehensive international human rights law, and it is to that purpose that I have devoted the main part of my academic and professional life.

The main part of Roosevelt's State of the Union address in January 1941 dealt with something entirely different: his efforts to persuade the US Congress to facilitate and finance a substantial armament build-up to be made available both to the US armed

forces and to those in need when resisting aggression. He proposed to establish what he called 'the arsenal of democracy'.

Since then, the United Nations has grown from encompassing 58 independent and sovereign states to 193 sovereign states, many of whom are not very democratic. To reach the intended aim of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights becoming a common standard of achievement is a long and tortuous road, but in my opinion very much worth pursuing.

The United States' 'arsenal of democracy' has grown enormously, and recipients have not always been democratic. On 20th June 1941, Hitler's Germany launched Operation Barbarossa. The US supplied the USSR with armaments under the 'lend and lease' act. The Soviet Union, on its side, took steps from 1944 to Sovietize Central and Eastern Europe. In the US, atomic weapons were created under the Manhattan project, and World War II came finally to an end through the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The 'arsenal of democracy' might from then on be perceived as a threat for the whole world.

The arms race appeared to have no end, and when the Soviet Union got the bomb, things just got worse. I and other activists who shared my views were preoccupied with the question of how to counteract the arms race. We literally thought the MAD doctrine (Mutual Assured Destruction) was just that. We considered the balance of terror inherently unstable and feared that the arms race would end only when the parties to the East–West conflict had obliterated one another.

We considered the balance of terror inherently unstable and feared that the arms race would end only when the parties to the East-West conflict had obliterated one another. This was one of my main concerns when I joined PRIO.

This was one of my main concerns when I joined PRIO. Peace researchers were doing important studies on the dynamics of the arms race in order to increase the public awareness of a potential nuclear war. On the one hand, I had a hope that peacekeeping could prevent the great nuclear powers from becoming involved in major wars, and on the other hand that the promotion of human rights could help stabilize the new states emerging out of colonization (1960–1970) and that central and Eastern European countries could be liberated from the USSR's imperial/socialist design, which these states did in 1989–1990.

***I suppose, then, that you also shared other views held by the Norwegian foreign policy opposition, which gradually evolved from the 1950s and were to become part and parcel of Norwegian foreign policy, such as development aid, support for decolonization, and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa?***

Yes, that is absolutely the case. For a while I chaired the Norwegian Anti-Apartheid movement.<sup>7</sup> As for decolonization, in the early 1960s I started my work on the UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>8</sup> I was particularly interested in the Congo conflict and how Western states and companies tried to maintain their positions in their former colonies. Prominent among them was the Belgian company Union Minière

(UNIMIN) in Katanga. UNIMIN played a most negative role in the new state, and may even have been partly responsible for the crash of the airplane carrying Secretary General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld. At that time, and on several later occasions, I had contact with the Norwegian military officer Bjørn Egge, who had spent time in the Congo in his capacity as intelligence specialist and worked there to establish an intelligence arm of the UN peacekeeping forces.<sup>9</sup>

## The New International Economic Order (NIEO)

*As I understand it, you have maintained your interest in the economic development of new states in the post–World War II era, in terms of development aid and more broadly North–South relations? And I understand that you are strongly of the opinion that economic development is a prerequisite for institutionalizing and securing human rights?*

I think this has to be discussed in somewhat separate parts. In the first place, I have long been concerned with human rights and our relationship with the new states. And I have analyzed the demand for a New International Economic Order from a human rights perspective. I am absolutely of the opinion that the observation of human rights is a precondition for development. This must be linked to the fact that when, from the mid 1960s, the demand for a NIEO was raised partly because the terms of trade between the industrialized states and those wanting to industrialize were extremely unfavourable for the latter.

The NIEO may also be seen as a matter of justice. As for human rights in what used to be called the Third World, I have maintained my interest. I noticed Steven Jensen's recent book and his emphasizing the role of Jamaica in promoting both decolonization and human rights within the UN.<sup>10</sup>

*Norway was an early enthusiast for development aid and launched a project to India in 1952. By the early 1970s, in terms of relative aid contributions, Norway had moved to the forefront of donors together with Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands—the so-called 'likeminded states'. PRIO researchers were enthusiastic, if at times critical, supporters of Norwegian aid policies, and even wanted to proceed further along the road to the NIEO, and to see Norway move quickly dismantle protection against Third World exports, from shipping to textiles.*

*I, along with most historians dealing with Norway and the NIEO, was quite sceptical of on the one hand Norwegian willingness to dismantle protectionist measures and on the other of the possibility for the NIEO to be accepted by the major Western powers. This was our view of the possibilities even before Margaret Thatcher became British prime minister in 1979 and Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States in 1980.*

*During an interview I made with Thorvald Stoltenberg, at different times a Labour Party Secretary and Undersecretary of State, he acknowledged the protectionist problem. He still maintained that he did believe in the NIEO until Thatcher and*

***Reagan. Did you think the NIEO was within reach before the conservative/liberalist wave starting in the late 1970s? Did you see the discrepancy between NIEO support and Norwegian protectionism?***

As many academic NIEO supporters, I obviously noticed the discrepancy between Norwegian principles and Norwegian protectionism. As most Norwegians working in this field, I realized that increasing transfers was easier than dismantling quotas and tariff barriers and other kinds of protection for Norwegian industries.

On the other hand, I was persuaded until Thatcher and Reagan that NIEO was conceivable. I believed that even the Americans and the Germans, as a result of civil society pressure, would eventually come to accept the NIEO. Of course, I don't know the details of Thorvald Stoltenberg's reasoning, but I think that both he and I essentially thought that international public opinion would in the end tilt even the major powers towards a version of the NIEO.

Reagan and Thatcher were instrumental in putting an end to the dreams of a new economic world order, but, of course, the process was helped along by the debt crisis of the 1980s, and Mexico's default. I did not write much about those issues at the time. I have since discussed the different stages of globalization, economic development and the need for increasing standards of living in the new states as preconditions both for the observance of human rights in these states and for the development of a more peaceful international society. At the same time, I have become increasingly concerned with promoting an understanding that these are not fully developed states, and that these processes inevitably take time.

***So over the years you have reached more sober conclusions as to what may be achieved in the short run with regard to both human rights and economic development in the new states?***

Yes, I am afraid so. The problems of development and human rights were immensely complicated in themselves, and were aggravated by the machinations of both the great powers and multinational companies promoting their own interests during and certainly also after the Cold War.

## **Specializing in Human Rights**

***You have worked widely in the field of international human rights—as a scholar, as an activist and as a member of numerous international commissions?***

Yes, that is true. A number of influences put me on this road. While I held the university fellowship I completed a major paper on the international human rights system and the consequences that ratification of these conventions had for Norway.

This work would form part of the basis for the work I did that led to *Storingsmelding 93 (1976–1977)*, which was the first government white paper ever on Norway and international human rights. Foreign Minister Knut Frydenlund had initially wanted Torkel Opsahl to do it, but he could not find the time, so he asked

me instead to prepare the general background paper on the international system of protection of human rights.

In retrospect, I believe that this work was what put me firmly on the path to being a human rights scholar and activist. Torkel and I had also cooperated in preparing the 7th Nobel Symposium in 1967, which Torkel had proposed. This symposium brought together a number of key persons working on human rights issues. I was asked to be the rapporteur of the symposium and to produce the book, which I edited jointly with the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, August Schou.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, my year at Columbia University had kindled my interest in human rights issues as well. Columbia was home to many human rights scholars. I made quite close contact with Leland Goodrich, who in 1949 together with Edvard Hambro published the *Charter of the United Nations: Commentary and Documents*.<sup>12</sup> I also over the years was in quite close contact with Hambro.

As regards the importance of human rights for peace research, I find it pertinent to point out that the Preamble to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights states very clearly that human rights require protection by law in order that man in the last resort shall not be forced to rebel against tyrants and repression. The rule of law and democracy must be promoted.

I had become convinced that in order to come to grips with the manifold internal conflicts in many parts of the world, the promotion of human rights was one important avenue. I wanted to understand societal change and how to influence it. I wanted to convert my academic learning into socially useful work.

At quite an early stage, I established close and extensive contact with Amnesty International and its Secretary General Martin Ennals (1929–1991). We joined forces to put together a system of documentation regarding human rights. We named it Huridocs, Human Rights Documentation System. I had become convinced that in order to come to grips with the manifold internal conflicts in many parts of the world, the promotion of human rights was one important avenue. That gave meaning to the work I had engaged in. I wanted to understand societal change and how to influence it. I wanted to convert my academic learning into socially useful work.

## Human Rights in International Affairs

### *How closely were you involved in the formulation of Norwegian responses to the Helsinki process from 1975 onwards?*

I considered the Helsinki process a most constructive one. The initiative was Willy Brandt's through his Ostpolitik. We had, of course, a particular affinity for Brandt because of his past as an almost Norwegian, a political refugee from Hitler's Germany to Norway in the 1930s, and then later Mayor of West Berlin and German Chancellor and leader of the Social Democratic Party. We greatly appreciated his efforts, and

discussed it quite frequently with Jan Erik Helgesen (1947–), who was the one of us who most frequently attended the Helsinki process meetings.

Torkel Opsahl, Jan Helgesen and myself constituted a trio of jurists who were strongly engaged in the human rights issues, and who provided the Foreign Ministry with much needed expertise in the field. My recollection is that Jan was the key person on our part, even though at a later stage I also cooperated closely with Bjørn Engesland (1961–), who was later to become Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.<sup>13</sup> Helgesen was very much part of the post-Helsinki processes on the part of Norway.

As for myself, I was quite active in the processes at the tail end of the Cold War. I had some very interesting sojourns in Moscow during the Gorbachev era, as the Russians also looked to Scandinavia as a model for an alternative socio-political system. But then, of course, came Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. Frequently what we think would be desirable for others does not come to pass.

But, I will say, we were immensely cheered by the election of Jimmy Carter to the US presidency in 1976, and by his advocacy of human rights. He was a most welcome antidote to his Republican predecessors Richard M. Nixon (1969–1974) and Gerald Ford (1974–1977). The former in particular had engaged in close cooperation with reactionary and extremist political forces in South America, Chile first and foremost. In our opinion, Carter converted the efforts for the promotion of international human rights into a basic principle in international politics, and clearly forced the pace of the international efforts to promote human rights.

*I have supervised two MA students who did their theses on Norway and the Helsinki process. Both of them found that Norway was at best quite diffident with regard to human rights in the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc more generally. However, as you were not really into the Helsinki process negotiations, we shall not pursue that question. I think we should rather proceed to look at your role in other fields of international human rights efforts, and the role of the threesome: Opsahl, Helgesen and yourself.*

Opsahl, as I said, was very broadly engaged in international human rights work, both as an academic and as a member of both the European Council Human Rights Commission and the UN Human Rights Committee—I believe he is the only one to have been a member of both. As I mentioned, he died suddenly in 1993 in Geneva, while working on the investigations of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. He was also the first chair of the Board of the Norwegian Human Rights Institute.

Jan Helgesen has kept working on human rights issues in Europe, and in particular in the former Soviet bloc. He is a member of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights while also attached to the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo.

As for myself, I proceeded along several different tracks. I kept up cooperation with Torkel Opsahl and Jan Helgesen regarding research, teaching and documentation of human rights issues within a Norwegian context. After a major UNESCO conference in Vienna in 1978, the three of us launched what we called the ‘Norwegian human rights project’. This would eventually lead in 1987 to the establishment

of the Norwegian Human Rights Institute [which later became a Centre under the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo]. I shall return to that.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, I was involved in work with Amnesty International, and attended some Pugwash conferences, also with Sean McBride who was awarded the Peace Prize in 1974 for his efforts in Amnesty and for human rights work more generally.

NGO work was important to me. However, my main preoccupation was with three international institutions: The International Human Rights Institute in Strasbourg; the UN Sub-Commission for Human Rights; and the European Council's Advisory Committee for the protection of minorities. The International Human Rights Institute was established in 1968, with the initial funding coming from Rene Cassin's Nobel Peace Prize award that same year. I came to that Institute by way of my close contact in UNESCO, the Czech refugee Karel Vlasek. He was a student in Paris at the time of the Prague coup in 1948, and he immediately jumped ship and came to work for UNESCO. He took the initiative for setting up the Strasbourg Institute, which has been broadly engaged in teaching within the field of human rights. I have myself taught there. Strasbourg was selected to be the site for the Institute because that is where the European Council's human rights efforts are concentrated. Vlasek had a very wide-ranging network of contacts, which over the years has been very useful for me. As we are living in quite a small world, I assume that Torkel Opsahl was the Nobel Committee consultant who wrote about Cassin.

## **Minorities and Indigenous Peoples**

From the early 1980s, I engaged ever more strongly in questions concerning the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. In 1981 I was selected to be a member of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, more commonly known as the UN Sub-Commission for Human Rights. It was composed of 27 academic experts distributed regionally between Western Europe and others (including the US, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America, and Africa).

I was re-elected to the UN Sub-Commission several times so I was a member for some 20 years, and in hindsight these were the most productive years of my life. The Commission developed into what in reality was a think-tank on human rights within the UN system. The members were mostly, but not exclusively, experts who acted independently of their own national states. The rest of us put some mild pressure on those who did not.

While a member of the Sub-Commission, I proposed that the UN establish a working group for issues related to indigenous peoples, and I was elected its first chair in 1982–1983. When after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union many serious ethnic conflicts broke out, I produced a study for the Sub-Commission on “peaceful and constructive ways to solve minority problems”, where I had great benefits from my intimate knowledge of peace research.

As a consequence of my report, the UN established a working group for the protection of minorities, which I chaired from 1995 to 2004. For a period, I also chaired the European Council's Advisory Committee for the protection of minorities. Much of my subsequent research is based on the insights gained as chair of those committees at the UN and the Council of Europe.

*You were at the centre of processes dealing with indigenous peoples and minorities in the UN and the European Council for nearly 30 years. In your own opinion, to what degree was this position due to your own interest and engagement in these issues, and your academic qualifications in particular, and to what degree do you think that it was due to Norwegian political involvement?*

*In other words, to what degree do you think the Norwegian Foreign Ministry pushed your candidacy for these positions?*

As in many such instances, I believe it to be a matter of both. My academic qualifications and my engagement, my belief that such conflicts had to be dealt with both for the benefit of the peoples directly concerned and for the broader issues of peaceful development, were clearly very important.

To what extent the Norwegian Foreign Ministry as such pushed my candidacy, I don't really know. I am quite sure, however, that Jan Egeland, first in his capacity as personal adviser to Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg, and later as Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry, played an important role in these matters. Egeland in the 1980s had been a key person at the Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva, as well as in Amnesty International. I strongly believe he played a crucial role in promoting my candidacy once he was in a position to do so.<sup>14</sup>

## **The Accidental PRIOite**

*I believe it is time we return to your career at PRIO, and not the least to the question of why you joined PRIO in the first place.*

*Furthermore, how did your main research interests fit in with mainstream PRIO interests? Finally, we should touch upon your decision to leave PRIO for the new human rights institute.*

First, to set the stage, so to speak. From about the mid-1960s, I did attend a number of PRIO seminars that I found quite exciting. I thought Johan Galtung a most engaging lecturer, but did not really get to know him at that time. I also found the activities of the so-called Peace Academy quite interesting. These were lectures taking place at PRIO, partly by PRIO researchers and partly by outsiders. The Peace Academy was not a PRIO activity proper, but run by the activist and actor couple Sonja Lid Larssen (1933–) and Lars Andreas Larssen (1935–2014). They were highly motivated and extremely energetic, Sonja in particular. A wide range of people attended, one of



them being Bjørn Egge with whom, as I said, I had discussed UN peacekeeping operations.

At that time, my research interests were fairly closely aligned with mainstream PRIO interests, such as UN and peacekeeping operations, the linkage of war, conflict and poverty, and nuclear weapons and the arms race. My interest in human rights and international law possibly set me a bit apart, but not significantly so.

What prompted me to join PRIO was not, however, my research interests. My move there was due to the fact that Johan Galtung in 1969 was appointed to the recently established chair in peace and conflict studies at the University of Oslo. PRIO then needed a new director to replace him, and Galtung asked me to take on the job, even though we hardly knew one another.

***I must confess that I was a bit surprised when I read this in Gudleiv Forr's presentation of this transfer of responsibility.<sup>15</sup> You had no previous PRIO engagements or experience and your academic interests did set you a bit apart from mainstream PRIO.***

***On the other hand, as I mulled it over a bit, it dawned on me that other initial members of PRIO had gone elsewhere by this time. Arne Martin Klausen to the Ethnographic Museum and Mari Holmboe Ruge to the Research Council. Thus, I concluded that PRIO at a turbulent time needed a steady hand at the helm. Even so, I wondered: why not Nils Petter Gleditsch? He is an extremely well-organized person (see Chap. 5).***

I suppose I had the reputation of being a capable administrator as well as researcher. There were many enthusiasts at PRIO, and not all of them equally well organized. As for Nils Petter, he certainly was. Whether Johan had asked him to take over, I really do not know. It is, of course, conceivable, and it is equally conceivable that Nils Petter would have replied that he would rather concentrate on his research, where he has indeed excelled.

Possibly, it had to do with age as well as proven experience. At 37, I was considerably older than the new cohort of PRIO researchers, such as Nils Petter Gleditsch, Kjell Skjelsbæk, Tord Høivik and Helge Hveem. They were all in their late twenties. Galtung, of course, had been very much an absentee director, travelling the world. It was to a degree a matter of establishing administrative routines and financial control, making sure everything was running properly.

***Even so, trying to run PRIO must have been quite challenging in the 1970s and into the 1980s. You were director in 1970 and institute leader from 1980–1981. Your second time around was at a particularly turbulent time, in the aftermath of the Loran-C case and with the ongoing Gleditsch/Wilkes case?***

I had actually forgotten about my term as institute leader. It is some time ago, after all. We all faced the turbulence, institute leaders, researchers and support staff. Some of the conflicts were of a serious character for both individual researchers and the Institute, others less so. Some were entirely of our own making, others only partly so, where outsiders fanned the flames.

To a degree, I believe the turbulence was due on the one hand to the pursuit of research projects that were politically easily flammable, and on the other hand to the willingness of outside critics to use such projects to undermine PRIO's existence altogether. At that time, peace research was still a field that provoked criticism from many quarters.

Our somewhat peculiar decision-making system—with the strong role of the general meeting, and not the least the flat wage structure—were problems we created for ourselves. On the other hand, these were pet concerns of the academic left at the time, and, however peculiar they may appear in retrospect, they were symbolically important. Despite quite pronounced misgivings, we all tagged along for quite some time, probably much longer than was sensible from an institutional point of view. Eventually, in the 1980s, PRIO transformed into an institution more like the other independent research institutes (see Chaps. 5, 10, 11 and 19).

I believe the turbulence was due on the one hand to the pursuit of research projects that were politically easily flammable, and on the other hand to the willingness of outside critics to use such projects to undermine PRIO's existence altogether.

*However, you are of the opinion that research-related issues were more important, and that the turbulence was due as much to outside detractors as to the actual research projects themselves?*

*PRIO was—and not entirely without reason—characterized as politically quite leftist, and it was a widespread assumption among conservatives and more middle-of-the-road politicians and academics that the political preferences of the researchers tended to influence at least the topics chosen and possibly even the outcomes of research projects. Such was presumed to be the case with the Wilkes-Gleditsch project, and Anders Hellebust and Loran-C and Omega. It could be said also to extend to the critical analyses of Government and Labour policies with regard to EC membership, and Helge Hveem's investigation of Borregaard in Brazil (see Chaps. 5 and 8).*

Yes, many detractors tended to see these projects as at least politically motivated, and a smaller number considered them more as politics than research. My view, now as then, boils down to the idea—and this concerns mainly Wilkes-Gleditsch and Loran-C/Omega—that it was important for Norwegian public opinion to be properly informed about Norwegian foreign policy and intelligence operations.

PRIO and I were firmly in favour of more openness. Research in these areas is perfectly legitimate. We thought that, even if there are processes and issues that may require a certain degree of secrecy, in these cases the need for secrecy was considerably overrated. Different assessments of the need for such secrecy in intelligence

gathering and foreign policy making constituted the basis for one of my few disagreements with Bjørn Egge. The occasion was a lecture on the Pentagon Papers. Bjørn was very critical of the Pentagon Papers process and its release of secret information.

In the PRIO case, the thing to worry about was not, in my opinion, the research projects themselves, but the fact that critics of PRIO would exploit these projects to scale down funding or altogether eliminate PRIO from the Norwegian social science research map. Thus, as I saw it, our main concern was to strike a balance between a principled support for openness and access to relevant data, along with the institutional caveat that this not be carried so far as to constitute a threat to PRIO's existence.

*PRIO certainly was for many years an irritant to the establishment, even as most of the political establishment generally favoured peace research, and was not beyond basking in the pleasant sunshine of promoting such research, as Eva Fetscher has documented in her doctoral dissertation.*<sup>16</sup>

*On the other hand, even as PRIO has become more mainstream and increasingly taken on commissioned work for the Foreign Ministry, clashes have occurred at lower levels, concerning both the role of Ministry officials at the time of the establishment of the state of Israel and later regarding the Middle East peace process. In these cases, the butt of criticism has been Hilde H. Waage. These wrangles are of course more about the actions of officials than about Norwegian foreign and intelligence policies, but they still concern issues of openness and accountability.*

I was no longer at PRIO at the time of these important fights over openness. They were also less about the institution and more about the individual researcher. I certainly admire her work, and both then and now found the reactions of the Foreign Ministry officials somewhat misguided. As you say, even if these confrontations were at a different level, they were about openness and accountability. Fortunately, at least in the first instance, they did relent, even if not always gracefully.

*As we have touched upon, the political parties of the left and the centre-left were generally supportive of PRIO and peace research. At times they basked in its glow. Yet when push came to shove, political support was at times somewhat shaky, and PRIO activists were not necessarily very helpful.*

*On the other hand, PRIO had some avid supporters in academia. Gudleiv Forr deals at some length with what he dubs 'the gentlemen's club' (herreklubben), and Eva Fetscher has also analyzed its role in her dissertation. Did you find it as useful as Forr and Fetscher have presented it?*

Yes, the academic gentlemen (and women) were indeed very helpful. First and foremost, they included some law professors, such as Anders Bratholm and Thorstein Eckhoff. They functioned more as supporters in difficult times than as contributors to making PRIO policy, though they were most supportive at the time when the University of Oslo chair in peace and conflict studies was to be filled for the second

time after Galtung resigned in 1979. All things considered, however, they were more protectors in times of trouble than actual policy-makers.

As for the chair and Galtung's role at the University and at PRIO after he left, I do not recollect that we were disappointed that Johan did not include PRIO more in what was going on at the University at Blindern. He had always been on the move, so the change was not dramatic. However, after Johan resigned from the chair and Øyvind Østerud in 1980 was appointed to succeed him, disappointment was palpable. We had all rooted for Håkan Wiberg (1942–2010). We recognized that Øyvind was an excellent scholar, but we thought that his motivation to engage in applied peace research was somewhat lacking. We were right of course. He was definitely more of a detached international relations scholar than an activist peace researcher. The gentlemen's club engaged quite strongly on the part of Håkan.<sup>17</sup>

## Was PRIO Entirely Novel?

*By that time, you were in the process of moving away from PRIO. Human rights and minority rights were increasingly your primary interests, and that sort of legal scholarship was not a PRIO priority?*

From the late 1970s, Torkel, Jan and I had been thinking about establishing an institute to study promotion and education of human rights issues, and we did not think that PRIO was the most appropriate setting for this. We were concerned with research, documentation and the dissemination of knowledge of human rights issues, inspired by the work of UNESCO and the statutes of the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg, created as an outcome of the Nobel peace prize awarded to René Cassin, who—as mentioned—had been a central person in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

We were thinking about an independent research institute, along the lines of PRIO, but separate from it. We did not initially want to make it part of the Law Faculty of the University of Oslo. Norwegian jurisprudence, as Scandinavian more generally, was largely realist and positivist. To introduce human rights smacked of natural rights, hardly a winner at the time—though Torkel Opsahl was an enthusiastic supporter, of course—but otherwise the luminaries were not so enthusiastic.

For some time, we discussed the possibility of establishing a joint Nordic institute, similar to the Africa institute in Uppsala. There was a lot of Nordic cooperation during those years. In the end, however, we settled for separate Nordic centres, which later became the core of the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI). After human rights became part and parcel of Norwegian law, the Faculty to a degree changed its mind. The Institute for Human Rights initially started out as a Research Council institute. Subsequently, it was placed directly under the Board of the University of Oslo, and it only later became a centre of the Faculty of Law.

From the late 1970s, the Labour Party was in favour of setting it up, Foreign Minister Knut Frydenlund in particular. With the change of government in 1981,

however, the process stalled. The Conservative Minister of Culture Lars Roar Langslet was hesitant. I assume because human rights by this time did not only include civil and political but also social and economic rights. After Labour returned to power in 1986, the Institute was launched the following year (1987). That marked the end of my years at PRIO, and I became the first Director of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

In conclusion, I think it is fair to say that I was much attracted to PRIO—also before Johan asked me to take over as director. I shared most of the perceptions of Johan and the staff with regard to the causes of war and the preconditions for a more peaceful world. But obviously, with my interests being increasingly concentrated on human rights and gradually the protection of minorities and indigenous people, I was hardly mainstream PRIO. In that situation, I thought a separate institution would be a better arrangement for this important field of study.

*Having supervised a number of doctoral dissertations on the so-called Norwegian Peace Tradition, and also having been chair of the PRIO Board for a number of years, I am curious as to whether PRIO researchers, and Johan Galtung in particular, ever considered themselves as inheritors of the mantle of interwar peace intellectuals and activists linked above all to the Nobel Institute and the Christian Michelsen Institute.*

*These were the Peace Prize Laureate Christian Lous Lange, his son Halvard—later to become Foreign Minister—Foreign Ministry Advisor and professor of international history Arne Ordning, and not least Edvard Hambro, son of the Conservative Party doyen Carl Joachim, a prominent League of Nations proponent.*

*As I see it, there is no linkage between the post–World War II PRIO and the interwar activists, even though they were engaged in very much the same sort of activities, research, lecturing, dissemination of research findings, and the encouragement of public debate. While you were at PRIO, as far as you remember, did you or your colleagues consider that you might have had progenitors dating back to the interwar period?*

Frankly no. I, of course, had close contact with Edvard Hambro from my time at Columbia when he was ambassador to the United Nations and I had a scholarship at Columbia University in New York, but I hardly ever had much knowledge of the interwar efforts. To me, to the extent that I had any knowledge of them, the peace efforts of the interwar years did not seem relevant.

The world had changed fundamentally during World War II. The United Nations had transformed international law and the UN was a profoundly different outfit than the League of Nations. Human rights law had been included as a major purpose of the new organization. It was now a truly global organization through decolonization and in many other ways. The atomic bomb had fundamentally changed the armament problems, and decolonization had dramatically extended the world order to comprise every region of the world. I do not quite see how peace research could build on peace efforts during the interwar years.

I do not think that Johan would have considered these interwar efforts as relevant to his own work; as far as I can remember, he never mentioned them. I have no clue whether he was aware of what they had been doing. My opinion is that he thought of peace research as something entirely novel, and certainly with new methodologies. He was, of course, a most successful academic entrepreneur.

In retrospect, I myself can certainly see the similarities between the PRIO people and those of the interwar years in terms of the urge to contribute to making a better world by means of research and public information efforts. We certainly share the urge to make a personal effort. That, of course, was part of what drew me to PRIO, the individual's responsibility to be useful, and to make a difference. For me, it was important that the study of law would make it possible to make such a difference.

*Thank you very much, Asbjørn.*

## Notes

1. The system of *Landsgymnas* (country gymnasiums/high schools) was introduced gradually from 1916. Large areas of Norway were unable to provide secondary education not just locally, but also within a broader county context. The *Landsgymnas* catered in particular to the rural population and areas that were sparsely populated. Most students lived in rented rooms. The system was discontinued in the late 1960s, when the many *Landsgymnas* were converted into ordinary *Gymnas*, now '*videregående skoler*' – the last three years of high school. The *Landsgymnas* have been considered intellectual elite schools, and a significant proportion of their students went on to university.
2. Law students studied law only, just as students in the sciences and the humanities rarely crossed faculty borders.
3. This somewhat informal mode of hiring university lecturers was fairly common in the early 1960s, as both the number of students and the teaching staff increased dramatically.
4. Torkel Opsahl, 1931–1993, was only two years Eide's senior. He completed his law degree in 1955, and defended his doctoral dissertation in 1965. The same year he was appointed to the chair in constitutional and international law at the University of Oslo, succeeding the dean of Norwegian international law scholars, Frede Castberg. He was both an outstanding scholar and a human rights activist, serving on a large number of international commissions. He was also for a number of years an advisor to the Norwegian Nobel Committee.
5. In *Atomvåpen: kjensgjerninger og vurderinger* [Nuclear weapons: facts and opinions], ed. Mattis Mathisen, Protest mot atomvåpen [Campaign against nuclear weapons], 1963.
6. Asbjørn Eide has added some paragraphs in this section that were not included in the original oral interview.
7. Norwegian students' organizations were particularly engaged in Anti-Apartheid activities, and helped bring South Africans to Norway for studies. The most visible faces were those of Hans Beukes from today's Namibia, then Southwest Africa, who arrived in 1959 and studied economics, and Freddy Reddy, an Indian South African who arrived in Oslo by way of London in 1961.

- He became a medical student and eventually a psychiatrist, and was elected chair of Det norske studentersamfunn in 1966. The 1964 Davis Cup match in tennis between Norway and South Africa at Madserud in Oslo occasioned major demonstrations and violent clashes between police and Anti-Apartheid demonstrators. See Knut Einar Eriksen and Helge Ø. Pharo, *Kald krig og internasjonalisering, 1949–1965* [*Cold War and internationalization 1949–1965*], pp. 396–400, Oslo 1997.
8. The resulting publication: *FNs fredsbevarende aksjoner* [*UN peacekeeping operations*], Oslo 1966.
  9. Bjørn Egge, 1918–2017. A Norwegian army officer, who ended his career as a general and commanding officer of Akershus festning [emblematic Akershus fortress in Oslo]. He joined the Home Front after the 1940 German attack, was caught by the Germans, and spent several years in Sachsenhausen. He was an intelligence specialist, and later press spokesperson for the armed forces. After retiring from the Army, he served as President of the Norwegian Red Cross. Egge was one of the first Westerners to come to the scene of the plane crash, and with quite good evidence has since maintained that Hammarskjöld did not die in the crash, but survived and was killed by a shot to the head. The jury is still out in this case.
  10. Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights*, Cambridge 2016.
  11. *International Protection of Human Rights* (Nobel Symposium), Asbjørn Eide and August Schou (eds.), Stockholm 1968.
  12. Leland and Sons Ltd, New York. (Biografisk leksikon says Boston 1946, first edition).
  13. Jan Helgesen was Norwegian member of the European Commission for Democracy through Legislation (the Venice Commission) from its establishment in 1990, and served as its president 2007–2009, and Vice President till 2016. He became cand. jur. I 1975 and has taught legal methodology and international human rights at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, since 1971. He was much used as an advisor to Central and East European governments when they established new institutions after 1989.
  14. Jan Egeland, b. 1957. Son of the prominent Labour politician/academic Kjølvi Egeland, and possibly the most prominent human rights activist in Norway from the 1980s until the present. In his positions at NGOs as well as in the Labour governments of the 1990s, Egeland played a crucial role in promoting human rights issues in Norway and internationally. Egeland held a PRIO scholarship when he completed his political science M.Phil. (*magistergrad*) in 1985, at the time when Eide was still at PRIO, with the thesis *Impotent superpower – potent small state. Potentials and limitations of human rights objectives in the foreign policies of the United States and Norway*, PRIO report 1985, Oslo and Oxford 1988 (See also Chap. 15 in this volume).
  15. Gudleiv Forr, *Strid og fred. Fredsforskning i 50 år – PRIO 1959–2009*, Oslo: Pax 2009.

16. Eva Fetscher, *The Peace Prophet and the Iconoclast. The Chair in Conflict and Peace Research at the University of Oslo, 1963–1985*. PhD dissertation in History, University of Oslo 2013.
17. Eva Fetscher deals in considerable detail with the machinations of the pro-Wiberg forces, Øyvind Østerud in several conversations with the author clearly draws the line between research and activism.

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## Chapter 7

# The Lifelong Peace Advocate: Marek Thee (1918–99)



Portrayed by Marta Bivand Erdal



Marek Thee in 1990 © Marek Thee

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The opposite pole of globalisation is fragmentation—the exclusion of a majority of the world’s population from the benefits of human development, generating a frustrated drive to defensive postures in violent and suicidal ideologies of nationalism, ethnicity and political-religious fundamentalism. Fault-lines are erected across the globe both vertically and horizontally by economic and military power relations on the one hand, and by gross inequalities between the rich and the poor on the other hand. (Marek Thee, personal, forthcoming).<sup>1</sup>

In his personal and unpublished memoirs (to be published by Springer in 2022) *My Story: A Journey Through the 20th Century*, Marek Thee, in the late 1990s, soon before his death in 1999, reflects on the state of the world. He does so as a child of twentieth century Europe, but also to a significant extent as a child of the twentieth century world. His twentieth century perspective, as a historian by discipline, and a truth-seeking activist at heart, are strikingly accurate comments on the present, some twenty years after they were written.<sup>2</sup>

A professor of history from Warsaw, Poland, interested in international relations and peace, with diplomatic experience from both the Middle East and Indochina, Marek Thee arrived at PRIO in 1968. Marek Thee may not appear to be the typical ‘PRIOite’ of the 1960s, yet the impact of the Second World War on his life—on him—is something he shares with several other early PRIOites. He also shared with his fellow PRIOites a dedication to the possibility of peace, and a sense of activism that must have been an underlying impetus for him, driving him to work incredibly hard throughout his life, prior to and during his time at PRIO, as well as afterward.

Marek Thee would work at PRIO for some twenty years, not least as editor of the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* (later renamed *Security Dialogue*), briefly as Director (1981–1983), and as a researcher. He was just past his fiftieth birthday when he moved to Oslo, Norway, with his wife, Erna, and their two daughters, young women at the time, Maya and Halina. The following is the story of the human being Marek Thee, formative of the activist and the diplomat, the father and husband, the idealist and the researcher. In the words of Asbjørn Eide in the obituary he wrote for his close friend and long-time colleague, at PRIO and later at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights:

Marek Thee was a rare case of a person who, even in the most desperately difficult circumstances and in the face of severe adversity, managed to channel his intellect and analytical skill towards constructing solutions to the world’s conflicts and tensions.

## **From Childhood in Small-Town Poland to Youth Activist in Gdańsk [Danzig] (1918–1938)**

Marek Thee was born on 21 November 1918 in Rzeszów in what today is south-east Poland, about 150 km east of Kraków, in the region of Galicia, which was formerly a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. In Marek’s early childhood, he was surrounded by his father, mother, and an older brother. When describing his family’s material circumstances, Marek himself writes: *‘My family was of lower merchant*

*middle class which had to work hard for their livelihood. (...) The range of ideas at home was almost limited to prayers for being better off*' (personal, unpublished memoirs). When Marek was around 8 years old, his mother died. Not long after, his father remarried and then Marek's two younger sisters were born, Paulina and Halina. Later, Marek named his own daughter Halina, in remembrance of his youngest little sister.

Late in the 1920s, the whole family relocated from Rzeszów—a town with 23,700 inhabitants in 1910, and with nearly half the inhabitants in 1911 being Jews—to Gdańsk [the Free City of Danzig], on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Marek's father owned a small factory and a shop there. The family lived in Sopot [Zoppot], a town with over 30,000 inhabitants in the territory of Danzig. The family business was on a street that in the 1930s was named Adolf Hitler-Straße. The ever-changing names of that street reflected the times. In the post-war period it was Stalin's Avenue, while today it is Independence Avenue, the main thoroughfare connecting the three cities now named Gdynia, Gdańsk, and Sopot.

The shop where their produce was sold was in the heart of the old city, now the tourist district of Gdańsk. The family lived in an apartment on the second floor, in a building which is still standing in Sopot. Marek went to school and was a pupil at the Polish upper secondary school. Even after the Second World War, he maintained some contact with friends from his school days.

In 2019, I had an informal interview in Oslo with Marek's youngest daughter, Halina Thee, on the subject of her father's life. During the conversation, I return to the Rzeszów days and ask her: why did Marek and the family move to Gdańsk [Danzig]?

**Halina Thee:** Well, it was probably, no, well, there was a reason. The pogroms, I believe. In those days [1920s], quite a lot of things were happening in Galicia. I used to think they moved just for economic reasons or something like that.

**Marta Bivand Erdal:** Because there was emigration from those areas in Galicia to the US, driven by poverty...

**HT:** Yes, well that had been going on since the 1800s, the late 1800s especially. But in the 1920s, the pogroms started in full-scale. And Marek and the family moved to Gdańsk and had the shop and the factory there. Marek went to school and he saw the German anti-Semitism in Gdańsk too. This was the Free City of Danzig, right? Here, it was allowed to speak of anti-Semitism. Whereas,

you know, in Poland there was no such thing, supposedly, and if there was anti-Semitism, the Ukrainians were responsible, not the Poles, of course. At least the way the Polish historians tell it today.

The Jews in Galicia experienced persecution in the time before the First World War and also in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, the Civil War and Polish–Bolshevik war in 1920. The Free City of Danzig came into existence in 1920 as a result of the Treaty of Versailles following the First World War and was subsumed by Germany in 1939, following its invasion of Poland. The city is referred to as Danzig in German; in Polish, it is referred to as Gdańsk, and at the time as Wolne Miasto Gdańsk [the Free City of Danzig].

The Free City, a port administered by the League of Nations, was an attractive emigration destination for the Jewish middle classes until the Nazi Party won power in Danzig in 1935. Already while at school in Gdańsk [Danzig], Marek started to take an interest in the idea of a better society, of a brighter future.

He became an activist and joined the Hashomer Hatzair, a Socialist-Zionist youth movement (which still exists to this day). He also became a youth member of the communist party. As a pupil he could cross the border to Poland regularly, and he used to carry leaflets across the border, an activity that the Polish authorities would probably have described as smuggling. He completed upper secondary school in Gdańsk [Danzig].

**HT:** Then came the Kristallnacht. He got to see the family shop shattered. He saw his father beaten up and humiliated. This had a tremendous impact on him. After the Kristallnacht the family packed up and left for Lwów or Lviv [south east of Poland at the time, now in Ukraine]. Marek remained in Gdańsk, alone, because he couldn't go with them. That in fact saved his life. He never saw his father, step-mother, nor siblings again. They were all killed by the Nazis, having moved to Lviv for what they thought would be safety.

**MBE:** Why could he not leave?

**HT:** Because his Polish citizenship had been revoked earlier, as an administrative measure by the Poles. Who knows whether that was because of his communist activism, or whether it was anti-Semitism which struck, or perhaps both? Nobody knows.

According to Nils Petter Gleditsch, a researcher who worked alongside Marek at PRIO from his arrival in the late 60s, in Marek's account of events, he underscored the possibility that he had lost his citizenship due to his communist activism.

**HT:** So, Marek a young man of barely twenty years, was left alone. Stateless. He was trapped. What is mysterious is how he got himself onto a list of people who managed to escape from Gdańsk. But he did, and left Europe for Palestine, aboard a ship. What happened was that the Jewish community in Gdańsk started to realise that the earth really was on fire beneath their feet. So, what they did, was that they decided to sell everything they owned, including the synagogues and silver, and an amazing collection of religious artefacts. They sold everything they owned, and for that, they bought a journey.

The original idea was that this would be the 'ticket out' for one thousand members of the community. Then, it was reduced to five hundred people, who were sent out of Gdańsk in sealed railway carriages supervised by the Nazis through Germany, to the south through Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and finally the Danube delta in Romania. They paid their way through. In addition, they rented a ship. And the whole thing was surrounded by silence and should not be spoken about. This was because if the Brits knew that they were planning to breach the blockade in Palestine, they would have stopped it. In due course, the Brits did understand that something was going on. When the transport got to the port in the Danube delta, a British consul was pacing close to the ship. They boarded the ship and started the journey on the S.S. Astir.

### **A Refugee's Journey across the Mediterranean (6 March 1939–28 June 1939)**

**HT:** About five hundred Jews from Gdańsk, plus some more they picked up on the way, boarded the ship and sailed via the Black Sea to Istanbul in Turkey and to the Mediterranean. They were headed for the coast of Palestine. But the British, who were governing there at the time, had found out. So, when the Astir came into Palestinian waters it was stopped. The Brits had set numbers for how many Jews were allowed to immigrate. This ship, with seven hundred Jews, was not part of their plan. (...)

They were on the ship, and the ship was refused the right to come into the port, so they sailed back to Greece, and then later to Cyprus — in desperate quest for supplies of food and water. Then they sailed back and forth, were refused entry, and back again. In the end, it became apparent that the ship's captain worked with the British and notified them of each trip. In the end, it is a bit unclear how they got to shore in Palestine, but they did. One of the versions of this story is that when the Astir sailed toward Palestine again, it brought with it a smaller ship, which they used to get closer to the coast and run it aground. And finally, they simply swam to shore.

That reminds me of something, you know? It's exactly what is happening now.

Well, in the meantime they had all destroyed their documents, so even the travel document as a stateless person, which my father had, is somewhere at the bottom of the Mediterranean. That's also something which I recognise from a report I read recently.

**MBE:** *It's pretty striking. In the same sea.*

**HT:** Fortunately, as they got closer to shore, they were met by a British police boat, who helped them ashore. They were interned for a few days but then released, as a decision was made to allow them in as Jewish immigrants. But then he was there, right, in Palestine, without any money, without any documents, without any luggage, without anything. He was left with nothing. Nothing at all. Twelve kilos of luggage was what they had been allowed to bring, packing up an entire life. Luckily, Marek had some family there. Some aunts who had moved at some point in the 1920s from Poland to Palestine. Marek's mother's sister took care of him.

There was a substantial immigration from Poland to Palestine throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

**MBE:** *Right, so quite close family then.*

**HT:** Yes, it was an aunt. She came back to visit Poland in the 1930s, and offered to take the two girls, Marek's sisters. They were about 8 or 10 years old at the time she offered to take them with her to Palestine. Their situation was really not ok. But she wasn't allowed to take them, the parents didn't want her to. Perhaps she should have insisted more strongly back then.

## **From Stateless Refugee to Polish Diplomat in Israel (1939–1952)**

As a 20-year old man, Marek Thee landed in Palestine and got himself a job working in a brush factory. Somehow, he had his birth certificate and his upper secondary school diploma, probably having sent it to his relatives before leaving Gdańsk [Danzig]. In Palestine, it did not take long until Marek got involved in a communist movement. He was engaged in producing leaflets and taught himself Hebrew as well as letterpress printing, a technique needed for his illegal printing activity.

On two instances Marek was jailed, officially for reasons related to the theft of paper, rather than subversive political activities, as it made it less complicated for the British police. Soon, though, the Second World War began to draw closer. By March 1942, Władysław Anders, commanding officer of the Polish army in the Middle East, arrived in Palestine with Polish troops.

This was the result of British-Soviet-Polish arrangement, whereby Polish troops that had been gathered on Soviet territory, consisting of people deported from Poland or imprisoned by the Soviets, were allowed to leave, and marched via Iran to Palestine in 1941–1942, and were later deployed in Italy. In the Anders army there were a number of Jewish soldiers, many of whom deserted from the Polish army and later joined the army of the new Israeli state. Among them was Menachem Begin—future Israeli Prime Minister.

HT: After Anders' army arrived in Palestine, Marek was very engaged in getting the soldiers involved in fighting the Nazis in Europe. He turned from Hebrew to Polish fliers to spread among the soldiers, who according to his own statements were pretty reactionary and anti-Semitic, right in the middle of Palestine. Because of his involvement with the Polish issues during the war, after the war he was named Consular and Press Attaché at the General Polish Consulates in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem.

**MBE:** *Still as a former citizen?*

HT: No, all of a sudden, he was a Polish citizen again. No one mentioned anything else. He was a Polish diplomat in what later became Israel. He held that position till 1952, when Stalin was at the height of his purges in the Soviet Union, anti-Jewish stuff, among other stuff.

When the Allies recognised the Soviet-based government in Warsaw, the Polish government in London lost its diplomatic status and the Anders army was dismantled. Marek Thee became a diplomat in the Polish People's Republic.

While in Palestine, Marek Thee met his wife, Erna, another member of the communist cell he was a member of. She came to Palestine from Vienna, to attend an agricultural school. Her parents managed to send her and a brother to Palestine, and a younger sister was on a Kindertransport from Vienna to England and arrived in Israel after the war.

Her parents, however, were sent from Vienna to Litzmannstadt, which is Łódź in Poland today. Her father died of emaciation and is buried there. Erna's mother and a younger brother were sent to Kulmhof an der Nehr, which is Chełmno in Poland today. This was an extermination camp, and Erna and her two siblings never saw their parents or their youngest brother again.

Marek Thee was concerned with improving human societies and had not given up his idealism. In 1952, he was removed from his consular posting in Israel by the Polish authorities, and returned to Warsaw to take up a post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there. This happened at the time of the Slánský-process in the then Czechoslovakia, where 13 members of the Communist Party, 11 of whom were Jews, were tried (and convicted, most to death sentences) on charges of a Trotskyite-Zionist conspiracy.

Not long before Marek moved to Poland in 1952, his daughter Halina was due to be born, and Marek asked his wife Erna to travel to Poland to ensure that Halina was born there. Erna, heavily pregnant, travelled to Poland, and gave birth in a military



hospital in Warsaw. With origins from Vienna, an Austrian Jew, Erna spoke Austrian-German, as well as Hebrew, neither of which were of much help in post-war Poland. Reflecting on her mother's experiences, Halina notes:

**HT:** It must have been incredibly frightening. She didn't like Poland. But because my father was so keen on moving there, on building a new and better society and all that, we moved.

### **(Re)migration to Poland and Launching an Academic Career (1952)**

When arriving in Warsaw in 1952, Marek Thee got a position at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but very soon he lost this job. Instead, he was sent to the Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw (PISM, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych). At this point, Marek was 34 years old. He had a diploma from upper secondary school in Gdańsk [Danzig] from before the Second World War, but beyond this, no formal higher education. He therefore spent the next years studying, as well as keeping a close eye on international affairs.

**HT:** He got a Master's degree in journalism, and then he took a PhD in history. Later he also received the dr. hab. title, and became a professor in history. His publications at the time, the scientific ones, were to be distinct from any of the foreign policy work he engaged in. Therefore, they were published under a pseudonym. After thinking for a long time about this, he decided 'Gdański' was a good pseudonym [literally, from Gdańsk, in Polish]. After all, that's where he was from.

At first, he focused on the Middle East; however, he soon discovered that this was not a prudent subject when dealing with Polish authorities. Another regional focus would prove far more fruitful for Marek Thee professionally, as a diplomat and as an academic: Indochina.

## Working in Vietnam and Laos (1955–1963)

In 1955, Marek Thee was sent as an adviser to the Polish delegation to the International Commission of Supervision and Control (ICCS) in Vietnam, following the 1954 Geneva Agreement. He was first based in the divided Vietnam, and later in Laos, whose independence and sovereignty had been recognised in the Geneva agreement and would be recognised once again in a new Geneva agreement in 1962.

His title was Commissioner, Polish representative (in the rank of the Minister Plenipotentiary) at the International Commission of Supervision and Control (ICCS). The Commission consisted of representatives from Canada, India and Poland. Its role was overseeing peace and peace-keeping in Indochina.

After a few years back in Warsaw, Marek Thee was again called to Laos in 1961, based on his significant knowledge of the region from past engagement. He stayed in Laos through 1963, only rarely travelling back to Warsaw to report to his superiors at the Ministry and to see his family. The circumstances under which he was posted were too dangerous for family visits. His daughter recalls:

**HT:** It wasn't a 'champagne' kind of diplomatic posting, he was part of monitoring efforts in unstable circumstances. But my father was always a collector. He collected Buddha-figures. In his lodgings there in Laos, he had a room with a fireplace and a mantelpiece. There, he kept his Buddha-figures. Then one night, he came late to his room, and there he found only the fireplace and mantelpiece remaining. The room was gone [bombed]. But the Buddha-figures were intact. The servant working in the premises was really impressed, and of course argued that it was Buddha himself who had secured the mantelpiece. That Buddha didn't seem to care much for the rest of the house appeared to be a lesser concern! So, Marek was up there, in the mountains. It was cold, and at times also dangerous.

As Polish Commissioner in the rank of the Minister Plenipotentiary, Marek Thee made many useful connections, several of whom he interacted with in various ways at different junctures later in life. Notably, this included princes and generals, all central players in relation to peace in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia at the time.

Marek Thee shared his reflections and experiences with this work in the book *Notes of a Witness: Laos and the Second Indochinese War* (1973) as well as other publications, including the article 'War and Peace in Indochina' in the *Journal of Peace Research* (1973).

## The Final Years at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (1963–1968)

From 1963 onward, Marek Thee was fully back at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, while his daughters were completing secondary education and university. After a few years of relative normality, after the Six-Day-War in 1967, things started changing.

**HT:** The then Władysław Gomułka, ‘comrade Wiesław’, the chairman of the Party [Polish United Workers’ Party] gave a speech—he could speak for days on end. He started to speak about people who swear to two countries. That they might perhaps find somewhere else to go. That we want Poland to be for the Poles and that Zionists should leave. The word Jew was never mentioned. Just Zionist. That was the gist of it, though the exact words were less direct. It was evident where this was pointing. My father understood fully where this was headed. And my mother to an even larger degree. So, they started going for these long, long walks in the park. Because our apartment, of course, and especially our phone, was tapped. Everyone knew this.

**MBE:** *You must have known too, as a young girl?*

**HT:** Yes, of course, but I didn’t have anything to tell them. So, the only... they must have torn their hair out, because... Well, my father had this huge desk in Warsaw. And I could lie on it, and it was longer than me, it was massive. And the phone was there, so I spoke to all my friends for hours, lying on top of that desk. Those who were listening to our conversations, they must have been driven crazy! And there was a set rule at home, both on the phone and at home: we spoke all the languages we could. So, I always spoke Polish. But the adults, when friends came to visit, there were friends from the Israel days, then it was Hebrew. When others came, German, English, and French too.

**MBE:** *Was there an assumption they weren’t capable of translating fast enough?*

**HT:** No! You know, it was about putting all of them to work! Sure, they could understand, they had their interpreters. It was simply to make life difficult for them.

While 1968 is an important year in European history, with multiple student protests, especially starting in Paris, as well as the events in Prague, the preamble to Polish events in 1968—of a different and more sinister nature—was the staging of a play at the theatre “Teatr Narodowy” in 1967. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, a range of cultural events and performances were planned. Among these was the performance of the play “Dziady” (Forefathers’ Eve) by the poet and writer Adam Mickiewicz in Warsaw.

**HT:** So, this play was relatively anti-Russian. But, it’s important to note that Mickiewicz lived and wrote in the first half of the 1800s. So, it was Tsarist Russia he was opposing.

Following the performance, the Party organs were not very pleased, and rumours of a suppression of the play started spreading. This served to increase the play’s popularity and the emphasis on phrases and moments with anti-Russian potential, where the audience applauded and cheered. The Soviet ambassador is also rumoured to have influenced what happened. By mid-January 1968, the authorities decided that the play would be taken off. Following the last performance in January 1968, a student protest was organised in Warsaw, and some 35 people were detailed, though most of them were quickly released.

**HT:** Student protest followed, at the University of Warsaw among other places on 8 March 1968, with police using tear gas against the students, and some were beaten down. After the protests and clashes at the University of Warsaw, which happened on a Friday, on the Saturday at school we had a subject called civic education. We had a very young female teacher. She was so nervous coming into class, looking at all our bewildered faces. Everyone knew something had happened. But not much really. Because only those who were present at the demonstration knew about it. The news in Poland back then functioned in the exact same way it does in Poland today, so: they didn’t tell you what wasn’t considered to be of interest. My teacher threw her books onto her desk and exclaimed: ‘I’m not going to say anything!’

Later on, some of the students at the University of Warsaw were arrested. They picked people with kind of foreign-sounding names. This whole thing with being a fifth column became central again. And the parents were of course made responsible. People started losing their jobs.

The main national paper *Trybuna Ludu*, the Polish United Workers' Party organ, printed a short notice, somewhere at the bottom of page three, or something. There were thirteen names there, people with anti-Polish sympathies, or members of a fifth column, or who knows. My father's was the thirteenth name on that list.

After that there was an anti-Semitic witch-hunt in Poland. We lived in Warsaw, and belonged to, sort of, diplomatic and academic circles. You'd have thought all this maybe just targeted those people at the University of Warsaw and their children. Or perhaps those who were somehow seen as troublesome for party-political reasons, such as my father who was a member of the Party. But really, this witch-hunt had severe ramifications across the country.

In March 1968, the Party [Polish United Workers' Party] started a propaganda campaign in which they accused prominent people of Jewish origin (so-called Zionists) to have influenced the students. It was suggested that they were cooperating with anti-Polish forces abroad. This campaign was spread over the whole country, including in the Western part of Poland where many Jews had settled down after the war. As a result, most of the Jews still living in Poland at the time, who had survived the Holocaust or returned from the Soviet Union after the war, were forced—or encouraged—to emigrate to Israel. Where they went after crossing the Polish border was of no interest to the authorities as long as Israel formally was the goal. This campaign was mainly part of an internal power struggle within the Party, but anti-Semitic sentiments, as well as loyalty to and fear of the regime, made it possible on such a large scale.

**HT:** In these western areas, many Jews were also told to settle, upon return after the Second World War from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Siberia. Even there, these families were subjected to this anti-Semitic witch-hunt. They were simply told that they had to get out, out of the country.

This was in 1968, the year I graduated from upper secondary school. That all happened quite normally. I went to school and in due course there were exams. And my maths teacher saved me when I was failing to address the task we were given. Thanks to him I even got a decent grade, which was quite astounding. But then came the time when we were to apply for admission to the University of Warsaw. Our class teacher, as it turned out, had two jobs: one as a teacher, and one as an informant. So, there we were, filling in our university entrance forms, and we had to fill in name, address, citizenship and nationality. Not just citizenship. Both citizenship and nationality.

I thought, what on earth, I'm Polish—I lived there, right. I was filled with all kinds of national patriotic values while being educated. At home we never discussed politics at all. If there was a discussion, it was while out walking. So really, I was quite well brain-washed by the school system and its propaganda, and in my spare time I was more interested in reading Jane Austen anyway. So, I filled in citizenship: Polish; nationality: Polish. I handed it in and it was checked, and a few days later when we had another lesson with our class teacher, he came back with some of the application forms and said: 'Some of you have filled in these forms incorrectly' and started on a long speech about nationality depending on who your mother is. Of course, this is the Jewish way, but I didn't realise it, I didn't know about it at the time. But I know that probably I'd done something wrong, and clearly there were others too. One of the girls in my class stood up to the teacher and said: 'What are you talking about? This is Poland. We are all Polish. What is it that you want?' The teacher just left the room. Anyway, my form went to the University of Warsaw, probably with a note on the margin. I never knew. When I got home from my final exam, my parents told me that they had applied for permission to leave the country.

**MBE:** *What was your reaction?*

**HT:** I wasn't 18 years old yet, I was shocked. I didn't want to. I wasn't interested at all in leaving. It was there that I was at home. My whole life, except the two first years, I'd lived at the same address in Warsaw. Everything was there. So I went to my friend and shared my shock and grief. Her father came and when he heard, he said: 'No, Halina, you don't have to go. I can adopt you'. So sweet.

So, there were good people too. But I had to. I didn't have anyone else really. And my father really was declared *persona non grata*. It started with us losing our apartment, because it was too big for just four people.

**MBE:** *So how come your father was persona non grata, based on all he'd done...*

**HT:** It was the anti-Semitism that was driving it. They wanted to throw him out of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, which would mean we could not stay in our state-owned apartment, and would have nothing to live on. But they ran into some problems.

First, my father was a member of the Party, i.e. the Polish United Workers' Party [Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR]. Second, he was heading the trade union in the Institute. Third, in that role, he had helped so many people, fixed extra allowances, and dealt with other issues, so there were a lot of people who liked him. But then after some dealing, after a long late-night Party meeting, they kicked him out of the Party. Then eventually they also let him go from the Institute, and he was forbidden to publish.

## **Leaving Poland (for Israel) and Heading for Norway (1968)**

In the course of 1968–1969, an estimated 15,000–25,000 people of Jewish background, mostly well-educated, left Poland on one-way papers for Israel.

They were stripped of their Polish citizenship and forced to leave behind property.

**HT:** In the end, my father got a six-month period of notification, and he started sorting out the exit application, for which we all needed visas to Israel, as leaving was permitted on the premise that it was to go to Israel. As Israel, following the Six-Day War, did not have a formal representation in Poland at the time, the Dutch Embassy was handling the applications for visas. That was just around the corner from our flat, so we could watch the queue from our windows. So, in order to get a Polish passport, that was quite a hassle. But, it was easier when heading to Israel which amounted to admitting one was a

Zionist. All you had to do was to fill in some forms and renounce your Polish citizenship—a one-way ticket out.

My father is the only person I know who has lost Polish citizenship twice.

On leaving Poland, my father lost not only his job, his flat and his savings but his pension rights too.

**MBE:** *So, you all then received a permit to leave, really to leave to go live in Israel. But you came to Norway?*

**HT:** Yes, well, we received permission to cross the border, right? We crossed the border.

**MBE:** *And the Norway part?*

**HT:** In August or September 1968, there was a sociology conference in Warsaw, and Johan Galtung and Ingrid Eide were both there. Our neighbour was a sociologist, so one day he appeared with two Norwegians on our doorstep, and they started talking. Our neighbour knew we had already packed our bags and were just waiting to leave the country.

It turned out Johan Galtung thought my father could fit perfectly to help edit and publish what became the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*. That's how the



connection with Johan Galtung came about, and then we knew we would be heading for Norway.

Before meeting Galtung, my father had already been writing letters to Canada and to Sweden. But then, as it turned out, we went to Norway.

My father left on 29 November 1968, by train via Gothenburg. He was met at the station in Oslo by Tord Høyvik, who took him to PRIO, where we lived at the start. My mother, sister, and I took the train to Vienna, and waited there for three weeks before we got the green light to fly to Oslo. We got some help from Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society—they helped us get the tickets to travel to Norway.

We arrived in Oslo on 17 December 1968. We didn't have much money as we were allowed to take only \$5 per person on leaving Poland, so my mother had sent a postcard to my father to let him know we were arriving. That card arrived a few days later. So, there was no one to meet at us the airport. We had no money and no idea what to do. So we called Ingrid [Eide], and she said, 'Just come, get a taxi and come to us'. I can still remember it, warm and light and nice, and I was in shock. They managed to find my father, who was with Tord Høyvik at a Chinese restaurant, the only one in Oslo at the time, I believe. We then lived in two rooms above the Institute, we started learning Norwegian, and my father worked at PRIO.

### **Becoming the Editor of the Newly Established *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* (1969–1989)**

The story of Marek Thee's arrival in Norway is also one PRIO's founding Director, Johan Galtung, reflects willingly on:

**Johan Galtung:** I was a lot in Poland [...] it must have been in 1968 [...] Marek Thee was at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, and told me that as a Jew, he had great problems, and he quoted to me what many people quote about Poland: ‘to become a leader you have to be anti-German, anti-Russian and anti-Jewish’. He said the anti-Jewish sentiments were becoming more and more explicit. I checked around a bit and discussed some issues, and I discovered that as a researcher he was top class, so I sorted out an invitation for him to come to Norway. So, then he came. And we had quite a lot of space at our offices, a villa. He came with his wife and children and luggage, and then moved into two rooms on the second floor.

I remember I asked him on his second day at PRIO: ‘how on earth can you manage this transition?’ He replied: ‘2000 years of experience as Jews helps a lot’. But his Norwegian remained relatively weak, though he managed extremely well. I had established the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* and suggested he edit it; the *Bulletin* was created for him, and he edited it from issue one.

In Marek Thee’s own words, the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* had the overriding aim ‘to present systematically, to compare and discuss in the light of general peace theory various plans, proposals and ideas for justice, development and peace’ (Thee 1970: 3). In *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 19(3/4) pp. 288–289 in 1988, Marek Thee writes on ‘Science and Technology for War and Peace: The Quest for Disarmament and Development’, a piece deemed typical of his scholarly contributions—and lines of argument. Below is an extract, concluding that a ‘change of direction’ is urgently needed, with the ‘common good of mankind’ as its chief concern:

*‘The current sharp acceleration of the race in science-based military technology has an ominous significance above and beyond the danger of war. It has a profoundly evil impact on the human condition. The working of military technology has produced a triple wickedness: it fuels and aggravates the course of the arms race, it deranges the economic performance of industrialized countries, and it acts to sustain underdevelopment in the Third World—with all the implications this triple thrust has for the world economy and the maintenance of peace.*

*We urgently need a change of direction. Science and technology must once again heed their civilizational mission: they should serve peace and not war; they should underpin disarmament and should work actively for the improvement of the human condition. Freeing science and technology from the malignant pursuit of means of destruction is a major universal human imperative.*

*It is thus of fundamental import that we devise measures to restrain military technology, so that we may move seriously to genuine disarmament and may buttress development. This may be a tall order, but unless a start is made, we may find*

*ourselves ever more forcibly in the grip of escalating armaments and an explosive developmental gap on the North–South divide.*

*With enough rationality and political will, we can check the technological momentum of the arms race by introducing qualitative technological criteria into arms control and disarmament efforts. But more than this is required: we need careful planning of a phased orderly redeployment of resources from military R&D and armaments, and their conversion for civilian use. Further, we have to try to activate the large community of scientists and engineers currently employed in military R&D to resist their engagement in this domain on ethical and moral grounds. With conversion planning on the way, they should find satisfactory alternative employment in civilian R&D. Most of all, we have to make the workings of military R&D and its consequences more transparent, so as to mobilize public opinion. This we need to back the call to transcend the military-technological compulsion and to make science and technology serve the common good of mankind’.*

On stepping down as Editor-in-Chief of *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Marek Thee took stock of the journal’s aims and achievements over nearly two decades. On the one hand, he was dismayed at the state of the world, and the prevalent focus on and funding for the military over and above the peace dimensions of international relations (in academic and real terms). On the other hand, he felt encouraged that, after all, readership, visibility, and attention for the cause of peace—and for prospects of peace proposals—had to an extent been possible to achieve:

*‘Establishing the Bulletin of Peace Proposals as a scholarly, value-based and policy-oriented journal of peace research, my aim was to deepen and disseminate knowledge on the causes of conflict and war, and on conditions for the maximization of the values of peace. While keeping strictly to scholarly standards, I always tried to convey our critical assessments and findings in a readable style, to be readily understood by both the academic community and the readers at large: members of peace movements, politicians and students of international relations.*

*A distinct goal of the journal was to make more transparent the nature and dynamics of armaments and disarmament, of underdevelopment and development, of the struggle for human rights and for the betterment of the human condition, all so as to move public opinion and governments to genuine action for peaceful change. Did the Bulletin succeed in accomplishing these aims? Certainly not to the extent I had hoped; still, perhaps to some degree. Yet my dreams remain unfulfilled.*

*The imbalance in resources available for military research on the one hand and for peace research on the other is stupendous. The world is still in the midst of a fierce arms race; and the gap between the affluent and those suffering material and spiritual deprivation remains immense. All the same, it is a source of satisfaction that the Bulletin has won wide international acclaim among a concerned public and has established itself as one of the world’s leading peace research journals.*

*This limited success is to a large extent due to the cooperation of the Editorial Committee and the editorial staff of the Norwegian University Press, as well as to the constant encouragement from our readers. Last but not least, the support of PRIO and its environment served as a stimulus for publishing the journal. Let me take*

*this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the accomplishments of the journal’.*

## **A Voluminous Production on the Possibilities for Peace**

**HT:** Think about it, before the Internet. He was remarkable. And extremely single-minded. Really. Every breath was for the international stuff, whether it was peace, or disarmament or...

Marek Thee’s scholarly contributions are summarised in terms of being a specialist of the arms race and international regulation and arms control. His diplomatic skills, however, were also continually put to use—for instance, in developing links and networks from PRIO internationally, whether with SIPRI (Sweden, Stockholm), or PRIF (Germany, Frankfurt), or elsewhere.

According to Marek Thee’s long-time friend and co-author, Asbjørn Eide (also a former PRIOite, PRIO Director, and later Director at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights; see Chap. 6), as published in Thee’s obituary in *Aftenposten* in 1999:

He acquired in-depth knowledge of the arms race and its drivers, and of international negotiations on disarmament. He published books and articles, one after the other, mainly in English. Several were also translated into other languages. In his research, his main thesis was that perhaps the most important driver of modern forms of the arms race is the technological interest in exploring and developing new weapons, most recently “smart” weapons. He received a number of prizes for his research, from scientific milieus in countries as different as the US, South Korea, and Japan.

Marek Thee was a prolific scholar. Meanwhile, as a scholar, his work is perhaps most accurately described as being based on his foreign policy interests and competence, as someone knowledgeable about and interested in the world, extremely well-read and very hard-working.

Among key titles in Marek Thee’s scholarship are *Notes of a Witness: Laos and the Second Indochinese War* (first published in 1973, with a total of 11 editions), *Armaments and Disarmament in the Nuclear Age: A Handbook* (first published in 1976, with a total of 25 editions published in 7 languages), and *Military Technology, Military Strategy, and the Arms Race* (first published in 1985, with a total of 14 editions published).

## A Lifelong Dedication to a Better Future

Marek Thee was a diplomat and an activist as much as he was a scholar. His writing—and academic production—are testament to that scholarly dimension of his life. Yet, more than anything, Marek Thee was an idealist on a mission for a better future—for the world.

**HT:** Well, it began with Communism, which was supposed to make life better for others. After that, there was war, really driving home the point of how terribly destructive war is. As a result, Marek started to become incredibly interested in peace. And after he had started working at PRIO, of course, he channelled his thoughts all the more toward peace. But the work he had conducted in Laos, that was to maintain peace. It's described in his book *Notes of a Witness*.

Having gotten his university education, only following a diplomatic comet career as a very young man in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Marek Thee juggled his diplomatic missions in Indochina with gaining professorship back in Warsaw. Unlikely as his twenty-year career at PRIO was—given his life history prior to the events of 1968, as a card-carrying member of the Polish United Workers' Party, and a long-standing employee of the Polish Institute for International Affairs—Marek somehow did manage to find his feet at PRIO. This is reflected in his response to Johan Galtung's question on his second day at PRIO in 1968 (as referred to above), and perhaps drew on his personal life history of uprooting and establishing new homes, over and over. For Marek Thee, PRIO was an opportunity sorely needed, at a critical juncture, as Stein Tønnesson (former PRIO Director, and supervisee of Marek Thee) reflects upon:

**Stein Tønnesson:** I think he was a loner with a mission, someone struggling against armaments, with an enormous dedication to that cause. He needed PRIO as a platform for that work, for cultivating his international network, and for editing BPP. But he did not much socialise or appreciate collective decision-making and he felt it as a burden when asked to contribute to a shared environment. Yet, he liked it very much when someone showed an interest in his cause and listened to him.

In retrospect, perhaps Marek Thee's life history, so reflective of twentieth century history especially in Europe, was not always known to his colleagues at PRIO, in particular those who arrived at PRIO after him. Stein Tønnesson shares how he learnt about Marek Thee's life story:

**ST:** When I attended Marek’s funeral and heard the rabbi talk about his life before, during, and after the Second World War, the intense drama of it all was totally new to me. I was much impressed and felt amazed and ashamed that I had never taken time to ask Marek about his pre-Indochina life. What I heard at the funeral deepened my sympathy for my former supervisor, this intense little sturdy man who, when he spoke, could sound like a typewriter, throwing out his words in forceful, somewhat impatient, sentences in an English with a distinctly Polish accent.

For PRIO researchers, alumni, and friends today, Marek Thee’s story can surely be an important memento and an inspiration—if it is more widely known.

Having turned 70—retirement age—Marek Thee ended his relationship with PRIO. Despite his age, however, Marek Thee still had a dedication to his work for peace. Therefore, losing his workplace at PRIO was a heavy blow for Marek. His work was his life. Without an affiliation and an office to go to every day, he was lost. Especially after the death of Erna, when he was left in an empty house in Oslo. Asbjørn Eide understood this and gave him what he needed the most: an affiliation to the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights. Thanks to this affiliation Marek was able to produce, among other works, *Peace! By the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: An Anthology*. He held his head high well past retirement age.

## Concluding Thoughts—By Marek Thee

In his forthcoming memoirs *My Story: a Journey Through the 20th Century*, Marek Thee shares reflections that appear as pertinent in 2019 as when they were written twenty years ago:

*‘I would very much like to conclude the reflections on my journey through the twentieth century in a positive, hopeful mood. After all, greatly beneficial socio-political and economic-technological changes took place in the past century, such as the abolition of slavery, the elimination of colonialism, the rise of the human rights project, some advances in welfare, a curtailment in gender inequalities, the revolution in almost all sciences, hard-and soft-form, the explosion of information technology, expansion of transport, progression in medical sciences, physics, chemistry, microelectronics, and finally the spread of democratic ideas and greater openness in national and international affairs.*

*The advances are unquestionable. However, the deep structures of ‘peacelessness’ in military and socio-economic affairs prevailed. Lack of freedom from want and fear remain potent. The world is still dominated by old-style divisive politics, by ethnic-nationalist and religious conflicts, by armaments, militarisation of international relations and deep cleavages of a socio-economic and political nature.’*

## A Postscript from the Author

The story of Marek Thee's life and work is a stark reminder of both the resilience and the vulnerability of human beings. More so, it is the unlikely story of a Polish-Jewish boy's journey from Rzeszów to Oslo, with significant stops in Gdańsk [the Free City of Danzig], in Tel Aviv, Israel, and in Warsaw, Poland—interspersed with stays in Indochina, along the way.

It is the story of a son, a husband, and a father, of a man who found himself in snowy Oslo in late 1968, setting out on the final stretches of a long professional career that would still give him two decades as a PRIOite, before spending his last ten years working from the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

At the outset of the conversation I had with Marek Thee's daughter, Halina, which constitutes the backbone of this text, she asked: 'How much do you know about Poland, about Poland's history in the twentieth century? Are you aware of the developments in Poland now, where they are re-writing history? Because, I'm going to tell you "the wrong version" of history'.

As far as re-writing Polish history goes, it is worth noting that Polish-Jewish history is actively being narrated, for instance in the Jewish cultural revival in Kraków, and through the exhibitions and educational engagement with school children at the POLIN museum in Warsaw.

But, simultaneously, anti-Semitism is again increasing in Poland, and history is indeed becoming increasingly politicised, making museums—such as POLIN—sites of struggle over narrations of the past. The history of the radically changed demography of Polish society—prior to as compared to after the Second World War, when the Polish-Jewish population was all but gone—is one that is omnipresent for all those who choose to see it. Yet, this history is often invisibilised and left tacit in present-day Poland. Much the same can be said for the events of 1968, leading to the last departure from Poland of Marek Thee and his family.

Meanwhile, the story of Marek Thee's life, including his engagement with PRIO for two decades, underscores the importance of *which stories we choose to tell*—and, in turn, which stories we choose to forget. By choosing to tell—and to share—Marek Thee's story, PRIO is choosing to foreground the story of a remarkable life, of an astounding character and human being. In doing so, PRIO also seeks to actively narrate a past that was not only idealist in its peace activism, but that was (or sought to be) international and welcoming to outsiders.

It is a story to be inspired by, and to be disturbed by—a reminder of the possibilities inherent in new beginnings, but also of the pervasive dangers of fragmenting fundamentalisms that Marek Thee himself warned us of at the outset of this piece.

### Notes

1. A few brief extracts from Marek Thee's personal, unpublished memoirs have been rendered here, with the permission of his two daughters, Maya and Halina Thee.

2. *Sources*: This text builds on textual sources, informal conversations, and interviews. The textual sources include Marek Thee's own publications; travel reports written by Marek Thee while working at PRIO (1969–89); a tribute to Marek Thee on his 70th birthday by the then Chair of PRIO's Board Torstein Eckhoff (*Aftenposten* 21 November 1988); and an obituary by Asbjørn Eide (*Aftenposten* 29 April 1999). Informal conversations and exchanges with PRIOites Nils Petter Gleditsch and Stein Tønnesson have shaped the content of the text, drawing on their reflections and memories of interactions with Marek Thee at PRIO. An extract from the interview of Johan Galtung by Henrik Urdal (Chap. 1 in this volume) referring to Marek Thee is rendered in the text. More importantly, however, the text is primarily the result of a generous two-hour conversation with Halina Thee (Marek Thee's youngest daughter), and the 50-page transcript of this conversation. As a follow-up to this interview, Halina has chose to share a few select extracts from Marek Thee's unpublished memoirs, which with her and her sister's permission are rendered here. Halina has also provided very helpful sources on the history of the Jewish community in Gdańsk/Danzig in Polish [*Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich* by Samuel Echt, Gdańsk 2012] and about the journey of the S. S. Astir [<https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/danzig/dan267.html>].

**Acknowledgements** Thanks are due to Trude Stapnes for transcribing the interview with Halina Thee. Thank you also to Stein Tønnesson, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Ewa Siarkiewicz-Bivand, and Gee Berry, for contributions, comments, and corrections which have improved the text. More than anyone, thanks to Halina Thee, for her time and commitment to sharing her father's life history, including in-depth engagement with a previous version of this text. Any inaccuracies remain the author's responsibility, whereas the narration of Marek Thee's story, as a life story where PRIO was important, but only half a century into his rich and astounding life, is a deliberate choice.

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## Chapter 8

# Congo and Structural Violence: Helge Hveem



Interviewed by Per Olav Reinton



Helge Hveem outside the Norwegian Parliament in 1981 © PRIO

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There is no country that illustrates large-scale violence better than the Democratic Republic of Congo. That is why the Nobel Peace Prize to Denis Mukwege is so well deserved, and why it also affirms the validity of structural violence as a concept. Even if the causes may vary—and physical violence may also breed structural violence—I believe that the DRC demonstrates that physical violence follows from structural violence. Or rather: the two types are interrelated; structural violence makes physical violence easier.

**Helge Hveem:** My experiences in the Democratic Republic of Congo put me on a path towards the type of theory-driven, but also policy-oriented, empirical research that I followed at PRIO and the University of Oslo, and still pursue. It was a significant day for me when the Congolese doctor Denis Mukwege received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018.

I had my first political science exams in spring 1961. Then I attended the Norwegian Army's course in Russian, until the end of 1962, before being recruited into the voluntary UN service. It was well paid, and I saw the possibility of experiencing something unusual at the same time as I financed my future studies.

In 1963, I spent seven months as sergeant at *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC). I was assisting the head of the air service; the UN was in charge of most of the air traffic in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the time. I visited Katanga. I was in the now conflict-ridden areas in East Congo. I visited the budding university. And I understood that this country, independent in 1960, was a victim of geopolitical rivalry and industrial exploitation.

Katanga's attempt to become independent was influenced and perhaps even directed by foreign mining interests, represented by *Forminière* and *Union Minière* in collaboration with local politicians. Foreign secret services and diplomacy were deeply involved.

I was in the now conflict-ridden areas in East Congo. [...] And I understood that this country, independent in 1960, was a victim of geopolitical rivalry and industrial exploitation.

There are challenges involved in governing a country of almost the same size as Western Europe, but without Europe's infrastructure. The Congolese state functions in its own way, even though it breaks down now and then. When "chaos" and "instability" rule, foreign actors are responsible to some extent, in combination with local interests. Geopolitical rivalry, regional conflict and natural resource exploitation afflicted the DRC from its independence in 1960. Foreign mining interests supported the Katanga and Kasai provinces for independence.

The east–west conflict and the UN became part of the DRC's politics when Patrice Lumumba (1925–60) was elected prime minister and later on executed. When the UN left, the chief of the army Joseph Mobutu (1930–97) took power with US support and governed for 32 years. He plundered the state until it almost collapsed, but used some of what he grabbed to bribe people. Nobody supported him when he left in

1997. The violence that erupted during the years 1998–2003 may have killed several millions and certainly sent others on the run.

International and national rivalry over resources and their exploitation are forms of structural violence. They were much more ruthless when the colony was the private property of King Leopold II of Belgium (1835–1909). But the country has been extremely violent after independence also. National sovereignty is often challenged by external actors through physical violence, in collaboration with local actors: the state authorities are robbed of income from national resources; civilians are killed *en masse* by groups fighting for power and control; and huge parts of the population are locked in permanent poverty.

Denis Mukwege has described the violence as he observes it in its most personal and sexist misery. He was among the first who observed violence against women as a weapon, and to show us how families and societies are broken down by it. When he puts this form of violence into its political context, he places the responsibility in the DRC capital, Kinshasa. In his acceptance speech in Oslo City Hall on 10 December 2018, he also asked us to look at the “conflict minerals”, particularly those that are so vital to the production of “new” products, such as smartphones, tablets and electric cars.

In that way, he connected the actual violence in the DRC to the exploitation of resources that is recognized as economically-motivated structural violence.

The mixture of armed revolt, military peace operations, economic exploitation and geopolitical rivalry in the DRC was my background. I had seen how national politics could be dominated and determined by international structures. I was soon involved in a project that was analyzing UN peacekeeping forces. I had offers from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and from PRIO, and chose PRIO because of its exciting and dynamic environment at the time—and one particular researcher who was a stimulating guide.

**Per Olav Reinton:** *And that researcher was Johan Galtung, PRIO’s instigator.*

Yes. It was Johan.

***What was your impression of him at the time?***

He was very stimulating, fascinating and clever, not least in the area of research design and scientific methods. Yet he also had the ability to create and transmit enthusiasm. I studied elites and opinion makers in Norway for my *magister* thesis, which later became a book, *International Relations and World Images*. Johan was important for me to construct a good approach—together with other colleagues, of course.

***At the same time, you were responsible for the more open and less academic Peace Academy?***

I was the secretary of the Peace Academy, in cooperation with *Fredskontoret*, Sonja Lid and Lars Andreas Larsen. Our friends from the law department participated, like Anders Bratholm, Torstein Eckhoff and Karl Nandrup Dahl. And some generals took part, like Bjørn Egge and Tønne Huitfeldt.

***These were discussions of a more extrovert kind that were important to PRIO in addition to research activities. Peace research and the institute had a good standing in political circles at the time. This was in the Cold War period, which legitimated the extrovert attitude. Contact and collaboration with the Labor Party was fundamental for PRIO.***

Yes, but MPs and other politicians in parties in the political centre of Norway were also important to PRIO at the time. Some persons at the intersection of business and research were vital as well. We must mention Erik Rinde. His father, Sigurd Rinde, had the money, but Erik was a stern supporter, even when the storms arose. And he was helpful with the housing (see Chap. 4).

***Yes, we worked in prominent villas, like Severin Jacobsen's house, when we were students. The 60s was a golden time. We had goodwill in political circles as well as among those who financed social research. If you look back: what was the most important activity at PRIO?***

The seminars were often very interesting. Many competent people attended. And I learned much from Johan in the first years. Less after some years, as we became more and more independently conscious and informed. When Johan developed his extensive social models in the 70s, I learned less from his lectures.

***He was a creative man.***

Very creative. I learned very much from him in the first years. No doubt.

***Who were members of the research staff at that time?***

Nils Petter Gleditsch and Tord Høivik. Ingrid Eide, of course, and Mari Holmboe Ruge. Sverre Lodgaard and Kjell Skjelsbæk were recruited at the end of the 60s, together with Asbjørn Eide. Younger people came later, like Stein Ringen, whom I supervised for a master's thesis on the UN, and I also supervised Ole Kristian Holthe's thesis on the Ivory Coast. And then we had several foreign guests, among them Tom Biersteker.

Some years later, a colleague of mine asked if he could use my material—my interviews with Norwegian political elites on their opinions and attitudes—but the archives had disappeared from PRIO. They may have been of interest to some of our visitors, and not only the foreign ones, but...

***Remember that our most prominent instrument was the stencil machine, a rotary style stencil duplicator, a technology that had its prime time during World War II. PRIO produced tons of stencils. Your material may have disappeared during clean-ups when the institute moved from place to place.***

OK. Let us say so. PRIO moved several times (see the introduction to this volume).

***But as you say: PRIO had many foreign visitors. How was your contact with them?***

They brought me to Uganda in 1969, through the WOMP—World Orders Model Project. It was an interesting group, financed through the Ford Foundation and

directed by Saul Mendlowitz and Johan. I was also in contact with Ali Mazrui who invited me to Makerere University in Uganda. I met Tim Shaw there.

***And we had informal Nordic Weeks.***

Making friends like Raimo Väyrynen and Peter Wallensteen—and later Björn Hettne. We had the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), which became important.

***And Johan Galtung was the hub in all this with his reputation in mathematical sociology and research methods, his contacts and position in prominent research institutions. But then something happened. His position became disputed. You said that his lectures in the 70s were of less interest to you.***

But that was not necessarily his fault. I was oriented towards other sources of inspiration, of course. I got new contacts in East Africa—Reginald Green, for instance, who inspired my interest in regional integration.

***New International Economic Order was the theme of the day, now almost forgotten, promoted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). What was that?***

You should connect this to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), I think—the 1971–73 oil crisis, as it was called. It was a mobilization for a power shift from the West to the oil-producing countries, actually. Prices increased, production was nationalized in parts of the Middle East.

The mobilization caught the West's attention, and created some optimism in developing countries at the same time, as an indication that they could change the economic order of the day. Algeria was very active, and was a spearhead. I aimed at this issue from 73–74 onwards. It was an attempt to combine politics and economics, studying what was an endeavor to regulate the world economy in favor of developing countries.

There were strange and unrealistic ambitions involved on second thoughts, but the point was to try to bring producers of raw materials out of the colonial structure. Oil and OPEC became their model example. Regulating the raw material market was the main purpose, but industrialization and technology transfer were also important.

The forces behind the coup against Salvador Allende in Chile 9/11 1973 showed that US interests connected to the mining companies were active behind the scenes. My preliminary work from the DRC gave me a push. Norwegian authorities wanted to participate, and I was engaged both at home and abroad. I was invited by an institute in Grenoble to study the markets of raw materials and their political and economic aspects. Later, I was contacted by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and participated in a consultative group from 74 to 77.

I wrote a book, *The Political Economy of Third World Producer Associations*. It was a study about the possibility for raw material producers to emulate OPEC. My conclusion was that oil was special. The structure of the oil market was different from the banana market. I also did a popular-scientific book that looked at the international order issues from a Norwegian perspective, *En ny økonomisk verdensorden og Norge*.

Some read it then, but nobody knows it today. It sold out quickly, though, and I travelled around giving lectures and went on TV.

I saw that the problem had to be approached methodically and theoretically on a multi- or cross-disciplinary basis, not only by economists or political scientists. I got acquainted with Susan Strange who had written an article about this in 1970 that I read later. I gave my heuristic contribution in 1973 in the article ‘The Global Dominance System: Notes On A Global Political Economy’.<sup>1</sup>

I was in New York at one of the UN-sessions and met John Ruggie, later professor at Columbia and a leading authority on international political economy. I participated in a group of researchers that published *The Antinomies of Interdependence* (1982). Ruggie conceived, as United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning under Kofi Annan, the UN’s framework for international industries’ global responsibility: Global Compact. Robert O. Keohane, Barry Buzan and Peter J. Katzenstein were also in that group; they become colleagues and close friends after.

***In this spirit, you engaged yourself in the Norwegian industries’ bauxite mining in Trombetas in Brazil, assisted by active research assistants.***

We looked at two parts of the value chain: the bauxite mining in Brazil, and the production of alumina in Jamaica. It is part of the history that Brazil was a military regime, and Jamaica had a comparatively democratic and progressive regime. So we compared the impact of different political regimes on production and on the behavior of the companies.

We started with Brazil, where Årdal og Sunndal Verk (ÅSV) and Norsk Hydro both had a minority share in the Trombetas project. Our research assistants, Dan Børge Akerø and Per Erik Borge, wanted to stay behind the lines—physically—to observe. Officially they went in as bird hunters, and as such they got inside the production sites and could even talk with some of the managers. The evidence we presented on the situation of the natives in the Amazon forest in the book we produced (with Dag Poleszynski), *Norge i Brasil* (1978), was due to Lars Løvold, also a research assistant at PRIO at the time.

We started with Brazil, where Årdal og Sunndal Verk (ÅSV) and Norsk Hydro both had a minority share in the Trombetas project. Our research assistants wanted to stay behind the lines – physically – to observe. Officially they went in as bird hunters...

***Did this have any influence on Norwegian industrial policy?***

Michael Manley was a high-profile prime minister in Jamaica. I had access to Norman Girvan, a researcher who was then the prime minister’s consultant and later director of Jamaica’s National Planning Ministry. There were contacts between the prime ministers in Norway and Jamaica, and I was asked to write a policy paper for the Norwegian prime minister.

The book on the Trombetas project got wide media coverage and was taken up in the Norwegian parliament. The debate ended with Årdal og Sunndal Verk (ÅSV) quitting the project, probably mainly due to political pressure. Norsk Hydro, however, stayed, and has since vastly expanded its presence in Brazil.

We then received further financial support for studying social and environmental consequences of the industry in Jamaica.

At the same time, assisted by Raino Malnes, I had a project for the UN's commission for disarmament, looking at the great powers' dependency on imports of raw materials. This culminated in the report 'Military Use of Natural Resources: The Case for Conversion and Control', which as a side effect bought me an invitation to the Academy of Sciences in Moscow in the autumn of 1980.

***There is a clear continuity in your research, Helge. You started with the Democratic Republic of Congo many years back. When you look back, were the formative years at PRIO exclusively positive?***

I grew out of the PRIO environment in the late 1970s. But I kept my interests in the perspectives, research themes and ideas that I absorbed in the 1960s. I appreciate that you say that my work is consistent over time, and I accept that. I have been occupied with power all my professional life, a key concept in political science.

Susan Strange was, like Johan, occupied with structure as a basis of power. On second thought, I see that I have talked too much about "structural power". I suggested in the 70s that technology was a main power resource in the article 'The Global Dominance System' (JPR 1973). Look around today, on platform organizations like Apple, Alphabet (Google), Amazon.

They accumulate capital, pay no taxes, and buy those that have become dependent on their technology. Chinese ICT business institutions grow in the same way, and now they begin to challenge the market power of the American companies. I am satisfied that I pointed at such power resources early, and that I have—as you say—been consistent.

***How was your relationship to the concept of peace, PRIO's raison d'être at the time of the Cold War?***

I met skeptics who asked, "what is this?", "how can your activities produce peace?"—and I had to defend my platform. I was not dealing with security and military aspects of peace, but found my niche behind the concept of structural violence. International structures contributed to inequality and hence conflict. It was a popular concept at that time, less today.

***Was it too wide as an analytical concept?***

I can accept that. It could be misused.

***We were extremely occupied with power and equality, also in the organization of the institute. When Johan was away, we filled the power vacuum with a very democratic organization, based on the institutional plenary meeting—Allmøtet—as the authority with no appeal.***

There was consensus as far as the basics were concerned, and the plenary meeting functioned well as long as there was growth and recruitment of people who wanted to contribute in a positive way along the same lines. I did not find the plenary meeting a problem when I was director, since I had the opportunity to take initiatives and decide the agenda since most people were in common agreement about the institute's goals and how it should be run, at that time.

It was an exciting experiment, but in the 70s, with internal conflicts, it became a problematic structure. Visiting researchers and students had the same vote as the director, and administrative persons the same vote as researchers, also in broad research policy matters.

In addition, we had rotation of certain "quotidian tasks". I remember one occasion when I was research director and I had to give the final touches to several applications before a tight deadline. In that situation, I was contacted in my office by an administrative person and reproached for not making tea for lunch. My reaction was—to put it mildly—'not well received.'

And we had the issues related to equal pay. All employees should be included along the same pay scale—administrative staff as well as researchers. Most were enthusiastic in the beginning, but all the equality ended up in what some called chaotic management.

Some of us left the place. I went to take up a temporary position in the UNCTAD secretariat in Geneva. On arriving back home, I was invited to take a position in the political science department at the University of Oslo—after I narrowly failed to be elected to Parliament by the way...

And we had the issues related to equal pay. All employees should be included along the same pay scale – administrative staff as well as researchers. Most were enthusiastic in the beginning, but all the equality ended up in what some called chaotic management.

***When Johan left as professor of peace and conflict research, and a new person was to be appointed, there was a debate about the core of peace research and the relationship between research and policy making. How were the relations between PRIO and the political science environment?***

Not necessarily too bad. There was some conflict obviously over not only that issue, but also who was qualified for the position. It is possible that some at the Department of Political Science worked hard to acquire the chair as there were very few new positions at the time. The person who got the position, Øyvind Østerud, is one of our most prominent political scientists and now a good colleague and friend of mine.

I recall, however, that I was in some doubt as to whether his research profile at the time was more relevant for the position than those of applicants from Scandinavian peace research institutions. In my own case, I did certainly not expect to get the position. But I was not even considered for the position as the committee found



my profile to be irrelevant for it. So much for my focus on structural violence ... I certainly found that strange.

***And bonds between PRIO and the political science environment have improved since the roaring 70s.***

There was a positive turnabout and change in the atmosphere in the 80s, because of personal relations, but also as a matter of common sense.

***Thank you very much, Helge.***

### Note

1. Hveem, Helge (1973) 'The Global Dominance System: Notes on a Theory of Global Political Economy', *Journal of Peace Research* 10(4): 319–340.

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## Chapter 9

# The First Steps in the PRIO-Uppsala Connection: Peter Wallensteen



Interviewed by Siri Aas Rustad



Peter Wallensteen in 2016 © Barbara Johnston/University of Notre Dame

PRIO was the engine of our Nordic peace research network. To ‘go to PRIO’ meant to be updated on the state of the art, to find out what was going on. The ideas generated could then be taken back home and used to build up one’s own activities.

**Siri Aas Rustad:** *You have been immensely important for the development of peace research. You have made your mark in Sweden, but also internationally as a pioneer in gender, peace and security studies and through the creation of the leading data collection project, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. If you think back on your childhood, was there anything in particular that influenced you in the direction of international relations and peace research?*

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**Peter Wallenstein:** I was born in 1945. My family had always been interested in international questions, and we travelled a fair bit. For example, when I was 10, we went by boat and car to England. The large political event that made me interested in international politics was the Suez Crisis with invasion of Egypt by Israel, France and the United Kingdom in 1956, at the same time as the Soviet Union invaded Hungary.

This was a dramatic period, but there was one particular reason that I became concerned. As a young boy I was interested in football (soccer), and my foremost idol was a Hungarian player named Ferenc Puskás. He played on a team (Budapest Honvéd) that was in a way linked to the Hungarian army, which put him in a difficult situation. Then, suddenly, he disappeared. I tried to find out about Puskás' whereabouts, but no one knew what had happened to him. I had to shift from the sport pages to the news pages to find out what was going on in Hungary.

So, in trying to know what had happened to Puskás, I became interested in international affairs. Incidentally, what happened to Puskás was that he refused to go back to Hungary after his team Budapest Honvéd lost in the European Cup in 1956. Later, Puskás played for Real Madrid for the rest of his career and did not go back to Hungary until 1991. The main football stadium in Budapest is now named after him.

Another important and defining experience came in 1967. I was involved with a small peace research seminar at Uppsala University but was more engaged in the UN student club (*Utrikespolitiska föreningen*). The association had exchanges with students from Poland also bringing Swedish students to Poland. This was during the hard Communist rule in Poland, and we were going to the other side of the Iron Curtain, i.e. passing a very concrete border. I travelled there together with my fiancée, Lena Sahlin (since 1968: Lena Wallenstein).

During the stay, we visited a concentration camp outside Lublin: Majdanek. For me, this became an illustration of organized evil. Just to see the storehouses filled with shoes from may be more than 10,000 people. To see their eyeglasses and suitcases. The Holocaust suddenly became very real and I began to understand its sheer magnitude. Everything was terrifyingly large, and it was suddenly possible to comprehend the scale of the killings that had taken place. I was later told that more than 80,000 died in Majdanek. This made it clear that you cannot merely have an interest in international affairs: you have to deal with the problems in some way. After this traumatizing experience, I came to PRIO. There, I found a very different spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The Holocaust suddenly became very real and I began to understand its sheer magnitude. [...] This made it clear that you cannot merely have an interest in international affairs: you have to deal with the problems in some way

### *How was your first experience with PRIO?*

My first encounter with PRIO was through meeting Johan Galtung in 1966 when I was a student at Uppsala University. I was working on my bachelor's degree on

sanctions and boycotts, inspired by the consumers' boycott of oranges and wine from South Africa. When I met Galtung, he was writing on the effect of sanctions in what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. I had already written several papers on Rhodesia and was connected to him in order to give him some knowledge of the country. It was during this collaboration that he said: 'Why don't you come to PRIO? We have a project on sanctions that you could work with'. He wrote me an invitation letter, and I got a stipend to come to PRIO in the spring of 1967, together with Lena. Ever since then, I have been in touch with PRIO.

At PRIO, we were a group of young people in our twenties, all of us engaged and determined to make a difference, and we were going to use reason, logic, intellect, data and research to achieve it. Galtung was in his element. He held lectures every week, sometimes even twice or more. He was inspiring, a good pedagogue—provocative but stimulating at the same time. If the rest of us failed to raise critical questions until the day after, it was too late, and he was already on to a new lecture on a new topic.

My time at PRIO became the opposite of the trauma I had experienced in Poland a few months earlier. It was after this that I decided that peace research was important, which was the beginning of the long and difficult process towards the establishment of the Dag Hammarskjöld Chair in Peace and Conflict Research and the present department at Uppsala University.

### ***How was life at PRIO in 1967?***

When we came to PRIO, we met—in addition to Galtung—Ingrid Eide, who was a person that was easy to talk to. There was Mari Holmboe Ruge, Per Olav Reinton, Egil Fossum, Erik Ivås, Fredrik Hoffmann (who was also part of the project on sanctions), Helge Hveem and Sverre Lodgaard. And many talked about another person that impressed everyone: Nils Petter Gleditsch, but he was not there this semester. In addition, there were two Argentinians: Luis Stuhlman and Jorge Schnitman. There had been a military coup in Argentina and they were in Oslo as refugees. PRIO took care of them and integrated them quickly.

The days at PRIO were very structured. All seminars and meetings should happen between 08.30 and lunch. After lunch there should be no meetings, and everyone should have undisturbed work time. Every day started in Galtung's office where he went through the mail, for example, invitations of various kinds. During lunch, we ate together in the Norwegian style with lunch boxes. We all sat in the kitchen around a big table with a red cloth. We soon discovered that Luis and Jorge did not have a lunch box, so Lena and I shared our lunch (lavishly provided by the Swedish-Norwegian center Voksenåsen) with them so that they could sit with the rest of us. The mealtime was an important social event.

We also attended other events together. Once, Johan asked us all to help out with preparing his boat, so we all did, and a few weeks later it was launched and then we had an excursion on the Oslo Fjord. We also attended debates at the *Studentersamfunnet* (The Student Society). Then, there was the Vietnam demonstration on the 1st of May. We walked past the US embassy. I remember that our Argentinian friends found it to be a rather boring protest. They were used to a much rougher atmosphere, and

argued that if we had just had some stones then the US embassy would have been a perfect target with its glass facade. However, this was not the Norwegian way and the demonstration passed without any windows being broken.

When I had the opportunity to start our own graduate training programme twenty years later in Uppsala, my ambition was to create the same atmosphere as at PRIO: ‘We are in this together, and we are creating something together’.

I really enjoyed the atmosphere at PRIO, where everyone was informed about what the others were working on. Occasionally, Galtung would comment on our work—however, he was mindful of what he spent his time on. What is more, PRIO had a very collegial style, which I had not experienced at Uppsala. There, the Political Science department was hierarchical and negative. It was very competitive, and people were trying to break each other down all the time.

At PRIO, it was different. When I had the opportunity to start our own graduate training programme twenty years later in Uppsala, my ambition was to create the same atmosphere as at PRIO: ‘We are in this together, and we are creating something together. If you do well, I do well’. The research becomes much better in this type of environment.

### ***How was the academic environment at PRIO during this period?***

Johan started something he called ‘Theory Weeks’. In January 1967, he had a week like this on conflict theory, and again in 1968, and in 1969 it was development theory. This was really interesting because people from all the Nordic countries came. All young persons like Håkan Wiberg, Raimo Väyrynen, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Anders Boserup. The day started with a lecture by Johan, a new topic every day. After that, there were presentations by everyone else. This helped create a good network between the Nordic countries.

We also organized Nordic conferences, further promoting the Nordic cooperation. PRIO was the engine of our Nordic peace research network. To ‘go to PRIO’ meant to be updated on the state of the art, to find out what was going on. The ideas generated could then be taken back home and used to build up one’s own activities.

For example, in Tammerfors/Tampere, Finland, the Tampere Peace Research Group was established in 1968. Further, peace research groups also developed in Lund, Copenhagen, and Gothenburg. And of course, in 1971 came the establishment of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in Uppsala.

All these Nordic peace research networks developed their own distinctive character, but all were inspired by PRIO. Galtung and others were extremely supportive. If there were difficulties or arguments, Johan would use his prestige and position to support the newly established groups. This was really important, as they were mostly driven by young people without any experience of how the university worked.

***After your stay at PRIO, did you go back to Uppsala to finish your master's degree?***

Yes, I went back and finished my *licentiatexamen*, which is what it was called in Sweden. This was a study of sanctions, which I had discussed with Johan Galtung and Fredrik Hoffmann at PRIO. I finished it in the fall of 1968, and a shorter version of it was published in *Journal of Peace Research*. This became my first academic article, called 'Characteristics of Economic Sanctions'. Johan thought that was a fitting name. I published the master's thesis on sanctions as a book a few years later.

After that, I started my PhD, and I wanted to look into not only what happens when trade ties are broken, but what happens when they are upheld. To look at trade as a tool of power. For instance, why is trade negative for some and positive for others? The PhD thesis was finished in 1973. Helge Hveem was the opponent, as was Raimo Väyrynen. I continued my studies on sanctions, notably in the new forms of targeted, 'smart' sanctions, but the sanctions researchers remain few at PRIO as in Uppsala.

***Can you talk a little about the establishment of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in Uppsala, and your role in this?***

In 1969 there was an opportunity to establish a course in Development Studies in Sweden. This was something that the Swedish government wanted to promote. However, for the university, this became a complicated matter. Should this be a matter of sociology or political science, or should it be something else? At the same time, colleagues and I were trying to get resources to further develop the small Peace Research Seminar. So, after some lobbying, the Minister of Education supported three programmes for peace research, in Uppsala, Lund and Gothenburg. This gave us the opportunity to make the small programme into a university unit.

The Dean of the Faculty (School) of Social Science was against this. However, there were others with an ambition to build up Soviet Studies in the same Faculty. So, we made an agreement that those who wanted the peace and conflict studies would vote for the Soviet studies and vice versa—together we became the majority at the faculty.

So, we made it happen, and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research was officially established in December 1971. In July 1972, I was hired as Assistant Professor (*forskarassistent*) in the newly established department, and I became head of this new unit (staying on until 1999). I presented my dissertation in Political Science the following year (1973) and became a docent (Associate Professor).

The three peace and conflict research programmes in Uppsala, Lund and Gothenburg developed differently. Uppsala and Gothenburg emphasized basic education with student courses, while at Lund they focused more on research and spent the resources differently. While Uppsala focused on peace and conflict research, Gothenburg focused on peace and development. The studies at Uppsala and Gothenburg became quite popular, and at the election for the national assembly (*Riksdagen*) in 1979, several political parties promised that they would strengthen peace research if getting into government.

Thus, in 1981 Riksdagen decided to establish the Dag Hammarskjöld Chair in Peace and Conflict Research. With the launch of a professoriate followed resources, thus the Political Science Department's ambition was that this chair should belong to political science. However, I and several of those I work with wanted to create something new, something different than political science. International affairs are not central within political science, and we would become a periphery. For us to be able to have daily conversations about questions related to peace and conflict, like at PRIO, we needed to be our own institution.

I and several of those I work with wanted to create something new, something different than political science. For us to be able to have daily conversations about questions related to peace and conflict, like at PRIO, we needed to be our own institution

This became a pretty tough process. Also, here Galtung played an important role. The group that was going to decide on the professoriate consisted mainly of political scientists—peace research was hardly represented. In 1982, Johan wrote an article in *Dagens Nyheter* calling this an 'academic scandal'. In Sweden, during this period, Galtung was seen as an important public intellectual and someone to be listened to. He was respected, particularly in the 1980s. He was not seen as provocative in Sweden, as he was in Norway. His claim about an academic scandal was often cited and repeated in the media, and it led to an interest from politicians and peace activists, as well as researchers at other universities. This had an enormous effect on the debate and I'm forever grateful that he chose to stick his neck out for us. For us, it was immensely encouraging to get this support from someone who had been an inspiration since the 60s.

This long process ended in January 1985 when I was appointed as the Dag Hammarskjöld Professor. I was personally very exposed in this affair and it was hard. Thus, for me, this was an extremely enlightening process in terms of how to manage crisis situations. Therefore, the inauguration ceremony in November 1985 became particularly important. Personally, I had never really liked ceremonies—I didn't even go to my own ceremony after having defended my PhD. However, at this time, when I entered into the university auditorium, there was music, and everyone got up. I remember thinking: 'why are they all standing? Because they are here to honour our research and academic achievement'. I looked around and I saw Galtung, Håkan Wiberg, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Raimo Väyrynen and all the others I had kept in touch with since the 1960s: probably around one hundred and fifty people who had followed the drama that this became. That felt pretty special. Since then, I have always encouraged my students to attend their graduation ceremonies. It gives a sense that to write a PhD thesis is very important, and that the university actually recognizes this in a solemn way.

When the decision was made in 1985, it had taken fifteen years from when we started. We never thought it would take that long. The professoriate gave me an

opportunity to start working towards a graduate programme. This was what I felt had been missing at PRIO.

PRIO had two problems. First, it was dependent on money from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or similar external institutions. As part of the university, we had much more autonomy. Second, I felt that PRIO lacked a link to the university education. However, Galtung seemed very negative towards the universities, probably feeling that they were too traditional, conservative and difficult to change. I think it is really important to get this flow of students coming in, writing their master's thesis, getting their PhD and finally becoming researchers. For peace research to be established within the university, the topic becomes less controversial and more accepted. The professoriate gave us the opportunity to educate people to become a doctor of peace and conflict studies. This is then their identity and will be part of their mission in life.

We had many eyes on us as we were building up our new institution. Was this the right thing? I know that many at other institutions were sceptical that we were really going to succeed. So, it was important that the first PhD theses turned out well. And they did. The first ones came in 1992, then more in 1993 and after that we had a nice flow. Now there are more than fifty people who have defended their PhDs—approximately the same number of men and women, which is great.

When we had established a group of senior researchers and lecturers, and when we had courses at all levels, I felt that my job was done. So, in 1999 I stepped down as the institute leader; by then, I had been in the role for twenty-seven years.

***The most renowned part of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala is the Conflict Data Program (UCDP). Can you tell me a bit more about how that was established?***

This started in 1978 as a small project, collecting daily information on conflicts that were reported on BBC World Service every midnight. A colleague, Ken Wilson, recorded this as we noticed that many of these violent incidents were never mentioned in print media. The idea was to get a more comprehensive picture of conflicts in the world.

It really took off when I was a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan in different periods between 1980 and 1984. This coincided with the difficult time during the establishment of the Dag Hammarskjöld professoriate, and this was probably my way of surviving and getting away from the drama. At Michigan I met David Singer, who pursued the big data project Correlates of War (COW). At that time, this was really high tech. Now it seems primitive in many ways, but this was groundbreaking, pioneering work.

[J. David] Singer was a great inspiration for me [...]. During one period, I stayed at his home after he got divorced. I lived there for a couple of months and we discussed conflict definitions at breakfast, lunch and dinner



Singer was a great inspiration for me, in terms of both conflict data and the long discussions we had about definitions and conflict. During one period, I stayed at his home after he got divorced. I lived there for a couple of months and we discussed conflict definitions at breakfast, lunch and dinner. This was great fun. I criticized his data project for only including wars with more than one thousand dead—I thought that the threshold was too high. I argued that smaller conflicts are important in understanding escalation and de-escalation. But no, he thought that it was only the big ones that were important. Further, I criticized the COW data for not including what the conflict was about. He found that ridiculous. All wars were about power. Whatever else the warring parties claimed about the cause was irrelevant and simply things they said to gain support. However, I disagreed. I argued that if we are going to solve these conflicts, we need to know what they are about. Finally, he got irritated and said, but with a twinkle in his eye: ‘Well Peter, if you don’t like what I do, do your own thing!’ I thought that was a great answer.

So, I thought: ‘Ok, I’ll do my own thing. We are going to do it here in Uppsala, and it is going to be very different from the COW data’. One element was to be able to publish it more widely. Thus, I made an agreement with SIPRI to have a chapter in its yearbook. The agreement continued until recently (i.e. for 30 years). Then there were all the discussions on how small conflicts could be accurately identified around the globe. In the end, we went down to an annual *twenty-five battle-death threshold*, beginning to publish this with the *Journal of Peace Research*. That involved a lot of discussions with, for instance, Nils Petter Gleditsch. Further, we wanted to include something about the incompatibility or dispute of the conflict. Studying conflicts in different countries, e.g. Thailand, it turned out to be possible to make a simple distinction between *governmental* and *territorial conflicts*. I think this worked really well and is very useful. I have noted that COW has since changed some of its definitions of civil wars, based on the UCDP.

The programme was not initially meant to be a big undertaking, but it has grown to be one of our most important and central projects. This is partly due to the collaboration with PRIO and, in particular, Nils Petter. In the beginning, UCDP delivered data to the SIPRI yearbook; however, the problem for us was that the data was seen as SIPRI’s and not ours. This was a reason for starting the collaboration with the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)*.<sup>2</sup> This has been a very positive collaboration, both for us and for JPR. The data became known as UCDP data, and it also lifted the JPR citations.

Singer taught me a lot about how to finance and organize a big project like this. He based his coding on work by master’s students, and this is how we started at Uppsala as well. However, we began to see data collection as a profession and realized that we needed people who really knew what they were doing and could do it the same way over the years and across the varying conflicts around the world.

Thus, the question about financing became critical. We wanted this to be a continuous project, but no research council or other funder was interested in funding it. We tried various sources, but finally I thought that this was a university concern. It was therefore great when it was written into the government’s proposition to *Riksdagen* that this was an important project. This meant that the university could allocate

funding to it as it was a structurally important programme for both national and international research. Thus, UCDP has had regular support from Uppsala University for ten years. However, UCDP is continuously in development and is at the forefront of what is going on, which also means it gets external funding for new types of projects. I think that the geo-referenced coding is an incredible resource that is yet to be fully explored by researchers.

***One of your ambitions with establishing a peace and conflict research programme was to show the importance and impact of this research. Do you feel that it has?***

When the first PhDs were finished and turned out well it was important to establish that this research was useful. Therefore, I set up bi-annual executive seminars meant for policy-makers. We conducted six of these between 1991 and 2001.

In 1999, the seminar was on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations. We organized a workshop in Uppsala about these issues, and it was really exciting as a set of pioneers on the subject came to Uppsala—amongst others, Louise Olsson, who was early in her career, and Ylva Blondel. Both really skilled researchers. Also, the chief of ‘Lessons Learned’ within the peacekeeping unit at the UN, Leonard Kapungu, and people representing the military attended. It was a very nice mix of researchers and practitioners.

The project was closing with a large conference in Windhoek, Namibia, so Ylva, Louise, I and several others went there to present our work. Kapungu was supposed to lead the meeting, but he suddenly got a call from Kofi Annan telling him go to Sierra Leone where the UN troops were in a crisis situation. So, he immediately left the conference. The question was, then: what do we do now?

At the conference, there was a fascinating woman named Margaret Anstee—one of the few women who had led a peacekeeping mission (Angola, 1992–1993). She was appointed chair of the conference and she changed the agenda, arguing: ‘We cannot just go through research questions. This demands action: I think we should make an action plan’. I was concerned about my role; I was after all responsible for the money. Can we report an action plan rather than a research conference? But everyone else was so enthusiastic, so OK—let’s do it!

Ms. Anstee started asking questions like: What does research tell us about peace processes? Which women are included? What should we do about it? The conference participants started formulating points about what needed to be done. After a while, she said: ‘This has become very good. I will take this to my good friend the foreign minister of Namibia. And now we need to call this something’. We decided to call the document *The Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*. She brought this with her to a number of central people also in New York.

In October 2000, Namibia was president in the Security Council, and could promote this action plan. It was then turned into a UN-resolution, Resolution 1325. If you look at it, it is really formulated as a set of researchable points. This was a fascinating project that started in Uppsala, and resulted in a UN resolution which I

think is one of the better resolutions.<sup>3</sup> This was one way of showing that the peace research that we were doing in the 1990s worked.

This has now grown into a fully-fledged research field both at PRIO and Uppsala with strong connections between the two institutions. For example, Louise Olsson is now a researcher at PRIO.

***Thinking ahead, what do you think are the big questions that peace research should be concerned with?***

There are a number of questions that we have not worked with as much as we should, for example human rights. There is surprisingly little research on this, we have left this for the lawyers. I'm not only thinking about individual human rights, but also women's rights and the rights of minority groups. How do we secure these? How do you appeal violations? How can we make a change? These are really important questions right now, as we are in a period where democracy is about to erode from within.

Further, I think we need to continue the excellent research on gender conducted both at PRIO and at Uppsala. Gender issues are hugely important, and there is still much left to do. We need to further explore the results showing that gender equality actually has an effect in reducing the amount of conflict. We need both basic research and applied research.

The climate and conflict nexus is important. Much research is pointing towards the conclusion that there is no direct connection between the two phenomena. However, we need to think more about the preventive perspective. There are many difficult situations that are linked to inherent antagonisms within a society, such as between ethnic groups or between herders and farmers. The communities need to be more inclusive and we need better communication between the state leaders and minority groups.

The fourth issue I'm missing is to study international institutions. What is it that makes so many perceive them as bureaucratic, difficult to administrate, and ineffective? I'm not so sure they are less effective than national institutions. We need some more innovative thinking about what global governance should look like. We need someone with Galtung's visionary ability. I have tried to interest PhD candidates in these questions, but there is a greater interest in peace processes and questions like: how are things in Colombia? And what should we do with Hodeidah (a port in Yemen, where humanitarian aid was blocked by the warring parties in October 2018)? This is great, but we need to have a bigger picture of the planet and of global governance as well. I believe that, together, Uppsala and PRIO can come up with some valuable ideas about this!

We need some more innovative thinking about what global governance should look like. [...] I believe that, together, Uppsala and PRIO can come up with some valuable ideas about this!

Finally, a small project that I'm part of now and which is a bit different is the connection between health, conflict and peace. The idea is to bring together the three United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on gender equality, health and peace. The aim is first to reduce violence, and second to build up transparent institutions. What is interesting about this project is that we are collaborating with people with a medical background. We have knowledge on how gender equality reduces violence, and they have knowledge on how gender equality improves health. How does the relationship between health and institutions look? It is really exciting to look for new connections. In peace research, we should not only talk about SDG 16 [*to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*], we should also consider how we can connect that aim to the other SDGs.

***Thank you very much, Peter.***

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***After the interview, we walk out of my office and bump into Stefan Döring, who is a PhD student at Uppsala and was Visiting Researcher at PRIO during the autumn of 2018. This chance encounter served to underline the strong relationship between PRIO and Uppsala, which originated with Peter Wallensteen.***

## Notes

1. For a fuller account of Wallensteen's professional history see Wallensteen, P. 2021. *Pioneer in Making Peace Researchable*. Springer, Chapter 1, pp. 3–29.
2. Every year since then, *JPR* has published a data article based on the updated UCDP data.
3. A more detailed account can be found in Chapter 24, in Wallensteen 2021 op.cit, pp. 475–481.

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# Chapter 10

## From Anarchy to Enlightened Absolutism? Sverre Lodgaard



Interviewed by Hilde Henriksen Waage



Sverre Lodgaard, returning to PRIO as Director in 1987 © PRIO

*What kind of journey was it, from life as a young researcher at PRIO in the 1960s, to directorial roles at PRIO and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs*

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*(NUPI) in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s? How do Sverre Lodgaard's life and work connect with his research career, his directorial roles, and social trends? And how does his journey relate to the evolution of PRIO over a period of 60 years?*

*The journey runs from a small village in Trøndelag County, where Lodgaard spent his childhood and early teenage years, to Oslo. When, how, and why did Lodgaard arrive at PRIO, and why did he end up in jail for refusing to do military service? In the 1970s, PRIO became notorious for its political radicalization. Lodgaard's research areas—East–West relations; the anti-nuclear movement; non-proliferation; disarmament; and heavy water—were a perfect fit with this radicalization.*

*But 1987 represented a watershed. That year, after having spent several years at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Lodgaard returned to PRIO as the organization's director and embarked on a massive clean-up operation. PRIO was transformed from an institute of hippies and left-wing radicals into a reputable research institute, welcomed in from the cold by the Norwegian Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, political authorities, and the Research Council of Norway. A new epoch had begun.*

**Hilde Henriksen Waage:** *Who was the young Sverre who started out on this journey?*

**Sverre Lodgaard:** I was born into a working-class family in 1945 and was the younger of two brothers. Like the other inhabitants of Singsås, a village halfway between Røros and Trondheim in Trøndelag County, we had what we needed, but nothing more. It was a good start: a small, very secure and stable community to grow up in.

The village had a few hundred inhabitants. I read with interest the little I could find about the wider world. In 1959 I moved to Trondheim and started at the Cathedral School, which was then a lower secondary school followed by *gymnasium* (college). However, my favourite subjects weren't social sciences, but maths and physics. When I realized that the laws of nature could be expressed mathematically, I was walking on clouds. I thought it was utterly fantastic.

*Given that maths and physics were your favourite subjects, and that you were living in Trondheim—Norway's technological citadel—why on earth didn't you study science? Why didn't you become a civil engineer?*

I came across a prospectus for the University of Oslo and read about something called political science. It sounded interesting and I had an early interest in politics, so I ended up there. But only for a year, I thought, then back to science.

*You say that you came from a Labour Party or working-class family. In other words, not from an academic background. Did your parents run a farm? Did they have other jobs alongside?*

My father was a carpenter and my mother a housewife. In other words, roles along traditional gender lines. My mother kept the house in good order, and my father worked hard and kept long hours. They wanted me and my brother to have an

education, which was fairly typical of the times. They understood that this was the future.

***But there must have been something in your background, your genes, that meant you had the ability and aptitude to study science, then later on political science.***

My mother thought it was a pity not to have any higher education. She talked about that several times. My grandfather was a farmer and he ran the farm very well. He had five children. Two boys. The elder would take over the farm, and the younger had to get an education. He became an electrician. The girls didn't need any education because they would get married and be provided for. He was old-fashioned, my grandfather. My father went to *folkehøgskole* (Folk High School) [school with no exams], nothing beyond that, but he was good with numbers.

***So, you moved to Trondheim?***

I lived there for five years altogether: two years of lower secondary school and three of *gymnasium*. I lived in a bedsit during the week. It was only an hour-and-a-half by train from home, and I went home every weekend. So it wasn't that big a deal. Before that I went to the local school in Singsås every other day—Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. That way we got pretty good at cross-country skiing. Having finished the *gymnasium*, my brother encouraged me to do something else for a while—that is, something other than maths and physics. That “something” became political science.

## Political Science

***Indeed. So, hadn't you thought at all about this Oslo plan before reading the university prospectus?***

No, I was easily influenced at that stage. In the beginning, I thought this new field of political science was a peculiar subject. I didn't really get the hang of it. To a seasoned scientist, it seemed fuzzy and hard to pin down, but after half a year it began to dawn on me what it was about.

***But you must have liked political science, because you carried on with it?***

I liked it more and more. Especially as student politics gradually took hold. That peaked with the Oslo Student Association. I was on the Board, vice chair, in the spring semester of 1967. There were Wednesday and Saturday meetings. After the Saturday meetings we were often on the front pages of Oslo newspapers the following Monday, with reports on debates of public interest.

And we had unlimited amounts of money! At that time, more beer was sold at Dovrehallen [a famous beer-hall in Oslo] than at any other place in Norway. We had an annual net profit of one million kroner, a large amount of money at the time.

When inviting speakers and planning the artistic interlude between the lecture and the debate, we could therefore choose pretty freely.

***So did these Saturday meetings have a set programme, with a lecture, an external lecture, an artistic interlude, and then a debate? What was it that caused you to be all over the newspapers on Monday mornings?***

The Student Association was a time-honoured, important platform. It had been for a long time and it stayed that way right up until the Marxist-Leninists of the Workers' Communist Party (AKP-ml) came along, took over and ruined it.

***But during the same time, you continued your studies, held 13 elected roles of various kinds in student politics, and sat on the Board of the Student Association. And you also had to decide on a research topic—what to focus on and write about for your magister degree. With your interest in maths and physics, you could have opted for a quantitative approach to political science, but you didn't do that?***

## **Johan Galtung and PRIO**

While I was sitting in no. 11 Uranienborgveien in Oslo [U11, the administrative office of the Student Association], I got a phone call. I can't remember from who, but I was asked if I would be interested in becoming an assistant to Johan Galtung. It was a paid job. NOK 800 a month. The way I saw it, I would have been a complete idiot to say no to that. Money was pretty tight at the time.

[Johan Galtung] could be a roller-coaster ride – with strong encouragement and strong criticism. No doubt that was part of his personality

Galtung had a project for the Council of Europe, and it was in that connection that he needed an assistant. As for the topic of my dissertation, I said to Johan that I would prefer a topic where I could apply quantitative methods. That was not to be. The dissertation was about interaction patterns across the East–West divide in Cold War Europe and did not require much of that kind.

***But did that mean that at the same time as were the political you were writing your magister degree thesis, you arrived at PRIO as an assistant on a project for Johan Galtung, funded by the Council of Europe? And did this contribute to determining your choice of topic for your thesis?***

The thesis was inspired by the Council of Europe project, and so I decided to study international relations, that particular branch of political science. In the years that followed, my own research was about European politics—across the East–West divide.



***We have now got to the topic of PRIO. Because here we have two parallel tracks: completion of your studies at the University of Oslo and your arrival at PRIO in 1967. I'd really like to hear more about this Johan Galtung. Today, many people are still well aware who he is. I remember him from NRK [the Norwegian national broadcaster] when I was young. He appeared on television drawing rectangles and diagrams with a marker pen. That fascinated me enormously. That was many years before I realized that I would end up at PRIO. But what was Johan Galtung like when you arrived? What was it like to have him as a mentor and perhaps as your guiding star? Were there advantages? Disadvantages?***

It could be a roller-coaster ride—with strong encouragement and strong criticism. No doubt that was part of his personality. I think most students experienced both sides. With hindsight, it is easy to see that he was an excellent supervisor. For example, I was asked to write a chapter for *Cooperation in Europe*, the book from the Council of Europe project, and the first draft I sent to him—he was somewhere in India, with Arne Næss [legendary professor of philosophy]—certainly wasn't much to speak of. It was poor. When I got his comments, he had picked some elements that perhaps weren't all that bad and indicated how I could develop them. In effect, I was encouraged to write a whole new text, which I did, and which actually became a chapter in the book.

Generally, Johan was first and foremost an enormous source of inspiration. I believe some of his best publications date back to the years around 1970, combining theoretical sophistication with empirical research and rigorous methodology. The results were outstanding. His article on imperialism, *A Structural Theory of Imperialism*, from the early 1970s, may still be his most cited work.

***Was he around much at PRIO, or had he already started globe-trotting?***

He has described those years, the second half of the 1960s, as PRIO's golden age. I can well understand why he saw it that way. Then, the foundations were being laid for a series of new recruitments. It was an exciting time. Galtung communicated well and was inspiring also for people involved in practical politics. We hadn't yet seen the most radical version of him. This manifested itself in the Peace Academy, for example, which I took over from him and headed for a while.

***What was the Peace Academy?***

Researchers, civil servants, military officers, journalists and MPs met at PRIO at 10am on Saturday mornings, and we stayed until 2-3 pm debating issues of current interest. Originally, a lot was inspired by Johan, but others also made opening interventions. At that time, Johan, the academic man, may have harboured another, related ambition. I believe he would have liked to become head of some international organization. He actually put himself forward for the role of rector at the United Nations University in Tokyo. As you know, that didn't materialize. Instead, he increasingly distanced himself from establishment politics and particularly from the Norwegian political establishment.

***Would you say that both PRIO and Johan Galtung himself were reputable at the end of the 1960s with contacts in the political community, hosting seminar series, debates and serious research? And that political radicalization hadn't yet really taken hold, either in Galtung or among PRIO's researchers?***

The very nature of peace research meant that since the East–West divide was the major line of conflict in international politics, the focus of our research had to be on reducing tensions, building bridges and seeking solutions. Accordingly, PRIO evolved in a different way from other Norwegian research institutes.

Most of what NUPI [the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs] stood for in the area of security policy had an obvious basis in Western interests, and in Norwegian interests as part of the Western world. PRIO was different, but so far, we liaised very well with proponents of mainstream Norwegian foreign policy.

***At the start of the 1970s, there were major changes. A number of younger researchers, of your age plus or minus a few years, arrived at PRIO. I don't know in what order, but didn't Nils Petter Gleditsch, Helge Hveem, Per Olav Reinton, Tord Høivik and Ottar Hellevik all arrive at PRIO in the late 1960s or early 1970s?***

The ones you mention are all three, four, or five years older than me. They were already there when I arrived. I was the Benjamin of the family for a short period. And then Kjell Skjelsbæk arrived a bit later, soon after me. It was a good community to join. Politically, it was in opposition to official Norwegian foreign policy, and that was okay with me. There was a striking level of self-confidence in the group. At times, we made bold arguments that probably went beyond what was reasonable, with all the fervour of youth.

## **Labour Party Politics**

***Would you say that the battle over the EC, in other words, over Europe, was the first topic that made political involvement and radicalization take off? Or were there other topics?***

That was at any rate the first political issue that engaged us all very strongly, except for the Vietnam war. Here, too, we argued with great self-confidence, and I think we were pretty good at it. I remember hearing via back channels from people we had invited to debates, and who were on the other side, that they had thought it over more than once before accepting our invitation, being uneasy about what they would encounter. And that they were relieved when debates ended in fair fashion for all involved. We were a young, successful, slightly zealous group, who came from an interesting and well-reputed institute.

***Weren't any of you in favour of the EC at that time?***

PRIO was against membership of the EC, and NUPI was for it. Some collaborators at NUPI were against, and they left the institute for a period of time. They—Harald

Munthe Kaas [who became a well-known media commentator and author] and Arne Treholt [who would later go into politics, become a state secretary, and be arrested and convicted of spying for the Soviet Union and Iraq]—set themselves up in an apartment at Skøyen. There was no room for them at the inn. The fronts were hard at that time.

***And they were to become even harder. This was primarily a political matter. This wasn't the theme for your research, was it?***

Actually, for me it was. I learnt much from the works of Martin Sæter, supervisor for my thesis. My television debut, by the way, was also on the emerging European integration and how Norway ought to relate to it. It was a debate with Einar Førde [Labour Party MP and minister, among other things] siding with me, and Johan Jørgen Holst [later head of NUPI and Labour Party defence and foreign minister] on the other side. Two people on each side; you were either for or against.

PRIO was against membership of the EC, and NUPI was for it

*Were the political roots of most researchers at PRIO, yourself included, basically in the Labour Party? They weren't on the far Left. You didn't flirt with the Workers' Communist Party or similar groups?*

Few flirted with the Workers' Communist Party, but there were a lot of people who weren't in Labour. And the founder himself certainly wasn't a Labour Party member. He did not want to have anything to do with the Norwegian America Party, as he called it.

***So, was he a member of any political party?***

No, I don't think so. He kept his distance from all parties, although he had close contact with Knut Frydenlund [a Labour Party MP and later foreign minister] and Finn Moe [chairman of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee]. Finn Moe had radical leanings, and he took an interest in what was going on at PRIO. Earlier, he had also been among the initiators of NUPI.

***Given your background, your childhood and teenage years, is it correct to say that you personally had links to the Labour Party?***

I sympathized with it before I came to Oslo. Then I became a member, and in 1969 I was recruited to its International Committee.

***What was that?***

The party had an International Committee that functioned best when the party was in opposition, and in 1969 the party was out of office. The chairman was Reulf Steen [MP, minister and leader of the Labour Party 1975–81]; later Knut Frydenlund took over, and Guttorm Hansen [Labour party MP and President of the Storting]

was a driving force at that time. Much of what I had worked on in connection with *Cooperation in Europe*—building bridges over the East–West divide—naturally translated into a keen interest in West Germany’s Ostpolitik. On the International Committee, it was primarily Guttorm Hansen who represented that thinking and reported on the Brandt-Scheel coalition’s Ostpolitik. [Willy Brandt was the leader of the German Social Democrats and Scheel of the German Liberal Party]. Guttorm Hansen visited Germany and made incisive reports on developments there.

***But am I correct that, over the longer term, your relationship with the Labour Party has fluctuated?***

Things got so stormy during the EC debate that there were consequences. I decided to leave. My wife [Ingrid Eide] said I made no bones about it, so when Knut Frydenlund phoned and wanted to talk about the agenda of the next meeting, I told him in no uncertain terms. I left the party in the spring of 1973 and joined the Socialist Electoral Coalition [*Sosialistisk Valgforbund*, a precursor for the Socialist Left Party], but I didn’t join the Socialist Left Party when it was founded. Right until the start of this century, I wasn’t affiliated with any party.

***So where have you ended up now?***

I went back to where I began. When I returned from the UN in 1997, I once again became member of the International Committee. The Labour leader was now Thorbjørn Jagland. After a while he wanted me to chair the committee, and I accepted. I made it clear to Thorbjørn that I wasn’t a Labour member, but he didn’t think formal membership was important.

I had a free hand to issue invitations to the meetings. It depended on topic and competence. Membership of other parties wasn’t a barrier as long as the person in question was not known to have a leading role. There was a lot of interest in attending, and I found it all productive and rewarding. We had some very good discussions.

I took on this role for social as well as political reasons. When I returned from the UN, I wanted to re-establish contacts and dip my finger into what was going on in Norwegian politics. Not on a weekly basis, not even every month, but perhaps every other month in connection with some issue or other of topical interest. Then, in the beginning of this century I got a phone call from a Labour MP in connection with my deputy membership of the Nobel Committee, appointed by the Labour Party. Winding up, he suggested that I pay the membership fee. Being involved in a bit of party work at that stage, I thought I might just as well do so. That’s how I got back to the roots.

***There are some recurring themes here. Your political engagement is really a factor throughout your whole journey. You changed party affiliation slightly, but not your actual political standpoint. Is it fair to say that’s pretty firmly within the Labour Party?***

Yes, on the left wing of the party. But there has been no continuity in my political engagement. I could engage, on and off, on issues that I thought were interesting and important, but then, after a while, I did not have the stamina to follow up. New

issues, new interest, and then a new lull. Guttorm Hansen invited me to the Storting [parliament] and put me in the Press Gallery so I could see how parliamentary life played out in practice. Perhaps he had a longer-term motive for doing so. But when I left the party in 1973, it was clear to me that I was not made for politics. I realized that I should concentrate on research.

***Indeed. No doubt many people think that researchers—including me—at PRIO and at other places that conduct research on international questions really want to be politicians. But what we really enjoy is getting on with our research. We have a desire to learn more, think, and analyze. That's what we really like doing.***

Yes, no doubt we think—both you and I and many others in our profession—that there is more excitement in research-related problems than in humdrum day-to-day politics.

## A Conscientious Objector

***As an introduction to the major topic of political radicalization in the 1970s, which would result in PRIO being branded a disreputable institute populated by hippies and radicals, I'd like to talk a little about you and military service. Because in the 1960s, military service was compulsory in Norway, and all Norwegian men were conscripted. And that would certainly also apply to you.***

Initially I applied for, and got, a deferment. Meanwhile, I had begun writing about nuclear weapons and nuclear policy. I had my views about the Norwegian Armed Forces and their integration into NATO, in which nuclear weapons were an important element.

At the same time, we had our own self-imposed restrictions—no stationing of nuclear weapons in time of peace, no foreign military bases, no flying of allied aircraft over Norwegian territory east of 24 degrees. As for nuclear weapons, this meant that Norwegian military personnel didn't get any training in the use of such arms. Even so, nuclear weapons were part of Norway's defence strategy. The implication was that allied forces, not Norwegian troops, might use these weapons on or from Norwegian territory in case of war. The reasons for my conscientious objection evolved over time and I ended up with the slogan *Armed and Defenceless*.

At its peak, NATO had 7,000 nuclear weapons in Europe alone. [...] I drew a line in front of myself and said: 'not this', and I've never regretted taking a principled stand. [...] It was classified as politically motivated conscientious objection, and the court ruled that I had to go to prison.

***What did that mean?***

At its peak, NATO had 7,000 nuclear weapons in Europe alone. When there were large-scale NATO exercises and these weapons were used in war games, the supreme commanders reported that Europe had been destroyed. Everything that was supposed to be defended would be destroyed if such weapons were used. I drew a line in front of myself and said: ‘not this’, and I’ve never regretted taking a principled stand.

However, there was no basis in Norwegian legislation for allowing someone to do alternative civilian service for such a reason. It was classified as politically motivated conscientious objection, and the court ruled that I had to go to prison. Stjørdal and Verdal District Court found that the minimum sentence required by law, three months, would be enough. The prosecutor appealed to the Supreme Court—four months had been the usual—but the Court upheld the sentence.

***And so you had to serve a prison sentence?***

I served it in the Bayern section of Oslo County Jail. I was offered another place where conditions were more benign, but I wanted to see how the ordinary prison system worked. For me, this wasn’t punishment of the kind that hit many others. Other inmates might lose their jobs, their families might fall apart, and so on. None of this applied in my case. At first, my impressions of prison life fluctuated, but after three months my understanding of life behind bars had stabilized.

***So, you had to serve your sentence in Oslo County Jail in an ordinary cell? It’s just unbelievable to be sitting here and hearing that. Who were your fellow prisoners? All different types?***

All sorts of law-breakers. There was no segregation according to type of crime. And this was the first time I saw people using narcotics. The drugs were given to a prisoner on remand. The stuff was injected into oranges and his lawyer was the courier. After three weeks behind locked doors, I got a job as assistant orderly—I’d realized that was the perfect job, because then my door would be unlocked from early in the morning until five in the afternoon and I could read and write a bit in-between work in the corridors.

I was offered another place where conditions were more benign, but I wanted to see how the ordinary prison system worked.

I commented on a book manuscript by Gunnar Garbo [a Liberal Party politician and peace activist] and finished an article for the Journal of Peace Research. I handed out food, brought clothes to and from the laundry, and cleaned cells. When I delivered the meals, the prisoner would often stumble slowly from his bunk, in a daze. I’d shout that he had to bloody well get up and take his food! I didn’t realize what was going on. Drugs. As early as 1974.

***Yes, but presumably this made an impression?***

It did, because it was a new world for me—and I stayed in touch with a couple of inmates afterwards. One of them had been imprisoned during the war, but never in peacetime—until now. He and two close relatives had explored 10 different ways of earning money, including stealing and selling Volvos. He was a trained engineer and used a drill bit that was so fine that when he picked the steering-wheel lock, no one could see the hole with the naked eye. After I was released, it wasn't long before he got out too. He helped me install the electrical equipment in my new apartment and turned up in a modern Volvo! The story had its colourful aspects! I heard from him some years ago, from Spain.

Life in prison could be a bit dismal, especially in the beginning, so when I was set free for a few hours each week to give my introductory lectures on international affairs at Blindern [the University of Oslo] I thought it would be a relief. It turned out differently. Time passes rather quickly when you get into the rhythm of prison life, but the hours at Blindern took me out of that rhythm. So, in a sense I was happy when the lecture series ended. I got out in December 1974.

**PRIO's Egalitarianism**

*The third group of questions concerns political radicalization in the 1970s. PRIO became an institute with a fairly bad reputation. It's worth noting that when I arrived at PRIO in 1984 as a young postgraduate, you weren't there, but I found an institute populated by hippies and radicals—a situation I could scarcely have imagined given my conservative upbringing in the Salvation Army and other evangelical communities.*

*So, perhaps we should begin with how PRIO was structured. And here, I think, for the sake of readers in 2019, we need to proceed step by step, in considerable detail. In 1971, a new structure was introduced at PRIO—it was still in place when I arrived in 1984: the staff meeting was the highest decision-making body. Everyone had an equal vote, whether you were a secretary or a researcher. The structure was completely flat [egalitarian]. There was no hierarchy of any kind. There was a 'leader', who was elected on a rotating basis. And there was a salary system that eventually resulted in a secretary becoming the top earner. So, I'm wondering: what was the point of this new structure? Why was it introduced?*

The background was a strong collective feeling, reinforced when Johan took off for other parts of the world. His departure meant that we had to find a way to govern ourselves. In the beginning, I thought it was an appropriate structure, not particularly problematic. The people who were there—you listed them a while ago—functioned well as a collective. And it was the spirit of the age—at least among those of us who were there at the time. Ideas about egalitarianism, staff meetings, and collective structures were considered fair and reasonable. So we tried it out. But once the

arrangements were put into practice, objections emerged, little by little, and over time they became pretty strong.

*When this system was introduced, Johan Galtung had left PRIO, so the researchers there at that time were Asbjørn Eide, Helge Hveem, Marek Thee, Tord Høivik, Nils Petter Gleditsch and you. In the politically radical atmosphere of the 1970s, you had a strong belief in the collective, in solidarity, which you thought would function successfully. So was there agreement initially about having an elected leader, which would be a rotating role; about the staff meeting having the highest decision-making authority; and about the flat structure and the salary system?*

No one emerged as the natural leader when Johan left, and there were ideological undercurrents working in the direction of a flat structure. The group you mentioned functioned well together, so the staff meetings naturally became the highest decision-making authority. The salary system came a bit later. That system put the flat structure to more of a test, but initially we all supported that, too.

*What was the basis for the salary system?*

Everyone was supposed to have equal pay. Ideally, an equal hourly wage regardless of position. Researchers and administrative personnel were to be paid on an equal basis. It was pursued so energetically and zealously, particularly by Nils Petter and Tord, that it had a provocative effect on some of us who had supported it at the beginning but saw more disadvantages as time went on. Disagreements about the salary system caused tensions within the group. So when the Institute got into a hostile encounter with Norwegian authorities and public opinion at the end of the 1970s, PRIO was an institute at war with itself.

## Revealing Military Secrets

*At the same time as this was going on, a drama was playing out in several acts under the title **The Battle Against Secrecy**. This title covered a number of related issues. What was your view of this unfolding drama, which ended with PRIO being branded a spy institute, and with Nils Petter Gleditsch up in court and being found guilty?*

On my part, this goes back to a book that Nils Petter and I published around 1970 called *Krigsstaten Norge* [Norway—the Warfare State]. The title was borrowed from the title of an American book, *The Warfare State* by Fred Cook. Our intention was to shed light on how much, and in what ways, Norwegian politics and society might be considered militarized, and the consequences of this. In the Norwegian context, the title was hype. It did not resonate. So that was a blunder. But there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the project. Already at this stage we were trying to bring out into the open things that had been relegated to the shadows. The battle for transparency, against secrecy, had already started (see also Chap. 5).



Already at this stage we were trying to bring out into the open things that had been relegated to the shadows. The battle [...] against secrecy had already started

By way of extension, Nils Petter and I had a harder look at Norway's self-imposed weapons restrictions. What were the actual contents of these restrictions? How did they work in practice? Under bilateral agreements between Norway and the United States, we put our territory at the Americans' disposal. The United States financed the installations, and Norwegian personnel were assigned to run them in order not to breach Norway's base policy, which prevented foreign military personnel stationed on Norwegian soil in peacetime. Times of war and crisis were a different matter. We tried to bring out into the open matters that the authorities weren't so eager to talk about. They might be our own 'secrets', or it might be American 'secrets', but to a large extent we were targeting Norwegian secrecy, because classification of information was more comprehensive in Norway than in the United States. Norway was more closely aligned to the British tradition, which had relatively strict classification rules.

So far, nothing had caused any fuss. For instance, Nils Petter and I wrote an article for the Nordic journal *Cooperation and Conflict* about the self-imposed restrictions, which received favourable comments from many quarters. Then, a military officer, Anders Hellebust, arrived at PRIO with a magister degree thesis in the making. It was fed into the PRIO context, and Nils Petter knew how to shape it with a view to public attention. I was also a part of that. At that point in time, a mentality had developed along the lines that since we thought it important to bring things into the open, we should also ensure that we got decent media coverage.

***Was that anything new?***

We weren't in the media so much in the late 1960s and early 1970s. But when these projects began to take shape, we thought that if we were to be successful, we would also have to summarize our messages in straightforward, easily understandable words and feed them to the media. To exaggerate a little: getting into the media became a criterion of success. We thought we had something interesting and important to present, and media coverage became a criterion of success.

***So there was no research-related disagreement between you and Nils Petter? In fact, quite the opposite?***

That's right. We had coinciding research interests, and we co-authored some publications.

***But all these cases—the 'lists case', the (Finn) Sjøe case, and several others—meant that PRIO increasingly encountered massive prejudice from many quarters, and as time went on, universally, not least from the establishment media. The overall effect of these cases, political involvements, statements in the media, research interests and focus, meant that suddenly PRIO had drifted into a kind of shoal of unfortunate situations.***

That's a bit exaggerated. But the report on the Omega and Loran-C stations (which had been set up on the Norwegian coast to help US submarines navigate) was controversial, and then came the report that set out to map US-Norwegian intelligence cooperation. There wasn't anything earth-shaking until then, but then it came, suddenly and brutally. Above all else, that was the parting of the ways.

***So here you're referring to the court case and the charging of Nils Petter Gleditsch and Owen Wilkes in July 1979, the court case in May 1981, the verdict in June 1981, and the hearing before the Supreme Court in February–March 1982. It was this case that became the high—or the low point—so far. But from the end of the 1970s and up until then, Nils Petter had made an enormous contribution, both in terms of research and also political engagement.***

And he ran this project with customary enthusiasm and systematicity in order to uncover as much as possible about what kind of operations were taking place, especially under the bilateral agreements between Norway and the United States. It wasn't necessarily the case that Nils Petter thought it was unreasonable for Norway to put its territory at the disposal of American operations. We had a security guarantee from the United States, and this was a significant part of the bargain. But he thought the secrecy was detrimental.

In the United States, if investigative journalists use open sources to establish that something spicy is going on that hasn't previously been brought into the public domain, that's the politicians' problem. In Norway, things were viewed differently. And perhaps it is fair to say that the situation wasn't quite as clear-cut as if the material had been obtained exclusively from open sources. For example, if you get close to a military intelligence station and see a sign prohibiting entry, but then find another way without a sign and go in that way, then you're in a grey area. On the margins, sole use of open sources may not have been clear-cut.

And then came the report that set out to map US-Norwegian intelligence cooperation. There wasn't anything earth-shaking until then, but then it came, suddenly and brutally. Above all else, that was the parting of the ways.

When the report was in draft form, Nils Petter invited me to read the first 30 pages. That was only natural, given that we'd collaborated on similar issues for many years. I then went to his office and said there's a 50 percent chance you'll be prosecuted. But he wasn't having it. He found my assessment completely unreasonable. His understanding of the political and social consequences of his work had significant flaws.

***Why wasn't it natural for you to collaborate with Nils Petter on this?***

It was something he was doing on his own, together with Owen Wilkes. Without remembering the specific details, it wasn't that he invited me to collaborate and I said no.

***Because wouldn't it have been obvious for him to ask you?***

In a sense it would. Probably, there were other intervening factors here. We were busy doing different things. I had begun writing for SIPRI's Yearbook: from 1976, I wrote the nuclear non-proliferation chapters. But it certainly also had to do with the nature of the work. It was sufficiently sensitive for Nils Petter and Owen Wilkes to find it best to keep things to themselves. PRIO wasn't kept informed about what was going on. However, to the extent that anyone else at PRIO had any insight into what was going on, it would have been me.

***With hindsight, doesn't it seem a bit strange that you and Nils Petter, given that your research interests were really very closely aligned and that you had written and edited several books together—both this one about *Krigsstaten Norge* [Norway—the Warfare State] and the one about *Norge i atomstrategien* [Norway in the Nuclear Strategy]—didn't continue your collaboration on this in 1978–79, and that it became a Nils Petter/Owen Wilkes project? One that you didn't participate in, or didn't want to participate in, or weren't informed about?***

I didn't have any wish to join the project, and I don't think Nils Petter had any wish for that either. But we did have a research relationship that was close enough for me to be aware that something like this was going on. And I was interested in some related questions that didn't have to do with military intelligence, e.g., to what extent Norwegian researchers had accepted money from the American military to conduct research for them and to what ends. But I never wrote about it because Nils Petter and Owen were leading that work too.

It was a paradox that a project that aimed to uncover secrets had itself been kept secret from the rest of PRIO's staff

***In the aftermath of the publication of the report by Nils Petter and Owen, there was internal uproar at PRIO. In an earlier interview, you said that the report was like a bomb. And in light of the highly collective, close-knit nature of PRIO, isn't it really somewhat strange that a report and a research project would come suddenly, like a bomb? Tord Høivik was leader at that time, and he experienced it as very unpleasant. What are your own recollections of this?***

Of course, it was a paradox that a project that aimed to uncover secrets had itself been kept secret from the rest of PRIO's staff. The fact that such a project had even been worked on hit the staff like a bomb. I was in a special position, because I knew that something like this was afoot, as I mentioned when I referred to my comment

to Nils Petter after I'd read the first 30 pages. And to repeat, Nils Petter and Owen can't have understood the political consequences of what they were doing. Their enthusiasm and determination to uncover things that had been out of sight got out of hand.

*A week after the report was published, PRIO issued an official statement, which said that the publication of the report by Nils Petter Gleditsch and Owen Wilkes would have been stopped if it had been subject to a 'broad administrative process'. The statement was written by the permanent staff members at PRIO, which included you. And it emphasized that PRIO was not taking a position on the content of the report, but that the work on the report had been kept virtually secret from the rest of the staff.*

Yes, it was—with me as a minor exception.

*But isn't it really quite extraordinary that all the permanent researchers at PRIO went public with a statement criticizing Nils Petter Gleditsch and Owen Wilkes?*

Well, it hadn't happened before. And I'm pretty sure it hasn't happened since.

## **Institute at War with Itself**

*So, by then, was PRIO no longer a pleasant place to work?*

The sum of several events meant that it had become very unpleasant. The report on military intelligence brought things to a head—it was the last straw. But at the same time, the salary system and the flat structure was also a major source of tension and misgivings. We'd all been in favour at the beginning, but many of us became more and more lukewarm as we saw that the system wasn't working. In that respect, much of the responsibility rests with Tord and Nils Petter, because they implemented the system with such an alacrity that when PRIO came into the spotlight because of the said report, it was an institute in conflict with itself. At that point, there was very little that was positive about being at PRIO.

*So events happened in parallel here: the onslaught of massive media attention in connection with the publication of this report, and at the same time, a feeling among other PRIO researchers that they hadn't been kept informed, or at least not well enough?*

The staff weren't kept informed.

*But you had seen the first 30 pages?*

Yes.

*And at the same time, the third factor was an ongoing and growing conflict about the flat structure and the salary system.*

That's correct.

### **Six Years at SIPRI**

***That led to you leaving PRIO in 1980. Why did you leave? Where did you go, and was this linked directly with the internal conflicts?***

It was a case of pull as well as push. I was already writing for SIPRI—the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. SIPRI was very well funded and had an excellent infrastructure. I worked there for six years. Very rewarding years. At the time, it was an optimal home for me. PRIO was the opposite. An unpleasant workplace. I was unhappy and wanted to get away. In that sense, things were pretty simple for me. Though it was inconvenient as far as my family was concerned, even Ingrid [Eide], my wife, thought that it was the best solution. The situation at PRIO had become pretty unbearable.

It had caused a bit of a stir – also internationally – that Ingrid and Johan [Galtung] had separated at the end of the 1960s and that I had married Ingrid

***And Ingrid, who was one of PRIO's founders, was no longer at PRIO. So where was she?***

She had a position at the University of Oslo, at the Department of Sociology, and spent some time in Parliament as an MP for the Labour Party. It had caused a bit of a stir—also internationally—that Ingrid and Johan [Galtung] had separated at the end of the 1960s and that I had married Ingrid. But it happened without causing Johan and me to fall out. We could have our disagreements on other matters, but the relationship was not damaged because of family affairs.

The reason for that had much to do with the coincidence and timing of what happened on his side and what happened on mine. He married a Japanese woman, Fumiko Nishimura. In the spring of 1971, just as I had finished my magister degree, we travelled together to an international conference in Romania and had a pleasant time. And Johan was on the committee for my dissertation.

***So to start at the beginning, what happened was as follows: two of PRIO's founders—Ingrid Eide and Johan Galtung—were a married couple. Was it in 1969 that Ingrid and Johan Galtung got divorced?***

Yes.

***And then, my goodness, Sverre Lodgaard marries Ingrid Eide, the ex-wife of Johan Galtung.***

Later that year.

***Indeed. There wasn't any hanging around here. You went straight into new relationships, because at the same time as Johan Galtung found his new Japanese wife, while you continued to have an excellent relationship with Johan Galtung,***

***both professionally and personally, he sat on your magister degree committee, and everything was just fine. Have I got that right?***

We were both a bit proud of it. But without the fortunate circumstances—the simultaneity of things—it could hardly have ended that well. And apropos your question, I fully understand that it is of some interest, in the context of PRIO’s history, to know what happened.

***Yes, I think it’s really good that you’ve said this. Because I’ve been wondering whether I would dare step into this territory. But of course, it is true that this isn’t a completely personal matter, because it did involve the real core of PRIO’s founders and a permanent staff member.***

Well, yes and no—I can’t see that it had major consequences for anyone.

***No—but it could have had. If things hadn’t gone well, there could have been consequences. So does this mean that in 1980, you and Ingrid moved to Stockholm?***

No, Ingrid stayed here.

***Okay, so Ingrid stayed here, but you moved to Stockholm and remained there for six years. You left PRIO, which had become an unpleasant place to work. At SIPRI, you continued to pursue your research interests—non-proliferation, disarmament, and heavy water.***

Following up on my thesis I first wrote a series of journal articles about economic cooperation—East–West joint ventures. I also studied what happened when things got really tense between East and West, such as with the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. What was cancelled, and at what point did cooperation pick up again?

I published my first journal article on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons around 1974–75. And in liberal Norway, I could be in prison in the autumn of 1974 and be on the Norwegian delegation to the first Review Conference for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) six months later. Not only was it possible, it all happened quite naturally.

From then on, my research was all about security policy, nuclear arms control, and disarmament, for a long while. Right from the beginning, my interest in the evolving arms control regime had a distinct non-proliferation element, and it was that element that brought me out into the world, to the international jet set on these issues. From there, I widened my scope of research to encompass broader issues of international affairs.

In liberal Norway, I could be in prison in the autumn of 1974 and be on the Norwegian delegation to the first Review Conference for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) six months later.

## Heavy Water

***You continued your work at SIPRI during the 1980s, and there you also became interested in the topic of heavy water. How did that come about?***

It started a bit earlier, with the establishment of the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG). The NSG developed a trigger list, i.e. a list of nuclear materials, technology, and equipment that should not be sold, or that one should be cautious about selling, and then only under the international safeguards. In 1977, the NSG added heavy water production equipment to the list, to be exported only under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. For the forthcoming Yearbook, it therefore seemed natural to compile an overview of such equipment and of the most important transactions involving heavy water. I visited Norsk Hydro in this connection to investigate what had happened to Norway's heavy water.

***So, were you still at PRIO in 1978, when this work on heavy water started?***

Yes, I did this chapter for SIPRI's Yearbook just before Christmas 1978. Norsk Hydro produced heavy water and had sold some of it to the United Kingdom and France. Later, it turned out that Norwegian heavy water also ended up in other countries, in Romania and most probably in India. But it was only the day before Christmas Eve that I asked myself where Israel got its heavy water from. At that stage, I had a fair overview of the international market and who required safeguards, so I quickly understood it must have come from Norway.

At first, I thought the heavy water had passed via France, because the French helped Israel to build the reactor where the water would be used, and Saint Gobain Technique Nouvelle had designed the reprocessing facility. When I mentioned this in a conversation at the [Norwegian] IFA (Institute for Atomic Energy) [now IFE, Institute for Energy Technology], I was told that 20 tonnes of Norwegian heavy water that was in the United Kingdom but was surplus to British requirements had been withdrawn and sent to Israel. At that time, a company called NORATOM handled the transactions. And so, I put a sentence into the Yearbook chapter: 'Less well known is the fact that Israel obtained its heavy water from Norway', marked it in the margin and sent a copy to Viking Eriksen, head of IFA. That set the alarm bells ringing.

***Because it was absolutely not public knowledge in Norway that Norway had sold this heavy water to Israel.***

No, it wasn't. And an emergency meeting was convened at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

***With you?***

I put a sentence into the Yearbook chapter: ‘Less well known is the fact that Israel obtained its heavy water from Norway’, marked it in the margin and sent a copy to Viking Eriksen, head of IFA. That set the alarm bells ringing.

Oh no, not me, but Jens Christian Hauge, [former head of MILORG, the military part of the Norwegian Resistance Movement during the German occupation, later defence minister and leading Labour Party politician] who had negotiated the heavy-water deal with Israel; the secretaries general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Trade; Viking Eriksen; and maybe a few others, to prepare themselves for the publicity that would ensue as soon as the SIPRI Yearbook came out.

That was my media debut. It was a crazy ride for a few days, and I learned a bit about how experienced media people could operate. For example, Norsk Hydro’s press officer Jon Storækre rang *Dagsrevyen* [NRK evening news] before the programme went on air, so that there would be no time to double check with me. He put up straw-man arguments, claiming that I’d said so and so, and that he had to correct it.

***So, the Norwegian authorities denied this in the media? Did they claim that you had misunderstood?***

What Storækre said was that Hydro hadn’t sold any heavy water, it was NORATOM that had sold it. But I hadn’t said or written that. I was well aware of NORATOM and made my rebuttal later in the evening. The daily *Dagbladet* had it on the front page. I went to the editorial offices—at that time it wasn’t so unusual to do that to make sure that one would be correctly quoted. When I entered Arve Solstad’s [the chief editor’s] office, he was sat there with some of his collaborators. He seized the initiative and said: ‘You are front page material!’ In the media circus that followed, I had many supporters, including at the IFA and in the press, and I was confident about my case.

***But wasn’t this a rather sensational revelation?***

It was headline news.

***It didn’t really fit with how Norwegians saw themselves. But did the Norwegian authorities continue to deny it? Or did they stop commenting on it after a while? How did it end?***

The television news wanted me and the foreign minister, Knut Frydenlund, to debate the issue. Frydenlund didn’t want to, which is understandable. The Secretary General at the ministry also didn’t want to be on the air with me, so we were interviewed separately. He said that Norway had conducted inspections, and that this was allowed for in the governmental agreement with Israel. In practice, the one inspection that he referred to was a visit by Jens Christian Hauge in 1961. He had seen where the heavy water was stored while waiting for the reactor to be operational in a couple of years. Of course, that had nothing to do with international safeguards. Heavy water



is supposed to be inspected at the moment it enters the reactor and is put to use. IFA reacted when they heard it—it was a pack of distortions—and phoned me to back me up.

To me, it was always clear that [...] the Norwegians knew perfectly well what was going on. Later, when Olav Njølstad examined Jens Christian Hauge's papers for an excellent book about this towering figure, he found an envelope labelled 'Heavy water for Israel'.

Many years afterwards there were doubts about whether those involved knew what they were doing. In his fascinating book *Strålende forskning* ['Radiant' Research] about the history of the IFA, the historian and current director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Olav Njølstad, wrote that he didn't believe they did.

To me, it was always clear that since the reactor in question would be run on natural uranium and heavy water and was kept free of inspections, the Norwegians knew perfectly well what was going on. Later, when Olav Njølstad examined Jens Christian Hauge's papers for an equally excellent book about this towering figure, he found an envelope labelled 'Heavy water for Israel'. The contents showed, beyond doubt, that Hauge knew what the heavy water would be used for. So yes, they knew, and they thought it was right.

**For my own part, let me just add that as the author of a doctoral thesis entitled Norway—Israel's Best Friend, and as someone who has researched the relationship between Norway and Israel, it's as clear as the light of day that the Israelis knew what they were doing. They always do. And when the Norwegian authorities allowed Jens Christian Hauge, a passionate supporter of Israel, to participate in the negotiation and inspection, there's no doubt that this wasn't about civilian objectives.**

## Returning as Director

*And so we come to your directorial roles. In January 1987, you returned to PRIO as its new director. On the one hand, this was a break: you got your first directorial post and you became director of PRIO, which had never previously had a director. On the other hand it represented continuity in the sense that you returned to PRIO, your academic home.*

*I remember it well. I was a young postgraduate when you came back, I was finalizing my master's thesis on Norway's attitude to the founding of the state of Israel, and in 1987 I got a doctoral fellowship from the Research Council of Norway. So I know a lot about the questions I'm asking now, because I had personal experience of this enormous change. I remember that there were still staff meetings,*

*and that those of us who were young students, taken together with those doing civilian national service, had a majority at these meetings, so we could vote down one proposal after another, overruling all the permanent researchers, if we felt like it.*

*Basically, there wasn't really any governance or control. Everyone could come and go as they liked. You could come to work in the weirdest clothes. This was the institute that you returned to and that I was working at as a young student. But why did you come back to PRIO?*

I'd had leave of absence, initially for two years. Then it was extended for two more, and then another two years. I guess Nils Petter had a hand in it. A moment ago, we talked about the conflicts of the late 1970s. All the time, in spite of the controversies, I was conscious of the quality of Nils Petter's research and his importance for the institute. When the fall-out from the famous report occurred, I was already on my way to SIPRI, but with a dual mind of what had happened. The detrimental aspects were obvious, but so were Nils Petter's importance for the institute. Perhaps it was the case that he also saw value in keeping me within the PRIO family, by ensuring that I got an extraordinary leave of absence. PRIO's administrative secretary (in fact administrative director), Tor Andreas Gitlesen, came on visit to Stockholm and explained that the egalitarian salary system and the flat structure were about to be abolished, and I decided to return to PRIO.

*But wasn't this a condition you imposed in order that you would return? Or was it the case that people at PRIO realized that they had to go through these processes in order to get you back?*

I'm not quite sure about the answer. What came first. My memory isn't good enough. But I wouldn't have come back if there hadn't been a green light to abolish these arrangements.

*As far as I remember, at any rate, a very clear opinion was expressed that this had to be sorted out. In other words, you weren't prepared to come back and start off with lots of negotiations and arguments about the flat structure and the salary system. So if you were to come back, it had to be clear that you would start with a clean slate.*

That's right. I wanted to implement a clean break. It had to be sharp and clear-cut. A lot of things had to happen more or less simultaneously. We've talked about the salary system and the governance structure, but there was also the research programme and how we structured and issued our publications. And we had to find new premises. Rådhusgata was unbearable. All of that simultaneously.

*I said in a farewell address to you in 1992, when you left your directorship of PRIO, that PRIO under you in those five years had been on a road from anarchy to dictatorship. Then I corrected myself in the speech, and said that perhaps it was enlightened absolutism.*

*I think at this point I ought to note that I was your successor. In other words, you chose me to take over as the director of PRIO. And it's for you to say whether you regret that or not. But I was certainly very close, both to you as director and to the changes that occurred. But I would like you to say something about—and this is part of the story—whether it was necessary at times to be pretty uncompromising in order to implement these major changes.*

## A New Era of Normalcy

This must have been the one and only time I felt I had to be uncompromising on many basic issues at about the same time. I did things that weren't normal, things I wouldn't have done under other circumstances. But then, the situation at PRIO wasn't normal either.

Among the things I mentioned, the salary system was the easiest to put in place. The decision had been made. We would go back to the usual for research institutes. As for the governance structure, that too had been decided: the flat system would be abolished. But then a new one had to be introduced, and things like that do not function properly overnight. It takes time for a new set-up to be up and running and operating smoothly.

PRIO hardly had anything that deserved to be called a research programme. There were diverse projects. We had to establish some priorities. PRIO was a small institute at the time, so resources had to be concentrated around a few main programmes. Some projects had to go. There was no future for women's studies as a separate branch of research, or terrorism for that matter. Some of these conversations were uncomfortable, in particular because people realized that a new era was in the offing and they were looking forward to being part of it. When they were told 'no, we cannot accommodate you', it was painful. Understandably, some reacted with disappointment and bitterness.

PRIO hardly had anything that deserved to be called a research programme. There were diverse projects. We had to establish some priorities

In addition, the office building at no. 4 Rådhusgata was an unpleasant place to work. The noise level was unbearable. There were heavy vehicles driving past right outside, making the building shake. There were exhaust fumes and huge amounts of dust and dirt. In some offices, it was difficult to hear what people were saying on the phone. So, what could we do about that?

I heard that the university department of anthropology had its eye on no. 11 Fuglehauggata at Frogner, but that they hadn't signed a contract yet. No doubt the anthropologists would describe what followed as overly offensive on my part. And in a way it was. I phoned Jens Kristian Thune, a top lawyer, and asked him to assist.

I knew him from my time in the Student Association, even though he belonged to an older generation.

Thune had hunted down the hidden fortune of shipowner Hilmar Reksten and secured NOK 600 million for the government, and was an important figure in Norwegian public life for a generation. ‘What is it?’ asked Jens Kristian. ‘It’s about using a sledgehammer to crack a nut,’ I said, and explained what I was after. He said ‘Okay, I’m on board.’ So we negotiated with Veidekke, the company that owned the building in Fuglehauggata. I conducted the negotiations on our side, as is usual in such situations, with Jens Kristian as my coach. He didn’t have the time to discuss with me in advance—we did it in the car on the way to the meetings. He was utterly professional, making the right compromise proposals at the right moments.

***So you bought no. 11 Fuglehauggata?***

We rented it. We laid claim to most of the building and offered the rest to the anthropologists, who turned it down. Instead, social scientists from across the street moved in. We sold Rådhusgata for NOK 10–11 million, and Jens Kristian’s help was invaluable in that phase too, as I had no experience in making such deals.

We used some of the money to refurbish Fuglehauggata and adapt it to our needs, but as far as I can remember we were left with NOK 7 million or so. Foundations are legally obliged to have sufficient reserves to cover the salaries of all employees for three months in case they have to close down, and a solid reserve is a dear asset anyhow. This was a major operation. Just the fact that we got away from Rådhusgata made most people positive about the overall plan.

Did you say dictatorship? Yes, I didn’t see any reason to debate whether it was acceptable for representatives of PRIO to go around in workmen’s overalls

Did you say dictatorship? Yes, I didn’t see any reason to debate whether it was acceptable for representatives of PRIO to go around in workmen’s overalls, making visitors wonder. There had to be a minimal dress code.

***Yes, so did you just say that? I’ve never been reprimanded for my attire, so I wonder how you went about it?***

Well, I must have said something.

***I wonder how you dealt with this? Do you remember?***

I don’t. Maybe it was a case of people picking up signals. People were happy to get away from what had become a negative feature of life at the institute.

***Perhaps it’s not necessary to say that much about it. Because when we moved from the old offices in Rådhusgata to the new offices in Fuglehauggata, which we thought were really posh, there was such a big shift in the level of office facilities***

*that perhaps people didn't feel it was that natural to go around in all kinds of swimming trunks and without shirts and so on, as had been completely commonplace at Rådhusgata.*

*So perhaps this contributed a little to the upgrading of dress and other things. And of course you didn't look like a radical yourself. You made sure you wore smart clothes and a jacket, sometimes even a suit, to work. I certainly hadn't seen that before in Rådhusgata.*

## The Punching Machine

But this developed of its own accord—one thing led to the other. I also wanted to have an overview of people's whereabouts. It hadn't been like that before. People came and went more or less as they liked. I installed an item that was current at other workplaces at the time—a punching machine, to register presence and absence—something that wasn't used only in private companies, but also in the public sector. But I would never have thought of introducing such a thing if it were not for the need to ensure regular presence at the workplace. I realize it must have seemed like some kind of shock therapy (see Chap. 20).

*You can say that again! Because you didn't engage in any in-depth or broad consultation about the punching machine.*

I didn't, but I should have done so, with the trade union.

*I remember arriving one morning and there were five, six, seven researchers standing around a box on the wall, which had been nailed up by the director, and I remember asking, 'What on earth is this?' I hadn't seen anything like it before in my life. And there was silence, I think because we didn't know whether we should smile, get angry, or react, because the shock effect of the clocking-in clock was pretty instantaneous.*

Yes, precisely.

*But did this cause any fuss? I remember I clocked in and out quietly.*

No, there wasn't any fuss. Today, arrangements are much more onerous. People have to keep timesheets. A much tougher measure. But at least I achieved a degree of order, ensuring that the staff would be present during working hours. To sum it up, the changes were about getting the institute into such a state that we could receive visitors without embarrassment and without being the object of unpleasant and negative attention.

On another level of respectability, I remember that when I was interviewed by Jarl Munch from NRK (Norwegian Public Broadcasting) upon return from Stockholm—Norway wanted Israel to return heavy water—I was made to understand that NRK had not been in the habit of dealing with PRIO. PRIO was ignored. I also knew there were MPs who were sympathetic towards PRIO, but who in light of what

had happened had tried to deflect attention from the institute, keeping it out of the limelight so that the annual funding could continue.

***But you were planning to put more in place? You had become the director. The institute's Board, as it was christened, was technically an advisory organ for the director, with the exception of the appointment of future directors, where the Board had real power. You needed a Board with appropriate authorities, much the way other institutes functioned. Hadn't that happened at PRIO before? At least it hadn't worked out. So how did you do this?***

My impression was that the Board had gone along with things, with the flat structure and the salary system etc., even though I doubt that they could have imagined something similar at their own institutions. I saw the board as passive bystanders. I phoned around to find a new chair. And I got no, no, no, no.

Anders Bratholm, no. He had been in the circle around Johan right from the start. But Anders also had merits from the war, as a member of the resistance, and for what I know his refusal may have been linked to the court case against Nils Petter.

I saw the PRIO board as passive bystanders. I phoned around to find a new chair. And I got no, no, no, no

Finally, Bernt Bull accepted, after discussing the matter with Knut Frydenlund. Bernt Bull had been political adviser at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs when Frydenlund was foreign minister. He belonged to that rare breed of Labour Youth League (AUF) members who were both teetotal and pro-NATO.

Trygve Ramberg also deserves a mention. He was chief editor at *Aftenposten* and affiliated with the Liberal Party (*Venstre*). He and I talked a great deal about how to get PRIO back on track. Trygve was a great man and an invaluable advisor.

***And when PRIO moved to Fuglehauggata in the autumn of 1987, did you want to have some kind of opening ceremony?***

Yes, to mark new times. Knut Frydenlund had passed away and the new foreign minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, attended. Thorvald lived up to expectations in his well-informed and customarily elegant manner.

***And contributed to making PRIO more reputable? Because wasn't this what it was about?***

Exactly—I think the staff felt that he conferred a sense of confidence in what we were trying to achieve. We had taken important steps on the research programme and the governance structure. The first budget from the Ministry gave a boost—an additional NOK 1.6 million—covering the rent for Fuglehauggata. That was encouraging.

We didn't expand massively during my term as director, but the budget was doubled. I took guidance from the way things were done at SIPRI. While important decisions had been made—we talked about that—there was still a lot that needed to

be put in place. The new Board was supportive. But even so, it took time to streamline the new set-up and get people used to it.

Another example: all SIPRI's books were published by Oxford University Press. A large, well-reputed publishing house. I wanted a similar arrangement for PRIO's journals and books, and invited half-a-dozen British publishers to make bids. I wanted our most important publications to be with one publisher: books, the *Journal of Peace Research* and what became *Security Dialogue*—formerly the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*. In the end, SAGE made the best offer. Both journals and two or three books each year in a book series.

Not to forget or belittle: some staff members had difficulties getting the new governance structure running in their veins. If they mobilized enough, they might have their way. I struggled a bit there. We had to allow for the new structures to take root over time.

*So was this the thing you found most difficult?*

In any event, it was the administrative matter I worked on the longest.

## Opposition from a New Angle

*Can you remember the areas in which the resistance was greatest, or where it came from? I think I remember that in the beginning, as you said as well, there was a kind of relief. People were eager for things to be a bit more orderly here. But resistance developed as time went on. Do you have any memory about which areas this came from?*

Yes, I do have some. I invited Johan Galtung to give lectures on major topics of peace research. Håkan Wiberg, too, another leading scholar in the field. After a while, Tor Egil Førland came to me on behalf of young historians—we were fortunate enough to have five or six at that time, including you, Stein [Tønnesson], Førland, [Nils Ivar] Agøy and Olav Njølstad, who was doing his civilian national service and acted as my assistant for a while. A very strong group.

Tor Egil said that if I did more of that, the group would consider it a step backwards for PRIO. And it wasn't just you historians, there were also others who were less than enthusiastic and didn't turn up. They said that they had heard Johan speak so many times before that it wasn't all that interesting to listen in once again. I disagreed, because I thought Johan was constantly producing new material. Here we had an interesting clash of scholarly opinion. I yielded and ended the lecture series in light of the reactions and because the lectures were under-attended.

On a related issue: I spent some time preparing for the 60th birthday celebration of our founder. It was the proper thing to do—besides, it was part of my job to show Johan the attention he deserved. He appreciated it. He rang me the next day and said that he and Fumi had talked about the event and had found it better than a comparable event for Arne Næss. That was kind of his yardstick.

***I remember that Tor Egil and I sat at the back for that 60th birthday celebration, because first we had a lecture by Johan Galtung himself, and then we had a dinner at the Norwegian Institute for Social Research. And I remember that I was almost a bit in shock over Johan Galtung's speech at that so-called seminar. Because he made a thunderous speech about the role of the United States in the world, which he didn't have anything particularly good to say about. I remember I'd been at several of these seminars, but the icing on the cake was this long speech he gave at his 60th birthday celebration.***

You're completely right. At that time, he was giving a series of lectures on the international role of the United States, about overt warfare, about so-called covert actions by the CIA and so on. And this was a broadside. There was no Q&A after that lecture, so we went straight over to the Norwegian Institute for Social Research where the party continued, and where I gave a short speech praising him i.a. for his courage. I had always found his courage impressive. However, he didn't see it that way himself—belittling himself, I thought, which was otherwise not his habit.

Let me mention another matter, about productivity and the conduct of research projects, which was conflict-ridden and unpleasant. I asked a couple of staff members to show what they were doing, as they had not published much for a while. In response, they presented a book outline that they claimed was very promising and that they had busied themselves with for quite a long time, but nothing ever materialized. They hadn't written anything. That was painful. I was quite annoyed and did not hide it.

***At PRIO that was really a new development. That someone would actually require their fellow staff members to produce research, and if we hadn't done it, whether we were students or doctoral fellows or researchers, then Director Lodgaard would say, 'We can't have this.' It felt—and of course it was—very different, and it made an impression. And many people felt that they were coming up against a director who was making demands. Some people thought that was fair enough, while others thought it was unreasonable.***

Yes indeed—some came to me and said I had been unreasonable.

***Of course, it's part of the picture that this was something new. Because before, down in Rådhusgata, if one had been a master's student there for five years and not produced anything, one could still wander around in shorts with no shirt and it was no problem.***

***But that was no longer the case once we came to Fuglehauggata. And it was very clear that we were now in a new era. But fundamentally, was there an acceptance that this was necessary and that this was a new era?***

Yes, that was certainly my impression. That there was acceptance. Colleagues came not only to convey discontent, there was more support, and I felt that very clearly. No doubt there were a few hangovers from the flat structure. That's something you just have to understand, it's human. I understood there was something there lingering on, but ultimately it disappeared.



***And within this process, from when you returned in 1987 until 1992, there were members of staff who weren't allowed to stay at PRIO. Because wasn't there a streamlining of PRIO in all areas?***

Programme priorities and concentration of resources meant that some had to leave. I had bad feelings about it, but there was no way around it. For much of the rest—ordinary working hours, presentable working conditions and so on—the streamlining you mention was a transition to normalcy. It was so obvious that there was no reason for lengthy discussions. The shortcut, cutting straight to the chase, was the right way.

***And so it's not unreasonable to characterize the five years when you were director as a path from virtual anarchy, i.e. chaos, to a dictatorship or enlightened despotism? There was really no doubt about who was in charge now, steering the PRIO ship, sometimes with measures that were harsh and direct?***

But you know, when you shoulder the director's responsibilities, your perspective becomes a bit different. I felt that ever so often it was me who had to back off. I had my doubts, not so seldom, about what was going on, but found it best to let it pass. Much depends on your vantage point.

## **Leaving PRIO for UNIDIR**

***During your second three-year term, it suddenly became evident that you were going to leave PRIO prematurely, in 1992. I remember that we were very surprised. Why?***

I was pretty content, to be honest, with how things were going at PRIO. In essence, I felt I had done what I wanted and what was expected of me. PRIO was in good shape, with a good staff, and in that sense I felt free to leave. And then a job came up that I was interested in. I applied, or rather Norway put me forward as a candidate, for the role of director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, UNIDIR, in Geneva.

Johan Jørgen Holst was foreign minister and did much to support my campaign. Bjørn Skogmo in Geneva, Martin Huslid in New York, and Bjørn Kristvik on the Board of Trustees likewise. Thanks to their efforts, my candidacy succeeded by a clear margin. The Board had 20 members and only two of them voted for another candidate. So, I moved to Geneva and stayed there for just over four years. It was a new horizon opening up, which brought me to all the main regions of the world.

These were good years, and there were some difficult times as well. UNIDIR's Board of Trustees was also the UN Secretary General's advisory board on security and disarmament and I was involved, first in an *ex officio* capacity, and then as an elected member up until the new millennium. At first under Boutros Boutros-Ghali and then under Kofi Annan.

*But were you tired of being director of PRIO and thinking that now you would look actively for something new? Or was it the case that PRIO was getting into good shape and you had actually planned to serve out your term, and then this job turned up? Or a bit of both?*

It was mainly pull, not push, and I felt free to leave. I was approached from Geneva and encouraged to apply.

*So there wasn't any plan?*

No, there wasn't any plan. An opportunity turned up. I could have stayed on, but then it was exciting to do something new. And I wasn't yet 50. So there was time for new adventures.

*Exactly, and then you were in Geneva until 1997, before returning once again to Norway as the director of NUPI (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs), PRIO's—how should I put it—partner and competitor, for 10 years from 1997–2007. Was that a plan?*

## Returning as Director of NUPI

No, there was no plan there either. [Nobel Institute Director] Geir Lundestad, who was chair of the advisory board at NUPI, phoned and said I ought to apply for the job. My new Swedish wife Marianne [Lodgaard] and I—we got married in 1994—discussed what to do: continue to live abroad or move to Norway? She didn't have a full-time job in Geneva—it was difficult for spouses to get jobs there—just a part-time engagement at the Swedish school. So we decided to move to Oslo. Marianne got a job almost immediately at the WWF (World Wildlife Fund).

Åge Danielsen, the Board chairman [...] made it clear – with a glint in his eye – that I was being paid to find solutions

Around 1990 the world changed, profoundly, and after a while there was little difference between PRIO and NUPI. They complemented each other, and to date there's been no conflict to speak of between these institutes. Still, NUPI was different from PRIO. Giving clear signals is important everywhere: research is the main function and a smooth-running administration is important to facilitate it. At PRIO I had looked for the right person to head the administration, in fact I made several attempts. Terje Bruen Olsen spent a year on a clean-up operation and did a great job, but it was only when Grete Thingelstad arrived that things fell into place.

At NUPI, the relationship between the permanent researchers who had always been on the government payroll, and those who had been recruited on a project-by-project basis, was delicate. The parameters were changing: now the permanent staff also had to make project applications and contribute to the generation of revenues.

***Of course, NUPI has always been structured differently from PRIO, in that it was and remains a state administrative agency, while PRIO is a foundation. So did that perhaps make it slightly more difficult to get people who had originally been permanent academic staff at NUPI to relinquish privileges?***

Yes of course. The old guard had a hard time adapting. Åge Danielsen, the Board chairman when I was appointed, made it clear—with a glint in his eye—that I was being paid to find solutions.

***So you thought your years as director of PRIO were good, and likewise your time at UNIDIR. How was your time at NUPI?***

I enjoyed it. No complaints. There were a lot of expectations linked to the job. NUPI was significantly bigger than PRIO had been during my time there. For instance, at PRIO I tried to attend all public meetings. I couldn't do that at NUPI. Far from it. I was supposed to be familiar with all main lines of research, in principle across the whole portfolio; to conduct research myself so that my academic qualifications wouldn't deteriorate on the job; keep the finances in order; and be visible in the public domain. I became a public figure in those years. And then there was the international dimension—that was important both for the institute and for me personally and I was involved in several international networks. So these were ten intense years, but good years as well.

After leaving the directorship in 2007, I have never felt any inclination to look over my shoulder. Life without institute responsibilities, with responsibility only for myself, has been most enjoyable. At age 74, I still keep an office at NUPI, benefit from the company of a good staff and from access to modern facilities, and feel privileged.

***You've travelled a long way—from Singsås and Trøndelag to active involvement in student politics—including many elected roles—to by chance ending up studying political science in Oslo, and getting a phone call from PRIO, and then you walked the whole way through your research career, finally ending up with several directorships.***

But I've never thought of it as a social class or status journey [*klassereise*].

***No, but perhaps it was?***

Well yes, undoubtedly it was, but I never thought of it that way. It's just how things worked out for me. And as for PRIO: let me end by saying that I've been very happy with the way PRIO has developed over the past 20 years.

***Thank you very much, Sverre.***

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# Chapter 11

## The Peace Policy Maker: Dan Smith



Interviewed by Stein Tønnesson



Dan Smith in 2020 © SIPRI

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What I want, if you look at me and my career, is on the one hand, a lot of activism, and on the other, a lot of research. The activism I have engaged in was sometimes in a movement, like the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), but mostly about trying to move things in policy terms. If you look at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), I went to a research institute and I brought it a little bit more into engagement and into policy work. Then I went to International Alert, which was a hands-on engagement organisation and I strengthened up its research and analytical side. So, you know, I've kind of always tried to unite the two halves of my personality, research and policymaking, in whichever institution I'm working for.

**Stein Tønnesson:** *And now you are director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Can you unite the two halves there?*

**Dan Smith:** I feel that SIPRI, where I arrived in 2015, is where I have really arrived. For me, this is *the job!* I mean, I'm not at all criticising either of the other institutions I have led. I'm very proud of both PRIO and International Alert, and I'm proud of what I managed to achieve between 1993 and 2001 at PRIO and from 2003 to 2015 at International Alert. But honestly, it is here at SIPRI that I feel I have the most comfortable seat, the one that is most shaped to the weird contours of my particular intellectual formation, where I can do some of the things that are closest to my heart. Yeah, I'm very happy.

At SIPRI, we have the good fortune to have a constituency that appreciates the importance of good policy research to support policy choices. While it's up to other people to judge whether the policy choices are good, we do our best to provide the Swedish government and others with firm evidence to support this or that policy choice. We have good relations with a number of different governments and with international organisations, including the European Union and the United Nations, and different agencies within the UN.

*And if you now compare the leadership positions you have held in Oslo, London and Stockholm, what distinguishes each of them?*

Well, first of all, I'll tell you what unites them, which is that even during the interview at SIPRI I found out that it had been in crisis and was really in a pretty poor shape. The director and the chairman of the board of governors had stepped down by mutual agreement in order to bring the crisis to an end. But of course, the structural weaknesses were still there. So, in a way, what unites the experiences of running PRIO, International Alert, and SIPRI is that in each case, I was coming into a place that had been through some kind of crisis and was still recovering from it, and was weakened compared to what it could and should be. I think at each place—perhaps less at PRIO, more at International Alert and even more at SIPRI—there was a huge appetite amongst the staff to put things right. Get this behind them and work together to move on to the next level.

## The Literary Road to Peace Research

*Dan, you were my predecessor as PRIO director. In my first month in 2001, you trained me in the job, and you also continued working for PRIO for some time after that, with responsibility for our huge engagement projects in the Balkans and in Cyprus. As the outgoing director, you showed a remarkable understanding of what a leader needs. Whenever I faced a difficult choice, you spelled out my options and told me what the implications of either choice were likely to be, but you left it up to me to decide.*

*Let me start this conversation by asking you about your unusual educational background. You studied neither history, international relations, sociology nor any other social science, but English literature. Is not one of your key assets as a leader in peace research your command of the English language? Please tell me what your literary road to peace research looked like. Which schools did you attend, and how did your studies form you as a person?*

School education started in a couple of primary schools in England as my family moved from one place to another, and then a year and a half of elementary schooling in Australia, and then back to the second of my previous primary schools in England. I took the national exam of the time; it was called the 11 Plus, and sorted out kids aged 10 and 11 in England into the bright ones and the not so bright ones. It was statistically decided that there would be 20% bright ones who would go to grammar school, and 80% not bright ones who would go to what were called at that time “secondary moderns”. That was an education system that was, fortunately, reformed out by the Labour government of the 1960s, which introduced comprehensive education so that everybody receiving state education (rather than paying fees) would go to the same kind of secondary school.

I was at a very good grammar school. It was—what can I tell you about it? How to shock the Scandinavians?—it was a boys-only school, we all wore school uniforms, we did competitive exams three times a year for the first two years of our time there, and then every half year after that, preparing us for the national level exams, the so-called O-levels—“O” for “ordinary” (which I think is why, in the Harry Potter books, the wizarding exams are called OWLS) followed by A- (for “Advanced”) levels.

I took the O-levels when I was 14, and then sat the A-levels at 16. In both cases, that is a year or two younger than most people do, for two reasons. One was because, when I was in my second primary school, there was a real crowd there; it was the end of the baby boom generation—kids born like me in 1951—and there were more children than places. So, one day the headmistress walked into Class 1 where I was, and two or three of us were picked out for a quick test. I was 5 at the time. One question, which I remember, was  $8 + 7$ ; I had the chalkboard in front of me and I just had to write in the answer. And then spelling about three or four words of about four or five letters in length, so not “cat” or “dog” but, you know, “milk” or something like that. Then, you know, that’s fine, Daniel, off you go into the next class. So, I

went up one year when I was 5 years old. I was always the youngest in my class all the way through school.

And then at grammar school, when most schools took five years to take their pupils to O-level, this school took four. So, I was doing the exam two years younger than most of my peers in England. It meant that once we'd done A-level, we had some extra time; that was why the school did O-levels quicker than normal. So, I did my A-levels in two years, but then I took another year to do one of the A-levels again—to deepen my knowledge and get a better grade—and then I took the entrance exam to go to Cambridge.

***When did you develop your interest in literature and fiction?***

I was an avid reader by the time I was 10 or 11, reading everything, mystery novels and so on, and probably some quite strange ones because I just chose more or less at random in the library. Being interested in actually studying literature instead of just consuming it started when I was 15, after I had taken my O-levels. I had teachers at that time in English literature who were themselves inspired by their love of literature, and I think that passed on to me. I became a reader of great novels, rather than just what I happened to find in the library, along with poetry and drama.

***When you got to Cambridge, did you focus completely on literature?***

Yes. There were people who switched subjects, who were at the university to read one subject and then changed to another one. But not me. I stayed with English not just because I loved reading but because it was the subject I was good at.

***And what was your focus during your study at Cambridge? Any particular author or kind of literature?***

The first two years at Cambridge—known as Part One—in English Literature, you do almost everything from the Middle Ages to as close to now as you can get. Within those centuries, I particularly liked the drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan and Jacobin theatre, and the so-called metaphysical poetry of Donne, Herbert, Marvel and others in the seventeenth century. After that, for me, there is actually a bit of a blank spot in English literature lasting about 140 years, during which I don't find very much of interest other than bits and pieces. It is really with the nineteenth century and the novel that it picks up. My long essay, as part of the Part One exams at the end of two years, was on Jane Austen. She is actually an abiding love of mine. When I have a really serious cold that has knocked me out, once I start recovering from it I read *Pride and Prejudice*. I always know I'm getting better when I decide to read my favourite bits from *Pride and Prejudice*. In the English lit. course, as the literature became more and more modern I was more into it. For my Part Two, the special period that I took was 1910–1935—just before the First World War, during it and most of the interwar period. It's a great period of literature in the English language, with authors ranging from T.S. Eliot to D.H. Lawrence—who hated each other—and everybody in between: from E.M. Forster to Aldous Huxley, Ezra Pound, James Joyce and W.B. Yeats. I did my Part Two



dissertation on Yeats. I was proud of that, I thought I did some good work there, and I was told that the examiners liked it as well.

***Your background in English literature distinguishes you from most other peace researchers. How has it advantaged you or disadvantaged you in the field of activism and peace research?***

[Jane Austen] is an abiding love of mine. When I have a really serious cold that has knocked me out, once I start recovering from it I read *Pride and Prejudice*.

I'm not sure. I came out of Cambridge an articulate—probably too full of himself— young man, and persuaded various people into thinking I should be given positions of responsibility.

I could always present myself articulately, I would always perform well, and I wrote reasonably. I don't think that's boasting, it's just being aware that these are skills I have, some of which I have worked at. I think that what Cambridge really gave me in terms of education was that it taught me how to read and write.

There were other aspects of learning how to write, though, and I think it never stops. I benefitted enormously from a style check programme I used in 1990 or thereabouts—that's after I had stopped being active in the British peace movement. The word processing programme I used was called WriteNow; it came with a free style check called Grammatick, which gave you a detailed, phrase-by-phrase analysis of your writing, emphasising the importance of clarity and simplicity. It was rather brutal, in fact, and told me I didn't write quite as well as I thought I did. It taught me a lot about the mechanics, the pace and rhythms of written English. I hope I am still learning now how to improve my writing.

I suppose that writing well—even if I did still have lots to learn—may have helped me with the activism; at least, I don't think it ever held me back in any kind of way.

As far as research is concerned, I don't think it's ever been a problem for me that I had a literary education rather than one of the social sciences. There are some people who do find it's a problem because they know that I don't have a degree in what they regard as an appropriate topic, neither a master's degree nor a doctorate. And if they start to get particularly critical about that, I point out that I do have a master's degree, a Cambridge University Master of Arts in English literature, and I ask if they know what I had to do in order to get that degree. Of course, they start to imagine the most demanding pedagogical programme you could think of. And I point out that what you had to do back in those days was breathe in and out for two and a half years, and then Cambridge University would send you a letter saying we have appointed you to be a Master of Arts. As you can tell, I don't actually take the paper qualifications very seriously. But I know that many people do.

I think if there is one issue, it is that sometimes in some fields I have felt it would be useful to be more versed in some of the theoretical language and the methodologies that are commonly used in political and social science. On the other hand, you know,

I consistently find that people who bring one theoretical and methodological package to the table can't talk to somebody else who comes with a different theoretical and methodological package.

Perhaps one of the advantages of not having a single disciplinary focus is that it is easier for me than for some others to take a broad view and look at a question from a number of different angles. I have always thought, if something is important and worth trying to understand, I can probably understand at least a part of it. I've never been put off a topic because I don't have the right theory or methodology easily to hand; I just try to figure it out. Maybe that's where knowing how to read helps most.

The one thing in which my student days studying literature clearly helped was when I started writing about the ethics of humanitarian intervention and the political philosophy of sovereignty. This was an important set of topics for me in the late 1990s and early years of this century. And then I think that both some of the specific reading I had done and, more generally, the literary sensibility, were very useful for unpicking some of the issues involved in, for example, the relationship between the Just War tradition and humanitarian intervention.

***Yes, I remember your attitude towards the disciplines from when you came to PRIO in 1993. At that time, I wanted to form a group of international historians at PRIO and you didn't want it at all. You wanted PRIO to be clearly cross-disciplinary.***

Yes.

## **A Mother's Tales—And the Library**

***Let us move back a little. Was there something in your family background that predisposed you towards studying English literature or engaging in peace work? Quite a few of our PRIO Stories tell about wartime experiences having motivated a strong dedication to peace.***

Nothing in my family background pushed me towards literature or research. I'm not sure about the peace bit. I am the youngest of three children. My father was born in 1914—a few months before the outbreak of the First World War—and my mother in 1916, the year that wartime rationing was introduced in Great Britain. They got married in 1940, one year into the Second World War. My father had been working in China and came back for the war. He joined the air force, qualified, and became a flying instructor, then deployed to Canada to instruct Canadian pilots joining the Royal Air Force. My mother also crossed the Atlantic to join him. For most of the time, he was stationed in North Battleford in Saskatchewan, one of the prairie states, and that's where my mum lived too. Towards the end of the war my father was deployed to Northern Ireland and flying ocean patrols. My mother came back with her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, on a transatlantic convoy; this was the eastward journey, the more dangerous trip to take because the supply ships and troop ships were full and were targets for German submarines. They were back in

Britain before the end of the Second World War, and my brother was born shortly after it ended. They went out to China after the war was over—sometime in 1946, I forget when—when my brother was still a baby, and my sister by that time was a two-and-a-half or three-year-old. It must have been a hell of a journey on a ship going out to China. They left just before the Chinese revolution was completed in 1949. They were then sent to a couple of other places, including Sri Lanka, which is where I was born in 1951.

I was about 18 or 19 months old when we left from there and then went to Kenya, living in Nairobi. That's where I had my second birthday. We were back in England after about a year, and I think my father was not particularly successful at that time; he went from one job to another for a bit. And then he got a position that started in 1958—while I was at primary school in England—that involved moving to Australia. Which, as a family, we did at the end of—what was up until then—the hottest summer in the UK, 1959. I am probably one of the last generation of people who took an ocean voyage for the purpose of getting from one place to another, rather than for a cruise or a laugh, or something like that, or as a crew member. We went out on the SS Stratheden ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ss\\_stratheden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ss_stratheden)) of the Peninsula & Orient shipping company, leaving from Tilbury docks in very late August of 1959. I had my eighth birthday on the ship as we went out. It took about four weeks to get to Melbourne, which was where we lived till we came back to England.

***Do you remember anything in particular that your parents said to you about war and conflict, in your childhood?***

My parents separated around the time we came back from Australia, and because I was the youngest child, my mother and I spent lots of time together. At Sunday lunches, I would prompt her for tales, for stories. She was a rather reluctant but very good storyteller, and talked vividly about life in Canada, about the convoys, about China and so on. So I have very strong images of all of that, and about the things which worried her, and the things that didn't worry her. For example, there wasn't much point in worrying about things like German submarines; of course, you did worry about them, but there was no point in letting the worry affect you too much. It was more important to know that you had a proper supply of nappies and other products for the baby who you were bringing back.

When my mother moved to China, one of her worries was about food, because she knew that she would have to go to some formal banquets and meals. She was just about 30 when moving out there, and obviously she had quite a lot of experience because of the war and going out to Canada, but in other ways she was a quiet suburban young woman from West London. And suddenly she was in exotic China where she would have to eat with chopsticks at smart meals. So indeed, very soon after she landed in China my father was invited to a dinner to welcome him, and she should go as well of course. She sat up until about 2 or 3 o'clock the night before the dinner, practicing eating toffees with chopsticks. My mum's stories were a big part of how I learned about my family background.

***If we now go to your own recollections from your childhood, what were the events that influenced your feelings about peace and conflict? When is the oldest memory that you have of something that had to do with conflict?***

I'm not so sure really. I've been thinking about this since I agreed to do this interview. I remember the Cuban Missile Crisis, and I remember some news about the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and the feeling that it was a good thing, because maybe our milk was being poisoned from radioactivity and so on. Nothing very specific... I am not one of those people who remembers where I was when President Kennedy was assassinated. Five years later, I remember where I was when I heard the news that Bobby Kennedy had been assassinated. And I think by then, which is 1968, and I was sixteen, coming on seventeen, I knew about the Vietnam War and war in the Middle East. I was opposed to the American role in the Vietnam War. But I didn't have particularly strong views about any of those kinds of issues until after I went to university in 1970.

***Which other things in life really fascinated you when you were a teenager?***

I hesitate to say about some of them—I think I was a pretty ordinary teenager. One thing I can think of, that I did a lot, which would seem to be retrospectively pretty significant given my career, was that I read military history. As I already told you, I was an avid reader, and the public library was a fantastic resource. My technique was to pick a book that looked interesting and if it was, if I got lucky, so to speak, I would read my way through that author until one day there wouldn't be one on the shelf that I hadn't read. Then I would just move on to another author. At some point, on one of the occasions when I felt like reading some non-fiction, I read J.F.C. Fuller's *Decisive Battles of the Western World*.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the classic works of military history, though I didn't know that till later. I was about thirteen at the time, I think. I also read Liddell Hart, who was the other major intellectual figure of the inter-war years, trying to make sense out of all things military after the carnage of the First World War. I was fascinated by those kinds of things. But it wasn't particularly the Second World War and modern war that fascinated me; I spent much more time reading about and wanting to know the details around medieval and Roman battles.

***We have something in common there, I did the same.***

I think it's perfectly possible that at any point in my life I might have taken a different turn, and then reading military history when I was a teenager would have been just one of those things that a strange young boy did. I think very often we read people teleologically, so that we understand them now for who they are, and then we look into the past to see those things which fed towards the person who we now know. Given different circumstances, at certain key points, if I hadn't gotten this job or that grant, I could have moved in a completely different direction.

For example, if I hadn't got the job at PRIO, maybe I would have focused more on writing crime novels—I'd had three published by the time I started in Oslo, as well as two short stories, and I was working on a fourth that has never seen the light of day. Perhaps I would have made a success out of that. Then probably one wouldn't think that reading military history as a teenager was particularly significant.

I think very often we read people teleologically, so that we understand them now for who they are, and then we look into the past to see those things which fed towards the person who we now know. Given different circumstances, at certain key points, if I hadn't gotten this job or that grant, I could have moved in a completely different direction.

### *We try to make sense of a lot of coincidences...*

Yes, exactly. A friend of mine who was helping me as a PA [personal assistant] when I was head of International Alert once looked at my CV and said to me, "Wow—you just took a straight line through life towards this job." But that is not at all how it felt at the time. I just meandered along doing what I was interested in.

### *Do you remember any dreams about or ambitions for your future?*

No, I was never able to answer questions about what I wanted to be when I grew up. When I was 17 or 18 and on the verge of going to university, I still had no idea what I wanted to do. I just wanted to go to university, have a good time, see what came up, and carry on.

## **Becoming a Leader at 22**

I had just passed my 22nd birthday when I became the General Secretary of a small national organisation.

One day in 1972, I joined the sit-in over a rebellion against the exam system. The system was strange, consisting of a series of three-hour exams into which, under pressure and feeling nervous about your future, you tried to encapsulate several years of learning. It's probably a good system for finding out who can do well in three-hour exams but it's hard to see it as a serious way of assessing how much you have learned and understood. Students started to rebel about this and wanted other systems of evaluation. I don't think anybody thought we should do away with exams completely but wanted more emphasis on dissertations and on continuous assessment through the semesters of being at the university. Several, I suppose very

politically motivated, students decided this would be a good issue on which to have an occupation of a major university building and I decided it would be a good idea to join in. If you want a day that really changed my life, that would be one of them. It started me on a course where I was associating with the political types all the time. Whatever we agreed or disagreed about, we wanted to change society, we wanted to change the world. We were of course young and enthusiastic and foolish in many ways, but I think that most of the things I was against at the time, I'm still against now. I'm just not as sure as I was when I was 21 about how to change them.

A couple of months later, I was elected to the student union's Executive Committee. Then I was launched into student politics for a year and a bit. When I left university, I had decided that I wanted a job in which I would do some good.

I guess I was still young and foolish and idealistic about this so I was not perhaps as open as I should have been to the idea that there are many different ways to do good. What I meant essentially was that I wanted a movement job. So, I went to work for an organisation that, up until the time that I saw the advert for the job, I thought had probably folded: this was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). CND had been very big from 1958 to about 1963 or '64, before the Partial Test Ban Treaty had taken some of the air out of its sails and it went into a quiet decline. The anti-Vietnam War movement and to some degree the anti-apartheid movement became more fashionable radical forces. Well, I saw a tiny little advert for a national organiser. I could tell from the salary that they were offering—which was a pittance—that they were not going to get anybody who was experienced and really knew what to do, so for the hell of it I applied and got the job. I started there in June of 1973, straight after I graduated. It was a very small office staff, just four of us, in a two-room office on Gray's Inn Road in central London, very ramshackle, very dusty. There were a National Council and Executive Committee who ran this organisation, which still had about four or five thousand members.

That autumn, the General Secretary, the head of the office staff, decided to retire. To my surprise, he and the chairman of the campaign sat down with me and said, well, they thought that I should have the job. So, I had just passed my 22nd birthday when I became the General Secretary of a small national organisation.

We wanted to change society, we wanted to change the world. We were of course young and enthusiastic and foolish in many ways, but I think that most of the things I was against at the time, I'm still against now. I'm just not as sure as I was when I was 21 about how to change them.

*Did that predispose you to become a leader?*

Yes, it did.

## Discovering Peace Research

### *Was it the job offer from the CND that led you into your interest in British defence policy?*

Yes, exactly. That's the route in. Because then what happened was that I took the executive decision, in which the chairman backed me, to improve our campaign literature. Our literature tended to appeal to people who agreed with us already. That's not completely useless because they might not know they agreed with us so simply stating a position could be useful for recruitment. But it wouldn't actually win over somebody who was open-minded and had questions. Anyway, over 1974 and 1975 we wrote and published a number of pamphlets, fact sheets and briefings with an emphasis on facts and arguments.

Another important shift in focus was that I said we're not a mass movement and we're not going to be one very quickly. I was wrong about that because by the beginning of 1980 we were a mass movement again, and that was only five or so years later. But as far as I could see at the time, there was nothing that would make us a mass movement.

So, I thought we needed to build our parliamentary strength. We needed more Members of Parliament to better understand the issues and our new literature would help with that. We did work with other constituencies as well, such as universities and trade unions, but I thought the parliamentary aspect was particularly important. I used to write a monthly briefing for Members of Parliament.

During those years, I started to meet people who were involved in research on these issues. I met Andrew Mack, who in later years directed the Peace Studies Centre at Australian National University, then became an adviser and speechwriter for [UN General Secretary] Kofi Annan, and after that the progenitor of the *Human Security Report*. I met David Holloway, who was one of the top experts on Soviet policy and strategy; he was at Edinburgh University at the time. Sometime after, he moved to Stanford [University] in California, where he still is. And I met Mary Kaldor, who was at that time at a research unit in Sussex University.

Meeting them and others was important and even inspiring. I started to realise that this was a world that I could get into. If I remember right, I invited myself to lunch with Andy Mack one day in early 1975, and asked him if he thought I could be the kind of person who could get a grant to do some peace research, and if so, how would I go about that? And he answered yes, and helped with useful introductions to other people. By then, I knew Mary Kaldor and we were working on a pamphlet together with David Holloway and Robin Cook, who 20 years later became the UK foreign secretary. Mary helped me a lot with my first research proposal, which I submitted in the summer of 1975. I was lucky with it and started doing full-time research in January 1976, leaving my job at CND after two years as General Secretary. And you know, just as I said about the reason why I did English, the reason I started doing

research was that I felt it was something I was good at and enjoyed. It was the part of the job at CND that I had really liked.

After that, one grant led to another and then to a precarious mixture of research grants and publishing income from different things. By the end of the '80s I felt that my life was a little bit financially and economically insecure, and I was beginning to come towards 40, which is a milestone. And I asked myself: in 10 years' time, when I'm coming towards 50, do I want to be in the same position as I am now? And my answer was a clear no, I didn't. I still loved research and writing but other aspects were not so good. So, I set about doing what I could to improve things. Perhaps this seems very odd and off topic, but one of the things that I did was give up smoking. I think it was a symbolic expression to myself about the importance of my own agency. If I want to do it, I can.

So, I was doing a fair amount of reflecting on myself at the end of the 1980s, start of the '90s. And I remember thinking and discussing with people what the ideal job for me would be. There was my interest in research, and my wish to connect that to changing the world, and a little experience of management. That came about because, although I had left CND as an employee, I stayed active in the peace movement. I was chair of European Nuclear Disarmament in 1981–82 and vice chair of CND from 1984 to 87. And I put in a considerable amount of time unpaid, which was part of why my life was financially and economically insecure. One of the things I did was look after the internal organisation of CND. By then it was employing about 40 or 50 staff and therefore had responsibilities as an employer. The staff needed job descriptions, proper terms and conditions, an evaluation process on their performance, grievance and disciplinary procedures. It's a bit of a paradox that unpaid part-time elected officers like me were managing full-time paid staff but that didn't change the fact that we had employer's responsibilities. We did what we could.

With that experience I had some sort of basis for saying, towards the end of the '80s, as I looked for ways to change my life, that the ideal job for me would be to run a small peace research institute. So, I was already thinking about that for a couple of years before I applied for the PRIO proposition.

## Coming to PRIO

***What did you know about PRIO at that stage? And how did you get in touch with PRIO? What led to your application for the directorship?***

What did I know about PRIO? I knew the *Journal of Peace Research* and I knew the *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* (now *Security Dialogue*) and, you know, read them both from time to time. I had met Johan Galtung a couple of times. I'd met one or two other people.

In 1982, I think, I visited Norway at the invitation of a peace group in Porsgrunn who were having a peace festival. At first I declined because my partner and child would just be coming back from America, and I wanted to be with them. So, they



said, well, bring them both, and we had a lovely time in Norway, a week or so, and when we were in Oslo, we met and stayed with Mari [Holmboe] Ruge (see Chap. 3), who was one of the founders of PRIO back in the '50s.

Then, quite how it happened, I'm not sure, but Nils Petter Gleditsch (see Chap. 5) wrote to me at some point in '91 and asked me to help out with a piece of work that he was engaged in. It was about the economic consequences of reducing military spending, which was one of the many topics I'd touched on in the late 1970s and early 1980s. After it was done, I remember getting a note from Nils Petter enclosing the advert for the PRIO directorship, and he said, you know, something like "post project employment opportunity?" So, it's all his fault.

***Had you not met Nils Petter before he wrote to you?***

Maybe I had, I'm not sure, ask him!

***He would remember, that's true, but I also recall that he was the one who contacted you and brought your name into the process. I was at PRIO at the time. When you arrived at PRIO, how were you received?***

I remember getting a note from Nils Petter Gleditsch enclosing the advert for the PRIO directorship, and he said something like "post project employment opportunity?"

Well, I think pretty nicely. It was rather odd because I had only just been appointed to a two-year contract as director of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. But I had already applied for the job at PRIO, which was a bigger opportunity and what I really wanted. But I felt I couldn't just leave the people in Amsterdam. So, we finally agreed that there would be a long period of notice for the Amsterdam institute. I think I was offered the PRIO post in August of '92 and I started in the beginning of April 1993. During those eight months I came to Oslo for about a week each month. Hilde Henriksen Waage (see Chap. 15) was the acting director and Grete Thingelstad (see Chap. 19) was the administrative director. I met the people there and got to know them and their work before I had to take any decision about things.

What I hadn't appreciated until I got there was just how weak the situation of PRIO was at that time. I think it's not an exaggeration to say that two thirds of the income was provided in the single core grant from the Ministry of Education, Research and Church [*Kirke og undervisningsdepartementet*]. And to be that dependent on a single donor is in any case a weak position. In addition, there were supposed to be five permanent contracts, but only two of them at that point were occupied by people who were there. Two of the other three were on leave and the third was in the process of leaving.

There were two short hires to replace the ones on leave. One was Pavel Baev (see Chap. 21), who is still there. I have always felt good about the work we put into keeping him in Oslo, and about the work he was doing that has fully justified it. In

addition, there were some PhD candidates, one researcher who was supported by an external grant, six or seven students and that was it.

So PRIO was small, dependent on one donor—and there had been some internal disputes as well. Even so, the spirit inside the institute was quite good. But one of the first things that happened was the proposition that what were called the foreign affairs institutes of Oslo—the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI) and PRIO—should be unified in the name of efficiency. We had to sit on a committee chaired by the Nobel Institute director [Geir Lundestad] on what could be done to unite the three institutes. It was a very strange experience and strange introduction to my ideal job that somebody seemed to want to take the institute away from me.

*Yes. This has been a repetitive occurrence over the years.*

I think it's fundamentally misguided. It's important to have different centres of knowledge and understanding, which even from a pure market point of view can compete with each other for grants. The overhead, the transaction costs of keeping these places going as independent units is astonishingly small, if you look at what the normal transaction costs are in most departments of government.

Anyway, we managed to avoid this misguided unification and needed to build up the institute, strengthen it. I opted against renewing the long leaves that two of the senior researchers were on and that gave us a little bit more room for manoeuvre. We had some good fortune here and there with grants from the Foreign Ministry, the Research Council and the Ford Foundation.

As you know, the position of director at PRIO is offered on a four-year contract that is renewable once—two four-year terms. Towards the end of my first term, I felt we were making progress on the main issues.

But a big challenge now arose because it became clear that there was going to be a major reduction in the core grant. We addressed this challenge in three ways. First, one day, Helga Løtuft, the administrative director, and I decided to work out the application for the following year's core grant in a different way. Instead of starting from what we were already doing and seeing how to allocate resources for it, we decided to start by working out what we wanted the institute to do, given its strengths and capacities and also areas where things needed to be improved. We worked out how many positions of different kinds we needed and, based on experience, how much each position cost. And we put it together and it came out as quite an aggressively ambitious budget with a big expansion written into it, despite knowing that the core grant would be smaller. And the board adopted that and backed us. When, nearly two years later, we got to look at how we'd done in that year for which we had done the aggressive budgeting, it had more or less worked out.

The second thing we did, at the same time, may have been unprecedented for researchers in Norway. We decided junior researchers can also have permanent contracts.

From my perspective, this was an easier and less dramatic decision than it may have seemed at the time. The truth is that tenure is not forever. If the institute went

down or it went bankrupt or we were losing money, then people would be made redundant anyway.

So, a permanent contract does not guarantee a job for life. This is one of the big myths I have discovered in Scandinavian research. Everybody wants the permanent contract but doesn't realise it's not permanent. You have to come from the UK or America in order to really understand how impermanent permanence is. So broadening eligibility for tenure was, for me, relatively straightforward. Yet it was also important because it told junior researchers that the institute was committed to them. In that sense, it gave them more security and that helped generate a feeling of being together.

The second thing we did [...] may have been unprecedented for researchers in Norway. We decided junior researchers can also have permanent contracts.

The third part of the response was that everybody had to raise salaries. Up until that point, it was assumed that senior researchers' salaries were covered under the core grant. With the core grant shrinking, that could no longer be the case. Now, everybody had to raise a large percentage of their salary. I hope that at the time, everybody understood that we would do everything to avoid having to let people go if research applications weren't successful. But everybody had to understand that we were all in the same boat, all rowing in the same direction, and therefore all researchers had to put their best effort into raising part or all of their salaries.

And, you know, my salary was also put into various projects. It wasn't completely funded from the core. So, we were all in that position. I guess some might ask why people who are doing such important work should have to work so hard to raise their own salaries. I get that. But the reality was that, while the collective that is the institute was fortunate to have a core grant of  $n$  million Norwegian kroner from the Research Council, what we want to spend is  $4n$ . So, we just have to raise the 3 times  $n$  from somewhere else. Let's get to it.

## Funding and Policymaking

*If I remember correctly, when PRIO hired you from abroad, our expectation was that you would generate international funding, and we thought your lack of a Norwegian network would be a weakness, so we would need to have someone help you build good relations with the actors on the Norwegian funding scene. Then, yes, we got a little money from the Ford Foundation, but the big success of yours was with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway. You managed as a foreigner to handle the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a way that I think a Norwegian director might not have managed. Was this also your impression?*

I think that's possible. Some international funds came in, as you say, but one of the problems back then was everybody knew how rich Norway was. So, they asked why Norwegians didn't just get Norwegian funding. It was not a completely shut door, but I always felt I was working uphill with those kinds of things. And some of the EU possibilities that now exist were not so readily accessible then.

What is the purpose of studies of signs of imminent conflict, for example? From one point of view, it is to test models for explaining and understanding conflict. But from another point of view, it is to assess the risks and see if something can be done to prevent the violence being as terrible as it otherwise could be.

In the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, I did have good working relations with different officials, and also with Jan Egeland, who was the state secretary at the time I started [1990–97], and several of his successors too. I think that they realised that I was not only interested in research for its own sake, but also to provide an evidence base for policy. We didn't have all of the current vocabulary back then; we didn't so easily refer to "evidence-based policy formulation", but that was what we were talking about. I mean, what is the purpose of studies of signs of imminent conflict, for example? From one point of view, it is to test models for explaining and understanding conflict. But from another point of view, it is to assess the risks and see if something can be done to prevent the violence being as terrible as it otherwise could be. And in the 1990s, that was a huge new area of concern opening up because, with the end of the Cold War and, separately, the increased immediacy of global news coverage, civil wars and genocide risks became more visible and a matter of urgent political concern for some European governments.

***Yes. It is clearly part of your profile to combine research with policymaking, providing information and suggestions for new policies, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs liked that very much. Did you feel that the PRIO researchers shared that ambition at the time?***

Some did. Some didn't. But generally speaking, even those who are not so inclined can be quite flattered if and when their foreign ministry or other policy actors pay attention to what they have to say. I think that the disdain for having policy influence is sometimes self-protective.

***Doing this has grown much since your time, and now we have to report on the impact of our research all the time, both in applications and reports.***

I think it can sometimes be overdone. It's a problem when impact assessment becomes a box-ticking exercise. There's also the complicating issue that very often policy actors do not want to acknowledge that they got the idea from an independent researcher.

But it is very much worth looking at impact—at whether your research conclusions have an effect—because it encourages you into a different way of thinking about your work and how to communicate it. The truth that a lot of researchers find hard to swallow is that a big, scholarly research report can be helpful as a background, but the decisive impact is probably best and most often achieved through a conversation and a two-page note that simplifies everything right down to bare basics. If you write more than that, most people whom you want to reach and influence simply haven't got the time.

So, put it in two pages, in simple, clear English, stress the recommendations and just make sure that you show in some way that the recommendations are evidence based. And then they will ask somebody more junior to look into that report and take a look at it.

## **PRIO's Three Heroes**

*When we had our 50th anniversary, [the former Dagbladet journalist] Gudleiv Forr wrote a book about PRIO's history. That book has three main heroes: Johan Galtung, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Hilde Henriksen Waage (see Chaps. 1, 5 and 15). I wonder if you could say a little about your cooperation and relationship with each of them.*

Well, I met Johan a few times in the '80s and in the anti-nuclear context. And again, when I'd taken over as director. He came and gave a couple of lectures. I wanted to maintain that connection with Johan.

He was very critical of my views about the NATO campaign against Serbia in 1999. And I thought that he was really, like some others, too soft towards Serbia and Serbian nationalism. And there was a kind of falling out at that point. I felt that he started to use needless rhetoric about PRIO, claiming that we had just become a security studies institute. I heard him express this criticism in a talk he gave at a conference in Tromsø around 2000. The sad thing was that, at the time, PRIO was engaged in supporting dialogue work in the Balkans, bringing people together from different communities, with similar work going on in Cyprus and between Greece and Turkey and contributing to the Greek Turkish détente which started in 1999. And at the same time, we were producing research that was being taken very seriously. And he could have seen that combination of research and active engagement as something that was at least close to what he had dreamed of decades before. But I don't think this disagreement had any particular effect in or on PRIO. It was one of those cases where there had been a parting of the ways between an institution and one of its founders—an evolution in different directions—and that's okay.

PRIO was engaged in supporting dialogue work in the Balkans, bringing people together from different communities

Nils Petter, well, as I said, he was the one who first linked me to PRIO, so I am forever grateful for that. He was a tremendous editor of the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)*. He did a huge amount just through his personal effort, through his personal energy to systematise things and to raise standards and to make it one of the premier scholarly journals in the field. I think a lot of his research also has been interesting, but I think he has for years and years got it completely wrong about the relationship between climate change and insecurity. To my mind, he has systematically set out asking the wrong questions and is therefore getting answers that are not very helpful. And using a methodology that is completely inappropriate, because it's based on studying the past and deriving trends. Yet one of the fundamental points about today's environmental crises and especially climate change is that the future will be different from the past. That means that research based on studying one hundred and sixty countries over the last 50 years is bound to be flawed. But, you know, I like him as an individual and I think he's made a huge contribution to peace research with *JPR*, and with his own work as well.

***Concerning democracy and capitalism—these are his other big contributions in later years, first researching the democratic peace and then moving from that to a theory of a capitalist peace—do you think it makes more sense to base those theories on historical statistics?***

I'm not sure about the capitalist peace, to be honest, not because I have theoretical divergences on it but because I haven't read enough of that. But on the democratic peace and the bell-shaped curve identifying where the greatest dangers are, I think that is very interesting work.

***Nils Petter has said jokingly that in the '60s we said: Make love, not war. But now it seems to be more relevant to say: Make money, not war.***

Really? The interesting thing would be to listen to Nils Petter reconcile that with his longstanding opposition to the idea that the development of the European Economic Community and European Union did not contribute to peace in Europe. You know, he was a devout opponent of Norway joining the EU in 1994. On the broader theme of economic cooperation and trading relations, I think they very often do contribute to peaceful relations, but I think there are a lot of nuances. It's interesting how trade can survive even in wartime, as it did between Britain and Germany during the First World War, and between England and France during the Napoleonic Wars. According to legend, Napoleon's army marched to Moscow in British boots. Closer to our time, during the wars in the western Balkans in the 1990s, there was plenty of illicit trading across the conflict lines. There are also times when you can see trade relations leading to anything but peace: look at how they are poisoning the international atmosphere at the moment. So, trade relations, if not properly regulated, may lead to all kinds of difficult issues.

***I Agree.***

On the other hand, you can turn this around and say that trade is a form of cooperation, which at its best is a win-win. There's a whole set of theories on this. I have been

quite struck by a book by Paul Seabright called *The Company of Strangers*.<sup>2</sup> It's all about how we are bound together by co-operative relations with people whom we have never met. And if you think about nationalism, one of the things about Benedict Anderson's idea of an imagined community<sup>3</sup> is that you have to imagine unity and closeness with people whom you've never met but with whom you think you are united by, for example, ties of language or religion or custom or whatever. Today, there's another kind of connection with the people who make the shirt you are wearing. With the people who will be manufacturing the vaccine that we need in order eventually to have immunity against the COVID-19 disease.

Binding of the world together through cooperation should be a good thing for peace. And you could say it's making money and call it capitalism. But you could also see trade as a form of cooperation and make that the basis of your theory.

***Yes. Transnational cooperation and integration make up one of the three corners of Bruce Russett's peace triangle.***<sup>4</sup>

You asked about Hilde as well. She was the acting director in the period between Sverre Lodgaard (see Chap. 10) and me. She was deputy director for a while. After she completed her PhD, she got involved in a very big argument with various Norwegian political figures over her work on evaluating and assessing the Norwegian back channel that led to the Oslo peace accords in 1993. She told me once that she blamed me for that because, one day soon after she had finished her PhD, I strolled into her office and remarked that I had a brilliant idea for what she should do next. And that was to do a proper assessment of the Norwegian back channel, not a quick three- or six-month evaluation, but a real assessment of it based on the kind of research that a historian would do.

Binding of the world together through cooperation should be a good thing for peace. And you could say it's making money and call it capitalism. But you could also see trade as a form of cooperation and make that the basis of your theory.

She went for that and produced two reports. And it was the first one in particular that caused the trouble, which I think in some ways was a fake controversy. She never said that Terje Rød-Larsen did not deserve credit for what he had done. She just said that other people also deserved credit for the Oslo back channel: it had been set up or prepared for him and then he came in and he did well. And it was really strange that there was so much vituperation in the air over that. But she stayed remarkably calm. I think she conducted herself very well during that time.

More generally, she was very popular and helpful with a lot of the researchers, especially the younger researchers. She played a very important part in creating the good atmosphere in the late 1990s, as we built up towards really being a serious research institute.

*Yes. That's something I benefitted from when I came as your successor.*

## **Engaging in the Balkans and in Cyprus**

*We should go into the two big projects that you built up at PRIO, in the Balkans and in Cyprus. Could you say a little about their importance and degree of success?*

The thing I regret about both of them is that they were never really integrated enough into the mainstream of PRIO's work. The Balkans work had started way back. Magne Barth, who was at that time deputy director of PRIO and editor of *Security Dialogue*, and later joined The Red Cross, connected me to this project at the Nansen School in Lillehammer. The principal was Inge Eidsvåg [Rector of the Nansen Academy, 1986–98]. He had developed a project aiming to bring people from the Balkans to Lillehammer for what was loosely defined as education, training and knowledge transfer about democracy and conflict resolution. I was asked to give some lectures there and, as it happened, I think I was the external lecturer who came most often to Lillehammer during the first semester in autumn 1995. Over time, the Nansen Academy changed the emphasis to dialogue. It was where people from diverse parts of the former Yugoslavia could get together and discuss issues that they cared about from completely different perspectives. And then it produced a big spin-off.

In the summer of 1997, two women who had been on that course, both from Priština, the capital of Kosovo, one Serbian, one Albanian, asked if I would agree to give a talk on the themes that I had spoken to them about—but do it in Priština. And I said yes. I didn't tell them until a couple of years later that the only reason I accepted so quickly was because I thought they would never be able to arrange it, so I was just being nice to them. But they got to work and eventually came up with a three-day dialogue seminar to be held, not in Priština but in Herceg Novi in Montenegro. There were going to be three of us giving talks: Steinar Bryn from the Nansen School, myself, and a third one, who dropped out because he said the way he was treated was very unprofessional, not being given a firm date, no assurances that his expenses would be covered, and no certainty till the last moment about whether or not it would happen. As a result, it turned out to be just Steinar Bryn and me.

It was quite a dramatic trip there because there was fog and the plane from Belgrade was delayed and then diverted and didn't land at the local airport. So, Steinar called another former student of the Lillehammer course to arrange for someone to drive me through the mountains to Herceg Novi in the middle of the night. I remember that Steinar was rather anxious that, after all, I might not arrive. But I did and there we were, with a plan for a three-day seminar with three lecturers, but only two of us



present. So, the plan went out the window; we just made up the programme as we went along. It was a whole lot of fun.

And of course, it was tremendously successful. The fact that we were improvising and had to be flexible meant the sessions were responsive to the participants. And it was very exciting. I mean, Serbs and Albanians were meeting for the first time, knowing what they thought and believing they knew what the other one thought and not needing to learn anything. And then just finding out about each other in the most extraordinary way.

Out of that, we built the idea of a continuing dialogue project, which came to be quite big with, first of all, four centres and then eight, and I think a couple more were added later in places all over the former Yugoslavia. People from the different ethno-national groups worked together to support dialogue in the localities.

There were one or two people at PRIO who did work on the Balkans and were connected to the project. I suppose the one who came most often was Inger Skjelsbæk (see Chap. 20), who later became a senior figure in PRIO and now is a professor of psychology at the University of Oslo. She came and participated in dialogues and got to know people, got to understand things about the Balkans. And there was also Victoria Einagel, who was doing Ph.D. work at the University.<sup>5</sup> But as I say, it's a regret that, even when we hired a coordinator at PRIO to run this very big operation, it never came enough into PRIO. I think that one of the difficulties is that it's sometimes complicated and slow for academic researchers to absorb something new into their research portfolio. This is much easier in the policy research context where I function now in SIPRI.

Serbs and Albanians were meeting for the first time, knowing what they thought and believing they knew what the other one thought and not needing to learn anything. And then just finding out about each other in the most extraordinary way.

One difference between PRIO and SIPRI is that despite what we have said about the connection to policy making, PRIO remains a much more academic institution. That's in its institutional DNA and in what's prized there. By contrast, at SIPRI, we have only one person whose main function is to do her PhD. For anybody else who is doing a Ph.D., it's in their spare time, a product of research they've already been doing. It's a very different approach.

As far as Cyprus is concerned, I think you probably know more than I do about the establishment of the PRIO Centre in Nicosia because while I was at PRIO we just had an office in the Ledra Palace [in the UN-administered "Green Zone" between North and South Cyprus]. It was a connecting point for us to go through—we could cross regularly from North to South and so we could bring participants from both the

Greek Cypriot community and the Turkish Cypriot community to meet in the Green Zone. But I think that, as I left, the activities and the portfolio of the new PRIO Cyprus Centre became much bigger. And Greg Reichberg was there for a while (2009–12) as centre director. There was some real research being done there, which there wasn't while I was director and running that programme.

*Yes, when I came to PRIO in 2001, you and I first had one month together where you continued as director and I got a chance to talk with all the staff. And then afterwards you served for a while as the leader of the Balkans and Cyprus projects. We made an attempt to get more research into the Balkans project, but it did not succeed very well, and the Balkans project became dissociated from PRIO. With the Cyprus project, I chose to go the opposite way and really emphasise it, lobbying and working actively with the Foreign Ministry to upgrade it, so it could become a real centre and hire local researchers who would do both research and engagement activities. I'm quite proud of what has since come out of the PRIO Cyprus Centre (see Chap. 23).*

Yes, it was really pleasing to see what was built from that start in Cyprus, that was great.

## The PRIO Centre for the Study of Civil War

*Let's talk about PRIO's application for one of Norway's first Centres of Excellence. It involved big funding with more than ten million kroner annually for ten years. Could you explain how you brought PRIO into that process?*

When the information about the new funding facility for Centres of Excellence came through, I thought that we really had to discuss going in for it. This was obviously very ambitious for us but, even if we were unsuccessful, which seemed likely, I felt it gave the institute a chance to talk together about what we wanted to be doing. If I remember rightly, the initial concept note needed to go in before I stepped down as director and, about the time I stopped, we learned that we were invited to go in for the second phase of the process. That was when the details started to be worked out with all of the Centre's different working groups. My memory of this is a bit vague but I think it's just after I stopped that those detailed discussions started.

*Yes. There was a two-phase process where PRIO first needed to send in a short application and then be invited to join the second round where we would make a thorough and elaborate application. The process was well underway when I arrived, so I don't remember any discussions about whether or not to apply.*

I remember feeling that I was leaving PRIO with the opportunity to take this further step. What I didn't realise was that it could actually succeed. Well, I mean there was

no other international studies centre that got the Centre for Excellence award, isn't that right? And PRIO's was the only social science centre.

*Yes, there was one humanities centre (medieval history), but ours was the only social science centre and it was one of just two that were not in the university sector. There were ten altogether.*

It was quite a thing.

*Yes.*

Quite a thing to have dared to go in for it, and even more of a thing to have achieved it.

*It was a great achievement. Also, the PRIO Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW) did something that not all centres managed. That was to use the big funding as a platform for applying for additional funding. So, by the end of the Centre's 10-year period, it had more funding from other sources than it had from the core funding.*

That was very smart. The other thing I remember us discussing was the intellectual substance of the Centre. What big questions would it be asking? And at a more practical level, how would PRIO be able to contribute to answering them?

It was important that there would be a degree of integration between the Centre of Excellence and the institute so that it would strengthen the latter in the long term. But it was also clear that the new funding facility in the Research Council of Norway was not meant simply to finance what an institution was doing or planning to do anyway.

*Yes, so after you left PRIO and were watching it from a distance, what was your impression of the way your work has been followed up?*

It seems to me that PRIO has not gone into more engagement than it did while I was there. In northern Europe, there seems to be a particular intellectual formation that makes it more difficult than it is in the UK or the US and some other places to understand the idea of combining engagement with well-grounded research. It surprises me that in some ways the lasting and most influential legacy I left behind from my years as PRIO director was the strengthening, out of all recognition, of academic research. If you had asked for my forecast at the beginning, I would have said that strengthening research is important, but connecting it to policy and engagement would be the thing I most wanted and expected, because that's more me. But yeah, I think the PRIO I joined had nine researchers, most of whom were PhD candidates, and the PRIO I left had thirty-plus and was just about to get the Centre of Excellence. I don't know how many PRIO has now ...

***The total number of contracted staff in 2019 was 136, when all part-time contracts are included, but that figure includes both researchers and administrative staff.***

Impressive, and that growth was kicked off during the nineties. I don't know what would have happened if the idea of merging PRIO, NUPI and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute back in 1993 had been implemented. Had that been attempted, I think it would have failed with at least one casualty along the road. Independence, however, has been a visible success.

***We have been saved several times from such a merger. One very helpful thing was the statutes of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, which obliged them to stay in Fridtjof Nansen's home at Polhøgda.***

Yeah, we also discovered a quite helpful clause in the PRIO statutes. If the institute were ever closed down, everything it owns would go back to the Institute for Social Research.

***A new attempt was made more recently, when the building of the United States embassy in central Oslo became vacant. There was a plan to co-locate all the foreign policy institutes in the building.***

Why do they have these projects? Why does it matter to them? Who is it who came up with that idea?

***This happens through personal contact between politicians, policymakers and some institute leaders.***

Huh.

***But let us return to your career as a leader. I remember how you were lying on a beach, reading *The Economist*, and you found an advert...***

## **International Alert**

No, it wasn't a beach, it was a balcony. I was in Athens for six months as a guest fellow at the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy research. I had gone there partly with the idea that I might be able to set up a centre for dialogue, research and policy in Athens. I had very good contacts there, as well as in Turkey, Cyprus and the Balkans. The region had had lots of needs and possibilities, neighbouring the Middle East as well. It seemed like a very good place to have a research and dialogue centre focused on conflict, peace and politics.

I had some grand ideas, but it was clear to me after a couple of months that this was not going to fly. So, one day I was lying on my balcony soaking up some spring sun, and thinking about the future, and one part of my brain said, "OK, you've tried Athens, now go back to Norway and accept a tenured position at PRIO". I told myself, I remember, that since I didn't particularly like Norwegian winters, I could do a lot

of fieldwork in Cyprus and the Middle East. And the other part of my brain, the less responsible part, said, “Yeah, but if Kevin Clements would resign as Secretary General of International Alert, you could have that job and move to London”.<sup>6</sup> This was an idea encouraged in me by an old friend of mine, John Marks, founder and head of Search for Common Ground, the biggest peacebuilding NGO.

So, about a week later, I was reading *The Economist* and saw the advert for the job, and I applied. The interview was in August of 2003. That afternoon, after the interview, I went down to see my sister. We were having a glass of wine in the garden and she asked me, “Now, so when you get this job and move to London, where are you going to live?”.

And I told her, you know, not to be silly because I’m probably not going to get this job. And at that point, my phone rang, and she said, “There, they’re calling to offer you the job.” I scoffed at her, of course, but actually it was a phone call offering me the position.

### ***How do you assess your time at International Alert?***

International Alert was the second organisation I arrived at in the aftermath of a crisis. There had been one crisis in the mid-1990s, and then Kevin Clements arrived as Secretary General and picked it up and put it back together a bit. But then another set of problems emerged, causing frustration. One issue was a structural hole in the finances of about 5–10 percent, somewhere between 200 and 400 thousand pounds a year.

Income was insufficient but they had been saved from crisis in the previous few years by a series of strokes of good luck. They had eaten up their reserves, however. So, it was an organisation that was not in good shape. And I started there in December 2003, straight after I’d finished an evaluation of the peacebuilding experience of Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway. There was an international conference just outside Oslo to launch the report, and the following week I moved to London and dived straight into what I knew already was a bit of a mess. I believed that my PRIO experience would help me through.

We had a bad moment 14 or 15 months later in early 2005, when we had to make some staff redundant because the finances had run out of good luck. We had improved financial management, but we still needed to save about £200,000 in core spending. It could not be taken from project money, so we needed to slim down the administration. That’s a difficult thing to do. First of all, it’s hard on people who haven’t done anything wrong or performed their jobs badly. Second, it’s not necessarily a quick way to save money because you have the redundancy payment to come up with. Third, it risks weakening your capacity to manage the finances in the best possible way. But we handled it well enough during the summer of 2005 that, by September, I was able to tell the staff that we didn’t foresee any more redundancies, so everybody could relax about that. This generated a kind of spirit

of feeling, well, we've been through the fire now and survived. And among the staff there was a tougher and much more pragmatic set of attitudes to the practicalities of what we needed to do, how we needed to organise ourselves, in order to do the work of helping communities manage conflicts and build peaceful relations that we passionately believed in.

And again, as at PRIO before, a general feeling developed that, you know, we're in the same boat and we either move that boat in the right direction or not. Generating that collective attitude seems to me to be the key to managing the kind of organisations I have been involved in throughout my working life.

When I started, International Alert was working in about 16 or 17 countries. By the time I finished, we were working in 26 countries and had offices in 14 countries as well as the head office in London. Our staff had gone from about 75 or 80 people to around 215, but the number working in London had barely increased. We were running the Talking Peace festival in London with a few tens of thousands of people participating each year. So, we were doing advocacy work at home as well as in the field abroad. We had put ourselves in the leadership position of the arguments around climate change and insecurity with a report that we published in 2007 and we were contributing to a report to the G7 foreign ministers that came out in 2015: *A New Climate for Peace*.

We're in the same boat and we either move that boat in the right direction or not. Generating that collective attitude seems to me to be the key to managing the kind of organisations I have been involved in throughout my working life.

I think International Alert was tremendous. I'm very proud of what we achieved in that time. I think we were part of the expansion of the zone of peace that happened up until about 2010–11. Amazingly enough, we actually managed to grow at the time of the financial crisis. Ironically, we came up with a business plan for expansion that was approved by the Board meeting on the Thursday before the Sunday when the Lehman Brothers collapsed, which is the event that's normally taken as triggering the worldwide financial and economic crisis. But we managed to expand, even so, and hit our targets even though we hit them in somewhat different ways than we'd been expecting and planning. During that expansion, we opened up programmes in the Middle East, Ukraine, Central Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Myanmar, and we kept our established programmes going in the South Caucasus, the Philippines, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and large parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

***So, tell me about your next transition.***

Sure. Towards the end of 2013, as I came up to the 10-year mark at Alert, I began to feel that I was getting close to what was enough. Not that I was at all fed up with the job or the people or anything. Far, far from it. And, still, in 2014 I drove through a new five-year strategic plan. But I began to feel, especially as I finished that strategic plan, that I'd just about given what I had to give to the organisation. Not that I was

exhausted, but I was ceasing to be so creative. And it began to be time to look for a new challenge.

*And then came SIPRI.*

## **The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**

I had long known about SIPRI and used its Yearbooks and other publications since my early days at CND. But the business of moving to SIPRI, that started because my wife is Swedish. In the summer of 2014, she—my wife—raised the question of whether we could move away from London sometime not too far into the distant future. I asked, “Where?” She first tried Copenhagen, where she had lived for many years, but I said that although we know a lot of lovely people there, I don’t see what I recognise as a professional environment for me. Next, she mentioned Stockholm. And it occurred to me that, as well as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), there is also the Stockholm Environmental Institute, there’s the Stockholm Resilience Centre, there’s Uppsala University, there’s also interesting work at the universities in Gothenburg and in Lund. So, I thought it could be a possibility and started thinking about how to make a transition into consultancy work. As I was doing that, I took a look at what SIPRI was doing and saw that SIPRI had an acting director. A couple of weeks later, it occurred to me that if SIPRI had an acting director, that must mean that the previous director whom I had met, Tilman Brück<sup>7</sup> had left and the institute might be looking for a new one. I thought the acting director would probably get the full appointment but looked into it anyway and saw that SIPRI was indeed advertising for a director, with the deadline for applications actually at the end of the week.

As background, I should mention that the previous time that the SIPRI directorship was advertised, I saw the announcement but wasn’t interested. Since then, however, SIPRI had started to do work on peace and development issues while maintaining its traditional lines of research, and I thought this was an intriguing balance. I had been to an event in spring 2014, and was impressed. So, I felt SIPRI had begun to change in a way that I found interesting. That event, by the way, is now the annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development, co-hosted with the Swedish MFA, with several hundred people attending in 2019 and, in 2020 when we took it online, some 3,500 registered participants and several thousand viewers on YouTube for some of the main sessions.

So, back to the story: I found out about the deadline and how to apply while I was in Dubai at a World Economic Forum meeting. And while there, our Lebanon office asked me to go to Beirut at the end of the week, to open a conference where the Minister of Interior was going to be speaking. So, I came back to London from

Dubai and booked another flight to Beirut two days later. On my way to the airport, I realised that I hadn't talked to my wife about the SIPRI thing, so I called her from the cab and explained it. And she said, "Well, you know, if you're potentially interested this time, it does no harm. Write the letter and think about it later." So I flew overnight to Beirut, got off the plane and got to the hotel, showered and changed, made the opening remarks to the conference where the Minister of Interior was going to speak, snuck out as soon as I could and staggered upstairs to get some sleep, woke up, wrote an application letter and sent it in about half an hour before the deadline. Then I was invited to an interview in January 2015 and was appointed a few weeks later.

### **Three Narrowly but Deeply Divided Cultures**

*How do you see the differences between English, Swedish, and Norwegian culture? Have you thrived in all of them?*

I think that English culture, because it's where I was brought up, is what I feel most comfortable with, even though when I came back from Norway after a decade, I realised there were numerous things that had moved on really fast. Of course, a man in his early fifties, as I was when I came back, is in a different position from a man in his early forties, which is what I was when I left. So, it can also have to do with aging.

But I think even now, when I go back and visit England from Stockholm, that's where I feel most comfortable, despite all the things that are strange and weird. London is an almost wholly dysfunctional city. I mean, it takes you an hour to get from anywhere to anywhere. You can be in one part of Hackney and try to get to central London and it will take you an hour; or you can be in one part of Hackney wanting to get to another part of Hackney, and it will still take you an hour. It's just ridiculous, and how people manage to live there I don't know, and I did it for 12 years. So, there you go.

Every country is a bunch of different countries and, as they say, London is a collection of different villages. It is an enormously cosmopolitan place with something like 300 native languages spoken. And as well as that diversity, there is massive social inequality and it is in your face all the time. When the Grenfell Tower fire occurred in 2017, one of the things that horrified people was that this building with completely unsafe building standards is located in the richest borough in England. So, you have millionaires and billionaires living within a stone's throw of this impoverished tower block.

London is a collection of different villages. It is an enormously cosmopolitan place with something like 300 native languages spoken. And as well as that diversity, there is massive social inequality and it is in your face all the time.



***Or owning apartments there, in which they don't live.***

Yes, so you've seen the film too.<sup>8</sup> But if you turn that around, one of the odd things is that London is a total archipelago of different social classes. You can live in a fancy street in Kensington and you cross the road and turn the corner and you're on the edge of a council estate. And then with the privatisation of municipal housing, some of that council estate anyway has some properties in it that are now privately owned. And that is something that is quite unusual. I mean, rich areas and poor areas are not just side by side, but they're kind of integrated. You have to be outside of London living in the home counties to have real social segregation with properly gated communities. There are a couple of areas of London that are protected for the hyper wealthy, but mostly different social classes live on top of each other. And that creates a kind of energy and buzz in London, along with the national diversity and just the sheer scale of it, which is very exciting and special.

One of the things that I learned when I went to Norway is that Norwegian culture looks so close to British culture in many ways, but the narrow differences run very, very deep. So, they're just as important. And I think you could say the same in a triangular way between the UK, Sweden and Norway. I'm not sure I have my finger on the pulse of the differences between Sweden and Norway. But I mean, one thing is that in my experience—and time could also explain the difference here—Stockholm is also far more cosmopolitan than Oslo. Oslo is not the quiet town that it was in the late 1980s, so people tell me, but it's still not really a world city, whereas Stockholm in some ways is a world city, albeit on a small scale.

**Agnostic About the Monarchy**

***I remember how we felt a kind of embarrassed pride at PRIO in 2003, when you went to London to receive an OBE [the award of becoming an Officer of the Order of the British Empire]. Are you a lover of monarchies or do you have Republican instincts?***

I would not describe myself as a monarchist or a royalist, but nor do I think that Republicanism appeals to me in the UK context. The real issues that have to be addressed start with social and economic inequality. Being pro- and anti-monarchy is a bit of a distraction. And I think that one needs to think very, very hard about the constitutional arrangements if one were to decide to do away with the monarchy.

It's interesting to think about what Queen Elizabeth did in 2011, when she went to Ireland, the first British monarch to have visited Ireland since independence, and she came off the plane wearing a green hat and coat, spoke in public in Gaelic and laid a wreath for those who died fighting for Irish freedom. And it really sealed the deal of peace. It said that this issue is over, now let's all move on. And I think it takes that kind of enormous symbolic power to be able to do that.

I agree that there is no rational case to be made for people inheriting the position of ceremonial head of state, but there are some good examples among those who've held that position. I'm kind of agnostic about it. I think that one can get very excited about it for very little purpose unless we have a really, really serious constitutional discussion.

## Mapping World Peace and Conflict

*While leading PRIO, International Alert and SIPRI, you have also been editing a number of widely used atlases of war and peace.*

I started doing the atlases already in 1983 with Michael Kidron. Our *Atlas of War and Peace* led, via a couple more editions into *The State of the World Atlas* and then to *The State of the Middle East Atlas*. What I like about doing them is that they are an attempt to communicate a lot of information in a digestible way that a non-expert could absorb and refer to. I've long been interested in maps and illustrations.

Communicating with the non-expert is something I have always thought is important and which experts are usually quite bad at.

It seems to me that the written word, which I love, is a means of communication that does not float everybody's boat. They need to have graphics and they need things to be, also as far as the written word is concerned, simpler and perhaps less elegant. And communicating with the non-expert is something I have always thought is important and which experts are usually quite bad at.

So that's really why I've been carrying on with the atlases. I'm doing my last one at the moment: The 10th edition of *The State of the World*. That'll be it, I won't do any more.

## The Peacebuilding Palette

*The biggest conceptual contribution I can remember you making was to our thinking about peacebuilding. Before you went to International Alert, you undertook a project on evaluating the peacebuilding experience of four countries: Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway. In your report, you undertook a thorough discussion of the peacebuilding concept and did away with some misunderstandings. First, you emphasised that peacebuilding does not require a "post-conflict" situation but may be undertaken throughout the conflict cycle. And you*

***dismissed the idea that peace can be built as a house, with four walls, a basement, a ground floor, a second floor and a roof. Instead, you introduced the concept of the “peacebuilding palette”, with paint in many colours and brushes at the peacebuilder’s disposal.***

My introduction to peacebuilding came with the Utstein study, which the Norwegian Foreign Ministry asked me to lead with teams of researchers in Norway, UK, the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>9</sup> The idea was that, at the time, it had been 10 years since UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had introduced the term peacebuilding into the international agenda with his document *Agenda for Peace* in 1992.

I thought, and still think, that “peacebuilding” is a better term than any other that was used up until that time to explain what is needed. When you’re thinking about how to develop peaceful relations, it’s not just about “conflict resolution” because many conflicts are not resolved in a real sense. And “conflict management” always struck me as being too technical a term. The idea of peacebuilding is also attractive because it goes broader than dialogue or mediation. It’s about education and reconciliation, about the economy and people having a political voice, and about ordinary people being treated with respect by those who have wealth and power so everybody can live with dignity.

What I saw when I looked at the actual peacebuilding projects was that the toolbox metaphor doesn’t work: it imagines ways of working for peace that are too rigid when what you need is flexibility and the ability to improvise.

What I also like about it is, as you said, that it doesn’t have to be confined to what some people call the post-conflict phase, normally meaning the post-violence or post-war period. You don’t know whether you are in a post-war or a pre-war period at any one time. What you do know is that you need to build peace. And I like the additional term that was developed of *sustaining peace* that came through in the United Nations in 2015–16. I think that’s what we have to do: build peace and sustaining it. Whether there seems to be a war looming or not, whether there has been recent violent conflict in your country or not, even in countries where everything is peaceful today, we should all be trying to build peace and sustain it.

As far as the palette is concerned, I contrasted it with the idea of the toolbox, which is what people often talk about. About needing better tools in the toolbox. It’s as if you think building peace is like fixing a car, with the assumption that the engines will all have the same size nuts needing the same size of wrench. What I saw when I looked at the actual peacebuilding projects was that the toolbox metaphor doesn’t work: it imagines ways of working for peace that are too rigid when what you need is flexibility and the ability to improvise.

In the end, the Utstein study produced a database of something like 350 peacebuilding projects that had been carried out over the previous five years. It was the first cut through these that showed me that there were times when you couldn’t

put the work into this or that category because the practitioners had found an interesting way of mixing it up together. So, *the palette* was the obvious metaphor to use—mixing paints and making something completely new and unique, something context-specific, which is indeed widely agreed now to be an important part of peacebuilding programmes.

*I think it may take someone who has studied art or literature to see that.*

Yeah, well, I suppose one of the things I do a lot and maybe overdo sometimes is use metaphors as a way to communicate and as a way to think. And of course, that does come out very strongly in the study of literature.

## Worries for the World

*I don't want to venture into the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced us to conduct this interview online, with you in Stockholm and me in Oslo. I just want to ask you openly how you feel about the world situation today? Are you deeply worried?*

Yes, I am. What one sees in the second decade of this century is a consistent deterioration in human security and global political stability. The two things feed each other, and they shouldn't be allowed to sit in separate categories. The more politically unstable things become, the more human well-being suffers, and very often, the more human well-being suffers, the less politically stable the arrangements around them.

I think that part of what [the COVID-19 pandemic] has done is expose the weaknesses in our domestic societies in terms of inequality, in terms of being unable to handle information properly, in terms of divisive politics [...]. And the compulsion to blame—especially to blame a foreigner.

At SIPRI we monitor these indicators. We see military spending going up pretty consistently, along with trade in major weapons. We see the number of wars returning to the level that they were before the Cold War ended. We see many of these conflicts apparently being more intractable now than for a long time. We see very few peace processes that are really generating stability. Colombia looks like the best hope in many ways, but its peace agreement is also wobbling and threatened. And of course, we see the toxin that has entered geopolitics in the last seven or eight years, fuelled both by the ambitions of Russia and China and more recently by the extraordinary behaviour of the US administration. The worst short-term consequences of this are, on the one hand, the risks that are inherent in the trade war and, on the other hand, the apparently chronic situation of bilateral US-Russian arms control. It would only take a phone call to extend New START, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between

Russia and the USA for another five years. Literally, one phone call could extend it. But it is not at all clear whether they will do that. If New START is not extended, that will be the end of the last major bilateral arms control agreement and that would be a very risky situation.

Now, you didn't want to mention the pandemic, but I think that part of what it has done is expose the weaknesses in our domestic societies in terms of inequality, in terms of being unable to handle information properly, in terms of divisive politics, in terms of the short-termism of so much political thinking. And the compulsion to blame—especially to blame a foreigner. And it's not just in the US that this is happening, it is widespread. At the same time, the pandemic has exposed weaknesses in the international system, especially the incapacity of the Permanent Five in the UN Security Council to come together and generate a joint approach.

On the other hand, although the pandemic is a blow to everybody, I think that there are also signs of hope. The UN institutions are surviving despite their maltreatment and in some ways flourishing. The youth movement around climate change and the environment is absolutely inspiring. People are not prepared—or, at least, not everybody is prepared—to sit still and put up with bullshit the entire time. And political forces are developing that do see the need for a long-term approach with long-term solutions to many of the problems that our model of economic and social development has thrown up in the last two to three decades, to do with the environment, with inequality, and with the extraordinary vulnerability of being so dependent on the cyber realm.

The new realism in international affairs is not the interests of any individual national state. The new realism is cooperation.

And I guess my sign-off would be quite simply that what people are beginning to understand is that the new realism in international affairs is not the interests of any individual national state. The new realism is cooperation.

To think that any of the big problems that any country, large or small, faces today can be solved alone is pure La-La Land fantasy. And they need to get off whatever it is that they're smoking, and come out and feel the fresh air and decide how to cooperate with each other, because that's the way forward.

*Thank you very much, Dan.*

## Notes

1. See J. F. C. Fuller [1954] (1972) *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and Their Influence upon History: From the American Civil War to the End of the Second World War* [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.] New York: Harper Collins.
2. See Paul Seabright (2004) *The Company of Strangers: A Natural History of Economic Life*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

3. See Benedict Anderson (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso Books.
4. See John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett (2000) *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
5. Victoria Ingrid Einagel completed her PhD in sociology at the University of Oslo in 2018, with the thesis *Telling stories, making selves: Reconfiguring social and political belonging in postwar Sarajevo*.
6. Kevin Clements was Secretary General of International Alert from 1999 to 2003, whereafter he became Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies and Foundation Director of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
7. Tilman Brück was Professor of Development Economics at Humboldt University in Berlin from 2009 to 2012, and served as Director of SIPRI in 2013–14.
8. See the 2019 documentary film *Push*, directed by Frederik Gertten. Available at: <http://www.pushthefilm.com/>.
9. The project was named after Utstein kloster in the archipelago north of Stavanger, Western Norway, where a meeting was held in 1999 among the British, German, Dutch and Norwegian ministers of development.

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## Chapter 12

# Truth and Logic for a More Peaceful World: Kristian Berg Harpviken



Interviewed by Arne Strand



Kristian Berg Harpviken as Director of PRIO (2009–2017). May, 2017. Photo: Ebba Tellander/PRIO

*If we fast-forward to today, peace research—well, actually all research—faces a new challenge that has become more and more obvious over recent years. This is that*

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*powerful political forces do not respect the core values that serve as the foundation for research: namely, the obligation to seek the truth and to build logical and consistent arguments.*

*Peace research has been a success, says Harpviken. Today, the study of war and peace is central to a number of academic fields. The most important finding of peace research is that the extent of warfare in the world in recent decades has been only a fraction of what it was during the major wars of past centuries. The key reasons for this decline are democracy, greater economic equality, international cooperation, and peacebuilding/peacekeeping operations and dialogues. ‘The greatest paradox of our age,’ Harpviken says, ‘is that most of us don’t see any of this, and that more and more we are giving up the things that made the world a better place.’*

*Kristian Berg Harpviken welcomes his good friend and colleague, Arne Strand (The Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Bergen, Norway), to his newly built log house at Harpviken Farm, which lies on the shores of Lake Mjøsa, just north of Brumunddal. The two men trace the connections from their shared life-long commitment to Afghanistan to today’s global challenges, via research policy and the important contributions of peace research to our understanding of the world. Harpviken was formerly Director of PRIO (2009–17). His research focuses on Afghanistan and the Middle East, civil war, peace processes, social movements and migration. He has been associated with PRIO since 1993, when he joined the Institute to work on his M.Phil. dissertation.*

## **Education and Interest in Peace**

**Arne Strand:** *The first time I met you was in 1989. At that time, I encountered a conscientious objector doing his civilian national service at the offices of the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC). You stood out slightly from the others doing civilian national service—for one thing, you were quite a bit older. I found out that in fact you’d already run a farm, studied economics, and achieved the military rank of second lieutenant. You were able to draw on your training in economics, and in addition you were studying for a university degree.*

*You weren’t a typical person to be doing civilian national service, but nonetheless, you’d refused to do your military refresher training. Can you explain a bit about your background and tell us a little about the choices that led you to do civilian national service and be a conscientious objector?*

**Kristian Berg Harpviken:** Yes, so firstly I’d had an interest in international policy and peace and conflict ever since my early teens. I wasn’t a particularly diligent student during my final years at high school, but I had some very good social sciences teachers who inspired me and stimulated my interest in international relations. But even so, when I was 18, 19 and 20 years old, I didn’t really know what I wanted to do when I grew up. A farm became available within our family, and so I bought it, did a course in horticulture, and worked as a farmer for several years. I’d actually



grown up on a farm, but with animal husbandry as the foundation. There was a lot I didn't know, so it was a steep learning curve, but I really liked practical work and you get to use many different aspects of yourself as a farmer, so it was an exciting time.

I'm a retrained farmer [...] it's a background that I value very highly, and I've gained a great deal from it.

For several years, I ran the farm together with one of my best friends. Even so, as time went on and we got our routines established for production, obviously it became a bit less exciting, because it was very much about just continuing along the same track. And quite quickly I became restless intellectually. I started to study a bit of economics on the side, first at the Norwegian School of Management [in Gjøvik] and then moved on to Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Oslo. And then I decided to lease out the farm. At that point, I'd been running it for five years after finishing my horticulture training. So in that respect, I'm a retrained farmer. Nowadays, my farming experience is in the distant past, but it's clear that what I gained from it is a way of thinking, cultivated through a small business and seeing the direct effect of your own efforts on what you can afford when you're preparing for Christmas at year's end. So yes, it's a background that I value very highly, and I've gained a great deal from it.

*And then, after you had been through military service, you decided to say 'No, that's enough!'. Was it then that you got involved in peace studies? Had you gone through a period of reflection that made you decide that you were through with the military? What was the reason that this became a turning point?*

Well, I was already sceptical about doing military service even when I originally enlisted. I was in the military all through 1981, and somewhat randomly I found myself in an officer training corps and trained as a junior officer. I got really good at operating mortars—I knew absolutely everything about mortars. And it was interesting, I learned a lot in the military. And I was in the company of a lot of interesting people. In many ways, our evenings at the barracks were one extended study circle, where we critiqued Norwegian defence policy and the military's organizational structure. There was a lot of pacifist debate in the barracks during the evenings. And there were several of us who even thought about becoming conscientious objectors during our military service, although nothing came of it. So I completed my military service and got my second-lieutenant's star in the post a few years later. But when I was called up to do my military refresher training, my ideas had matured sufficiently that I decided to refuse to serve.

My motivation was purely nuclear pacifism. I thought it was impossible to defend participating in a defence strategy that was dependent on nuclear weapons. It was already clear to me then that Norway was an integral part of NATO's nuclear strategy. At that time, we had the NATO Double-Track Decision, and in addition, there were

developments underway that had the potential to bring about the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on European soil. It was pretty clear that if global war broke out, it would be played out in Europe with the United States participating from a distance. The victims would be here. With the development of tactical nuclear weapons, the threshold for nuclear warfare would be lowered. And I found that this was something I absolutely couldn't support. For me, it was unthinkable to take my place in a command structure where I might have to take up arms at short notice on the basis of those principles. So that was my motivation for refusing to serve. And strictly speaking, that's not a basis for avoiding military service in Norway. Conscientious objectors are supposed to be total pacifists, not nuclear pacifists. But I wasn't challenged on that point during my interview with the local sheriff. So instead of doing well-paid refresher training as an officer, I spent four months doing badly-paid civilian service. A kind of mild punishment, but actually I got a lot out of it.

It was pretty clear that if global war broke out, it would be played out in Europe with the United States participating from a distance. The victims would be here. With the development of tactical nuclear weapons, the threshold for nuclear warfare would be lowered. This was something I absolutely couldn't support.

***Are the things you do driven by chance events, or do you make deliberate choices? You ended up doing your civilian national service with the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC). Was that a choice you made, or did it come about by chance? At that time, the NAC was a solidarity organization that wasn't particularly strongly opposed to the use of force in the Afghanistan conflict.***

It had a lot to do with chance. Because I had completed my initial military service, I only had to do four months of civilian national service. And so I found myself at Dillingøy on the Oslo Fjord—home to the renowned headquarters for the civilian national service. There was a large board with possible jobs for people doing civilian national service. Mostly they were jobs at care homes and kindergartens. Very valuable work, but that wasn't what I was most interested in.

Basically, there were only two jobs that appealed to me. The first, which I put at the top of my list, was at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). The second was with the NAC. I phoned PRIO, which turned me down. I don't know why. It amuses me now, however, to think about how my first approach to PRIO ended in outright rejection. Perhaps it was because I would only be with them for four months. Or perhaps I didn't manage to convince PRIO that I had anything to offer. But then I moved on to the second job on my list. You're completely correct when you say that the NAC was a solidarity organization that explicitly supported the use of violence by the Afghan resistance movement. I'm not sure how much I was aware of that, but if I look back, I do remember the NAC's posters and their images of resistance fighters, mujahedin, sitting on mountain tops with their Kalashnikovs silhouetted against the

sunset. Those images were similar to a more recent genre, known as ‘helicopters at sunset’, which was widely used by the allied forces in Afghanistan after 2001. One rarely sees the victims of war, but instead we get to admire extraordinary examples of technology and uninjured soldiers, all set against beautiful landscapes.

As I see it, I was working at the NAC at a point when we were fairly deliberately moving away from supporting the resistance movement, its commanders and warlords, and towards acting in solidarity with the Afghan people, who were mainly victims of the war. So I can lend my support to that. But something that I’m rather more self-critical about is that we, myself included, to a large extent accepted the conflict patterns of the Cold War and did not see the opportunities, in the context of Afghanistan, for dialogue across the conflict between the resistance movement and the so-called Communist regime in Kabul. Completely to the contrary, we rejected any attempted approaches. Today, it’s easy to see that if we had achieved some kind of reconciliation, a peaceful solution, something that the United States and Pakistan as well as other supporters of the resistance movement rejected, then yes, Afghanistan could have been a much better place to live in today. It’s a sad story, and I have to shoulder my share of the responsibility.

## **The Afghanistan Laboratory**

*I’ll come back to that topic, because in reality your experience at NAC provided you with opportunities to gain insight into, and to experience working within, a conflict—an experience that was completely different to what you would have got by doing your civilian service at PRIO. So what you did next was to continue with Afghanistan. Just a few months after I met you for the first time, you had become my deputy and the NAC’s Agricultural Coordinator.*

*The direction you chose then, which you perhaps hadn’t thought of as leading towards research, seems to have given you an extremely rich practical background and strong skills with empirical data. This wasn’t what you set out to get originally, but these aspects of your experience developed over time and served as a foundation for the analyses you made when you later went into research. Do you agree?*

Yes, and that was an absolutely deliberate choice. I was encouraged to apply for that job, but there was competition to get a job with the NAC at its overseas office in Peshawar, which worked ‘cross border’ with Afghanistan at that time. The thing that was attractive was the opportunity to work practically and make use of some of my skills in financial management, leadership and agriculture. But above all, it was the opportunity to get to know a conflict by living and working within it.

With hindsight, I’d say that in the almost two-and-a-half years I worked for the NAC, I learned more than during any other period of my life. Really, it was a completely incomparable schooling in understanding peace and conflict and seeing what it means for people. And perhaps the thing that I take with me, the thing that surprised me most of all at that time, was how to a large extent people continue to

live fairly normal lives in an extreme situation. From a distance, one thinks of war as all-encompassing and assumes that everything comes to a halt. But in reality, people continue to fall in love and have children and build houses and for that matter also to lose everything, get sick, and die. In other words, all the things that make up normal life. It taught me that despite the enormous differences on the surface, we humans are all pretty similar.

*There are two things that I think we can explore in greater depth. Peshawar, in north-eastern Pakistan, where the NAC had its office, is just across the border from Afghanistan and at that time was the birthplace of two phenomena of global historical significance.*

*First of all, the resistance movement was based there. The resistance took the credit for having defeated the Soviet Union, in that way contributing to ending the Cold War and bringing about the United States' global hegemony.*

*Simultaneously, also in Peshawar, al-Qaeda was being formed. The end of the Cold War sowed the seeds of what would become known as the War on Terror. Once the ideological battle between communism and democracy was over, a religious conflict emerged in its place. We were there in the midst of this transition. At the American Club, we celebrated the fall of the Soviet Union and the victory of the mujahedin. Five hundred metres down the road, there was a meeting of the future leaders of al-Qaeda. I didn't see it at the time. But do you have any reflections on this radical shift in global politics?*

We found ourselves at a unique observation point. Afghanistan was one of the places where the so-called 'Cold' War was hot. The Cold War was being fought out there through armed conflict in a proxy war between Afghan communists, supported by a large number of Soviet soldiers, and the Afghan resistance movement, with support from Saudi Arabia, the United States and others. With the end of the Cold War, the communists' power base eroded because supplies from the Soviet Union dried up. So the roots of this radical, violent Islamism lie further back in time—we can trace them far back in the Afghan context. But the Islamists first really got the wind in their sails when the United States and its allies wanted to build up the Afghan resistance to the Soviet Union. In that regard, Pakistan also had a finger in the pie. The Afghan resistance movement became so very radically Islamist quite simply because other political representatives of the Afghan people got neither recognition or support from Pakistan, the Middle East and the United States. They didn't even get permission to operate on Pakistani soil, unlike the Islamist resistance groups.

In that respect, we need to go back to 1979–1980 to understand the change you're talking about. At that time, the reality was that an Afghan refugee, who crossed the border to Pakistan and wanted access to humanitarian assistance, had first to join a political party. People who arrived at the Pakistani refugee commissioner's office without a party membership card were turned away. Very few could afford this, so this mechanism was very brutal. These parties won great influence in the resistance movement throughout the 1980s and stood ready to intervene and take leadership

when the Communist Party collapsed in 1992. In that regard, the end of the Cold War had a special twist in the case of Afghanistan. I remember very well an Afghan I talked to a lot about politics. He said that now we should just dread what's coming, because during the Cold War, we could play off one superpower against another. Now we'll end up in the shadows, he said, so now it's really time to be sorry for us Afghans. I didn't see it then, but subsequently I've thought a lot about what he said.

*Some of the Islamists who lived around us later travelled to Tajikistan and participated in the conflict there. Later, they were in Bosnia, then Iraq. In fact, the international fighters who had come to fight against Communism and atheism became al-Qaeda, and later the same type of ideology led to the founding of Islamic State. I'm not saying that Afghanistan is necessarily at the centre of this, but many threads lead from Afghanistan to the major conflicts we have seen in the twenty-first century.*

Well yes, but the 'foreign fighters'—to use a term that emerged only later—were really insignificant parasites during the war in Afghanistan. They didn't do much of importance. Admittedly, they added some resources in the form of money and weapons and sympathy from rich donors in the Gulf, but beyond that they contributed little to the armed campaign. But for the fighters themselves, Afghanistan took on great significance. The mountainous country became a laboratory, a training camp, an opportunity to gain battle experience and to build a reputation as fearless warriors. There weren't many Afghans who believed in this reputation, because of course they saw how little benefit they gained from the foreign fighters. But around the world, not least in the Gulf, it worked well. It's difficult to imagine that international Islamism would be where it is today if it hadn't been for the foreign fighters in Afghanistan. And it's strange thinking about it now, given that at the time they seemed so insignificant.

*Perhaps they were also inspired by having contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union? Perhaps that gave them hope that they could also overthrow other regimes by military means?*

Yes, of course that's completely correct. Even though it's a myth that it was the resistance movement that defeated the Communists. When rebels are victorious and take power, they create a narrative about how they fought their way to victory. In reality, the war in Afghanistan was only one of many causes of the collapse of the Soviet Union. And the regime of Najibullah (Afghan president 1986–1992) survived the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and was still intact when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. It was only thereafter that the Afghan regime imploded. The contacts that certain individuals in the resistance movement had with people within the regime made it possible for them to engineer a split within the government and its security forces, so that the various military units joined up with different resistance groups. Accordingly, these resistance groups experienced a sharp increase in capacity. But those who had fought for the Communist government didn't disappear, of course—you can still come across them 30 years later. Many of them have managed to adapt to different regimes, and have maintained varying degrees of visibility, but they have been survivors, and many of them have done pretty well out of their shifting loyalties.

*What I learned from Afghanistan is that nothing is black or white, even though almost everyone wants to suggest that's the case. Let's stay with Afghanistan a little longer, and look at your research in more recent years, as well as your strong engagement in the public debate in Norway and your membership of the Afghanistan Commission [the Norwegian Commission of Inquiry on Norway's civilian and military involvement in Afghanistan during the period 2001–2014] which was established by the government in November 2014 and delivered its report in June 2016 [i].*

*What was it that went so disastrously wrong? The parties in the Mujahedin movement from the 1980s gained power and then started fighting against each other. There was civil war. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban came in and took control of large areas of the country. Then came the attack on the United States on 11 September 2001—the attack on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers. No Afghans were involved directly, but the response included an international military intervention in Afghanistan that removed the Taliban from power, and led to a new phase in the conflict that will soon have been going on for 20 years. What lessons can we learn from this? What could have been done differently?*

*Currently, one superpower, the United States, wants to withdraw. Russia is back. China has become involved. What does this mean for how we think about peace-building, about the opportunity that apparently arose in 2001 to create a new and democratic Afghanistan? Peace advocates whom you and I know well got involved in this; they were full of energy. What now? If the global community withdraws and, as in 1989, leaves the Afghans to themselves?*

Pakistan is not present in Afghanistan for Afghanistan's sake, even though this is what its rhetoric suggests. Pakistan is present primarily because of India. One of the biggest mistakes after 2001 [...] was that India got to be a significant supporter of the Afghan government. That made Pakistan feel as though it was being trapped in a pincer manoeuvre, and that had consequences.

From a longer-term perspective, this is a civil war that began with the Afghan Communists' coup d'état in 1978. The civil war became internationalized with the Soviet intervention over the Christmas period in 1979, and since then the war has been internationalized in various ways. It's important to recognize that this is a complex conflict. The domestic political picture is complicated, with many actors and shifting alliances. It's not a case of a constant conflict between two consistent parties. Alliances change the whole time on the basis of geographical identity, ethnic identity, religious identity, family acquaintance, friendships made between families and through education, as well as many other factors. The Afghanistan conflict is difficult to analyse.

In addition, it's not only complex internally. It's also very complex internationally. One thing is the superpower aspect of this, how for a long time Afghanistan was one of the Cold War's hot spots. Another thing is what has happened subsequently, not least with 2001 and the American intervention in response to the terror attacks in New York and Washington. In addition, there is a complex regional picture, in which each of Afghanistan's neighbours has its own role. I've done a lot of work on this, and my analysis deviates from the standard view [ii].

I argue that the involvement of Afghanistan's neighbours is not motivated primarily by an interest in Afghanistan itself. They get involved because they perceive threats to their own national security. Pakistan has been perhaps the least helpful of all of Afghanistan's neighbours over the past 40 years. But Pakistan is not present in Afghanistan for Afghanistan's sake, even though this is what its rhetoric suggests. Pakistan is present primarily because of India. One of the biggest mistakes after 2001—you asked what it was that went wrong—was that India got to be a significant supporter of the Afghan government. That made Pakistan feel as though it was being trapped in a pincer manoeuvre, and that had consequences. A new proxy war commenced and has continued on Afghan soil over the past 20 years, this time between those supported by Pakistan and those supported by India. This is one element in the complexity of the Afghan conflict. Afghanistan could have sought a form of neutrality, but there has been little interest in pursuing that.

Those who say that they know a solution, and if this or that had been done differently, everything would have turned out well, have no credibility. No one can be completely certain what would have been best. It's easy to say that much has gone wrong and could have been handled differently, but that wouldn't necessarily have resulted in full peace and harmony.

For Afghanistan, it's a huge paradox that during those periods when the window to a peaceful solution was open widest, the parties were least willing to take advantage of that window. Early in the 1980s, the Soviets realized that they had landed up in an undesirable conflict, but the United States and its allies—in particular the United States—saw it as expedient to conduct a proxy war against the Soviet Union on Afghan soil, and so did what they could to hinder dialogue. Something similar happened in 1986–87, when both the Communist regime in Kabul and Gorbachev's Soviet government wanted to find a peaceful solution. This ended with an agreement, but it came too late. After 1992, when the Communist regime had fallen, the window was once again slightly ajar, but by then the rest of the world, with the exception of certain neighbouring countries, had completely lost interest in Afghanistan. The Afghans were left to their own devices. This is something that many have regretted subsequently.

For Afghanistan, it's a huge paradox that during those periods when the window to a peaceful solution was open widest, the parties were least willing to take advantage of that window.

And perhaps the most important example of all was the period after 2001 when the Taliban were down and out and the movement almost collapsed. At that time, Taliban leaders expressed interest in, and willingness to engage in, dialogue, were minded to sign a binding peace treaty, and integrate themselves into Afghan policy, but they were rejected out of hand. Today, most influential international actors want a peace agreement, but now the local obstacles to achieving an agreement are probably greater than at any time since 2001. The tragic paradox of Afghanistan is that the better the opportunities for peace have been locally, the less international interest there has been in participating. And the greater the local obstacles have been, the greater has been the international interest in peaceful solutions.

## **Military Power or Dialogue**

*An important element in this paradox is of course that it was a weakened Taliban who were interested in negotiating. As we lay our last hands on this interview (22 August 2021), it has been one week since the Taliban entered Kabul again. They are now in a position to dictate the terms for negotiation..*

That's correct. This is one of the reasons why it has proven so difficult to achieve peace. It's obvious that some of the political views that the Taliban represent, and that they displayed during the time that they were Afghanistan's de facto government (1996–2001), are unacceptable to large parts of the global community. Even if we believe, as I do, that dialogue is important, we cannot be certain that the Taliban are willing to share power with others and respect fundamental human rights, such as allowing women to participate in education, the labour market and politics. There are major, unresolved questions there that give very serious cause for concern.

*With the Taliban victorious, we see large-scale evacuation of diplomatic personnel and Afghans that may be at risk under Taliban rule. The Taliban craves international engagement, and in the first few days in the capital, they have behaved more responsibly than anyone would expect. Now what?*

I have been arguing that diplomatic engagement with the Taliban is now more important than ever [iii]. What we see is the opposite: Western embassies evacuate. The Taliban gained a quick victory, they found themselves unprepared, they are eager to secure international support and, ultimately, international recognition. Just at the time when the shape of their power structure and their policies are being negotiated, diplomacy fails. 'It takes two hands to clap' is an Afghan proverb, but the Taliban now find that the other hand is missing.

*With regard to the military aspect, we can no doubt conclude that a massive use of military force, including from Norway, has not brought about the desired result. It has neither defeated the Taliban nor created a basis for peace. Even so, it can't explain the fact that the Taliban are back.*



***The Taliban's success must have something to do with how the Afghan state is structured; on what has been emphasized, both politically and economically. There have never been so many Afghans living in poverty as today, despite the billions [of dollars] that have poured in. There has never been as little support for the Afghan government as today, despite all the measures that have been put in place to get it to function. From a peacebuilding perspective, is it individual elements, or is it the sum total of what has been done, that is wrong? What have we learned?***

There was a period when we talked about Afghanistan in the context of peacebuilding. No one does that today. Nowadays, it's usual simply to affirm that Afghanistan has lived with war for 40 years, and forget that there was a period when we talked about building peace. It's striking how the Taliban could collapse in 2001 like a house of cards. Many of those who had served on the Taliban's front line returned to their mosques or madrassas, or to their farms or shops, and adapted back to ordinary life. They were anticipating a completely different future. But in the course of just two or three years, the Taliban began to rebuild their network, to present a military challenge to the international forces and the government. I think there were two factors that contributed to this.

One was that the people who were appointed to important positions in the country, not least to leadership positions locally, had little legitimacy. They were former commanders, former warlords. They were well known. If there was one thing that Afghans knew, it was what these people stood for. Many Afghans would no doubt have said that although they had little sympathy for the Taliban, there was one thing the Taliban had done that they saw as valuable, and that was that they had got rid of precisely these people. But then the international community turned up and reinstated them. It was almost as though the world was vacuumed for former warlords who could go and fight against the Taliban during the intervention in 2001. We brought them back after they had won the war for 'us'. When I say 'we', I'm not implying that I supported that war, because it wasn't something I wanted. These warlords were generously rewarded with attractive and powerful positions in the new structure of government. Locally, there were many people who objected to this. Obviously, to a large extent, this was also about local conflicts: regardless of whom you install in a governmental structure locally in Afghanistan, there will be some history of conflict between them and others. In any event, it motivated people to look for an alternative, and the only available alternative at that time was the Taliban, who were in the market to begin to recruit and rebuild their organization.

It wasn't inevitable that the Taliban would manage to rebuild, they had to have help to achieve that.

One factor that I think was equally important was the internationally run military campaign. In autumn 2001, there were few international soldiers; in fact, there were

no soldiers, only some intelligence agents, military advisers and air controllers [identifying targets and directing aerial attacks] and that kind of thing in the intervention phase. But soon afterwards, a number of international soldiers arrived, who worked with Afghan militia groups and the Afghan army, and they carried out this work in a way that took many lives, trampled on people's rights and destroyed people's harvests and infrastructure. These soldiers generally conducted themselves in a way that was widely seen as completely unacceptable. And once again, the people had only one alternative when it came to seeking protection, and that was to turn to the Taliban, who were slowly rebuilding their organization. In that way, the Taliban got the wind in their sails.

If you take away those two factors, it's impossible to explain the resurgence of the Taliban. Because even in their heartlands, the Taliban were not a very popular organization in 2001. There had been many uprisings, protests against the forced conscription of young boys to their forces, the use of force to collect taxes, and that type of thing. It wasn't inevitable that the Taliban would manage to rebuild, they had to have help to achieve that. And they obtained that help from the unfortunate decisions that were taken following the international intervention.

## **The Afghanistan Commission**

*Norway is one of the few countries that attempted to conduct a critical review, by establishing the Afghanistan Commission in 2014, of which you were a member. The conclusion was that the only positive result of Norway's many years of engagement in Afghanistan was that Norway got to demonstrate its reliability as a NATO ally. [iv] The Commission's report was extremely critical.*

*What was it like to be involved in that process? Internal discussions are one thing, but it's a different thing to defend the findings in public afterwards. Am I right to think you didn't get much opposition? All the same, it was a brave move; many countries have just wanted to forget, avoided any discussion of their own roles, and just continued to provide aid. You are a researcher with a strong empirical background, concerned with opportunities for peace. Was it challenging?*

*What was it like to meet Norwegian politicians and tell them that what they'd done over the past 14 years had scarcely resulted in anything positive, and that you could document this fact?*

It was extremely interesting work with very able people on the Commission and in the secretariat, and the work gave me the opportunity to meet all the key decision-makers in Norway. We also interviewed international decision-makers. We got to ask how they had viewed the developments, what they had thought, what was the basis for their thinking, and what decisions they had made. Obviously this was incredibly interesting, especially for someone who had followed events in Afghanistan so

closely. I also saw that the Commission's conclusions, although they were rather critical, were largely perceived as an accurate summary of Norway's role in Afghanistan. Yes, they are harsh conclusions, which deviate sharply from the official justifications supplied in advance of, and during, the involvement in Afghanistan.

I remember an article in [the Norwegian newspaper] *Aftenposten* [1 November 2007] written by the leaders of the three parties in the red-green coalition government: the Labour Party, the Centre Party, and the Socialist Left Party. [v] What I realized afterwards was that in that article, they tried to consolidate a kind of joint position, despite their strong disagreements. In that article, not a single word was devoted to the importance of Norwegian participation for Norway's alliance with the United States and NATO. So when we came later, and said that that concern for the alliance was probably the most important reason for Norway's engagement in Afghanistan, and that the preservation of the alliance was the only thing that Norway was successful in achieving, our statement stood in stark contrast to the types of justifications that the three party leaders had supplied in *Aftenposten*.

## **Minefields—Work to Impact Policy and Practice**

*I'm sure we won't succeed in leaving the topic of Afghanistan altogether, but now I'd like to move further along in your research career. Of course this grew out of your work in Afghanistan, and also came to encompass the problem of landmines, among other things.*

Yes, it grew from the fact that I'd worked in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, when I returned to Norway, I started working towards an M.Phil. In my dissertation, I wrote about political mobilization among Afghanistan's Hazara people, an ethnic minority, which also to a large extent is a religious minority, because most Hazaras are Shia Muslims, unlike other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, who are Sunni Muslims. [vi] The Hazaras went through a dramatic period politically throughout the 1980s, with various forces that ideologically and in other ways pulled in different directions. I thought this was an exciting topic to work on. In a sense, this was a study of non-governmental military groups: how they build themselves up and how they justify their activities, and recruit, and organize themselves and behave in conflict. This is an interest that I've continued to pursue, for example in my study of the Taliban.

The landmine issue re-emerged as a political problem just at the time we were both working there in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. People saw the enormous human consequences of the landmines and started mine-clearing measures, rather helplessly in the beginning. Some of the people involved became influential in what from 1992 onwards became the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which in 1997 secured an international treaty banning anti-personnel landmines, and was even awarded the Nobel Peace Prize the same year. This was something that captured the interest of a retrained, practically-oriented farmer, both politically and practically. At one point, I went to Afghanistan with a colleague to take part in a

mine-clearance course. I wanted to learn the techniques, and there was a lot to learn. But to start with, I was most interested in the political aspects, in the idea of landmines as an ethically unacceptable weapon.

There was more value for money in clearing three landmines buried around a village water hole than in clearing a large, fenced-off minefield in an area where hardly anyone dared venture anyway.

The unique thing here was that we gradually developed a broad alliance of anti-war activists, retired soldiers, politicians, humanitarian organizations and mine-clearance organizations, who stood together and pursued this campaign and to a large extent were successful. When negotiations on the Mine Ban Treaty were completed in 1997, not all countries were ready to sign. The superpowers, and several other important countries, such as Israel, India and Pakistan, have still not done so. But the reality was that the Treaty was complied with. For a long time, hardly any new landmines were deployed. Now, the situation is different. In a number of conflicts, landmines are again being used on a significant scale. In the long period after 1997 when landmines weren't used, I became interested in mine clearance, how one went about that work. I realized that large-scale resources were being used to clear the largest possible areas, and remove as many mines as possible, without any prior assessment of what was most important for the people living there. In brief, it was about finding a mechanism for establishing priorities. There was more value for money in clearing three landmines buried around a village water hole than in clearing a large, fenced-off minefield in an area where hardly anyone dared venture anyway.

*Let us take this as an example of two things: a collaboration between researchers, activists and politicians who actually achieved something, and the independence of research. Independent research led to change in how the actual work of mine clearance was conducted. You contributed both to achieving a ban on mines and to addressing the problem in the most economically efficient way for the people who were really affected.*

*This is a brilliant example, I think, of how a collaboration between critical research, critical activists and politicians can lead to positive change. Not just politically, but also in the way of approaching a problem. Here, we see how a researcher can make a contribution to peace.*

Obviously, the researchers had to deal with the political authorities. The first thing to say about that is that many of the most important agents for change were found within various countries' civil administrations, and not necessarily in activist communities. If it hadn't been for a number of pioneers, including in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there would never have been a Mine Ban Treaty. The activists also drew a lot on research and also conducted some research themselves. Some of it was pretty good, while some was less rigorous. It was a challenge that people tended to

throw around numbers—the number of mines in the world, how many people were killed by mines, and so on—that lacked any empirical basis. After the Mine Ban Treaty was signed, these numbers came back to haunt them. They had established such an enormous estimate for the size of the mine problem that it would have been impossible to solve. And so there was no real reason to try to do anything. One had to downscale the estimates in order to get rid of the mines. Now some realistic estimates were needed, not the activist estimates that had motivated political action. It was an interesting turnaround.

And then we also worked closely with the mine clearance organizations. They found much of their expertise among people with military backgrounds. They had organizational cultures that differed from both those of the activist community and those of the rest of the aid community. Mine clearance is a risky activity. It requires discipline and thorough organization. We now challenged these organizations on how they fixed their priorities, showing that in practice, the consequences of not conducting a socio-economic analysis in advance of a clearance operation could result in a rich local landowner benefiting at the expense of the poor, without the organization even realizing it. And yes, not everyone was equally happy to have this pointed out. We had some difficult discussions. But we worked and conducted dialogues with the various organizations, carried out field studies on the projects they themselves were implementing, and also worked in a climate where there were others who were also working towards the same goal.

And then a fundamental change took place in the way people thought about mine clearance. Now there was more dialogue with the local population and a larger number of rigorous socio-economic analyses, and the operations were followed up and evaluated, both as they were underway and in the first few years after completion. This made it possible to avoid taking measures that as a starting point were based on the best of intentions, but in fact had major negative consequences.

***And so does peacebuilding, the types of elements it may involve, then come into the discussion?***

Absolutely. Something we were interested in was how mine clearance could contribute to peacebuilding. One thing is that mine clearance makes it possible for people to start working again, to cultivate the soil and drive on the roads, to move back to rural settlements. And that in itself in a way helps to bring about peace. In addition, one can also organize mine clearance measures in a way that builds bridges between groups that have been in conflict: one can recruit mine-clearance operatives from several population groups; one can recruit people from what was an occupying power to clear mines they laid themselves, in a gesture of reconciliation. There are many ways one can envisage building peace as an extension of mine-clearance measures, and we worked on that intensively for a period at the end of the 1990s and a little into the 2000s. I felt that we got support for our ideas. It's been good to see that some of the work we did then has been taken up later, for example in the peace process in Colombia, where there has been a very strategic use of mine-clearance measures as a contribution to reconciliation and peacebuilding.

## Research into Migration

*I also see a connection with another field in which you have built your research career, that of migration. I've always seen PRIO as one of the leading centres for research into migration. You were a part of that. Can you tell me a bit about it, before we touch on your leadership roles at several levels in PRIO?*

*What was it that made PRIO so good at research into migration? Was it because of a strong theoretical basis, or because people had extremely good field experience, or because of the way it was organized? Is there something we should learn from here?*

I'm not going to take much credit for research into migration being a strong area at PRIO. It obviously has a lot to do with a number of individuals who were both able scholars and creative when it came to method, theory and data gathering. I think those were the main factors. In addition, I think that at PRIO we have been good at creating a workplace that provides a stimulating environment. It lets its researchers discover their strengths, and carve out their own place within the organization. And then it has something to do with the fact that migration itself—not just directly conflict-related migration in the form of surges of refugees and internally displaced people, but also other types of migration—is often closely related to conflict. The large scholarly community at PRIO that studies conflict and peace has, I believe, contributed to the development of research into migration.

People justify their opposition to migration in many different ways, and I think many of us have made a bit of a mistake in thinking that opposition comes mainly from the far right.

In this respect, I am somewhat critical about migration as a distinct field of research. Research into migration has become a research topic in its own right, almost a separate discipline. Migration forms a part of many social changes. If we look at change processes in Norway today, and subtract how people relocate because that belongs to a separate research discipline, then we won't understand much about what's going on. We won't understand so much about the politics either, we won't understand so much about local conflicts. And there I'm thinking not only of international migration, but just as much about internal migration. If people move from Otta to Oslo, it affects the age structure, the sex ratio, and economic development. I think the context of research into peace and conflict has been of great importance for the development of a broad-based environment for research into migration at PRIO.

*You have also ended up in the midst of debates about immigration to Norway, and not only in relation to the themes you just outlined.*

Well yes, and there's been internal debate within PRIO about that. Traditionally, PRIO has focused on international conflicts, and has avoided research into situations

that are purely Norwegian. But then we have come to realize that many conflict-related factors do not follow national borders. If you're going to work on war and peace, you have to liberate yourself from the system of nation states. And if you don't liberate yourself completely, you must at least look across the system of states and national borders. Migrants are often important actors in the regions and countries that they come from. For someone studying the Afghan conflict, it may be necessary to keep track of what is happening among the exile communities in Norway, Germany and the Netherlands. We have become more and more interested in transnational considerations and networks.

One finding in PRIO's research that has gained a lot of attention is that—quite contrary to the general assumption that the immigrants that are the most concerned about their homelands and spend a lot of time there, are poorly integrated into the country they have relocated to—these immigrants often have the resources necessary to be active in both countries. In other words, there is no contradiction between being active in the area you come from and being well integrated in the country you have come to. In fact, there's a synergy. Research into migration has contributed to a good deal of myth-busting by not only looking at the countries that migrants come from, but at the networks that bind people together over borders and great distances.

I question this idea of the so-called 'refugee crisis'. It's true that there was a dramatic increase in the number of refugees coming to Europe in 2015, but we are talking about slightly over one million refugees arriving in a continent with over 500 million inhabitants. Calling this a crisis rings hollow when you have situations like the one in Lebanon, where one million refugees arrived in a country with five million inhabitants.

***I think the debate in Norway has been one-sidedly focused on rights. 'They mustn't be given rights! They must be sent back. There's a duty to send back those who don't fulfil our criteria!' In contrast to the landmine debate, this debate has become extremely politicized. Strong emotions come into play. Supporters of immigration clash with anti-immigration voices in the Norwegian debate. It's a difficult debate to get involved in.***

It's a difficult and sometimes ugly debate. Many of PRIO's migration researchers have found it unpleasant to take part in it, not least when they encounter posts on closed forums on social media, which can be unpleasant, bullying, and sometimes threatening. And it's correct that the debate on migration has changed a great deal. It's clear that until 2015, many migration activists were saying that we must open our borders. I don't think I've heard anyone say that since 2015. That viewpoint has died out completely. Now, even the most ardent activists will limit themselves to saying that we should respect our international obligations to a greater degree, and ensure that people who are in real need of protection have the opportunity to get it. Today,

this moderate view has become the most radical position. The debate on migration is difficult and very polarized.

In my opinion, it is also about many other conflicts. We see that people justify their opposition to migration in many different ways, and I think many of us have made a bit of a mistake in thinking that opposition comes mainly from the far right. There is strong opposition to migration, supported by different arguments, across the whole political spectrum, among trade unions, on the left, in rural communities, in the Centre Party. In many other countries, fear of migrants is apparent also among Christian democrats and conservative Christian communities. There are various types of reasons, but opposition to migration resonates in almost all types of ideological landscapes in Europe. This is cause for great concern, because it can clear a path for unconventional alliances that could become powerful. The world is fundamentally unfair, we all know that. At least in the short term, it is unrealistic to envisage an end to the system of nation states.

***Of course, it's easy to enter into a purely theoretical debate about the integration of refugees, but when the reality was suddenly that thousands and thousands were coming into Europe, after Turkey had opened its border, the debate became completely different.***

That's definitely correct. I question this idea of the so-called 'refugee crisis'. It's true that there was a dramatic increase in the number of refugees coming to Europe in 2015, but we are talking about slightly over one million refugees arriving in a continent with over 500 million inhabitants. Calling this a crisis rings hollow when you have situations like the one in Lebanon, where one million refugees arrived in a country with five million inhabitants. When the surge of refugees was perceived as a 'crisis', rather than as a challenge that Europe should tackle by working together, it was because a general scepticism about immigration had grown so strong that it was possible to use that scepticism to gain political support for that perception.

We saw this most clearly in the most migration-friendly European countries, Germany and Sweden, where the authorities made complete U-turns. It's easy to forget now, but when Sweden's conservative prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt spoke about it as an opportunity to 'open our hearts', there was no suggestion that Sweden should close its borders. That was completely out of the question. His party campaigned for election on this basis and suffered huge losses.

***In fact, more Afghans returned to Afghanistan in 2001–2002 than came to Europe later. Is there anything that researchers can contribute in these types of contexts?***

Many participants in the public debate are not very receptive to what I would call facts, to hard, factual information. Obviously, that's disappointing for us researchers. But researchers must also be careful that they don't take on a purely activist role. That is the other trap that one may fall into if one gets too frustrated about the public debate. I think that we researchers have to come to terms with the fact that we do not have political power. We have a lot to contribute to these debates, but the results are seldom a carbon copy of what we suggest or support. And it's also not our role to determine policy. Our role is to enlighten politicians and inform the public debate.



Once we realize this, I think our influence becomes greater than if we take on an activist role.

***Yes, perhaps over time, but perhaps not when the topic is one that researchers are passionate about and believe that they have knowledge about there and then...***

I think that we researchers have to come to terms with the fact that we do not have political power. [...] it's also not our role to determine policy. Our role is to enlighten politicians and inform the public debate. Once we realize this, I think our influence becomes greater than if we take on an activist role.

## The PRIO Director

***We've talked about your varied background, with research that contributed to changes in international policy and practices in the area of international aid. We've talked about research into migration and how the field has developed. As a researcher, you've had a two-track career. The whole time, you've been involved in both research and administration.***

***You were Research Director at PRIO when we worked together there, then later you became Deputy Director. And, in 2009, you decided to apply for the job of Director. Why did you do that? You weren't a conventional theoretically-oriented researcher, but someone who combined theory and practice. What ambitions did you have when you took on that responsibility?***

Just working at PRIO was a dream in itself. When I was doing my M.Phil. in sociology at the University of Oslo, I wrote my dissertation on a student fellowship from PRIO. So when I got a job there in 1995, it was a dream come true. And then I got new contracts and new opportunities, and as time went on, I became Research Director. But I wasn't really looking for a career in research management, it was research itself that I was passionate about. However, when I was asked to take on management roles, first as Research Director, then Departmental Director and then Deputy Director, I found that doing the organizational work was enjoyable, that it was fun getting things to function. That no doubt had quite a lot to do with my background. Even so, it was only after the position of Director had been advertised that I began to think of myself as a possible candidate. I really hadn't thought about it before. That might sound a bit strange, because by then I'd already been Deputy Director for nearly four years. But that's how it was. And once I began thinking about it, I realized it was something I wanted to do.

Also, I believed I had something to contribute. For me, it was about the fact that I find leadership and organization enjoyable, and that it's particularly enjoyable to head

an organization that does something important. The job of director at PRIO became a leadership role that I was passionate about. I think I also had some advantages: one was that I felt I had good relationships with everyone working at PRIO. I didn't have any likes or dislikes. That's a clear advantage if you're going to head an organization where you've already been working a long time.

And so what was it that I wanted to achieve? I was very well aware that I—to use a Norwegian expression—was jumping after Wirkola [a Norwegian expression that basically means 'I had a hard act to follow']. [vii] In other words, I was taking over an organization that was well run, that was perceived as one of the best academic institutions in Norway, and that had a strong international reputation. There's no one who works on peace and conflict who isn't aware of PRIO. That meant I didn't have any ambitions to be a revolutionary, to tear things down in order to build them up again. It was more about preserving the good qualities that PRIO already possessed and developing them further. I realize, of course, that this process of further development requires a rather high level of commitment. It's one thing to preserve the good qualities, to recreate them every day; that's not something that happens of its own accord. It's easy to think that one just needs to stand still, but that view is fundamentally flawed. In order to preserve the good qualities, one has to engage in constant renewal. It's about generating new ideas, it's about employing new people, finding new ways of doing things, ensuring that the organization receives continual injections of new energy and enthusiasm, so that people have the desire to create something.

And at the same time, there's the additional factor that you're operating within changing external conditions. And so you have to adapt and find opportunities in these changed conditions and create something new. There's no doubt that PRIO has changed a lot over the past decade and has become a more professional organization. This applies to leadership, on which we've placed a lot of emphasis, to training, to systemization, routines, and recruitment, both in general and at a senior level. It's about research communication. And it's about administration in general, everything from financial management to human relations. It's about research administration specifically. In that respect, I'm thinking in particular about improving funding applications and the implementation of research projects. These areas have become a lot more demanding, with more criteria that have to be fulfilled, and more intense competition. Nowadays, there's a larger number of powerfully competitive institutions than was the case 10 years ago. And this also applies to a number of other things, such as security and preparedness routines, that we have made much more professional. So it's clear that PRIO today is a more professional and better structured organization. That's been almost essential; there has been a conscious organizational shift that we have all engaged in together.

## Research Dissemination

***Is it possible to generate academic knowledge, assure its quality, publish the results in reputable journals, and disseminate knowledge to those who may benefit from it either practically or politically—all at the same time?***

We've done a lot of work to improve our communication skills. The way we think about dissemination has become engrained in the organization, and for good reasons. Traditionally, researchers, also at PRIO, would think mainly of writing research articles, books and book chapters as an integral part of their research. To generate new knowledge, and make it known to fellow academics, is fundamental to everything we do. But it is equally important to communicate this new knowledge to other audiences. In my experience, reaching out to other audiences is often also a key to having a greater impact on academic audiences. In addition to academics and the general public, we must also target a more specialized audience, namely the policymakers and stakeholders who might use our knowledge for developing new policies or holding on to successful ones. To reach them, we need different tools. We have innumerable tools at our disposal.

When we find ourselves sitting on an interesting research finding, we should identify the most effective channels for reaching the relevant audiences. Ideally, all research projects should have tools that reach all three types of audience: academia, the general public, and practitioners. But we can't do everything all the time, so we have to make informed choices. Ultimately, it is about what I would call musicality. In other words, the ability and willingness to keep track of the ongoing social debate, to keep track of ongoing processes. Where will it be possible to plug in this knowledge? Who will be receptive to it? You may have the world's most interesting research finding, but if your timing is wrong, or if you don't see where you should plug it in, it will never get further than your desk drawer or your computer.

***This is a subsidiary question, but to what extent did it become your job to disseminate research findings when you were director of PRIO? As someone who was often called up by the media, could you use your position to disseminate results from your colleagues' research projects?***

***How does one generate a unified understanding of the many elements that are produced within an institution such as PRIO? Are there mechanisms for achieving this?***

As director, one has both one's own research and that of others to use as the basis for dissemination. It's obvious that one will be more secure, more competent, within one's own research portfolio. And one should participate in the debate oneself. When it comes to research by other people, it's more complicated. Often, it's the person in charge who is invited to comment, even though he or she is not the one with the most knowledge about the topic in question. There are good reasons for instead asking the researcher who has actually done the research to present it.

There has to be scope for both approaches, but it's clear that in the main fields where PRIO has engaged in systematic research over long periods of time, such as the study of trends in peace and conflict, it's important that the director is able to present it, to promote PRIO's brand and set external footprints. But one must present it with full respect for, and acknowledgment of, the people who have done the work. In general, this is a win-win situation, because the people who have done the work are also interested in seeing their work made visible.

## **Gender Distribution and Leadership**

*I have great respect for the gender-related research advanced by PRIO. PRIO has not yet had a female director, but there have been many visible women within the organization who have been at the forefront of the debate about gender, peace and conflict. Indeed, this is an example of the balance you talked about, whereby you promote those who have expertise and they are granted permission to grow within their role. Is that how it is?*

The fact that PRIO has not yet had a female director, apart from a brief period when Hilde Henriksen Waage filled the role during her term as deputy director, is nothing to be proud of. In fact, it is also not long since PRIO promoted its first woman to a research professorship.

*I think it's slightly strange that such a strong scholarly environment has not hired a woman as director, either from its own ranks or from the outside.*

That's true, but over a 10-year period, we have gone from having an extremely lopsided gender distribution at the senior level to a situation that is completely and utterly different. When I say senior level, I'm thinking both of women in leadership positions and women who rank as professors. Some of it has to do with demographics: a new generation has emerged whose members have struggled their way up, completed their doctorates, worked hard, and been strongly engaged in their work. It's also about a deliberate policy to promote the careers of women in peace research.

## **Framework Conditions and Organizational Culture**

*This leads me to ask about PRIO's financial structure and research funding. How much scope is there for strategic interventions? Even though PRIO has core funding, the Institute is locked into three-to-five-year funding cycles for its research projects. At the same time, one must be constantly ready for action and taking up new issues and ideas.*

There is scope to be strategic, but it is far too restricted. PRIO has core funding that corresponds to around 15–17% of its total budget. To a large extent, this is tied up in the costs of research management and drafting new project-funding applications, and it provides inadequate scope for pursuing new ideas. In reality, this means that when someone at PRIO gets a good idea, or wants to build up her or his expertise about a new topic on the horizon, the Institute is not able to allocate much in the way of resources until it has obtained external funding. And these external funding cycles operate slowly. It might take one, two, three, or even four years to get the funding. But by then, the ship has sailed, you're too late.

From this point of view, I think our strategic room for manoeuvre is inadequate. Our core funding should correspond to about a third of our turnover. That would be ideal. I wouldn't ask for more than that, because it's healthy to exist in a market and compete for external funding. Research is not like an ordinary business activity, however. It needs a lot of long-term planning. Accordingly, our core funding is far too small. When the financial room for manoeuvre is so restricted, it makes the institution dependent on the commitment and initiative of individuals. New research initiatives cannot be set in motion from above. I would have liked to have seen the Institute get greater opportunities to control its research agenda, set priorities, take up new ideas and new topics.

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***If you think about the whole spectrum of activities that you engaged in as director—structural change, funding, organization, communication, research policy, and public debate—what would you wish to highlight as your most important achievement? You were active in many arenas and were highly visible in the public debate, both in Norway and internationally.***

It's difficult to say that it was *my* achievement, because it was all about teamwork, but I think the professionalization of PRIO as an organization is something to be proud of. We talked a bit about communication and how we think about communication. In that connection, we've changed direction towards what I'd call an integrated approach to research communication. Instead of thinking that in my role as a researcher I have an obligation to communicate with other researchers, and perhaps to some extent to communicate with other audiences when I feel like it, we have now adopted a rounded approach so that we communicate constantly with a range of audiences, and these activities are integral to our project development and implementation. I really believe that we have developed an approach that makes a difference, that increases our visibility and, not least, our ability to reach those audiences we should be reaching. Through this we have also become better at arguing that our projects are worth funding. We have put in place a way of thinking about communication that is fundamentally strategic.

***Does this also mean that the organizational culture is one in which the researchers themselves are eager to communicate their research and get involved? That's the impression I get. I think that PRIO has an extremely competent communications department that is capable of motivating researchers and improving the products they produce.***

Yes, the most important thing is the actual organizational culture. Just creating good-looking diagrams and documents has little value in itself. The key thing is for the communications to be anchored in the organization and its research. The entire organization has contributed to developing the system we now have at our disposal. In addition, our support functions are focused on change: on working on strategy; and proposing communications strategies for specific projects and initiatives. The primary function of the communications department isn't to work on individual products.

## **The Development of Peace Research and the Challenges it Faces**

***Let's turn now to the field known as 'peace research'. You were Director of PRIO for eight years and you have been involved with the organization for a long time. PRIO has a central role in international peace research. But what have been the major changes during your time? Is it correct that peace research has moved from having close links with peace activism towards engaging in critical reflection on that activism?***

***Has peace research moved from being anti-military towards engaging in dialogue with military circles? What are the most important changes? I'm asking about this, because afterwards I want to ask you about how we should think about making positive changes to our world today, where a lot of things are not going particularly well.***

Peace research has developed in several different phases, and I don't think that I've made my analysis sufficiently detailed that I could sit down and write an article about your question here and now. But very broadly, I would say that if we go back to the 1970s or 80s, it was usual for PRIO and other peace research environments to be seen as institutional participants in international peace activism. Peace researchers did not have strategies that were purely research-based, but they engaged themselves in issues where they hoped they would be able to promote change—in disarmament, for example. Peace research represented an aspect of the anti-war activism that emerged in the wake of World War II and which reached its peak during the Cold War, not least after NATO's Double-Track Decision in 1979, which was key when I decided to refuse to attend my military refresher training.

After the end of the Cold War, the fronts changed. There was scope for communication and alliances between groups that had not previously been on speaking

terms. As you mentioned in one of your earlier questions, peace researchers began to conduct dialogues with military decision-makers about security policy. They began to discuss military strategy and military ethics (*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*)—questions that peace researchers had not touched with a bargepole previously. There were a lot of sour faces in activist communities because of this, but it was necessary for peace research and for maintaining its relevance. If we go a little further forward in time, particularly to the War on Terror after 2001, we see a dramatic shift in thinking about war and peace and the use of military means. The use of military force internationally, as a means to manage, damp down, and prevent conflict became acceptable, at least if a UN mandate was in place.

There was also another shift, perhaps not as early as 2001, although the seeds of it were already there at that time. This was a shift from focusing on conflict resolution and the laying of the foundations for lasting peace, to being content with a lower level of ambition, mainly managing conflicts to ensure that they did not spin out of control and have major negative consequences. Much of the international involvement we are seeing today in Libya, Mali and other places does not aim to create lasting peace. The goal is simply to keep the problems at a level where their effects will not be too damaging—at least not for the outside world. This is something that peace research must come to terms with: we find ourselves in a different political climate and have taken on a role that is perhaps more defensive.

For you and me, Afghanistan is perhaps the most striking example of this trend, but the same applies to Iraq, Syria and Yemen. And there is hardly anyone today who believes it is possible to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The political will, and the belief that one can go from war to lasting peace, have been weakened. At the same time, quantitative research has contributed to raising awareness about how much more peaceful the world is today than it was during the two world wars and the Cold War. Although things have gone in the wrong direction over the past decade, we know that we have a lot to lose. Accordingly, it's important to maintain the multilateral cooperation that was built up after World War II, to avoid further terminations of disarmament agreements, and to avoid a new Cold War—this time between the United States and China.

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And there's also another area where I think that we peace researchers have an important defensive role to play. That is to defend scholarly research. If we fast-forward to today, peace research—well, actually all research—faces a challenge that has become more and more obvious over recent years. This is that powerful political forces do not respect the core values that serve as the foundation for research: namely, the obligation to seek the truth and to build logical and consistent arguments. Opponents of scholarly research are gradually emerging in all sorts of media. The

United States is led by a president who permits himself to misquote a research report one minute, and then say the complete opposite the next, without losing any support from his voters. Sometimes I feel as though we have a public debate in which the value of research has become purely decorative. People continue to use research and its status to give weight to their own arguments, but they neither understand nor respect the basic research value that is the commitment to seek the truth.

The misuse of research is an attack on research in general, and these attacks come from politicians fulfilling leadership roles in some of the world's most powerful countries. There are politicians who would prefer not to have strong, independent research communities and who have many instruments at their disposal for undermining independent research: everything from discrediting serious researchers in the public media to removing funding; or prosecuting academics who produce findings or interpret data in ways these politicians do not like. This situation is troubling. I'm not sure how we as researchers should deal with it. I believe that an important starting point is to avoid falling into the trap of starting to argue like the most tendentious politicians: we should not be too activist; we must avoid inaccuracy both with statistics and other facts; we must insist on the value of truth, even when this is uncomfortable. If we fail to do these things, we will lose our basis for meaningful communication.

This means that we must ask disagreeable questions and report disagreeable findings, including those that we ourselves find disagreeable. If we find, while conducting research into migration, that in certain situations a particular type of migration promotes conflict, then we must be willing to say it—even if we don't like it. Researchers must reflect on their own role and their own practices, and strengthen their adherence to scholarly values.

***Is there now less explicit peace research because areas that were traditionally seen as peace research have become integrated into other fields and scholarly disciplines? Has there been a shift in the whole focus and understanding of peace and conflict research, a move away from its earlier themes?***

Yes, what many people think of as peace research's crisis is actually its success. If we go back 30 or 40 years, peace research was a peripheral activity conducted by a tiny group of researchers. Today, peace and conflict research is central in a number of disciplines and also in interdisciplinary research. In the study of international relations, and partly also in political science, we see that themes from peace research often dominate. But as you said earlier, this type of theme, a broader understanding of war and peace, is important in a range of research fields: migration; inequality; health—one could make a long list. So although peace research as a concept is perhaps less prominent than before, it is also more generally accepted. The themes, concepts and perspectives that peace research has put onto the global research agenda have a larger place than ever. Not a single week goes by when I don't notice politicians, media commentators and intellectuals using Johan Galtung's ideas from the 1960s. Positive/negative peace and structural violence have become inevitable parts of the international political vocabulary.



This also means that there are an incredible amount of smart people who now work on this type of research and help renew it, with regard to both method and theory. One of the themes that I've been curious about for many years, but which I haven't worked on systematically myself, and also couldn't find any really good research on, is how local communities adapt, survive and interact with the parties involved in difficult conflict situations. Then we see how in recent years, a number of new, extremely rigorous projects have emerged, which examine how local communities adapt, how they work with the armed groups in order to acquire some kind of security and scope for action. And what are the constraints, what are the types of conflict that make it most difficult for local populations to adapt? So there is a lot to look forward to within this field of research.

***I agree completely. Let's move to a different topic. I have worked a little with Turkey, where our strength used to lie in our collaboration with Turkish researchers. That has now become very difficult.***

***We are faced with irreconcilable dilemmas, which nonetheless give us an even greater responsibility to engage in the kinds of issues that have now in fact been put off-limits for local researchers. At the same time, COVID-19 makes this all the more difficult. Is it possible to change our ways of working? Are there themes, forms of collaboration that we can explore?***

Your example of Turkey makes this dilemma clear. Researchers there used to enjoy complete academic freedom and could collaborate academically in a normal manner. But then there was a political backlash forcing them to be very careful with what they say or write. Russia is another example, although there the change has been more gradual. And we have seen a clampdown in China under Xi Jinping. So we have to turn our attention to how we can work academically with countries that lack academic freedom, be it China, Iran or Venezuela. What types of research collaboration do we have? In our field—peace and conflict research—there is scope for conducting the type of scholarly dialogue that is sometimes called 'science diplomacy'. We have to open up and think more broadly. We can conduct scholarly dialogues with academic environments that are not necessarily similar to our own. These may be completely different types of knowledge environments. In many countries, heavyweight knowledge environments exist in the civil service, business, civil society, in all parts of society.

Instead of thinking that the other party has to be an academic institution that is similar to our own, we should think that what we can supply in the way of knowledge through a scholarly dialogue can form the basis for an informed exchange, where there is scope for different views. An example of this could be a dialogue that directly or indirectly addresses questions about human rights and democracy. Currently, I'm heading the PRIO Middle East Centre, so I have a particular interest in the Middle East. There, we can engage in dialogue with learned religious scholars whom we wouldn't normally think of as academics, but who have studied theological questions in great depth. So we must have competencies that make us interesting to them as partners for a dialogue—but obviously without there having to be agreement.

Through this kind of dialogue, we can create opportunities for people in authority to discuss things that they wouldn't otherwise be able to discuss between themselves.

Over time, this can contribute to changing the climate and ways of thinking. I actually think the room for engagement is rather large, although I recognize there are also limitations. Another thing about science diplomacy is when we are talking about a kind of academic dialogue that is not immediately political: physicists who meet to talk about physics, for example. When we talk about peace and conflict, it's difficult to avoid controversial issues. Yet there can be ways of getting closer to each other through different perspectives, using new concepts and tools for analysis, and in this way opening the door to dialogue.

***Yes, creating a shared forum for dialogue that is not only about peace and conflict, but that is about how to resolve concrete things and thereby generate trust.***

Yes.

***I've struggled with the research system that equates success with publications. What you're saying must mean that we need to think differently about how research should be evaluated. It needs to be possible to report types of results other than simply articles. But this will take a long time. Perhaps you won't see results quickly, but you have to be willing to stick with it in the long term. Knowing Cyprus, for example, change can happen suddenly: a political decision or a change of leadership on either side. Suddenly, everything you have invested in over many years of projects involving research and dialogue becomes important.***

***What's interesting is not only the opportunity to revisit years of research, it's also the fact that the same people with whom you've been maintaining a dialogue for very many years suddenly have an opportunity to exert political influence. That doesn't fit with the Research Council of Norway's thinking about funding applications—it goes far beyond it. And the research-funding system isn't really designed for this. Or does an opportunity exist?***

What you say is correct. If we look at the research that's conducted at PRIO, what really has made a difference has usually been based on a collective research endeavour with a long history, lasting 10, 15 and 20 years. And where, at the same time, there has been creativity and an ability to see what is possible: where the research has resonance; where it's possible to plug it in and generate attention to it; at the right time and in the most appropriate arenas. I'm critical about much of the way in which we are forced to structure projects by research funders. This is because we have to define upfront what we're going to produce in such fine detail that it hinders the creativity—or the musicality—that is essential if we are to be relevant. If you're conducting genuine research, you don't know exactly what you're going to find. If you don't know what you're going to find, you also don't know exactly to whom it will be interesting or how it will be interesting. The world around you will change so that you think you will find certain things, which you may think today will be extremely interesting for a given actor, but three years later, when you are ready to

present your findings, the most important forum in which you should be presenting your research may be one that did not even exist as you planned your project.

We have to define upfront what we're going to produce in such fine detail that it hinders the creativity [...] that is essential if we are to be relevant. If you're conducting genuine research, you don't know exactly what you're going to find. If you don't know what you're going to find, you also don't know exactly to whom it will be interesting or how it will be interesting.

For all of these reasons, I think most research projects should operate with a more open structure of communication. EU-funded research is particularly problematic, because the plans for what you're going to produce are barely negotiable. The Research Council of Norway is more flexible about allowing change along the way. But just the fact of being forced to define a rigid structure in the first place is pedagogically counter-productive. When researchers have to define the likely outcomes of their research in advance, they enter into a logic where it is obvious that the goal is to submit an article to a specific journal in December of Year 4, preferably with the anticipated finding. But when December of Year 4 comes around, it may well be the case that your priority should be to attend a conference on the global political process where your topic is up for discussion, a forum that you could not anticipate would ever emerge when you planned your research project. But as a researcher, you must be open to change.

***So what you're saying is that even if there were an express goal to use research to improve things, to influence political processes, the need to plan your research in a detailed and binding way may in fact prevent this from being possible.***

Yes, one should of course have ambitions concerning what one is going to produce. Research should, and must, be tested by fellow scholars. So I do think it's extremely important to have ambitions in relation to scholarly production. But having to define in detail the kind of scholarly products you intend to produce, or what you're going to communicate in different media, or as policy inputs to political actors, that's counter-productive, because it blocks the musicality that's essential if you are to be relevant.

## **The Paradox of Peace Research**

***We've talked about our changing world, about its altered power dynamics, about the ever-increasing number of authoritarian regimes, with strong leaders who retain their hold on power. We are painting an extreme picture of crisis, and we are arguing for the value of our own research within all of this.***

***But at the same time, this picture isn't completely correct: everything hasn't got worse. In recent years, there has been much research that indicates that we have moved in a positive direction. Are we succeeding as researchers, as analysts, in responding to these incompatible trends?***

It's here that peace and conflict research has been least successful. Because this is a complete paradox, and it's the gravest paradox of our time. There can be no doubt, if one looks at the empirical data, that the world today is a better place to live for the majority of its inhabitants than in any previous phase of human history. This may change with COVID-19, but we don't know this yet. If we look at this from a perspective of 50 or more years, then the world has become a better place to live according to almost all parameters: this is not true with regard to environmental and climate change, but it is true for life expectancy; infant mortality; education; health; and peace. Although the number of conflicts and the number of deaths in armed conflict have risen again since 2011, the amount of war is still at a level that is far below where it has been historically, including in the lifetimes of many PRIO researchers.

Even as recently as in the 1980s, when the most significant wars were in Afghanistan and between Iran and Iraq, the global casualty figures were much higher than they have been in the twenty-first century. The conflict in Syria has been serious. And there have also been other serious conflicts. But if we take a step back and look at the empirical data, the world has never been affected directly by conflict to a lesser extent than during the period since the 1990s. This is a trend that goes back to the end of the Cold War, and may still continue, although there has been a deterioration over the past decade. As mentioned earlier, we have a lot to lose. But this message is not accepted by most people, and as a result, the dominant view is the polar opposite—namely, that the world has become much worse. And this idea that the world has become worse leads many people to think that we have to change everything. That means throwing the baby out with the bathwater, throwing away everything that has made the world a better place.

We see democratic elections handing power to anti-democratic leaders. [...] Democracy is the best vaccine we have against both international and civil wars. This is precisely what research tells us: democracy must be protected.

There can be no doubt that some of the most important reasons why the world has become so much better have to do with international cooperation, democracy, and the focus on peacebuilding and peacekeeping forces. It's about international trade, mobility, and open borders. All of these things are now under threat. It's not just that we don't realize that the world has become better, but it's also that because so many of us have convinced ourselves that the world has become worse, we are actually making it worse. We've created a self-fulfilling prophecy based on a view that is opposed to the empirical evidence. Although I have been convinced by the empirical

evidence that the world has become a better place, I actually feel pessimistic myself, because the improvements are not valued and recognized.

I sense a political climate with a potential to make the world dramatically worse. For example, we see democratic elections handing power to anti-democratic leaders. People use their right to vote to put politicians in power who may deprive them of their right to vote. Democracy has been essential for improving people's lives. Democracy is the best vaccine we have against both international and civil wars. This is precisely what research tells us: democracy must be protected. This is perhaps our most important message, but it is a message that we have not succeeded in communicating.

***And that is perhaps the most important conclusion of this interview. Thank you, Kristian.***

## Notes

1. The Norwegian Government (2016) 'A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001–2014', NOU 2016: 8. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/nou-2016-8/id2503028/>.
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7. For an entertaining (and quite appropriate) definition, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumping\\_after\\_Wirkola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumping_after_Wirkola).

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# Chapter 13

## On the Road to Peace: Wenche Iren Hauge



Interviewed by Åshild Kolås



Wenche Iren Hauge © Julie Lunde Lillesæter/PRIO

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In my experience, successful peace processes are marked by close interaction between actors who engage with the process for a long time, know the conflict and the parties well, and gain their trust. Trust is more important than anything else. The long-term actors might be from NGOs or from civil society. They certainly don't have to be people from political circles. They are vitally important in the first, most difficult phase, when the process is vulnerable, and trust is gradually built. This creates a foundation for the UN to play a role in later stages. The UN is a large apparatus, and when it enters a process, the dynamic is immediately changed. However, at some point it is often necessary to have UN agencies on board, not least when a peace agreement has been signed, in the demobilization phase, when there is a need for monitoring, and when it's time to disarm non-state actors and organize the surrender of weapons. At this stage, the role of UN agencies can be critical.

**Åshild Kolås:** *Before you started working as a researcher, which life experiences were the most decisive for your choice of studies, and what led you to your career path?*

**Wenche Iren Hauge:** Travelling abroad had a major impact on those decisions, but I should probably start out with a brief summary of my life prior to travelling, to put those travels into context. I was born in 1959 in Ålesund district hospital, since my family lived on the island of Valderøy, just outside of Ålesund on the west coast of Norway. I attended primary and secondary school at Valderøy, and went to high school at Fagerlia in Ålesund.

When I was about to finish high school, I was eager to travel. One day at the library in Ålesund, I saw a poster announcing something called The Travelling Folk High School (*Den reisende folkehøyskole*). The poster explained that students at this school would travel abroad to learn about the world, and study at the same time. This was in 1978, and the school had just started up in Norway. As soon as I saw the announcement, I wanted to attend. The school year was scheduled to start in August, after the summer holiday, and the journey was to begin in the autumn of 1978 and continue into the winter of 1979.

The admission process took place at The Experimental Highschool (*Forsøksgymnaset*) in Bærum, Oslo's western suburb. We had to go there in person and have a conversation with the staff. This was how we were admitted. The school itself was located at Hankø Fjordhotell, a hotel outside of Fredrikstad, on the eastern side of the Oslo fjord. We stayed at Seilerkroa (The Sailor's Inn) and the Yacht Club for three months before we started the trip. There were one hundred students all together. Fifty of them would go to Asia by bus, and the other fifty to Africa.

## A Bus Journey to Africa

I was among the fifty travelling to Africa. We bought five old buses and were divided into five groups. Each group would live in their own bus throughout the school year. We drove through Europe all the way to Sicily and took the ferry across the



Mediterranean to Tunis. From there, we continued into Algeria and through the Sahara Desert with our buses, well loaded with water and diesel and whatever else we needed.

There were one hundred students all together. Fifty of them would go to Asia by bus, and the other fifty to Africa

We also brought with us some clothes that we had collected at a flea market. We gave these clothes as gifts to the liberation movement Polisario, which was fighting for an independent Western Sahara. Algeria supported these freedom fighters, so Polisario had several offices in Algeria and refugee camps in Tindouf. The clothes and some protein biscuits we had baked ourselves were delivered to the Polisario office in Algiers. Then we travelled further southwards, where our buses parted ways. Some travelled all the way to Nigeria, and my bus was one of those. Others drove through Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), the Ivory Coast, and so on.

This was my first trip outside Europe. It made a strong impression on me to see the bottomless poverty in some countries, especially Niger, where children came forward to the bus, many with the eye disease Trachoma. In some areas there was very little food available. At the same time, we also saw the contrasts. In Nigeria, for instance, rich elites lived in luxury and others in extreme poverty. Multinational companies had invested in the Nigerian oil industry, and they had their own huge complexes with golf courses, swimming pools and other luxuries. This was an eye-opener for me. In addition to travelling, we read up on the countries we visited. The reading list included books about colonial history and imperialism. I became aware of the differences between the rich world in the North and the poor world in the South, and how these two worlds were connected, historically and today.

In Nigeria, rich elites lived in luxury and others in extreme poverty. Multinational companies had invested in the Nigerian oil industry, and they had their own huge complexes with golf courses, swimming pools and other luxuries. This was an eye-opener for me.

When we returned to Algiers, one student was allowed to travel to the Polisario refugee camp in Tindouf together with one of the teachers from our school. I was the lucky one since I knew a little French. Seeing the refugee camp also made a strong impression. I saw how the refugees lived in tents, out in the desert, under miserable conditions. And let's not forget that this conflict is still ongoing today. Polisario is still there, demanding an independent Western Sahara.

## Travelling by Train to Latin America

When I returned to Norway, I lived in Oslo and worked for a year as a nursing assistant at Ullevål hospital. This was a way to save money for my next trip, which was to Latin America. I started by flying to the United States with my family. We drove across the United States from New York to San Diego, California. From there, I travelled by train through Mexico, and later to Central America. This was in 1980, and both Guatemala and El Salvador were in the midst of civil war. It was a year after the Sandinista revolution took place in Nicaragua. I travelled for a full nine months, so I had plenty of time to see the situation in these countries with my own eyes.

Guatemala was the country that left me with the strongest impressions. The Guatemalan civil war had started twenty years earlier, in 1960, but in 1980, the conflict was escalating. I learned later that Mayan Indians and poor Ladino farmers were massacred in 440 documented incidents of violence carried out by the Guatemalan army. Most of these massacres took place in northwestern Guatemala and in the county of Quiché, where the hometown of Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú is located.

Guatemala was the country that left me with the strongest impressions. [...] We had to get off the bus every time the military stopped us to search the passengers. The soldiers often took local people away from the bus, and we could only guess at what happened to them.

The main guerrilla group in Guatemala was Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), which fought against the military dictatorship. URNG had a programme of land reform, economic equality, and improving the living conditions for the Maya population. I travelled around the country in local buses, and experienced daily life firsthand. We had to get off the bus every time the military stopped us to search the passengers. The soldiers often took local people away from the bus, and we could only guess at what happened to them. Large numbers of people disappeared and were tortured at the time.

The same was the case in El Salvador, where a full-blown civil war was going on. I travelled through El Salvador to Nicaragua, which was a great contrast. Young Sandinista leaders greeted people at the border, many of them women. They stood at the border crossing to welcome everyone into Nicaragua. They also wanted to inform us about the literacy campaign they had launched.

During this trip, I learned more about internal conflicts and became interested in understanding their causes. I had seen the poverty, lack of democracy and persecution that led people to join the guerrillas. At the same time, I knew that the United States supported several of the military regimes in Central America. I also reflected on the differences and similarities between these conflicts and the experiences I had from Africa, where I had learned a lot about unfair international trade relations and the consequences of multinational foreign investments. I became interested in the

internal dynamics of civil wars, and also in how international actors influence these wars. When I returned to Norway, I started studying political science. If conflict studies or international politics had existed at the University of Oslo at the time, I would probably have chosen one of those disciplines. But it was difficult to find a better fit for my interests, so I ended up studying political science.

## Unsatisfying Theories

*What was it like to return to Norway after so many impressions during your travels, and attend much more theoretically oriented university courses?*

It was not very satisfying, to put it mildly. When I started political science, the curriculum contained a lot of organizational theory and democracy theory with hardly any reference to Third World countries. The course drew on a Western academic understanding of how democracy works or should work. Later on, I had the opportunity to take a course in international economics, called 'International Economic Politics'. It made a better fit for my interests, because there was more focus on systemic inequality and structures in world trade that put Third World countries at a disadvantage. But to begin with, there was an enormous gap between what I was given to read and what I had seen with my own eyes. I had a hard time trying to rediscover the reality I had experienced on my travels.

There was an enormous gap between what I was given to read and what I had seen with my own eyes

## A Well-Intentioned but Failed Peace Treaty

*How did you start your career at PRIO?*

That happened when I was writing my master's thesis. I decided to write a thesis on Esquipulas II, a Central American peace treaty from 1987. Esquipulas is the name of the Guatemalan city where the treaty was signed. The treaty involved all the five countries of Central America: El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica. It was a peace agreement that was meant to end the internal conflicts, and also bring peace between the five states. It was intended to start dialogues inside these countries and stop the practice of supporting guerrillas in neighbouring countries, such as the Contras in Nicaragua. The Esquipulas II agreement was signed in 1987, but in 1989 there was no peace in Central America at all. The agreement was not a success.

I thought this was a great topic to focus on, because it would allow me to research the internal conditions in each country, as well as the relationship between the countries, and even the role of external actors such as the United States. I wanted to return to Central America to gather material for my thesis, and was able to stay for a few months at Consejo Superior de Universidades Centroamericanas (CSUCA), the Central American University (CSU) in San José, Costa Rica. I stayed there while continuing to work on my thesis.

The title of my thesis was ‘Obstacles to the Fulfilment of the Central American Peace Plan’. I had Kjell Skjelsbæk as my main supervisor. Kjell Skjelsbæk was a prominent former director of PRIO who, after holding a position at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Oslo, had joined the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), where he also served for three years as director. When I returned from Costa Rica to Norway to complete my thesis, Kjell Skjelsbæk was seriously ill with cancer. He made an incredible effort to offer me the best supervision he could. It was absolutely amazing, and I was extremely grateful. I had applied for a grant at PRIO, and stayed there while writing my thesis. Hans Petter Buvollen at PRIO was my second supervisor. Sverre Lodgaard was the director of PRIO at that time. This was my first encounter with PRIO.

## The North/South Coalition

After finishing my studies, I looked for work. The North/South Coalition (Idégruppen om Nord/Sør) announced a vacant position as Head of Information. I applied and was offered the position. The North/South Coalition was a debate forum for politicians, academics, NGO staff and the media, with a focus on North/South issues such as trade policy, debt crisis issues and development aid policies. I was the only employee of the North/South Coalition.

The board of the North/South Coalition included Bernt Bull from the Labour Party and Odd Jostein Sæter from the Christian People’s Party, both members of the Norwegian Parliament (*Storting*) at the time; Kalle Moene and Grete Brochman, who both taught at the University of Oslo; Jens Andvig, who was a researcher at NUPI; and Elin Enge from the Forum for Development and the Environment, an NGO. In short, I was working for a very resourceful group of people. This gave me an excellent opportunity to work on North/South issues.

It was an important learning experience for me. While I was the only employee, the North/South Coalition had a coordinator, on rotation. When I started my job, Øystein Tvetter from Diakonhjemmet International Centre (DIS) was the coordinator. He was a highly skilled coordinator who worked hard to put key issues related to relations between the Global North and South on the policymaking agenda and raise public debate and awareness on north–south issues. I was inspired by his enthusiasm and fearlessness. Diakonhjemmet International Centre was the host institution for the North/South Coalition when I started the job. However, this only lasted a few years, as we only spent some years at each institution that hosted the Coalition.

After a short while at the Centre, it was time to move. This happened to be just at the time when Dan Smith became the new director of PRIO. Bernt Bull invited Dan to join the board of the North/South Coalition on behalf of PRIO, and Dan agreed. Soon after, Øystein Tveter and Bernt Bull also asked Dan to arrange for PRIO to host the Coalition for the next two-year period. Dan agreed to this as well. The North/South Coalition moved to PRIO, and I was based at PRIO as the Coalition's Head of Information. This was how I came to PRIO (the second time).

## **Working with Dan Smith**

I had a very good collaboration with Dan (see Chap. 11). He held a great interest in all aspects of international relations and had no issue with incorporating North/South relations and related political and economic challenges into his conflict and peace orientation. I learned a lot from him. When it was time for the North/South Coalition to move again, there was a vacancy as a junior researcher at PRIO. I had enjoyed my time at PRIO and my interactions with its research community, so I decided to apply for the job. It was in a project called 'Dynamics of Conflict Escalation'. I applied and was offered the position.

The objective of the project was to test conflict theories with quantitative data. So, I had to work quantitatively, which I was less used to. I worked closely with Tanja Ellingsen [at PRIO until 2012] on this project. As it began to draw to a close, Dan asked me whether I had considered applying for a doctorate. I started to think about his suggestion and concluded that it might be the way to go if I wanted to continue a research career and delve into the topics that interested me. I applied to the Research Council of Norway (RCN) for a PhD grant and was successful, and so the PhD project was funded from the RCN's Poverty and Peace programme.

In addition, Dan submitted an application on my behalf to the Ford Foundation, and I got additional funding for the doctoral project, which had the title 'Causes and Dynamics of Conflict Escalation: The Role of Environmental Change and Economic Development, A Comparative Study of Bangladesh, Guatemala, Haiti, Madagascar, Senegal and Tunisia'. This was a huge comparative project where I had selected the cases on the basis of the quantitative study I was about to complete.

For the comparison, and as I was looking for the importance of lacking economic development as a potential cause of conflict, I selected countries with different levels of economic development. I chose two conflict countries that were low-income and two that were lower middle-income, and in addition two peaceful countries of which one was a low-income and one a lower middle-income. When I started the project, these two latter countries remained peaceful, although the situation changed somewhat later, unfortunately.

## Explaining Peace Through Systematic Comparison

### *What were your conclusions on the peaceful countries?*

The cases were systematically selected. The two peaceful countries were Tunisia and Madagascar. Madagascar was then a low-income country and Tunisia a lower middle-income country. The conflict countries Haiti and Bangladesh were low-income countries, while Guatemala and Senegal were lower middle-income countries. I chose countries with slightly different levels of economic development. In that sense, the quantitative background was useful for the selection process. However, it became clear once I had started on the case studies that qualitative methods, especially fieldwork with interviews, would be my main methodology.

The head of the National Cultural Institute in Antananarivo [...] explained: ‘There is a word in our language called *fhavanana*. It means solidarity. [...] If you live in the same area as me, I have a problem hurting you, because we have walked the same road, been drinking the same water.’

I travelled to all the six countries and carried out fieldwork. In the conflict countries, I interviewed actors on both sides of the conflict: from the government side and from the non-state armed groups. In the peaceful countries, I interviewed important actors who had information about political factors and cultural features that might have helped keep the country peaceful.

This was an interesting exercise, especially in Madagascar. I found that socio-economic, ethnic and religious divides often created a fertile ground for conflict, especially where there was a deep cleavage between the economic elites and poor marginalized groups, and when the economic cleavages coincided with the ethnic and/or religious divides and created the deep conflict fault lines. In Madagascar, these dividing lines were not so clear, and identities were partly intersecting.

In addition, I discovered cultural features that contributed to peace, such as a concept known as *fhavanana*. The head of the National Cultural Institute in Antananarivo, Juliette Ratsimandrava, explained it to me as follows: ‘There is a word in our language called *fhavanana*. It means solidarity. This idea is transformed into the life of the neighbourhoods. People who live in the same block as you develop some sort of solidarity with you. If you live in the same area as me, I have a problem hurting you, because we have walked the same road, been drinking the same water.’

The interesting thing about this concept was that it was known and respected throughout Madagascar, also in the armed forces. So, through several major political crises in Madagascar, including incidents in the 1970s and 1980s, both the protesters and the police had shown restraint and remained non-violent. The concept of *fhavanana* was often referred to by those who explained this situation.

## Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

*You have used both quantitative and qualitative methods in your research. How would you describe your own experience with different methods, and how do you see the significance of methodology for the results of peace research?*

I think combining quantitative and qualitative methods can be very good. For my doctoral project, for instance, it was important for the comparative aspect of the study to select the countries systematically. I did this on the basis of quantitative surveys I had conducted in the previous project with Dan Smith. When I carried out the case studies, however, I preferred qualitative methods, as I needed to reach a deeper understanding of the conflict and its context. As a general rule, I think there is far too little collaboration between quantitatively and qualitatively oriented researchers.

As a general rule, I think there is far too little collaboration between quantitatively and qualitatively oriented researchers

Another issue is the lack of awareness about limitations in one's own method, on both sides of the aisle. With regard to how I had selected my case countries, it was reassuring to know that I had done this systematically. This gave me a good basis for the qualitative work, lending strength to the findings and the reasoning around the conclusions as well. The qualitative methodology also gave me a lot of important material based on interviews and key documents that were useful. And with the quantitative data as a foundation, I was on solid ground when comparing the countries based on their level of economic development. This was very useful. I don't think there needs to be any contention between the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. It would be good to have more dialogue and reach a better understanding of the limitations of both.

## The Importance of Fieldwork

*You have a good deal of fieldwork experience. How has that impacted your research?*

Yes, you are right that I have done a lot of fieldwork. In addition to the fieldwork already mentioned, I have had projects with fieldwork in Colombia, Nepal and Sri Lanka. I have also carried out several projects focusing on local models of peace-building in Haiti. In the doctoral study, it was incredibly useful to bring out the comparative perspective. I saw, for example, that the land issue—the struggle for access to land and natural resources—was extremely important as a cause of conflict, especially in the smaller conflicts. I found this consistently and clearly. However, I

think this is a conclusion that it would have been difficult to reach without having done fieldwork.

Since then, I have become very interested in peace processes, and in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes, particularly in the gender perspective of these. The interest in peace processes started while I was working with Dan Smith, and I was asked to carry out an evaluation of Norway's role in the peace process in Guatemala. This brought me very close to the Norwegian actors who were involved there, for example State Secretary Jan Egeland, a former PRIOite who was also the head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Gunnar Stålsett, who was there as a representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and Petter Skauen from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). The evaluation work not only gave me a close-up view of a peace process, it also led me to think more about how peace is achieved.

Recently, I have focused more on the post-conflict phase, and on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes in particular. There are several important issues that I am interested in, particularly the gender perspective and the role of minors in conflict. This focus has developed mainly as a result of questions that have come up during fieldwork.

The data I have collected and other findings during fieldwork have given rise to several new research projects on these topics. One example is the WOMENsPEACE project, where we studied women's participation in conflict and peace processes in Nepal and Myanmar. During interviews with ex-combatants in Nepal in 2016, I realized that several of them had joined the Maoist Army as minors, and then I also became interested in doing more research on what had happened to these minors after the DDR process, and to investigate this through a gender perspective. We must not forget that the minors are also females and males.

## **The Utility of the UN in Its Various Roles**

*You have attended several major multilateral conferences, and you have also studied the UN contribution to peace processes. What are your thoughts on the conferences you have participated in, as well as the role of the UN in peace processes? What are the opportunities and what are the challenges?*

The first UN conferences I attended were as a representative of the North/South Coalition. I attended the UN conference for Least Developed Countries in Paris in 1990, the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992, and the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. These conferences were highly relevant to North/South issues, which is why I took part in them. I learned a lot about rows between countries at such conferences, since every country has its fads or pet objectives that it wants to gain acceptance for. It takes an enormous effort to reach an agreement on a text, and the process can be tedious. The result is often the least common denominator. Still, these conferences are important. I personally had



a mixed experience though. In part, it was nice to see that joint efforts were made, and the countries were able to agree on a text. On the other hand, the text would inevitably be watered down along the way, because of the difficulty of reaching an agreement when everyone held on to their pet objectives.

I think many peace processes could benefit from the UN staying longer into the post-conflict period, when the implementation process begins. This is the most vulnerable phase of a peace process

Since then, I have seen more of the UN in other roles and contexts. I found that the UN played an important role as a mediator in the last stages of the peace process in Guatemala, from 1994 to 1996. In that case, Norwegian actors were engaged in the early phase of the peace process. However, it came to a point in 1994 when the process reached a stalemate and it became important to have a mediator with more leverage, and so the UN was brought in. This was when Jean Arnault was appointed as a mediator in the peace process. He was a very skilled person who, together with the others involved, not least the conflicting parties themselves, managed to bring about a final peace agreement in 1996.

I have found that successful peace processes are marked by close interaction between various actors who have been involved for a long time, who know the conflict and the parties well, and who have gained their trust. Trust is more important than anything else. The long-term actors might also be from NGOs, or civil society. They certainly don't have to be people from political circles. They are vitally important in the first, most difficult phase, when the process is vulnerable, and trust is gradually built. This creates a foundation for the UN to play a role in later stages.

I would say that a successful peace process is characterized by a good division of roles and wise interactions between the various actors involved in the facilitation and mediation. I have less faith in peace processes where there is a lot of prestige involved, and where people from the UN are drawn in without any special relationship with the parties, or without the trust that is needed.

The UN is a large apparatus, and when it enters a process, the dynamics are immediately changed. However, at some point, this is often necessary, not least when a peace agreement has been signed, and in the demobilization phase, when there is a need for security and monitoring, and when it's time to disarm non-state actors and organize the surrender of weapons. At this stage, the role of UN agencies can be critical.

I would say that a successful peace process is characterized by a good division of roles and wise interactions between the various actors involved in the facilitation and mediation. I have less faith in peace processes where there is a lot of prestige involved,

and where people from the UN are drawn in without any special relationship with the parties, or without the trust that is needed. A good interaction between different actors is important.

In Colombia, Norway played an important role in the peace process. The UN was involved in a major way only at a late stage. UN agencies were strongly involved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. In general, I think many peace processes could benefit from the UN staying longer into the post-conflict period, when the implementation process begins. This is the most vulnerable phase of a peace process, the point when armed groups have given up their only leverage for the implementation of their demands: the capacity to use their weapons. At this point, it is important that an independent party is present to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement and ensure compliance by all the parties involved, including the government authorities and the security forces. Not least for the sake of civil society, the UN is very important at the crucial final stages of a peace process.

*Thank you for sharing your important insights, Wenche.*

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## Chapter 14

# PRIO's State Feminist: Helga Hernes



Interviewed by Kristian Berg Harpviken



*Helga Hernes coined the term ‘state feminism’ in the mid-1980s. At the time, suggesting that the state could be women friendly and an ally in the struggle for women’s rights was controversial. A decade and a half later, however, the term had become widely used. ‘State feminist’ is indeed the best description one can find for Helga Hernes. She has used her academic as well as her political positions as platforms for advancing gender equality and women’s rights at a national level. In 2006, she arrived at PRIO, bringing her scholarly, activist and political experience*

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to inform research associated with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>1</sup>

*Helga Hernes was born in Western Prussia (now part of Poland) in 1938. She experienced war and its consequences as a child, grappling with her country's history as she grew up, and becoming deeply disappointed with how slowly German society came to a recognition of responsibility. In her late teens, inspired by her American grandmother, and by encounters with a benign American occupying force in Germany, she left for the United States. There, she pursued her education at top-ranking institutions, while engaging in both the anti-Vietnam war protests and the struggle for civil rights.*

*In Norway, which she made her base in 1970, Helga Hernes has left a mark in many societal domains<sup>2</sup>: as an activist against nuclear arms and for gender equality; as an academic pioneering gender research and heading several national institutions; as a politician serving as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time that the Cold War came to an end; and as a civil servant, where she drew on her personal network and institutional knowledge. She has always been modest about her own achievements, and this interview offers a rare opportunity to gain closer insights into what she stands for, and what her many contributions have been. A foreigner who made Norway her home, Helga Hernes could see clearly what to most Norwegians seemed entirely natural about their society. Throughout, she has shown a consistent commitment to academic quality in pursuit of a just and peaceful world.*

**Kristian Berg Harpviken:** *Helga, you are generally referred to as a 'state feminist', and you were actually the person who coined the phrase 'state feminism', isn't that right?*

**Helga Hernes:** Well yes, the process of coming up with the term state feminism took me about 10 seconds. I'd written a book as part of a series in English, and the editor at the publishers phoned me and said he needed a title for my book by the next day. I simply said: 'It must have something to do with power... I'd suggest *Women and Power: Essays in State Feminism*.' It took 10 seconds.

*We will talk a great deal about your political efforts in support of gender equality, but let's start with your commitment to peace. It is correct that this started with the campaign against nuclear weapons?*

## The Fight Against Nuclear Arms

I woke up last night and looked through my old files. In there I found a newspaper cutting with a photograph of myself. It's a good thing to be self-centred, you know. To collect things.

I was young, and suddenly I was in the papers. I'd landed at Flesland Airport just outside Bergen, and two colonels and a general were standing there. They all stood to attention. But it wasn't for me, it was for another general.

***So the officers weren't there to welcome the peace activist?***

No, certainly not. But I was very happy to be able to get involved in campaigning for peace along with Ingrid Eide, Mari Holmboe Ruge, Eva Nordland, Berit Ås and many others. There were really a lot of us.

***You were all involved in Women for Peace?***

Yes, the organization was called Women for Peace. It was founded in the late 1970s. The reason we became important, and that I became a real activist, was the NATO 'dual-track' decision on 12 December 1979 to deploy medium-range and cruise missiles in Europe, unless the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its SS-20 missiles. We weren't completely successful. But even so, the position adopted by Norway in Washington was significantly moderated.

A key issue, especially for me, was to prevent the two Germanys attacking each other with nuclear missiles if it came to war. A nuclear war on European soil, particularly between two countries that actually used to be one, would have been a catastrophe. I think that's why I became so very actively involved. Because it was deadly serious. Thorvald Stoltenberg [Minister of Defence 1979–81] and Johan Jørgen Holst [State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1979–81], and unfortunately also Gro Harlem Brundtland [the deputy leader of the Labour Party, who became Prime Minister in 1981, the first woman in the post], were 'all for it'. And the American pressure was enormous.

***Yes, it's clear that it was. What work did the organization do?***

I gave countless lectures. I'd imagine that there was a majority in the Norwegian population against the dual-track decision. Because it brought people so close to the reality of what nuclear war would mean. So close. Even if Norway were not involved itself, because of course you had a resolution on nuclear weapons [No nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil] and so on, it would still have been completely dreadful. There would have been a world war.

***And then you were appointed as a member of the government's Disarmament Commission?<sup>3</sup> So that meant that you were combining being a civil society activist with a position within the political elite?***

Absolutely. But I wasn't the only one. I remember that someone came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and tried to object to us. I don't know if you know who Helge Sivertsen was? Helge Sivertsen [Oslo's Director of Education 1971–81 and a former Minister of Education] was a fantastic pedagogue and teacher, and he was also a pacifist and Labour Party member. He took a very principled position on this point. He didn't let himself be picked on. I must say that I think it was almost comical that we, as a government-appointed Disarmament Commission, should get such a burning hot issue on the table. Undoubtedly that was something no one had anticipated. But I didn't have a bad conscience about it. What was the name of the psychologist? Yes, she was Wenche Håland from the University of Bergen. She was a very important voice for peace, and saw this as a very important appointment. There were only three

or four of us. We were a minority on the Commission, and Helge Sivertsen abstained from voting, although I think he would also have had some qualms. But of course, both the Minister of Defence and others tried to convince us that this wasn't our business. That it didn't come within our mandate.

***But did the Disarmament Commission itself have major influence?***

No.

***Even so, there must have been a certain amount of status attached to just sitting on the Disarmament Commission.***

Of course! It gave us a platform. When I travelled around with Women for Peace, I was travelling as a Woman for Peace. I wasn't travelling as a member of the Commission. But that was a time when there was a lot of status attached to being a woman and being politically active. And it was really fantastic when we arrived in different places. I don't know whether you've been to Western Norway with all those tiny islands, but it was very, very exciting how engaged the people were. They arranged fantastic dinners. It was really much more exciting than arguing with the AKP girls [activists linked to the Maoist Workers' Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) or AKP-ml]. Because they wanted to make the issue theirs, of course, but that wasn't tolerated by Eva Nordland or Mari, or in particular by Ingrid. There were others involved too, such as the educator Birgit Brock-Utne. This women's struggle was at least as important as the others we were engaged in.

Of course there were some of us, such as Birgit Brock-Utne, who emphasized female qualities, but I never did so. I was in favour of equality and I said that women should be valued the same as men. That was my only demand. Nothing else. I wouldn't have anything to do with women being soft, fine, lovely creatures. I wouldn't have anything to do with that. And I also wanted men to share the work of looking after children. That was a very primitive and simple demand, seen in today's context. But it wasn't particularly well received.

[T]here were some [...] who emphasized female qualities, but I never did so. I was in favour of equality and I said that women should be valued the same as men. That was my only demand. Nothing else. I wouldn't have anything to do with women being soft, fine, lovely creatures.

***Was it very controversial to believe that women were not necessarily more peaceful by nature than men?***

Yes, they didn't like to be told that. That's what I said. I said it all the time, wherever I found myself: 'Women are not better people than men.' The fact that we were fighting was just because we wanted to have equal rights with men, it didn't have anything to do with us having superior natures. But there are still feminists who

believe that women are better people than men, more peaceful and so forth. That's not true. Well, I don't think it's true. Let me put it like that.

***No doubt we'll never be completely rid of this disagreement. But this is very interesting. So in the 1970s, you worked as a peace activist with people whom you would later work closely with—or against—in the political sector? For example, you later became State Secretary for Thorvald Stoltenberg?***

Yes, and I was good friends with Johan Jørgen and his wife. But when Thorvald, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, invited me to join his team in 1988, I didn't really think so much about the period when I had encountered him in my capacity as a disarmament activist. Obviously, that had to do with his personality. He never mentioned it. The only agreement I had with Thorvald about myself and my political views was: 'Thorvald, I'm not a pacifist, and I'll never be a pacifist, because I grew up in Hitler's Germany. I can't be a pacifist. But I'm a nuclear pacifist. Is that good enough?' He said yes. That was the only agreement we ever had about my political views.

***That's interesting. Subsequently you've become better known for women's research and for your support of women's rights. Would you say that these are equally important parts of your life?***

That was the case at that time. But the peace movement, it kind of comes in waves. I don't feel that there's a peace movement now. I think the women's movement was fundamentally more democratic. I'm a liberal, I'm a democrat, I want to have equal rights. I don't think I'm being so unrealistic in my demands. I just think that I'm being rational. But of course that's how I see myself. Isn't it?

## **Pioneering Gender Quotas**

I've always felt that it's important in a democracy for everyone to be equal. And then we also obtained statistics through women's research. If you look at the first book I wrote, *Staten—kvinner ingen adgang?* [*The State—No Admission for Women?*], the statistics made it completely clear. Other feminist researchers found the same thing. And of course there were researchers at Statistics Norway who gave us excellent information about unfair pay differentials between women and men.

And I was also very concerned about teaching positions at universities. I was head of the Gender Equality Committee at the University of Bergen in 1974. I sat on the Committee with the historian Ida Blom and the biochemist Karen Helle, and there was also a very supportive chemistry professor, whose name I can't now remember.

1975 was the UN's International Women's Year, and at that time the issue of women's equality was on the top of the agenda. The University of Bergen, along with its Rector, was very proud of being the first university to have a Gender Equality Committee. And they asked somebody on a university fellowship. All the others were permanent employees. Not me.

And I became the chair. We came up with gender quotas. That was really the most important thing.

***Was it the Committee that launched the term ‘gender quotas’?***

Yes. I was personally responsible for coining the phrase. We distinguished between moderate gender quotas and radical gender quotas. The moderate version meant that if two applicants had the same qualifications, then the person appointed would be from the under-represented gender. The radical version was that if there was a woman who was qualified, then she would get the job. I didn’t support radical gender quotas.

***But did the Committee also say something about the conditions under which one could contemplate applying moderate gender quotas, and the conditions under which one could legitimately apply radical quotas?***

I’m fairly conventional when it comes to academia. I think that the quality criteria are the most important. That has to do with my respect for a university as an institution. But take politics, for example, that’s somewhere I think radical gender quotas are very useful. There were endless discussions about women’s qualifications for political positions. I said that this is a democracy, so this discussion is totally insignificant, it won’t take more than two to three months to get into it. I mean, quite seriously, there were all these men who said that women weren’t qualified. Accordingly, it was important. Because when using a ‘moderate’ quota, the relevance of the qualification was completely central. With ‘radical’ quotas, it was mostly about what gender you were.

I was personally responsible for coining the phrase [‘gender quotas’]. We distinguished between moderate gender quotas and radical gender quotas.

***This has been very important. I know that you also conceptualized the different justifications for women’s participation as the interests justification, the resources justification, and the social justice justification. Was this something you did in this context, or was this something that came later?***

No, it was no doubt because I noticed that we had to supply justifications, even when I thought they weren’t needed. But my opinion is still the same. Today, I think gender equality is generally accepted. But that wasn’t the case then. And of course it also made the situation difficult for women who were not considered qualified. Accordingly, it was important to be strong and to stick to one’s principles. Because at universities the scepticism was deeply entrenched, particularly at the University of Oslo and in the social sciences.

***At your 80th birthday celebrations, Hege Skjeie, the first woman to be appointed a professor of political science at the University of Oslo, said to you that she thought Norway was completely unique in its use of gender quotas. That the idea hasn’t become so widespread as perhaps we believe.***



No, it hasn't. Quite simply, it's still seen as undemocratic. Subsequently, both she and Cathrine Holst [a professor of sociology at the University of Oslo] did much more work on quotas than I ever did. I used the idea most in the first things I wrote, and in politics. But they have written about it.

***Do you think gender quotas are an important reason why we have come as far as we have in Norway, for example, in relation to political representation?***

Absolutely. But today, women's political representation is totally accepted. It didn't take more than five years, so it wasn't a long and difficult battle. Perhaps it was in some municipalities, if someone had sat there for 30 years and thought it was his right and so on. But I'm thinking of the country as a whole.

***But of course there's a contrast here. Even today we have only limited representation of women at senior levels in business, for example, as you have also pointed out.***

Yes. But things are really starting to change now. There's a huge amount of money in business. Money is an important motivation. Particularly in the lives of men, who could lose these incomes if they got female competition. I'm not saying that women aren't interested in having money. But for them, it would just be a very pleasant by-product. For men, who to a large extent are the people who have economic control, it would be a significant loss for them to have to share it. And of course, it's still the case that women in very senior positions in business get a lot of attention in the press, precisely because they are still the exception.

***It can't have been obvious that this Gender Equality Committee at the University of Bergen would turn out to be so significant?***

I think it had something to do with the notion that now the time had come. It has to do with the time you are living in and whether society is receptive to change or not.

***But someone also has to be the pioneer. It's clear that you can't be a pioneer if nothing exists to facilitate your activities.***

That's true. But I was extremely lucky, especially with these men. And Karen Helle was perhaps the most critical voice, because she was professor of biomedicine, her husband, Knut Helle, was professor of history, and she thought it was a bit degrading for women to be appointed because of gender quotas.

But I still believe that feminist research is more important than gender quotas. Absolutely. Gender quotas are just a mechanism.

## Cooperation and Conflict in the Women's Movement

***At the start of the 1980s, you proved yourself as a major research entrepreneur by building up a new research project and editing a series of books about women's living conditions and lives.***

Absolutely. In fact, it attracted a lot of attention. One group that was very important for us were women journalists. They could be found at all the newspapers. It was the women journalists who brought things to the public's attention. In fact, I've often emphasized that point.

***Was this alliance between civil society and the media of central importance?***

Yes. In a way it was also relevant to their own lives. Reidun Kvaale was very important. She was at *Aftenposten* of course. But there were others as well. We always held launch events for books in the series, and they were always very well attended. Not by researchers, but by women from civil society.

Women's organizations attended all the book launches. At that time, they had many more members than they do now. There was an organization called the Housewives' Association, but of course they have a new name now and the number of members is now 10% of what it was. And in fact, I don't know how much political influence the Norwegian National Women's Council [Norske Kvinners Nasjonalråd (NKN)], which at that time had 800,000 members, has today. Now there are so many women in workplaces that they can organize in their own workplace. That's a big difference. It also means that I think that most of the norms I talked about before in relation to universities, they are now accepted by women academics. That quality means something, and so forth. I believe that everything we think is important for good research is accepted by both women and men. That wasn't necessarily the case in the beginning. In the beginning, there were some non-researchers who thought that qualifications were something that men had invented.

***So this was a matter for genuine debate?***

Yes, it certainly was. I resigned from the Women's Front [Kvinnefronten] very quickly. I was actually a 'founding member' of the Women's Front in Norway, along with other members of my women's group. I was the first to resign, which I did in 1974. The reason was that the major topic at that time was the six-hour working day. The Women's Front joined with the Socialist Left Party (SV) to oppose a six-hour working day for parents with young children.

***For what reason?***

That it would discriminate. I asked: 'What is wrong with limiting it?' They wanted to have it for the whole population. I said: 'The whole population? We can't afford that. You are a taxpayer too. You wouldn't want your taxes to fund the travels of a 60-year-old man.' But the opposition was very strong, both within the Women's Front and also in other organizations. I think it was the Socialist Left Party (SV)—or the Socialist People's Party, as it was known until 1973—that was against it. They said it would lead to discrimination in the labour market against parents with young children. They would not get jobs if it was known that their working days would be only six hours long.

In that respect, Margit Glom, for example, was very important. She was at the Union of Commerce and Office Employees (HK). She got the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) on her side. Six-hour days should be for everyone.

They shouldn't be just for parents of young children. But I thought the thing that was realistic and the most necessary was in fact to have it for parents of young children, because those would be important years for their integration into the labour market. I thought it was quite simply irrational to believe that it had to apply to everyone. They called their position principled, but I said it was unrealistic.

***But that wasn't the only reason you resigned, was it?***

No. It was the case that when we founded the Women's Front, it was mostly made up of women on the political left. I remember that I was approached by some right-wing women who asked if they could be involved. I was stupid enough to say: 'I think perhaps you wouldn't feel at home.' That was unkind. It was just stupidity on my part. I remember there was an elderly woman who wanted to be involved, but I said: 'I think perhaps you won't feel comfortable.' So I wasn't without blame. But really it was just stupidity.

***So was this one of the reasons you resigned from the Women's Front?***

Yes, it was really because it was an incredibly authoritarian movement. I'll just mention one example: that I never got to speak before 1.30 a.m. Or at least extremely late. Some of them, some who are still at the university, have apologized and said that they behaved very badly. They knew that they were behaving badly. But the cause was the most important thing for them. So I travelled to the United States. I was the only one to do so in my women's group. There were seven of us who resigned, giving our reasons in a letter to the Socialist Left Party and the Women's Front. I was a member of the Socialist Left Party at that time. And then while I was in the United States, my women's group wrote a white paper about the authoritarian tendencies in the Women's Front. That was excellent.

***It was mainly to do with the fact that there was a heavy presence from the Workers' Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)?***

Yes, it was because of the Marxist-Leninists. We called them 'Pål's hens', remember? [Pål Steigan was one of the main leaders of the Workers' Communist Party.]<sup>4</sup> Even today I think there's some kind of personality trait in people who can be so authoritarian. There's something or other that I find very unappealing. But the white paper turned out to be excellent.

## **The Women's Group: Just like Family**

***We must talk about this women's group that you're part of. It's both a political and professional collective that you've been involved with almost all your life.***

Yes, and it's also an emotional thing. They are like my sisters.

***I've heard that you even have a 'family portrait' of them at home.***

Yes, that's right.

***How did that come about?***

It was 1975, International Women's Year, and we gathered in southern Norway. Elisabeth Aasen had a house there, and I came over from the United States. So we celebrated and decided that we should take a photograph. We would all be dressed in white. Long white dresses. And in fact we did the same thing again 10 years later, but then we just wore casual clothes or something a little smarter. That picture isn't anything special.

***So the group was already established in 1970?***

Yes, the group existed then. We were all founding members of the Women's Front. We were Elisabeth Aasen, Jorunn Hareide, Kari Wærness, Kristin Tornes, Sidsel Aamodt Sveen, Kerstin Nordenstam, who is now dead, and then me. In fact, there were also two others, but they left us pretty quickly, because we were too radical for them. All the others were academics and very progressive.

***And you've become an honorary professor in several places?***

Yes, but that's a different story. I applied for a teaching job at the University of Oslo, which I didn't get. A member of the appointments committee told me the reason. It wasn't good. It had nothing to do with my qualifications. It was because my competitor wanted to buy a house, and needed a permanent job in order to get a mortgage.

***So the idea was that a man's role as provider for his family took priority over women's right to earn a living?***

Absolutely. But I've always had a very soft spot for the man who got the job. He came into my office the next morning and said: 'I think I'm really the only person who really understands how you're feeling. I have a bit of a hunch about how things went. But I just wanted to say that you have my support.' He was very, very decent. But one of my sayings that I've repeated many times is: 'Thanks to the University of Oslo, I've had a very interesting life.'

***You've certainly had an interesting life, but who should take the credit for it is something that can be discussed. It is very generous of you to be grateful for precisely that decision.***

Yes, but take Elisabeth Aasen, for example. She has written fantastic books about women through the ages, but she has never been given a university fellowship. They thought she was too popular. Quite unbelievable. But she is very well recognized now.

***What has this women's collective meant for you?***

For me, it has been absolutely my most important circle. There is no other group that has been more important for me. It has been incredibly important. For me, because I'd come from abroad, I learned a lot about Norway through the group. It has been

a very strong source of support and friendship throughout my whole life. Some of us got divorced, including me, and then being part of a group like this really meant a lot.

***So, it has been both a family and professional collective, and a political sounding board.***

Politically, it no longer means so much. No doubt they didn't think my joining the Labour Party was anything to celebrate.

***No, it wasn't a Labour Party group was it?***

Not at all. But also it wasn't so very partisan politically. There was only one person who was furious. She thought it was treachery. I didn't think so.

## **The Path to 'State Feminism'**

***But back to the book series. We've talked a little bit about it. It was something you spent a lot of time on throughout the 1980s and it was important.***

When I stood down from the Council for Social Science Research at the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF)—one of the forerunners of the Research Council of Norway—because my term had expired, I was appointed Director of Research at what became the Secretariat for Women's Research. Hege Skjeie, who had come from the Gender Equality Commission, was head of the Secretariat.<sup>5</sup> And then I was there as Director of Research. So it was me who organized all these meetings we had. The meetings were in groups and themed around certain topics. Many of these books aren't monographs, but anthologies. In other words, they emerged from the seminars we held, sometimes in mountain hotels, or occasionally in private homes.

It was Erik Rudeng [historian, publisher, museum director and cultural politician, who in his time worked with Johan Galtung in the field of macro-history] who came up with the idea of a series of books to be published by Scandinavian University Press [Universitetsforlaget]. When he left the publishing house, Dag Gjestland took over, but by then the decision had already been made. As I mentioned, my volume was number two. The first volume was by Kari Wærness and was about social policy. Then, as time went on, there was one after another. But there were never 18 books, as originally planned, there were only 17. I've got a slightly bad conscience about that, because there was a group in Trondheim who wanted to do a book about women and work. I said: 'But good lord, there's so much about this topic already.' No doubt I should have been a bit more generous and said yes.

***I think you should congratulate yourself for the 17 that were published, rather than blame yourself that the 18th never happened.***

Yes, but she was very disappointed and I understand that. But it was in connection with this series that women journalists were so important. Because the books got discussed. The books got discussed for their own sakes, and the simple fact that a series was being published was referred to as a sensation.

My academic council at the NAVF was B, which was for the social sciences, while academic council A was for the humanities. We always said that A had only the elitists, because they gave fellowships to just a few women. My dear friend Jorunn Hareide had such a fellowship for four years. I think that all those awarded fellowships by Council A went on to become professors. The chair there was Anne-Lise Hilmen, while Mari Holmboe Ruge was chair for the social sciences.

Mari and Hanne Haavind wrote a report for the Social Sciences Research Council, and it was Mari who took the initiative.<sup>6</sup> It was Hanne who headed the group that wrote this report and they proposed a secretariat. In any event, they proposed a more collective solution whereby one rather gave funding to meetings, and help for publications. I don't think we ever granted funding for short-term fellowships. There were obviously some people who were awarded fellowships on ordinary competitive grounds, but it was mainly a more collective way of creating a new academic field. There were sociologists, political scientists. There weren't so many female political scientists, I think there were three of us. Many anthropologists, some economists. There was a pretty good breadth. We would have liked to have had a really good book on economics. Harriet Holter, a social psychologist who played a central role in women's research, was someone we didn't include, but the social anthropologist Ingrid Rudie made one of the major anthologies. There were three major anthologies. But I've never actually looked into how many of these books became required reading. That would be interesting.

***But your book on state feminism is still required reading?***

Yes, I believe so. As I explained earlier, the process of coming up with the term state feminism took 10 seconds. It happened when Rune Slagstad, the editor for the book series, phoned me. I was sitting at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) in Uppsala, where I'd been awarded a fellowship. I was a member of the Swedish study of power and democracy. 'Helga,' he said. 'I must have the title of these two books, yours and Tove's [Stang Dahl], tomorrow. What's your title?' And I simply said: 'It must have something to do with power... I'd suggest *Women and Power: Essays in State Feminism*.' So it took 10 seconds.

***But now it's become a key concept, hasn't it?***

That happened while I was abroad serving as an ambassador. I'd been ambassador in two countries, first in Vienna [with dual accreditation to Bratislava and Vienna-based international organizations], and then in Bern [with dual accreditation to the Vatican]. And suddenly state feminism had become an important concept. I wasn't responsible for doing that. Of course it was many years later. I think that's actually very interesting.

*Hege Skjeie called the term a stroke of genius.*

Yes. It was a stroke of genius, but a very instinctive one.

*But it captured your ideas?*

Yes, it captured my ideas completely. I said: 'We should be grateful that we have a state that is as feminist as it is.' I still believe that, despite the fact that some people don't think it's good enough. I've always been very positive. And it has been said that I'm too positive. But this concept [state feminism] became established by people other than me.

*Was the phrase adopted immediately in the Norwegian debate?*

No. I first noticed it when I came back from being ambassador in Switzerland. People were talking about state feminism.

## State Feminism Goes Global

*This subject of state feminism is interesting, but why did it reappear on the agenda in the early 2000s?*

I don't know. I must confess that I don't know. But it was certainly the case that even some politicians began to use the term in a positive manner. I believe I called myself a feminist, but that wasn't so usual. One said that one was a female advocate for women's rights. As I mentioned earlier, I was invited to meetings, mainly by the Labour Party, because Britt Schultz [Labour politician and later State Secretary in the prime minister's office] was head of the women's movement there, but also by the other parties. I always said yes. But I don't think that I used the term state feminism. It would actually be interesting to find out how the term made a breakthrough. I was simply struck that it had happened. In fact, I don't know if I got credit for the term in the beginning. Of course, the term is the secondary title of my book *Women and Power: Essays in State Feminism*. I was the person who coined the term. It was becoming more commonly used from the mid-1990s, but the actual book came out in 1987.

I said: 'We should be grateful that we have a state that is as feminist as it is.' I still believe that, despite the fact that some people don't think it's good enough. I've always been very positive.

*So, it just turned up so much later? That's interesting.*

Yes, it is. But I continue to think that it's a good concept. Because I still think that regardless of whether people believe that the Labour Party is reactionary, it

is Labour that has got this through, and also the Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). This idea that women should have equal pay. I remember how I pestered Jens Stoltenberg [leader of the Worker's Youth League, AUF—the youth association of Norway's Labour Party—from 1985 to 89] in particular, and others too. I got on their nerves. But it didn't matter to me. And I also had good friends in the trade union movement. Esther Kostøl was very supportive. I'd actually written some rather stinging criticism. In the feminist magazine *Kjerringråd*, I'd written: 'The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions is really the Norwegian Men's Confederation.'

*If we take the women's movement a little further forward to the beginning of this millennium and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, there are some who claim that the fundamental idea of the concept of state feminism pervades this resolution. Do you see it like that?*

But that's how it is!

*Hege Skjeie, for example, suggested this. And Torunn Tryggestad [PRIO's Deputy Director and Director of the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security] is interested in the same suggestion.*

Yes, and actually I think she's correct. But it is understandable, because this is a UN resolution. UN resolutions are addressed to the Member States, not to civil society. And of course feminism as a whole was only partially directed towards public authorities. In general, the Norwegian women's research was more about strengthening the women's movement. But a UN resolution is of course directed at the Member States. And that is why one can call it state feminism. I haven't thought about it. I've tried to look a little in the archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but I haven't really got very far.

*No, but to the extent it resonates with the process behind Norwegian state feminism, which is about both the bottom-up work of civil society and the government's response, there is a parallel. This parallel could perhaps not have occurred until after the end of the Cold War. It was in the 1990s that we got a more open UN system that was receptive to civil society activism.*

The continent where a women's peace movement was most active was Africa. But they didn't call it state feminism. They called it women's rights. But they addressed themselves to their own governments and to the international community. You had these international women's years with major conferences in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and finally Beijing in 1995. But you won't find the term state feminism anywhere. You might well say, as Hege said, that the spirit of the resolution reflects the same concept, because it addresses civil society only to a limited extent, and devotes most of its content to states and their obligations. But even so, the resolution has mobilized women. When I came home, after having been in Switzerland, I met up with Torunn Tryggestad and Kari Karamé. Obviously, they thought that I knew what Resolution 1325 was, but I had no idea.



***It didn't attract such great attention that you, as a Head of Station at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noticed it? Even with your special interest in the topic?***

No, not at all. Never. So I think that came later. There's nothing wrong with that.

***I've also had the impression that it took 10 years before the resolution began to gather some momentum.***

Yes. Torunn and Inger Skjelsbæk write about that. I've tried to learn what happened in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing. I was only actually present at the meeting in Copenhagen, and in that meeting, there was nothing at all that had any suggestion of state feminism. I feel the meeting was really more directed towards civil society. Because there weren't so many UN countries that thought that this was particularly interesting. The Norwegian government, you know they decided to support the Mexico conference in 1975. I think they gave NOK 650,000 altogether, but that wasn't much, compared to other priority areas.

***Isn't this rather similar to what you and your colleagues achieved in a Norwegian context with a relatively strong mobilization of civil society and heavyweight institutions where there are many potential agents for change that one can build alliances with, and then these agents use their influence to set an agenda and establish fora to invite civil society to join as a facilitator to change the institutions?***

Yes, I think that's completely right. Karin Stoltenberg [Director General at the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs] arranged these matters from the ministry, and I remember that once I asked very cautiously if I could have a place on the Norwegian delegation. 'I don't know what you would have to do there,' said Karin. 'Well Karin, I have actually worked on women's issues for quite a few years.' 'Yes, but this isn't to do with that. This is mostly for us within the ministries.' I think that sometimes she would rather have had me than Janne Haaland Matlary [Professor of Political Science at the University of Oslo], who became a member of the papal delegation and tried her utmost to influence the Norwegian delegation. She is anti-abortion and a very, very strict Catholic. So then I would no doubt have been more amenable.

***Hege Skjeie went even further than that. She said that she recognized Helga Hernes in much of 1325.***

Yes, but that is because the resolution is universal. This is today's food for thought. This is the strength of the small countries. In the French, German or British foreign ministries, someone like me would never have had any chance at all. But with the Norwegian ministry, I can phone and say: 'Can we meet for coffee?' Small countries are completely different in their decision-making structures. They provide possibilities for different groups to exert influence. I think it has to do with this much greater wealth of ideas that often exists in small countries. If you look at which countries ally themselves with each other, it's usually the small countries. It's very rare that you see Germany united with Finland, Sweden, Denmark and so on. The United Kingdom, now and then. And of course Canada. Canada is the only large country where one

sees that women's issues get aired in international fora. Not the only country, but I think the most obvious.

Small countries are completely different in their decision-making structures. They provide possibilities for different groups to exert influence. [...] In the French, German or British foreign ministries, someone like me would never have had any chance at all. But with the Norwegian ministry, I can phone and say: 'Can we meet for coffee?'

## A German Child During and After the War

*Something we have not talked much about is the early part of your life, your childhood.<sup>7</sup> How has it influenced your interests later on? It seems to have been a pretty dramatic period.*

Yes, but you know, I was in the Catholic church recently, and I'll now say something that I think is also said by psychologists and psychiatrists, that as a child, so long as you have a person you can rely on—and for me it was my grandmother—you will feel secure. I saw my grandmother when they tried to shoot my grandfather. He was a general and fled to the West in May 1945, just like my father. We other family members had already fled in February. And we lived in real poverty up in the mountains. My grandfather had big problems with his gall bladder. But he found us. And then someone in the village told the Americans that a general was here. And so two American soldiers arrived. They asked: 'Where is the general?', pointing their guns and so on. My grandmother said: 'Well, if you're interested in this sick old man, that's him.' 'You have to come with us,' they said, and they took him. He was very sick. They were only interested in taking him.

Then one of them said: 'Why don't we just shoot him down? He is going to be shot anyway.' They didn't know my grandmother was an American. She said: 'Who the hell do you think you are? You look like you are from Alabama, and in Alabama they don't even know what shoes are. You probably got your first pair of shoes when you got into the army. What are you doing with this old man? Why do you want to shoot an old man? What has he done to you?' These two young soldiers were completely freaked out.

He was taken to an American hospital and was imprisoned there for three years. He was operated on three times for his gall bladder problem. I visited him many times. Just think: he wouldn't have survived if he hadn't been imprisoned. But I was frightened that time when they came into that room in the mountains with their weapons. I thought they would shoot us, but they didn't want to. They only wanted to shoot him.

***That's not an experience that we've all had during our childhoods.***

No. We lived by the Baltic in Kolberg, which is now in Poland. We spent a lot of time in the air-raid shelter from about November 1944 until we fled in February 1945. Often it was only during the night, but sometimes also during the day. Mostly we were being bombed by the British. It was my uncle who helped us to decide when we should flee and how we should seek refuge.

So we sat on a train outside Dresden for five days while it was being bombed. It was terrible to hear the bombing. The sky was dark red. But we weren't bombed. Our train wasn't bombed. So we actually got down to Vienna, and when we got to Vienna, the Russians arrived. Then my grandfather arranged for a truck that took us and some other families, and we ended up in a very idyllic valley close to Zell am See. So there we were. We arrived there, I think it must have been in April/May, and then we stayed there.

So then there was a decision on the Austrian side that all *Reichsdeutsche* ['Imperial Germans']—of course we were *Reichsdeutsche*, while the Austrians and all the other German speakers were so-called *Volksdeutsche* ['German folk']—had to leave Austria within three days. Then we had help from our young American friends. All of them fell for my wonderful grandmother, so in August 1945, we were driven with three other families to Chiemsee, an extremely beautiful place where one of my aunts had some friends. That was where I grew up. We didn't have much, just our clothes.

Chiemsee is between Munich and Salzburg, closer to Salzburg. It's one of the most beautiful... It's a large lake where King Ludwig II of Bavaria built a castle. That's where we arrived. We started to attend school and that's where I took my final school exams. My brother still lives there with his family. My only sister lives there. It was completely incredible. My mother became a doctor at various hospitals, but spent the last 15 years of her life at her home there. And my grandparents were there too.

I don't know how much you know about German history, but Prussia isn't exactly a place that most Germans are so very fond of, and in Bavaria they simply called us Saupreußen ['pig Prussians']. But I wasn't bullied as much as my younger siblings, so I always had to protect them. I don't know why, but I think I was just used to being the eldest. We had a long journey to school, so this wasn't always easy. My grandmother was also a peacemaker. Initially, we were put up in a guest house, and the people living there were clearly not particularly happy for us to be billeted there, you know, having refugees in their house. But we are still friends with them. That is thanks to my grandmother, who became best friends with their grandmother.

***And so you all had to establish a completely new life there?***

Kind of. When my mother became a doctor at Augsburg, 150 km from Chiemsee, it meant she had to commute. She came home every weekend. So it was grandmother who brought us up, and we always had a nanny. After a year, my father suddenly arrived home on foot. He had been in France as a prisoner of the Americans. My

grandfather was imprisoned for three years. But really that went relatively uneventfully. Then we moved to Augsburg. But I managed to move back to live with my grandmother.

You know, my father, because he had been an officer, was not permitted to continue his legal studies. He had studied law for four semesters, but now he had to start working with all kinds of commercial activities, mostly bartering.

I think probably his life would have been better if he had been permitted to finish his legal studies. It was always my mother, who was a doctor, who was the main breadwinner. But the Americans were a very positive occupying power. There was very little violence, I have to say. At any rate, I can't remember it. And now we were living in the country. I lived happily in Augsburg for three years, and went to a school for girls. I was confirmed there. My mother was active in city politics for the Free Democratic Party.

***But you say that the Americans were a positive occupying power?***

Yes, and of course they hadn't experienced attacks during the war. The British had suffered much more during the war, so the British weren't particularly friendly to the Germans, they had no empathy. And the British didn't have much food either. We did go hungry. For the first year, I remember very well that I went to bed hungry every night. But you get used to it. I remember that I got a single one-centimetre-thick slice of bread each day, and also we sometimes made a little pea soup. The farmers helped us—of course you're a farmer too, Kristian—to get some potatoes planted. So, by doing so, we also had potatoes during the winter. I don't know how I should describe it. That was our life. It wasn't something you needed to be very scared of. You were hungry and you didn't have any fine clothes, and if you needed a pair of shoes, it was a family catastrophe. We wore wooden clogs. We were really poor. But of course we weren't the only ones.

***But there was a long period towards the end of the war when you must have been pretty anxious and felt the lack of security. You say that it's important to have an adult that one trusts, and I think that is true.***

Absolutely. My grandmother, what I've told you about her, that was only the most dramatic incident. Otherwise, she was a woman who was very caring and must also have been pretty overworked. But we always had at least one maid. And usually we also had someone who came in to do the cleaning. But of course we were living in this guest house, where the owners really wanted to use the rooms for other purposes. So, as refugees, you weren't exactly popular.

I well remember that at one point I had a Bavarian boyfriend. That was a big problem. I was 15 or 16 years old, and his mother was extremely worried that it would get serious. My grandmother had seven grandchildren, and one of them had a nanny who fell in love with a Bavarian. They had to wait 10 years before they were allowed to marry. So as you can imagine, we weren't well thought of. We were refugee children.

***But subsequently you've said that you don't feel any bitterness that Germany was treated as it was, that you feel it got what it deserved, in a way?***

I wouldn't say that we were starving. They were difficult times, but that was the result of the war.

***Is that what you're thinking when you say that Germany got what it deserved?***

At least two or three years passed after the war before I understood what concentration camps were. I asked my grandmother, who just said: 'That's where people go who have done something wrong.' And I said: 'I thought they went to prison.' 'Yes, but when there are many of them, then they have to end up in a camp.' It wasn't discussed. History teaching, if you were lucky with your teacher, went up to 1918, but most teachers stopped at 1870. No one ever said anything at all about the Third Reich. No history teachers. No German teachers. No one. It was totally...

***There was a complete lid on contemporary history?***

When I think back on it, it's still incomprehensible. I heard the men in the guest house, they talked about their wartime experiences, but I never noticed any suggestion of guilt. That emerged first in the next generation, in the 1960s and 70s. But at that point, I wasn't in Germany. It was the generation of 1968 who lifted the lid. That was really very late.

## **Academia and Activism in 1960s America**

***And the 1968 protest movement was something you were a part of, just on another continent.***

Yes, I was on another continent. But obviously, the anti-Vietnam War movement was very international. I remember that when I was working in Boston, we often travelled down to the demonstrations. I heard Martin Luther King. My students came too. I didn't take them with me, but they came of their own accord. Even though I was teaching at a very radical and liberal school, even they wouldn't want me to ...

***To be leading protests in Washington DC?***

I was very lucky that in 1961 I got to participate in the civil rights movement. [...] [W]e travelled to Ralph David Abernathy Sr.'s headquarters. We spent time with Abernathy. Martin Luther King was his second-in-command. We travelled to Selma, Alabama.

No, and I think that was completely right. Sometimes, I talked about the Vietnam War in history lessons, and then I got told I shouldn't do that. And there was also the civil

rights movement. For America as a country, the civil rights movement was actually much more important than the protests against the Vietnam War. The anti-Vietnam War movement had only one message for the government: 'Get out of there.' There was nothing else.

I was very lucky that in 1961 I got to participate in the civil rights movement. We formed a group called Ambassadors for Friendship. We were four foreigners and a young American woman. And there was a car dealer who was enthusiastic about our group. He gave us a huge station wagon, and we painted Ambassadors for Friendship on it. We followed a big U-shaped route through the whole United States.

***So this was students from Mount Holyoke?***

Yes. For example, we travelled to Ralph David Abernathy Sr.'s headquarters. We spent time with Abernathy. Martin Luther King was his second-in-command. We travelled to Selma, Alabama.

***During the actual march?***

Yes. We were very, very involved in activism. Then we travelled to Texas, where they found out who we were: 'Socialists. We don't like Socialists!'. We weren't socialists, but whatever. We followed a so-called U-shaped route through the whole United States. All the Southern states. Alabama, Mississippi. But it was interesting. We were often invited to visit churches. I was even told: 'Girl, you should have been a preacher!' We talked about peace and reconciliation. We also had a young American woman with us. She was fearless about asking for help, and we got masses of help. It was very, very interesting.

We were often invited to visit churches. I was even told: 'Girl, you should have been a preacher!'

***It's easy to see a thread here from your childhood, your experience of war and what it meant for you and your family. When do you think that you first saw how one could work politically to achieve peace? Was it in the United States? Or did you already see elements of it while you were a teenager in Germany?***

Not in Germany, no. I was very happy to get out of Germany. I thought it was quite simply unpleasant and embarrassing that we could never talk about anything.

***Exactly. So you became concerned about it very early?***

Yes. I remember one time I came back from the United States. That was the only time I had a really heated confrontation with my grandparents, so much so that they nearly threw me out. You know who Arthur Miller was? He had written a play which was about anti-Semitism. The play was shown on German television. My grandfather, who was a TV addict, watched the play and was completely outraged. I began to scream at him: 'What is it you're saying? What is it you're saying?' And

my grandmother just came in and took me outside: 'If you ever mention that subject again, then you can't stay with us.'

I had other friends who were also not allowed to talk about how the Jews had been persecuted, who weren't allowed to mention Hitler at all. So it was a very strong taboo, and I'm sure that the man who was headmaster at my school was a Nazi. But what was interesting was that none of us ever felt any empathy or sympathy with what had happened in Germany. All of us thought it was completely appalling. And then the Americans, they had what were known as America Houses. That was something that my family didn't like, but I snuck my way there. There I saw movies. It [the house] was very important. An important institution.

***So you loved America from an early age?***

Yes, yes, yes, I loved America. Also because of my grandmother. In spite of it all, she was an American opera singer. But I do say that the Americans took a very naive approach to democratizing Germany. Their approach was very proper. The most sentimental movies and I don't know what else. But I think the Americans did a very, very good job when they arrived as an occupying power. It must have been terrible to have been in the French zone, or obviously in the Russian zone. Quite terrible because people didn't get food, and if they weren't Communists they were treated very badly. But the British and the French, they had of course undergone their own very powerful experiences.

The Americans had a completely different starting point, even though they had also lost a relatively large number of young soldiers. But even so, they thought it was exciting to be in a different country, and they were just a different type of person. They brought their music. It was completely fantastic. I don't know if you've read *Year Zero* by Ian Buruma [Penguin 2013]. The thing that really liberated the Germans and got them to love the Americans was the music. It was everywhere. There was almost no criminality, and unfortunately I have to say that Black Americans were responsible for the small amount of criminality that did occur. To them we were well-to-do. I sound a bit as though I'm very unrealistic, but I don't think that I am.

***No. You've experienced it.***

Yes. For them 'it was a trip to Europe'.

***What do you think have been your most important sources of inspiration professionally? Now I'm thinking of your whole lifetime, right back to when you travelled to the United States, perhaps even earlier.***

Yes, I must say I was very lucky with the schools I attended in the United States. I got my AFS scholarship, and ended up at a Quaker high school in Baltimore, the Friends School of Baltimore. I entered a whole new world. Both because they were Quakers and because so many were Jewish. They just accepted me. Even though it was only 1956. No one ever said anything about my being German or anything like that. I had Jewish friends. So for me, who came from Germany and had been ashamed of what Germany had done, it was quite incredible. So I got a scholarship, and was lucky enough to go to a Quaker school. I still think that the Quakers have an

incredible way of looking at life. I travelled back home because I wanted to get my high school diploma in Germany. At that time, I thought that was very important.

I spent one year in Baltimore. It really meant a lot. They gave me a high school diploma after that one year. So actually I was qualified. I really wanted to go back to Germany to get my German high school diploma, and that's what I did. Then I applied to Mount Holyoke. But I didn't apply only to Mount Holyoke. My American mother, who was a fantastic woman, I think sent 30 letters to different colleges about this brilliant... Well, you know what Americans are like.

I got three scholarships from top-ranking colleges. But of course the best was Mount Holyoke, the oldest women's college, founded in 1837. I was there for two years and gained a BA in political science. With a BA from Mount Holyoke, you're seen as a member of the elite. They [the women's colleges] are the Seven Sisters. Every evening we sang 'Oh, Mount Holyoke, we pay thee devotion'. It was very, very fine. And then I became a teacher. This was at a very radical, advanced school outside Cambridge, Massachusetts. I got a job as a teacher there because I still had my boyfriend. I was doing what was known as PHT—Putting Husband Through. You earn the money while he studies. This worked really well because I got to be at one of those very radical schools dating from the 1930s. It had a very good reputation. I was a house mother, and I also taught German and history.

This was also the time when the Vietnam War was at its height. So I was very active in the anti-war movement. Then I applied to Johns Hopkins and got in there. There I studied both political science and international policy and wrote my doctorate on the international community. And then I came to Norway. I was very fortunate with all the schools I attended. All of them: college, high school, my teachers, and graduate school. You had a library where you could stay until midnight. Of course, that made a big impression on me. I've always been grateful. I could never have done that in Germany. You wouldn't have had that quality, or that student life. Nor did you have that kind of organization. Everything is much more left to the individual, while in the United States, if you attend an elite institution, you get followed up.

In fact, I think that created a foundation that helped me when I came to Bergen and taught there. That I knew what a good university was. I was in Comparative Politics, but the department was called the Department of Sociology, and at least half of the staff had been in the United States.

*And they had brought a culture with them?*

Yes, very much so. And also Stein Rokkan was quite marvellous because he was so international and he took me all over the place. He was very generous.

## **Politician and Diplomat**

*I want to ask you a little about your career as a civil servant and as a politician. Because it's interesting: you came from a background where you were actually very involved in activism. Some would perhaps describe you as a pragmatic activist,*



***in the sense that you have been results-oriented. You have very clearly stuck to your principles as an activist. And then you entered a political service where it's necessary to compromise to a much greater extent and even perhaps implement or convey messages for which you don't necessarily have much personal sympathy. Has it been difficult?***

Actually it hasn't. I don't actually know how often, with the exception of this ghastly whale business, where I had to travel around Europe and it was really awful. Otherwise, I haven't had to convey messages that weren't welcomed by the recipient.

I wasn't an opponent of NATO. I wasn't a pacifist. That's pretty much the only thing I can imagine that would have caused difficulties for me at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

***But weren't you a nuclear pacifist?***

Yes, and I think several of us were. And so I don't think that was a problem either. For that reason, NATO's dual-track decision was a major problem, as we've spoken about already. I think it shows Thorvald Stoltenberg's high-mindedness that he took me into the fold.

I once saw an article that Rune Slagstad had written about me, where he quoted from a conversation with Thorvald, who said: 'She's very different from me, and that's why I chose her.'<sup>8</sup> That's actually not correct. He was a mixture of very naive and very tough. He had two sides. But he was unbelievably knowledgeable. He had a phenomenal memory. He remembered everything.

But I'm trying to think back to situations which weren't really so... I really can't remember. I went on trips to Africa with Knut Vollebæk. Those were purely positive. I had been on tours of Asia, but there it was really only the Japanese who had an understanding for our point of view. The other Asian states had a completely different context for the decisions they took after the war in relation to defence policy. But it was good that we could live with each other in the northern regions without shooting at each other. I'm trying now to remember my travels abroad. I don't really remember anything unpleasant. But perhaps I've just suppressed the memory. I don't think so, but I don't know.

***But you became a key defender of Norwegian whaling policy for a while?***

Yes. I thought that was appalling. I went to Thorvald. He got so angry with me that he threw me out of his office. That was because he said: 'Helga, I've asked once before. You know that Gro wants it this way.' I'm certain that he thought it was a load of nonsense. But he was really angry with me. Genuinely angry. Such that I burst into tears and ran out of the office. The press spokesman arrived. He'd heard what had happened, and comforted me. That was the only time something unpleasant happened. But it was because I didn't want to go along with it. I thought it was stupid.

***You thought it was wrong?***

I thought it was wrong. I thought it damaged Norway's reputation. I had to travel to all these countries and defend our whaling policy, which I thought damaged Norway's

reputation, and be told: ‘Have you completely lost your mind?’ Whales are treated almost as holy creatures by some people. Particularly by American ambassadors to Norway. There was a woman, Ambassador Loret Miller Ruppe, she came all the time and harangued us.

It was entirely possible to be a nuclear pacifist. The battle against the dual-track decision happened long before I entered the corridors of power. Thorvald knew about it. Thorvald knew that I was a nuclear pacifist, but he thought that was a good thing. He didn’t have anything against it. He said: ‘The more vision we show, Helga, the better it will be for us.’ I had an incredible amount of freedom. In fact, I only rarely had to clear things with him. Only rarely.

I had to travel to all these countries and defend our whaling policy, which I thought damaged Norway’s reputation [...] I thought it was wrong.

But also we didn’t have any major problems, apart from this stupid whaling business. He took me in despite the fact that I’d been very active in campaigning against the dual-track decision. I was interviewed by many newspapers, and twice I was on television. Do you remember the TV programme *På sparket* [*Off the cuff*]?

*Yes.*

The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) researcher Martin Sæter and I were up against Johan Jørgen Holst and Arne Olav Brundtland, also from NUPI. While the camera was on me, they always sat there laughing and so on, trying to make me lose my temper. It was the first time I’d ever been on television. They really exploited that to the maximum, but I kept my cool.

*That’s almost a parody of a domination strategy.*

Yes, absolutely. But afterwards Martin Sæter described me as a saint. But you know, Johan Jørgen also wanted to have me as his State Secretary. In fact, I’ve got no idea whether he was a nuclear pacifist or not. I think he was simply ambitious, I don’t know. I was only interested in working with Thorvald because he and I could speak openly to each other. He was the boss.

Then the whole Middle East process occurred without me actually knowing about it. We were free to walk into Thorvald’s office at any time. When it was getting a bit late one evening, I went into his office to say goodnight, and he was sitting there whispering with Jan Egeland. I had no idea what was going on, just laughter and high spirits and so on. ‘Goodnight, we’re also going home.’ I didn’t get to know about it until things were pretty far along.

Then Jan Egeland turned up and told me about it. I had a kind of double door in my office. We always used to go in there. There was no one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who knew about it apart from Jan and Thorvald. He took me into this little nook and whispered to me: ‘Helga, I think we’ve had a breakthrough. I think this is going to work out.’

*I've talked to your American colleague at that time, Ed Djerejian, who is now head of the Baker Center at Rice University in Texas. A very interesting man. He had the Middle East portfolio during his time as undersecretary. He also didn't know what was going on. But he told me that they had picked up some signals about something going on in Oslo, that they had actually tried to make a thorough investigation.*

Actually, I think it was quite right that I didn't know what was going on, because I had no role in it. The only role I had was to protect Mona Juul. Because at some point or other Mona got involved, and then she became somewhat unwell. Then I simply had to say to her sometimes: 'Now you must go home and go to bed.' I knew that she was sometimes absent for several days. She was my allotted task. If she had been at another office, then her boss would have wondered what she was up to. While I was simply told: 'Mona will be working for you, but she will also be working with other things.' But that was Jan's business, and obviously Thorvald's. But Thorvald was certainly a bit upset about having to step down in 1993 and hand over the job of foreign minister to Johan Jørgen.

It was Thorvald who had started the process. Thorvald was cunning. He loved it that I called him cunning. Johan Jørgen wasn't as generous as Thorvald. He didn't have that kind of personality. I remember that Terje Rød-Larsen sometimes got furious with him because he was so indiscreet.

The whole Middle East process occurred without me actually knowing about it. [...] Then Jan Egeland turned up and told me about it. [...] There was no one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who knew about it apart from Jan and Thorvald [Stoltenberg]. He took me into this little nook and whispered to me: 'Helga, I think we've had a breakthrough. I think this is going to work out.'

## Overseeing the Secret Services

*You were also Chair of the parliamentary Intelligence Oversight Committee (commonly known as the EOS Committee). Wasn't it a historic occurrence for someone to be simultaneously a senior researcher at PRIO and Chair of the EOS Committee?*

Yes, but it was also because of Stein Tønnesson [Director of PRIO 2001–2009] that I stopped.

Stein said to me: 'Helga, I don't like it. I just want you to know how I think. I don't like the secret services.' I simply said: 'I like the secret services, but I hear what you're saying.' The secret services are important.

***So you only served [on the committee] for a limited period because of this?***

Yes. I resigned. That was the choice I made. In fact, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Parliament [*Stortinget*] offered me a pretty high salary to stay. I've never been sorry about it. Because it gets rather monotonous after a while.

You don't really find much out. It's not so difficult for them to shut you out if they want to. But I did gain great respect for the Intelligence Service. And not really so much respect for the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST). So that was very interesting. But I had total respect for what Stein said to me. He didn't tell me that I had to stand down. I thought about it, and then I thought that really he was right. What was I doing at a peace research institute and spending masses of time going through files that were... ? It wasn't exactly a 'sexy job'.

Stein [Tønnesson] said to me: 'Helga, I don't like it. I just want you to know how I think. I don't like the secret services.' I simply said: 'I like the secret services, but I hear what you're saying'. [...] I understood very well that what Stein said to me was a personal opinion. It wasn't as though he had put a pistol to my chest and said I had to choose.

***Yes, I can certainly understand that there's a lot that's very routine. To some extent this is really a function whose existence is its most important characteristic. Partly it covers the backs of the secret services, and partly it ensures that people don't step over certain boundaries, because they know that someone is keeping an eye on them. It's important.***

Yes. In fact, you have to be very good to do this job well. We had at least two very good lawyers. Although one of them died. It's almost essential to be a lawyer, because there's something about the legal method. I learned a lot from Trygve Harvold. I think that when one gets these kinds of jobs that are so important and so complicated, people actually don't understand how complicated they are. The Intelligence Service could have sent us around in circles if they'd wanted to, but they didn't. They behaved properly.

I was a bit surprised when Stein said that to me, because I thought it was kind of salon radicalism. And then I thought that actually he was right. I thought that he didn't like it because a radical-democratic institute wouldn't value the secret services. In any case, there was no doubt. I had no doubt what I preferred. The only thing was that I would have liked to have earned more money.

***But did you yourself think that there was a tension there? A tension between what you did at PRIO and performing a role such as Chair of the EOS Committee?***

No, I actually don't think so. Given that I've seen how this institute has a very broad agenda, I can't actually see that there was any incongruity or conflict of interest.

It was something that had to be built up when I arrived. Because it had been one of my former colleagues from the foreign ministry, who really hadn't... But the secretariat grew a lot under me. Very capable lawyers. I gained a huge amount of respect for these young people. I learned a lot. And then, as already mentioned, there were at least two members of the Committee who had some grasp of the work. After a while, I also began to get some grasp of the work. It's a very demanding role. I understood very well that what Stein said to me was a personal opinion. It wasn't as though he had put a pistol to my chest and said I had to choose. He didn't do that. He just said: 'You know that I don't like it.'

## Back to the Academy: Gender and Peace Research

*Yes, perhaps it's natural to go from here to how your interest in women's research led you to PRIO in 2006?*

Yes, it led me. Or really, I was dragged. Thank God! It was a real stroke of luck for me. Inger Skjelsbæk got in touch with me. Then Inger and I, both of us, saw that we must have Torunn Tryggstad. I didn't know Torunn particularly well, but I was slightly acquainted with her. So I invited Torunn to come to my apartment for a chat. Of course, she did have very close contact with Inger.<sup>9</sup>

*You say that you were dragged to PRIO, but that doesn't really mean that you were dragged there against your will?*

Not at all. I was over the moon. Firstly because they wanted to build up the women's perspective, and that was something I wanted too. I had always said, especially to [the jurist and criminologist] Tove Stang Dahl, who unfortunately died in 1993, that the thing that was wrong with women's research in Norway, in which I had played a fairly central role, was that we were too nationally oriented. We needed to be more international. She said: 'But Helga, what do you mean?' She thought that my using the word 'state' in the title of a book was already a step too far, that I was too complicit. I saw this as an opportunity to fulfil an old dream, which was to internationalize Norwegian women's research.

I was over the moon [to join PRIO]. [...] I saw this as an opportunity to fulfil an old dream, which was to internationalize Norwegian women's research.

So I had these two fantastic young women who supported this, and who were also interested in it. They were both confident, knowledgeable, energetic. I mean, what else could one want? So for me, it was utterly fantastic. Because I had left the ambassador post in Switzerland two years early because it was so boring that I thought I would die. But at any rate, you're asking me why I think this was utterly

fantastic. I didn't know much about PRIO. But I'd been here once in 1969, and so I did know some people here.

Torunn has a wonderful talent for obtaining funding. I always thought that I was the best, but she surpasses me. People at the ministries were always laughing: 'Helga has arrived in her silver outfit, so she must want money.'

***You had a special outfit for this purpose?***

No. A woman at the OED [Ministry of Petroleum and Energy] said it one time, and I said: 'But I've never—the OED?' 'Yes, but of course I know about you.' Well, but as I have already mentioned, I always come back to the fact that having allies in the central government bureaucracy is very important. But the Max Planck Institute [in Germany], of course that's a national institution. They have their own funding, but they also get public money. So it's not only in small countries, but on the whole it's in smaller countries, that you get access to funds for professional renewal.

After I finished my doctoral thesis, that was actually one of the things I regretted. The only regret I have in relation to my academic life is that Stein Rokkan did not allow me to do research on international politics. He said: 'Helga, I've promised the University of Oslo that we won't get involved in that, and so you must simply...'. And so for me this was an old dream. Internationalizing women's research. And I think it was one that was shared by Inger. We actually didn't have much knowledge about violence against women. I'd met Torunn in South Africa, and she had obtained funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work with peacekeeping forces.

Torunn [Tryggestad] has a wonderful talent for obtaining funding. I always thought that I was the best, but she surpasses me. People at the ministries were always laughing: 'Helga has arrived in her silver outfit, so she must want money.'

***The Training for Peace project?***

Yes. Training for Peace. For me it was pure heaven. That I could suddenly begin to think about women's issues internationally. I mean it wasn't difficult to convince me. I was very happy. There can never be any doubt that I thought of the offer from PRIO as a gift.

***The Norwegian National Action Plan on 1325 that you helped to write, was it the first?***

That was Steffen Kongstad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That was him. He was a friend and a good supporter. And it was really extremely important. The Action Plans that came later were of course even better. But the first was the most important. That it was published at all. It was difficult to get the attention of the political leadership, but that didn't actually matter so much, because there's an awful lot that happens

in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs without the political leadership necessarily being aware of it.

***Has it meant a lot for Norwegian engagement on this issue? I mean giving it a central role in Norwegian foreign policy?***

Yes. I had a phone call from Susan Eckey at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when I came back from Switzerland. She asked: 'Helga, can we meet up for lunch?' I said yes. And then she said: 'You know, we've got a Labour government now. This is something we want to work on, but the Conservatives weren't interested.' So I said: 'What is it?' So she told me about this resolution. Then I said to her: 'You know what? I've just had an invitation from PRIO.' 'Yes, but that's splendid.' Obviously, it came mainly from Torunn [Tryggestad] who is familiar with the UN system. But it also came about because Susan and Steffen Kongstad asked me. I remember that even my old friend Svein Sæther [who was ambassador to Beijing 2008–17] supported it. It was very important. It was Susan Eckey who was the driving force. So it came from two sides. Of course Torunn knew much more than I did about the purely academic side, because I hadn't worked on this while I was an ambassador.

***But this does mean that you spent a long period as a research entrepreneur in national women's policy because as a pensioner you were able to tackle women's issues in relation to foreign policy.***

Yes. I've never used the word entrepreneur about myself. But there are a lot of people who have said that I'm an entrepreneur.

I consider my life to have been successful thanks to others and the support of others. I've been very fortunate since I came to Norway. In many, many ways. I've had support from Stein Rokkan, from the Research Council of Norway, and so many others. Then came my international period at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I didn't actually work on women's issues, but then I came back to it. It has been a long series of strokes of luck. It has been enjoyable, let me put it like that. I haven't actually produced so very much.

***Let's return a little to PRIO. You had a glimpse into PRIO at the end of the 1960s. You told me that you had a brief encounter with it in 1969. And then you returned 37 years later.***

Yes, that's right. It was a bit of a different crowd back then. It was kind of a bit more 'kunterbunt', which is to say very colourful. You had the feeling that you were approaching people who saw themselves as very radical, as though they had seen the light, and knew how life should be lived. There was a very high level of self-confidence. I remember it as a gathering of people who were happy and content with themselves and what they did.

In my limited contact with Johan Galtung, he was very patronizing. Either because I was German or a civil servant, or I don't know what. He didn't think I was anything special. But I'd just like to say that I was never hurt. Never. I just thought that he was a bit arrogant.

***Did you have anything to do with PRIO during your time at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?***

No. Let me think for a moment. No. I don't remember. I've never worked so hard in my life as I did at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so I was very engaged with the issues we were working on. Of course, that was at the time when people thought that PRIO was a nest of radicals, and that NUPI [the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs] was the place where one ought to be. I well remember that Johan Jørgen was very much a NUPI man. He certainly wasn't a radical. PRIO also wasn't part of Thorvald's world. I'm trying to remember the people I met. I probably met Nils Petter Gleditsch. I know Kari Skrede, the sociologist, well, so I met Nils Petter through his wife Kari. And of course Kari had been in my book series.

Overall, I think that there's much more contact between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the outside world nowadays than there was when I was there. There's actually quite a lot of contact now.

***With your long academic experience from many institutions, including top-ranking American institutions, what was it like to come to PRIO in 2006?***

I thought that it would be much more ideological than it actually was. I thought we'd be discussing Peace with a very big P. And it really sounds very conceited, but I hadn't expected the scholarly excellence. I think that's almost become even more outstanding. It gets better all the time. I thought I was coming to a nest of radicals, but that wasn't the case. It was a professional environment at a very high level. There were people who were both highly educated and working on important projects. I had always experienced NUPI as being much closer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but I think that's no longer true.

Yes, I think that it was very, very enjoyable to see what was happening at PRIO. The University of Bergen was also an excellent environment. Very advanced methodologically, and that's something I've never been. Quantitative methods have never been my thing. But PRIO has everything. You have people who are very advanced in their methods. Everyone is working on problems that are of key importance. There's a very large, first-class international network. So for my part, I'm just grateful and full of admiration. I think, you've been director of course, so you certainly know where the weak points are. There are certainly some.

I thought that [PRIO] would be much more ideological than it actually was. I thought we'd be discussing Peace with a very big P. [...] I thought I was coming to a nest of radicals, but that wasn't the case. It was a professional environment at a very high level.

But I was very positively surprised. It wasn't just 'peace and all that', it was serious hard work. Especially when we wrote the Action Plan on 1325. We got pretty close to the Ministry then. I've always had close contact with Svein Sæther, Susan Eckey



and Steffen Kongstad. I was rather glad that also in this respect we had good relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because I'd never experienced the Ministry as particularly controlling. I think the Ministry is also an institution of excellence.

Really, I have to say that it's simply been a great, great privilege to be allowed to be here. I really must say that. People take themselves seriously and they take others seriously. They work on important things.

***Thank you for the interview, Helga, it has been a real treat.***

Thank you.

## Notes

1. For a detailed portrait of Helga Hernes, written by one of her closest colleagues at PRIO, see Skjelsbæk, Inger (2013) *Statsfeministen, Statsfeminismen og Verden Utenfor* [The State Feminist, State Feminism and the World Beyond]. Oslo: Aschehoug. For the English translation, see Skjelsbæk, Inger (2018) *Helga Hernes: The State Feminist*. Oslo: PRIO/H. Aschehoug & Co. Available at: <https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=12169>.
2. For an informative biographical essay (in Norwegian), emphasizing the main lines in Hernes' thinking, see Fredrik Engelstad (2005) 'Helga Hernes', Norsk biografisk leksikon. Available at: [https://nbl.snl.no/Helga\\_Hernes](https://nbl.snl.no/Helga_Hernes).
3. Helga Hernes was a member of the Norwegian government's Disarmament Commission from 1979 to 1981, then again from 1990 to 1993. See: <https://nsd.no/polsys/data/forvaltning/utvalg/1025000>.
4. 'Pål sine høner' is a folk song, well known in Norway, published by Peter Christian Asbjørnsen in 1863. In the tune, Pål loses all his hens to the fox, but when he is later compensated (in grain), he feels vindicated.
5. On the initiative to start a new programme in women's research, see Hanne Haavind (1997) 'Den første utredningen om kvinneforskningens muligheter og ambisjoner i de samfunnsvitenskaplige fag', *Kvinneforskning* 3–4: 8–13. See also the interview with Mari Holmboe Ruge in the PRIO Stories series, available at: <https://blogs.prio.org/2020/06/organizing-for-peace-mari-holmboe-ruge-interviewed-by-kristian-berg-harpviken/>.
6. See Eirinn Larsen (2019) 'Sekretariat for norsk statsfeminisme' [Secretariat for Norwegian State Feminism], pp. 263–290 in Thomas Brandt et al., *Avhengig av forskning: De norske forskningsrådenes historie* [Research-dependent: The History of the Norwegian Research Councils]. Oslo: Fagbokforlaget.
7. Hernes' experiences during and after the war in Germany were covered at length in two portraits broadcast by the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. Firstly, there was the radio programme *Ekko*, with the title 'En lite kjent flyktningehistorie' [A little-known refugee story], 13 January 2017. Then, there was the TV programme *Torp*, 31 January 2018.
8. Rune Slagstad (2018) 'Statsfeministen Helga Hernes' [Helga Hernes, the State Feminist], *Klassekampen*, 16 January 2018.
9. For Helga Hernes' recruitment to PRIO, see Chap. 20.

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## Chapter 15

# Searching the Archives for a Missing Peace: Hilde Henriksen Waage



Interviewed by Henrik Syse



Hilde Henriksen Waage in 2016 © Martin Tegnander/PRIO

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Between Israel and the Palestinians there has always been a huge asymmetry of power. There is a strong party and a weak party, and this has made it impossible to achieve a genuine peace. A nice little bridge-builder like Norway cannot easily change the policies of the stronger party, particularly when this party is backed by an even stronger one, the United States. I say this not because I am pro-Palestinian or an Israel-hater. My point has nothing to do with love or hate. I say this as an academic researcher.

**Henrik Syse:** *Ok, Hilde, I know this is what you have been saying all along. One of your research projects was even called ‘The Missing Peace’. Let me still ask about your expectations for the future. In 2039 you will be 80—and I will follow in 2046. Maybe this is a banal opening question, but will the Middle East be more peaceful then?*

**Hilde Henriksen Waage:** I do not believe so. I am basically a positive and optimistic person, but when it comes to the conflicts in the Middle East—and there are many of them—I am afraid we will not be any closer to a peaceful resolution. Research into history has rather shown us that things have gotten much worse.

*Is that a conclusion you draw on the basis of your study of history? Or is it more a conclusion based on what you see as of 2019?*

Both. The one should not exclude the other. As a historian, I often ask myself: what if anyone had asked me to be a negotiator or mediator in the Oslo Process? Based on the premises of that process, what would I have answered? I would have said: ‘No. I cannot do that based on those premises, because I have no belief in it succeeding, based on the knowledge that I have.’

*We will certainly come back to that. This is indeed an exciting aspect of interviewing you: you have a rich PRIO history, and at the same time you have done research on one of the most famous and important conflicts there is, not only in the Middle East itself and in many parts of the world, but more specifically here in Norway. You have written about a subject that fellow academics and specialists find interesting, but that has also been a key part of Norwegian politics and society, and that has made many people really angry. Let’s start with you, though. If you were now being interviewed by someone who knew nothing about you, what would you say about your background from before PRIO?*

## **Born into the Salvation Army**

I was born in Drammen. ‘Harrybyen’ Drammen, as some say—you know, ‘the redneck city’, as I guess one would say in the US. That is how many people saw it

then. I was born into a middle-class, bourgeois, Christian home, where my parents believed in what the Bible said, and they believed in the State of Israel. In other words, I grew up in a pro-Israeli home. So, you might say that these issues were with me from day one, this interest in and the strong viewpoints on the Middle East.

In the 1970s, my friends—or rather, the friends of my parents—had joined what is today the Socialist Left party (SV) and what we now call the Palestine Committee (Palestinakomiteen). And in the early 70s, in the social environment that I was part of, that was really unusual. These friends were my parents' best and closest friends, but they had a political standpoint that was pretty far removed from that of my parents. My parents were people of faith. Both were active soldiers in the Salvation Army, which I was certainly part of, too. My dad taught at Danvik Folk High School (Danvik Folkehøgskole) in Drammen, which was owned by the Inner Mission (Indremisjonen), the more conservative part of the Norwegian Christian Mission movement.

And I remember from when I was a little girl that my sister and I were dismissed from the table when my parents and two of their very close friends, Ingrid and William, were discussing Israel. I wondered what could be so wrong about this country of Israel that it made my parents and those I considered my aunt and uncle so angry that they simply could not behave in anything resembling a normal way.

***But at the same time, your parents were progressives in their way. Your father was what we in Norwegian call a 'husstellærer', or someone who taught home economics and domestic care, right?***

My father was a composite character politically speaking. He had a great influence on me. I believe that for him—and there were differences between my father and mother—the support for the State of Israel, as for many of his generation, was very much premised on the persecution of Jews during the Second World War, as well as his basic socialist beliefs. But this was socialism within the framework of the Christian People's Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*); that is what we are talking about: a form of Christian Socialism. So, for him there were many important reasons to support Israel.

My father was educated as a teacher, and at Danvik Folk High School he taught English. When I was five years old, he brought our whole family to England to study for a year at the University of Newcastle. And so, I started school in England at the age of five, and I thought it was terrible. I did not understand a thing they were saying, and in Newcastle it was ice cold—that is what I remember best. And this was a pretty radical thing to do at the time. Mum had to work in a school for girls who had committed criminal acts but were too young to be imprisoned. Dad had to live with an English family in order to learn English.

And so, he taught English. He was also very preoccupied with philosophy, so I grew up with Socrates and Plato, and Dad sat through all our vacations reading philosophy books. And he was deeply engaged in the push for equal rights for both sexes. He was, I believe, the first man—along with 120 women—to attend the Teaching College for Home Economics and Domestic Care (*Statens lærerskole i husstell*) in Stabekk [west of Oslo]. There, he took a one-year course in home economics in order

to become a teacher, and to provide a male example in this role when it comes to equality between the sexes. That is what I grew up with.

***Now, just for the record, and to get the historical facts straight, tell me their full names and dates.***

Indeed. Dad was Johan Henriksen, originally from Fredrikstad, son of a Finnish father who had fled Finland because he did not want to serve in the military. This must have been before the Russian Revolution and the Finnish Civil War, and I would think that this would have warranted the death penalty. So, instead he became a ship captain and sailed the seven seas—and ended up in Fredrikstad in Norway. My mother, Ragnhild, whose maiden name was Myhrvold, came from Drammen. She hailed from a poor working-class family, with a father who was an artistic painter and a stay-at-home mother. My mother obviously had talents because she had received stipends from several sources so that she could complete high school, which was quite unusual for girls of her class background at the time. She had academic talents and ended up as a schoolteacher, exactly as she had wanted. As for the dates, Dad was born in 1929 and Mum in 1931. And it was my mother's side that were active in the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army is in a way my second home, my spiritual home. There, I've attended everything from Sunday School every Sunday to Sunday services at 11—holy meetings, as they were called. I have been through all the ranks in the Girl Scouts, and sung in their Ten Sing choir, even singing solos before I managed to destroy my voice. In short, this was my home, and it was also at the first co-ed Scouts Camp of the Salvation Army in 1975 that I met my husband.

***This is a good background for you to have, since it gives you direct knowledge of a part of Norwegian society—the Christian community—who have been extremely interested in your work, not least on Israel. At times, when you have been maligned or attacked, I am sure you must have thought, 'how can they say such things?' It might then be good to know a bit more about this environment from the inside, and to know that it is also a place for warm and engaged human beings.***

When I started studying Israel in the 1980s, I did not come into it from a radical, pro-Palestinian youth background. I came into it from completely the opposite side. But then I realized that there was something about the relationship between the map and reality that did not quite fit.

Yes, indeed. To this day, I feel great affection and warmth towards the Salvation Army. I mean, I could nominate them for a Peace Prize. There is something about their understanding of Christianity, and their social work, which I have appreciated from when I was very young all the way until now. I just need to hear a brass band and it makes me happy. Although I am not now active in the Salvation Army at all, that is and remains my spiritual home. And this is what many do not know about

me: namely, that when I started studying Israel in the 1980s, I did not come into it from a radical, pro-Palestinian youth background. I came into it from completely the opposite side. But then I realized that there was something about the relationship between the map and reality that did not quite fit.

***How long did your parents live?***

Dad did not reach a very old age. He died in 1998 at the age of 69. He had been seriously ill for many years. My mum died in 2014, at 84.

***And your sister, how much younger than you is she?***

My sister Ragne is two years younger than me, born in 1961—and a teacher, like the whole family, really.

## **Becoming a Historian**

***And that leads us to the start of your studies. When did you decide that you wanted to delve in the manifold problems of the Middle East?***

Well, at the time I was living in Trondheim, because my husband Geir [Morten Waage] attended what was then called NTH (*Norges Tekniske Høyskole*), and today is called NTNU (the Norwegian University of Science and Technology; *Norges Teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet*). He was studying to become an engineer.

***And you married in ...***

Ahh, that's 100 years ago now. In 1980. At that time, I had already studied for three years at the Teachers' College in Halden, and then I moved over to history to take what was then called *grunnfag* and *mellomfag* in history [equivalent to a Bachelor's degree with a major in history] in Trondheim. I was about to start my Master's degree (*hovedfag*) and was wondering what to write about. In Trondheim, there was a totally different environment for history than in Oslo. The emphasis there was on the history of the labour movement, women's history, and so on. And I soon realized that those fields were not really my main interest.

Already at the Teachers' College I had become interested in international politics and Norwegian foreign policy, even if that was not much discussed in our home, with the exception of the Middle East and my dad's political interests. And as we were winding up in Trondheim, planning to move back to Oslo, I called the professor at the University of Oslo who advised students on such topics. That was Helge Pharo. All I knew about him was that he was an 800-m track runner. I had even seen him running around at the University. And I had found out that he was advising students who were writing on topics related to foreign policy. So, I called him up and told him my name politely, and I wondered if he could help me come up with some topics. And he said: 'Well, I think you should write a thesis about European integration.' And I went: 'Ugh! [*Æsj!*]' And he replied: 'Excuse me? What are you saying?'

‘Well, I didn’t mean to say “ugh!”, but don’t you have anything else?’ I just thought it sounded so boring. ‘OK, what about the conflict between Greece and Turkey since 1945?’ And I said: ‘Well, that’s a bit more interesting, but you haven’t quite hit the target.’ So, I simply said I would think about it, and then I started reflecting on all those loud discussions about Israel that I had grown up with. And I thought, why not just study the one thing I have always wondered about: what is so wrong with that country, since it makes everyone so angry?

A few days later, I called Helge Pharo back and asked: ‘What about Norway’s relationship to the foundation of the State of Israel? Could I write about that?’ And he replied: ‘Is there anything to write about on that?’ He has since said that that was an incredibly stupid thing to ask, not least in light of what I actually found. Well, that is how it began. And I think the reason why I chose to write about the Middle East was exactly that background of experiencing all those discussions about Israel.

***This must be around 1983? Or 84?***

This is 1983.

***May I just mention a funny anecdote? I finished high school in 1984, and I chose to write for my written exam in Norwegian about the conflict in the Middle East. I knew that could be a topic that came up, so I had really prepared. And my big hero was Shimon Peres. And the 18-year-old Henrik wrote about how Peres broke with Menachem Begin’s line. Well, I always say that if they had read my exam from 1984, they would have had peace now! But of course, no one but the examiner ever read it. I came from a home where support for Israel was seen as part of the support for western ideals and not least part of our obligation since the war.***

***But I remember how my father, an active politician, always stressed to me the importance of respecting belonging and culture, and that was in many ways what got me to think more deeply about the plight of the Palestinians. But enough of that—how did the history of Israel lead you to PRIO?***

Well, it’s 1983 and I’ve had this conversation with Helge Pharo, and we have spoken several more times about how to proceed, and we agree that I should apply for access to the archives of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. That was, of course, Helge’s idea, and I was very enthusiastic. And he assumed that it would be easy to gain access to those papers—nothing controversial there. Everyone knows that Norway at the time was a strong and warm supporter of Israel. At the same time, PRIO announced a possibility to apply for student stipends. Well, all I knew about PRIO was the noise generated by Nils Petter Gleditsch and his book on NATO listening stations in Norway.

***Oh, I remember that, too.***



## Arriving at ‘Hippie’ PRIO

I remember it very well! I had an image in my head of Nils Petter in this court case, and all the publicity around it. But I had no strong preconceptions about PRIO, except that I thought it was probably a bit of a rabid, ‘hippie’ place, to put it that way. I thought that it was not quite in the mainstream, but I did not really know much about the place. Anyway, I thought this must be a good idea, so I actually spent two months writing my application and I flew from Trondheim to Oslo to go to an information meeting for students in late 1983.

There were lots of students there, maybe 30 in total. Asbjørn Eide, the father of Espen Barth Eide [who later became both Defence Minister and Foreign Minister of Norway], chaired the meeting. I brought this application that I had worked so hard on—a project outline of about seven pages. I remember there was this other girl who was working on domestic violence, and Asbjørn Eide told us both after the meeting that we could just go home—our topics were not ones that PRIO would be interested in.

And I was so disappointed—I had travelled all that way and everything. So I went out into the corridor, and I saw someone I did not immediately recognize. I soon realized it was Nils Petter Gleditsch, who had been listening in from the outside through an open door. And he said: ‘Hey you, don’t go. I am interested in your topic. Tell me more about what you want to write about for your thesis.’ I knew that Nils Petter had already advised several history students. Well, I told him about my plans, and he said that I should write an application. ‘I already have an application,’ I told him—you know, ever the good girl, having done my job and all. ‘Well, give it to me, then,’ he said. ‘You’ll hear back from me.’

Well, I went back to Trondheim and I heard nothing. And in January 1984 we moved to Oslo, and someone called me and said I had received a whole year’s student stipend at PRIO. There had been 70 applicants in all, and two were successful. One of them was me, and the other—I later heard—was Jan Egeland. And that is how I came to PRIO. It really feels quite arbitrary.

***Well, not really that arbitrary. It seems to me that Nils Petter, listening to you, understood that your project outline was truly good. You had already then decided that your topic would be the founding of Israel and Norway’s relationship to that event, right?***

Yes, yes.

***But you still had no clear impression that there was something there that gainsaid the official story?***

Quite right—I had no such impression at all. I had formulated this as my topic, and I had—during the fall of 1983—sent applications for access to the relevant archives of the Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*), the Labour Party’s parliamentary group, maybe also the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), and that’s all I remember.

And I had not received any replies yet. So, I was just waiting, while I had started reading relevant literature.

***OK, let us just take the formalities. You got a stipend and could work from PRIO. Who was your supervisor?***

At the University of Oslo, where I was part of the programme in history, it was Helge Pharo. And at PRIO it was Nils Petter Gleditsch. It was the two of them.

***Right. And they worked well together?***

Oh yes. In my opinion, and I know they don't quite agree with me, but I truly feel that I would never have completed that degree or become a historian if it hadn't been for the enormous support and backing and excellent advice they gave me. They did so from two different places, not together, but it worked very well. And then I remember, in February, that Nils Petter told me that he had found money for me so I could go to the US to delve into archival files there, too. And I had to tell him: 'But, Nils Petter, I can't do that—I'm expecting a child.' And I thought it was terrible. But he just said: 'Oh, how lovely.' And I replied: 'Do you really think so?' Because that wasn't really my plan then. So, there was no trip to the US at that point. But I had a child and I continued writing my thesis at PRIO.

Nils Petter [Gleditsch] told me that he had found money for me so I could go to the US to delve into archival files there, too. And I had to tell him: 'But, Nils Petter, I can't do that – I'm expecting a child.' And I thought it was terrible. But he just said: 'Oh, how lovely.'

***And so Kristoffer was born, right?***

Yes, in September 1984.

***And when did you pick up the writing again?***

Oh, there wasn't much of a break.

***Typical you, eh?***

Well, I am not very good at being pregnant either. There was work more or less all the time. I collected sources and brought the literature with me constantly, and I had this new typewriter with a correction key.

***Oh yes, I remember that one—the correction key! Fantastic!***

Oh yes, fabulous. This was before personal computers, right? And I remember my husband Geir said, 'The only place you do not work is when we are out on the boat; otherwise you are carrying this stuff around all the time'. And I did. With the baby and everything. Writing and writing.

***And when did you submit your thesis?***

That took some time—I submitted in May 1987.

***And you were at PRIO all the time, except when you were at home due to maternity leave. Did you have any income?***

Oh, things were really tight. And do not imagine that we had a huge civil engineer's income from Geir at that time, because we did not. But I did have the student stipend from PRIO, and then—which partly explains why things took so long—I got a stipend from the Research Council of Norway that was given to one female history student and to one female philosophy student, in order to encourage recruitment of female researchers within those male-dominated fields. And that was quite a big stipend, several thousand kroner a month for a full year. That was good, because I realized that I had a much more daunting task ahead of me than I had initially realized. And I had the baby and everything. But anyway, it all ensured that I had time to write quite a comprehensive thesis and still have money for food.

**The First Controversial Findings.*****Tell us more about the process—because this thesis would become quite controversial.***

To be honest, I was a bit gullible and naïve about what it would be like to deal with politically controversial questions. I do believe, as I did then, that it is possible to be a proper historian, a good historian, and to be judged academically on the basis of one's work. Unfortunately, however, that has not been my experience—that's not the way it is when you reach conclusions that contradict widespread opinions.

***And what were those conclusions?***

I was a bit gullible and naïve about what it would be like to deal with politically controversial questions. I do believe, as I did then, that it is possible [...] to be judged academically on the basis of one's work. Unfortunately, however, that has not been my experience – that's not the way it is when you reach conclusions that contradict widespread opinions.

Well, my conclusion was the following: Norway had not at all supported the creation of the State of Israel from the beginning. Norway had first wanted to send the Jews who had survived Hitler's extermination attempt to somewhere in South America. That was official Norwegian policy, and the Labour Party first got angry with me saying that, because they did not want to admit that they had supported a Jewish colonization of South America. They hoped that could be passed over in silence.

***And these were not just minor figures within the Labour Party?***

No, no, this was the [Einar] Gerhardsen government's stand, and it was held by the two leading figures of the Labour Party at the time: Haakon Lie, the party's general secretary, and Aase Lionæs, who for many years chaired the Nobel Committee. Aase Lionæs was very angry with me. And I was so surprised, because I had only seen her on TV. And I could not understand why they were so angry at what I had found in the Foreign Ministry's and Labour Party's own archives. I will say about Haakon Lie, though—and much can be said about him—but when I interviewed him about this he said: 'Can you imagine, Hilde, that I could have stood for something so stupid back then? But that's what I thought at the time, so I just have to stand by the mistaken opinions I had.'

My conclusion was the following: Norway had not at all supported the creation of the State of Israel from the beginning. [...] And I could not understand why they were so angry at what I had found in the Foreign Ministry's and Labour Party's own archives.

The greatest problem came with the Foreign Ministry. And I was not prepared for that, since I had received so-called privileged access to still classified documents. That meant I had access, but that the ministry reserved the right to read my manuscript after I had done my research, before publication. And that's what created the problem, because when I handed them my finished thesis for what's called 'release' from the ministry, I got into trouble with some of those bureaucrats and friends and colleagues of the actors I had written about.

What I had found out, in brief, was that four top Foreign Ministry bureaucrats had gone behind the back of the Gerhardsen government, which had decided to support Israeli membership of the UN: first, in the Security Council, where Norway had a seat, and then in the General Assembly. They simply sent a telegram of their own where they added their own sentence—and I found this in the source materials as a handwritten addition—saying that Norway was *not* to support any Israeli UN membership, but should instead abstain from voting in both the Security Council and in the General Assembly.

***Did they have any support elsewhere in the West for this—what about the UK, for instance?***

The UK was a bit of a special case, because they had been the Mandate Power in Palestine and had keenly felt the problems associated with creating a Jewish state there. So, they were against.

***Hence, these Norwegian bureaucrats were not all alone.***

Right. What they primarily referred to was international law, since most of them were lawyers and experts in international law. They did not want to formally recognize a

state whose borders were not clear, which was at war with its neighbours, and which had created a huge Palestinian refugee problem. They did not want such a state to become a member of the United Nations, at least not at that point. What created the huge commotion was of course the fact that these were now unfaithful servants vis-à-vis the Norwegian government, even had they not succeeded. And in 1987, that became too much to handle for the Foreign Ministry: that I had found and could document that leading Foreign Ministry officials had gone behind the back of the government.

***So, what was the process, then, to get this declassified and published?***

The deal was that I could publish the findings, but that the sources should remain classified. I was called into a crisis meeting at the ministry, two days before Christmas Eve, I remember. I had the sense to bring Helge Pharo. I did not know at this point what I was going to be asked. All I had got—signalling that this was serious—was a phone call to my parents, with whom I was living temporarily. The ministry said that I had to come and give them some answers, but I didn't know what the questions would be. In that phone conversation, they explained that the contents of the conversation remain classified until you get there in person. And when I came for the meeting, the whole leadership of the ministry was there.

***Those are the bureaucrats, right? Not the political leadership.***

That is right. The Foreign Minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, knew nothing about this. They called the thesis 'indecent and slanderous'. They demanded that I re-wrote the thesis in forty different places in order for me to have it declassified and published. And I fought back. Not because I'm tough or anything, but because the agreement I had signed with the ministry stated that the ministry could demand information be withdrawn if it pertained to state security or purely private information. But there was nothing like that in the materials of my research. It was just that they did not like its conclusions. So, when I replied that I refused, the ministry people were really shocked that this young lady would not give in to their demands to have the ministry portrayed in a better light. I simply refused.

They called the thesis 'indecent and slanderous'. They demanded that I re-wrote the thesis in forty different places in order for me to have it declassified and published. And I fought back.

***This must have been quite a tough process—and I assume it was not solved overnight. Probably Christmas and the New Year passed. You said it was good you brought Helge Pharo. What was Helge's reaction?***

His reaction was sharply critical, just like mine. We both tried to find out what this was all about before we went into the meeting, and we each tried to figure out how to react and what to say. I remember we met a relatively young man out in the corridor

before the meeting, a Principal Officer (*byråsjef*) called Knut Vollebæk [later to become a Foreign Minister representing KrF (*The Christian People's Party*)]. And we had no idea what the meeting would bring up, right? And he pulled me aside and said something like: 'This meeting will be pretty terrible for you. But try to keep calm, and I will help you solve this afterwards.' If I had not received that warning ahead of time, I don't know how things would have gone.

I mean, both I and all the Foreign Ministry people were so angry. The lawyer they had called in to evaluate whether they could sue me for libel actually said that the ministry probably didn't have a very strong case. But in a way, that didn't help. Helge Pharo defended me, and that was good. He defended me and also history as an academic field, both during the meeting and afterwards, and I remember he said something like: 'This is a really good thesis: it is academically strong, she has treated the source materials professionally, and I cannot see that she has been slanderous in any way, or has pressed the sources too far—I actually think she could have gone much further.'

Well, after several rounds—this must have taken something like nine months altogether—the Foreign Ministry finally gave in and cleared the thesis. The Foreign Minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, had also gotten wind of the story, and I have been told that he said to the ministry's people: 'Get this matter out of the way now, please. Can't you see that you are doing more harm than good?'

***I guess this says something about the respect people like Thorvald Stoltenberg and Knut Vollebæk had for academia, after all—and the way in which they understood the fact that people have different roles. But what about PRIO? How did PRIO relate to all of this? Who was PRIO's director then?***

Sverre Lodgaard—and Sverre was a personal friend, from what I remember, of several who had been in that meeting at the Foreign Ministry. They had spoken to him several times, both before and after the meeting. Beforehand, he had assured them that I was a nice person who would undoubtedly listen to their advice. After the meeting, I have been told, they called Sverre and said: 'You said this young woman was nice? Well, she is not—she's tough as nails and won't give in to anything.'

So, it was not primarily PRIO that played an active role here, but more Helge Pharo on behalf of the field of history, but of course with full academic, moral, and personal support from Nils Petter Gleditsch, who was also very concerned about the problem of secrecy. He had encountered this kind of situation personally just a few years earlier. Well, Helge Pharo really fought for this, also in his role as Department Chair for the History Department at the University of Oslo. And I think you are right about another thing: I think I was greatly helped by the fact that people like Thorvald Stoltenberg and Knut Vollebæk saw that one has to understand the role of the academic—and the Foreign Ministry bureaucracy just didn't do that.

***And then the thesis was released from the ministry and given to a commission at the University of Oslo, I presume.***

No, not quite. The three people in the commission had already been permitted to read it, that was part of the contract. So, I had already passed my exam, with a very good

grade, even, and to make matters even more difficult for the ministry, I had received a doctoral stipend, while they were still quarrelling and holding the thesis back. They essentially claimed that I did not understand a thing, while the academics came in from the side and gave me solid credit.

***What happened to the thesis—it became a book right?***

Yes, by the time we were well into 1988 and the thesis had been released from the ministry, I wrote letters to more or less every publisher I could think of. I think I sent around 12 letters, saying: ‘Hi, I’m Hilde, and I have this thesis. Would you like to publish it as a book?’ I had no expectation that I would hear anything back—maybe Pax would reply, a socialist publishing house, but that would be it, I thought. And then I got one positive reply after another. I chose Gyldendal, and I was really proud when my thesis appeared as a book with them, under the title of *Da staten Israel ble til* (*When the State of Israel was Born*). I remember doing one of my very first media appearances shortly afterwards, about this book that had stirred up so much trouble. I recall one of the Foreign Ministry’s top bureaucrats went on NRK’s (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) news show *Ukeslutt* and said, ‘This is the book that we say is worse than Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*.’ Well, that’s how it ended!

One of the Foreign Ministry’s top bureaucrats went on NRK’s *Ukeslutt* and said, ‘This is the book that we say is worse than Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*.’

***And the book came out in 1989?***

Yes, right, 1989.

**From Israel 1949 to Suez 1956.**

***Tell us about the doctoral stipend.***

Well, that was Helge Pharo again. He pulled the strings for me. I was going to finish my master’s so I could become a high school teacher, right? It is April 1987, and I’m completing my thesis and he springs it on me: ‘Hilde, shouldn’t you apply for a doctoral scholarship?’ ‘No, no, are you crazy?’ I remember replying. But he protested and said I wouldn’t get a scholarship right away anyway. I would have to apply several times. ‘Try now, and then you come back again next year, and then maybe ... It’ll take you just two weeks to write the application, and I’ll tell you if it’s too bad to even send in.’ So said Helge. And I abided by what he said. I created a project about Norway’s relationship to Israel and the Suez Crisis in the 1950s, sent it in, and pretty much forgot about the whole thing. And then, in October 1987, they called me from the Research Council of Norway and told me, congratulations, you have a doctoral stipend!

***Wow! And by that time, you had received your fine grade for your master's, right?***

Yep. And this was before the whole trouble with the ministry, which started around Christmas. In 1987, I actually had a rather long leave of absence because of an eye operation, but I was back at PRIO in 1988 getting ready to start my doctoral work, and then in 1989 I was pregnant again, with child number two, who arrived in September. That is Katrine. And I stayed home with her until April of 1990.

***And let us take child number three right away, too.***

## **Interrupted by PRIO Directorship**

No, no, we will take another break from my academic work that I had first. I am a historian, you know. We have to get the chronology straight! Well, there I am, working away on my doctorate with two kids until we get to around May 1992, which is when Sverre Lodgaard calls me to his office, the Wednesday before Ascension Day (*Kristi Himmelfartsdag*).

***The second floor of Fuglehauggata 11, right?***

Yes, and I'll never forget. I was really wondering what he wanted to talk with me about, because he was so insistent. And I'm way into my doctoral work, and I'm busy with the kids and everything. And then Sverre tells me that he has got a new job in Geneva and has to leave PRIO a year before his director's tenure runs out. And he says: 'I want you to be named deputy director and take over as director when I leave PRIO in August.' I was pretty shocked, really shaken. Was he joking? I mean, I was so young, and there were so many other more senior researchers whom he could have asked, and he asks little me. That's how I felt. But I did say yes.

***And why? Because you liked the challenge? Because you liked PRIO? Maybe because you have a crazy streak?***

Hah-hah—all of the above! Well, except I do not really have a crazy streak. I am pretty rational, to tell the truth. But there are two things that have always characterized my work life. First, it is my genuine joy and interest in doing historical research. And second, I love working with people, and I love to manage and lead others, to get things done together with others—that is something I have always enjoyed. So even though I had zero leadership experience, except for girl-scouting and a bit in Sunday School and things like that, and I guess some leadership experience from back when I studied to be a teacher, I did not really have *proper* leadership experience. But I always had the *interest* in directing and making decisions. And according to Sverre, those were abilities that he had detected. And so, I thought, well, how old was I? 32? 33? Well, I turned 33 that year in August.

***You were indeed young to be PRIO's director.***



Yes, at first I decided that it was unthinkable. But then I realized what an amazing opportunity it was. And so, I went for it—I mean it was only for a year anyway. But the Research Council got really mad: another leave of absence? You know, an eye operation, and then another child, and now you are going to be the director of PRIO?

***I guess another trait that made you do it is that you are very conscientious. You want to do your duty.***

Yes, I guess so.

***And so, you think that someone must do the job anyway, and now I am being asked, and I'd better do it.***

Yes, and remember, it was only for a year. We had to be quick and start the search for a new director. And hiring a director in an academic institution is not that easy. I remember I was asked at the same time to sit in a select committee that was going to help the Lund Commission [on the secret services in Norway], and I said no to that. And people told me: 'You cannot decline that!' But I had to make some choices. So, I guess I am quite determined and conscientious—and I did see that director job as an opportunity. I guess I was even quite flattered.

***Did you enjoy it?***

Yes, very much. We also speeded up the process of getting a new director, which became Dan Smith. And when he had been selected, it must have been around February 1993, I had to tell him—I guess this was becoming a tradition: 'Dear Dan, I'm having another baby.' That was the first thing I told him! And on top of it all, the pregnancy was not going too well. So, I had to ask him to start earlier than planned. Our original plan was for him to start in autumn 1993, but he actually started coming to Oslo and overlapping with me in late spring.

***But the pregnancy did end well.***

Yes, Henriette arrived in October—around the same time of year as the others!

## **Meeting Three Good Men**

***Let us go back to your fights with the Foreign Ministry. As we have already heard, some people have been quite important to you. One of them later became Foreign Minister, Knut Vollebæk. Tell us about him.***

I have experienced that there are some people who, quite independently of their political party affiliation or standpoints, can effectively cut through the red tape and the challenges and make decisions that are morally right. I can mention at least four of them, and we can start with the one you just mentioned: Knut Vollebæk. Already in 1987, as I pointed out, he was the one who took me aside before that troublesome meeting and assured me that things would probably work out. I remember that when

I would sit in the ministry's library working on my doctoral thesis in the early 1990s he would stop if he saw me and say: 'Hilde, remember to call me in advance if I need to bail you out again!' He always had that basic respect for the independence and integrity of the historian and the researcher, and that continued later, after his time as Foreign Minister, when he was ambassador to the US.

There are some people who, quite independently of their political party affiliation or standpoints, can effectively cut through the red tape and the challenges and make decisions that are morally right.

Then there is Vidar Helgesen, from the Conservative Party, who was State Secretary (Deputy Minister) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time when there was so much controversy around my research on the Oslo Process and Accords in the early 2000s. He made sure, against all the resistance among several within the bureaucracy, that my report was released. I will come back to that.

And then there is another, who contacted me as these storms were ongoing and I was in real trouble. I remember our eldest daughter Katrine one day took the phone and told me, 'There's a man called Stoltenberg who wants to talk to you'. I picked up the phone and he went, 'Yes, this is Thorvald Stoltenberg', and this was while his son Jens was Prime Minister, and I had of course interviewed Thorvald previously. Now he called me to say that, 'Well, you know, with Jens being Prime Minister and everything, it's hard for me to really say anything, now that you've stirred up all this trouble with your research. But I want you to know, from Jens and myself, that it is important to be able to look oneself in the mirror every day and do what is right!'.

*Interesting—sounds like Thorvald.*

Jens even said to me a few times, whenever I met him on some occasion: 'You know, Hilde, my dad often talks about you at home, and he always speaks so highly of you.' It took some courage to tell me that, because I was not particularly popular within the Labour Party at the time, to put it diplomatically.

## **Jan Egeland, 'The Saviour'**

*Yes, this is basically about understanding one's proper role, isn't it? What about Jan Egeland in the midst of all this. When you started out at PRIO, you and he were there together as master's students, right?*

Yes, Jan could certainly be mentioned as a fourth politician who has made a difference to me. I remember when we sat there in the 1980s, when PRIO was still down by City Hall in Rådhusgata 10, and the noisy trailers went straight through that street—that was before the tunnels and everything. The office building was shaking, we often

could not hear what we were saying. He was writing his political science thesis, and I was writing my history thesis.

And I remember him saying, as he was writing on the role of small states in world politics and I was writing on Israel and Norway: 'Hilde, you know, this academic life is not really for me. I think I'll go out into the world and create some peace.' It's true! I mean, already then, he was travelling around the world. He was active in Amnesty, he had been to Colombia, he was a news anchor in NRK, and he was tanned and handsome. And always so nice! A really inspiring person. And I remember answering him: 'I agree, this academic life isn't really for me either. And writing this thesis is *so* tough. Maybe I should just stay home and raise children.' And he replied: 'I don't believe you! In a few years you'll be a Middle East expert.'

***And he was right!***

Well, I know Jan, so I may be biased. But whenever I came across him in the materials about the Oslo Process, I saw that he had a real and genuine wish to create peace. I even wrote a book chapter about him once, which I wanted to call 'The Saviour', but the publisher wouldn't let me. The thing about Jan in this context is that when my research started appearing on the Oslo Process, he was open and absolutely willing to answer questions, and he admitted that while their ambitions for peace were real, they had in many respects failed. In short, he was able to reflect critically on his own role. And that takes some guts.

***I actually remember a meeting we had in Fuglehauggata, where you presented your first report on the Oslo Process, and Jan Egeland was there as member of the panel. And for me, knowing a bit about the tensions you had experienced vis-à-vis the Foreign Ministry and the Labour Party, it made an impression on me when Jan said so clearly that these things have to be spoken about and questioned. I mean, he was someone who was clearly associated with the inner circles of the Labour Party.***

Yes, you are right. He had been State Secretary (Deputy Foreign Minister) and had definitely been part of the Oslo Process.

## **Fellow Historians**

***Let's go back to PRIO as a workplace. It's been filled with some interesting people, right? And among them are several historians, such as Tor Egil Førland and Stein Tønnesson. What is the place of historians and history at PRIO?***

To answer that I will have to go back to Nils Petter Gleditsch. Due to his work on NATO and secrecy and all of that, he was deeply interested in genuine historical research, gaining access to secret sources, and analysing them. Hence, when I came to PRIO, there was much historical research going on. There was Morten Aasland, who is now an ambassador, there was Roger Sørđal, who was writing on U2-flyovers

and spy balloons, and then there was me. There was Stein, too, but he had already been there for a few years (1980–82), had just completed his master’s degree, and left PRIO around the time I came. But he was certainly someone I knew of and in a way took over from at PRIO, although I hadn’t actually met him.

And Nils Petter continued to recruit historians: Tor Egil Førland, now professor of history at the University of Oslo, who was writing on export restrictions and CoCom [the ‘Coordinating Committee’; the Western bloc’s organ for strategic export controls], and Olav Njølstad, who was writing a thesis on Jimmy Carter’s containment policies. Olav is now the Director of the Nobel Institute. I remember Olav and I shared an office down in Rådhusgata. And Stein came back in 1988, after three years at the Institute for Defence Studies (*Institutt for Forsvarsstudier*). So yes, it’s true, there were many historians. There was Odd Arne Westad, too. He was one of the COs (conscientious objectors) and in a way a junior to the rest of us. But he has gone on to great things—he recently went from Harvard to Yale. All of us found ourselves in this environment around Nils Petter Gleditsch and Helge Pharo.

## Fitting in at PRIO

### *Exciting. But tell me, what was it like being a woman at PRIO?*

Well, we are in the past century, right? And there have been a number of changes to what it’s like being a woman in what is still, although not as predominantly, a male-dominated environment. I will admit that I felt a bit of an outsider when I came to PRIO. It occurred to me that most of the women who were there—or who had been there before me—were quite radical feminists, and here I came with my family and kids and everything. And my main cohorts were these male historians who could come across as super-clever, a bit arrogant, and quite good at showing off—or so I felt. But those guys, you know, who are today the Nobel Institute Director and the Department Chair at Blindern and so on, they must have liked me—if not personally, at least as a historian.

We even founded a small club, which we called ‘*Internasjonalen*’ [The International, after the famous Socialist anthem]. That was Olav Njølstad, Tor Egil Førland, Stein Tønnesson, Odd Arne Westad—and me. I may not have fit in completely, but I did hang out with these guys and continued to work as hard as I could while wondering: Do I really fit in here? Maybe I should just stay home with the kids? I guess what really made a difference was this deep interest in history that we all shared.

I really don’t feel it has been difficult being a woman at PRIO. [...] People at PRIO generally are preoccupied with equal rights. But overall, in society at large, things have clearly changed since the 1980s. I recall [my husband]

telling his colleagues he had to pick up the kids in kindergarten, and being asked: ‘Don’t you have a wife to do that kind of thing?’

***You were at PRIO from 1984 to 2005, before moving on to the university. Did conditions for women change over that time?***

Well, to be honest, in spite of what I just said, I really don’t feel it has been difficult being a woman at PRIO. Remember Nils Petter, who thought it was so nice I was having this baby, right? Also, people at PRIO generally are preoccupied with equal rights. I guess it has been more difficult being someone a bit from the outside, from this bourgeois, Christian environment in Drammen, and also not being part of any academic elite. But overall, in society at large, things have clearly changed since the 1980s. I recall Geir working as an entrepreneur and telling his colleagues he had to pick up the kids in kindergarten, and being asked: ‘Don’t you have a wife to do that kind of thing?’

## **Good Directors—Necessary Changes**

***So, tell us about the PRIO directors you have worked under.***

That’s a funny story. Because when I came to PRIO in 1984, it was something of a hippie institute, with a flat structure and the secretary getting the highest pay of all. We had these common-room meetings for all, where the COs and students were in the majority. We could—and sometimes did—vote down proposals from the tenured research staff. I especially remember one time when I had a visitor over from the Foreign Ministry, and there was one of PRIO’s researchers at the time—I won’t say who—who came with those big, baggy Bermuda shorts and no shirt and sat down in our lunch room with his feet on the table. Things were just floating around, to put it that way. It was quite chaotic, both when it comes to leadership and the organizational structure. Time was ripe for a change, and that is why Sverre Lodgaard was hauled back from Stockholm and SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) where he was working. He came in 1987 and was faced with quite a clean-up task.

***Well, for me who came in 1997, I still heard about all of that, the most visible result of it probably being the punching machine for logging hours.***

Yes, that was one of the most visible manifestations, but there were so many other things: the salary system, the titles, the director, clothing expectations—I mean, we suddenly started talking about how we were to dress at work. And the punching machine, ahh, yes. For most of us that was pretty strange. Were we to stamp in and out like workers in a factory? All in all, though, I do think it was necessary to meet the demands of the times (see Chaps. 10 and 19).

***The directors during your time at PRIO have all been different personalities. What can you say about them?***

I would say that PRIO has been very good at recruiting leaders who have been right for the times. It was necessary to have a Sverre Lodgaard who could put things in order. It was then necessary to have a Dan Smith who could open up for Foreign Ministry and other sources of funding, which in turn made it possible for PRIO to expand and continue its activities. And it was necessary to have a Stein Tønnesson, who could consolidate our activities so that we did not grow too much, not least when it comes to politically operative projects, instead emphasizing PRIO's strength as a research institute.

***What about the external profiling of PRIO?***

This has definitely been strengthened under Stein and later Kristian (Berg Harpviken) and Henrik (Urdal), who speak Norwegian and know how central PRIO ought to be to the Norwegian public debate. That was a key part of Stein's mission—to make us visible not just as researchers, but as contributors to public debates about international politics.

***And during much of this time, you were the deputy director.***

## **Hunting for Funds**

That is right, from 1992 until I left PRIO in 2005. Fundraising was an important part of my work all that time. Under Dan, that became a core part of our activities, but in many ways, it was strengthened under Stein due to the emphasis on PRIO becoming even more visible in the public eye.

***And that reminds us of an interesting topic: namely, PRIO's need to be visible, not just due to financing and fundraising, but also because we need and want to share our research findings. To me personally, that has always been an important part of PRIO: the encouragement to be visible, without any sort of central censorship from PRIO's leadership. And that certainly brings us back to your research. You, after all, became part of a very public and visible debate about Israel and the Oslo Accords.***

Well, we could have a long interview about this one topic, because this is immensely important in my view. On the one hand, PRIO is absolutely dependent on external funding, and I have myself had two major projects financed by the Foreign Ministry. On the other hand, this can get quite difficult, because one may get into conflict with one's funder—as happened to me vis-à-vis precisely that institution, which was also PRIO's most important funder.

***Exactly, and that takes good leadership to guide a way through such a situation.***

Indeed: one has to protect the integrity and freedom of the researchers. That was crucial to me, particularly as some of my research became so controversial, both in parts of the Foreign Ministry and within the Labour Party. I mean, when the Foreign Ministry indicated that I should change or tone down my conclusions, that was when I said a clear and unequivocal no.

***This brings us back to your master's thesis, which was more controversial, I guess, than your doctoral work. Tell us a bit more about the controversy with the Labour Party.***

Well, a good example is the May 1 Labour Day parades in 1956, when one of the parade floats displayed a living birch tree with a bloody axe wedged into it, accompanied by the following text: 'Let Israel live.' I found out through my archival research that this parade float did not come from the Labour Party headquarters at Youngstorget in Oslo. It came from the Israeli Labour Party and the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which shows that the latter actually had a hand in deciding what would be the Norwegian Labour Party's message.

***I guess Haakon Lie, the long-time Secretary General of the Labour Party, was crucial here.***

Oh yes, he was the most important of them all, facilitating close contact with the Israelis, and starting negotiations on the export of heavy water to Israel, so that they could build an atomic bomb. We even have the story of the 34 Vampire airplanes, which Haakon Lie wanted to smuggle over to Israel—we do not even know where they ended up.

***But still, the main conclusion, that the Labour Party supported Israel, is relatively well-known, isn't it?***

Yes, but I think in the 1980s and 90s, at a time when Norwegian public opinion was starting to turn around, it was difficult for many within the Labour Party to admit that they had been such strong supporters of Israel.

***Back to your continued research: did you never lose interest in the Middle East, and think, hey, I'll study Venezuela instead?***

Not at all. I think many of us researchers get a little obsessed. Especially when we get to work on things that are genuinely topical and right at the centre of the news. That is a privilege in so many ways. I felt that I did not do research solely for my colleagues at the university. Quite the opposite: the public at large really cared about these issues. To make it even more topical, I wrote my doctoral dissertation at the same time as the Oslo Process was happening. I remember that right after I had defended my doctorate in February 1997, Dan Smith came to me and said, 'Well, now we've shielded you long enough'. In other words: go out there and get a funded research project! And obviously, I had to turn to the Oslo Process and the Oslo Accords. I was really curious: how was it that Norway, still in many ways Israel's best friend from the old days, was supposed to have got on equally well with the Israelis and the Palestinians?

***I came to PRIO in February 1997, and I remember that on my second week here, you defended your dissertation. And I was thinking, wow, this is fantastic! What a place! Talking about funding, though, where did you get funding for the Oslo project?***

We went to the Foreign Ministry. I remember Dan Smith really wanted me to move into more contemporary studies on the Middle East, and this was the obvious thing to go for. So, I got in touch with the people doing internal evaluations at the ministry, and we took it from there. We had several meetings before we got the contract signed in 1998, and it seemed to us that some at the ministry really believed it best that the ministry itself do the full evaluation of both the politics and the use of funds for the Oslo process.

But we did get project funding in the end. What they did, though, was make it into a two-phase project. The first part, to be undertaken between 1998 and 2000, would be about how Norway got engaged in the first place. That part of the project was under the title *Norwegians? Who Needs Norwegians?* And then they did not really commit to the second part. That came later, after quite a lot of noise.

## **The Oslo Process**

***There is indeed a lot of noise stirred up throughout, here! But first, a short digression: there is a play called Oslo, which has become quite popular. It's about the Oslo Process.***

Oh, dear.

***Has the author of the play taken your findings into account?***

Not at all. I mean, I do read newspapers. And I have read several stories about this play—how the writer had a child in the same class as Mona Juul's and Terje Rød-Larsen's twins in New York, and how he got so fascinated with Terje Rød-Larsen's own story about his role. That play really constitutes the fairy tale version of the process. It reproduces all the myths about Norway's role. And I have come to realize that even though I have published so many academic articles on this subject, and have gone in depth into the details of the process, I will never be able to change the way these things are perceived internationally—and even really in Norway.

***So, if someone who had seen the play wanted to know exactly where your story is different from the one portrayed in the play, what would you tell them?***

Well, 'the fairy tale version'—as I call it—is that the Oslo Process is primarily Terje Rød-Larsen's achievement. He decided that he would try to do something that no one had been able to achieve: create peace in the Middle East. That is when I would say: that is *not* how politics or peace diplomacy works, and that is not the way in which peace negotiations take place. You cannot just show up in Jerusalem and say: 'Hi, I'm Terje. I come from Norway, let's make peace.' It is just not possible.



And I find it strange that people believe in such a version. I would immediately add that Terje Rød-Larsen has played an important role, with his initiative and his way of approaching the whole situation. But that is not how it began. Because someone had been working on this for years. And that someone was the Norwegian Labour Party, which for years had worked systematically to position itself in that role. But in the play, that is completely swept under the carpet, and it becomes a one-man show with that man's lovely wife as a helper.

## The Missing Counterbalance

*That takes us back to the Oslo Process as such. You have always claimed that one must take power seriously. Israel is the stronger party, and the stronger party will formulate most of the premises. I guess your claim is that this is where we often go wrong—that we do not do enough to even out those power discrepancies.*

Yes, that is a position I have always held. And it is hard for me to understand that people can get so angry with me over that. I simply point out that there is a real asymmetry of power! As I have already said, there is a strong party and a weak party. And it is simply not the case that a nice little bridge-builder like Norway can easily change the policies of the stronger party, particularly when that party is backed by an even stronger one, the United States. I can't see what on earth is so sensational about pointing that out. But in my case, making that factual point is what created all the noise around my two reports. But of course, my conclusions did not feel flattering for Israel, or for the Norwegian governments and the Norwegian Labour Party.

*What have the reactions been like in Israel? I am not thinking of those who are in active politics and may have something to defend, but of researchers and others who know the Oslo Process and history well.*

Ah, I remember coming to present my findings at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and I was so nervous. I thought: 'I may have been in trouble for my research conclusions before, but I'll surely get a real beating now.' But that didn't happen. Israeli academics, even Israeli politicians, have a much more 'realpolitik' approach to all of this. So, the first question to come up after the lecture was this: 'Of course we Israelis are the ones deciding, who else should it be?' So that actually went very well—I got much support. It went considerably worse on the Palestinian side, and I was not prepared for that either. Many of those I interviewed among the Palestinians, and those I later shared my findings with, were angry. Maybe that reaction is not so strange when having to admit that they had entered into a deal according to Israel's rules of the game, and based on Israel's premises, because they were so weak.

***What about the United States in all of this? They are obviously the strong party behind Israel. But are there not periods in US politics where they have exerted more pressure on Israel, too, such as under George H. W. Bush?***

That is exactly the discussion I want to encourage. The moment that American administrations, whether Democrat or Republican, see that this one-sided support of Israel hurts them, you will see that they are willing to shift course. We saw it with the Eisenhower administration in 1953, and during the elder Bush's presidency, as you said, in 1991. They took new initiatives, and they criticized and corrected their close ally Israel. So please note here that I am not saying peace and a new direction for the Middle East are impossible. But those two instances are exceptions. Mostly, American presidents have moved the US in an ever more Israel-friendly direction, which makes peace less likely.

## **Joining the University and Learning Hebrew**

***In 2005, you left PRIO for the University of Oslo, maintaining a 20% link to PRIO. Was that an obvious step for you, or a hard decision to make?***

Oh, it was very hard. I had been at PRIO since 1984. I had taken on a whole spectrum of roles at PRIO—from being a cleaner to becoming its director. And I felt, and still feel, that PRIO is a fantastic place to work, with such excellent colleagues, such a good environment, and so much fine leadership, which not least has helped us all understand that we must work hard on *financing* all our research, because PRIO does not have its own money. But at the same time, PRIO manages to take care of each individual researcher. Indeed, I have so many good things to say about PRIO that I could give a long lecture just about that. But I felt that all the noise around my work was making it more problematic to stay on, both for me and for PRIO. It was not that I did not get support internally, because I received strong support from everyone at PRIO. There was no one there who did not wish for me to stay on. But with all the heated discussions around my work on the Oslo Accords, I did feel it was becoming more difficult.

So, when a professorship was announced at the University of Oslo, with a start date of August 1, 2005, I applied and went for it. Remember, I had studied for three years in a teacher's college, and my aim was always to be a teacher, not a researcher. For as long as I can remember, I have always enjoyed communicating and teaching. The funny thing is, I had always imagined that in order to be a professor of history at the University of Oslo, you had to be a man and be 60 years old. When I realized there was actually an opening for me, I knew I had to give it a try. But it was with a truly heavy heart that I handed in my resignation at PRIO. I was crying. And Stein Tønnesson, our director then, was not too happy about it.

***The rest of us were not too happy either. That has to do, I think, with your ability to care for your colleagues and your fellow human beings. That is something people***

*do emphasize about you. We celebrated your 40th birthday not too long ago, right? Or I guess it was 60. Anyway, it made an impression on me how everybody talked about your love and care for the people around you—colleagues, students, family, and friends. You are also a good listener. And on top of it all, you have had your share of serious health challenges—with your eyes, and with respiratory diseases, among other things.*

*Sometimes you even have problems with reading or driving, and often have to spend parts of the year locked up in Gran Canaria, because the Norwegian winters get too cold. For someone who loves her family so intensely, that cannot be easy. And still you stay so engaged and positive. Where does that come from?*

Well, thanks, but I really do not know. It is true, however, that I like working with and being close to people, and not least interacting with students and young researchers. That is true whether it is a young Henrik Syse coming to the institute in 1997 or my students coming to me today. I really love engaging with other human beings. It gives me a lot as a scholar, too. I learn so much from others, including from my students; not just by lecturing, but also by advising, commenting on papers, leading seminar discussions, and helping students finish their theses. And I do suppose it is true that I spend quite a lot of time on my students.

*Yes, you do. But what if a student comes to you and wants to write a thesis that challenges your conclusions. How would you feel about your job as adviser then?*

Oh, that is just fine—great. I may feel inside that this student will not actually manage to disprove my findings unless he or she has found some documents I simply did not know of. But under all circumstances, I would find that exciting. I should add, though, that I feel I have left behind my research on Norway's role in the Middle East now. I have moved into other topics, even if they are related. Right now, I do quite a lot of work on peace negotiations as such. That builds on my work on the Oslo Process, which I learned so much from and take inspiration from. But it goes beyond that. What happened in the peace negotiations after the war in 1948, or after the wars in 1967 and 1973? What happened when Syria invaded Lebanon in 1976? These are genuinely exciting topics, because I find that what happened internally, and the agreements actually reached, are not at all the way they have been portrayed to the outside world.

Let me add that one of the really great things for me, since I do not have time to dig into all of these archives myself, is to send young master's students to do research in, say, the Carter archives, or the Reagan archives. And now I have taken a bachelor's degree myself in modern Hebrew, so that I can much more easily access the materials in the archives in Jerusalem.

***Fantastic, a bachelor's degree in modern Hebrew.***

No, it's not fantastic at all. It's crazy, that's what it is. It is very difficult to learn Hebrew, a Semitic language, when you are a Norwegian. But it has been a great help to me. Now I can access and understand so much more of those archives in Jerusalem.

***We are getting towards the end, Hilde. Just let me say what an incredibly journey you have been on—and have shared with us. Let us finish now with your family, which means so much to you. They have supported you all the way.***

Yes, absolutely. I sometimes feel as if my husband Geir and the kids have been along for the ride, to put it that way. They have certainly not chosen this voluntarily. At times, there has been a fair share of phone calls, even death threats, and police claiming I need protection. Often, our children have taken those phone calls, so they have heard it all. Their childhood was filled with comments about this mother of theirs. Remember, I was quite visible in the media, more so then than now. They had to live with that.

But as one of them once said to me: 'We've never had any other mum. This is what we've grown up with—I mean, we thought that everyone sat listening to the foreign-policy news hour on the radio at breakfast on Saturday mornings, with their mum hushing them so she could hear everything.' So, to them, this life has not been strange at all. Even when others have asked them, 'Aren't you afraid something might happen to your mother, working on all these dangerous things?' They have answered: 'Nah, mum says it's nothing to worry about, and we talk to her on the phone every day.' Having said that, of course Geir has had to hold the home front together with three kids, when I have been on these research visits to the Middle East.

***And in 2020, you have your 40th wedding anniversary!***

Yes, indeed. It is actually our anniversary tomorrow, the day after this interview. But that is just 39.

***If we can finish up by having you say one important thing about PRIO that you have taken with you, one thing that has really made an impression on you, what would that be?***

When I come back here now, in my 20% position, and we work on applications, for instance, I see how much people help each other. In spite of all the pressure and the dangers of not succeeding, we do support each other. PRIO could have been a very, very stressful place. And naturally, there is stress at PRIO. But still, there is a solid framework here, and extremely good leadership. That trickles down into the entire organization. Quite simply, and in general, people are kind to each other.

***Thank you, Hilde!***

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# Chapter 16

## Fresh Grounded Peace Research: Åshild Kolås



Interviewed by Wenche Iren Hauge



Åshild Kolås © Julie Lunde Lillesæter/PRIO

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What I think we should do more of, as researchers, is to reach out to ordinary people, especially those who live in the places where we have travelled and gathered material. We used to call them informants, but they are actually participants. And then, for our research to be useful to them, we have to communicate back to them. Unfortunately, this is not a part of what we are taught to do. Researcher education is about translating from the empirical to the theoretical. This is not just a literal translation, but a cultural one as well, which separates us from our participants. What needs to be translated in both directions, or brought into a dialogue, is actual understanding, between the society we study and the world of academics and people who work in international organizations, in ministries and in development aid. What we too often see, even in qualitative research, is a one-way representation of the society we study, targeting an academic audience.

**Wenche Hauge:** *You are an anthropologist, Åshild. Can you tell me what it was that made you study anthropology?*

**Åshild Kolås:** Yes, I think I was inspired to become an anthropologist very early in life, already as a small child. When I was five years old my family moved from Ålesund, Norway, where I was born, to San Diego, California. My father had relatives there. After a couple of months, I started school there. My twin sister and I both started school before we could speak much English. This was a cultural encounter that made a deep impression on me.

I remember that we had a Mexican friend and next-door neighbour, and she spoke Spanish. This place was close to the Mexican border. Some people would talk about the Mexicans as illegal migrants. They were sometimes referred to as ‘wet-backs’. So, being an immigrant myself, I quickly became aware of the many different social aspects of cultural encounters. When we returned to Norway, I was almost ten years old. After having lived on the west coast (in Møre og Romsdal) for several years and completed high school there, I decided that I wanted to study. I moved to Bergen and began my studies there.

Actually, I started to study archaeology. I was interested in how people have lived throughout history, and in prehistoric times. However, after a while I left my studies and got a job. When I later returned to academic study, I chose media and mass communication, planning to become a journalist. I wanted to have a chance to explore and travel while working, and to be able to experience and learn more about different ways of living. This was when I was in my mid-twenties. By this time, I had worked odd jobs for a while, and completed two years of photography school. I had also travelled all over Europe with an Interrail pass. While I was studying, I decided that I wanted to travel and see more of the world outside of Europe. My first destination was Asia. Together with a friend from the Experimental High School in Norway (*Forsøksgymnaset*), I went on a journey with the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow via Ulan Bator to Beijing.

***Before you tell me more about these travels, I would like to ask if those first impressions and experiences in the United States, like meeting Mexicans living there, also stimulated you to travel more?***

Yes, it certainly did. My family travelled to Baja California and all over the state of California, visiting many sites and camping in national parks. We visited the Grand Canyon. My father was an architect, and we also went to see the house of Frank Lloyd Wright in Phoenix, Arizona. When we had to leave the United States to go home, my father rented a moving van. My parents packed our belongings into the truck and drove all the way from San Diego to New York. So, I really caught the 'travel bug'.

Since I had seen a lot of the United States over land, I thought I would like to see Asia in the same way. It was a fantastic experience to take the Trans-Siberian Railway, to lean back in the railway chair, look out of the window and watch the Soviet Union. Because at the time, it was still the Soviet Union. It was Autumn 1988. The travel experience gave me a completely different impression from what I had imagined. We had heard that the Soviet Union was a superpower. This was during the Cold War and the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union was palpable.

Earlier, I had seen and experienced the United States and Europe with my own eyes from the ground. When I took the train through the Soviet Union and compared what I saw to Europe and the USA, I discovered that it was much less developed than I had imagined. I saw people living in the countryside in small cottages, using horses and wagons to transport goods and belongings. This gave me new insight and a completely new understanding of geopolitics. I became interested—not only in how people lived—but also in politics.

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Then we reached Ulan Bator and I saw the summer palace of the Mongolian Emperor. It was quite an experience, especially since this was a Cold War exhibit. When we came to Beijing, we experienced a China that was still in the early stages of opening up to the outside world. Foreigners could only stay at carefully selected hotels and we had to use something called Foreign Exchange Currency (FEC), which could be used in the same way as at the foreign exchange stores in Moscow. You could go to certain shops where most local people were unable to enter. In Beijing, we were often asked if we wanted to change money, as the dollar had this specific use.



We managed to find one of China's first Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants in Beijing. It had a separate door where those who had FEC could go directly in, whereas people who had no FEC would have to wait in a long line. And when they finally got in, they took pictures of each other with their pocket cameras. So, this was quite a contrast to what we had read and heard about China, both with regard to Chinese authorities and ordinary people. We also saw a disco or nightclub where we were barred from entering, but where we could see a big party taking place, with strobe lights and loud disco music.

***So, in a way you understood the importance of going deeper and behind the images that the media had presented to you, and perhaps find a totally different world?***

Yes, exactly. So, this stimulated my appetite for travelling as a way to learn. But I also had a particular reason for travelling—to learn more about indigenous peoples. A part of the reason for going to China was that I actually wanted to visit Tibet. We took the train from Beijing and ended up in a Tibetan monastery where a lot of nomads participated in a festival. This was extremely fascinating. Some nomad girls invited us to their tent. We had a Chinese girl with us, who translated for us. The girls invited us to stay at their fire and have food there. They joked with us, saying: 'Are you married? Because we have many brothers.' They teased a lot and made fun of everybody. It was totally different from what we had experienced elsewhere in China.

In the cities we had visited on the way to the Tibetan area, we often found ourselves surrounded by people who would stop and stare at us. We didn't know how to deal with it, so we started to walk quickly to avoid attracting crowds. When we met the Tibetan nomads, the interaction was very different. I became fascinated with Tibet. This was when I decided that I wanted to study anthropology and focus on Tibet. However, exactly what the focus of my studies was going to be didn't become clear to me until I travelled to India and went to Dharamsala, where the exile Tibetans lived. I attended their 'Uprising Day' on the 10th of March 1989. I stayed there for several weeks and the Dalai Lama gave a teaching. He used to do this every year around that time, right before 'Uprising Day'. There were many volunteers and activists there, especially from countries such as the USA and Britain, working for the cause of the Tibetans. I understood that it would be difficult to conduct research and fieldwork in Tibet, so I decided that I wanted to write my master's thesis on the Tibetan independence struggle, and that would bring me back to Dharamsala, and maybe also allow me to visit Tibet again.

***When you were ready to write your master's thesis, how was it to return from travelling, with so many impressions and experiences, to a theoretically oriented faculty?***

My thinking before I went on fieldwork was that I wanted to explore, to stay grounded and avoid tying myself up too much theoretically. I was not quite sure about what theoretical framework to use at the time. But I discussed it with my supervisor Thomas Hylland Eriksen when I returned from fieldwork. He suggested to write

about nationalism and to link my work to the nationalism theory that was very much in focus at the time, such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.<sup>1</sup>

I received a student stipend to work on my thesis at PRIO. I started thinking about how to relate the material from my fieldwork to theoretical debates. What struck me was that Benedict Anderson writes about how the media and the literature create a community, a national community. In my experience with the Tibetan case, it was more of a resistance struggle, a popular movement. When Tibetans talked about the 1950s, before the Dalai Lama fled to India, their focus was on the first encounters between the Han Chinese and the Tibetans. The Tibetans' view of their own history and their representation of their own experience focused on violent conflict and violent encounters with the Chinese 'other'. When I was in Dharamsala, I remember meeting some Tibetans who had just arrived from Tibet. They showed me their scars, to prove that they had been beaten and mistreated in prison, explaining that it had happened after they had participated in political activities.

What struck me was that Benedict Anderson writes about how the media and the literature create a community, a national community. In my experience with the Tibetan case, it was more of a resistance struggle, a popular movement.

Actually, there was a big difference between this way of building nationalism and the ones I read about in the theories of nationalism. I consider Ernest Gellner almost as a functionalist—that is—each society will inevitably develop the cultural elements used to build a nation, and the understanding of a particular nation is literally random. So, according to Gellner, people could use just about anything cultural to build a nation; any songs or national costumes. Any society, when it develops and builds an education system, a written language and so on, through modernization, would develop to become a nation and eventually a nation state. I felt that such theories were at odds with what I had experienced. So, I was not quite sure whether this was the theory I wanted to relate to my fieldwork material. But finally, I did, and I found that I was actually able to relate what I had gathered of research material to the theory in a—hopefully—interesting way.

When I finished my thesis, Dan Smith, who was PRIO's director, asked me if I wanted to write an article for the *Journal of Peace Research*, based on my thesis. I did that, and this was my very first published article. It's also my most cited article.<sup>2</sup>

***You mentioned that you applied for a stipend at PRIO. Had you decided that you particularly wanted to work at a peace research institute? I ask because there were other institutes, like the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), where you might have worked. Did you end up at PRIO by coincidence?***

I think it was a bit of a coincidence. I don't think NUPI had any student stipends at the time. I remember that, when I was applying for the student stipend, I went to listen to Dan Smith at a seminar at the University of Oslo at Blindern. I thought he was very inspiring. I very much liked what he said.

***So, did you feel at home in the PRIO environment and did it also function as a basis for the work with your Ph.D.?***

Yes, I felt that I had come to the right place. I began to write the project description for a PhD right away. Then I asked Dan if this might be a better fit for SUM (the Centre for Environment and Development at the University of Oslo). But he said that it was a good fit for PRIO. Finally, I received a grant from the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to do my Ph.D. at PRIO. By that time, I had already worked at PRIO for four years.

After finishing my master's thesis, I became the coordinator of a project about Tibetan culture in China, about cultural survival and revival. The topic was the revival of Tibetan culture in the new period after Mao Zedong. So, it covered the reconstruction of monasteries and the revival of the monastic orders and issues related to that. The project was financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and I worked on it from 1997 until 2000. In the course of the project, I visited all the Tibetan areas outside of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, that is, the cultural frontier between Tibet and China. I found that the most politically open area, where it was the easiest to do fieldwork, was Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan. When I went there in 1997, it was the first fieldwork I had conducted for the MFA-funded project.

Why would they want the name to be changed to Shangri-La? However, after a while I understood that this was about [...] a reformulation or new representation of Tibetan culture.

When I first visited the Tibetan area in Yunnan, I learned that they had asked for permission to change the name of the county, Zhongdian, to Shangri-La. When I first heard this, I thought it was nonsense. Why would they want the name to be changed to Shangri-La? However, after a while I understood that this was about capitalizing on or benefitting from the Chinese government's policy to promote ethnic tourism, and also about a reformulation or new representation of Tibetan culture. There was a growing interest among Chinese people in the large cities, in how to achieve harmony between humans and nature, which they associated with Tibetan culture. And there was travel for pilgrimage. So, this was about much more than a name.

The name Shangri-La itself was an odd choice, of course. It comes from a novel entitled *Lost Horizon*, written in the 1930s by a British author who had never been to Tibet. He had probably read articles in *The National Geographic* by a botanist who had been doing research in eastern Tibet, in an area not far from Diqing. So, this author had written a novel called *Lost Horizon*. It was made into a Hollywood movie and became a great success. The story was about an airplane that crashed in the Himalayas and the passengers were brought to a monastery high up in the mountains—in a place where people lived in harmony with nature and never grew old. The monastery was called Shangri-La. During my fieldwork, people in Diqing talked about an airplane

that actually crashed there during the Second World War, although this was a long time after the novel was written. Regardless of the inconsistency in the timing, they argued that the events in the novel had actually happened in their home place. I was fascinated by how these people linked the literary world with a recontextualization of their history to build a new self-understanding.

During my fieldwork, people in Diqing talked about an airplane that actually crashed there during the Second World War, although this was a long time after the novel [Lost Horizon] was written. Regardless of the inconsistency in the timing, they argued that the events in the novel had actually happened in their home place.

***Very fascinating!***

Yes. So, when I finally received my grant to do my PhD on ethnic tourism in Diqing, I was very satisfied.

***You have told me in the past about some different types of experiences from your travels, such as encountering intense Hindu nationalism. Did this also influence your thoughts about causes of conflict and the lack of peace? Perhaps you also can see aspects of the current political situation that you think illustrate this?***

Yes, I think this brings up the relationship between religion and nationalism. I have seen this in Tibet as well. It works in both positive and negative ways. Tibetan Buddhism is perceived as a core value in the Tibetan sense of nationhood. And in India, we find the same approach to the use of religion for political purposes, which has become a part of conflict, as the counterpart becomes an enemy, you might say. And the counterpart, or the Other, in India are the Muslims. I first experienced this when I conducted fieldwork for my master's thesis, and there was a strong conflict related to a mosque named Babri Masjid where Hindus wanted to build a temple for Ram, one of the Indian gods. There were large crowds of people who went to the mosque, Babri Masjid, and wanted to tear it down. The mosque was destroyed in December 1992, while I was on fieldwork in India.

This gave me an insight into how incredibly strong emotions can become when people draw on this kind of religious motivation to rally around political goals. And I think of this in both a positive and a negative sense. Because you can see the same with regard to Israel and Palestine with the al-Aqsa mosque and the conflict surrounding that. So, this is something that makes you understand not only the conflict, but also what is universally human about this. We all have the basic tools that can be used to create societies, to create culture—and this can be positive as well as negative.

This gave me an insight into how incredibly strong emotions can become when people draw on this kind of religious motivation to rally around political goals. And I think of this in both a positive and a negative sense.

***Interesting! And then let me turn to what you said in the beginning: As an anthropologist and peace researcher you have travelled much, carried out a lot of fieldwork, interviewing many different people. How do you relate to these people after you have conducted your research? Do we, as researchers, live up to our responsibility towards them?***

No, this is an aspect of research where we have the potential for improvement. It's nice to know that there's something more we can do. On the one hand, you have your experiences from the field, what you gathered from qualitative interviews and participatory observation, which is special for anthropology. And then this material must be related to theory. What we do most of the time is to communicate within academic and policymaking environments, where we share some common frameworks of understanding, but which are quite theoretical. This is so because the same ideas are to be applied in different cultural or social contexts. As I said earlier, what I think we should do more of is to communicate back, leaving behind the theoretical, academic language, and reaching out to ordinary people, especially those who live in the places where we have travelled and gathered material. We used to call them informants, but they should be seen and treated as participants. And if they really are to be participants, then they cannot simply represent places where we collect material. For our research to be useful to them, we have to communicate back to them.

Unfortunately, this is not a part of what we are educated to do. Researcher education is about translating from the empirical to the theoretical. This is not only about the translation of language, but also about cultural translation. What needs to be translated is the actual understanding we can find in the society we study, for this to make sense in the world of academics and people who work in international organizations, in ministries, in development aid. What we too often see in academic output is superficial one-way representation.

***Perhaps it is also the case that we who work with this, know that it is quite demanding? It might be due to language, or several other issues. Perhaps research programmes and researchers we cooperate with also fail to take into consideration what the costs of this are, in terms of economic resources and time, to be able to communicate back. Should we make this more visible and emphasize it more in our project applications?***

Yes, and I want to add that I haven't really experienced any demand for this, whether from the funders of research, from degree-giving educational institutions or evaluation committees giving you a right to call yourself professor. What they look for is what you have published. And when you publish, this is in 'peer-reviewed' journals

where the language is completely academic. This is challenging enough in itself. You need to get funding for research, you need to carry out big research projects, write articles and have them published, and you need to write books and have them published and report back to funders. If you then—in addition to all this—communicate the results to the participants of the project, it's barely even noticeable.

[What] I think we should do more of is to communicate back, leaving behind the theoretical, academic language, and reaching out to ordinary people, especially those who live in the places where we have travelled and gathered material.

With time, we have gained more opportunities for giving back. One example is to organize a seminar in the country where you conducted fieldwork. That is absolutely one way of doing it. But you might say that even then, we often meet the academic and political elite, the NGO-elite and multilateral actors who are based in the field. So, I am not quite sure about how this should be done, or how to make it more visible.

Another point is that when you cooperate with researchers from other countries, the same criteria are used to evaluate their competence—how much they have published and how highly the academic institutions they belong to are ranked. There are hierarchies in this system. Sometimes there are demands, like in the RCN programme NORGLOBAL, to include researchers from the Global South. Then you often see the same researchers included, who come to western countries and work with multilateral agencies. So, the criteria for selecting research partners have not actually changed that much, even though you are encouraged to have partners in the Global South. The way I have tried to meet this challenge is to seek out partners situated far away from national capitals.

### *In the field?*

You could say that. What I try to do is to find people in the places where I go for fieldwork who have sufficient education to be able to do academic work. I have tried to support them when I could, so that they can have their research published. For example, when I have edited anthologies, I have included people with this kind of background to help them get their work published. I enjoy doing this. It's by no means a burden. But I also think of it as an obligation, out of gratitude to those who spend their time and effort participating.

***This is an ethical challenge that all researchers should discuss more, to give feedback and inform the target groups or participants they work with. This leads me to a last, but related question: Can we as peace researchers, and at PRIO, engage and use the knowledge we are gathering better?***

Yes, obviously. We can do it in several ways. We can make different types of output, which help to lift up the presentation of the research results in unconventional ways, by using new means of communication and new platforms. It is quite common nowadays to publish and reach out through social media, and maybe even make

video productions and documentaries. I remember in the beginning, when I worked with the MFA-funded project, that we actually cooperated with researchers from China who produced anthropological films.

With the help of new communication tools, we can develop and improve how we communicate our research, and give viewers direct impressions, instead of having the researcher interpret everything through a writing process.

There are lots of things that can be done. We can report our research directly from the field, rather than first just writing notes, then writing our PhD, and then finally publishing a book, maybe with a couple of photos in it. I actually brought a video camera with me to Shangri-La and made a video of housebuilding, where they used a rammed earth technique. In relation to this, they also carried out a series of rituals in order to bring good luck and happiness to those who were going to live in the house.

So, there is an enormous potential in trying to shed light on those cultural expressions and practices that are important to people, and how they are continued, but also change over time. With the help of new communication tools, we can develop and improve how we communicate our research, and give viewers direct impressions, instead of having the researcher interpret everything through a writing process. This will actually give the viewer an opportunity to make her or his own interpretation of what they see in, let's say, a video. And this can easily initiate a process of understanding and reflection. This is an opportunity we should definitely take advantage of.

***Yes, thank you very much!***

My pleasure.

### **Notes**

1. Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
2. Kolås, Åshild (1996) 'Tibetan Nationalism: The Politics of Religion', *Journal of Peace Research* 33(1): 51–66.

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## Chapter 17

# The Democratic Civil Peace and Beyond: Scott Gates



Interviewed by Nils Petter Gleditsch



CSCW Director Scott Gates © Marit Moe-Pryce/PRIO

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*‘Strong critical theory doesn’t play a big role in peace science anymore, or even in peace studies’, states American political scientist Scott Gates in this conversation with his long-term collaborator Nils Petter Gleditsch. Scott calls for more and better recording of data disaggregated in time and space; more work that takes advantage of quasi-experimental designs and other methods through which we can better ascertain causal inference; and further use of data from social media to better appreciate such phenomena as the relationship between social media use and protest activities.*

**Nils Petter Gleditsch:** *I am Nils Petter Gleditsch, and I am going to interview the American political scientist Scott Gates, who has been my colleague at PRIO and NTNU for many years. Between 2003 and 2012, Scott was the head of PRIO’s Center of Excellence, the Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW). We are going to talk about that, and about the rest of his life. We are going to speak in Scott’s favorite language, which is English.*

*Let’s start with a little bit about your family background.*

**Scott Gates:** I am the eldest of four siblings. My parents, and especially my mother, are very engaged in issues of peace and conflict. I was a kid during the Vietnam protests. I was 10 years old in 1968 when first Martin Luther King and then Bobby Kennedy were killed. I well remember those events, especially because my mother forbade us to play with guns. We were not even allowed to own them, birthday gifts of toy guns included. Nonetheless, we still played with sticks and made them into guns. On the day that Martin Luther King was assassinated, my mother intervened and laid down the law against sticks as pretend guns: ‘On this day of all days, you will not play with guns.’ Despite how much you read about the proliferation of guns in the US, that sort of parental restraint was not completely unusual in our neighborhood.

*We are going to talk later about how you ended up in Norway. But you come from the Midwest, which of course had strong Scandinavian immigration. Was there anything Scandinavian at all in your childhood and youth?*

Not by family. My mother’s family is from Winnipeg and my father’s from South Dakota. My ethnic background is mostly English and Scottish and not Scandinavian. But growing up in Minnesota, you can’t avoid becoming familiar with Scandinavian culture. When you have friends named Mikkelsen, Sandberg, and Strom, you get to know things like lutefisk and Christmas celebrated on Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day.

On the day that Martin Luther King was assassinated, my mother intervened and laid down the law against sticks as pretend guns: ‘On this day of all days, you will not play with guns.’

***What about politics?***

We had Karl Rolvaag, of course, who was Governor of Minnesota in the 1960s for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL). Orville Freeman, Farmer-Labor Party in the 1930s before the creation of the DFL. Hubert Humphrey was Mayor of Minneapolis, Senator from Minnesota, and Vice President of the US. Later, there was Vice President Walter Mondale, whose name is an anglicization of Mundal. When I was a teenager, Wendell Anderson was the Governor and later Senator. He was featured in the seventies on the cover of *Time* magazine as governor of the ‘state that works’.

Politics are different now. There has been a big, big, populist transformation, especially in northern Minnesota. The political composition has changed tremendously, although in recent presidential elections there has been a Democratic majority. The so-called Iron Range mining area used to be solidly Democratic, and now it is solidly Trump-land. When I was a kid, rural Minnesota and the cities voted for the Democrats and the suburbs were Republican. But the Republicans at that time were much more moderate, with a business focus. Close to Høyre in Norway: not populist at all, and not super-conservative. This rural–urban bond comes from the Farmer-Labor origins of the Democratic Party in Minnesota. Indeed, it is still called the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL).

While he was still Mayor of Minneapolis, Hubert Humphrey stood up in the 1948 Democratic National Convention calling for a voting rights act, black rights, and things like that. The Southern Democrats—the Dixiecrats—led by Strom Thurmond walked out of the convention. Now the Dixiecrat wing of the Democratic party has become die-hard Republican and the old-style liberal Republicans have become Democrats.

**A Student in the United States*****How did you become interested in the social sciences?***

I have been fascinated by history and the social sciences since I was a kid. In sixth grade, my teacher gave me a unique compliment: I should become a history professor. Not just a teacher, a professor of history. Then again in high school, I was told that I should think about doing political science. But every time I responded that I wanted to be a scientist. I started at the University of Minnesota, with a science focus, taking mathematics for engineers, chemistry for pre-medical students, and things like that. On the side, I took political science and anthropology. Eventually I discovered that I was far more talented in those fields than in the sciences. So, I changed track and took a double major in those two disciplines.

***With your science background you have presumably had a big advantage relative to many other social scientists in terms of methods, theory building and so on?***

That's probably true. In my honors thesis in political science, I did a quantitative analysis of the patterns of foreign aid. 15 years later, David Dollar in the World Bank published a similar analysis, which got wide attention. I never tried to publish. But I remember that during the oral exam they asked me if I had taken any stats classes. In fact, I had never taken any, but I had enough math to be able to pick up a book and figure out how to run regression analyses. Not to brag, but it was a tremendous advantage. When I started grad school and we had study groups, I had a much greater math background in my cohort than the others.

***Then you went to the University of Michigan for graduate studies?***

Yes. I actually had two separate lives at Michigan. In 1980, I graduated from Minnesota on schedule with that double major plus a minor in economics. I was accepted for graduate studies at the University of Michigan as well as at Washington University in St. Louis. That was an up-and-coming department at the time. They had lots of money; they flew me down with some others to St. Louis to convince me to go there. I was going to work with Kenneth Shepsle, who was a very big congressional scholar. He wanted me to do game theory and study the US Congress. Shepsle, as it turned out, would have left for Harvard as soon I was in the middle of my dissertation. So, I am not sure if that would have been a great move for me.

The alternative was to go to Michigan and be in a slightly riskier position without a guaranteed scholarship but have the possibility of working for J David Singer at the Correlates of War (COW) project. A choice between studying international conflict or staying with the US Congress. I couldn't imagine spending the rest of my life studying only Congress, as interested as I am in American politics.

***Tell us a little more about the Correlates of War project—which has been important for PRIO, too, in several ways. Singer founded it while he was in Oslo on sabbatical in 1963–64.***

Oh, really? I didn't know that. Michigan had been a hotbed for studying conflict from a multidisciplinary perspective. The COW project was based at the Mental Health Research Institute, located quite far from the Political Science Department, the Institute for Social Research, and the Institute for Public Policy Studies. Singer had over twenty graduate students working for him. He was extremely well funded, and it was a bit like a factory. Some were analysts. Others only gathered data. People had specific roles and a place on the factory assembly line. I was very fortunate because I came from the outside and was funded by the department rather than by the project.

Singer had received a letter from Rudy Rummel, which criticized an article that Singer and his colleague Mel Small, a historian, had written for the *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* critiquing the idea of a democratic peace. Rummel had dug up work on the democratic peace by a criminologist named Dean Babst. Rummel tried to build upon Babst's work by looking at all dyads at war to see whether two democracies ever formed such a dyad. Singer wanted to pursue this further and put

me in charge of that project. I was the only person out of the twenty who were working at the Correlates of War project who did everything: I read the literature, I developed theory, I worked out the research design, I did the data analysis. At a meeting at the Correlates of War project, Zeev Maoz suggested that I look for measures of regime type in Ted Gurr's Polity dataset, published in 1974.

[J David] Singer had over twenty graduate students working for him. He was extremely well funded, and it was a bit like a factory.

***Rummel didn't publish his first article on democratic peace until 1983, I think.***

That's right. It was this article that Singer had given to me. Singer was supposed to be a reviewer, but he gave it to me. In my comments, I noted that there were some aspects of the article which were impossible to replicate because not enough detail was given. Remember, I was just a first-year graduate student. I wrote something to the effect that: 'Given this lack of information, I can't replicate the results.' Singer took that sentence and went on at length about how it couldn't be replicated, which went well beyond what I had meant. I had just noted that more information was needed to replicate the results.

This disagreement occasioned my first introduction to Singer's temper tantrums. I hadn't realized the extent to which he was depending on a first-year graduate student for his professional work. In any case, Rummel got a revise and resubmit and his article was eventually published in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. In the meantime, I worked on my master's thesis on the democratic peace. I presented a paper at the spring meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association in Chicago. This is kind of the number two political science convention in the US, after the American Political Science annual meeting. It was unusual for grad students from the University of Michigan to present at professional meetings. I remember riding an elevator in the political science building at Haven Hall with one of the junior professors who scoffed that I had the audacity to be presenting a paper as a second-year grad student! But I got really good comments at the meeting. Singer knew about this and had supported me doing it. Then, when we met, he said the paper required some editing, and that how much editing he did would determine whether he was the sole author, or co-author. I responded that I had done everything: I had written every word, done all the statistical analysis. Everything! And I could see where that was going, that I would get zero credit for it. I commented that I thought it was too high a price to pay for editing. Singer exploded. He stood up in full red-faced rage. He started the meeting with me being wonderful, and such a bright prospect, and he ended by saying that I was an absolute dunderhead. That there were serious doubts about my ability to finish or do anything.

I left the room not giving him the paper, or the authority for it. I had a long conversation about my predicament with John Jackson, who was in public policy and statistically oriented. I decided to leave Michigan, but on Jackson's advice, I

took a leave of absence. In my mind, I was quitting political science and going back to the University of Minnesota in applied economics. I would switch from conflict to development. In economics, at that time, it would be very difficult to study peace and conflict. Todd Sandler was doing it, but he had a job at the University of Wyoming at that time.

[Singer] said the paper required some editing, and that how much editing he did would determine whether he was the sole author, or co-author. I responded that I had done everything: I had written every word, done all the statistical analysis. Everything! [...] I commented that I thought it was too high a price to pay for editing. Singer exploded. He stood up in full red-faced rage.

***There was Kenneth Boulding, of course, but he had a very interdisciplinary approach.***

He did. Anyway, I joked that my future would be at Montana State and even though the town of Bozeman might be a nice place to live, that was not what I aspired to do. Maybe that was kind of arrogant. But that's where I was. I just didn't want to work as hard as I would have to do in economics and then have to pay a high cost.

I had big psychological issues with the Singer controversy. He contacted me later and asked on behalf of Zeev Maoz for the data. I had not touched my master's thesis or that Midwest paper. I gave all my data to Zeev Maoz. After all, he was the one who had helped me with the paper when I presented it at the COW seminar.

***You still have a copy of your master's thesis? I'd like to see it!***

I should probably scan it and put it up on the web.

***Please do!***

Anyway, Zeev got my data and my paper and he got an *American Political Science Review* (APSR) article out of the topic. I do remember Rudy Rummel thanking me in a footnote in the 1983 *Journal of Conflict Resolution* article. Somebody said: 'Well, you got more thanks from Rudy Rummel than you ever did from J David Singer'.

In any case, I left for Minnesota and got another master's degree in applied economics. I worked with a guy named Vernon Ruttan, who worked on technology transfer and agricultural development. My Master of Science (MS) thesis was entirely a formal game theoretic model. After obtaining my MS in economics, I decided that political science was much more interesting for me than economics. I went back to Michigan, but rather than Singer I worked with Harold Jacobson, who specialized in international organizations, and with John Chamberlain, who had worked on collective action problems. He had a doctorate from Stanford, where Robert Wilson, who won the Nobel Prize in economics this year, served as his dissertation advisor.

My doctoral dissertation was on aid conditionality. I went to Pakistan to compare World Bank and US Agency for International Development (USAID) conditionality. I developed a theoretical model that could be generalized to bureaucracy. A year after

defending my doctoral dissertation, I was sharing a hotel room with John Brehm, a friend from graduate school at Michigan. We started talking about bureaucratic politics and decided to work together. I from the rational choice perspective and he from the psychological. Over time, the psychological perspective fell away, and we combined my games with statistical analysis. With John Brehm, I co-authored several articles and two books on bureaucracy. Brehm is an Americanist and an expert on public opinion. John and I won the Herbert Simon award for the scientific study of bureaucracy. I am probably the only peace scientist to have won that award.

John and I also worked on police brutality, and right now we are rekindling some of this work in the light of what has been going on in the US. We are going to start looking again at the US police and the excessive use of force. I have always wanted to combine my two lives and I think the police brutality work nicely combines peace science and the study of bureaucracy. Our first book featured the street-level bureaucrat. The policeman and the social worker. The bureaucrats on the street, so to speak, interacting directly with the citizenry. Street-level bureaucrats possess considerable decision-making discretion and agency. We examine how they spend their time across tasks. The book is entitled, *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage*. Working constitutes positive expenditure of time to produce public policy. Shirking, which stems from laziness or political opposition to a given policy, involves no work effort. Sabotage involves work effort used to undercut the implementation of policy.

We also examined police brutality. We took two different datasets (one of which had been collected by Elinor Ostrom, the Nobel prize winner) on the nature of police-citizen interactions, including police brutality. We were able to merge these observational data with personal psychological data, matching on the officer. We found that those officers with a psychological proclivity for violence were far more likely to engage in police brutality. They also served to 'infect' those around them. Officers who normally did not engage in violent altercations with citizens were much more likely to be brutal when on duty with a violent officer.

We found that those officers with a psychological proclivity for violence were far more likely to engage in police brutality. They also served to 'infect' those around them.

***Your work on bureaucracy was a spin off from your development studies?***

Yes. The Pakistan office of the USAID was the agency's biggest operation, mainly because the Soviet Union was in Afghanistan. A massive amount of development aid was channeled to Pakistan and it was handled by a huge staff. At the time, the World Bank also had one of its largest contingents in Pakistan. I was able to compare the two. I found that the local staff developed close ties with their fellow bureaucrats on the Pakistani side and became estranged from the Washington bureaucrats. They actually had more in common, so the USAID staff engaged in policies closer to that of the Pakistanis. This is part of my theory about bureaucratic sabotage. What

I witnessed in Pakistan, in particular from lower-level bureaucrats, was that at the final aspects of implementing policy they actively spent their time undercutting the policies to make sure that they were never put in place. Ever. They effectively used their time to sabotage the policies rather than to effectively bring them forward. Out of that came my book with Brehm about working, shirking, and sabotage in bureaucracies.

***What was your relationship to the Correlates of War (COW) project once you returned to Michigan?***

I really had nothing to do with it. I heard about it, of course. Among other things, I was a good friend of Paul Diehl, who had Singer as his advisor but never worked for COW. As Paul said, he never milked the COW, and that allowed him to have much more freedom and leeway in how he wanted to do his work.

***So, you finished your dissertation, and then your first job was at Michigan State?***

After my field work in Pakistan, I returned to Ann Arbor for half a year. That spring, the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University called me. They needed someone to take over Jim Morrow's courses, since Jim had been hired by the University of Michigan. Jim's courses at Michigan State were statistics for graduate students, world politics for undergraduates, and graduate seminars in international politics. I started teaching, although my dissertation was not yet finished. I remember I had a conversation with my father about it. He said it would delay my doctoral dissertation, but it might put a foot in the door for getting a job there. Michigan State is a top research school and has done very well on international rankings. We were also a really young department and an exciting environment.

The one problem was that the department had almost no international politics people. I was probably attracting half of the graduate students, and they did very well. In the US, there is a distinction between R1 schools, i.e. research schools, and non-research universities. Among all the Michigan State graduate students in political science 1995–2005—and mind you I left Michigan State in 2002—I had over half of all the R1 placements. And I was only one out of 32 faculty members. That was partly because they would never hire an international relations guy. Gretchen Hower, a student of Dina Zinnes and the smartest person in our department, was there for a while, but she left academia. In my final years, they hired Bill Reed, who was super smart and a fantastic colleague. Reed is now at the University of Maryland.

***These things never follow a normal distribution, whether that is students, publications, or citations.***

International relations was a popular topic. I was single and able to dedicate tons of time and energy to my teaching. But you know the legacy: Sara Mitchell at the University of Iowa was one of my students, Brandon Prince was another, Mark Souva at Florida State.



***We are getting close to your move to Norway. You were recruited first into a temporary position at NTNU, or the University of Trondheim as it was called at the time. How did that come about?***

## **Moving to Norway**

A housemate in Ann Arbor and an extremely good friend of mine was a Norwegian-American named Richard Matland. He was an undergraduate from the University of Wisconsin. There is a friendly rivalry between Minnesota and Wisconsin, and at our first meeting we started arguing about Minnesota vs. Wisconsin college sports. We met as graduate students at Michigan.

***I remember Rick speaking rather quaint Norwegian ...***

Someone told me he spoke the language of his grandmother, who was from a tiny little island in Western Norway. Although he was completely fluent in Norwegian, all his pause words were English. He would rattle off in Norwegian and then he would go ‘um ahh, anyways’. In any case, Rick used any opportunity he had to come back to Norway. His wife was Norwegian, and he wanted his daughters to be fluent in Norwegian as well. He had spent a year at the University of Trondheim with Ola Listhaug, whom I knew from a party at Michigan when he was a visiting scholar there in 1982 or thereabouts. Ola knew Rick quite well.

One day in late 1993, Ola [Listhaug] called me in Michigan and said, ‘I have an offer you can’t refuse...’

One day in late 1993, Ola called me in Michigan and said, ‘I have an offer you can’t refuse: You teach one class, give a lecture on the American presidential election and you can finish your work to get tenure—and then you come back for your tenure year’. My department at Michigan State was in a budget bind at the time, so they were happy to see me go and hire a graduate student to teach my classes. I went to Trondheim after the Lillehammer Winter Olympics, in the summer of 1994. The glow from the Olympics was still there. I had a fantastically productive year. I finished two books and two articles in that year, so I had more than enough for tenure when I returned to Michigan State. I even took Norwegian classes, which is kind of funny in retrospect because I was only going to be here for one year.

***For the uninitiated reader, we are talking about the person who founded political science in Trondheim.***

Ola Listhaug was a genius when it came to running the Department of Sociology and Political Science. He knew that he couldn’t let the new political science section

grow too quickly, or you could end up filling it with people you wished you had never hired. So, he hired strategically, especially PhDs from the US. If they stayed, as did Torbjørn Knutsen, Jonathan Moses, Jennifer Bailey, and Indra de Soysa, that was fine. But for many others, such as me, he anticipated that we would not stay in Norway. We kept some seats warm, which he could use to recruit others in due course. He hired Han Dorussen, who stayed longer than I did but eventually went to the University of Essex. But I kept coming back.

*Now we're talking about the early 1990s?*

I got tenure once I returned to Michigan State, and after tenure you are up for sabbatical. I had thought that I was going to get an invitation to the University of California San Diego, but that went to Hanne Marte Narud instead. So, then I elected to go back to Norway. This time I had to work a little bit more or, as Ola said, I had to sing for my supper. So, I came back to what was then called Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU), and I taught courses. This was when the two of us first met. I remember that I presented a paper on the democratic peace with Sara Mitchell at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association. You came up to me afterwards and expressed an interest in cooperating. That summer, I remember I came down from Trondheim to visit PRIO, and ...

## **Getting to Know PRIO and Love**

*Of course, I had been teaching in Trondheim for a couple of years then. But I was in an adjunct position, so I only came there for the day and taught my course and talked to my students and left again. So, I didn't know that many ...*

You probably knew more students than faculty.

*Yes. There was a lot of interest in international relations, a little bit like what happened to you at Michigan State. Suddenly I found all these students coming to my class and signing up for theses.*

*To break off from the chronology for a minute. At the time I assume you had heard about Johan Galtung, PRIO's founder?*

Oh, definitely. We talked about him in graduate school.

*Had you read any of his work?*

I remember his sanctions paper on Rhodesia, which I thought very highly of. I was more critical of his work on positive peace. The idea is brilliant, but it's a little bit too much of anything good is peace. I was rather critical of that, and I still am. But certainly, those two pieces I remember quite well.

Well, to return to my association with PRIO, I would not be here if it wasn't for you. I kept coming down to PRIO from Trondheim. Because we did join forces on the

democratic peace and wrote grant proposals for the Research Council of Norway and for the National Science Foundation in the US. In fact, for a while I was spending more time here in Oslo even though I was supposedly teaching in Trondheim for the semester. Then you took some time off to go to Uppsala to teach. You needed somebody to take over your editorial duties at *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)*, and I was very eager to do this.

I remember saying to myself when you made the offer, that ‘this is my last time in Norway’. Famous last words! I thought that it would be interesting as well as good for my career. I really liked the idea of serving as an editor for a while. And once that was done, I would get serious and start thinking about getting married and what not. I was over 40 years old. Time to get serious in my head.

***At the time, did you ever consider the possibility that you might become a permanent resident in Norway?***

No way! There was zero interest. But then you invited me to a party, and you put me at a table with Louise Harnby from Sage and Ingeborg Haavardsson, PRIO’s communications director. According to Ingeborg, she was interested in me, but I did not have any interest in her at all. When Ingeborg returned from a sailing cruise in Scotland, I invited her out to the Jazz festival and then we became romantic. I was living in a flat in Oscars gate at the time. There were two entrances. I would normally use the front entrance but for some reason I took Ingeborg to my apartment through the back entrance. And one day just by chance I saw tucked into the doorframe of the back entrance a little turquoise envelope with ‘Scott’ on it. I was really surprised to find a very tender romantic note from Ingeborg about how wonderful it was to have met me and everything else. But basically, it all started at your party.

***It was a dinner during the editorial committee meeting of JPR. I am glad it worked out, even though I can no longer remember if my seating plan was deliberate ... In any case, I have said many times that Americans will almost never give up a tenured position to take a job in Norway. Americans who work in Norwegian universities usually have come here before tenure became an issue. Or because they were denied tenure, frequently for the wrong reasons because of animosity in the department and that sort of thing.***

***Of course, the overwhelming majority come because they have found a Norwegian partner. Many Norwegian women in particular are strong enough to keep their men here, as opposed to moving to the US. You fit the pattern for the second point, but not for the first. You did get tenure.***

## **Directing PRIO’s New Center of Excellence**

Yes, I did give up tenure in the US and mainly because we got funding for a Center of Excellence. You and I had worked very hard together on an application to the

Research Council for funding the Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW). At the same time, I had also applied to be the Director of PRIO. I didn't get that job, which in retrospect I am thankful for.

***You placed a good number two! Most of our colleagues probably assumed that you were my favorite to get the directorship, whereas in fact, I thought that you would be wasted as Director of PRIO. If you placed number two, you'd be in a stronger position of authority as the Director of the Center. That position was of course situated under the Director of PRIO, but we needed to establish the Center Director's authority.***

Yeah, but the Research Council of Norway gave me considerable authority because they had explicitly said that any Center was to be an autonomous organization within whatever body it was part of.

***Did you ever think that getting funding for a Center of Excellence at PRIO was a realistic option?***

No, I didn't. I had also received a job offer from Uppsala University of a chair in the Department of Peace and Conflict Research. But the salary was very low, lower than my Michigan State salary. That was another tough decision and Peter Wallensteen really worked hard on it. But I was not prepared to take a pay cut to live in a more expensive place. So, I turned that down.

***But then you also had a new job offer in the US?***

I was offered an endowed professorship with really good pay at the University of North Carolina. That was very interesting, and I had been contemplating trying to accept both. To be at PRIO and take the job at North Carolina with a reduced assignment and, after the Center had run its course, to reverse the relationship.

***This sounds to me like you would be modeling your lifestyle on Johan Galtung?***

Well, Ola Listhaug gave me some personal advice. There are three factors that are going to be affected here. They are your health, your marriage, and your career. You can't maximize on all three. One or two of them will suffer if you try to do a transatlantic job. Eventually, I decided that the costs were too great and gave up the North Carolina option. At that time, with two young babies and an eight-year-old in the house, it was the best decision by a long shot.

***Then, despite your misgivings, the Center application was successful.***

I remember on the day we were told, I met you in the reception area of PRIO's office in Fuglehauggata. You asked if I'd heard anything, and I said no.

***I think I also said if you get a call before 10, we're in. They will call the successful ones first...***

Yes, this was about 09:15 and I went upstairs to my office. As I crossed the threshold, the phone rang. And there they were! The Research Council. The irony is that I so

little expected it that four days earlier Ingeborg and I had bought a house in East Lansing.

***We did get a bit worried when we heard that you had an offer of an endowed faculty position at North Carolina. Fortunately, Ola Listhaug arranged for you to get a permanent full-time professorship at NTNU with 80% indefinite leave. This was quite an unusual arrangement. It was the kind of thing that Ola Listhaug could manage and few others.***

Of course, I already had a 20% adjunct position at NTNU, a Professor II job in organization theory. That made it much easier for him to get me a 100% position with 80% leave, because the cost was the same. Ola really wanted this to work and he was able to get the university to approve the arrangement.

***Well, it was a bonus for NTNU to be associated with another Center of Excellence in addition to their own three Centers.***

Yes, and Ola Listhaug was already a working group leader at the Center as well.

I told [Jon Elster] that all his life he had tried to understand why people cooperate when you would expect them not to. So why not look at conflict, too? Have you thought about destructive conflict relationships like feuds and war? They do not seem to make sense from a rational perspective and yet perhaps they can be explained through rational choice theories.

***Do you want to say a few more words about recruiting the working group leaders for the Center?***

I was very keen on trying to entice people who were not conflict people. To bring people from other fields to provide new insights into conflict research. Like Ola Listhaug, who was a public opinion specialist. And, of course, Jon Elster.

Jon was associated with a project at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Norwegian Academy of Science. I went down to Drammensveien and had a meeting with Jon. I had never met him before. I thought the world of him. I had read his books, and I remember how phenomenally well he writes. As a graduate student, I had heard that English was his third language. I told him that. Then he confessed that no, his French was not as good as his English. Jon doesn't suffer problems with his ego, but he still had enough humility to say that.

In any case, I told him that all his life he had tried to understand why people cooperate when you would expect them not to. So why not look at conflict, too? Have you thought about destructive conflict relationships like feuds and war? They do not seem to make sense from a rational perspective and yet perhaps they can be explained through rational choice theories. I think I hooked him with that conversation. Jon became fully engaged and brought some phenomenal intellectuals to the Center.

***Such as Jim Fearon and Diego Gambetta ...***

Exactly, and Jim Robinson. And the interesting thing is that some of these guys he was so hard on. Jon was scathing in his critiques of Jim Robinson. But they would still come back. Jon also blended really well with Kalle Moene and his group on economic factors in civil war.

***You may remember that Jon first declined because he was a part of a planned Center of Excellence application from the Institute for Social Research. We called Jon in Paris from my office just a day or two before the deadline, just to make sure, and it turned out that the application from the Institute of Social Research had imploded.***

That's right. Perhaps my hook wasn't as successful as I thought.

***He was interested, but he felt he already had another commitment.***

That's right. He had said, 'I would rather be with you, but ...'. I remember that now.

***Another person you recruited from the start was Kaare Strøm. As I recall, that was a part of our strategy to bring into the application some prominent Norwegian expats. Social scientists of Norwegian origin who could not be brought back to Norway full time, but who were interested in having a connection to Norwegian academic life. A part-time position as a working group leader was in many ways ideal.***

And Kaare also fit the pattern as an expert in other areas, such as institutions and governance, who hadn't previously worked on conflict. Of course, subsequently he has, particularly on power sharing and peace.

***How would you assess the CSCW overall?***

I think, as a whole, it was an unmitigated success. We had a profound impact on the study of civil war. We still do, especially on the geography of conflict. The PRIO-Grid, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), came out of the Center and will have a lasting impact.

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project (ACLED) was also developed at the Center. We were already so committed to working with UCDP (the Uppsala Conflict Data Program), so I told Clionadh Raleigh that she could go forward with ACLED and we would make no claims on the data. ACLED has been amazingly successful. It is used regularly by *The Economist* and by the World Bank. And Clionadh has recruited a group of permanent staff at the University of Sussex that keep it going.

The stamp that we helped to put on the conflict data from UCDP is also indelible. Backdating the armed conflict dataset to 1946 and making it more easily available to other researchers was a phenomenal achievement.

I think, as a whole, [CSCW] was an unmitigated success. We had a profound impact on the study of civil war. We still do, especially on the geography of conflict.

## Doubting (or Dissecting?) the Democratic Peace

*The democratic peace was, of course, an important element of the Center's research profile. If we go back to the first applications we wrote to the US National Science Foundation and the Research Council of Norway, you posed as an opponent of the democratic peace and we wrote the application as 'an enthusiast meets a skeptic'. That turned out to be quite a successful formula. But you probably stretched the skepticism a little bit?*

Well, I was not a true believer. I was critical in some ways. I had co-authored a critical article with Torbjørn Knutsen and Jonathan Moses in *Journal of Peace Research*. In that group, I was the most favorable towards the democratic peace. My main point was that I wanted more real theory. The democratic peace was a result in search of a theory.

Then came our 2001 APSR article with Håvard Hegre and Tanja Ellingsen ...

*Which is probably your most frequently cited article ...*

What about my 1997 book with John Brehm?

*That's your most-cited book, but still less cited than the APSR article.*

In any case, we framed that article around the civil democratic peace. It was successful at the time and still gets cited frequently. But less frequently than its contemporaries, Fearon & Laitin (2003) and Collier & Hoeffler (2004). Those two were framed as theories of civil war. We really did have a theory of civil war too, but we didn't frame it that way.

Well of course both those two articles went for an opportunity theory of civil war, which at the time seemed like a novel approach, even though it was part of Ted Gurr's old formula in *Why Men Rebel* (1970) or the Siverson-Starr 'opportunity and grievance' model (1990).

Our model was more grievance oriented. Actually, ours was both. Both grievance and opportunity are embedded in the parabolic relationship. In autocracies, there is little opportunity to rebel, while in democracies there is little grievance. In semi-democracies, the product of opportunity and grievance is the highest, so they are the most prone to civil war. If we had framed that as the key point of the article, perhaps we might have had even more citations.

**Right.**

***The original Center grant was for a five-year period. And then it could be renewed for another five years. In fact, I think that all the Centers from the first round were renewed. You seemed quite annoyed at that, after we had put so much hard work into the second-round application.***

We were rated, or so I was told by one of the Research Council Administrators of the Centers of Excellence, as number two in an overall assessment, after the geohazards group. That was quite flattering. Bergen had two Centers which were originally recommended for non-renewal. In one of them there had been a lot of internal squabbling and arguing. It would have been very easy for the Research Council to have just said ‘we are sorry ...’, but they still let both through after the university lobbied. I was really irritated because I had put a lot of time, sweat, and anxiety into that renewal process. And then it didn’t really seem to matter.

***If I were to say that, in designing the second period, you were a little bit too soft in keeping on all the working group leaders?***

No, I went through three leaders in one working group and I eliminated myself. One thing that I had done wrong in the first round was that I was a working group leader as well as the Director. I also took much more control of the budget and created incentives for the leaders. If they got an outside grant, they would double the allocation to their working group. If they didn’t get any additional funding, they would get less every year until there was just a pittance in 2012. Most of the working group leaders responded to this incentive, and we got lots of outside money. So, we weren’t relying entirely on the Research Council. I didn’t see a reason to just get rid of a working group leader just to get rid of somebody. You had to have good reasons for it.

***Of course, one general weakness of the Center model as set up by the Research Council was that the host institutions had a big incentive to hire for the Center people who had failed to get outside support.***

I refused to do that. And you were very strong in this regard. We both were.

One of the new hires as a working group leader was Jeff Checkel. Jeff was the furthest away from all the other working group leaders intellectually, from an ontological perspective. I believe that Jeff changed more than we did. Jeff became less critical in his critical theory. He didn’t become quantitative, but he became more empirical. And ...

***... more appreciative of quantitative work?***

... and much more open to new methods, and especially mixed methods. Jeff has been very helpful. He is now an associate editor at *JPR*. That decision was made before I became editor, but I rely on him quite often ...



*... and of course he has continued to give courses at PRIO.*

He and I have taught together. An odd pairing, but it works.

***After the Center, did you feel a little bit like an athlete who retires after winning gold medals?***

No, quite the opposite. Now I have more time to do my own research rather than administration. One big problem was that I was having big trouble finding funding for my grant applications. In particular, I was annoyed by responses to applications to the Research Council which said that since Gates has already gotten more than enough money from the Research Council, we don't need to fund this project. You get a good evaluation, and then you are told you can't get the money.

In autocracies, there is little opportunity to rebel, while in democracies there is little grievance. In semi-democracies, the product of opportunity and grievance is the highest, so they are the most prone to civil war.

***This is Norwegian egalitarianism striking back, you see. After a period in which excellence was rewarded, which of course was inegalitarian in many ways, the Research Council goes back to its old ways.***

Exactly. Just after I received that letter from the Research Council, Jon Hovi called me and said they had an opening in political science at the University of Oslo, and so I said yes, I would apply. And then I took a full-time position at Blindern.

***Of course, you like teaching?***

Yes, I really enjoy teaching. I was teaching in Trondheim but teaching there is hard on your body.

***I know from personal experience ...***

... because you wake up early, and you're still working on your lecture in the taxi, and on the plane, and then when you go home in the evening after teaching the entire day, you fall asleep in the taxi, go through security, and fall asleep again on the plane.

***Falling asleep in the taxi is a good characteristic, at least you get some rest. I was quite proud of being able to fall asleep in the taxi.***

## **Editing Journals**

I must say that PRIO has been very good in maintaining my research relationship on a part-time basis. I have not been kicked out of my office. The entire arrangement

with PRIO and the University of Oslo has been ideal. And then last year, I was told that there was a crisis at the *Journal of Peace Research* when Gudrun Østby wanted to step down as editor. There was a lot of anxiety among others at *JPR* about who the next editor would be. Then I said, well you know I kind of was interested a long time ago, and no one had thought that I would ever take the job. But as it turned out, I did. It's a lot of work, but I don't dislike it.

***What's the number of submissions now? Over 500 per year?***

Over 500 in 2019 and still rising. The last article we received is *JPR-20-0570*. 570 submissions this year, so far. We might pass 600. [614 articles were submitted in 2020].

***That is a big increase since my time!***

... or that time in 1999 when I took over while you were in Uppsala.

***When I became editor in 1983, the first year of my long period as editor, I had to put two of my own articles into the journal in a year because of a lack of submissions. One successful, and the other a total failure. Anyway, were you disappointed when I retired as editor in 2010 and recommended Henrik Urdal rather than you as my successor?***

No, because I was still Center Director. It was impossible for you to have pointed to me. I realized that. I didn't think it was possible for me to do both jobs. The number of submissions wasn't as high as it is now, but it was growing, and I thought it was going to continue to grow.

***Academic journals are now in a bit of flux with the calls for open access, digitization, and so on. How do you see the future of the academic journals? Will we end up without journals and just archives or what?***

That is an interesting question ... You could have peer-reviewed article archives and special issues where an editor puts together a group of articles. And those special issues might be virtual. There are so many exciting opportunities as we move away from the print medium. Animations and three-dimensional figures are possible with electronic presentation, but not with print. Linking appendices and articles is easier too.

***You also edit another journal, *International Area Studies Review* (IASR). How did that happen?***

Michigan State University is one of the prized destinations in the US for Koreans. I think it began because Michigan State is a top agricultural school. The Korean connection seems to date back to the fifties. A lot of scholarships were given for development-related agronomy and things like that. Many Koreans started going there. This led to a more established link between Michigan State and Korea and students from other fields started going there, including political science. So, when I went to Michigan State, we always had several Koreans.

One advantage was that political science at Michigan State was extremely quantitative, even more so than the better-known University of Michigan. Michigan has the reputation, but Michigan State was more advanced in training graduate students. That was good for the Koreans, because they have quite onerous math requirements just to get into the university. So political science offered courses where they could get a good grade with their competence in mathematics. Of course, international politics is more interesting to most Koreans than American government, so I became the supervisor to a lot of them.

They became public administration scholars or specialized in international politics. Back at that time, I was still an international political economy person. I was interested in conflict, but I wasn't doing research on conflict. My own dissertation was on conditionality and my very first student, Sang-Hwan Lee, wrote on trade politics and trade conflicts. We have stayed in close contact. His university, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), had a journal called *International Area Studies*, edited at their Center for International Area Studies.

In 2010, he approached me to ask if I was willing to serve as the editor of the journal. We had the journal's name changed to *International Area Studies Review* and signed a publishing contract with Sage. *IASR* is now published on the same model as the two PRIO journals, *JPR* and *Security Dialogue*. HUFS owns the journal, while Sage offers publication services on a contract basis.

***Of course, International Studies Review is a name claimed by a better-known journal published by the International Studies Association, but there is no monopoly on journal names.***

Exactly. Their *International Studies Review* was older than the other one, but I thought the new name was truer to the journal's mission. Although the international standing of *IASR* is still limited, it is improving and overall, I think it has gone pretty well. In part as a spin-off from this relationship, I am now organizing a conference on the Korean Peace. A virtual conference due to COVID. I was also brought in on some back-channel stuff that PRIO was part of along with Stein Tønnesson and Pavel Baev, in which we met dignitaries from North Korea. I was even invited to come to Pyongyang, but they did not know that I was American. They thought I was Norwegian. I thought if it came out that I was an American, it could cause trouble for the meeting, so I withdrew, even though it would have been interesting.

***Is there any problem being the editor of two journals at the same time?***

No, the main problem with *IASR* is the lack of good submissions. We get well over 100 submissions per year, but most of them pretty poor. I put a lot of effort into promoting scholars from the global south through *IASR*. But even when good, those articles are hardly ever cited, and this hurts us in terms of impact factors and so on. I am not sure why they are not cited, but it could stem from the authors having no network. The journal unfortunately does not always attract the attention it deserves. Nevertheless, I have been happy to work with Norwegian scholars who do article-based dissertations. The introduction (or the 'kappe', in Norwegian) is an overview of literature. Usually, you don't have an avenue for publishing those things, but we

do. Gudrun Østby's assessment of horizontal inequality is a particularly successful example.

*Such articles probably provide good course material.*

Precisely, so we do better on metrics of downloads than on citations.

## Peer Review and Joint Authorship

*I also want to ask you a little about peer review. When we first started systematic outside peer review in JPR in 1983, several people, including people on the editorial committee, asked if we didn't have to build a base of reviewers first. I said no, we just test people and then we build that base as we go along.*

*We found that some people were willing to review, and some were not. Surprisingly few were not. But of course, with over 500 articles per year, and three reviewers per article, that is over 1,500 reviews and there is a limit to how many times you can ask the same person.*

I try not to ask anybody to review too frequently, even though we have relaxed the policy of not more than one request per year. We also have many more desk rejections, articles declined without review. This might be well over half. We have an editor specifically designated to desk rejection. Then I review his suggestions and I rarely desk reject something that he suggests is okay, but I do send out for review some that he recommends rejecting.

*Torbjørn Knutsen once told me that he had taken a course from Henry Kissinger. Kissinger would only read the As, or so claimed one of the teaching assistants. If this was true, the teaching assistants in fact decided who got an A. It would be the same thing with desk rejections unless the editor reviewed them.*

That is correct. I also know that the associate editors apply somewhat different standards. Some are kinder than others. If I send out an article that I view as reviewable, but weak, I don't send it to the kind associate editor. I don't think that would be fair. If you are not aware of the differences between the associate editors, you could have a kind one giving a go to everything. While a lot of sophisticated work judged by a stricter associate editor would not get through.

One innovation that I really want to push forward with the publishers is to provide animations and other forms of visual displays of data. SAGE has been reluctant, partly, I think, because of the cost and partly because of lack of staff expertise. This would move us towards electronic media, and not print media. Having an ability to promote three-dimensional figures, dynamic graphs which are moving and changing, would be a big breakthrough for *JPR*. I really think we would be unique among journals.

One innovation that I really want to push forward with the publishers is to provide animations and other forms of visual displays of data.

*One of the things that struck me at the most recent editorial committee meeting of JPR was all this discussion about getting a third review where the first two disagree. It struck me afterwards that despite the great value of peer review, there can be too much reliance on the reviewers. There are even stories about journals where if one reviewer says ‘no’ the article gets rejected. Of course, JPR has never practiced that.*

No, but *American Political Science Review* has often done that.

*My feeling is that when two reviewers disagree, then it’s the job of the editor to decide.*

I live by that standard. I try to get three, but if I don’t get the third, I decide. I am encouraged by finding that, despite reviewer fatigue, there are always young new researchers willing to review articles. Especially as conflict research is becoming more common in economics, there are more and more junior economists who are willing to review. For a lot of the types of articles that we are getting, that has really increased our pool.

*I also look for younger scholars when I solicit reviewers for JPR’s Book Notes column. The problem is that as we get older, it may be harder to find these young people.*

I use Google Scholar a lot. And some scholars do recommend others, frequently younger colleagues. When I decline a review request from another journal, I try to do that myself when I say ‘no’.

*Talking about younger scholars. We talked about your one-time mentor J David Singer and that article about democratic peace where he suggested that you might get to be a co-author. It struck me that Singer co-authored quite a bit in his time, but rarely with graduate students. The same goes for Rudy Rummel, although he generally co-authored less. This is very different from my own experience and from the atmosphere at PRIO today, where grad students and senior scholars co-author all the time.*

That’s true. It was to some extent a result of the ‘factory model’ that Singer had set up in the COW project. He collaborated a lot with Melvin Small, a senior scholar, but he was out of the picture when I joined the project. Even Paul Diehl, one of the most successful students from the COW project, never co-authored with Singer. Mike Wallace did, but after he got his PhD. Diehl, by contrast, has published with his graduate students. So have I, extensively. And so have you! I regard partnerships with younger scholars as very productive. And I think most grad students do, too.

## A South Asian Orientation

***We've talked about your relationship with Korea. But you've also co-authored with several Indian scholars. How did that come about?***

I have coauthored with an Indian historian, Kaushik Roy. We have written two books together, co-edited four volumes, and co-edited a special issue of a journal. He is an extraordinary scholar. We met after I gave a lecture at the Oslo Summer School. He came up to me and asked several insightful questions. He followed through via email and proposed a joint project. We applied for funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and received the grant. Indeed, we have received two grants from the MoD. I have been interested in South Asia for a long time. Remember, I did my doctoral fieldwork in Pakistan. All of my books with Kaushik have been on South Asian politics (including Afghanistan). Our most recent book is *Limited War in South Asia: From Decolonialization to Recent Times* (Routledge).

I have also closely collaborated with Mansoob Murshed, an economist, who is of Bangladeshi background. We met at a World Bank conference that had been organized by Paul Collier. We hit it off from the beginning. I regard him as a good friend. We published a reasonably highly cited article on horizontal inequality in Nepal as it related to the civil war. We now have an article on food riots under review.

## Gauging the Future of Peace Research

***Perhaps we can talk a little bit about the future of our discipline. Where do you see peace research and the study of conflict going in the future? You are not allowed to respond with a standard line that I often use when asked such questions: There was a jazz musician who said, 'Man, if I knew where jazz was going, I'd be there already.' But where do you think we are moving?***

My answer today is somewhat different than it would have been 20 years ago. Then, I was very worried about a hyper-polarized environment with 'critical theorists' on one side and those with an extreme empirical orientation on the other. But strong critical theory, while it still exists in tiny pockets, never took over. It certainly doesn't play a big role in peace science anymore, or even in peace studies. In recent years, I think people like Andy Mack with his Human Security Project played a profound role, as well as Paul Collier in moving institutions like the World Bank and the UN towards evidence-based research.

To go on with ontological debates about what we can or cannot know, doesn't get us anywhere. Particularly if you want to try to solve real-world problems. If somebody can map out the situations and talk about the patterns and how they can be changed, we have some meat on the bones. As a practitioner, I would find this more valuable than endless discussions about the nature of science and knowledge.

Another important development is more and better recording of data, including information disaggregated in time and space. Just focusing on the nation, the state, and the year as the units of analysis is no longer good enough. You need to break it down to smaller units. Certain questions, like politics and governance, are obviously still going to be important at the nation-state level, although they also have local components. A lot of conflict analysis must look to the sub-national level, particularly in order to understand how resources affect conflict. As you yourself showed clearly in your work on diamonds and conflict. If you only look at the nation-state level, you would think that diamonds were fueling a conflict in Russia. But of course, the conflicts were mainly in the Caucasus and the diamonds were in Siberia, so they played no role whatsoever. This trend towards more disaggregated work has been going on for a few years now and will accelerate, I think.

Another new trend where I think we will see more work is to take advantage of research designs where we can better ascertain causal inference, such as quasi-experimental designs. In the next ten years I think we are going to see a lot more of these, or people doing natural experiments. For instance, a natural disaster occurs, and you use it as an interruption and then look at the differences before and after.

Finally, I think we will see a lot more use of data from social media. Right now, Twitter provides the most useful source of such data; indeed, techniques have been developed and are being developed that enable social scientists to better appreciate the relationship between social media use and protest activities. It may be easier to do this for non-violent protest than for violent. If you are starting an organized guerrilla movement or some other violent activity, you may want to keep it more secret.

***To go back to your first point, I basically agree when you talk about the dominant position of peace science relative to the critical approaches. But there are also signs in the opposite direction. Take the decolonization movement. That actually originated within PRIO to some extent ... Or the attack on Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver in Security Dialogue for practically being racists by citing ancient scholars.***

A lot of people were already in the profession back when critical theory and critical perspectives were on the rise. The difference between those people, and our people so to speak, is that they are more like artists. So, your analogy with jazz I think is right. But what's art and how do you become an artist? One of the worst critiques of an artist is that they are derivative. But for me as a scientist, if my theory is said to build on somebody else's, it is the best compliment I can get! Implicitly, that means that it's derivative. Our work is good if it is derivative, but for an artist it's bad. For critical theorists, their perspective on peace studies is like art rather than science. There is no knowledge base to build on. But most policy makers really do believe there are facts, there really is a world out there, there is a way to understand things, and they can make the world better. It doesn't fit the artist perspective. There will always be those artist types out there. They will continue to invent a new thing to cause some commotion about.

I should note though that some critical theory has provided on occasions useful insights and criticism. Jeff Checkel's recent work is hated by some of the more radical critical theorists, but I think [Andrew] Bennett and Checkel's work is excellent.

***Unlike me, you haven't lived through the time when critical theory and Marxism were ascendant in peace research, which in many ways tore peace research apart. Several institutions split and closed down because of this.***

Oh, and Galtung basically turned his back on PRIO. But this didn't happen in the nineties with rising critical theory. When I was an undergraduate in the late seventies, there was a rise in anthropology of economics, much more evidence based. In the US, anthropology departments combine human origins people, archaeologists, and social anthropologists. But for most social anthropologists there's no room for any behavioralist approach. The problem for anthropology in the future, especially at the University of Oslo, is that they attract so few students. There is a real danger that they will close the anthropology department down because there's no demand.

***I also wanted to ask you a little bit about political science at the University of Oslo. Peace research was founded in Norway by Galtung and other sociologists. I studied sociology myself, I never studied political science. Which is a bit bizarre, since I eventually became a professor of political science...***

Yeah, but you really are a political scientist!

***...but now when I look at people being recruited to the political science department, it's a very different story.***

The comparativists were always a little bit more quantitative. I think some of that spilled over into international politics. The political science department at the University of Oslo was a stronghold for people who argued for publishing in Norwegian. It still has such people, but most of them are emeriti now. Since I was hired in 2015, the balance is completely tipped. The influx of non-UiO doctorates who get a job at the University of Oslo changes the perspectives considerably, too. But even among those who get a UiO doctorate, such as Tore Wig, their experience and working abroad is so much greater. And of course, he was at PRIO for a while, too ...

***Final question about the future: You have an MA in political science and an MS in economics and you always have interacted a lot with economists. Do you see more economists becoming interested in conflict? More cooperation? More theory in peace science derived from economic models?***

To a large extent yes, and I think that economics has changed a lot, too. It has become more empirical. Some parts of it always were. Macroeconomists were always empirical. But micro might not have been. The behavioral approach has really had a profound effect. Even the Nobel Prize has moved towards acknowledging that change, even though these Nobel prizes are generally conservative, with the prize awarded long after the work was done. In 2019, they rewarded some experimental work. On the whole, I think that economics has become more of a general social science-oriented discipline since I was a student in applied economics. A Todd Sandler today wouldn't have to start in Wyoming, then go to Iowa State, and end up at University of Texas-Dallas. I think he would have been at a more prominent school, like Stergios Skaperdas and Michelle Garfinkel at the University of California, Irvine,



two more examples of really good peace researchers who do the modeling and are also empirically oriented.

*Well, I don't know if we have left any gaping holes, but we'll probably wake up in the middle of the night to think 'why didn't I say that?'. Thank you for an interesting conversation!*

- Nils Petter Gleditsch has been associated with PRIO since 1964. He served as the editor of *Journal of Peace Research* (1977–78, 1983–2010) and—under Scott Gates' leadership—as head of the working group on environmental factors at the Centre for the Study of Civil War (2002–07).

## Notes

Also see:

- Scott Gates' profile at the University of Oslo: <http://www.sv.uio.no/isv/english/people/aca/scottga/index.html>.
- Scott Gates' website: [scottgates.weebly.com/](http://scottgates.weebly.com/)

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## Chapter 18

# A Historian's Paths to Peace



Essay by Stein Tønnesson



Stein Tønnesson in 2013 © Julie Lunde Lillesæter/PRIO

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When looking back, I find nine paths I have explored in a quest to understand war and peace: War as war, war as horror, outbreaks of war, severity of wars, war endings, peace viability, regional transitions to peace, peace practices, and peaceful “utopian moments”, such as 1948, when the UN Declaration on Human Rights was adopted. A possible tenth path is one I have mostly shied away from: major peaceful utopias, such as a Harmonious or a Classless Society. While I have walked on all nine paths, the three I have travelled the most are outbreaks of war (in Indochina), transitions from widespread war to relative peace (in East Asia), and a peaceful utopian moment (the 1973–82 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

My studies of revolution and war in Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), and also elsewhere, have led me to a conviction that peace, almost any kind of peace, is preferable to war. War rarely leads to any positive improvement, and entails enormous suffering. I define “peace” as absence of war and violence, and I see such absence as desirable in almost every situation. Since war and violence are negatives, the mere absence of war and violence is already positive peace. The term “negative peace”, I think, is a misnomer. If the absence of war is “negative peace”, then violence—the opposite of peace—would be positive, which is absurd. A mere absence of war is already positive peace. Yet it may be just a minimal, fragile or shallow peace. Peace building, as I see it, is about transforming a minimal peace to a deep and viable peace. (For different views on how to define peace, see Chaps. 2, 8 and 20).

“Structural violence” is another term I see as misleading. If we call injustice, inequality or exploitation structural violence, then this may lead to the conclusion that we have a right to counter the structural violence with violence, and thus we have an argument for war.

Although PRIO has been dominated by the social sciences, it has also been a scholarly home for historians, philosophers and theologians. In this essay, which I first presented as a keynote address to the Norwegian History Days on 1 June 2018, I try to make sense of my life as an international historian and peace researcher.<sup>1</sup>

## History and Multi-Disciplinarity

I was trained as an international historian, first by my father (Kåre Tønnesson) at the dinner table, and then at the universities and colleges of Århus, Lillehammer and Oslo. I have spent long days with loads of files in the national archives of France, Britain, the US, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore—and Norway. Yet I did not seek a university career. During most of my professional life, I have thrived at multi-disciplinary research centres: the Norwegian Institute of Defence Studies (IFS) in Oslo, the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, the Centre for Development and the Environment at the University of Oslo (SUM), the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, and notably the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), where I was an MA student 1980–82, a doctoral student 1988–91, director 2001–2009, and

will soon be a research professor emeritus. Over the last four years, I have worked in close partnership with the Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS) in Yangon.

This is the first time I have made a systematic attempt to give meaning to my professional life. I felt a sense of relief when discovering that it seemed possible. All my nine paths appear in some way to have helped me understand how war and peace have come about historically, and how peace may become viable.

I believe strongly in the possibility of learning from history. What else could we learn from?

The main source I have used for this essay is my Curriculum Vitae (“course of life”). That is where I found the nine paths that cut through my life as a peace historian.

## **First Path: War as War**

The first path is not exactly peaceful. I call it the study of war as war. My ventures into war studies have allowed me to meet and learn from security analysts and strategic thinkers at thinktanks and military academies, notably in China, Vietnam and the US. I have tried to use the same methods as they do, and have learnt to cite authorities such as Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz and Admiral Alfred T. Mahan. “Know thy self, know thy enemy”, says Sun Tzu. So, if war is my enemy, I must know war.

When I tell my Chinese colleagues, many of whom are hard realists, that it does not make sense strategically to build fortresses on underwater reefs in the South China Sea, since the US Navy can destroy them at will, my argument stands and falls with strategic reasoning. My motive, however, for advancing this particular argument is my wish for peace around China.

Military matters have always fascinated me, although there are no military officers in my family. I trace the fascination back to my childhood in Bærum, Oslo's rich suburb in the west, where we replayed the battles between cowboys and Native Americans (whom we called “Indians” at that time). I made multiple drawings of guns as a little boy and resented my peace-loving parents, who took me to demonstrations against nuclear arms and denied me the right to carry a handgun when all the other boys in our neighbourhood—and some girls too—had guns aplenty. Poorly armed as I was, I was shot dead all the time, and forced to lie face down while counting to fifty.<sup>2</sup>

As a teenager I devoured books about Alexander the Great, Harald Fairhair, Genghis Khan and Napoleon Bonaparte; I remember how much it annoyed me when a book about King Charles XII of Sweden allowed a cavalry regiment to play a decisive role on the right flank when it was actually situated on the left flank. I had drawn a sketch of the battlefield, with units in their right place.

My two main heroes until I discovered Chairman Mao Zedong were Winston S. Churchill, who saved England, and Colonel Birger Eriksen, who rescued the Norwegian government from total humiliation in April 1940.

More recently, I had mixed feelings when watching the film *Darkest Hour* and hearing Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax put forward the same peaceful arguments for seeking Mussolini's help to negotiate with Hitler that I myself have advanced in favour of talking to Kim Jong Un. My former hero Winston pursued his irrational instincts and opted for war at all costs.

It was not until my university studies that I began to empathize with the 1000–1400 Germans who perished when the cruiser *Blücher* was bombed and torpedoed from Oscarsborg by Colonel Birger Eriksen on 9 April 1940, thus allowing the Norwegian king and government to escape from Oslo and resist the German invasion. When I first heard that German soldiers who managed to swim and climb ashore in the Oslo fjord were given food and warm clothes by Norwegian civilians instead of being rightfully killed, I was appalled. It took time for me to understand that, in 1940, guerrilla warfare remained unthinkable for Norwegians. War was for soldiers in uniform.

Guerrilla warfare, which is integral to a strategy called People's War, would later become a key research interest of mine. In my youth, which coincided with the Vietnam War, I shared the idea that guerrilla tactics is a legitimate weapon of the weak. By hiding among the people, revolutionary fighters with popular support can win protracted struggles against militarily superior oppressors. I admired the revolutionary ideologues of People's War: Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh and Vo Nguyen Giap.

Later, I discovered that the oppressive government armies of Indonesia and Myanmar (Burma) also adhered to the doctrine of People's War, and that the British were inspired by the same doctrine in their counter-insurgency warfare in Malaya. Government armies used it against communists and ethnic separatists. In Myanmar, there was People's War against People's War. The Indonesian Army also used People's War against communists but, surprisingly, the Indonesian communists did not resort to arms but allowed themselves to be massacred in 1965. In Myanmar, People's War led to a proliferation of local ethnic armies and militias who still fight each other and the government today. Myanmar's civil wars can now be followed—and influenced—in real time on Facebook.

At some time in the 1980s, I realized that regardless of who claims to represent the People, the blurring of distinctions between soldiers and civilians has horrible implications. There is a cynical rationale behind guerrilla tactics; its aim is to provoke the adversary to kill civilians by making it impossible to distinguish between soldiers and civilians. This is meant to alienate the population from the adversary and increase support for oneself. When ethnic groups choose opposite sides, this creates popular animosities that last through generations.

Guerrilla tactics serve to pull civilians into warfare both as victims and perpetrators and do much to increase their suffering. The result has been to prolong civil wars, sometimes indefinitely. Only in a few countries, such as Vietnam, have guerrillas been able to win their wars and seize power, and this has required massive outside help to surpass guerrilla tactics, build a conventional army and fight big battles. In the end, moreover, it has not led to any deep peace, but to repressive and sometimes aggressive regimes.

Even the United States, a superpower, has used guerrilla tactics. It learned its lesson in Vietnam during the 1960s–70 s, and turned guerrilla tactics around, using that method in “low intensity warfare” in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and other places, with devastating consequences for the local populations. I have long regretted my youthful admiration for guerrillas. The best weapon of the weak is ahimsa: non-violent struggle. It also sometimes leads to horrible defeats, but when it succeeds it creates more peaceful societies. Peace researchers have moreover found that non-violent rebels achieve their aims more often than the violent ones.<sup>3</sup>

## Second Path: Horror

My second path is the study of evil: destruction, murder, torture, rape, massacres and other atrocities. We should remember those who suffered and died, raise awareness of the risk of war, and remind new generations of its dreadfulness. An essay from 2018 by Vietnam War veteran reporter Max Hastings in *The New York Review of Books* notes with satisfaction how rare it has become to glorify war and concludes by endorsing a quote from the Norwegian Resistance fighter Knut Lier-Hansen, who blew up the ferry *SF Hydro* on Tinnsjøen on 20 February 1944, causing the loss of eighteen lives, including fourteen civilians. Lier-Hansen, who lived until 2008, stated: “Though wars can bring adventures which stir the heart, the true nature of war is composed of innumerable personal tragedies, of grief, waste and sacrifice, wholly evil and not redeemed by glory.”<sup>4</sup>

The slaughters in the First World War did much to end the glorification of war in Europe. Yet tales and sketches of horror have been with us from long before. I have at home two volumes with reproductions of Francisco Goya's *Desastres de la guerra*, his drawings from the guerrilla war in Spain against Napoleon's imperial army 1807–1814. Among them is a depiction of a husband with his hands tied behind his back watching three soldiers rape his wife and daughter. The women are victimized; if they survive the rape, they may get pregnant and give birth to children with enemy genes. The husband is also victimized. If he survives, he must live with the shame of having been unable to protect.

The perpetrators, I surmise, are also victims. They lose their humanity and are condemned to live with the memory of having committed a horrible crime. I admire the work of psychologist Inger Skjelsbæk (PRIO and University of Oslo) (see Chap. 20), who has interviewed victims and perpetrators of rape in the former Yugoslavia, seeking to understand the psychology and strategy of sexual humiliation.<sup>5</sup>

The same event that Goya depicted two hundred years ago happened again in August 2017 in Myanmar. Soldiers of the national army raped Rohingya women, sometimes in the presence of their husbands. Children fathered by the victims of the Myanmar Army's appalling tactics now grow up in Bangladeshi refugee camps.

With this in mind, I felt a deep relief and satisfaction when Dennis Mukwege, the Congolese doctor who has dedicated himself to helping victims of war rape, finally

received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. He received it together with Nadia Murad, herself both a survivor and a leading activist in the worldwide struggle against war-related sexual violence. My hope is that the prize will help stimulate their work and struggle in the pursuit of human peace and dignity, regardless of gender, culture or religion.

In 2008, I wrote an essay about the role of civilians in war for an edited volume dedicated to the doyen of Norwegian state feminism, Helga Hernes (see Chap. 14), on her 70th birthday.<sup>6</sup> As a historian I could not accept the flawed idea of so-called New Wars.<sup>7</sup> The rape and killing of civilians is in no way new. It has persisted through the centuries. Few wars have killed more soldiers than civilians.

In my MA thesis, I wrote a chapter about mass killing through terrorist bombings. Not in Guernica, Dresden or Tokyo but in the Vietnamese port city Haiphong on 23 November 1946. Several thousand civilians were killed by French naval artillery and aerial bombardment that day. I have since visited Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Hiroshima, Nanjing, Dresden and S-21, the Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh, from which just a few came out alive after the 1975–78 Cambodian genocide. Those few had not yet been put to death when the Vietnamese army arrived to liberate them.

I don't think I watched one single episode of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's 2017 TV production *The Vietnam War* without having to cry. In 1974, I visited the endless rows of graves from the 1941–44 siege of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and in 1989 I saw the long lines of tombs at Cao Bang and Lang Son in Vietnam, dating from the five-week Chinese invasion in February–March 1979. I noticed from the birth dates on the graves that everyone was younger than me. Some were as young as my little brother Øyvind Tønnesson, born in 1963. Wars cut off lives in their prime.

It is meaningful to study and document the horrors of war, the Holocaust, the massacres and genocides. I admire and respect those who do but have not myself ventured far on that painful path. Why, I ask myself, have I missed every opportunity to visit My Lai, where 4–500 unarmed villagers were massacred by Americans in March 1968? Why have I not gone to see the place and meet the survivors? Not because I'm afraid of grief. I do grieve. There is something else I'm afraid of: the political use of victimhood.

My Lai is exploited in Vietnam to show what the Other did to Us. Survivors have made it a profession to weep in front of tourists. I have twice gone through the Museum of American War Crimes in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). I have seen, but did not like, the Massacre Museum in China's former capital Nanjing, which displays the crimes of the Japanese "devils" in 1937–38 in gruesome detail but fails to mention how Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of Nationalist China, after having abandoned his capital, decided to blow up dykes so vast farmlands would be flooded and block Japan's advance. His decision led to the death of at least half a million Chinese peasants, many more than those killed in the Japanese rape of Nanjing.<sup>8</sup>

Japan's humiliation of China plays a key role in Xi Jinping's Chinese nationalism today, just as it did in Chiang Kai-shek's view of history. I've seen the cult of victimhood also in Japan. The Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo commemorates the leaders who were "unjustly" tried and executed in 1948.

When Japanese colleagues ask me how long we Japanese must continue to apologize for what our grandparents did in the 1940s, I tell them to stop apologizing and

mobilize instead true feelings of remorse: try finding out what led Emperor Hirohito and Prime Minister Tojo Hideki to commit such crimes against humanity! If a monument were built in central Tokyo to the victims of Japanese militarism, and the Prime Minister would kneel there instead of at the Yasukuni shrine, there would be no more calls for apology.

I respect post-Cold War Germany for its peaceful approach to the past. I want to return as often as I can to visit the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Long quiet paths along rectangular coffins in stone. A Bauhaus graveyard. So simple. So full of mourning.

When Japanese colleagues ask me how long we Japanese must continue to apologize for what our grandparents did in the 1940s, I tell them to stop apologizing and mobilize instead true feelings of remorse: try finding out what led Emperor Hirohito and Prime Minister Tojo Hideki to commit such crimes against humanity!

In the Spring of 2018, I travelled with a group of friends to Dresden, and was amazed to find that the city's military museum hardly mentions the British terror bombing of 15–17 February 1945, which cost at least 25,000 lives. A few years back, the museum had a sober and detached exhibition about the destruction and reconstruction of the city, displaying multiple perspectives without taking sides. The permanent exhibition studiously documents Nazi Germany's war crimes but says almost nothing about the two million German prisoners of war who died in Soviet camps.<sup>9</sup>

Is this a step too far? Might some see it as a parody of self-depreciation? I see a risk of a nationalist backlash and feel convinced by a key argument in novelist Nguyen Viet Thanh's book *Nothing Ever Dies*. He claims that "remembering others can simply be a reversal, a mirror, of remembering one's own, where the other is good and virtuous, and we are bad and flawed". What he instead looks for is a "just memory" that strives both to remember one's own and others, while "recalling the weak, the subjugated, the different, ... and the forgotten".<sup>10</sup> At any rate, I cannot help admiring the way Germans have approached their perturbing past.

### Third Path: Outbreaks

My third path reaches its end where wars begin. Given their horror, we must continue to study how wars break out. Many have tried. "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta", writes Thucydides in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*.<sup>11</sup> He calls this the "real reason" behind the war, which may be lost if one focuses too much on the immediately preceding events.



Yet, Thucydides does recount those events in much detail. His account shows how some of Athens' and Sparta's allies got into conflict with each other and pulled the two main powers into a mutually destructive war that both would have preferred to avoid. Thucydides' statement about "the real reason" is often referred to in debates about the outbreak of the First World War and about the risk of a confrontation between China (rising Athens) and the USA (fearful Sparta), which could unleash a Third World War.<sup>12</sup>

Thucydides also looks at internal disagreements among decision-makers on either side, particularly in Athens. My own contribution to the history of outbreaks is a study of French and Vietnamese decision-making in 1946, in the run-up to the First Indochina War. When I decided, in 1980, to undertake that study, my hope was to find the origin of the whole cycle of wars in Indochina: The First Indochina War 1946–54, the Second Indochina War 1959–75 (my youth), and the Third Indochina War 1978–89 (which I observed as a concerned historian).

My studies in French, British and American archives led to my MA thesis, supervised by professor Helge Pharo at the University of Oslo, published as a *PRIO Report* in 1984, revised, extended and translated into French in 1987, then again revised and translated back to English for publication by the University of California Press in 2010, and finally translated and somewhat censored by Vietnam's Communist Party before publication in Vietnamese in 2013.<sup>13</sup>

My key finding, which remains controversial, is that the outbreak of war in Hanoi on 19 December 1946 was due to a mistake on the part of Vietnam's communist leaders. The French socialist veteran Léon Blum, who had just formed a transitional government in Paris, wanted badly to avoid war, and did his best to contact President Ho Chi Minh. Ho knew that Blum did not want war and tried to send him telegrams.

But the French High Commissioner in Saigon wanted war. He feared that Blum might undermine the French effort to reconquer all of Indochina and create a French-managed federation of five states. The High Commissioner realized that the French government would not allow him to openly take the initiative. Hence, he did his best to provoke the Vietnamese government into action, and he succeeded.

After having faced a series of deliberate French provocations, the Vietnamese army and militia forces (*Tu Ve*) launched a badly coordinated attack against the French in the evening of 19 December, and the French responded with a well-planned counter-offensive. This is how the First Indochina War began.

President Ho Chi Minh fled to the countryside, where he became a guerrilla leader. Léon Blum, before leaving power to the first constitutional government of the French 4th Republic, could not hold his tears back as he stood in front of a Christmas tree at the headquarters of the French Socialist Party (SFIO) in Paris. In the 1930s, his Popular Front government had been unable to support the Spanish Republic against General Franco, and now—again under his watch—the new French 4th Republic stumbled into a colonial war. It would last eight years, and then came the war in Algeria, which destroyed the French 4th Republic.

In my conclusion, I discussed whether the 19 December outbreak was inevitable or not. I found that it could well have been avoided if Blum and Ho had got in touch or if Ho and Giap had understood that the French High Commissioner was setting a trap

for them. However, when I wanted to go further into a counterfactual argument and argue that if only the outbreak had been avoided, then the whole cycle of Indochina Wars might not have happened, I ran into difficulties. The First Indochina War, I realized, would most likely have broken out all the same. Instead of in December 1946, it would have come in the autumn of 1947.

Once the French Communists had been forced out of the French government, the Christian Democrats (MRP) had taken over the presidency of the French cabinet from the Socialists, and the Truman doctrine had singled out communists as the greatest threat to the free world, France would have broken off relations with Ho's government. So, war would have begun in conjunction with the onset of the Cold War, instead of at a time when the French Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats were still in government together.

When my mentor and colleague in Australia David G. Marr, with whom I have exchanged manuscripts for forty years, saw my disappointing conclusion, he asked why I had spent so much of my life studying 19 December 1946, if it did not make a greater difference. I have not found a satisfactory answer but would meekly suggest that it may be useful to have a detailed study of how a colonial governor can undermine his government's policy, and how a young, unproven government can let itself be provoked. For national leaders to avoid war with other nations it is essential that they keep their armies under centralized control. Conflict prevention today depends on President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and Kim Jong Un of North Korea having full control of their governments and armies, and on their ability to avoid provoking each other or the United States.

In Southeast Asia it is a problem that the civilian governments of Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines have never fully controlled their armies. These three countries are now the only ones in all of East Asia that still have civil wars.

When learning of it in his old age, General Vo Nguyen Giap rejected my contention that something had gone wrong in Vietnamese decision making on 19 December 1946. He gave the order to attack, he claimed, and never regretted it. He had been in full control and the attack was necessary: a failure to respond would have been perceived as a sign of weakness.

In a conversation I had with him, I tried to tell him how much he could have benefitted from showing restraint that night, so Ho Chi Minh could have exposed to the French public the wrongdoings of the French High Commissioner. I also pointed out that his attack, which was meant to be launched simultaneously against all the French garrisons in Vietnam, happened only in Hanoi at the scheduled time, so the French had time to alert their other garrisons and withstand the attacks. I met Giap a few times in the 1990s and 2000s. Afterwards, in his three-volume memoir, he refuted my arguments in writing.<sup>14</sup> I gave my response in my 2010 book, although this part of it was censored in the 2013 Vietnamese version.

Eight years after Giap unleashed the First Indochina War, he won his big victory at Dien Bien Phu, at horrendous cost to his people. Giap frightens me. The fact that I have met him personally sometimes makes me shiver. He had so much blood on his hands, and he and I have so much in common. He started out as a history teacher, he read about Napoleon Bonaparte's campaigns, and as a young man he analyzed

class relations in the villages of the Red River Delta. My own first book, in 1976, was a study of the class struggles in the Norwegian woods during the 1920s–30 s.<sup>15</sup> He authored influential books about the struggles he had been part of.

In 1995, I attended a conference in Hanoi, where Giap met former US Secretary of Defence Robert S. McNamara. The tall and remorseful American wanted to have a real conversation with his short and proud counterpart Giap and learn from him if only one or also a second torpedo had been fired in the Tonkin Gulf incident of August 1964. McNamara assumed, as I did at the time, that Giap had been in command in 1964, in his capacity as Minister of Defence.

We did not know then that Giap had been side-lined by the Communist Party's new leader Le Duan, and that even President Ho had become a figurehead. Giap disappointed McNamara in 1995 by avoiding a real discussion. Instead, he gave a lecture about the difference between invading another country and resisting an invader.<sup>16</sup>

We now know that Giap actually warned against escalating the communist insurgency in South Vietnam because he feared a full-scale American intervention. He also opposed the Tet offensive in 1968 and the invasion of Cambodia in 1978. The driver of all these fateful acts was Le Duan, who had his political background in the struggle for southern Vietnam.<sup>17</sup> Le Duan died in 1986 but Giap lived until 2013, reaching the age of 102. At the time he passed away, he was known to be critical of the Communist Party leadership. His funeral happened amidst an outpouring of patriotic mourning.

As Giap and McNamara grew old, they both developed more peaceful attitudes. McNamara regretted what he had done when serving as President Lyndon B. Johnson's Secretary of Defence. Giap did not express regrets, at least not in public. The last time I saw him at his house, he was too frail to recognize me but he read out a message expressing his desire for world peace.

## **Fourth Path: Severity**

My fourth path follows the escalation of a war after its outbreak. Its magnitude or severity may be measured in duration, the number of weapons or troops deployed, the scale of fighting, the number of casualties or the amount of destruction. The great majority of wars are small. Some are severe but only a few are catastrophic. By far the worst ones in the twentieth century were the First and the Second World War. Perhaps the most significant event in the twentieth century was one that did not happen: the Third World War.

The Vietnam War is the worst of all wars since 1945. It belongs with the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, the Iran-Iraq war, and the Afghanistan War of the 1980s to a small group with millions or hundreds of thousands of battle deaths. Peace researchers emphasize, however, that small long-lasting wars, like those in Colombia and Myanmar, although they do not include big battles, have devastating consequences for their communities because they involve so much gendered violence,

disrupt local economies, prevent economic development, and stimulate criminal production and trade in drugs and other lootable resources.

Another key finding in peace research is that the intensity of fighting in a civil war depends on external aid. The worst that can happen in a civil war is that each side obtains substantial foreign support. As professor at Yale Odd Arne Westad has emphasized, access to assistance from one or the other side in the global Cold War exacerbated the hot civil wars in Third World countries, not least in Indochina.<sup>18</sup>

The end of the Cold War brought a peace dividend by drastically reducing proxy warfare. In the 2010s, however, large-scale external support made a comeback in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. We need to study the effects of proxy warfare and how to prevent the external interventions that widen and prolong civil wars instead of ending them.

I have been thinking about two other factors that tend to escalate wars and increase the death and suffering. If the warring parties have equal strength and end up in a stalemate, they tend to engage in hugely destructive battles. This was the case on the Western front in the First World War, for the Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988, and during the 1998–2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Yet, stalemated wars between big armies are rare. I believe that another factor has been more fateful. This is the mix of war and revolution. They tend to feed on each other.

By far the two worst wars in the nineteenth century, in terms of casualties, were the Taiping Wars in China 1850–64 and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Europe 1792–1815. They ripped societies apart through life-and-death struggles between rebel leaders wanting to totally change the world and traditional kingdoms and principalities. The rebellion leading to the Taiping Wars aimed to create a Heavenly Kingdom on earth and was led by a man who believed himself to be the resurrected Christ.<sup>19</sup>

I do not agree with Steven Pinker and others who say that inter-state wars are more severe than civil wars.<sup>20</sup> The basis for this claim is statistics that categorize the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the Indochina Wars, the Iran-Iraq War and the Afghanistan Wars only as inter-state. In fact, all those wars combined inter-state and intra-state warfare. The most severe wars are those that mix revolution with both civil and inter-state war.

In my doctoral thesis from 1991, I studied how the Vietnamese Revolution grew out of strategic decisions taken in Washington and Tokyo during the Second World War. War led to revolution.<sup>21</sup> In early 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt gave Japan the impression that he intended to invade Indochina.<sup>22</sup> This prompted Tokyo to launch a coup against the French Indochinese regime, which had survived until then under a July 1941 agreement between the Vichy government and Japan. The coup happened, however, at a time when Japan did not have the capacity to replace the French civilian administration.

The result was a power vacuum, which coincided with a famine taking around half a million lives in north-central Vietnam. The vacuum was filled by Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh league, which until then had led a precarious existence in an area close to the Chinese border. By August 1945, profiting from the power vacuum, local Viet

Minh committees had been established all over northern Vietnam. When learning of the Japanese surrender, they seized power so Ho could become president of a new revolutionary republic.

In my study of the subsequent outbreak of war between France and Vietnam, I did not emphasize the fact that the Viet Minh had revolutionary aims that went beyond national independence and unity. Ho insisted that independence and unity would be enough for his life time. Communism could wait. I am not sure if he meant it when he said it.

If France had let Ho Chi Minh run an independent Vietnam, Ho might have become a communist leader who could act independently of Moscow and Beijing—like Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia and Nicolae Ceaușescu in Romania. Yet it is clear that the Viet Minh leaders did not just fight the French. They also fought rival nationalist factions within the Vietnamese society. During July–October 1946, while Ho was on an official visit to France, Giap, as Deputy Minister of the Interior, organized a wave of repression against non-communist parties.

The mix of multiple lines of conflict—civil wars, US intervention and bombing, massive Chinese and Soviet support for the revolutionary side, and ethnic conflict between Khmer, Viet, Lao and many minorities—made the Vietnam War the most severe of all wars since 1945.

The struggle between communist and non-communist nationalists in Indochina made it possible for France to find local partners in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, and set up so-called Associated States. The Associated State of Vietnam would later become the Republic of (South) Vietnam. The war that the US opted into in the 1960s was thus at once a civil war in South Vietnam, a war between South and North Vietnam, and a war between various factions in Laos and Cambodia.

The mix of multiple lines of conflict—civil wars, US intervention and bombing, massive Chinese and Soviet support for the revolutionary side, and ethnic conflict between Khmer, Viet, Lao and many minorities—made the Vietnam War the most severe of all wars since 1945. And then came the Third Indochina War, which did not just affect Cambodia but also Laos and the border region between Vietnam and China.<sup>23</sup>

In a chapter I am writing for the *Cambridge History of the Vietnam War* and another for Peter Furtado's *Revolutions* (Thames & Hudson 2020), I go back to my doctoral thesis and put more emphasis on the role of revolution in driving the cycle of Indochina Wars. In this context, of course, it helps that I am no longer blinded by the admiration I once felt for revolutionary guerrillas.

My brother Johan has reminded me of a question he asked our father, Kåre Tønnesson, a historian of the French Revolution, in 1971 when we were both revolutionary teenagers: “How come you are not a revolutionary when you study revolution?” The answer, which annoyed us at the time but humours us today, was: “Precisely for that reason.”

## Fifth Path: Endings

My fifth path looks at how wars come to a close. They may end in victory for one side (as in the First and Second World Wars and in Sri Lanka in 2009), they may peter out as the warring parties cease to fight (as in the Malayan insurgency, which began in 1948 and became inactive long before the insurgent leader Chin Peng capitulated in 1989), or be settled through a formal ceasefire or peace agreement (as between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh movement in 2005).

There is a debate among peace and conflict researchers about whether victories or peace agreements are most likely to bring lasting peace. This has academic interest but cannot in my view have normative implications. I find it more relevant to compare peace agreements and see why some fail while others succeed.

Many Europeans hoped the First World War would be “the war to end all war”, but the Versailles Treaty of 1920 was not the kind that could create lasting peace. Instead it prepared the ground for the Second World War, and the Middle Eastern Settlement of 1922 provided David Fromkin with the best book title I know from the field of international history: *A Peace to End All Peace*.<sup>24</sup>

My brother Johan has reminded me of a question he asked our father, Kåre Tønnesson, a historian of the French Revolution, in 1971 when we were both revolutionary teenagers: “How come you are not a revolutionary when you study revolution?” The answer, which annoyed us at the time but humours us today, was: “Precisely for that reason.”

A study I would like to see is a comparison of the five peace agreements that were made for Indochina in the period 1946–91, four of which failed while the last—in my view—succeeded. The first is the one I have studied in detail myself, while the last is the one I would most like to look into now. First France made a deal with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 6 March 1946, which was reconfirmed in a *modus vivendi* agreement on 15 September. It collapsed when war broke out on 19 December.

The second agreement was made at a great power conference in Geneva on 21 July 1954. It recognized Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as independent states, while dividing Vietnam temporarily at the 17th parallel pending national elections to be held before July 1956 in the whole country. The agreement fell apart when the anti-communist nationalist Ngo Dinh Diem took full power in South Vietnam and expelled the French, replacing them with US advisors, who did not consider themselves obliged to fulfil the Geneva agreement. Once it became clear that the agreed elections would not be held, the communist leaders in North Vietnam gradually and hesitantly, and against Soviet as well as Chinese advice, decided to foster a full-scale rebellion in South Vietnam.

The third agreement was made in 1962, again in Geneva, and this time President John F. Kennedy fully endorsed it. The aim was to neutralize Laos. The settlement

quickly collapsed as Laotian factions resumed fighting among themselves and the country became a strategic asset for North Vietnam in constructing the “Ho Chi Minh trail” for the transportation of troops, weapons and provisions to the front in South Vietnam (for the two Geneva agreements, see Chap. 6).

The fourth agreement was made in Paris January 1973 between the US and North Vietnam (with South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam as reluctant signatories), after four years of negotiating while fighting. The 1973 Paris agreement made it possible for the US to extricate its troops from Vietnam, but the war did not end. Both sides in the civil war broke the agreement, and just two years after it had been signed (and Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had been offered the Nobel Peace Prize),<sup>25</sup> a North Vietnamese offensive brought South Vietnam to surrender on 30 April 1975.

The 1973 agreement, which followed extensive American aerial bombing of Cambodia, had the additional effect of weakening the incumbent government in that country and allowing an extremist Cambodian grouping (the Khmer Rouge) to seize Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975, and install a genocidal regime. This in turn led to the Third Indochina War, pitting Vietnam against the Khmer Rouge, which formed a coalition with two other parties, receiving aid from China, Thailand and the USA so it could fight against the Vietnamese occupants and its client regime in Phnom Penh for most of the next decade.

The fifth agreement, about Cambodia, was signed in Paris 1991. It installed a temporary UN administration, set up a coalition government in Phnom Penh, and isolated the Khmer Rouge so it disintegrated and eventually fell apart when its leader Pol Pot died in 1998. Thus, the path was cleared for all three Indochinese countries to establish normal relations with each other and the rest of the world, join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), launch economic reforms, and obtain rapid growth. The peoples of Indochina have not since seen freedom and democracy, but they live much longer and better lives than their parents and grandparents did.

## **Sixth Path: Viability**

My sixth path, which I alluded to in the beginning, is conceptual: how do we define peace, and what does it take for a peace to be viable?

For a long time, I tried to shy away from this path, where it’s difficult to get through the tangled conceptual undergrowth that hinders understanding. My inclination was to concentrate on empirical studies, look for unknown facts and combine them with the known ones in arguments or narratives geared to sort out case-specific causal connections.

Yet I always also admired conceptual precision. Vague or misleading terms such as “holistic approach” or “root causes” do not appeal to me. I prefer narrow concepts and try to resist the temptation to widen them. Hence, I began to feel that two widely accepted concepts in peace research were mostly leading us astray. As mentioned in the beginning, they are “structural violence” and the distinction between “negative”



and “positive” peace. In 2016, I decided to put my criticism of those terms into writing.<sup>26</sup>

Why do I not like the term “structural violence”?

First, because we already have terms to describe social and political systems that harm and shorten people's lives in other ways than through physical violence: oppression, subjugation, exploitation, tyranny, inequality, discrimination, etc. An unequal or unjust society is not necessarily violent. If we distinguish between violence and injustice, we can study the causal relationship between violence and injustice, and the same goes for inequality: does injustice or inequality lead to more violence or not? We cannot, however, study these relationships if we subsume injustice or inequality under the term violence.

My second reason is political. If we characterize an unjust or unequal but otherwise peaceful society as structurally violent, we make it easy for would-be rebels to legitimize the use of violence against that injustice or inequality. If non-violence is instead appreciated as a virtue in itself, more rebels may opt for non-violent means of struggle.

Peace often depends on *threats* of violence, within states through repression and between states through deterrence. In such cases, many peace researchers speak of “negative peace”. I see that term as a misnomer. It plays on two different meanings of “negative”. Sometimes the word is used normatively, meaning bad as opposed to good. Sometimes it is used descriptively to denote the absence, as opposed to presence, of a certain condition.

However, when absence of war is called “negative peace” it negates the wrong noun. When a doctor calls a medical test negative, he does not call this “negative health.” A positive test would indicate that the patient is ill. If absence of armed conflict is negative peace, then positive peace must be war, which is absurd. In the same way as a negative test for illness is a positive indication of health, the absence of war is a positive indication of peace. Absence of war is thus positive peace.

Yet such a positive peace may be frail or insecure. What peace researchers normally mean when they call for a “positive peace” is that there should *not just* be absence of armed conflict but something more, like justice or equality. Hence, they feel a need to build justice or equality into their definition of peace. This is where they go wrong and distort our concepts. Fortunately, there is now a tendency to abandon the terms negative/positive peace. Peace researchers speak instead of shallow/deep, low quality/high quality, resilient/non-resilient, sustainable/unsustainable, or nonviable/viable peace.

This means that the peace-war dichotomy can be understood as a continuum with total war on one side and viable peace on the other, and with the absence of war (or violence) representing a dividing line between the peaceful and unpeaceful side of the continuum. What makes peace viable is of course a key concern in peace research.<sup>27</sup>

In defining the difference between viable and less viable conditions of peace, I have sought inspiration from Karl Deutsch's classic concept of a *security community*. He defined it as a group of people with a sense of community and “institutions



and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure for a ‘long’ time, dependable expectations of ‘peaceful change’ among its population”.

Such communities can exist within just one state or within a territory consisting of several states.<sup>28</sup> Deutsch also spoke of a *no-war community*. While members of a no-war community keep up a military preparedness to defend themselves against each other, although they see little risk that they may have to resort to force, the inhabitants of a security community take peace so much for granted that they no longer see a need to arm against one another. A security community has viable peace.

## Seventh Path: Regional Transitions

The seventh path is one I discovered only after the turn of the millennium. I had never studied statistics myself and had long found it boring. However, my exposure to quantitative peace research at PRIO and as a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Peace Research* led me to appreciate statistical studies. I was intrigued by an article written by the Finnish peace researcher Timo Kivimäki, trying to explain how Southeast Asia had overcome its wars and become so much more peaceful than before.

We met and decided to cooperate, and eventually developed a research proposal together with Isak Svensson of Uppsala University. Our aim was to explain a statistical transition to peace in a major world region with more than 30% of the world’s population. This is East Asia (Northeast + Southeast Asia), which suffered 80% of all the world’s estimated battle deaths during 1946–79, but only 6% in the 1980s, and in the years 1991–2020 less than 2%.<sup>29</sup> How come?

The statistical finding that formed the basis for our research proposal depended on a narrow definition of peace as (relative) absence of armed conflict. Yet the research programme we developed, after receiving generous funding from the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, included several researchers who questioned such narrow concepts. They investigated the many shortcomings of the East Asian peace as far as quality or viability are concerned.

It was clear from the outset that the East Asian Peace cannot be called either a “security community” or a “no-war community” but remains fragile with nations arming against each other, threatening each other, and making operational plans for war. Many of the regional governments are moreover authoritarian or outright dictatorial. Yet I see the East Asian Peace as representing a momentous improvement from the foregoing period. East Asia’s transition from widespread and frequent warfare from 1840 to 1979 to four decades of relative peace has allowed for an astounding improvement of people’s lives.

In our programme, we explored several competing theories to explain the regional transition. I developed, together with Kivimäki,<sup>30</sup> a “developmental peace” theory. In my view, the regional peace came about as a cumulative effect of a series of national priority shifts at different junctures. In one country after the other, the governing elite decided to shift from various kinds of ideological or irredentist priorities to aiming

for state-driven economic growth: Japan 1945–46, South Korea 1961, Indonesia and Singapore 1965, Taiwan 1972, China 1978–79, Malaysia 1984, Vietnam 1986, Laos and Cambodia in the 1990s.

[T]he regional peace came about as a cumulative effect of a series of national priority shifts at different junctures. In one country after the other, the governing elite decided to shift from various kinds of ideological or irredentist priorities to aiming for state-driven economic growth.

In each case, leaders emphasizing economic growth sought and obtained stability both externally and internally. Then peace followed. In 2018, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un organized a dramatic rapprochement with South Korea, the USA and China in an failed attempt to join the East Asian zone of prosperity (while probably intending to keep his nuclear weapons).<sup>31</sup> The East Asian Peace is not a high-quality peace from either a liberal or a socialist point of view. It is repressive and allows for appalling inequalities. Yet it has allowed an astounding economic growth. Life expectancy at birth has risen dramatically in every single East Asian country, and, as Alex Bellamy has shown it has also led to a dramatic decrease in “mass atrocities”.<sup>32</sup> East Asia's economic rise has depended on peace.

As someone interested in global history, I suggest that we make more comparisons of geographical regions with regard to levels of armed conflict, and ask questions like: how could East Asia make a transition from the world's main battlefield to a region of peace and prosperity, while the Middle East remains mired in chaos and war? (see Chap. 15). Why have Latin America and Africa had their share of devastating civil wars but very few inter-state wars?

## **Eighth Path: Peace Practices**

The eighth path is practical. How can we characterize peaceful communication? Human interaction is of course mostly peaceful. What people do to each other, even in times of war, is peaceful most of the time. Violent events are exceptional. This is easy to forget. Researchers, even peace researchers, are drawn to studying outbreaks of violence without paying attention to the peaceful interaction that happens in-between.

I feel inspired by my colleague at PRIO Wenche Hauge (see Chap. 13), who has compared violent and peaceful communities in Haiti, trying to find out what made some communities avoid violence while others succumbed to it. She finds that institutionalized patterns of cooperation, often with informal but well-known lines of authority, have helped communities retain their internal peace. She made a similar study in Madagascar, and found there too that established institutions cutting across ethnic divides prevented disputes from being used by political rivals to whip up hostile communal sentiments.<sup>33</sup>

Her research conclusions remind me of findings by the Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen, whose doctoral thesis was a study of peaceful multi-ethnic societies in Mauritius and Trinidad.<sup>34</sup> I have been inspired by their findings, and also by peace practices I have observed in the field, and the activities organized by local and international NGOs seeking to transfer lessons learned from one place to another. Even in the worst of situations, there are people who cooperate peacefully across ethnic divides.

In Myanmar, I have had a chance to learn from the training activities of the RAFT organization, led by the Norwegian historian and practitioner Eva Østbye. Following the principles of “do no harm” and “conflict sensitivity” as defined by Mary B. Andersson, this Myanmar based organization has sought to train public institutions, private companies and organizations in how to map out local patterns of conflict and cooperation, reflecting local “dividers” and “connectors,” as an essential phase in any planning of investments or other interventions. The aim has been to prevent violent conflict and build peace. It remains to be seen if it can continue its peace practice under Myanmar’s new military regime.

In 2017, I stepped down from my East Asian macro approach and began working on three micro studies of interaction among ethnic armed groups and government agencies in Myanmar. I wanted to find out why in some places and on some occasions, people with different ethnic identities treat each other with decency and respect, while in other instances they commit heinous crimes against each other.

My research partner was the Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS). We studied how ethnic armed organizations influenced each other when choosing to either fight or agree to a ceasefire, and how peaceful and violent interactions were reflected in the social media. A drastically different situation emerged when the Myanmar military carried out its 1 February 2021 coup. Social media, notably Facebook, played a highly significant role in the protests that followed and the violence used to quell them.

A massive introduction of smartphones in Myanmar since 2014 has provided a digital platform for ethno-religious hate speech, surveillance and violent mobilization but also for non-violent protests and peaceful interaction across ethnic and religious boundaries.

Together with MIPS and Ph.D. student Julie Marie Hansen at PRIO I looked for differences in the way men and women use their smartphones. Myanmar is a country where people who did not have access to any kind of phone or computer until recently can suddenly communicate with anyone in the whole world and this has continued to be the case after the coup.

Changes in communication patterns that have taken decades in other countries came to Myanmar in just four to five years, in a context of ongoing armed conflicts. I wanted to consider the potential of social media to develop peaceful practices in a society that has not yet joined the East Asian Peace.

Some would not see this as history. I do. I find it impossible to grasp anything called “the present”. Historians study the past, which includes everything that has happened until this moment. I conceive of “the present” as a constantly moving

dividing line between past and future. We form the future based on what we know about the past.

This is my rationale for having chosen to concentrate, as a peace historian, on recent history. It is the most recent history that has the strongest impact on the future. Peace practices have, however, existed throughout known history, and comparisons of such practices over time, under different political, economic, technological and cultural conditions, should be further emphasized in peace research.

## **Ninth Path: Minor Utopias**

My ninth path moves ahead of the others by looking at plans, visions or goals. At some points in history, new constellations of power and influence give radical reformers a chance to change the world for the better. These are, to borrow the expression of Jay Winter, “utopian moments”.<sup>35</sup>

They resemble what I referred to above as national priority shifts, but Winter's moments are international. He does not look at “major utopias” such as Paradise on Earth, a Harmonious World or a Classless Society but at “minor”, more practical utopias. One utopian moment was in 1948, when René Cassin became the key node in an international network of reformers, who seized upon a chance they got before the full onset of the Cold War and obtained the adoption of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What an achievement!

I feel inspired by Winter, and would like to nominate another “minor utopia”, namely the 1982 signing of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, which has become a global constitution for the oceans. The 1970s, with its quest for a new world economic order, with China's entry into the United Nations, and US-Chinese and US-Soviet détente, provided the momentum that was needed to move forward with arms control and other international treaties.

I see the Law of the Sea Convention as a huge step in the direction of global peace. This is not because it provided fairness and equality between nations or removed all territorial conflict. The Law of the Sea Convention privileges states with many islands or long coasts (such as the USA, France, Chile, Argentina, Angola and Norway) by giving them sovereign rights to the resources in the water and under the seabed in a huge 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone. Coastal states in Latin America and Africa played key roles in pushing for that part of the Convention.

The main reason why I see the Law of the Sea Convention as a huge achievement for peace is that it sets geographical distance—not history or effective jurisdiction—as the basis for delimiting national zones. To the extent that the geographic principle is accepted, the scope of territorial conflict is drastically reduced. It does not, as on land, depend on power or territorial control but on purely geographic measurement.<sup>36</sup>

The main reason why I see the Law of the Sea Convention as a huge achievement for peace is that it sets geographical distance—not history or effective jurisdiction—as the basis for delimiting national zones.

Legitimate disputes can only arise in those areas where disputed islands may generate a right to an Exclusive Economic Zone of their own and thus create overlapping claims. Other disputes may be resolved through the application of established principles for how to calculate median lines, with room for just a little give-and-take. From 1999 to 2000, the Convention made it possible for Vietnam and China to delimit their territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones in the Gulf of Tonkin, and also arrive at a fishing agreement.<sup>37</sup> In 2010, the Law of the Sea Convention allowed Norway and Russia, after thirty years of negotiation, to sign a delimitation treaty in the Barents Sea.

The Law of the Sea Convention also includes another fundamental achievement for world peace. It established the principle that the resources in “the Area” (meaning the seabed under the High Seas, outside of all national continental shelves) is the global heritage of mankind. Any exploitation of resources in the Area shall be reported to and taxed by the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the world’s two greatest powers refuse to accept basic aspects of the Law of the Sea Convention. The US is against the principle of the global heritage of mankind, insists on a free-for-all principle, and will not accept any global “socialist” tax. This is the main reason why the US Senate has not ratified the treaty.

China accepts the rules on The Area and pays taxes to the UN for its exploitation of deep sea resources. In 1996, the Chinese National People’s Congress also ratified the Convention. However, China does not in practice accept the basic principle that maritime zones can only be claimed on the basis of geographical distance from coasts. Unfortunately, the South China Sea, with its immense importance for world shipping, strategic role for the Chinese, US, and Japanese navies, symbolic role in Chinese patriotic imagining, and dwindling fish stocks due to weak or non-existing resource management, is a place where the capacity of disputed islands to generate maritime zones makes it hard to resolve maritime disputes.

An Arbitration Tribunal under the Law of the Sea Convention, established at the initiative of the Philippines, sought to clarify the most difficult issues in a 2016 ruling.<sup>38</sup> However, China refused to fulfil its obligation under the treaty to take part in the arbitration, and totally refuted the Tribunal’s award. In contravention of the geographic principle, China insists that it has *historical rights* in virtually the whole of the South China Sea, including waters close to other countries’ shores. China thus treats the sea as if it were land. In so doing, it breaks with the fundamental principle in international law that “land dominates the sea” and fosters doubts about its respect for international law in general. This is a major problem not only for peace in East Asia but for peace worldwide, since it deeply affects China-US relations.

I have been trying to persuade Chinese colleagues that they can reach satisfactory solutions for their country, based on a loyal interpretation of the Law of the Sea, which is quite flexible, but have mostly spoken to deaf ears.

Utopian moments have allowed the creation of peace-enhancing treaties and institutions, constituting what Winter calls “minor utopias”, but they fall apart again if major powers decide to ignore or reject what has been solemnly agreed.

## Conclusion

A possible tenth historical path, which I have not pursued although I flirted with it in my youth, is major utopias. Many movements in history have rejected all incumbent institutions or beliefs and have sought to create a new and shining society, based on justice, harmony and peace.

What I call the East Asian Peace, a relative absence of warfare in East Asia since the 1980s, is not a utopia but a historical reality. For a long time, East Asia has seen very little war. Yet the East Asian Peace is just a minimal or vulnerable peace since so many conflicts have been left unresolved. There is a constant risk of new outbreaks. Yet I think the war avoidance we have witnessed for three-to-four decades, is already a positive achievement, providing a basis for further strides toward a more viable peace.

In my youth, I was moderately fascinated by major utopias. In 1971, I wrote a school essay about Thomas Moore's *Utopia*. I seem to remember that already then, inspired by my father's cool rationality, I thought of major utopias as ideals that would never be totally fulfilled. I was not much attracted to the idea of absolute peace. I never liked the idea of Paradise and did not even believe in the possibility of a classless society, although I sometimes held it out as a beacon to strive towards.

More recently, I was deeply sceptical when China's former leader Hu Jintao promoted the idea of a Harmonious Society. My fear was that China might use violence to defend harmony, as indeed it is doing domestically through various kinds of repression. Peace for a peace researcher is not harmony but non-violent management of conflict and non-violent struggle (ahimsa).

Visions of a total eternal peace have inspired ideological leaders and movements worldwide. Major utopias have also sometimes brought genuinely peaceful achievements. Yet they have more often provided legitimacy to human rights abuse and horrible crimes. Just like Jay Winter, I'm weary of beliefs in total peace or harmony. I have lost my faith in revolutionary change but feel inspired when regions or nations reform and turn more peaceful, and when new, innovative solutions are found to longstanding disputes. I would like to see historians do more comparisons between peaceful and violent communities.

To sum up, among my nine paths, the first (war as war) is dubious but necessary. The second (war as horror) is admirable provided it does not denounce “others” for what they did to “us” but instead helps create a just memory. The third (outbreak), fourth (severity) and fifth (endings) are classics that need to be kept alive. The sixth

(viability or peace building) is fortunately a growing field of study. The seventh (regional transitions), the eighth (peace practices) and the ninth (utopian moments) are the ones I would like to pursue in the rest of my peace researching life.

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# Chapter 19

## Managing Peace Researchers: Lene Kristin Borg and Grete Thingelstad



Interviewed by Stein Tønnesson

At a farewell lunch organized for PRIO Director Sverre Lodgaard at the end of his term in 1992 (see chap. 10), someone said that, under his leadership, PRIO had made a transition from anarchy to dictatorship. The speaker who said this expressed herself in favour of the dictatorship, which according to her had been necessary. Another speaker quoted Mao Zedong for stating that to make an omelette you need to break a few eggs. Some eggs had indeed been broken.

*This comment comes from Grete Thingelstad, who served as Administrative Director (kontorsjef) at PRIO during the transformation period from 1989–95. Lene Kristin Borg, PRIO's current Administrative Director, adds the following remark:*

PRIO's anarchic past had completely vanished when I arrived in 1998. I came to a well-ordered institute, and it may surprise those who have heard about PRIO's past but not about its present that after running PRIO for more than twenty years, I have not yet met Johan Galtung.

**Stein Tønnesson:** *What kind of background and qualifications did you have before taking up your job as Administrative Director? Were you interested in peace beforehand?*

**Grete Thingelstad:** I had studied social science at the University of Oslo, and had worked as a research secretary at its Department of Informatics, as well as at the Centre for Industrial Research (now SINTEF), where I was head of administration in one of their departments. So, I had learnt some things about research administration, although I had not studied management. When I saw that there was a vacancy at PRIO, I applied, got the job and started in September 1989. I had had no previous

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engagement with peace activism or peace research but had begun to study social anthropology.

**Lene Kristin Borg:** I studied economics and administration for two years at the Economic College, as it was called at the time, in central Oslo. My first job was as an accountant at the Norwegian Refugee Council. I took up that job in 1989, the same year that Grete got the job at PRIO. I stayed with the Refugee Council until 1994, when I discovered a vacancy at CICERO, the Centre for International Climate Research. It was great fun to work there as a controller, under the directorship of Helga Hernes, who later joined PRIO as a Senior Adviser.

In 1997, someone at CICERO alerted me to the fact that the position as Administrative Director at PRIO had been advertised. He said: “You need bigger challenges. You must move onwards and upwards, Lene!” I remain grateful for that tip, which got me to apply to PRIO—although I had really liked it at CICERO. I applied and was invited to an interview with PRIO Director Dan Smith, Deputy Director Hilde Henriksen Waage and Helga Løtuft, who had served as administrative director since Grete left the job (see chaps. 11 and 15).

**Grete:** She was my replacement for two years when I had parental leave.

**Lene:** I really wanted the job at PRIO as I had gained an interest in international affairs through my previous jobs, with a focus on refugees and climate issues. I had come to know economists and meteorologists, and I liked to work with research.

So, to meet researchers focusing on peace and conflict was something I looked forward to. I had for a short time worked in a purely commercial environment and had found that meaningless. My interest in international affairs was also stimulated by the fact that I had married a guy from Morocco.

**Grete:** In my case, the interest in international affairs was stimulated by my university studies and several years of activist work for indigenous people. I gave up social anthropology when I got pregnant. At that time, most anthropologists did their fieldwork in foreign countries, preferably on a small isolated island, and that did not fit well with parenthood. I had, however, done some travelling in the USA and Europe before I came to PRIO, so I had an international outlook.

**Stein:** *How did you get the jobs?*

**Grete:** I was interviewed by Director Sverre Lodgaard and a graduate student, Merete Wilhelmsen—who is now a Norwegian diplomat—and I remember feeling surprised that I would be interviewed by a student. A stronger memory is the joy I felt when I got the offer. I was incredibly happy. I have three children, and I have changed job after each parental leave. As I remember, I began at PRIO when my second leave ended on 1 September 1989.

On my first day at PRIO, I was introduced to all the staff, and I remember meeting a researcher whose name was already familiar to me, since I had seen him on TV, heard him on the radio and read about him in the papers. He was dressed up in the kind of attire that I expected researchers to wear when coming to work: a suit and tie.

I was therefore unprepared for his first words to me: “Please excuse my having dressed up today; I shall be going to a funeral.” This was Nils Petter Gleditsch (see chap. 5). I had no idea that PRIO had an informal dress code. For me, it felt natural that a famous researcher would be wearing a suit and tie. I later noticed with some relief that when PRIO invited Oslo’s diplomatic corps to its seminars, most of the researchers dressed up.

I arrived during a transformative period at PRIO, when Sverre Lodgaard had recently begun as director (chap. 10). Many controversial changes had already been introduced under his leadership by my predecessor in the management role, who had only stayed for one year but had enforced some radical reforms. He cleaned up the place, so to speak, and controversially introduced a registration system where employees had to ‘clock in’ with punch cards, logging the time they arrived at work and the time they left, allowing the management to calculate how many hours a person was at work. This caused quite a shock.

**Lene:** I had been told that my interview would be in English, so I rehearsed various terms in the car while driving down to PRIO in Fuglehauggata 11. Hilde Henriksen Waage asked the toughest questions. Afterwards, I was very disappointed when I found out that I had not got the job. I was in the top two. Then, fortunately, it turned out that the first choice had also applied for another job and had got it, so just before Christmas 1997, Dan Smith called and offered me the job. It was a wonderful Christmas present.

Before I arrived, the accountant at PRIO also left, so Lars Even Andersen, now Deputy Administrative Director, began in that job at the same time as me. We were hired at the same time and became PRIO’s new management team.

No one was there to train us. Dan Smith simply welcomed me and declared: “Here is your office—you can start working now. It’s not always easy to know what you should be doing when you are the boss, but I’m sure it will all work itself out. So just sit down, think a little, walk around to say hello to people, and then you will find out what to do.” This was strange, I thought.

No one was there to train us. Dan Smith simply welcomed me and declared: “Here is your office – you can start working now”.

**Grete:** What you’re saying reminds me of my first day at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), where I took over as Administrative Director in 1997. It was such a shattering experience to receive so little guidance there that I have forgotten my first day at PRIO.

**Lene:** I remember walking around without anyone to accompany me, introducing myself to these strange intellectuals. Helga Løtuft, my predecessor, had left a note for me, which was also rather puzzling. It contained some anecdotes and a list of people she called “high maintenance”. There was also a note about dress code, defining

what was acceptable. Shorts were not allowed, but neither was it obligatory to wear a suit or jacket to work.

**Grete:** The prohibition against shorts stemmed from the time before I arrived. At that time, we had many conscientious objectors (COs) among the staff. Some of them dressed very informally, so the management introduced some rules. Moreover, a few months before I arrived, the staff had found a note from the Administrative Director in their pigeonholes one day, notifying them that from that day onward, all male staff were obliged to wear a tie. This caused much consternation until it was discovered that it was an April Fool's joke. A history student, Tor Egil Førland, was behind the prank.

**Lene:** Fortunately, Hilde Waage was there, so I could ask her about my tasks. And then I discovered that PRIO was actually well organized, with clear lines of authority and formal statutes that had been well thought through.

**Grete:** You came at a time when many things had been tidied up.

## **PRIO's Anarchic Past**

**Stein:** *What kind of image did people paint of PRIO's 'anarchic' period?*

**Grete:** I was constantly reminded of it, both because people talked about it and because we still had remnants of the flat structure. The reforms had only been in effect for one year by the time I arrived, and I was fortunate not to be responsible for introducing some of the stricter reforms.

Sverre (Lodgaard) got both the honour and the blame for the transformation. The image I could form of PRIO's past depended on who I talked to. Some were happy that there was finally some order. Others thought that PRIO had lost its soul.

Many stories were told about the good old days at PRIO's previous offices on Rådhusgata 10, as though the place was a symbol of what had been lost. There had been times there when students and COs were in the majority at the plenary meetings and could therefore impose their viewpoints on the research staff.

In my time, too, we had many COs (Conscientious Objectors)—seven to eight at a time. Together with the students, they constituted one third of the staff. We had quite a lot of drama and conflict, for which many would blame Sverre and me. Later on, I have thought that I could have done things differently, although I still believe there was a need to shake up the organization.

**Stein:** *What were these conflicts about and how could you have handled them differently?*

We had quite a lot of drama and conflict, for which many would blame Sverre [Lodgaard] and me. Later on, I have thought that I could have done things differently, although I still believe there was a need to shake up the organization.

**Grete:** When I later studied at the Norwegian Business School (BI), I wrote a term paper about research management, based on my experiences at PRIO. I looked at it again today and found my notes from the farewell lunch organized at Hotel Bristol for Sverre Lodgaard, at the end of his term as director in 1992. It was there that I found the quote from a speaker who had said that PRIO had changed from anarchy to dictatorship, and one from another who claimed that eggs had needed to be broken.

At the time, PRIO's revolution was not just a result of internal pressure for change but also a response to external demands. A committee led by [professor of political science Knut] Midgaard had come up with a set of recommendations for how to increase PRIO's productivity. If nothing radical had been done at the time, then PRIO's funding would have been lost or at least reduced. There was no alternative to tidying things up. According to the Midgaard recommendations, the quality of PRIO's publications had to be improved.

Yet, I think we may have moved too quickly. This is more than thirty years ago, so my philosophy about leadership has matured. I think it is important to listen to people, acknowledge their feelings when they lose freedom or resources. When you remove authority, influence, or control from people who are used to having it, you must acknowledge what is going on—admit that it is tough and needs to be talked about.

While saying this, I want to recognize the patience Sverre showed at the time. I remember, when we set out to alter the PRIO statutes, how many hours we spent sitting in meetings of the Institute Council, discussing every word and comma. So, there was a lot more democracy at PRIO than in most other work places. Still, the transition was radical indeed.

**Stein:** *I think perhaps you were already quite patient and mature at the time. The most tumultuous period preceded your arrival and to some extent you served as a security valve. It was possible to go to you with complaints and express emotions.*

**Grete:** I remember that a couple of students or COs came and asked me: "Are you very strict?" I said no. I suppose I was fortunate to arrive after the toughest reforms had been introduced, so I would mainly follow up and implement the reforms that had already been decided. I did not get into personal conflicts myself and felt that I had good relations with everyone. I really missed my PRIO colleagues when I left.

## The Peace Researchers They Met

**Stein:** *Who among the staff made the greatest impression on you at the time?*

**Grete:** Nils Petter Gleditsch was a forceful personality, embodying PRIO's past. Tord Høivik as well, although he was often away. Susan Høivik had also been there a long time. Then you, Stein, and Tor Egil Førlund held strong opinions about the various decisions made, although you were newcomers as doctoral students.

**Stein:** *I knew the old system in Rådhusgata from my two years as an MA (hovedfag) student in 1980–82.*

**Grete:** You and Tor Egil were not afraid of voicing your opinions in discussions with the director. Then I remember Ola Tunander. He did not take much part in discussions about the reforms but was a very good colleague and researcher.

Then there was Rune Ottosen, who was information director. He held influence as union leader. We cooperated very well, and he played an active part in the whole restructuring process. Am I right that the union was new at PRIO at the time, and that PRIO had not had a union earlier?

**Stein:** *I think the Norwegian state employee's labour union (NTL) had members at PRIO from before, but that it formed a section at PRIO and became far more important once decisions were no longer taken at plenary meetings and once the equal salary system was abandoned. It was only much later that Forskerforbundet took over as the main union at PRIO.*

**Grete:** As far as I remember, the division of labour between the Institute Council and the union remained blurred, so this was something we had to resolve. We negotiated PRIO's first collective agreement (tariffavtale), which defined the issues to be left to the Institute Council and the ones to be negotiated between the union and management. I remember Rune as a highly dedicated information director and a rational, well organized NTL leader.

Hilde (Henriksen Waage) was not at PRIO when I arrived. She was at home with her second child, but I remember she called me and congratulated me on the job. We only got to know each other after she was back from maternity leave. Since that time, we have remained close friends. She was a very strong personality with great influence at PRIO and we have always seen eye to eye.

**Stein:** *What about Marek Thee and Kumar Rupesinghe?*

**Grete:** I never met Marek (see chap. 7). This is painful, since I was given the task of asking him to leave his office at PRIO after he had reached retirement age. That was a sad process. I am not sure why he was thrown out so abruptly. He had a huge library, and then he died not long afterwards.

**Stein:** *He was given an office by Asbjørn Eide at the Centre for Human Rights. Marek had been editor of the Bulletin of Peace Proposals (BPP)...*

**Grete:** ... which Magne [Barth] took over.

**Stein:** *Yes, and it subsequently changed name to Security Dialogue. This was part of the new times.*

**Grete:** I believe it was still called BPP for some time while Magne was editor. He began at PRIO a little before me. As for Kumar [Rupesinghe], he was appointed as leader of one of PRIO's new research programmes. He travelled much and managed his programme with the help of COs, but I do not remember to what extent he took part in our decision making.



**Stein:** *Did you meet Johan Galtung?*

**Grete:** Yes, he gave a series of seminars and published some books under our new publishing agreement with SAGE, and then I took responsibility for organizing an event on his 60th birthday on 24th October 1990...

**Stein:**...*United Nations Day.*

**Grete:** Yes. He was exactly one month older than my mum. This is why I remember his birthday. The two 60th birthdays could not have been more different. So yes, I met Johan Galtung when he came by.

**Stein:** *He turns 90 in 2020 (see chap. 24) and is still in very good health.*

**Grete:** How nice! Where does he live?

**Stein:** *I meet people all the time who ask where he lives but this is not so easy to say. He is a cosmopolitan, you know. His personality transcends all geographic boundaries; his autobiography is called Johan Landless (Johan uten land). Hence, when asked, I usually reply that he lives on the globe.*

*When I travelled the world as PRIO Director 2001–09, meeting peace researchers and activists in various countries, I met people all the time who told me they had recently received a visit from Johan Galtung. I also once took part in a conference together with him in Seoul. He told me that he had stopped reading new books about international affairs, and advised me to do the same. These books are always outdated at the time of publication, he explained. Instead of reading them, he used his network to find out who was working on the world's most interesting manuscripts, and then he invited himself to lunch or dinner with the authors, flew to wherever they were located, and made them recount the arguments they were going to put forward. In this way, he remained at the forefront of theoretical developments in his field without having to read lengthy books or articles.*

*I suppose he travels a little less now, yet I am not confident about pinning him down in any particular part of the globe. His wife is Japanese, so I think he has some attachment to Japan. He has also spent much time in Spain. The telephone number I have reached him with most recently begins with + 33, which is France. The global organization that he often works with, Transcend, has an address in Romania, and then I know he loves a certain place in Western Norway. So, I think I'll stick to saying he belongs to the globe.*

**Grete:** Well yes. This matches my impression. Johan was the kind of guy who came by.

**Stein:** What did your intuition say about his personality?

**Grete:** He was totally okay. I seem to remember though that he was dissatisfied with PRIO's new research profile. There was not enough peace and too much security for his taste. Am I right?

**Stein:** *I think so. Yet Sverre invited him to give a series of seminars.*

**Grete:** This was part of a deal, I think. And he attracted a good audience. And then we agreed to publish three new Galtung books with SAGE.

**Stein:** *We also edited a two-volume bibliography of his works for his 60th birthday. What about you, Lene? Did you hear much about PRIO's 'anarchic' past when you arrived in 1998?*

**Lene:** That past was no longer a part of PRIO. I have only heard about it and, probably to many people's surprise, I have never met Galtung. Maybe he came by a couple of times in Fuglehauggata 11, but I never met him.

**Grete:** What about PRIO's 50-year anniversary celebration? I remember that he took part.

**Lene:** Yes, I saw him at a distance, but we were not introduced. I think his relationship to PRIO has been frosty for a long time, although this is not much known outside PRIO. I remember receiving some warnings when I took up my work at PRIO, notably from relatives: "Lene, make sure you do not become too radical!" They had heard about PRIO's 'anarchic' past, which I have never encountered.

I was interested to hear Grete talk about all the discussion that went into PRIO's statutes. I came to an orderly and well-organized institute. The statutes were written in Norwegian and had been translated into English and did not need any further revision at the time. A basic capital (*grunnkapital*) had been established in accordance with the Norwegian Foundations Act. Helga Løtuft had fixed that.

We were registered as a Foundation with our own capital. We had a thoroughly negotiated collective wage agreement and also a special agreement (*særavtale*) between the union and management. These founding documents remain with us today—now of course in somewhat revised form. There were also templates for employment contracts. I was happy to come to a highly organized work place.

Moreover, people behaved decently towards each other. At the Refugee Council, I had experienced many heated discussions and also some conflicts. At CICERO, things were more peaceful. Climate research is a hot issue but there is not so much debate among people studying the ozone layer, CO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>x</sub>. At PRIO, although the institute's topics of study are war, conflict and peace, I encountered a calm and polite work environment. I think this was due to...

**Grete:** ...the restructuring?

## **Restructuring a Research Institute**

**Lene:** Yes, I think so. Yet I remember thinking that we had to do something to strengthen our finances. At the time, the core of our economy was an annual core grant managed by the Research Council of Norway. The rest of the institute's activities were covered by project funding, but this was not an integrated part of PRIO's finances.

The project funds were not part of PRIO's core budgets and accounts but were kept entirely separate.

This was reflected in the employment contracts. Some researchers were permanently employed with a salary from the core grant, while the rest worked on temporary contracts for the duration of their funded projects. The permanently employed researchers, who were also the most qualified and famous ones, had no responsibility for generating funds. The same was the case at many other research institutes.

Yet this could not last. A wave of reforms would completely change the funding structure of Norwegian research institutes, with framework agreements, project numbers, registration of hours worked on the various projects, a general expectation that all researchers gain income to cover their salaries and overhead, and a wholly new system for how to decide the size of the core grant received by each institute from the Research Council.

**Grete:** In my time, the core grant was about half the total funds. I suppose its share had been reduced by the time you arrived.

**Lene:** It was progressively reduced. We could not continue to have two classes of researchers: one with secure funding and one operating on soft money. I felt we had to do something about that, and I was helped to do it by pressure from the outside.

**Grete:** So, you carried out the same reforms at PRIO that I had to implement later at NUPI.

We could not continue to have two classes of researchers: one with secure funding and one operating on soft money. I felt we had to do something about that, and I was helped to do it by pressure from the outside.

**Lene:** Yes. This happened in the whole institute sector. For some researchers, this was new and threatening. The permanently employed staff did not of course want to lose their privileges. Some thought that the system of hour registration, hourly rates, and request for earnings undermined their roles as free and independent academics: "Why register hours spent on research? We are not consultants but qualified researchers with a right to carry out academic studies as defined by ourselves." We had many discussions about this.

Eventually, we introduced an incentive system [CompEx], with compensation for surplus hours. Every researcher had been required to earn a minimum of 1200 h at a fixed rate. Not everyone, however, was able to meet this requirement, but no one wrote hours in excess of 1200 h. With CompEx, we introduced a system where those who could write more than 1200 h would receive half of the excess earnings as an individual bonus.

Before introducing CompEx, we had to negotiate for a long time with the NTL. They were difficult negotiations. The result was a much-improved financial situation, where the excess earnings by the most sought-after staff members made up for the

deficits incurred by some of the others. This made it possible for us to offer more competitive salaries to our researchers.

When I came to PRIO, the salaries were very modest. I found it unreasonable that people with such competence and dedication to their work should earn so little. Even people with a very strong inner motivation and urge to improve the world should have a decent income. So, I am happy that our financial reforms made it possible for the PRIO management to be forthcoming in our salary negotiations with the union.

**Stein:** *As you know, I always felt that CompEx is an unjust system since it allows some individuals to earn more than others. Still, as PRIO director, I supported its introduction since I realized its potential for improving our finances. It has allowed PRIO to gain a small surplus every year, so we now have enough capital to survive for some months even if we lost all earnings. Isn't that so?*

**Lene:** Our CompEx is probably the most generous incentive system in the whole sector, and we could perhaps reduce the share of extra earnings that is paid out as an individual bonus. Yet it has certainly served PRIO well. I have noticed that many Norwegian companies are now moving away from excessive incentive systems and offer decent salaries instead under the general expectation that all employees do their best without any extra income.

I'm not sure, however, that this will work in a research institute. In a commercial company, the ability to generate earnings is the main criterion for success, also on the level of the individual. For researchers, what counts most is to generate new theories, come up with interesting empirical findings, and publish in peer-reviewed journals. A researcher can get a high status in the research community without generating any earnings. In my view, an incentive system is needed to help them also care about their earnings.

**Stein:** *Do you, Grete, remember the turnover at the time you came to PRIO?*

**Grete:** I have brought with me our annual reports. In 1984, the turnover was a little less than 4 million NOK. When I started in 1989, it had increased to 10 and went up to 12–13 before I left. The core grant was more or less constant, so it was the project funding that increased.

At NUPI, we went from 80 to 40% core grant funding in the year when I began. This was dramatic. PRIO, it seems, was earlier out in its quest to generate project income. When Sverre came to PRIO, he brought with him some UN-funded projects from his previous work with the UN. A grant was also obtained from the US Ford Foundation. In addition, PRIO sold Rådhusgata 10, and the money we received was invested with help from the lawyer Jens Kristian Thune in a way that generated a nice extra income every year.

**Stein:** *PRIO's turnover has increased almost every year since the 1980s. How do you explain this success?*

**Grete:** I think it has to do with the fact that PRIO has a reputation for high quality research. New publication profiles were developed through agreement with a British

publisher (SAGE), and PRIO was early out in aiming to publish its work in peer-reviewed journals. It also published high quality journals of its own. When the research quality increases, the ability to earn money increases as well. Both PRIO and NUPI have raised funds from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for projects that are relevant for Norwegian foreign policy, and also from the Ministry of Defence. PRIO has moreover been able to compete with university-based researchers for free project funding from the Research Council of Norway.

PRIO was early out in aiming to publish its work in peer-reviewed journals. It also published high quality journals of its own. When the research quality increases, the ability to earn money increases as well.

**Lene:** When I began at PRIO, we managed an MFA-funded dialogue project in the Balkans, led by Director Dan Smith (see chap. 11). It was a big project, 10–13 million NOK annually. We also got a Cyprus project, which would later lead to the establishment of a PRIO Centre in Nicosia. In the beginning, the leaders of the Cyprus project were Stein Støa and Trond Jensen. At the time of the referendum on the Annan Plan, it was led by Youli Taki and Ayla Gürel, and the first director of the Centre, when it was established, was Gina Lende who was later succeeded by Arne Strand. Today, it is led by Harry Tzimitras (see chap. 23).

These projects brought us into a high level of financial dependence on the MFA. They also generated some debate internally as to whether or not we should take responsibility for operational projects without any significant research component. We failed to integrate research with the Balkans project but succeeded better in Cyprus. So, the Cyprus Centre is still with us, while the Balkan project was taken out of PRIO's hands. Later on, it was placed under the responsibility of the Nansen Academy at Lillehammer. This happened, as you Stein will remember, during your time as director.

**Stein:** *Yes.*

## Managing Researchers: Herding Cats

**Lene:** Yet PRIO's turnover did not much suffer from the loss of the Balkan project since at that time we got one of Norway's first Centres of Excellence. As far as I remember, it was Nils Petter who first had the idea to apply, and he developed it together with Håvard Hegre and Scott Gates, along with Dan Smith towards the end of his directorship (see chaps. 11 and 17).

**Stein:** *Yes. Work on preparing an application for a Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW) had begun before I began as PRIO director in early 2001. It was our*

*biggest success in my time as director, and I remember our joy when Scott Gates decided to give up his tenured position at the University of Michigan in order to assume the directorship of the Centre.*

We got one of Norway's first Centres of Excellence. As far as I remember, it was Nils Petter who first had the idea to apply, and he developed it together with Håvard Hegre and Scott Gates, along with Dan Smith.

**Lene:** The CSCW served as an enormous stimulus for PRIO's research environment. The theme of civil war was well chosen, since international attention to internal armed conflict had increased significantly since the end of the Cold War, and the team established at PRIO was highly talented. I remember my enthusiasm for the application. When we got the Centre, it boosted our self-confidence. We got the right to use a special logo, and the CSCW attracted a lot of energy, extra funds and visits by some of the world's leading researchers in the field of international relations.

**Stein:** *May I ask the two of you how it is to manage researchers. We are quite individualistic, aren't we? We are not used to being given orders. Research management has been compared to herding cats.*

**Grete:** Will you begin, Lene?

**Lene:** I have different roles vis-à-vis the administrative staff and the researchers. For the administrative staff, I am the boss. This is one role. My role vis-à-vis the researchers is more difficult to define. I am their leader in administrative matters and in matters related to HR (Human Relations) but I do not lead the activity that matters most to them, namely their research. In that domain, I am more of a service provider. I must do my best to facilitate their research, create an environment conducive to their research.

**Stein:** *What if they refuse to do something you want them to do?*

**Lene:** This is similar for all employees, regardless of whether they are researchers or administrative staff. In some extreme cases, which I try to avoid, I have to say, "now do it!", but most people hate to be told what to do. So, sometimes the recipe for preventing someone from doing something is to tell them they have to do it.

The trick is to make them think that they got the idea to do it themselves. Then they do whatever it is out of joy and feel proud of it afterwards. So, instead of telling people what to do, I mention the challenges they face and ask them what they think should be done about it.

**Stein:** *So, this applies equally to administrative and research staff?*

**Lene:** Yes. It helps to be curious about people, to try to find out what they are best at doing, how they want to develop, what will be most challenging or rewarding for

them to do, how they can grow and learn, identify possibilities, and seek to create conditions conducive to success.

**Grete:** I may be mixing up NUPI and PRIO, but a researcher is a researcher. Working with people is in many ways the same whoever they are, but the challenge in dealing with researchers is that they sometimes feel that their projects belong to them and must not be interfered with.

I had some experience with researchers who resented the fact that the Institute requires overhead from their project funds: “These are my research funds. You’re taking my money!” In the past, it was possible to think that way. It was still possible when I began at PRIO, and changing such attitudes is not easy.

I think they may have the same problem at the universities, where the professors are asked to generate funds for their research and develop projects of relevance for adopted institutional strategies. There is not always total congruence between what a researcher wants to do and what she is paid to do. It does not help that you are interested in Indonesia if no one is ready to fund your work on Indonesia.

Research leadership is not only about facilitation but also about developing strategies and annual plans. I have many friends among researchers, and they all complain that they spend too much time writing research proposals and reporting to funders. I think a certain balance is needed.

While it is true that research leadership and administrative leadership are quite different, I think you and I, Lene, have both been members of a leadership team, with overall responsibility for the institute’s well-being, and with an authority that needs to be recognized by all concerned. Yet, I as Administrative Director could not try to decide what kind of research the researchers should undertake. This, I must admit, was part of the reason why I left my job at NUPI and started working with FK Norway, now Norec.

With my social science background, I felt constrained by my management role and wanted to take part in substantial discussions about the main mission of my work place. You, Lene, took your exams in economy and administration. I have learnt my management skills only through practice. When I first began as an administrator, I had to ask my husband and sister for help in understanding budgets and accounts, and at the beginning I relied a lot on common sense.

**Lene:** I think research leaders have to rely on indirect motivation: how can this be done? What kind of structures are needed? How much should it cost? What kinds of contracts are needed? How can you make sure that the research outcome benefits the institute as a whole? How can we ensure administrative support to the researchers?

We must be curious about people, give them recognition. Everyone has a need to be seen and acknowledged. And you do not need to be a researcher yourself in order to understand the value of research. It is enough to be curious and ask. So, this is what I try to do. And the answers I get contribute greatly to my job satisfaction at PRIO.

**Grete:** I agree completely on the need for recognition.

**Lene:** We have made a four-year strategy at PRIO where we do not in fact define any research themes but consciously allow them to be defined in a bottom-up process. In our previous strategy, we defined certain areas as particularly important but discovered that it was difficult to cover some of them. On the other hand, some new and fruitful research ideas came up that did not fit with the strategic priorities.

So, I think perhaps the research themes should be defined by the researchers themselves. They have this inner urge. We may gently channel their energy in certain directions but must not set rules or guidelines that dampen or stifle it.

## A Loss of Visibility?

*Stein: In Gudleiv Forr's book about PRIO's history, **Strid og fred: Fredsforskning i 50 år** (Oslo: Pax, 2009), which was published for our 50th anniversary, there are three heroes: Johan Galtung is the hero of the 1960s, with a wealth of ideas and controversial views (see Chap. 1). He was the one who started it together with three other founders (Ingrid Eide, Mari Holmboe Ruge and Erik Rinde; see Chaps. 2, 3 and 4). Then there is Nils Petter Gleditsch, the hero of the 1970s–80s, who revealed Loran-C and other state secrets (Chap. 5). Finally, there is Hilde Henriksen Waage, the hero of the 1990s–2000s, who fought with Norwegian diplomats and politicians for the right to publish her archival findings about the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Chap. 15).*

*While Hilde Waage waged her courageous struggle for her right to publish, the rest of PRIO became rather boring from Gudleiv Forr's perspective as a writer and journalist. The institute ceased to be controversial, and he did not find much drama to write about.*

*As you indicated, Lene, Galtung's relationship to PRIO became somewhat frosty over the years, and on the occasion of PRIO's 50th anniversary he openly criticized the institute. He claimed that NUPI was adopting a more critical attitude to the US and Norwegian authorities than PRIO. We had, in his view, allowed ourselves to be integrated into the conventional foreign policy elite under the US global hegemony.*

*Would the two of you have wished that PRIO had preserved more of its critical soul, so it could maintain a more noticeable presence in the Norwegian media?*

**Grete:** Research institutes depend on recognition. To be recognized it is necessary to make one's views and findings known through the media. I think it is essential for any Norwegian social science research institute to appear regularly in Dagsnytt 18 (a debate program on Norwegian radio and TV appearing at 6 pm every weekday). My colleagues at NUPI used to do that, and it was a good way to make the institute visible.



If you are too controversial, as Galtung may have been sometimes in many people's view, you will no longer be consulted for advice.

In order to appear on DN18, you must have some clear opinions and formulate them sharply, and you must explain your views by stating: "Research has shown that ...". Yet, you must not exaggerate or present arguments that can easily be shown not to hold water. Then you lose reliability. If you are too controversial, as Galtung may have been sometimes in many people's view, you will no longer be consulted for advice.

Sometimes, when I meet researchers who study very small details that only a few people know about, I tease them by asking if it is of interest to anyone other than themselves, and then they sometimes feel insulted. Yet this is about money. Someone has to pay for what you are doing, and you should be able to present why it is relevant.

**Stein:** *In the period since you left PRIO, do you think that PRIO has been visible in the media?*

**Grete:** To be a bit blunt, my impression is that PRIO has appeared in the media when the Nobel Peace Prize is to be predicted—and also sometimes when there is talk about Afghanistan.

**Stein:** *Because of Kristian Berg Harpviken? (see chap. 12)*

**Grete:** Yes. He used to comment on Afghanistan and the Nobel Peace Prize. It has become quieter now, hasn't it? I may be wrong, but my impression is also that NUPI has lost some visibility.

**Stein:** *I suppose you see this differently, Lene, since you live in the PRIO environment and get reports about our media appearances in connection with every meeting of the Institute Council.*

**Lene:** I do not think it is quiet around PRIO. No, certainly not. PRIO puts great emphasis on presenting research insights and providing relevant input to Norwegian public debates and foreign policy making, and on making sure that these contributions are based on world class research.

To maintain a high research quality is part of PRIO's branding. This is something you, Stein, emphasized strongly in your period as director. You wanted high quality and measured our success in terms of publications in the leading journals. You had this as your priority number one, but then you also wanted to make PRIO's research publicly known and you wanted our researchers to take part in public debates both in Norway and internationally.

Sometimes solid research reveals something that is controversial and difficult to express, but then you have the advantage of being able to back up what you say with solid evidence. This is in my view extremely important.

The quality of our research is crucial to PRIO's branding and something we are proud of. Maybe this has led us to be more academically correct or cautious in what

we say publicly, but I'm not really sure that is the case. It's difficult for me to imagine, when we deal with complex matters, that we may be able to just say yes or no or black and white. Most issues have at least two sides and can be viewed from several angles.

**Grete:** Yet seen from the outside, since I left PRIO in 1995...

**Lene:** ...it has become quiet around PRIO?

**Grete:** I don't really know, but anyhow I agree that PRIO enjoys recognition for its high-quality research.

One issue I think we must take up are the several proposals that have been made over the years to assemble PRIO, NUPI and the Fridtjov Nansen Institute (FNI) in the same building. Was there talk of including other institutes as well?

**Lene:** Yes. It was also proposed to include CICERO.

**Grete:** A proposal along those lines came from the (Geir) Lundestad committee. At that time, some 25 years ago if I remember correctly, PRIO was considered as the little brother or sister. I was at PRIO at the time, and we were afraid of being eaten by NUPI. And the FNI (Fridtjof Nansen Institute) could not move because it was bound by its statutes to remain at Fridtjof Nansen's burial place at Polhøgda, near the old Fornebu airport. So, if we had moved into the same building, we would have all had to move out there. I remember that there was a lot of back and forth about this.

**Stein:** *We discussed the same thing recently in connection with a proposal that both institutes move into the vacant building of the US Embassy.*

**Lene:** It is true that we do not think of ourselves as a little brother anymore.

**Grete:** But do you agree that it was so at the time?

**Stein:** *I suppose so. I did my best to sabotage the proposal. I think it is essential for peace research to have its own identity and not be reduced to an aspect of research on international relations. Our mission is not just to understand peace and conflict but also to contribute to peace between and within nations. So, I was relieved when the NUPI researchers refused to give up their special status as...*

**Grete:** ...civil servants...

**Stein:** *...because that gave them better legal protection against losing their jobs. In a private foundation like PRIO, we don't have such protection. And, as you said, the FNI was bound by its statutes to remain at Polhøgda. Up until 1964, by the way, PRIO was located at Polhøgda. Then Johan Galtung published an article that the FNI Board didn't like, so they threw him and his group out (see chap. 2).*

**Lene:** We have dialogue meetings with the Research Council every year. The Research Council always tells us how impressed they are with PRIO. We are praised for the number and quality of our publications, we do well both in specific research programmes and in obtaining the most competitive grants. We did very well in recent

evaluations both in the humanities and social sciences. So, they ask us what our recipe is. It is difficult to reduce this to a single factor. I think it's that we have been stacking one stone on top of another over a long period and that this has resulted in a solid building. Or, what do you think, Stein?

**Stein:** *I agree that PRIO has become a high-quality research institute. May I ask you, Grete, since you were first at PRIO and then NUPI, what you see as the main differences between the two?*

**Grete:** I went from little brother to big brother. There were many more people at NUPI. More well-known faces and names. But I came there at a time with a need for financial reform. The core grant was drastically reduced. So, I was thrown into organizational changes that again almost amounted to a revolution, with Sverre (Lodgaard) once again at the forefront (now as NUPI director, see chap. 10) and me as his executive.

As for the researchers, their challenge was to not just think about their own research but to see the institute as a community with shared goals. We needed to see the bigger picture, create some programmes, and adopt a research strategy aimed at enlarging our programmes. I don't quite remember how much of this had already been done when I arrived at NUPI. I remember that we established a UN programme, a Europe programme, etc.

The researchers, the 'cats' you say we are supposed to be herding, had to establish an identity within a larger setting than themselves. When I left NUPI and joined FK Norway (Norec), what I missed the most was the long lunch table with debates among the researchers. It made me feel informed about international affairs. At FK Norway, we were only some 12–15 people at the time when I started, so I really missed those debates.

**Stein:** *Does it make a difference that PRIO has always had English as its working language?*

**Grete:** It is an enormous advantage to have had English as your working language, and we have the same in FK Norway. And as NUPI always had many guest researchers, and as most of its publications were in English, there was not much difference between PRIO and NUPI in that regard.

**Stein:** *Lene, when you meet with representatives of other institutes, in the Institute Leader network or in Abelia (the employers' association), do you see much difference between the institutes?*

**Lene:** We also have a five-institute network among NUPI, CMI, CICERO, FNI and PRIO, and hold meetings among the five administrative directors. I think perhaps that PRIO, which has had English as its working language from the beginning in 1959 and has many non-Norwegian employees, is the most internationally oriented.

When researchers arrive from other countries, they say they appreciate the community feeling at PRIO. We pay attention to fostering that feeling by emphasizing the need to be present at the workplace, creating meeting spaces, welcoming newcomers, and wishing people a proper farewell when they leave us. PRIO is meant to be a

working place where people can meet colleagues and discuss topics with them. I think we have a tight-knit community. At least, we have visitors who tell us that this is their impression.

**Stein:** *Isn't it a little strange that for such a long time now, there has been so little conflict internally at PRIO? Not that the institute is totally peaceful, but I have the impression that there is far more conflict in other parts of academia.*

**Lene:** There have been some difficult conflicts at PRIO. This cannot be denied. But we have got through them. I think we have a culture for discussing our disagreements politely. We can disagree, but we discuss the matter at hand instead of attacking the person we disagree with.

I think it was very hard to decide what to do with our pensions. We are members of the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund (*Statens pensjonskasse*). The cost of these pensions increased enormously, almost to the extent of consuming all our savings and bankrupting us, so we had to do something about it and reduce the value of our pension rights.

This was difficult because it created conflicts of interest between the various generations of researchers. Yet, I felt that we were able to discuss it and reach a rational conclusion. In the end, the matter was resolved in an unforeseen way, but while we struggled with this problem, it was really very difficult.

## Comparing PRIO's Directors

**Stein:** *May I challenge you to say something about the role of PRIO's directors? In the old days, the position as director shifted among the research staff, with each serving one year at a time. The director did not have much authority, and the plenary meeting could reject anything he or she proposed. In the early 1980s, I saw how the Administrative Director (Tor Andreas Gitlesen) was the one who had to steer the ship on a daily basis, while always having to consider the possibility that he might be repudiated in the next plenary meeting.*

*When you arrived, Grete, a new system with an almighty director had already been introduced, and that system has since remained in place. The director must inform and consult the Institute Council but can only be repudiated by the Board. How do the directors Sverre Lodgaard, Dan Smith, Stein Tønnesson, Kristian Berg Harpviken and Henrik Urdal compare to each other, and how do they compare to Hilde Henriksen Waage, who only served as interim director for a while but was deputy director both under Smith and Tønnesson? What are the main differences between us?*

**Grete:** I have already said something about Sverre. He assumed the role of a tough decision maker, and I think perhaps he could have carried out his task more mildly. Yet, there are times when a revolution is needed. Sverre was a strong leader with a

forceful personality. He came back to PRIO after a stay at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and had some ideas about how to lead a research institute. These ideas differed from the philosophy that had been in vogue at PRIO.

Yet his reforms were welcomed by many of the staff, who saw a need for change. He did it with a 'bang', but he and I worked well together, and he would later headhunt me for a position at NUPI at a time when I had decided to study law and become a lawyer. This never ended up happening, as I allowed him to persuade me to join him at NUPI. Then, we transformed NUPI in almost the same way as we had PRIO.

**Stein:** *But with less of a 'bang'?*

**Grete:** Sverre had spent a few years working for the UN in Geneva and had grown both older and milder. The situation was also slightly different at NUPI. The main thing that had to be cleaned up was the finances. The researchers had increased their applications for project funding, a process which many of them had never previously had to undergo.

**Lene:** We still have the Institute Council (IC) and statutes that make sure it is heard. Our decision-making system is rather time consuming. We are now some 100 staff, and they get 2–300-page documents before every IC meeting, which they are expected to read. So, it is perhaps unjust to expect every staff member to read through all this documentation and keep abreast of all kinds of matters.

On the other hand, I think it is a major advantage to have it this way, since managing researchers upside-down is hardly recommendable. If they are not heard as members of a community, they may become individuals who do not listen either to their bosses or their colleagues, who do not form teams, but concentrate uniquely on their research. In that case, PRIO would degenerate into a research hotel with no community feeling and no sense of loyalty. I want to protect our current system.

**Grete:** I understand, and yet you have moved far away from the system that prevailed when big and small decisions were made in plenary meetings and everyone earned the same salary, with just some difference in accordance with seniority. I think even the salaries were decided by the plenary meeting.

**Lene:** Of course, we are nowhere near that system today. Yet, we still have a kind of corporate democracy.

**Grete:** Many young people today will be surprised that what we did when Sverre returned to PRIO was seen as radical. Today, it seems almost natural to have a director with decision making power. Many probably even breathed a sigh of relief when they no longer had to make up their mind about how to vote on every little matter.

**Stein:** *Grete, when I asked you to name the people you met when you came to PRIO, you mentioned Nils Petter Gleditsch first, although Sverre was the director. Would you characterize the relationship between the two of them as marked by mutual confidence?*

**Grete:** Up and down perhaps. They knew each other well, for better or worse. I do not think they were engaged in positional war or anything like that. Yet Nils Petter

was... not perhaps a rebel but a kind of rebel anyway, and he was one of the architects behind the old system. When you lose something you have built and believed in, you do not feel happy.

Yet I have only warm thoughts about Nils Petter. I spoke with my children recently about how nice it was to visit Nils Petter's office when they were kids. He allowed them to open his drawers where they found some children's toys. I suppose there must have been a reason why I mentioned Nils Petter first. I could just as well have mentioned Tord Høivik, but he was much away at the time, so he did not become a symbol of the old PRIO in the same way as Nils Petter.

**Stein:** *How would you, Lene, characterize the leadership style of the directors under whom you have served?*

**Lene:** PRIO has had very good leaders. This has been one of its strengths. Straight and decent leaders with both scholarly and managerial talent. I think this is one of the reasons why PRIO has done so well.

Dan was obviously important. He was here when I began. He's English, and the period of his tenure was probably the most internationally oriented in all of PRIO's history. The English language was practised more naturally back then than it is these days at PRIO. Today, we use English in the IC and other meetings, but when we're having discussions in the corridors and offices, we often speak Norwegian. This was not the case in Dan's time.

You, Stein, were a good leader for me. It was fun to work with you. You pleased me on the very first day when you said that you would take care of research management while I should take responsibility for all administrative matters. You wanted me to make decisions myself and consult you only when necessary. This gave me greater freedom than before, and I liked it.

You were open with me, and I felt that I could trust you. I always knew what you thought or felt. You did not hide anything. This remains the case even today and it feels safe. The whole organization noticed this about you, that you did not behave strategically but expressed your genuine views and feelings. I also appreciated your emphasis on academic quality—that you always sought to lift the quality of PRIO's research.

Kristian was a fabulous leader for PRIO. He focused on every individual and on the organization as a whole. He was better than any other PRIO director at running an organization and at thinking of it as an organization. He would knit people together, see new opportunities, and work strategically to improve the organization.

Henrik is a highly qualified scholar, who emphasizes scholarly quality. He is more like you, I think. He enjoys a high level of respect among the researchers because their own values are reflected in his personality. He is also straightforward and very good at resolving administrative matters.

**Grete:** Was he recruited internally?

**Lene:** Yes.

**Grete:** So, it is only Dan who has been recruited from the outside?

**Lene:** As a matter of fact, yes.

**Grete:** Because Kristian arrived as a student in my time already, and although Stein came from the outside when he took over as director he had been at PRIO during two periods before.

*Stein: And Kristian was my deputy director after Hilde (Henriksen Waage) had stepped down. Both of them supported me tremendously. We discussed all important matters among ourselves so both the director and deputy director should be able, if need be, to take decisions without asking the other. I promised them that I would never revoke any decision they had taken in periods when I was away. This system allowed me to travel a lot while I was director, without creating any decision-making bottlenecks.*

*Let me mention, by the way, that Dan (Smith) continued as director during the first month I worked at PRIO in 2001, and trained me in the job before I formally took over. He also remained at PRIO for some time afterwards, until he obtained his dream job as director of International Alert in London (see chap. 11). While continuing at PRIO, he also maintained his leadership of the Balkan and Cyprus programmes. I much admire the way he managed, as the previous director, to serve under my directorship. He knew from his own experience that a director wants the programme leaders to present some precise alternative options when important decisions are to be made. So, he did that, allowed me to decide and then implemented the choices I made. He is now director of SIPRI, where he has engineered a major turnaround after a difficult period.*

**Lene:** There was some discussion between Dan and Hilde. This was a little difficult for me, since I owed loyalty to both. Dan was director. Hilde was deputy director, and I was administrative director. They did not always want the same thing. It was challenging for me to stand between them.

**Grete:** I also served under Hilde and Dan. She was interim director from the time Sverre left until Dan arrived. This is a period she and I reminisce about when meeting each other as friends. The fact that two young women—yes, we were very young at the time—could be running PRIO. I also remember how Dan brought the wider world to PRIO, with his connections, his English language and his wit. The English at PRIO improved tremendously in his time.

[Hilde Henriksen Waage] was interim director from the time Sverre left until Dan arrived. This is a period she and I reminisce about when meeting each other as friends. The fact that two young women – yes, we were very young at the time – could be running PRIO.

**Lene:** It really did.

**Stein:** *Was it Nils Petter who found Dan and encouraged him to apply?*

**Grete:** I wonder if it was Kumar. Or perhaps not. I think it was Nils Petter. We asked a consultancy firm to help with the hiring.

**Lene:** We have used the same firm, ISCO Group, later too.

**Grete:** I think Arild Underdal was chair of the Board at the time. Hilde, Arild and I handled the contact with ISCO.

**Stein:** *Let me add that when I applied for the PRIO directorship in 2000, I first made sure to find out if Hilde herself was interested in the position. This was both because I knew that I could not compete with her and because I thought she would be the best choice. I was much saddened later when she opted for a professorship at the University of Oslo and reduced her position at PRIO to just a 20% assignment.*

## How to Recruit Researchers

**Stein:** *Can you say something about PRIO's recruitment policies? Since researchers are so free to do what they themselves want, recruitment is alpha and omega for a research institute, isn't it? How do you make sure that you make the right recruitment choices?*

**Lene:** We often advertise positions and hire people on the basis of trial lectures, interviews, and committee evaluations of their academic publications, sometimes with the help of a consultant. Even then, when we do everything according to the book, we sometimes make mistakes. There are things we simply cannot discover without having a candidate with us for a longer period of time.

In my view, the most secure way to make a safe recruitment choice is to invite a young researcher to work on one of our projects as a research assistant or junior researcher, hire her or him on a temporary contract and try her out over time. Then we assist her in developing a good Ph.D. proposal, keep her on as a doctoral candidate and hire her permanently after she has completed the doctorate.

Another safe way is to hire someone horizontally: someone who has been engaged in cooperation with PRIO on a collaborative project while being employed by someone else, and whom we therefore know well. This was the case with Torunn Tryggestad, who used to work at NUPI and who has played an essential role in developing gender research at PRIO.

I feel there's a dilemma here. If you read about recruitment, all the books say that it should be done by advertising the job publicly, spreading the net as widely as possible in order to catch the biggest fish. But when I think back, we found some of our best researchers in the way I mentioned.

This does not mean that we recruit only Norwegians. Young students from many countries, often also with practice in the field, come to PRIO as interns or participants in conferences. They exchange ideas and form ties with our researchers. Then perhaps



they jointly write up a research proposal, and if it is funded they can be hired as project staff on a temporary contract. I cannot remember having had any trouble with researchers recruited that way.

**Grete:** I think it is particularly risky to base a recruitment decision uniquely on academic qualifications. Committee evaluations may be skewed and manipulated. The result of an evaluation may in fact be determined by the choice of committee members. We must always supplement such evaluations with interviews, trial lectures and tests. You need to define precise criteria for the job you need to fill and must use sophisticated interview techniques. To make a good interview is in itself a profession.

**Lene:** One problem is that those who have the highest academic competence sometimes have little experience with writing project proposals, generating funds, networking, making sense of their research in communication with decision makers and in speaking to the media. If we hire someone without any of these skills, a highly qualified academic who can only write scholarly articles, then we have to restart their professional training at PRIO, teaching them how to do all the rest. This requires a hefty organizational effort.

**Stein:** *I think it sometimes helps to use a written test: give candidates one hour to compose a one-page text on a relevant subject.*

**Grete:** Sverre and I did that sometimes. When hiring a new communication director, we gave the candidates an op-ed Sverre had written in Norwegian about the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and asked them to write an English summary. Several candidates did not know the correct translation of “prøvestansavtale.”

**Stein:** *Is there a question I have not asked that I should have asked?*

It is particularly risky to base a recruitment decision uniquely on academic qualifications. Committee evaluations may be skewed and manipulated. [...] We must always supplement such evaluations with interviews, trial lectures and tests. [...] To make a good interview is in itself a profession.

## Conscientious Objectors (COs) and Gender Balance

**Grete:** I think we should reflect on the role of the COs.

**Lene:** They no longer exist.

**Grete:** Exactly. They no longer exist but they played a huge role in the past. They were a cheap and sometimes highly qualified work force. In the term paper I wrote

at BI, I noted the advantage PRIO had gained from having someone with a doctoral degree in philosophy run its switchboard.

Yet, I added in my term paper that this was not perhaps a rational use of that philosopher's competence. At any rate, it would be interesting if someone could undertake a little research project on the contribution that COs made to PRIO over time. I remember a person who worked at PRIO in four different positions: first as a CO, then a student, then a cleaning assistant and finally as a researcher.

Many COs were eager to get work at PRIO—much preferable to working at a hospital or nursing home. Were they sometimes allowed to fill roles for which they were not qualified? Were they given too much influence? We had some who thought they were too good to carry out menial tasks. I think we had ten CO positions (hjemler) in my time.

[Conscientious objectors] were a cheap and sometimes highly qualified work force. [...] I noted the advantage PRIO had gained from having someone with a doctoral degree in philosophy run its switchboard.

**Lene:** Ten COs?

**Grete:** Not all positions were filled at any one time, but I seem to remember we had ten positions we could fill if need be and if we could find the right candidates. I'm not aware that anyone has written about their role.

**Stein:** *Nils Petter Gleditsch says something about this in the interview we did with him (chap. 5), and Sverre Røed Larsen deals with it in a book he is writing.*

**Grete:** The COs provided very cheap labour and the work they did for PRIO over the years was immensely important. Many of them were strongly motivated, talented people, and quite a few of them went on to choose an academic career. Many have maintained an affinity to PRIO. I would like to mention, though, a slightly acerbic remark I received from a Soviet guest researcher.

**Stein:** *Could this be Valery Tishkov (1941- ), who was Director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in Moscow? He is like an encyclopedia, knowing every little ethnic group in the former Soviet Union, and has done very interesting comparative work on ethnicity and national identity.*

**Grete:** It may have been him. At any rate, he asked: "What is a CO?" I tried to explain: "They work for us as an alternative to serving in the military, and sometimes they complain about the work we ask them to do when they do not think it's sufficiently meaningful." One of them had just turned sour when I asked him to do some work at the copy machine.

"Okay," said this Russian: "If I go back to Moscow and give a young man a choice between going to Afghanistan and copying some papers in a research institute, what do you think he might choose?" He did not pity the young bloke who was copying

under my orders. Then, a downside in having so many COs was that they made it impossible to even dream of an appropriate gender balance at PRIO.

**Lene:** Now that we no longer have any COs we must rely on a professional administration, but we are thinking about creating a formal intern or trainee programme, since we receive so many requests from abroad for internship.

**Stein:** *Has the gender balance improved?*

**Lene:** We are now almost fifty-fifty.

Among the research professors, the men are still in a majority, while on the postdoctoral level we have a few more women than men.

Among the Ph.D. students and research assistants, there are almost only females. So, the two challenges we face are to recruit junior males and to help women acquire professor competence.

**Stein:** *We found that it was a bad idea to hunt for established female professors...*

**Lene:** ...since this would just mean stealing them from others.

**Stein:** *Exactly. The point is to create an environment conducive to career development. May I ask both of you a final question: has PRIO helped you to have the career you most wanted? Did you make the right choice when you applied for the administrative director job at PRIO?*

## Fantastic Lives

**Grete:** I think so. First at PRIO, then NUPI. When people hear I have worked at these two institutes, they straighten their backs a little: "Oh! So, you have worked there!" Really. Norec, where I work now is not as well known as PRIO and NUPI. Yet, the job content in Norec is more meaningful for me.

I don't think I would have got such an interesting job had I not first worked at PRIO and NUPI. If I had not applied to PRIO or had resisted Sverre's wish that I come to NUPI, I would most likely have become a lawyer. Life has its happenstances. I'm happy that I got that job at PRIO and that I let Sverre persuade me. I'm happy with the direction that my life has taken. Even proud.

It's fun to come to work every morning and witness all the discussions in the corridors about where the world is heading. I feel like part of a big community.

**Lene:** The same goes for me. I am immensely happy that I got to work for PRIO. It has been an incredibly good place for me. I'm genuinely proud of my work. I have

good colleagues in the administration. My cooperation with the directors has worked well.

It's fun to come to work every morning and witness all the discussions in the corridors about where the world is heading. I feel like part of a big community. This has been fantastic.

*Stein: Thank you both very much, Lene and Grete.*

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## Chapter 20

# Peace Is More Than the Absence of War: Inger Skjelsbæk



Interviewed by Cindy Horst



Inger Skjelsbæk © Ingar Steinholt/PRIO

We focus a lot more on conflict than we do on what peace actually is. What is it that creates well-being? What is it that makes you feel at ease in your own skin, in your own life, in your own sociopolitical context? What does it take? All narratives

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about who you are and what your prospects are, and how that impacts your well-being, depend on how these stories are reinforced or challenged by the communities you live in. If peace is just the absence of war, then you have peace lots of places. But if peace is also well-being and resilience to conflicts, then it is more challenging.

*I meet Inger Skjelsbæk at a café in central Oslo, early in the morning when things are still quiet and we can speak undisturbed. I have known Inger since I started working at PRIO more than a decade ago, and in that period, she has been my boss and I have been hers. An interesting fact about Inger is that she pretty much grew up with PRIO, being the daughter of former PRIO director and researcher Kjell Skjelsbæk.*

**Cindy Horst:** *What is it about you and your background that prepared you for being a peace researcher?*

**Inger Skjelsbæk:** Obviously, knowing about PRIO was a part of my upbringing because my father worked at PRIO. I grew up with the PRIO logos on letterheads that were sitting around the house, and I remember being taken to PRIO as a young child with my dad. I can't remember how old I was, and this is just an anecdote, but I remember there was a homeless guy who lived in the basement of the building where PRIO was in Tidemands gate 28 in the 1970s. I think my dad was going to pick up some papers on a weekend, and he took me along, and we met this guy as we entered. My dad had a conversation with him, and he needed some food, so we went in and got him a plate of food and gave it to him. Then my dad picked up his stuff and we went home. I just remember that it was exotic, you know.

I also remember some of the people who were working at PRIO when I was little—they used to come over for dinner. I remember Marek Thee and his wife, and that I was told that these were holocaust survivors, that their relatives had been killed. I just remember they were very nice to us kids, and how sorry I felt for them about their loss. I am not sure I fully understood the depth of their fate as a child, but that came to me later. The spirit of PRIO in a way came to me through those anecdotes and experiences, and conversations at home about what was going on in the world—those kinds of things primed me for wanting to do what I did. Being a PRIO child kind of primed me for becoming a PRIO person, I would guess. At least, it primed me for a specific kind of curiosity.

*But did you think a lot about this academic world and what it meant? Did you think of it as something you aspired to join or were you simply a part of it?*

It's not like I drifted into it; I took active choices. You know, growing up, I would see my dad on TV every now and then, commenting on political events. I remember him being on TV with Helga Hernes for instance, discussing nuclear disarmament. Those events made me proud and engaged and I wanted to learn more. I felt I was privileged because he could explain what was going on. I could get the background story without having to read up on everything on my own, and the world out there became part of the talk at home. Yeah, that engaged me.

As a teenager, I became more engaged myself in international affairs. I grew up in the Western part of Oslo and went to Berg secondary school (*videregående*

*skole*), which in the 1980s was where Jonas Gahr Støre [later foreign minister and Labour Party leader] went as well, but he was older than me. It was a very active school. People were very politically engaged. Many people were members of political parties. I was never a member of a political party, but I had friends who were. I felt that complemented what I was used to from home. These were conversations that were easy for me to be a part of.

***And when you say you were politically engaged, can you give some examples? What were you engaged in?***

I had an interest in the world outside of Norway, more than party politics in Norway. I was an exchange student in 1986 with the American Field Service (AFS) in Quebec. That came from a wish to see the world. I didn't want to go to the US—which many of my fellow students did—because I had lived there as a child. I therefore ended up going to Canada. I was so ignorant I didn't even know they spoke French, so I realized: 'Oh my God, I'm going to a French family', and I went to a French, catholic girls' school. That was a huge surprise for me, and a steep learning curve, since I had no previous knowledge of French or catholic girls' schools. But through that learning experience, I was for the first time exposed to nationalist thinking and rhetoric. Not in a violent way, but I learned what it meant to be a French-speaking minority in an English-speaking majority setting.

I also got to know other AFS students from all over the world, so when I came home, I had friends in Venezuela, Sweden, Brazil and other places, who I stayed in touch with. Later on, I engaged very actively in AFS in Norway. I was a teacher for exchange students who came to Norway. I was a contact person for individuals who were here for a year—like a professional friend, if you like, in case something went wrong. So, this was my political engagement.

***Then, when you finished secondary school, you had to pick what you were going to study?***

I studied English and French, and then my father became very sick. We knew he was going to die, because he had a very severe cancer. At the same time, I had decided that I wanted to study psychology. I remember he said to me that in peace research, there is a need for people who study psychology. There aren't that many people who study psychology who have a peace and conflict focus. So, when he died, that became kind of a thing for me: 'Then I'll do that'.

I wanted to go into peace research with a background in psychology. I studied at NTNU and at that time, Nils Petter Gleditsch had a part-time position at NTNU. This was just two or three years after my father died. So, I decided to contact Nils Petter because I knew of him, and I asked: 'Do you think there is any chance I could be affiliated with PRIO?', and he was really sweet, and he really encouraged me to apply. He told me about this student stipend that they had. I applied, and I was rejected.

***I was thinking ‘this story has a happy ending’, but then you did not get it...***

Exactly. The reason, I think, was that my thesis project wasn't developed enough. I was too eager. But then I was encouraged to reapply, and I did, and then I got it. So, I came to PRIO in August 1995 and did my hovedfagthesis there. When that was done, I was offered the chance to be part of a project funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Affairs on gender, peace and security, which the MFA had initiated. After that, I just stayed because there were opportunities that came up. So it was Nils Petter actually, or it was my dad who said that this would be something valuable.

At that time in the mid-1990s, Malvern Lumsden was at PRIO. He was a psychologist. And Johan Galtung, he had written about psychology. There was a PRIO book from 1993 on the shelves, I remember, entitled *Conflict and Social Psychology*, edited by Knud S. Larsen. It's not like psychology was a science that was absent from PRIO, but it was very minor. Now it's more or less absent. Or very, very, very minor. I felt that there was room for that kind of knowledge, but it does not have a big place in the multidisciplinary field of peace research at PRIO or globally.

***That seems like quite a big responsibility, the way you are describing it?***

I came with that notion of bringing psychology—in the sense of the impact of war on individuals, that's always been my focus—to PRIO. But, over the years that interest became transformed to a focus on gender and women. In my research, I have combined this dual focus—on gendered individuals. Understanding wars and conflicts is also a question of understanding individuals in cultures and sociopolitical contexts as opposed to only organizations and social groups.

So I felt that, as a psychologist, taking the individual as a starting point of analysis was important. I have been interested in focusing on such questions as: how do the changes that war and peace entail trickle down and impact the individual? My take has always been, let's focus on individuals and see how they incorporate events, institutions, discourses—things that are out there—into their stories about who they are and who they have become, because of armed conflict. I felt that was an important perspective in peace research. I still feel that this focus on the individual is very important, and I feel sometimes that it is more marginal than studies on institutions, political systems, governance, and that sort of thing.

***So, I guess you've always agreed with your father's observation that a psychological perspective is important, and you've seen that this has been a good path for you as well.***

Yes, and I have to say that I have always had support from the PRIO leadership, from Dan Smith to Stein Tønnesson and Kristian Berg Harpviken. I have never felt that I didn't have a place, you know. I have just felt that I have not been part of the mainstream. However, there is a certain freedom in not being mainstream. I think it's a good place not to be sometimes; it gives a degree of freedom.



***I can see that. Can I ask if you have had any role models, both on a personal and an academic level?***

No, not in the beginning, and this is related to not being in the mainstream. Maybe that's one thing that I felt very strongly in the first maybe ten years that I was at PRIO, maybe even longer—that I didn't have any role models. I felt that I was completely on my own. I saw other students who seemed to be lifted up by a senior researcher, and I didn't feel like I had anyone like that. I felt that I had support in the sense that I had a place at PRIO, but I had to figure out my research path on my own.

But I was also lucky, because at the time the funding mechanism allowed for more 'satellite research' to flourish, more than it does now. I got funding from the Norwegian Research Council to do an exploratory study on sexual violence in war, and then for a Ph.D. project where I was my own project leader as a very junior scholar. All the funding went to me, and I was completely independent. I mean I had my supervisor at NTNU for my Ph.D. project, but I was given this possibility to develop a research niche of my own and I don't think I could have developed as an academic in this field otherwise.

I had this strong interest in finding out more about how sexual violence in armed conflict impacts individuals and their communities, and no one had done this before, it seemed. I didn't know what my research would lead to, and I didn't know how big it would be, not my own research necessarily, but the focus on gender and war more broadly. I just knew I had this interest, and I had these sorts of academic tools that I could use to grapple with it. I was given the possibility financially and then also I got support from the PRIO leadership to do it, which was important. Today, I think it is much more difficult for younger scholars to develop something new in the way that I was able to.

***But what about the NTNU supervisor?***

If there ever was a good mentor, in my early days, it was her, Hjørdis Kaul. Yet she was no expert in the field of gender, peace and security. She was an expert in organizational psychology and had worked on women's participation in work life in Norway. Therefore, it was the gender dimension that was her expertise. She was a very good conversation partner. Very supportive. She was there for many, many years for me.

I had this strong interest in finding out more about how sexual violence in armed conflict impacts individuals and their communities, and no one had done this before, it seemed. I didn't know what my research would lead to.

There were also people who appeared and supported me, like I remember Ingrid Eide. There was one episode, and I think this was when I was about to finish my thesis, so this would have been 1996. I remember I knew who she was, but I had so much respect for her and I felt that I could not approach her. It was a bit of a threshold

for me, but then I decided that I should just go ahead and ask her about papers from the Beijing conference, the big women's conference in 1995. So I called her and I remember the next morning I came to PRIO, and she had been there the evening before, after I had gone home for the day, and put a huge pile of documents on my desk with a very encouraging note saying, 'Good luck, Inger', and I just remember that it meant so much. Not just a pat on the shoulder. It was like, here are things you can work on. I felt I was being seen by someone with a PRIO standing, and that was very special.

Then I remember Cynthia Enloe, who is a very prominent scholar on women, peace and security. I wrote her a letter, also in 1995 or 1996, when I was trying to figure out what to do next, asking about research, you know the things that people now do over email and it takes no time. But I actually wrote a letter on paper, and then she wrote a letter back. I got a handwritten letter from her, which was also very encouraging, and she said, 'I'm so happy that you want to do research on gender and conflict at PRIO'. She had worked with Dan [Smith, former PRIO director] in London before Dan came to PRIO. I think he was the one who said that I could write to her, but I was like: 'I can't simply write to her, are you crazy?' But I did, and she responded. I keep that letter in my files and read it now and then. So yes, there were people who supported me, people you could admire, who responded, and who became sources of inspiration for me to pursue the research interests I had.

***How has this balance been between the psychology side and the gender side? Have you felt that there was any tension?***

I came in as a psychologist, and then I happened to work on gender issues. Then that identification changed, and I became much more of a gender researcher who also happened to be a psychologist. I think that comes with working in the institute sector in general, because you become much more topic oriented. Then your academic discipline vanishes a little.

Being in the margins can sometimes feel a little lonely, because you see that those who are in political science—with their literature, their terminology—have much more in common. It was as if they had a better match of topics and discipline than me. Even some of the same core terms I would know from psychology, but they meant something different for them. Sometimes that could be frustrating, but now I am happy that I have learned so much from different disciplines at PRIO. And I think in terms of increasing the understanding of the gender, peace and security nexus, it is good to have a wide range of disciplines involved in various studies.

***And have you also through those years felt yourself to be a peace researcher?***

Yeah, I think so.

***The moment you started working at PRIO, that made you a peace researcher, or...?***

No, I didn't use that term about myself until ... it was a bit like when I got married with my husband, you know, I said he was my boyfriend for about ten years, and then I said he was my husband. It was something that took time to get used to. I think it's the same with PRIO.

I worked at PRIO, that's what I would say, but would say that I was a psychologist. It was as if identifying as a peace researcher was a bit too big for me.

But now that I'm not at PRIO full time,<sup>1</sup> I say that I am a peace researcher, along with being a psychologist and gender researcher. I think the transition to becoming a peace researcher, for me, also came when others identified me as such. I mean that an identity can be reinforced by others. But I am not exactly sure what it means to be a peace researcher.

*I was just going to ask you, what does it mean to you to...*

...to be a peace researcher?

*Yeah. It is something I am also curious about myself. What is that identity, or that group of people?*

I think it's an identification with a group of people. I gave a talk about this when PRIO turned 50. In the speech, I told a story about my dad. Because as a child I had to explain to others what my father was did. He was a peace researcher, and I had no idea what that meant. For instance, my best friend's parents were doctors. That was much easier than having a father who was a peace researcher. So, in this speech I recounted, which is actually true, how I had asked my dad: 'What am I going to say that you do? I don't know', and he told me I could say that he's a kind of teacher, a kind of scientist, and a kind of helper. That of course didn't fly very well when you were ten years old and tried to tell your friends in the schoolyard. The other parents were doctors or policemen or something else that everyone had heard of. My father's job was a mystery. And my kids have suffered the same fate, having to explain to their friends what their mother does.

[A]s a child I had to explain to others what my father did. He was a peace researcher, and I had no idea what that meant. [...] I had asked my dad: 'What am I going to say that you do? I don't know', and he told me I could say that he's a kind of teacher, a kind of scientist, and a kind of helper.

Yet my father's explanation was quite good, I think; people have the expectation that a peace researcher is a particular form of scholar. They expect that you engage in promoting certain forms of change. I think that is a valuable expectation, and I think that we should deliver on it; be the helper, the scholar, and the teacher.

To me, I think the thing that makes PRIO a super interesting and valuable place to be is this generation of knowledge for a purpose other than just gaining knowledge and promoting your academic career. That has always been very important to me, and I think that's important for most people at PRIO. It has come through in different ways, also in conversations among the PRIO leadership, when we have our discussions about research strategies. I think that is something unique to PRIO: it's not just an academic job. It's more than that.

***What do you feel psychology would have to contribute to this?***

I think that taking the individual as the starting point of analysis is valuable for understanding the impact of conflict. I remember I thought a lot about this when I was involved in PRIO's dialogue projects in the Balkans. I was part of that for many years in the late 1990s and long into the 2000s. These were inter-ethnic dialogue meetings with people from all the former Yugoslav republics in collaboration with the Nansen Academy at Lillehammer. I thought that having expertise and knowledge in organizational psychology and group psychology, on how dialogues work, how negotiation works, was highly relevant. There is room there for psychological research, and that is not explored enough. Documenting and theorizing around the various forms of dialogue projects that PRIO was and is involved in could have been done much more than has been the case.

***Ok, I would like to go more into PRIO questions. When we started, you talked about this 'PRIO spirit'? Could you elaborate a little bit more on what that entails, starting with when you were a child?***

Well, you know, that's a big question. The PRIO that I heard about as a child and that I experienced as a child was an extended family. My mom will talk about this very affectionately. How they would have gatherings with the wives and the kids, and how they took care of each other. At times when my mom is not so affectionate, she talks about how everyone had equal pay and my father with this huge student loan and high education was paid the same as the cleaning lady, and they had lots of expenses. She was not so hippy happy about that, as my father might have been. But that of course is just like mythical stories that I've heard in my childhood.

The thing that makes PRIO a super interesting and valuable place to be is this generation of knowledge for a purpose other than just gaining knowledge and promoting your academic career [...] it's not just an academic job. It's more than that.

When I came in the mid-1990s, PRIO was a bit of a laidback place. There were lots of conscientious objectors and many more men than women. I also remember people wearing their slippers instead of shoes at work. So yes, it was a special place, I would say.

PRIO grew and became more professional and became a different place over the years that I have worked there. If I am going to summarize, it was international, it was communal, family oriented in the sense of feeling like an extended family, and it was quite male dominated. So, it's changed a lot. But of course, I am romanticizing the past a little bit. But I have good and close friends from these early years at PRIO and I know that there are many other groups of ex-PRIOites who still meet and have maintained friendships based on work experience at PRIO.

I do not want to leave an impression that PRIO has changed in a bad way. It has just become much bigger and has a different dynamic. But now that I do not have

my daily work there, I look at PRIO and think that it has a particular ‘PRIO spirit’, which is characterized by a strong sense of engagement and community.

***But what about the international character? It sounds like it was very international. Has it become less so or is it still the same?***

You have to remember I came to PRIO from Norway. Just working in a place where everyone speaks English was special. We had to speak English because when I came Dan Smith was the director and he was British. In addition, there was Robert B. Bathurst [the former US naval officer]. There were also Pavel Baev and Valery Tishkov from Russia and J. ‘Bayo Adekanye from Nigeria. So even though it wasn’t 50% non-Norwegians in terms of numbers, it felt very international in a Norwegian context. That, I think, is still the case. Then, in addition, everyone who worked there had lived elsewhere and was connected to the outside world, so to speak. I think this is also still the case. In terms of diversity, it’s still white and European and all of this, but by Norwegian standards it is international. A particular form of international, let’s say.

***You were also talking about Marek. He was Polish?***

He was Polish (see Chap. 7).

***And this kind of presence of the older generation with actual holocaust experience, was that also part of the PRIO spirit to some extent?***

You know what, I wish I could say yes, but I think that was probably more the case before I started. Because I know that from Ingrid [Eide] and Mari Holmboe Ruge, the experiences from the Second World War, and later from the Cold War, were of course very important (see Chaps. 1, 2 and 3). But for me it was the war in the Balkans that was the reference point. That’s why I started my research on sexual violence in war. I came to PRIO when the Bosnian war was ending. So the conflicts in the Balkans were “my” wars, if you like, my generation’s wars.

***It comes into your living room, you see what is happening...***

And you identify. The Second World War was present in the life story of Marek Thee and of some people I knew in my childhood. And I had a huge interest in the Second World War, I just read everything I could. But when I came to PRIO it felt as if it was more important to delve into the present, to try to understand contemporary conflicts. Even though the backdrop was always there.

***So at that time, the Balkan war was for many people at PRIO a reference?***

Yes. In 1994, the first groups of people from the Balkans were brought to Lillehammer. This was because Lillehammer was a friendship town with Sarajevo; the 1984 Olympic Winter Games had been organized in Sarajevo, and on the tenth anniversary in 1994 the Olympics were held in Lillehammer. At that time, I remember hearing stories from colleagues at PRIO, such as Wenche [Hauge] and others who went to Lillehammer to meet these people and talk to them. Then that started evolving

and became the Nansen Dialogue Network that PRIO was involved with first through teaching, then through a more committed kind of leadership, and so on.

***OK, now I would like to come to the gender dimensions, because it must be something quite particular.***

I arrived at PRIO in 1995, and the Beijing World Conference on Women had just taken place. Norway wanted to follow up, and PRIO was contacted and asked if we could organize a large conference in Santo Domingo at the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). We went there and had a big conference on gender, peace and conflict. Dan Smith and I edited a book based on the conference, entitled *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, published by Sage in 2001.

This effort was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with complementary funding from the Norwegian Research Council. This combined funding and research effort led to what later became the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security in 2015, through collaboration with Torunn Tryggestad. And then of course the big entrance of Helga Hernes, which is important. Going back, if I ever had any role model and a mentor it would be her (see Chap. 14).

***Why was it so important to have this big entry of Helga, why was that so crucial and what did it do?***

Well, there were several things. First, she was senior and well respected. I was junior and just finishing my Ph.D., and you're at that point where you're thinking about what to do next. Then Torunn, whom I had collaborated with for many years while she was at NUPI, contacted me and said that Helga is retiring, but she would still like to be active. She encouraged me to contact Helga and ask her out for lunch. I was so nervous, because I had met her only a few times, but she seemed so stylish, and strict. Everything that I am not. I felt so junior and inexperienced around her. But I thought that I had to do this, and contacted her.

We had lunch, and I asked her if she wanted to come to PRIO, even though I had no mandate to do it. That was when Stein was director. I met him in the stairs in Fuglehauggata as I came back from that lunch and I asked: 'Stein, is there any way we can make this work?' Stein was, thankfully, very enthusiastic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was willing to provide funding for this work and Helga asked: 'What do you think we should do with that?', and Torunn wanted to do a Ph.D., so we were able to get her to come to PRIO to work on a Ph.D. project on UNSCR 1352. So that's what happened. Which was a huge change and a new turn for me. Not only did Helga come along, but also Torunn, who was my co-conspirator when it came to building up research on gender, peace and security in Norway.

We were talking earlier about being alone in the field of psychology at PRIO, but in the first 10 years that I was there, I was also pretty much alone in my research focus on gender, too. For many years, every little piece of information, mail, or phone call relating to gender would end up with me. It was as if they were thinking: 'That goes to Inger. She is the woman person'. Then to have a group of three colleagues to have conversations with on a daily basis, and to have Helga who is so well respected and

established, was fantastic. I am not a good political analyst. I am interested in people, but I am not good at analyzing political developments. I don't have the vocabulary for it, I don't have the training for it. Torunn and Helga are super at this. To be allowed into that company, and have them come to PRIO, was a huge privilege for me. It allowed us to manoeuvre funding, research, and engagement in ways that I had not been able to do before, and I have learned so much from them.

It also happened at a time when I had two little kids. Torunn also had two little kids, and we were exhausted all the time. Travelling was the last thing we wanted to do, but Helga could do that, and more. She could represent and make us visible on lots of different arenas. Therefore, she was such a blessing for both Torunn and myself. In addition, we grew much less fearful of her and are now very good and dear friends. And when I became deputy director at PRIO in 2009, Helga's experience with leadership was so useful—I had lots of talks with her about various things. Then she was like a true mentor in the classical sense.

***And the fact that you are a minority as a woman—at the start, did that matter at all? Now I guess we are more women than men at PRIO, but have you always felt that it doesn't really matter if I'm a woman or a man, that you can interact on the same level?***

In the beginning, I felt that there was a strong need to get more women at PRIO.

I think that now, at least with a comparative view from the University of Oslo, PRIO has done pretty well. It doesn't mean that things are perfect. There are still things to do. But I think there is a place for conversations about gender dimensions in recruitment, assessments, and evaluations at PRIO that is open. I think that the gender research focus also has been part of that. Not that that's the only reason, but the fact that it's not just talking about women in various academic and leadership positions, but also gender dimensions in research.

I think that one of the things that I'm most proud of as a member of the PRIO community is that gender dimensions are part of many projects. You don't have to be a gender researcher to have that focus. I think that by insisting on that, when funders also ask for it and PRIO has a capacity and willingness to respond, we enable reflections about internal dynamics at PRIO as well.

***But over the years the number increased?***

Yes, the numbers increased. Of course, that's also a reflection of the fact that the number of women in academia increased in general. I talked a lot with Hilde Henriksen Waage, who was the deputy director during my formative years at PRIO. Female representation was something she cared a lot about. She had been here ten years longer than me, and she had felt that she was really one of the only women and felt that there were lots of issues to address. Because of her, and others, PRIO is now a much more gender equal place in terms of numbers and also in terms of research focus. That is something to be proud of, I think.

***Alright, so we've talked about your personal story and PRIO, and I want to spend a little more time on peace, peace research, and the peace concept. Starting off***

***with your personal connection or emotional connection to the concept of peace and even war: what does ‘peace’ mean to you?***

Interesting. I have thought a lot about it lately. I was just at a conference entitled ‘Wars Don’t End’ at the University of Birmingham. The conference focused on many things relating to postwar, including children born of war, which is something I am developing a project on. Throughout the years that I’ve worked at PRIO, I think Johan Galtung might be right—we focus a lot more on conflict than we do on what peace is. And I think that psychological expertise could rectify some of that development. One important theme in psychology is the notion of well-being. What is it that creates well-being in people? What is it that makes you feel at ease in your own skin, in your own life, in your own sociopolitical context? What does it take? I think we have focused way too little on what that means. I think that’s relevant for peace research and for the notion of peace.

I have also thought about this in relation to transitional justice: the notion that justice is needed for reconciliation to take form and for peace to be established. When you think of peace in terms of justice, the people who are involved think in terms of their rights. If your rights aren’t met, then the justice has a counterproductive effect, because then you get upset and risk installing a sense of new violations, i.e. violations of rights. I would love to see more academic thinking and more research on what it is that makes people feel that they have a life in peace, feel like they have well-being, feel that they have developed resilience against conflicts. I think that maybe political science is not the academic discipline with the greatest capacity to do that kind of research, but there are other fields that would be more appropriate for developing that kind of knowledge, like anthropology, community psychology, philosophy, and sociology, and I think that’s really needed. If peace is just the absence of war, then you have peace in lots of places. But if peace is also well-being and resilience to conflicts, then it’s a different kind of work and research.

***How does the individual and the collective come into that? Because if you think about well-being, that also has a lot to do with one’s own being at ease with oneself and everything, whereas in peace and conflict, it’s always about relations between people?***

I am thinking about well-being in the sense of a community approach. Well-being obviously is something about being at ease with yourself, but you can’t have a society with individual therapy for everyone who has been in conflict. So, you need to think in terms of the community level.

I would love to see more research on what it is that makes people feel that they have a life in peace, feel like they have well-being, feel that they have developed resilience against conflicts.



I think all narratives about who you are and what your future prospects are, and how that impacts your well-being, are dependent on how these stories are reinforced or challenged by the communities you live in. And there you can do something, you know! Just going back to the work that I've done on survivors of sexual violence: they can get a lot of individual therapy and help, but if the society constantly stigmatizes them, then it's very hard to maintain a notion of yourself as a survivor, as someone who has agency and control over her—or his—life. You need to be reinforced by the larger society in your understanding that you were a victim of armed violence in a conflict setting, and that you were not yourself at fault. If you are recognized as an innocent victim, you do not need to feel stigmatized. That conflict-related story must be reinforced on the level of the community and society.

*I find it very interesting that you bring in narratives and stories, so it is also about the stories you're able to tell about yourself and the visions of the future you can imagine. About how it is that these stories are created, and how people create their own story in a way that supports well-being and a sense of peace.*

*In a way of course, as researchers, we contribute to this; I don't want to say that researchers do storytelling, but they contribute to the societal stories about peace and conflict. What if, for example, PRIO doesn't create these stories about what peace really is, and instead creates a lot of stories about what war is about?*

I think PRIO has in its mission statement—there is a formulation, isn't there?—I think it says that PRIO 'conducts research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups and people'. But 'peace' is a concept that comes with a lot of baggage. It can be very hard to engage with and maybe conflict is an easier term to engage with.

*Because peace comes with a whole baggage of activism, or...?*

Yeah, it comes with a notion of activism, religiosity, and more. Of course, for that reason it's important that PRIO defines what it means in a PRIO context. And I think in a way we have done that, in the mission statement. But of course, PRIO is not completely free to simply decide what we want to do when we do peace research. Because research has to get funded. If funders are much more interested in research on how to end conflicts, that's what you're going to talk about and that's how it has to be. But, perhaps mapping out in more detail what these conditions for peaceful relations might be could be a reinforced focus at PRIO in the next 10 years?

*What you're saying is that you can't really have sustainable peace by just focusing on conflict. You really need to understand what that ideal peace is all about. Which is I guess also going back to Galtung.*

Yes, I sound like a Galtung follower, but my reference point is also obviously what I've done myself in terms of gender dimensions. Just to take one example, if you think about narratives about war and peace, and the gender relevance in that landscape, then wars change gender relations and dynamics, often profoundly.

Elise Barth, a former PRIOite, wrote a report many years ago called ‘Peace as Disappointment’, about the experiences of Eritrean female fighters, because their imagined peace was based on idealized notions of the past, of what they thought had been before the war. It was not based on the reality of what was before the war, but on idealized memories. In that context, often after a conflict you will see a turn to extremely rigid gender roles because extremely rigid gender roles somehow represent a form of security, something recognizable after upheaval and turmoil. Peace, therefore, may not always be the best thing for women. What kind of space is created after a conflict for different people? And what stories are they offered about who they are and were, and who they should be in the future?

To me, it is super interesting that peace is not always good, or that it can be many, many different things. Peace can bring new restrictions for women. It can give less security. (After the Vietnam War, for instance, the Vietnamese male fighters were rewarded with official leadership positions in the postwar society, although they were much less competent than the women who had filled those positions during the time when the men were out fighting). Very often, the end of a war gives women less security. This is one reason why they sometimes want to continue to carry arms. Arms make them feel secure in an insecure setting. These dimensions must be studied more.

Often after a conflict you will see a turn to extremely rigid gender roles because [they] somehow represent a form of security, something recognizable after upheaval and turmoil. Peace, therefore, may not always be the best thing for women. What kind of space is created after a conflict for different people? And what stories are they offered about who they are and were, and who they should be in the future?

***I just want to end with your quote from your father when he was trying to explain what he was doing. A peace researcher is a teacher, helper, and scientist. For you, thinking about peace and the work you have been doing, how do these three elements come in?***

Very concretely, actually. First, the scientist: when I came to PRIO in 1995 the Bosnian war was ending. I had an interest in women’s experiences. I had written my thesis about women’s narratives of war in different conflicts. I saw all these reports about sexual violence in Bosnia and found that little academic work had been done about it. I literally went through books in the PRIO library and looked for research on sexual violence in war only to find that there was hardly anything on women and nothing on rape. So, part of my motivation for doing research on sexual violence in war was a wish to make this subject scientific or bring those experiences into scholarly discussions about armed conflict. The question was, how is rape effective as a weapon of war? If it is a weapon of war, what does it do? How does it destroy

people, or opponents? So that was very concretely my motivation for doing that research.

Then, teaching: I think I've said yes to almost all the requests I've received to talk about this in various settings. I've been to NATO headquarters and talked about it, I've talked to military students in Norway, I've talked to NGOs. Bringing this knowledge to the users was a big thing.

Then the helper part, how does this help people? That's harder. I've interviewed survivors and people affected in various ways, but I'm not going to claim that by talking to them and asking them questions I have helped them in any way. Yet I think and hope in the larger picture of things that the fact that their experiences have been recognized by the efforts of mine and my colleagues carries some importance for them.

Knowing that I have helped organizations in Bosnia to get funding for their work also counts. That's been something. Not that I've raised a lot of funds, but I have helped with some events and things. In addition, I think that the Missing Peace Initiative, which was a collaboration between the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley, and Women In International Security (WIIS), has been one way of 'helping', in the sense of making knowledge available to concerned users and other stakeholders. We organized meetings with policy makers, practitioners, and researchers.

***But is that a difficult balance also? I mean, you are an academic, so you're not supposed to be an activist, I guess.***

I don't feel that as a problem. I feel that as an academic, sometimes I just need to take a phone call to put people together, saying that I've interviewed these people. This is what I've done. Interviewed people in Bosnia, been in contact with people, and then in contact with the Norwegian embassy and I have suggested: 'If you don't know about these women doing this great work, maybe you could talk to each other?' It's just facilitating I would say, more than being an activist as such. I have been asked sometimes to do more activist work, and that I'm not comfortable with. But being a facilitator, that I'm fine with.

***But I think for many it doesn't tally with the role as an academic.***

That may be true. But there are ways of combining. For instance, the work that Torunn has done—that I've been part of in the margins—with the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) network. That involves a big teaching and helping component, in the sense of generating knowledge and putting it to use. Making sure that people who work with peace and reconciliation have tools with which to address the gender dimensions of that work. Now we're working with the UN to provide academic input for their work on sexual violence in armed conflict and what kind of knowledge they would need.

This kind of work is, I think, extremely meaningful, and PRIO is excellent at doing this kind of work, which is why I really want to stay affiliated with PRIO for as long as I can. To be part of those kinds of efforts. I don't think that every person at PRIO should necessarily work in such a way—that is, balancing research, teaching,

and engagement at all times. But I do think that PRIO as a collective should continue to work in this way, facilitating the generation and transfer of knowledge amongst a range of users. I think the possibility of having an impact, and being the helper, and making knowledge come to use is and should be a big part of PRIO's identity. I think it is, and I hope that never goes away.

*Thank you very much, Inger.*

### Note

1. Inger is now a full-time professor at the Center for Gender Research at the University of Oslo while maintaining a 20% position at PRIO.

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# Chapter 21

## A Migrant in the Common European House: Pavel Baev



Interviewed by Stein Tønnesson



Pavel Baev in 2008 © Lise Åserud/NTB/Scanpix

In the late 1980s, when I took part in drafting speeches for Mikhail Gorbachev underpinning his concept of an ‘All-European House’, one part of my work was to strive towards the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Nothing came out of it at the time. Now, after more than 25 years at PRIO and having become a Norwegian citizen, I realize that the same question has taken on a new complexity with the worsening of East–West relations. I want to return to the work I did at the time, and co-operate with my PRIO colleagues on a project aimed to reduce the not-negligible risk of a limited nuclear war in Europe.

**Stein Tønnesson:** *Pavel, you were born in 1957, the year of the Sputnik. How was it to grow up in the Soviet Union during the Cold War?*

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**Pavel Baev:** As you say, I was born in the year that Sputnik was launched, which means I'm two years older than PRIO. Nothing in my childhood, my teens, or my twenties prepared me for the huge change in my life it represented to become a PRIOite.

I had a very stable childhood. In my early years, the Soviet Union was very much on track. Going to school was a regular thing and the quality of our education was satisfactory. We had a fair chance to continue studying, and I was lucky enough to be admitted to Moscow State University. Only one out of twenty applicants were admitted, so the competition was tough indeed. I prepared myself seriously for this big advance in my life, and I felt privileged in many ways as a student in the best of all the universities in the Soviet Union.

***Could you tell me about your parents? I assume they must have lived through the Great Fatherland War and the whole Stalin period?***

Yes, certainly. The war had a huge presence in the lives of my parents, though they were not old enough to actually fight. That was my grandfathers' plight. Both my grandfathers fought in the war and were lucky to return home.

For my father, the war came very near. He lived in Moscow and experienced the shock of evacuation, when Hitler's troops came close, but the family returned after Moscow was saved by the Soviet forces. My mother, however, had a summer break in 1941, just before the German onslaught, in her native village in the Smolensk region, and was cut off from Soviet-controlled territory when the territory was captured by German troops. Her village was liberated only in 1944. For a long time, my grandmother and her two daughters had no contact with my grandfather who was at the front and both had to presume the worst, which fortunately never happened. So, my family certainly has its war memories.

I myself, however, belong to a generation for whom war was already a distant occurrence, something we had just heard about. The two world wars and the October Revolution and everything that had happened in the first half of the twentieth century was already a matter for the history books. Life around us had very little connection with war. I lived in a stable and, in many ways, peaceful period—not particularly tense. I had a feeling that everything was on track and I knew more or less what I might possibly achieve in life. It might be a little bit better or a little bit worse, but everything was very much predetermined—even a little boring. For a teenager looking for adventure, for conquering new horizons, my only conceivable battlefield was in the competition for a good university exam.

***At what age did you join Moscow State University and how did you get in?***

I still cannot believe my good fortune. I was admitted immediately after finishing my ten years of schooling, and was only seventeen when I entered. I spent five years in the university, which was normal in the Soviet Union back then. In fact, across all disciplines the basic higher education had a five-year duration. I had been fairly young when I graduated from secondary school and seized my chance to get a college education. At my school, nobody else in my year of graduation tried to get into a top college, though many of my friends would receive a higher technical education.

I chose geography as my subject. My heart was more in history, but the history department was full of ideology. Marxism-Leninism dominated every part of the curriculum, even antiquity. Geography was basically free of ideology, and we could choose from a range of topics, from meteorology to the economic structure of foreign countries, which was already my specialty.

***You talk as if this were a happy period in your life.***

Of course! I was suddenly in a place where I felt free, with new horizons opening and many interesting friends. I experienced my first love, could go on summer expeditions to different corners of Russia, and even abroad. My first foreign trip went to the German Democratic Republic, where I first saw the Berlin wall. And back in Moscow, when looking out of the window in the reading room of the high university skyscraper in the Leninskie Gory, I could see the global metropole of Moscow below me, a lot of sky above, and freedom all around. It was a very happy time.

***So, you had a stable childhood in the age of Nikita Khrushchev (1953-64) and entered university in Leonid Brezhnev's time (1964-82). What is your view today of those two Soviet leaders?***

Khrushchev had to step down when I was still just a boy, in my first class at school. We were given textbooks with a big portrait of him and were ordered to remove that page from the book. So, my only memory of Khrushchev is his removal. My time in the Soviet Union was the long, long Brezhnev era. It seemed incredibly long, and it was quite a surprise for me to recently realize that Vladimir Putin has now held power longer than Brezhnev.

The beginning of the Brezhnev era was full of hope, full of expectations. There was a feeling that the Soviet Union—the whole of this huge multi-ethnic country—was on track. There had been big problems in the past, not just with the war but also with internal repression, but now everything was getting better and life was improving year by year.

This was the perception I had during my school years and at university. It seemed that there would be many interesting opportunities ahead, and there was no prospect of any dramatic change. The country would stay on track and no major breaks or breakdowns could possibly happen. This proved of course to be an awfully wrong impression, but this is something I can only say with hindsight.

***By the time you finished your studies in 1979, I assume you had not made other foreign trips than the one to East Germany?***

I also took part in a student exchange with Bulgaria during a short winter holiday, and I had travelled to Yemen as a schoolboy already. My father worked in military intelligence, so he took my mother and my little brother with him to his assignments

abroad: first in northern Yemen, and later Egypt. I did not make it to Egypt, but I visited my family in Yemen.

## **Joining the Soviet Military?**

*So, you had international experience from early on. And when you had finished your studies, the first job you got was for the military, wasn't it?*

Yes indeed. I was assigned to a military research institute affiliated with the Soviet Ministry of Defence, doing a lot of hard research on the potential enemy. My specialty was the United States—the various aspects of its military policies.

To get that job was a huge change in my life. Suddenly, after all the openness and freedom I had enjoyed at the university, where so many roads seemed open, I found myself confined to a restricted and controlled environment with bars on the windows, and no opportunity to travel abroad. The discipline was rigid. All my superiors were military officers, and for them such discipline was natural. They felt that it was more relaxed in the ministry than in the military units they had served in before. For me, it was incredibly tough.

*Did you think of choosing a military career—putting on a uniform and perhaps one day becoming a Soviet general?*

Of course. I was invited several times to join. Though probably I would never have made it to the level of a general, since I came in from the side-line with no basic military education. I would always have been a second-rate officer, with limited prospects. Yet a life in uniform would have been financially beneficial. I could have doubled my salary. But for some reason, I never felt it would be right. So, I resisted the persistent invitations.

Sometimes you make choices in life that you can't quite rationalize in hindsight. During my second year at PRIO, for instance, when I was on a temporary contract, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) announced positions in its newly created Centre for Russian Studies. These were secure, well-paid jobs. Some of the guys who got those positions are still there, like Jakub M. Godzimirski and Helge Blakkisrud. I did not apply. While it was my field of study, I felt myself a part of the PRIO family, so to apply from PRIO to NUPI just did not feel right. I never applied and never regretted that I didn't.

*So, by instinct you shied away from NUPI and the Soviet military. Yet you worked as a civilian for the Soviet Ministry of Defence at a time when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan and the Cold War in Europe got colder.*

That's right. I joined the Ministry of Defence in September 1979, and in December the Afghan War began. Several of my colleagues disappeared from our corridors when they were sent south. This remained a pattern during all my years there. Some of them never came back because they were reassigned to other jobs, and some came back as



very altered people, I would say. One was killed. I went with a group of colleagues to the military airport to receive the heavy coffin. That certainly made an impression. War had come into my life. The whole atmosphere changed dramatically in those years, from the hopes created by Razryadka (Détente) to a new phase of confrontation with a real threat of an east–west war. My colleagues indeed saw it coming.

## **Trying to Build a European House**

*But then came Mikhail Gorbachev.*

Indeed. Which, even in hindsight, seems like a miracle. A lot of things changed for the better: in the world, in the Soviet Union, and in my life. Once Gorbachev had pronounced the words, “All-European House,” a new think-tank was created to develop that concept. This became the Institute of Europe in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I joined that Institute at its creation in 1987.

*Two years after Gorbachev had become General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, you joined a new think-tank to study his idea of an All-European House.*

Yes, this was a time of incredible change. After a period when general secretaries came and went (Yuri Andropov 1982-84, Konstantin Chernenko 1984-85) and nothing changed, suddenly with Gorbachev the wind of change began to blow. And again, one of its manifestations in foreign policy was the idea that Europe is our common house. We felt a need to put the confrontation and the risk of war behind us. We wanted to adjust our minds to the fact that we live together in this house and must be good neighbours.

*Did you meet him?*

Several times, but never privately and never one to one.

*Did he read your stuff?*

Yes, but most of our texts were collective. We wrote drafts for his speeches and for papers to be circulated to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. So, our think-tank was heavily involved in foreign policy making. We produced new ideas in abundance for Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, who was Soviet foreign minister at the time. [Four years after the Soviet Union’s demise, he became President of Georgia, serving from 1995 to 2003].

*When you worked for the military you were an expert on the United States, but now you focused on Europe.*

My main area was arms control and the possibility of a new military détente, and our relationship with the United States was crucial. Even though Gorbachev aimed for an All-European House, the United States could not but be considered an essential

part of the balance-of-force and the security structure that were needed to make it happen.

One part of my work concerned the role of nuclear weapons in Europe—non-strategic nuclear weapons, which were mostly American. We prepared ideas for possible negotiations. Nothing came out of this at the time, so now, at the ultimate stage of my research career, I want to return to this unresolved problem, which has acquired a new complexity. Together with some of my PRIO colleagues, like Greg Reichberg and Louise Olsson—and possibly Stein Tønnesson if he has any free capacity—we might give a new push to that problem, which is a leftover from the final phase of the Cold War, but has acquired a new quality in the current situation.

*That could be useful indeed. When you worked for Gorbachev's new institute, did you then again have a chance to travel abroad?*

## Seeing the Wall Come Down

Yes, a year and a half after I joined the Europe Institute, my security clearance expired, and I was clean to go. I travelled to several countries, mainly in eastern Europe. A trip to Poland produced a particularly strong impression because it gave the *Perestroika* [Gorbachev's slogan for reform] a new meaning for me. Poland went for deep reforms, some of them painful with a lot of inflation, yet with new, intense hope.

In the following year, 1989, one of the strongest impressions I have had in my whole life came during a conference I attended in East Berlin, organized together with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) think-tank EPV. We held Soviet-German talks about European security just as the Berlin wall came tumbling down.

***EPV?***

I do not recall what the abbreviation stood for ... it soon disappeared together with the whole GDR state.

***Were you actually there at the moment when it fell?***

Yes, the venue of our conference was a little outside Berlin. Around it was a big park, in which everything was peaceful and quiet. But in the evening, we could go to Alexanderplatz and hear the colossal crowds chanting "Wir sind ein Volk!" In the morning, we went back and were surprised to see that everything had returned to peace and quiet. Not a single glass had been broken, and everyone seemed to be back at work. This very quiet morning was followed by a colossal explosion of emotions in the evening. On the last day of our conference, the wall was torn apart—brick by brick.

***What were your emotions at the sight?***

It was a shock, an unintended result of our new foreign policy. We lost control of the All-European House we were trying to build, and saw all our brilliant ideas about how to manage the rapprochement between east and west go overboard. Suddenly the process gained a momentum of its own. The new European dynamics were no longer manageable.

***What did you feel about Gorbachev then, and how do you assess him now?***

What happened in Berlin was something he had not foreseen. As leader of the Soviet Union, he thought that he would be firmly in control of events. He expected his decisions and his guidance to determine Europe's future. Then, suddenly, the events took on their own momentum.

After that, he was lost. His last two years were a period of indecision. He was unable to regain control, unable to understand what was happening. Inside the Soviet Union, he was no longer obeyed or taken seriously.

**The First Norwegian Encounters*****In 1989, when you were thirty-two, had you already heard about PRIO?***

No. My acquaintance with PRIO started in the following year, when I met Sverre Lodgaard at a conference. I don't remember where. There were many conferences at the time, and I met several Norwegians before him, including Johan Jørgen Holst [NUPI director 1981–86 and 1990–91, Minister of Defence 1986–89, 1990–93, Minister of Foreign Affairs 1993–94], who took part in our programme on non-strategic nuclear weapons. He participated in several workshops and impressed me with his work capacity. He took an energetic part in the discussions, generated new ideas and discussed other people's proposals. He was never one to just present his own paper.

***So, Sverre Lodgaard, who was PRIO director at the time, met you somewhere in the All-European House?***

Yes. In one of the conferences around Europe. He invited me to come to PRIO for a week, and that week happened to be in January 1991. I came to PRIO with some of my prepared ideas...

***Was this your first visit to Norway?***

Yes, but I had already met several Norwegians. One of them was the leader of the Conservative Party, Kaci Kullmann Five (1951–2017). I met her in Moscow at a reception in the Norwegian embassy. She introduced herself as just Kaci and impressed me very much. She was sharp and keenly interested in what was going on. She did not conform to my idea of what a conservative party leader was like. I was so impressed that I have voted Høyre ever since.

***What was your first impression of PRIO? How were you received when you arrived in Fuglehauggata 11, where I was struggling to finish my doctoral thesis at the time when you arrived?***

The visit did not take place in a convivial atmosphere, because it coincided with King Olav V's death and the First Gulf War. My seminar presentations were overshadowed by these events. Nevertheless, I felt I had come to a friendly place, open to interesting discussions. So, I returned the following year for the launch of *Security Dialogue*. Magne Barth, the editor, invited me to be one of his associate editors. Then, in February–March 1992, I came for a full month.

***Magne Barth had taken over from Marek Thee as editor of the Bulletin of Peace Proposals (see chap. 7), which was relaunched under the name Security Dialogue. It celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2019, counting all the years of both the BBP and Security Dialogue. And you were involved in the relaunch.***

Yes, I was present at the conference where we brainstormed about the launch, decided on the new name, developed a design, established a list of possible contributors. For me, this was hugely interesting. I felt that I was part of a big transformation in international affairs.

## **The Demise of the USSR**

***By the time you came back for your second visit, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was gone. How did you experience that?***

Well ... it was a new shock. Not so much the collapse, but the military coup that failed. I witnessed it first-hand, because our institute was located in central Moscow. I came to work on a Monday morning, and there were tanks all around. I stood with my father that crucial night outside the Moscow White House. We stayed the whole miserable night under drizzling rain, expecting any moment that the storm would come—and then suddenly in the morning, miraculously, there was victory! The troops withdrew. Gorbachev returned from his captivity in the Crimea and the nightmare disappeared. But again, from that moment, the Soviet Union was seriously broken. Its dismantlement and collapse soon followed.

***This was Boris Yeltsin's victory.***

Yes, it was. He was there, standing on top of a tank in front of the White House. I saw him. It was his moment in history, and he did not chicken out. With all his weaknesses, all his later controversial decisions, and his Soviet past hanging heavily on him, this was his historical opportunity, and he did not miss it.

***How did the shift from the Soviet Union ruled by Gorbachev to a Russia ruled by Yeltsin affect you personally?***

It was a big change. Gorbachev was—with all his weaknesses, all his helplessness in the last few years—in my view a better leader than Yeltsin. Not least because Gorbachev was always attentive to expert advice. He invited different opinions and made up his mind after serious consideration. Yeltsin was impulsive and did not trust any of Gorbachev's advisors.

So, our think-tank lost its relevance for policy making. Our connection with the government was broken. It was unclear how Russian foreign policy would be managed. At the same time, due to hyper-inflation, our salaries were so small that it was difficult to survive with a family. So, when Sverre invited me to come to PRIO for half a year, maybe a whole year, I saw it as a fantastic opportunity.

***Would you have accepted that invitation if Gorbachev's Soviet Union had survived?***

That is a hypothetical question. It depends on how Gorbachev had behaved. At the middle of his reign, we had a feeling of being involved in something profoundly important, making a difference in such a way that even a short trip abroad was difficult to manage because we might be missing something very important. But then he lost touch...

***Do you think Gorbachev deserved the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990?***

Yes, very much so. His first response was surprise: what does this really mean? We managed to explain to him that it was a great achievement and honour. In the Soviet Union, the reputation of the Nobel Prizes had been damaged by some problematic decisions related to literature. The prize to Boris Pasternak in 1958 left a strong aftertaste. So, it took a few months for Gorbachev to understand the significance of the peace prize. Now, if he looks back, he probably sees it as a very important moment in his career.

***So, in 1992, Pavel Baev comes to Fuglehauggata 11 for a period of half a year. You go to work in Oslo every day. You learn how to use a punching card. Did you bring your family?***

Yes, we arrived together as a small family of two, and a few months later we became a small family of three. In fact, that was a strong incentive to come to Norway, since in Moscow at the time it was logistically and medically difficult to give birth. The only thing that worried me—and I asked Magne [Barth] about it during one of our conversations—was the price. How much would it cost me in Norway? And Magne looked it up, and told me that immediately after giving birth, my wife Olga would be paid an amount of money, and then she would receive the same amount of money every month. For us, this appeared absolutely unthinkable and incomprehensible, and made the decision to come and to stay even easier.

***When and how had you met Olga, and when did she become Olga Baeva?***

We were in the Institute of Europe together from the beginning when it was a small think-tank with about a dozen people. She was personal assistant to the deputy director, and I was the head of one of the departments. It is one of those incredible treasures in life that we would work in the same institute in Moscow, and end up working in the same institute in Oslo.

***Yes, she is the head librarian at PRIO now. And so, already in 1992, when you were here for your first long stay, Fyodor was born.***

We arrived in mid-October, and he was born in late January. That was the most important event in our lives, and much of my further effort at PRIO was driven and determined by the fact that we were three and I was a responsible father, and that it would have been difficult to manage the family economy in Moscow. This opportunity was simply too important for us all to miss.

***It must have been a big move for a family with a pregnant wife to move to a foreign country, not very far away but still foreign and belonging to a different world during the Cold War. How was it to settle down in Oslo for a Russian family, and did you get adequate support from PRIO?***

Oh yes, oh yes. Absolutely and without doubt. When we arrived, my first impression was that PRIO had become a smaller institute. Sverre was no longer there. Several others had left as well. All in all, there were probably about two dozen people on PRIO's payroll. All of them were so friendly and supportive, helping us with finding an apartment and explaining how the system worked.

For us, PRIO was really our main support system, because we had nobody else in this country. But still, in Moscow back then, many things were so hard and so impossible to buy with any sort of money, which we also did not have anyway, so, Oslo felt like a blessing.

## **A Changed Moscow**

***Here in your office, you have a big map of Moscow on the wall. Do you sometimes miss the city where you grew up?***

Yes, I miss the Moscow that is no longer there. I miss my mother and my brother, who still live in Moscow. Moscow is a very hard environment. I probably cannot imagine myself going back.

Each time I visit, the stress and noise, pollution and tension are so acute that my system, which is spoiled completely by Norway's clean air and water and regular life, starts to fall apart already after a few days.

***So, the Moscow you knew was destroyed in the age of Yeltsin?***

Not exactly destroyed. It evolved into a different place—hugely interesting, by the way! It is very dynamic. It is very hard driven. The speed of life there is incredible. It is hard to compare it to anything else. Even in China, where you and I have been travelling together, even in New York, the speed is slower. Moscow is now a hard place, tense, where you have to elbow your way in crowds. It is very competitive, and the competition is not nice and fair.

**A Young Female Director*****When you settled down with Olga and Fyodor in Oslo, was it already your intention to try to prolong your contract and stay?***

My intention was to prolong the half-year stay to a year-long stay. This was the first task I set upon when arriving. Hilde (Henriksen Waage) was the acting director...

***Hilde Henriksen Waage was acting director, and Sverre Lodgaard had left (see Chaps. 10 and 15).***

Yes. Sverre became director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). I was a little surprised when I did not find him at PRIO, because he was my strongest connection.

***He was in Geneva.***

I had no problem accepting Hilde's authority though. I think she had more of a problem in exercising authority. For me, a director is always a director, whoever he or she is, and I take her word as an order.

***She was a young woman. Did you have young female directors in Moscow at the time?***

Absolutely not. But you know, everything was foreign in that situation. So, I had to adjust to everything. She explained to me that if I wanted to extend my stay the thing to do was fundraising, which again was a totally foreign thing for me. In the Soviet Academy of Sciences, we never did any fundraising. We just learned to do what we had to do.

I started writing applications and was surprisingly successful. I got a fellowship from NATO, I had a small grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and another small grant together with NUPI for a project on UN peacekeeping. One thing led to another, and the half-year was extended to a year. When I now try to explain to myself why I have stayed in one place so long, I generally say that I came for one year, then for another, and ended up having stayed twenty-five. That is my explanation for the incredible turn in my life.

## Brilliant Students and *Security Dialogue*

### *Did you get Norwegian friends? Did you socialize with other Russians in Oslo?*

The only Russians I socialized with were fellow researchers at the Nobel Institute. Vlad Zubok, and then Constantine Pleshakov. They were historians, and the Nobel Institute had a fellowship programme. So, I met sometimes with them.

But my main milieu was PRIO, and the people I socialized with there were a group of young, brilliant students, who are still around in different positions. Tor Bukkvoll is at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), Nina Græger at NUPI, Kjersti Strømmen works for the Norwegian National Broadcasting (NRK) in Beijing, and Kjersti Løken [Stavrum] is in the media. Sven Gunnar [Simonsen] is now an independent consultant, and Bjørn Otto Sverdrup has a leading position in Equinor [formerly Statoil]. They were the students that PRIO was incredibly happy to cultivate back then.

Certainly, there were comings and goings. PRIO was a fluid environment. After just three years, I already felt like a veteran, with so many newcomers and departures around me. Magne Barth was my closest contact, but he also left, moving to the International Red Cross. So, I took over *Security Dialogue* from him.

### *How was it to edit Security Dialogue?*

It was hugely interesting. For a while I was there on my own, but then I got Anthony McDermott as co-editor. Dan Smith recruited him for the job. It was better to share the editing with Anthony, because this gave me more time for my own research. Certainly, editing a peer-reviewed journal was a challenge, maybe a bit too big for me. With hindsight I can say that. I did my absolute best, and we enjoyed doing it together, but I think *Security Dialogue* did much better later, when J. Peter Burgess took over.

## Dan Smith Doubles PRIO's Size

### *How would you characterize PRIO as a workplace, in comparison with the workplaces you knew from Moscow?*

It was much smaller than most similar places in Moscow. For me, what was striking was the independence it had in expressing its views and opinions. I was also a bit surprised by how many comings and goings there were. I was used to more stable environments.

Around Easter 1993, my third PRIO Director, Dan Smith, took the reins during an identity crisis at PRIO, which had become too small and not financially sound. Dan's response was more fundraising, and this became a guiding policy. Everyone was obliged to do fundraising.



Then the institute expanded. Dan took some difficult decisions, which did not sit well with traditional PRIO structures and patterns, but were remarkably successful. PRIO doubled its size and gained a new profile. It no longer focused uniquely on academic research, but entered the area of “engagement.” Under Dan’s leadership, PRIO was more engaged in all sorts of peace efforts than ever after (see chap. 11).

***He cultivated a close relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and built up the Balkan and Cyprus programmes. We still have the Cyprus programme.***

Yes, and there were several other experiments too, which could have led to similar expansion. In the autumn of 1995, I travelled with him into war-torn Grozny, which made a strong impression. When the first Chechen war was just about to end, an unhappy interwar period began. The Balkan and Cyprus projects were the largest of Dan’s initiatives. The Balkan one was huge, with a number of local offices in the various capitals of the former Yugoslavia.

We must remember, though, that it was also under Dan’s leadership that we decided to apply for a Centre of Excellence. The initial brainstorming for how to work out an application, how to proceed with it, was done in Dan’s time as a part of the same strategy of expansion.

***This was what became the Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW), directed by Scott Gates (see chap. 17) Did you also take leadership responsibilities yourself?***

Yes, I was very much involved in designing the application. One of the eight initial CSCW research groups was mine. The idea was to make sure that the Centre was firmly anchored in PRIO, connected with many parts of its research. It should not be a virtual Centre involving mostly foreign visitors. I think we succeeded with the CSCW, beyond expectations. The Centre became a very strong part of PRIO’s academic profile, but that was primarily in the period when Stein Tønnesson was director.

## **Am I Really a Peace Researcher?**

***You mentioned in the beginning of the interview that you had refrained from applying for jobs at NUPI that were right up your alley. You said that this was out of some kind of loyalty to PRIO.***

***Did it also count for you that PRIO is a peace research institute? Has it been a selling point for you that PRIO is about peace, not security?***

That is a question I have often asked myself throughout my years at PRIO: am I really a peace researcher?

I’m certainly not a peacenik in the full sense of the word. Many parts of my research are about security, power relations, war and conflict—particularly in the former Soviet Union—and not so much about peace. But what impressed me at

PRIO from the very beginning was how open it was to different perspectives. The focus was not on expressing ideological dogma but on banging our heads together and seeing what we could produce collectively through brainstorming. For me, that was very important.

What impressed me at PRIO from the very beginning was how open it was to different perspectives. The focus was not on expressing ideological dogma but on banging our heads together and seeing what we could produce collectively through brainstorming.

As for that very noble part of the PRIO identity—that we are not just doing interesting research and developing theories, we have a purpose to make sure that peace comes closer—I think it is important. Maybe not in a direct way, such that each project application must contain the idea of world peace, but in the sense that I have not really wanted to work once again, as I did in Moscow, with a think-tank closely related to national foreign policy making. I wanted something with more independence and with more freedom to shift from one idea to another, not just follow the demands of any particular political party.

*That is probably my primary reason for being at PRIO as well. I do not want my research to be directly associated with foreign policy making. NUPI, of course, is not just that but also an institute of international affairs.*

It is. It belongs to that family of institutions. It is a good family and I have associated with for instance IFRI (Institut français des relations internationales) in Paris, which is also a part of this family. I have worked with colleagues from NUPI throughout my whole time at PRIO, even today. We develop joint projects and I find it very productive. There was never any animosity or hostility.

## **The American Attraction**

*While in Moscow, you studied the United States, and since you came to Oslo you have gone to the US many times.*

Yes, that was my main subject of research while working in the military research institute. US foreign and security policies are still a very interesting object of study for me, so I travel to Washington several times a year, where I am affiliated with the Brookings institution. I value this connection very much, because I still think that with all the ups and downs in US foreign policy making, Washington is a hugely important place, not only for global security, but also for global peace.

***I have noticed that you tend to thrive in Washington. You write these short, sharp analyses of current events of a kind that the Americans appreciate. You also sent your son to study in the United States, or he perhaps decided himself?***

That was very much his own decision, and it was driven by the fact that in the United States the education system includes college sports. He played tennis from an early age, and in his age group became Norwegian champion, so he wanted to continue. His college wanted him as a tennis player and paid more than half of his tuition fee. Otherwise, I could not have afforded his education there. I was pleased to see that his four years there were as happy and intense as my five years in Moscow State University had been.

## **Through Norway to America in a Quest for Recognition**

***Do you think your son Fyodor will settle down in Norway?***

That is a difficult question. It engages the same kind of never-ending identity struggle that I am conducting myself. From very early on, I decided that I cannot become genuinely Norwegian. I am doomed to remain a rootless cosmopolitan, and this country is generous enough to accept that. As for him, while he now has a good job in the United States, paying well, and a girlfriend there as well, I think he can never become a genuine American. A big part of him is Norwegian, and I think his heart is in this country. I think he probably fancies very much, at some stage in his career, to return.

***I wonder if I could ask you about your personal feelings concerning the United States. Many PRIOites have double feelings about that country. The institute has its origin in very strong criticism of the United States as an imperialist and war-prone power. The Vietnam War accentuated that, the war in Iraq the same, and now there is a fear of a US war against Iran or even China.***

***On the other hand, the United States is the homeland of our main research partners, almost matching Sweden as our best research connection. We see the conferences held by the US-based International Studies Association (ISA) as the main place to meet up with colleagues and test our research findings. How have your feelings towards the United States developed over the years, and how do you assess the American presidents that have served in your time?***

I arrived at PRIO during the Bill Clinton period (1993–2001). It was a legend at PRIO that in his youth Clinton had visited our institute. So, at that moment we had a perception that with this president the United States could become a powerful contributor to conflict management in the right way, a hope that US policy could be intoned with the PRIO mandate for peace making. It felt natural to build close research connections with the United States, and the creation of our Centre of Excellence facilitated those connections.

As far as international relations are concerned, the strongest academic institutions are in the United States. You may call it our peer review environment. We judge the value of an article, a project or even other activities on how it is evaluated in the United States. If it is strong enough to make a difference there, if it is really noticed there, appreciated there, we feel that our work is being recognized. I value my connections with Brookings and some other US think-tanks very much. I see them as beneficial for PRIO, strengthening our international profile.

***And who is the best president the United States has had since the 1970s?***

I would still give my vote to Barack Obama (2009–17) even though he disappointed in many ways. You may argue that Trump’s election in 2016 was a consequence of the Obama presidency, of the deep hostility generated among many American voters by Obama’s coming to power. Yet I would not blame him for this.

I think [Putin] is a disaster for Russia. He is taking Russia into a dangerous dead-end. He presides not only over Russia’s decline, but possibly over its demise.

I do remember, at the very start of Obama’s presidency, that I was asked what he would concentrate on during his first 100 days. I said he would seek ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Yet it never happened. The US Senate has still not ratified it today. I do not think it was a good idea to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Obama at the very start of his presidency. Nevertheless, I think he probably deserved the prize.

***Since we are talking about presidents, could you express your feelings towards Vladimir Putin?***

I think he is a disaster for Russia. He is taking Russia into a dangerous dead-end. He presides not only over Russia’s decline, but possibly over its demise. I worry about Russia’s trajectory under his leadership, and I hold him responsible.

## **A Military in Trouble**

***When you came to PRIO you were a Soviet expert on the west, but not really an expert on Russia or the Soviet Union. How did you change your research profile after you had come to PRIO?***

Well, it was a period of catastrophic change. We all have to evolve. When everything changes beyond recognition around us, it is impossible to stay on the same track. Reinventing myself was natural and also interesting.

One obvious topic for me was the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the conflicts that erupted in its wake. All in all, the collapse was remarkably

peaceful, astonishingly peaceful I would say, but the Caucasus became the area where all sorts of small conflicts tended to ignite one another in a kind of chain reaction. This was a relevant topic for PRIO. The Balkans was for me a foreign territory, but I felt that with my knowledge of the Caucasus and my ability to draw on connections there I could deliver some insights.

For me, another topic I could study from a certain level of competence was the Russian military, which was also a prime instrument in the conflicts of the Caucasus and at the same time was shrinking and going through a colossal identity crisis. That change in itself was so interesting that it became the main topic of my first book.

***Could you interview your father about the Russian military?***

Of course. I discussed many things with him. The whole family, on the male side at least, had strong connections with the military. My two grandfathers were in the military, my father was a military intelligence officer, my brother was a young captain back then. My cousin was in the navy. So, as far as first-hand sources were concerned, I had no shortage. But for many of them the shock of the Soviet military's decline was profound, even bitter. My cousin was not able to take it—he died very young.

***Can you tell a little bit about your first book?***

It was called *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* and was mostly written in 1996. It took a couple more years to complete it though, because I was involved with *Security Dialogue*. I studied the Russian army's retreat from Eastern Europe, its painful reforms and contraction, and its engagement in several armed conflicts from the former Yugoslavia to Tajikistan.

I think my research topic really demanded attention. If you look inside the cover of the book, you will see that I dedicated it: "To my grandfathers, who both were colonels in the Soviet Army. To my father, Captain of the First Rank (ret.). To my brother, Captain in the Russian Army. And to my son, who will—I hope—choose a different career". This book was my first big accomplishment at PRIO, and it helped me get a permanent position. After that I became a Norwegian citizen, and after that again I became a research professor. So, these were steps up in my career, and important landmarks in my life.

***Was it evident to you that you would apply for Norwegian citizenship, or was it painful in any way?***

It was not painful at all. By that time, it was quite natural. Our little family had settled happily here.

***So, Olga is also now a Norwegian citizen?***

Yes, of course.

***And your mother-in-law now lives with you here?***

Yes, she has moved in with us. She is a lady of mature age. She cannot really manage on her own in Moscow.

***Your first book also impressed the Norwegian Ministry of Defence. They showed a strong interest in your knowledge about the Russian military, so they funded many of your projects at PRIO. How was it to work for the Ministry of Defence in a different country from the one you had grown up in?***

It was interesting. I was surprised by the flexibility of the Norwegian Ministry of Defence. How open it was to discuss new ideas. How open-minded the bureaucrats were in comparison with the ones I had known.

While they also operated in uniform, and certainly respected discipline, they never really tried to prescribe anything. They funded my research and thus gave me the opportunity to do it, but they never tried to influence the outcome. That was, for me, something very important, and the same goes for PRIO. At the outset, receiving funding from the Ministry of Defence did not feel natural for my colleagues, but after a while, no one saw it as a problem.

## **Oil, Gas and Nuclear Modernization**

***Then you broadened your field of expertise to include the oil and gas sector.***

I became interested in that area when looking deeper into how Russian foreign and security policies are made. The instrument of oil and gas became just as important as military power. And this led to a quest for politicized control over the oil and gas business. I also found interesting opportunities for fundraising, which became a natural part of my research. Whatever brilliant ideas you have, you still need to make sure that there is a sound financial foundation underneath. That was something Hilde [Henriksen Waage] advised me to do. And that was PRIO policy under Dan [Smith]'s leadership. Whenever there is an interesting opening and you feel you can make a difference, I tend to go for it.

The Arctic became an interesting dimension in my research at the time when Artur Chilingarov famously planted a flag under the North Pole in 2007. It is not the same Arctic for me as for many environmentalists, ecologists and NGO activists. For me, the Arctic is interesting in terms of what it shows about Russian foreign and security policy. For the same reason, I have become interested in Russia-China relations, so I established a connection with you, Stein, so we could make several interesting trips to Asia together and write some joint articles.

And now I see an opportunity to return to nuclear matters. I see a deep contradiction between the ongoing nuclear modernization and strengthening of many features of nuclear deterrence systems and a strong political drive towards nuclear disarmament. Nuclear modernization and disarmament initiatives will have to coexist for many years to come. I think it will be interesting for PRIO to establish a forum where researchers engaged in nuclear modernization and disarmament can meet, interplay, and look for compromises.

***Do you also follow the North Korean question?***

I do, although Russia's involvement is disappointingly weak. Nevertheless, it is an area for which I have developed a lot of interest and I hope to be able to design some research projects, probably not specifically on North Korea, but on nuclear security matters in East Asia, with Russia as a part of the equation.

**Multidisciplinarity*****Do you identify yourself as belonging to one particular research discipline?***

I can probably say that International Relations is my discipline. I am not a great theorist; I cannot really design interesting mathematical models or build databases. So, for that matter I know the weaknesses of my research.

Very often, I also feel that the pressure of events is such that it is more important to write a short comment, a short memo with an impact factor, than to try to theorize and think it through while other events overtake your brilliant observations. How to combine the more fundamental and academic parts of research and the more current analysis is for me the most interesting challenge.

***When you came to PRIO you encountered a small environment, which has become much bigger, but it has always been multidisciplinary. You have met historians, legal specialists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, theologians as well.***

***Was this something you were used to? Has this been stimulating to you intellectually? Or would it have been better to work in a more specialist environment with people using similar methods and referring to the same theories?***

Multidisciplinarity came naturally for me. Besides the military research institute where I worked, I was familiar with several other institutes in Moscow as well, like the USA and Canada Institute, where I defended my PhD. They were always very multidisciplinary, with historians and cultural studies, and even literature. I think bringing together different perspectives is a huge advantage of PRIO and we should cultivate that further.

## **PRIO's Strengths and Weaknesses**

*How do you see the system of decision making at PRIO? Is it run effectively, is it participatory, does the leadership consult sufficiently with the staff? And how has this changed?*

It has certainly evolved. A system that worked for an institute of 25 people cannot be the same for 75 people, plus affiliated researchers and associates. It has evolved, and PRIO is now more structured—with real departments—than the PRIO I arrived to.

Decision making is done by the leadership group primarily, and not the Institute Council, as was the case when I arrived. Certainly, there are always some problems with decision, particularly with regard to hiring new staff. Some of the hiring was quite successful in my early days. Inger Skjelsbæk came and remained at PRIO for many years (see chap. 20). Henrik Syse and Greg Reichberg are still my colleagues. Some other decisions of this sort were probably less successful, and some of them were troublesome. So, PRIO now has a much more established recruitment policy, with more thorough and competitive processes.

Financial discipline is also something that is difficult to achieve, because fundraising is never easy. Its success is never guaranteed. We always take chances. We have to apply for much more than we can handle, and then suddenly we find ourselves overloaded, or underfunded.

But I think, all in all, that PRIO has managed to overcome most of its challenges, and I think the decision-making system has gone through an evolution in a remarkably conflict-free way, and become something we all agree to. The Institute Council has less decision-making power now, and this has become natural. Decision making is far smoother when it is done by a smaller group of people around the table, with long discussions in a tight milieu, than in a meeting of fifty people.

*What would you see as the biggest change that has happened at PRIO since you came in 1991/92?*

Size certainly matters. So, growth was probably the most important change. Now, when I say anywhere in Europe that “I work in a small research institute in Norway with about 75 people,” it is often a shock. The normal size of European research institutes is still some 15–20 people, 25 at best. Probably, we are as big as any European institution of this sort. We are not exactly a think-tank, and not exactly an academic institution. We are an interesting cross-breed, a mixture of several different traditions and patterns, and I think this is one of our main strengths.

We value our academic profile, that is one of our strengths. Connections with the International Studies Association. Our peer-review journals. At the same time, our policy orientation, which is the think-tank part of our activity, and engagement in the field in different ways. These are the main parts of PRIO's identity. I think they come together organically. They are drawn from different traditions of peace research, but have always coexisted and are never really in conflict.



***How influential do you think PRIO is in Norway and in the world?***

It is difficult for me to judge about Norway. I have always tried to keep a distance from policy making. But I think that PRIO has managed to connect with Norwegian decision making, particularly with the Foreign Ministry, probably less with the Parliament. That is a big difference, I feel, from for instance Washington, DC, where think-tanks have strong connections with the US Congress.

At the same time, PRIO's reputation is much stronger in the area of academic research. With the International Studies Association, our journals, and our strong heritage from the Centre of Excellence, we are able to carve out a very specific niche in several disciplines. Yet we are not so much engaged in international political decision-making. We are probably less involved in Brussels than NUPI, less able to influence EU and NATO decision-making. Maybe it is good to have that difference from other European think-tanks.

I think the EU bureaucracy in many ways is its own worst enemy. The ways in which it organizes its decision-making and funds research is so awkward, so cumbersome, and makes it so difficult to deliver on all the requirements and paperwork. It sometimes feels that it is not worth even trying.

So, I think PRIO has a strong enough profile, where it matters. The environment where we could probably have made a greater difference, with our size, is the peace research environment. I am not entirely satisfied with how the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) works, in how this whole family of peace-loving institutions connect with each other. There are certain weaknesses here, and often you encounter various identity crises. The connections, even with SIPRI, are not as strong as they should be.

**Going to Work at PRIO**

***One last question: could you try to describe your travel from home in the morning to PRIO? How you travel, what you think about, what you feel when you enter PRIO, where you enter, what the first things you do are, and how you start your work day?***

It is a very short journey. I live up the Holmenkollen hill, three minutes' walk from Gråkammen T-bane stasjon (metro station). Often I make a longer walk to Ris stasjon, just to have some exercise and clear my head. I love thinking while I walk. Typically, while walking I try to sort out what kind of problems the day has in store for me, what sort of surprises I may expect in my inbox. Then it is a 15-min ride on the T-bane to Oslo Sentralstasjon, and another three-minute walk to the backdoor of PRIO. I normally enter through the gate from the back, not through our main entrance. It is a little bit shorter.

I enter my office [...] generally with a very good feeling that life is interesting, life is great fun – that I expect something I never thought of to change my day beyond recognition.

I think one of the important impressions you get at PRIO is the smile that meets you from behind the reception. From Cathrine [Bye] or anyone else who works there. It immediately lifts the spirit of any visitor, gives a feeling of being welcome. I think that is an important part of our identity.

Then I register my arrival with my card, enter my office where we are sitting now, switch on the computer, generally with a very good feeling that life is interesting, life is great fun—that I expect something I never thought of to change my day beyond recognition. And there are always good colleagues around. PRIO feels particularly friendly and cheerful in the morning.

*Thank you very much, Pavel. (The interview was made before the Covid-19 pandemic forced Prioites to work from home.)*

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## Chapter 22

# Non-pacifist Philosophy in Good Faith: Henrik Syse



Interviewed by Trond Bakkevig



Henrik Syse in 2010 © Ingar Steinholt/PRIO

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My Christian faith was formed in an intellectual framework. I do not mean intellectual in the academic sense of the word. It was more that thought became part of my faith.

*This is what PRIO's first philosopher, Henrik Syse, tells PRIO's first pastor, Trond Bakkevig, in the beginning of the dialogue that follows—about faith, justice, reconciliation and PRIO as a home for peaceful thinking.*

**Trond Bakkevig:** *Henrik, when were you born?*

**Henrik Syse:** I was born April 19, 1966, just when the Beatles recorded Revolver and at a time when my father (Jan P. Syse, Member of Parliament 1973–1997 and Prime Minister of Norway 1989–1990) still had not entered politics full time. My parents had just moved to Uranienborg, which is in the western part of the inner city of Oslo. I grew up there, with my elder brother Christian, and my parents Else and Jan.

*And you went to Uranienborg elementary school?*

Yes, grades 1 to 6, 1972–1978. Then to KG, Kristelig Gymnasium, for six years, through high school. KG was a school with a strong Christian basis. Some might think it was somewhat narrow, and on top of that, it also recruited many students from the wealthier parts of Oslo. But it was more pluralistic than many probably thought and recruited students from all over the city. I had a good time there. Those years had a definite influence on what I have since been doing as a researcher and professor. It was a place where intellectual curiosity was nurtured. My teachers were genuinely interested in what I thought and meant, and discussions about important, existential questions were part of daily life—a place where we also lived well with disagreement.

## Faith and Early Thoughts

*Is that also where you became rooted in your very clear Christian faith?*

Yes, but then again, the words ‘very clear’ need to be nuanced: not because my faith is not real, but because what I arrived at was in many ways an intellectual framework. I do not mean intellectual in the *academic* sense of the word. It was more that *thought* became part of my faith. I came from a home where we did not often go to church. My mother came from a family where they often did, whereas my father’s family were members of the church, consciously—they were baptized and confirmed, and they had deep respect for the church—but it was not part of everyday life. So, Christian culture and faith was a kind of mother tongue around me, with for example evening prayers before I went to sleep, but at the same time not something I encountered institutionally all the time. That was my background.

At KG, I felt I had to relate more consciously to this background. In a way, KG forced this upon me, with such things as the school’s daily prayers: is this just superstition? Is it a kind of fairy tale? Is it indoctrination? Or is it a message that I have to respond to, which expresses a historical and metaphysical truth, or at least a

guide to truth? It was at that point I became aware that in this message there is much of what is most important to the lives we actually live.

Some of the teachers were quite conservative, both theologically and politically. They especially did not like the Labour Party, since it had for a long time been against independent schools like KG. My father thought it was a bit embarrassing when, at a parent-teacher meeting, they seemed to pray to God in thanks that the conservatives were voted into power. He was a conservative, who later became a prime minister, but I know he did not feel well during that prayer. In spite of this, there was room for different opinions at KG, both theologically and politically. And I learned many hymns and songs. We sang a lot. I am so happy to have that as part of my mental baggage.

***We should sing more!***

Yes, indeed! We had a small Christian songbook that we used every day. Some of the texts were somewhat naïve. But there is much that is valuable about them. I often hum hymns and songs to myself, which I learned back then.

## **Discovering Philosophy**

***Am I right in thinking that this was when you decided to study philosophy—against the background of this meeting between thought and faith?***

In many ways, yes. My brother read some philosophy for a university exam, I remember. I was 17, and with my background from high school, I looked at his books and thought: there must be something about St. Paul in these books. I had read his letter to the Romans at school, discussed it, and thought that *this* was philosophy. Think of what he says about the relationship between what you know you ought not to do, and what you actually do. But then I discovered that in the books on philosophy there was very little about the Bible or about explicitly religious topics. Yes, there was a chapter about St. Augustine and the medieval thinkers. I learned more about this later. My first impression, however, was of a philosophy almost without religion.

***And the textbooks by professor Arne Næss did not have much about religion?***

That's what I realized, too. There was really not much serious reflection about religion, or so at least it seemed to me. And it puzzled me. I thought there must be something here I need to find out more about. What is this relationship between philosophy and faith, between reason and religion? All of this became an important motivation for me to work on what we can broadly call philosophical questions. It did not mean that I had decided to become an academic philosopher, that was more coincidental. I had finished the introductory exam in philosophy, which was obligatory for everyone who would study at the university (*Examen Philosophicum*), but I had to wait more than a year before I could start my studies in the Russian language in the army, which I was planning to apply to.

One of my teachers at the University of Oslo, Arne Tuv, suggested that I use the time in between to study more philosophy: ‘Now that you have worked so diligently for your preparatory exams in philosophy, you’re already halfway there!’ I thought that was a brilliant idea, and I remember that first semester of philosophy—*grunnfag*, as they called the first year—as one of the finest experiences I have ever had. I could dig deeper, I tried to understand Hume’s empiricism, and worked a lot on St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. I saw that they opened up issues I thought were truly important—well, they are important, period—and I recognized that these were indeed all those questions we had discussed so intensely during the years at KG, and which helped me also explore the relationship between faith and reason. So, I studied philosophy up to the *mellomfag* (major) undergraduate level before I joined the army and studied Russian there, and later at the University from 1986 to 1988. Then I added English as my final subject, finishing my Bachelor’s degree right before my father became prime minister in 1989, and I had to leave my position as chair of the Oslo chapter of the young conservatives (Oslo Unge Høyre) because Hanna and I were going to study in the US. That was in August 1989.

Hanna and I had actually got married that summer, and we went on what we later have called our two-year honeymoon. We left for the US—she to study English, and I to study philosophy and politics. We could have been at Columbia University in New York, where we were admitted, but decided on another university, Boston College, because of the programmes and courses they had, which fit us really well. I followed a programme in political science, with emphasis on political theory. In reality, I more or less finished a Master’s programme in philosophy, even though it was in the Department of Political Science. Boston College was a Jesuit university, but the political science department was heavily influenced by the students of the secular Jewish philosopher Leo Strauss (1899–1973). This opened for many interesting discussions.

I learned a lot from the close reading of texts, which was very much emphasized there. I got to know Plato and Aristotle, but I admit that I regret to this day that I did not take the time to learn classical Greek. I learned some of it when I returned to Oslo, and have worked quite a lot on the philosophical terminology, but I have mostly had to rely on translations. Anyway, it was a wonderful time where I really got to wrestle with important texts, and not least with the relationship between politics, philosophy and religion—those topics that had followed me since KG.

Back in Oslo, I was admitted into an interdisciplinary doctoral programme in ethics under the umbrella of the Research Council of Norway. It must have been one of the most valuable programmes ever in Norwegian higher education, with interdisciplinary courses combined with a solid foundation in moral philosophy, chaired by the wonderful philosophy professor Dagfinn Føllesdal, on whom I am just now co-writing an academic article for a Norwegian philosophy journal, centring on exactly the Ethics programme.

I finished my doctoral thesis in 1997. My good friend Tom Eide, who was the leader of the secretariat of the programme, was in touch with Dan Smith, who at that time was Director at PRIO. Dan had told him that they had started a new project on international ethics and the ethics of war at PRIO. At this time, only Dan and Mona Fixdal, who is still doing valuable research in this field, were involved. They had

some funds from the Ministry of Defence and needed a senior researcher. ‘For one year’, Dan said, ‘then we will see’. At that time, I still had not even defended my thesis. And that’s how I came to PRIO.

## Theology and Philosophy

### *Let us pause for a moment: what was your thesis about?*

It was about the idea of natural law, that is, the idea that morality and politics have their basis not merely in human will, but in laws and patterns that are natural or at least independent of mere human volition. This was a topic I had started working on in the US. I had several teachers who were deeply fascinated by the question of whether morality, or ethics, has a foundation outside of human agreements and contracts. The most important one was probably Ernest Fortin, who was a theologian, an Augustinian monk, actually. His research and teachings were situated at the crossroads of theology, philosophy and political science. He taught much political theory and was inspired not least by a book by Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1953). He had known Strauss quite well.

Do we need to return to the classics, the ‘ancients’? Did they have an insight into right and wrong that we have lost, and are we within modernity developing a kind of deep-seated relativism, which in turn gives us no power to resist the authoritarian and the totalitarian? Or is it the other way around?

Strauss’s main thesis is that in the West and in modern liberalism, there is a break within the tradition of natural law, with far-reaching consequences for all of western politics and philosophy. In the original natural law tradition from Plato and Aristotle, they struggled to find the preconditions for knowing what is right and what is wrong. Theologically, this was continued within Christianity, especially with Thomas Aquinas, who ultimately thought of natural law as a law coming from God. Then came Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other thinkers in early liberalism, who inverted this and turned natural law into a concept of natural rights that humans possess as individuals. Even though it is presented by them as a kind of continuation, the modern, liberal version of the classical thinking around natural law—which developed into such milestones as the US Declaration of Independence, modern democracy and the UN Declaration of Human Rights—in reality represents a radical break, according to Strauss and Fortin.

The question today is how we deal with this break, and even whether it actually is a break. Has it been a resounding success, which is how a Steven Pinker would talk about the Enlightenment and modern, natural science? Or, has it led to totalitarian catastrophes, and moral and political crises? Do we need to return to the classics,

the ‘ancients’? Did they have an insight into right and wrong that we have lost, and are we within modernity developing a kind of deep-seated relativism, which in turn gives us no power to resist the authoritarian and the totalitarian? Or is it the other way around: does this modern version of natural law protect humanity and freedom, while the older forms of thinking were superstitious and authoritarian?

To Strauss, the fallacy of believing in the modern model became evident in light of Nazism. Before the Second World War, he had corresponded and interacted with the famous lawyer Carl Schmitt, who became a supporter of the Nazi party. If you do as Hobbes and Locke did, and separate natural rights from a larger body of law, making them the property of the individual, you enter the road towards total relativism, said Strauss. The result is a Hitler or a Stalin, who promises to fulfil all human wishes and needs. The point of someone like Leo Strauss is that we have lost the philosophical protection against this. This was the ‘rallying cry’ of students of Strauss, and it remains so to this day: ‘return to the ancients’. This way of understanding the history of ideas was different from what I had learned at the University of Oslo. I had not really dealt with these questions in this kind of way.

But, the weakness in Strauss’ thinking is that it essentially sees the classics, Plato and Aristotle, as representing a kind of thinking where we gain insight into right and wrong through philosophical rationality alone. And the underlying danger, hinted at by Strauss, is that philosophers might find out that it is not possible to find out what is right and wrong after all, but they have to hide this dangerous insight from the people.

The more optimistic version of the ‘return to the ancients’ argument says that philosophers, through dialogue, through philosophy, and through nurturing virtues, can tell society how to organize and how life can be lived—that classical philosophy is the way to gain insight into what is righteous and good. Hence, we must return to their wisdom and leave behind the relativism of modernity. Many students of Strauss, however, see this as only his surface teaching—that he was actually more pessimistic, and that we therefore have to leave it to philosophers to rule society, since they are the ones who can protect us from dangerous truths.

Strauss and his students have had much influence, especially in the US, emphasizing the point of view that philosophy is basically the rational study of the world, whether that rationality succeeds or not. The consequence is that there is a fundamental contradiction not only between ancients and moderns, but also between philosophy on the one side, and faith and revelation on the other. According to this way of thinking, to open oneself to religious revelation is the same as submitting to a divine truth, which is superior to human truth and rationality. That, according to Strauss, leaves no room for real philosophy. Strauss held that the big, truly formative intellectual and spiritual struggle in the history of Europe is the one between Athens and Jerusalem. He says that you cannot be both a philosopher and a theologian—you have to make a choice. That tension constitutes the lifeblood and core of European thought.



I thought: ‘This is not satisfying’. It was like the first time I saw books on philosophy. Should we not instead take seriously the human experience of being part of a larger reality, indeed, that life itself is a revelation? Thomas Aquinas called it ‘natural revelation’. We cannot just put all of that—faith, spirituality, the belief that there is a God—aside and say it is something totally different from philosophy, especially if philosophy ends up being some secret teaching of elite philosophers who must hide the real truth from the people.

A fellow student of mine at Boston College recommended that I read one of Strauss’ contemporaries, also a German immigrant, Eric Voegelin (1901–1985). He managed to flee Nazism and taught at Louisiana State University in the US. In the fifties and sixties, he also taught in Munich with my former, lovely office fellow at PRIO, Helga Hernes, as one of his students. Voegelin’s last years were spent at Stanford University. Voegelin had an important correspondence with Strauss, recorded in one of the finest books I know: *Faith and Political Philosophy* (1993). Voegelin said that we as humans find ourselves in a tension between the changeable and the unchangeable. He uses a platonic concept, *metaxy*, which means to be in the middle, in-between. To be a human is to live in the *metaxic* situation, in the tension between what is greater than we can grasp on the one hand, and concrete, physical reality on the other. In that tension between what we can sense of the eternal, of unchangeable principles, and the experience of living in a world where everything changes, is where we find ourselves as human beings, at all times.

I saw this way of reading the history of philosophy as having great depth: it’s not a history about humans thinking different things which are then laid on top of each other, it’s a history of humans meeting reality through experience at all times, and that includes the experience of the transcendent and the divine. If we look at the paintings in ancient caves and ask what experience is mirrored here, we will see that it is all about this meeting between myth and reality. The myths are, in other words, not the same as fairy tales: they are a search for truth.

After these philosophical encounters—after having read Strauss, Voegelin and Plato’s dialogues, and having read about natural law—I understood how complex, but also how important, the issue of natural law is: can we as humans gain insight into what is right and wrong in a world where so much is contingent and changeable? Can we have insight into what is changeable—or what is eternal? Do the ancients and for that matter the medievals view this completely differently from how we do in modernity? Is there a ‘break’, and if so, what does that consist in? I originally wished to write a dissertation on medieval philosophy, but if so, I would have had to spend years learning Latin. I did not have time for that with the kind of scholarship I had, so I decided to write about Thomas Hobbes and John Locke and use their English-language texts. I used what I had learned about Greece and the Middle Ages to mirror that and to deepen my understanding of what their natural law philosophy actually says.

I wrote a dissertation I am fairly proud of, although it could obviously have been better. It did come out as a book some years later (*Natural Law, Religion, and Rights*, South Bend, 2007). Maybe it wasn’t directly relevant for my later work at PRIO, but at the same time, many of these thinkers had formulated crucial ideas about

wars, asking whether they could be just and in conformity with natural law. And that became an important part of my work at PRIO. Many of those who come from the natural law tradition indeed contributed to formulating what we today call just war theory: Plato, Cicero, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hugo Grotius, John Locke ...

And what Dan Smith and Mona Fixdal really wanted to find out is whether this language and framework could be used to analyze current conflicts. So this is how I came to PRIO, and how my philosophizing on natural law and right and wrong finally came to practical use.

***Yes, there is a continuity here, the relationship to international law, Hugo Grotius and ...***

Yes, and this is indeed what I have been working on at PRIO. Dan Smith could tell you more about this. His thesis was that the Balkan wars in the 1990s were a crisis in Europe, a moral crisis. After the end of the Cold War, we did not handle the underlying tensions in the Balkans in a way that saved human lives, within a moral and legal framework, a framework which could also tell us whether there are circumstances where it is right and justified to use armed force, and, if so, what are right and wrong actions in war. Dan's thesis was that this is a moral issue—it's not only a question of politics and international law.

When politicians and political scientists do not know the language of ethics, there is an imminent danger. They may know international law and even the Geneva Conventions, but issues like the *ius ad bellum*, whether it can be right to use force, require a genuine moral debate—and the reasoning behind all the conventions need to be examined. Dan thought PRIO should engage in these kinds of issues, maybe even find an academic niche. He said, in short, that the discussions about a possible armed intervention in the Balkans were in reality of a moral nature, but politicians did not use this kind of language—or if they did, they did it very badly.

When politicians and political scientists do not know the language of ethics, there is an imminent danger. They may know international law and even the Geneva Conventions, but issues like the *ius ad bellum*, whether it can be right to use force, require a genuine moral debate...

The core idea of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and more broadly the tradition of natural law, is that there are some common standards that need to be understood and obeyed in order to protect human dignity. If holocausts, world wars and the nuclear bomb are not to ravage the world again, we must agree on certain norms. Hence, there is a close relationship between the tradition of natural law, across the centuries, and international law. Hugo Grotius expresses this most clearly, right at the dividing line between the classic and the modern, between Thomas Aquinas and Thomas Hobbes, so to speak. And he formulated many of the standards of international law that we build on today.

I really enjoyed working on this. There is indeed a continuity for me from KG to PRIO. But, if anyone had asked me in December 1996 if I was going to be at PRIO and work on these issues, I would have doubted it very much. But, when the telephone rang that second week of January 1997, I thought, 'yes, absolutely, wonderful'. Then again, I never thought I would stay here so long.

## A Philosopher Among Social Scientists

*And, how was it, as a philosopher, to enter an institution so much shaped by the social sciences?*

From the first minute I felt that PRIO, much thanks to Dan Smith and Hilde Henriksen Waage and several others, is a place where people are curious and open-minded, and that they were grateful for taking part in philosophical discussions. Afterwards, I got to know that there had been some internal discussions about inviting me in. I still had not defended my thesis, but Nils Petter Gleditsch had read one of the chapters, on Thomas Aquinas, and concluded that, yes, we want to have this kind of thinking at PRIO.

To me, one of the best things at PRIO is that we have these professional tensions. My colleague in the field of philosophy, Greg Reichberg, and I say to each other that we understand fully less than half the articles in the *Journal of Peace Research*. We do not understand what this or that graph is meant to illustrate or what its formula means. We can read graphs, but do not understand the method or the significance. This is also a question about the relationship between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Nils Petter Gleditsch will insist that the quantitative comes before the qualitative, at least chronologically, since you cannot have a discussion about qualitative issues before you know what you are discussing. Some of us will, however, say that for fundamental philosophical and terminological reasons, the qualitative work must come first. But, I have always felt that at PRIO, there is an openness and curiosity around these issues, and I have always felt pride in being at an institute encompassing both positions and fostering debate between them.

## Non-pacifist Peace Research

*Then, the question I am quite sure you have anticipated: there were not many members of the Conservative Party (Høyre) in the staff of PRIO at that time?*

Probably true! As for myself, I was active in the youth chapter of the party, and chaired the Oslo organization (Oslo Unge Høyre) from 1988–1989. When we returned from the US, I became a member of a local, municipal governing body, and served on some committees here and there. I was a proud son of my father, and represented

what I guess I would call moderate, internationally oriented conservative points of view. But I was not an active politician by any means.

Anyway, was this somewhat contrary to dominant political points of view at PRIO? Well, coming to PRIO for the first time, the first person I met was a friend from the student and youth organizations of the Conservative Party (Else Marie Brodshaug)! She was finishing her Master's degree with Nils Petter as her supervisor. I thought, 'If she's here, I can be here, too'. Professor Bernt Hagtvet, a member of the PRIO board back then, said that when a Syse comes to PRIO, then peace has come to Norway. Funny! But I very soon discovered that people at PRIO were not only curious about politics, but also about philosophy, and that there was a wide variety of political views. And there were wonderful people there. I could mention so many, so just mentioning a few feels wrong. But I just must include my many conversations with Hilde (Henriksen Waage) and the language lessons with our beautiful language teacher-in-residence, Karenanne (Bugge), who was already then well above 70—well, those are stellar memories of human warmth and friendship.

I also discovered that it was possible to work on the ethics of war and international law from a non-pacifist point of view. Greg Reichberg, who has become a fantastic friend and colleague, came to PRIO for the same reasons I did. I had recommended him to Dan and PRIO after getting to know him through another good friend, Professor Torstein Tollefsen, who teaches medieval philosophy at the University of Oslo, and he came to PRIO in 1998. For some years after that, Greg and I ran a seminar on military ethics, which also came to include the Norwegian Military Academy at Linderud (Krigsskolen). Retired generals participated, together with active-duty officers from the Army—and PRIO veterans. I remember it as a great time for truly wide-ranging and thorough discussions. PRIO was and remains a place for curiosity and thinking—also about issues that were not directly related to war, but which could have implications for peace and war, like trade. I have always felt not only that I was welcome at PRIO, but that I am part of it.

***And in addition to your political orientation, you are married to a lecturer at the Military Academy?***

Well, Hanna used to be there, from 1994 to 2006. Now she works in the Ministry of Defence. I always thought it was cool that she was at what we in Norway call the War School while I was at the Peace Institute.

***And the point is that concern for peace can at the same time mean support for armed defence?***

To me, it is necessary to combine support for armed defence and concern for the right and morally defensible use of force, with a deep concern for maintaining peace, and with the insistence that the use of force must have ethical legitimation. I believe that the Second World War and the threat from communism demonstrated the necessity of armed defence. At the same time, armed force can be misused terribly and lead to enormous suffering. But the need to defend oneself and one's nation and the rule of law, even with arms, can live side by side with a strong commitment to peace.

For me, not least as a current member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee (from 2015 to 2020), it is interesting to know that Alfred Nobel, who was not a philosopher but who was deeply engaged with questions of war and peace, earned his fortune on the production of explosives and bombs. He decided that part of his enormous fortune should be used for a prize to those who promoted disarmament and elimination of armies. He seems to have believed that arms were a precondition for peace. Until trust was built, one had to deter and be able to defend oneself. But the goal is disarmament. That's a consistent position.

But pacifism always stands there as a moral challenge to those who are prepared to defend themselves with arms—just like doubt is a challenge to the believer. I believe that the basic values PRIO is built on are a constant challenge to guide our research towards preconditions for peace. Those basic values—to be international, to be interdisciplinary, and even more basically: to believe in the value of peace—will always guide what kind of research we delve into. Issues related to conflict and peace are literally issues of life and death. Our research can therefore never be totally neutral.

***How would you then describe the relationship between this normative basis and the ideal that research should be free?***

I believe that is a tension we have to live with—all the time. Norms guide us to the research questions we engage in. Even Max Weber and his so-called value-free science demonstrated that this was the case: what does the researcher decide to read, what does he or she assess as interesting, and what do we think are important questions? These issues are guided by values. We must be conscious about this, and openly express what our values are. Research should always be free, open, and not guided by personal or hidden interests, but we need to communicate and explain what kind of research we do, and why we do it. My normative points of view will always be there when I decide what to do, but our research should never for that reason be programmatic or opinionated.

## **Religion for and Against War**

***Let us move on to your own research. Much of it has been concentrated on religion, politics and war. Can religion cause war?***

Yes, it can. In 2014, Greg Reichberg, Nicole Hartwell and I published an anthology as part of a project supported by the Research Council of Norway. Together with some of the world's leading experts, we looked at what the most important religious traditions say about the ethics of war. What do their texts actually express? How have their traditions developed? We wanted to get behind what popular opinion says about how different religions relate to violence and war. And the answer to your question is, I'm afraid, yes. I say, 'I'm afraid', since as someone who considers himself religious, I wish I could say: 'It is not religion that creates war and conflict, it is human beings;

they twist religion, and use it as ideology'. That may often be true, but there are many instances in history where we have to admit that religion has been at least a motivation for war.

I wish I could say: 'It is not religion that creates war and conflict, it is human beings;' [...] All of us should ask: what is it in our religious tradition that has contributed to war? What is it in our tradition that is unethical? How should we deal with such texts in a serious way?

Yet we have to add two factors to this. The first is that we have to be careful not to declare monocausal reasons for what happens. In other words, religion does not need to be the single reason for war, or the decisive cause. It can be a supplementary factor, or it may have contributed to dynamics driving or intensifying conflict. Those same wars could have happened without religion. In the course of world history, it is often difficult to separate religion from politics. The other thing we must remember is that religion in many situations has also limited conflict or even hindered war. That has been the case not least when religion has relativized politics by reminding us that the most important questions are *not* those driving us towards war and conflict. There are more important issues in the world.

In addition to all of this, we know that religious thinking has contributed to international law. Much of the framework for our current Laws of Armed Conflict, including the Geneva Conventions, was provided by thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas and Hugo Grotius. This has definitely limited the destruction of war. So, there are two sides to this—as you, Trond, well know.

***Yes, but you are the one being interviewed!***

Yes, but you may have something to say against what I say.

***Yes, maybe—my experience is that many current religious dialogues are attempts at convincing each other that 'my' religion really wants peace. Very few dialogues are about that which in 'my' holy book, or in 'my' texts, actually promotes violence and war.***

I do agree. I made that as a rule of thumb in the summer of 2014 when we were in Jerusalem to present this anthology. There was unrest there then.

***The Gaza war was about to start.***

Precisely. When we landed in Tel Aviv, they talked about missiles that could reach the airport. Greg and I discussed how we could present our book in both East and West Jerusalem in this situation. This was the first time we had officially presented the book, and we expressed ourselves thus: if you find something in your own religious tradition, your own religious texts, your own religious books, which you are proud of and regard as furthering peace, then you can be sure that others have a parallel in their traditions or texts. There are many differences, but this is still true. And vice

versa: if you react strongly against something in the texts or traditions of others, you can be quite sure that you will find the same or something similar in your own. Religions have throughout history played different roles. They have solidified power and they have challenged power, across religious divides.

All of us should ask: what is it in our religious tradition that has contributed to war? What is it in our tradition that is unethical? How should we deal with such texts in a serious way? The introduction to the anthology, which I wrote with Nicole Hartwell, is about this. But we also have to look at the context in which the texts were written. If not, such an exercise may only end in useless self-flagellation.

## **The Power of Texts**

### *But what role do texts play in real life?*

Prior to the last few centuries, most people could not read. Texts have been transmitted to them by others. Speeches given on occasions of war in the Middle Ages, speeches given to encourage and inspire warriors, used only adapted parts of texts. Speeches by European kings often had a limited relationship to Biblical texts. But what is important about texts, is that you may return to them and ask what was said at the time, and what do we see or know now, at our point in history. Could the same texts be used to resist current politicians' use of them to legitimize wars? Critical and nuanced studies of texts are important in order to be able to correct and challenge contemporary opinions.

When I teach just war theory, I tell students that they may not end up knowing exactly what is right or wrong in questions of war and peace. Many moral questions are genuinely difficult. But, I tell them, 'you need to be good at asking questions, good questions, so that when you meet a politician who says that this or that is unquestionably right in the light of our tradition, you can ask: "is it? Are you sure?" And if the politician says that this or that text says so, you may correct or nuance it, or ask critical questions'. Critical reading of texts is extremely important.

## **Norms and Presidents**

### *Yes, but what is the relationship between those who read and those who have power?*

Ahhh, an old and big question. Machiavelli understood himself as a counsellor since the king or the prince—or the president—never had time to read. The philosopher, the author, the interpreter of texts or the priest had to tell him what the texts say. This leaves considerable power to those who transmit what texts say. Hitler got a vulgar version of what Nietzsche said and many around him took that version very seriously.

Carl Schmitt, a very knowledgeable jurist, used his legal insights to legitimize what the Nazis did.

But there are also those who can nuance, revise, and challenge current opinions. I was once told about an adviser in the White House who had written a doctoral thesis on just war issues. In the autumn of 1990, he was so frustrated that President George H. W. Bush seemed unable to convince people that they had a just cause in fighting Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait. The adviser then wrote a memo on ethics and just war, which was brought to President Bush. As a result of that, the President and his advisers immediately changed their language and used arguments and texts from the just war tradition—particularly in speaking to churches that were critical to the President’s policy against Iraq and Kuwait.

This is fascinating, not least because George H. W. Bush seemed to take ethical issues seriously. He knew that his position was problematic, many in Congress and among the US allies were doubtful, and at the same time he understood that the moral foundation was important. He used texts and traditions, such as those derived from Thomas Aquinas. The first Gulf War was very controversial, by all means. But the discussion around it demonstrates that political discussions can be strengthened if academics participate—not uncritically, and not by serving power, but by contributing a terminology that improves discussions.

***As when President Barack Obama gave his lecture after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize?***

Yes. That was interesting. I was teaching the ethics of war at Bjørknes University College, and we had our exam at the exact same time as he came to Oslo. I told my students that if that speech had been written for our exam, he would have received an A. The speech was masterfully eloquent and quite nuanced. He wrote much of it himself—on the plane across the Atlantic. By that speech, I would say he legitimized the prize he got, after all the controversy around it. It was indeed a speech that defended the use of force, and he spoke as the United States Commander in Chief, so it remains controversial to this day. But he also spoke strongly about the moral limits to waging war. I am, overall, not quite sure that he later lived up to what he said, though.

***Yes, this is often the problem with the relationship between ethics and politics.***

It is. And about Obama, one may say of his politics that it is ‘intellectual realpolitik’, but with a strong moral foundation. He should probably have used more of his Nobel speech, his strong commitment to rights and international law, in his last years as president. Among other things, I am thinking of the very controversial and widespread use of drones.

***Now we are into normative issues...***

Yes, this analysis definitely brings us into normative research. But it is also about the *communication* of normative research—to tell others what different traditions and arguments say, and to use that critically in politics and in the armed forces. I



have lectured in many military settings, often to soldiers. There, I very consciously communicate something normative.

Once, I got a compliment from an officer after I had spoken to soldiers and officers who literally the next day would depart for Afghanistan. This was after some soldiers who had been in Afghanistan infamously had said to a Norwegian magazine that they used expressions like ‘going to Valhalla’, and that it is ‘more fun to kill than to have sex’. The officer said to me, several years later, that he appreciated that his company heard my lecture on the last evening before leaving. He could later use words and expressions from my lecture when speaking to the soldiers in Afghanistan. He told me something along the lines of: ‘We spoke about virtues, not about Valhalla. We talked about who we are, what we are proud of, and how we can live up to our duties, as duty ethics requires of us, but not just for the sake of the duties per se, but so that we can act in accordance with our virtues, with who we want to be.’ He could use this kind of language partly because I had spoken to them the day before they left. That makes me proud to be a philosopher.

Back to your question. Yes, I am normative on behalf of a common foundation: international law, the Geneva Conventions, proper behaviour in war, but also on behalf of basic ethical ideals that call upon us to take good care of each other, and to be honest and caring even when the surroundings are tough.

You know this, as a theologian, that some sermons can be academic in the sense that you want to convey something you have read and used your intellect to understand, and that you therefore want others to learn or understand. At the same time, you want them to think about right and wrong, and give them something to build their lives on. In that sense, I am more of an Aron from the Old Testament story, the priest who could speak, than Moses, the great leader who brought his people through the desert. I am the one who teaches more than being any kind of prophet—or great thinker.

Being at PRIO and meeting people like Nils Petter Gleditsch, Scott Gates, Pavel Baev, Greg Reichberg, Torunn Tryggestad, Inger Skjelsbæk, Hilde Henriksen Waage, or Marta Bivand Erdal, to mention only a few impressive scholars—I could have mentioned so many more—I realize that I am probably not in their category with regard to original thinking. But I may be able to *communicate* deep thoughts and important teachings. I like that. I like being there between the normative and the research-based, between thinking and communication.

## Priests and Prophets

*And that reminds us of the relationship between a priest and a prophet.*

Yes, the priest has a different role than the prophet. Yet both have to speak the truth.

*And it is only afterwards one can see whether someone has been a prophet. One cannot appoint oneself.*

That is true. One should be on one’s guard once someone claims to be a prophet.

***So, maybe it could happen that you, in your role as an academic priest, sometimes will be thought of as a prophet?***

That was generously said. I myself do not believe that. But I believe that I can be among those who say things that people afterwards realize are important. That is the most satisfying thing about being a teacher: that I can communicate things that I know people may be thinking of twenty years later. We should challenge each other. Not everything should be like sweet honey to the ear—or is that the right expression? Well, what I mean is: not everything should be swallowed without friction.

I teach at Bjørknes University College here in Oslo, which PRIO has had a very fruitful collaboration with. There, I often use old texts—say, excerpts from Plato’s *Republic*, or his first *Alcibiades* dialogues. In the room I have 10 or 15 students who never thought they would be reading something like this. Suddenly, there are one or two whose eyes are opened. They see something they had never thought of. Some of them may even continue with studies or at least readings in philosophy. To introduce young men and women to that—well, that’s when I realize this work is certainly worth it.

***Do you read the Biblical Book of Joshua?***

No, but maybe we should. I remember it from my own reading of the Bible. Not least what happens after the fall of the walls of Jericho. We do sometimes discuss the ambivalence in how religious texts treat war and peace. Religious texts can be used as recipes for how to live, detached from their contexts in the wider bulk of texts or in history. That can be dangerous. What we must search for is, so to speak, the hermeneutical common thread—or the red thread—through these texts or scriptures, describing a movement from this world of chaos to the persons we ought to be and the world we should fight for. That is so crucial to biblical hermeneutics.

***Or is it possible to use the Book of Joshua as a recipe for how not to behave?***

It is like many biblical texts. You fight with them, and they portray the negative as well as the positive. Think of King David—placing Uriah in the front line so that he would be killed. David could then take Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, as his wife. At the same time, he is one of the heroes in Jewish and Christian history. That is the nature of these kinds of texts, written by people with different impressions and purposes. That holds even if we believe the texts are divinely inspired. This is why critical reading of religious texts is so important.

## **Gender**

***So, generally it is men who wage wars, and also write about the ethics of war and peace. Do you reflect on the gender dimensions of what we are discussing?***

I am forced to it. For different reasons. First, because I am privileged to be at PRIO, where gender research plays an important role. I have participated in some of it. I have

learnt a lot, especially from people like Inger Skjelsbæk and Torunn Tryggestad, as well as Helga Hernes, who for several years was my dear office mate (see Chaps. 14 and 20). I have learned that much of what I have taken for granted—why things are as they are, why some people have power and others not—are related to gender in some way or another. I have learned that one acts, consciously or unconsciously, in accordance with expectations that are related to one's gender. Think of the Middle East, and how many of the conflicts there, or in other places, are about—not only, but also—alpha-males trying to demonstrate how strong they are.

One of the things I do like most about the gender research here at PRIO is that it is so empirically solid, and therefore does not become primarily political or ideological. The gender researchers have also cooperated with and learned from the armed forces. My dear wife has actually been part of that, as senior adviser on gender issues in the Ministry of Defence, and that is a second reason I have been preoccupied with this. I am confronted with gender issues at home, intellectually and practically! Hanna and I even have four daughters!

This of course brings us to texts again, and to those who have written them: men! I remind my students that there are lots of people whose stories we simply do not hear or hear only indirectly. People who may have been great thinkers in their time. They may have had influence, but we do not read their thoughts directly because they did not write or take up leading positions. Their voices are not readily available to us; we have to dig them out.

In an anthology Greg Reichberg, Endre Begby and I edited about the most important texts on war (*The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings, Oxford, 2006*), we found a text by Christine of Pizan from around the year 1400. It is one of the best summaries of the ethics of war of that era. One of the things widows could do in order to have an income was to write. This was recognized and acknowledged. Usually it was poetry. Christine of Pizan decided to write about knights and war. For centuries, however, the structure of societies was such that women could hardly make themselves heard.

The next question is whether there is something essential with men, biologically, which makes them behave differently from women, and whether war and conflict are grounded in this. I am agnostic about this. It is a complicated area, filled with different viewpoints. We need wide and open debates about these issues. But above all, the turn to gender research as part of research on peace and conflict is important and right. It is a weakness in the tradition that there are too few female voices. There is no doubt about that.

***Yes, and people such as Dennis Mukwege in the DRC show us very clearly how sexualized violence becomes a weapon of conflict.***

Indeed. And that is what I remember from when I first met and discussed this with my good colleague Inger (Skjelsbæk) from my early days at PRIO: how sexualized violence has become a permanent feature of many wars, making it essentially into a weapon. It can be used as a deliberate war strategy, and it can be perpetrated with varying motives amid the brutality of war—amongst civilians, the military, and also

peacekeepers. Whatever the root causes, conflict-related sexual violence is a real and powerful weapon (see Chaps. 18 and 20).

This is important to us in the Nobel Committee, since we are committed to Alfred Nobel's will, which speaks of disarmament. I am of the opinion that the fight against sexualized violence in war is to fight for disarmament, since sexual violence is a weapon of war. This is what we also said in the announcement of the Committee when Mukwege and Nadia Murad received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. It is about reducing violence and abolishing a kind of weapon. Mukwege is one of those who has formulated this most clearly, in a way that builds on the realities of war.

***But then, we are on our way to your role in the Nobel Committee. And Bertha von Suttner.***

That is exciting ...

***... she is one of the prophets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, right?***

Yes. This is interesting since most of those who have done research on the life of Alfred Nobel agree that the Peace Prize would never have been instituted without her pressure. He was impressed and fascinated by her. They met only a few times, and we can sense that their relationship could have become closer, but it did not. On the other hand, the correspondence between them, not least her reports about contemporary discussions about peace, made a great impression on him.

After her time, women have had an increasingly important voice in political debates, and thereby have had a lasting impact on efforts to democratize our societies. This was important for the peace prize and peace work more generally. Bertha von Suttner saw and experienced that women do have an important and legitimate role in what at the time was known as peace congresses.

## **The Nobel Committee**

***Let us continue with Nobel. How is it to be at PRIO while at the same time a member of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee?***

As an academic, it is fantastic. It is like a hand in a glove. When I do my work for the Committee, it feels like continuing my daily work. I have to read a lot, and I never do that particular work at PRIO in order to keep to strict confidentiality rules. So, I do that at home. Lots of papers to read and demanding discussions—that is the essence of the work in practice. But through this, I am certainly enriched as a researcher. To people on the Committee who do not have the kind of day-to-day work I have, it is probably very demanding. On the other hand, it is good that not all members are specialists on international politics or do research on conflicts.

My membership has not caused any problems for me at PRIO. Before I said yes to the parliamentarians of the Conservative party who nominated me, I discussed it with my wife, my brother, and another good friend, plus with Kristian Berg Harpviken,

who was then PRIO's director. Kristian had no objections. I discussed it with him to be sure that it was not seen as problematic that a PRIO researcher sat on the Committee. He established a policy, which is still available on the PRIO Home Page, a 'disclaimer' which has functioned well—for him and for his successor, Henrik Urdal—and which says that there is no contact between my work on the committee and any of my PRIO work or my PRIO colleagues. I can only tell them about the prize after it has been announced—and then I can only say what is said publicly to justify the prize. And let me add: read that announcement carefully. There, in the details, you will find our justification.

Beyond that, I can say very little. This is the way it has to be. In short, I have to be very careful. I'll admit that the double role as a member and a peace researcher is not always without problems. The discussions in the Committee are not publicly available, and we do not tell who has been nominated or not. But of course, I give lectures on peace-related topics and meet many people all the time. I meet people from, say, Iran or Iraq the one day, Americans the next, and can be invited to a meeting in the Middle East the third. People look at my CV and discover that I am the vice chair of the Nobel Committee. Then they probably start interpreting things I say or hear what I say in light of my Nobel affiliation. This is unavoidable, so I have to be very conscious about what I say and do not say. However, I cannot and will not stop talking about foreign policy. If so, I could not do my job. Let me add that I feel extremely humble about being at PRIO and being a member of the Nobel Committee, because there are so many PRIO colleagues of mine who could and should have been on the committee rather than me. Goodness, I mean it, and it makes me so humble. (Editor's note: Henrik Syse served a full six-year term on the Nobel Committee, from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2020, the last four years as its vice chair.)

## **A Sunday School Teacher**

*We are approaching the end. And let me mention, you are also a Sunday school teacher in your local church. Maybe the most famous Sunday school teacher in Norway.*

That is kind of you to say. There are many who are involved in Sunday school work. I have had the fortune to be known as one because I sometimes speak about it.

*What is then the link between your work here, as a peace researcher, and Sunday school?*

There is no historic link here. Hanna and I came back from the US, and one Sunday we're in our local church. During the service, they asked if there was someone who could help with Sunday school. We did not have children at that time, but, perhaps because of that, we could do it. This has nothing to do with PRIO. But I have found that there is a connection, both there and when I travel the country

to give lectures or addresses. The connection is in my eagerness, as a researcher, to communicate insights to people outside our professional circles—to people who will never read what we write, who think that discussions among researchers are almost incomprehensible, but also deserve to hear what we believe is important. This is interesting and pedagogically challenging.

What I like most about Sunday school is to explore how complex issues can be communicated in such a way that children understand them—and especially, to link ethics and metaphysics. Metaphysics at its best tells us that your life and the lives of others are worthy and wanted. And Sunday school is about Bible texts, about understanding the world as created and multifarious—in short, about metaphysics. But it is therefore also about ethics: let us protect this diverse world and all those in it.

What I like most about Sunday school is to explore how complex issues can be communicated in such a way that children understand them – and especially, to link ethics and metaphysics. Metaphysics at its best tells us that your life and the lives of others are worthy and wanted.

I also emphasize that Jesus gives extra time to those who are on the outside. This is an incredibly important aspect of the New Testament texts. We are responsible for each other, and God is present as part of this world, even—or maybe especially—for the outsider. The underlying message is that the day you feel that everything is difficult, you are still not alone. I try to communicate this, while also avoiding making it just sweet and harmless—because this should challenge us.

***So, there are indeed links between this and your peace research?***

Yes, obviously. Well, not programmatic ones. In other words, I do not try to be a Sunday school teacher where I should not be one, and I am not a peace researcher in Sunday school. Fortunately, on that score, I very seldom meet people who are angry with me about mixing roles, but rather I often meet people who say: ‘Good for you that you are a Sunday school teacher.’ Through this, I think I bring my lectures and what I talk about closer to people. There are many who will say: ‘I did not even know that Sunday school still exists. But I remember I went to Sunday school, and there was this flannelgraph.’ Yes, we have one. Fine thing. Flannel cloth on which you can hang figures. Cute. Takes away distance. People can be a little nervous if they know I am a peace researcher, and a member of the Nobel Committee. But I am also a Sunday school teacher! That is less frightening.

Let me add, though, that I have deep respect for those of other faiths—or of no faith. I realize that we live in a world where many find faith to be problematic or strange. I do take that seriously. And also, I am often afraid that talking about faith can give the impression that you think you are somehow more holy and ethical than others. I am deeply humble about my own shortcomings and my own mistakes. I know there are people I have hurt or wronged in my life, as well as academic mistakes I

have made. Being a person of faith only makes me more regretful and humble in the face of that.

***A last question linked to what we have talked about. I know you are writing a book on ambivalence and ambiguity?***

Yes, very exciting stuff. This effort is born out of a philosophical and indeed ethical observation: namely, that in the most difficult questions we face, there are important arguments on both sides of a debate. Think of abortion, or for that matter, war. To insist on certain principles and the struggle to avoid relativism must not be the same as saying that one side is completely right, while the other is completely wrong. It is only through dialogue that we can find solutions, and very often compromises.

## **22nd of July 2011**

This book, which I hope to finish in 2021 or 2022, was born out of another project, about the terror that happened on the 22nd of July here in Norway. Two colleagues, Rojan Ezzati and Marta Bivand Erdal, wanted to apply for funds for a project, and they needed someone with a doctoral degree and sufficient research experience to stand as project leader and sign the application. They asked me and said that I probably did not need to do that much in practice, because it was already a well-staffed application. We composed a solid application, really, had several people from other institutions joining in, but frankly, I did not expect it to go through, because it was a brand-new project and it competed against so many others. But we got the funds—for four years. One of my tasks in the project was to formulate questions about the freedom of speech, the responsibility for speech, and how to combat extremism in light of the ideology that informed the July 22nd terrorist's actions.

To know when you should be ambivalent, and when you should not, is one of the most important things in this world. To be able to say that there is a moral boundary, that we cannot accept certain actions, but at the same time that we must have freedom of speech.

I learned then that that to know when you should be ambivalent, and when you should not, is one of the most important things in this world. To be able to say that there is a moral boundary, that we cannot accept certain actions, but at the same time that we must have freedom of speech is crucial. In the upbringing of children, we must make it clear that there are absolute boundaries for what we can do and say to others. But we have to combine this with an open and generous space for speech, a room where we listen and see nuances. One of the articles I wrote for the project was for a conference on Vaclav Havel's life and thoughts. When should we be open and ambivalent, and say, 'Well, maybe I am wrong?' And when must we stand firm

and allow for no compromise? I believe this is a key normative question, and even a question to us as researchers: what should we engage with? What do we need to take seriously? The name of the project was ‘NECORE’, short for ‘Negotiating Values: Collective Identities and Resilience after 22nd July’.

It is good to finish our conversation by talking about this project. Some time ago, I met some of our veteran researchers in the PRIO lobby. We talked about this place and said to each other that this is a good place to be. I am truly grateful for that. And now, I am learning from the younger researchers. Those who are born ten or twenty years after me. It is so good to learn from people who have read, understood, and talked about things that I have never heard or seen. NECORE has been truly educational for me. It has contributed to my humility—fortunately not humiliation, but the opposite, humility. That is very good.

***And this is how it is possible to take up a clear position and at the same time question things?***

Yes, I hope so. I believe that what we experienced on the 22nd of July and also during the recent terrorist incident in our neighbouring municipality of Bærum (a racially motivated murder and an attack on a mosque) demands of us that we are principled and clear about human dignity. At the same time, research has an extremely important role in asking open, curious, and critical questions. I thrive in that position, at least as long as I can occupy that position together with my wonderful colleagues.

***Then all that remains to be said is: Thank you!***

And from me: Thank you for very good questions!

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## Chapter 23

# Creating a Third Space in the Cyprus Conflict: Mete Hatay



Interviewed by Cindy Horst



Mete Hatay © PRIO Cyprus Centre

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Seeing victim become perpetrator, perpetrator become victim—seeing them change places depending on the situation—triggered a lot of questions in my mind...

Whatever you imagine for the future, you always construct it from the past. And you cannot say, 'let's put the past behind us and start now', because the property title still comes from the past. You cannot say: 'All right, I'm keeping the property, let's put the past behind us', you cannot do that. Rhetorically, of course, you have to start a new life, but in reality, you always have the past haunting you—physically as well as emotionally, both through legal means, and in how history is written.

In order to tackle these problems of the different pasts, and different visions, and different truths, we have aimed to prepare a third space for multiple perspectives. So that everybody can bring their perspectives and have a debate about it. So that we can strive to a certain compromised truth somehow. To help develop new strategies.

*Mete Hatay has worked at the PRIO Cyprus Centre (PCC) since its inception in 2005. The PCC functions as an independent, bi-communal centre committed to both research and dialogue. Its aim is to contribute to an informed public debate on key issues relevant to an eventual settlement of the Cyprus problem. The researchers attached to the Centre are both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as well as individuals of other nationalities.*

*Talking to Mete, I am again struck by the incredible value of experiential knowledge from contexts of war and oppression in peace research, as well as the ways in which traumatic experiences during violent conflict can inspire action towards social justice. Such experiential knowledge has inspired the founders of PRIO, who grew up during the Second World War, and it is also a real asset for the PCC.*

**Cindy Horst:** *Could you start by telling the story of your life, pretty much from the beginning?*

**Mete Hatay:** I was born in 1962 in the Republic of Cyprus, before the division of the island. I grew up in the enclaves, the Turkish Cypriot ghettos, which were established because of intercommunal fighting that had begun three years after the founding of the republic. The ghettos were spread around the island, covering around three percent, I think. Turkish Cypriots were then 20% of the population.

It was a bit like Gaza, but many smaller versions of Gaza, in different places. I spent my childhood in these ghettos, until I was 12 years old. We couldn't get out when I was small because of a siege for three and a half years between 1964 and 1968. No one could get out, and no one could get in, either. It was a contained space, like a camp.

I grew up in this environment, which was paradoxically a very happy childhood. I mean, as a child you don't fully understand what's happening around you. What I saw was that it was a small place—everyone supported each other, all the women in the neighbourhood were like mothers to us. All the fathers were soldiers, and you had this war communism going on. Everybody had the same amount of money, same ration cards to buy the bread.

We grew up in a camp with a sort of relative equality or egalitarianism imposed on us. For instance, the rents were the same. You couldn't rent out your house for a

higher price, because there were many displaced people who moved into this enclave. We were staying in my grandmother's house, four families in one house, for example. All the relatives were crowded into one house. My childhood was like that. For me it was happy, but of course I didn't know the other sides of the war.

You could hear now and again the guns and shooting. There were uniformed soldiers everywhere. I was too young to be conscripted, but I experienced the explosion of masculine military culture all around me. My father, my uncles, my cousins, they all became fighters, because that was the norm: being a man meant to carry a gun and become a hero for your community and defend your people. We grew up in that kind of environment. There were Turkish flags and Turkishness everywhere. And I didn't get to know a single Greek Cypriot until I went to London. Can you imagine? This is like 18 years.

We used to watch the Greek Cypriot kids from a distance. There was one apartment building in my neighbourhood, and we used to go on top of that and watch them playing football and everything. We were also obsessed with barricades and territory, so we developed games about borders, like trying to fly our kites over to the Greek Cypriot side without losing them.

The siege was lifted in 1968, and after that life was a bit easier. We used to go with our mothers and fathers outside the enclaves, for instance to do some shopping very quickly. But you never got to know anyone. Also, Greek Cypriots still couldn't enter the ghettos. It was an environment like that.

## The Cyprus Partition

Then 1974 happened, and we saw all the other tragedies happening to Greek Cypriots this time. On our side, there was a lot of joy when the Turkish army entered the city. But soon we started seeing lorries loaded with prisoners passing through our neighbourhood. I was twelve years old then, and I observed all this. Some of the lorries were also loaded with dead bodies. I saw planes bombing certain neighbourhoods. Wounded people. Both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. All this suffering that you observe, that you witness in the war.

After that, there was another period of looting. Turkish Cypriots got out of these ghettos, they moved from 3 to 30% of the island, and started looting everything. So that was the other tragedy. Growing up with all this, seeing victim become perpetrator, perpetrator become victim—seeing them change places depending on the situation—triggered a lot of questions in my mind. But of course, it wasn't a systematic thing.

I stayed for five years on the divided island after 1974. In these four, five years, what I observed was very interesting. We moved into a Greek school, for example. The previous school was a former matchbox factory, and from this matchbox factory we moved into a proper school with microscopes and a library and things like that. It was social mobility for all the Turkish Cypriots. They went from being a neglected little group to being the masters of all this loot that was left behind by the Greek Cypriots. And even our school was a looted place. Then we saw this former cigarette

factory, which belonged to a Greek Cypriot man, being turned into a parliament, and it is still used as a parliament.

Then, when I was 17, I went to study in London. I went to study hospitality management because tourism would be the future of the northern part of the island. Then I moved to Vienna for a while, and came back to Cyprus again in 1988. I was away for nine years or so, and the moment I stepped off the boat the police stopped me, because I hadn't done my military service. I had just come back to see my home and family and they immediately threw me into two years of compulsory service.

In many ways, it was the worst time of my life. I was also older than almost all the other conscripts and was used to living on my own. You're put in a room with another 40 guys, in this fascist environment where you can't ever ask 'why' and just have to say 'yes, sir'. Of course, militaries everywhere must be the same, but when it's compulsory and you're forced into it, it hurts more.

After I finished my military service, I didn't have the courage to go back to Europe and start again from the beginning. I stayed on and began working as the assistant manager in a formerly Greek Cypriot hotel, the Dome Hotel in Kyrenia. After several years, I became the hotel manager. I was there for almost 12 years, and during that time I started to observe how people live in their everyday lives with this de facto state, how they interact with its institutions and so on. It's supposed to be your new home, your new state, but it's always temporary. You work in a place, like the hotel where I worked, but this place doesn't really belong to you. It might belong to you later, or it might be given back to its Greek Cypriot owner. So you're in a permanent state of limbo, having a state that's not a state. That caused me to develop an interest in liminality and temporality.

Increasingly, I started reading and investigating more, and meanwhile I started teaching in the Tourism Department of Near East University. I began conducting independent research and writing in local newspapers and magazines. Gradually, I became well-known in the north for my investigative journalism. This was around 2000, but of course I should also talk about the background to this period. The 1990s was the time after the Soviet Union collapsed, the Berlin Wall came down, and initially in this post-Cold War period there was this enthusiasm on the part of the international community to solve conflicts all around the world.

This was when Cyprus also came onto the agenda of the international community. In the post-Soviet period, and also right after the Belfast agreement, the international community said 'OK, it's time for Cyprus to be solved'. And in that period, the US and the EU created a linkage politics, the plan being for Cyprus to be united and join the European Union and Turkey to get a date for negotiations on joining. And the US and EU started pushing for a solution. The negotiations were intensified. Civil society was motivated and started growing in north Cyprus.

## Becoming an Activist

During this time, Turkish Cypriots had two big crises. The local banks collapsed in 1999, and then in 2000 there was an economic crisis in Turkey that hit the north. The Turkish lira was devalued overnight. There were a lot of people in the streets striking or protesting against the government and Turkey. All these protests gradually turned into a peace movement in 2002, when Mr. Annan or Desoto—his good offices guy—dropped a peace plan on the table. This very soon became known as the Annan Plan.

Of course, this was while the people were demonstrating and everything, so that again fuelled the movement. And there were huge changes in Turkey. The Kemalist regime collapsed. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power. The AKP came with an EU agenda, which also included solving the Cyprus problem, and intentions to find a Belgian model for Cyprus. They were open and supportive of the peace movement in Cyprus, so the environment changed.

In 2001, I quit my job and became a full-time activist, collaborating a lot with Greek Cypriots, abroad or in the buffer zone area. We were preparing different ideas to solve the Cyprus Problem, having discussion platforms and so on. During this time, PRIO arrived in Cyprus. I think it was [Jan] Egeland's idea to help the process in Cyprus somehow.

First, PRIO sent someone from Norway in 1998 to establish a discussion group for people coming from different professions and backgrounds. You had politicians, businesspeople, teachers, and activists participating from both sides of the island to come up with alternative Track 2 ideas to support the Track 1 diplomacy. In 2000, PRIO sent Trond Jensen, who established another group called the Dialogue Forum. This was when PRIO opened an office right in the buffer zone with just Trond and his secretary.

Then we were invited in. I was then helping with logistics for the Uppsala Initiative run by Ann-Sofi Jakobsson in Cyprus. We were arranging four-party meetings between Turkey, Greece, Turkish Cypriots, and Greek Cypriots. The Dialogue Forum was parallel to that—somehow it was linked—so I got involved with PRIO more and started helping Jensen out in the north. Because the borders were not open yet, he could cross for a day until 5 o'clock in the evening, but he couldn't stay here. So we were helping him out in this isolated period.

After the UN presented the Annan Plan to the leaders, some of us from the Dialogue Forum sat down and came up with an idea for an information campaign about the plan. That was Yiouli Taki, a sociologist, Alexis Alexiou, Ayla Gürel, and me. We were inspired by the Good Friday agreement, and how they conducted their information campaign before the referendum. We asked Trond Jensen whether PRIO could help us with this project, to inform people before the referendum. Because we knew that the plan could be left orphaned or hijacked by politicians, and we expected there to be a lot of misinformation about the plan. So we got together.

We got support from PRIO—then under the directorship of Dan Smith—we got funding from the UNDP, and we got the blessing from all the diplomats on the

island. Also, the United Nations helped us to summarize the plan, because the plan was hundreds of pages and you couldn't expect ordinary people to read this plan. And it was changing all the time, because the process was still ongoing.

You had Annan Plan I, Annan Plan II, Annan Plan III, Annan Plan IV, Annan Plan V, yeah? Different stages. Then, meanwhile, in 2003, the borders were open, so the four of us could meet freely. We started using the PRIO office. Then Trond Jensen went back to Norway, and Ayla and Yiouli started managing the office in the buffer zone, so it became a local ownership in that sense.

This project was very successful. Soon everybody knew about what they called 'the green books'. We prepared a 20-page citizen guide for the Annan Plan with graphs and everything, explaining how the federal system is going to work, how the property issue will be solved, and so on. And in the north, we had television programmes for a year, two nights a week, explaining the plan to people. This included a programme where people would call and ask how the plan was going to affect their personal situation, because everybody had different expectations and different problems in relation to a solution. There were displaced people, non-displaced people, citizens who were Cypriot, citizens who were not Cypriot, non-citizens, and so on. Everybody had his or her own Cyprus problem. So, people would call in and ask questions on live TV programmes, and we would explain how the plan would affect them.

The good thing about the summary was that it was written by both sides together and with the input of the United Nations, so it was a common manuscript. It wasn't bits you select to convince Turkish Cypriots or selective bits that you take from the plan to convince Greek Cypriots. It wasn't a 'propaganda manuscript': it was an actual summary. It was convincing to have it. No one could challenge it, not those who were against the plan or those who were for the plan but were also exaggerating it.

Because some citizens saw the plan as the satanic verses, some citizens saw it as the bible. So, we had to come in between, to show what it really was and prepare people for the new changes. It took us almost one and a half years to do all these things. It was successful in the north, more than in the south. Because in the south the public space was immediately taken over by the officials, and they didn't allow Yiouli or Alexis to talk on TV or distribute booklets, have meetings and everything. But in the north, thank god, the atmosphere had changed. Both the government in northern Cyprus and in Turkey had changed. As I said, the AKP party was supporting a solution. The AKP party then was different than today's AKP party, of course.

Then, in the north, we had this campaign, an information campaign. We went to 58 different remote villages—we had television programmes, conferences, seminars, etc. Civil society really supported us, and all that support meant that voter turnout in the north was high. The yes vote was 65%, so it was a successful thing. After the collapse of the referendum, having only one side voting yes in the referendum, there was this pause. The international community didn't know what to do, because everything was linked, and this linkage was broken. They were expecting Cyprus to enter into Europe United, but the island was still divided.

Then, PRIO wanted to continue. During this period, Stein Tønnesson was the director of PRIO. He was as enthusiastic as us. Because he also knew how important impartial information is in conflict resolution. How things can be hijacked easily, and how certain established ‘truths’ can damage the whole process. Because there was all this smear campaigning during the referendum, during this polarized period, and there were ten different versions of the Annan Plan being presented by different sides. So, it was good to have this third space in a conflict area, the PRIO Cyprus Centre, to create a platform for more healthy debate. That was the idea. And we also requested to have a Centre like that.

## The PRIO Cyprus Centre

The Centre was established in 2005 with two Greek Cypriots—Yiannis Papadakis and Costa M. Constantinou—and two Turkish Cypriots—me and Ayla Gürel—as consultants on both sides, as well as one director from Norway, Gina [Lende], and one non-Cypriot office manager, Guido [Bonino]. Soon after, Olga Demetriou joined us, after Yiannis went back to university.

We tackled all the issues that had been demonized or securitized during the talks, and which became taboo things to talk about. Usually the liberal peace movements do not talk about triggering issues. We actually went into the controversial issues, you know? We aimed to open debates about certain things. Because both sides have to deal with a lot of denial, preventing them from seeing certain things and talking about them.

The past is always prevailing in the discussions. Whatever you imagine for the future, you always construct it from the past. And you cannot say, ‘let’s put the past behind us and start now’, because the property title still comes from the past. You cannot say to the Greek Cypriots: ‘All right, I’m keeping the property, let’s put the past behind us’, you cannot do that. Rhetorically, of course, you have to start a new life, but in reality, you always have the past haunting you—physically as well as emotionally, both through legal means, and in how history is written.

In order to tackle these problems of the different pasts, and different visions, and different truths, we didn’t say that we’re going to establish the actual truth, but at least we were aiming to prepare a third space for multiple perspectives.

So, we started concentrating on that. I wrote my report on north Cyprus’s demography, for example. It was a taboo subject to talk about demography, because one side insisted that immigration to the north is demographic engineering, and the other insisted that it was just a normal immigration. Writing about the politics of demography was taboo. In many ways it still is, though not as bad as before. And we realized after a while that our input in the discussion started changing the hegemonic narratives on both sides. Politicians and officials who had just been repeating the same lines for years suddenly couldn’t do that so freely. They could see that they could be challenged. First, those officials attacked us, both sides. But then, they had to tolerate

us. Now they have this antagonistic tolerance towards us, the officials. Because we don't follow their truths.

Creating a third space—everywhere, not in the limited ways I'm talking about—helped to increase the scope of debates; more quality debates started. We brought many people from abroad, we did many comparative studies with other conflict areas, we enabled Cypriots to see themselves as not being unique. There are a lot of similarities with some other places.

We published dozens of reports, and we established, in a way, a credible channel on Cyprus studies, on three main pillars: one, an academic pillar, with many of our studies published in academic journals, discussed in academic arenas. Two, a policy pillar, as we are constantly being consulted by members of the international community, diplomats on both sides and such. And the third pillar is public outreach, where we use television, interviews, programmes, documentaries, radio shows. We all write popular articles in the newspapers.

This information campaign, which started in 2002, turned into a Centre in 2005. It's a hybrid centre. I wouldn't call it a 100 percent research centre. I wouldn't call it a think-tank. I wouldn't call it an NGO. It's a mixture of everything. I think it's a unique experience. It is a project from outside, but it is very locally owned, as we decide on our managers, and we employ them—with the collaboration of PRIO, of course. So, there is a great deal of local ownership.

We set our own agendas. Many reports are co-authored. It is amazing to have a Greek Cypriot researcher and a Turkish Cypriot researcher writing an article or report together. Or the collaboration may be between someone from outside and someone local, because we have a huge local knowledge, but sometimes it can be too much detail, and you need an outsider to put it in context. We do a lot of comparative work nowadays, also regionally.

It's going to hopefully be a place for scholars from abroad to come and collaborate on local and regional issues. The advantage of Cyprus for research is that it's a part of the European Union, but it's also near to all these conflict areas. And all conflicts around the area anyways are connected to Cyprus somehow.

***Wow, great. Thanks. One of the things I was interested in hearing more about is when you said: 'In 2002, I quit my job and I became an activist', which sounded like it was a simple thing you just decided.***

***Could you tell me more about what you were thinking at the time: were there any particular triggers? What made you take what to me seems a big decision?***

As I said, it was a transition period. Everything was changing in the area. In Turkey, things were changing. The crises were there. And also, there was this feeling of being locked up in a place. And the prospect of the European Union was ahead of us. That train was leaving in two to three years' time. Of course, I had more experiences before with bi-communal groups in the 1990s, in the post-Soviet period and after the Berlin Wall collapsed. The leftist people were invited into these bi-communal talks more than before. The Cold War was over. The American-funded civil society and these kind of liberal peace gatherings started including the left as well. Not just



official representatives from both sides, but more persons who were opposing their own regimes. I met a lot of my Greek Cypriot friends in these meetings, so these kinds of gatherings were important for having access to the Greek Cypriot side, and to get to know some Greek Cypriot activists.

Of course, after a while, after that purpose was served, it didn't get anywhere because you become friends and after a while you don't produce more creative ideas. It is good to have debates, to have interaction, and then the creative ideas come. After a while you become good friends, and as I said the Americans were insisting on not talking about hot issues, like 'don't say occupation'. No, let the guy say occupation. All these—what they called 'sensitive'—words should be avoided. After a while, it just becomes friends meeting in the buffer zone or abroad.

So, I had about ten years of experience with these groups before 2002. Then, when the protests and so on started in 2002, I realized it was the turning point and it didn't mean anything to have a normal job, you know what I mean? Everybody realized that we were in this state of exception, and we had to finish that somehow. A lot of people joined, like Ayla quit her job, I quit my job, and it became more like a full-time activity to put pressure on the government. To gather people for the peace movement. It looked like a noble cause back then, and it was in a way.

It was one of the happiest periods in my life. Because you had a purpose, you were working towards something, achieving something. These small things first, then later when we succeeded in getting the government to open the gates, for example, after all these protests. It was like Euphoria, you know? Imagine after 30 years, all of a sudden, the checkpoints were open and you had flocks of people coming from the other side. It was a very interesting period.

## Who is 'the Other'?

*One other thing I'm really interested in is that you mentioned this was a collaborative effort with Greek Cypriots, as early as in the 1990s. But at the same time, when you started your story, you said that until you were 17 you never really met a Greek Cypriot, and that as a small boy, you were brought up with this idea that you had to defend your community and I guess also with particular enemy images.*

*So, what happened in that process? How did you make sense of who this 'other' was?*

I mean, I started reading. And living in England helped me a lot. While you are studying, you work in restaurants and everything, and I met many Greek Cypriot refugees there in London. So, I started hearing the other side of the stories. Like I met a guy, Demitrios, he was 67 years old and he was a waiter in a Jewish restaurant in Golders Green. He said he retired at the age of 60, went to live in Varosha [in Cyprus], and then after six months the Turkish army came, and he lost everything. Stories like that.

And I had a friend, Andreas, a photographer. I remember in the 1980s, when we were having a drink in the bar celebrating the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), how angry he got. Because we heard that they proclaimed a state in Cyprus in 1983. A couple of Turkish Cypriots said: ‘We have a state now!’, and he was so upset, and he didn’t talk to us for months. In a way, all this interaction in a neutral zone like London helped us to understand each other.

Then when I came back to Cyprus—I have other hobbies like making music—when I made my first CD in 1995, the music reflected all these changes. It was called ‘The Others in Me’, and it was a very Cypriot album. I had started questioning *Turkish* Cypriot-ness, and it was not just me. During that period, a lot of literary activities started questioning the idea that we live in a state taken away from other people. And also, the hope of getting recognized was gone by 1990. So then you start questioning.

You become like a diasporic person in your own homeland. The house you’re living in doesn’t belong to you. The state you call your own can dissolve anytime. So, you start looking for a homeland. In the old days, people used to migrate to Turkey for a homeland. As diaspora, you always have a nostalgia for homeland. In this period, we developed the notion of a united Cyprus as a homeland. Many poets and writers, we were all influenced by that, as well as people older than me. I had my contribution as well. So that changed me a lot. And a lot of people during that period. And we started pushing people—not pushing, trying to encourage people—to think about a united Cyprus more.

And as I said, there was the economic crisis. In Turkey, there was a war going on with the Kurds in the southeast, which had spill-over effects in Cyprus. You had more paranoia with the regime and everything. There was one journalist killed, a couple of bombs exploding. The establishment had started to panic, but also the opposition started to grow. This was changing, and people like me who were more liberal moved on to become more leftist.

*You describe it as a natural thing, but I still find it quite remarkable. On the one hand you need to be open enough to really listen to the other side’s arguments and listen to their grievances, and on the other you need a willingness to resist the criticism and accept the risks involved in having this position, right? I don’t know how exceptional it was at that time, but I’m sure there were plenty of people who totally disagreed with you engaging in this way.*

First, there was a lot of pressure, there were many attacks in the newspapers and the media. And the other thing: I quit my job, but it was intolerable after a while to work, because they sent me a letter saying ‘you have to stop doing these bi-communal meetings’, for example. I refused it. Then the civilian affairs office of the military asked me to come in. They didn’t do anything, but they were showing that they could do something if you push too much. The atmosphere was toxic. You do become a bit paranoid. Our phones were tapped, and sometimes there were civil police when we went to have meetings in villages, but also sometimes you can imagine these things.

*Yeah, so you have to be quite convinced that what you’re doing is the right thing.*

## A ‘Guerrilla Researcher’

Yes, exactly, exactly. I wasn’t alone. That was the good thing. You realize that it’s a mass movement, then you feel more secure in a way. Things look more doable to you when you have more support.

*And then you said that you also gradually moved to becoming an academic. What did that give you?*

I still don’t see myself as an academic in that sense.

*And you would also not identify yourself as a peace researcher?*

Yes, I identify as a peace researcher, but I like to think of myself as a guerrilla researcher. I like public engagement, which means that I respond to current events and try to shape them. I do that through media engagement that builds on my research. A lot of my journalism takes the research that I’ve done with PRIO’s support and uses it to respond to what’s happening at the moment. I also do a lot of dialogue activities and try to engage people in different ways—through film, television, music, festivals, youth gatherings and things like that. In that way, I have access to different kinds of people that I might not have access to if I were only doing academic research.

*What is your unique contribution, you feel, over the years?*

A lot [laughing]. I mentioned before about the taboos, the myths, that keep the conflict going. A lot of my research has been about questioning those myths. My research on demography did that. All my investigative journalism has done that. But I’ve also questioned liberal peace interventions and the formats they use, which I think just perpetuate the status quo.

I believe that there is more we can learn from vernacular stuff. I increasingly look at ordinary people’s interactions, mundane people’s everyday interaction. Especially after the checkpoints. How they reconcile without any facilitation. And how we can help these people, without facilitating them directly. Because that becomes an intervention and then it loses its organic nature. I’m looking at that because that kind of organic relationship—interaction and interdependence—is the main motor of coexistence.

Everybody doesn’t have to love each other; you can coexist without loving each other. We can find different mechanisms for coexistence, rather than this American way of reconciliation, holding hands. I felt like a guinea pig, experimented on by certain scholars coming from Fulbright who were trying to teach us how to have empathy. I can compare what should be done and what shouldn’t be. That’s why I’m increasingly more concentrated on vernacular reconciliation. As long as it’s organic, and there is some kind of need involved, and also common interest.

To have commonalities on certain things is important. Of course, we believe in multitude, but you need commonalities too. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can have that commonality: you find this common interest to unite people who are very different.

***But that's also an example of what you meant, how you can actually help without formal facilitation: so, you find the best jazz musicians...***

No, not the best jazz musicians. Jazz musicians who are playing together, you know? They don't have to be the best. Actually, ordinary is better. It's a bigger group we're talking about. These commonalities, creating common spaces. For instance, I am working now on a documentary that shows how the walled city of Nicosia has become a space for all sorts of interactions based on common interests, bringing people together.

## **Resolving the Problem Step by Step**

***Could you describe the shift of the PRIO Cyprus Centre (PCC) over time? Have you seen it change in particular ways?***

The PCC is a hybrid and also a situational entity. Because its main *raison d'être* is the Cyprus problem, at certain times you employ different attitudes and approaches in the Centre. For example, if you have a peace process going on and everybody talks about how all the stars are aligned and you're about to have a solution, you immediately adapt yourself to the situation. You prepare more for the aftermath: if the solution comes, what is the most urgent thing to do? Or you prepare people for disappointment. If you observe the process closely and a lot of it is only PR and you know that it's bound to fail, you prepare people saying that, look, it's not as presented.

Then, during a frozen period when there is no process, both sides of the island are states of exception. The Republic of Cyprus functions on doctrines of necessities, so all the Turkish Cypriots' communal rights are suspended. And the same thing in the north: the north is a breakaway state, so all the Greek Cypriots' rights are suspended. It's two states of exception feeding each other. And when there's no process, they start attacking each other. They start questioning each other's anomalies.

For example, property issues become more important, citizenship becomes more important. So, the other party's suspended rights and regulations become more important issues than actually solving the Cyprus problem. And in those periods, we begin to focus more on rights and regulations. These are things like the Green Line regulation that Turkish Cypriots can use to export their goods to Europe and which hasn't been very successful because of a lot of impediments. Or the hydrocarbon issue. So, in these periods, we try to bring the debate away from antagonism to more healthy areas, because it can get very nasty, with a lot of attacks on each other.

I have been working on this step-by-step approach to solving the Cyprus problem, rather than having comprehensive settlement talks [...] where nothing

is agreed until everything is agreed, which means that everything becomes a bargaining chip.

Then we also propose methods for negotiations. For example, I have been working on this step-by-step approach to solving the Cyprus problem, rather than having comprehensive settlement talks. Because with the comprehensive settlement, you postpone everything to a settlement, and you don't do any steps meanwhile. You can have a piecemeal approach, an incremental approach. And you cannot do that with this comprehensive settlement where nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, which means that everything becomes a bargaining chip. All these issues that you could easily solve before a solution becomes a hostage to a comprehensive settlement.

Then we study settlement processes around the world, and what we can learn, like why did the Oslo agreement, the Oslo process, fail in Palestine? It was an incremental solution. But then, a lot of comprehensive settlement talks have failed as well. So where are we making mistakes, or what should the international community think of when they are jumping into a process?

***Do you feel that the fact that you have both the Greek and the Turkish participation at the PCC helped in these different periods, or has it at times been difficult? Is that a method to use in other contexts as well, do you think?***

I think it could be. Look, it is important to have representation from both sides, but it's also important to have internationals or 'non-native' elements in the Centre to balance. Because sometimes certain personal things, even between people in a working place, can turn into an 'ethnic' conflict. We didn't have that much in PCC, but I could see it in other NGOs or institutes in the buffer zone, that personal issues immediately can be turned into a 'because I'm a Turkish Cypriot' or 'because I'm a Greek Cypriot' kind of attitude. We have to be very careful with that.

De-ethnicizing the environment in the office is very important, even though we have to have these ethnic balances, but also the attitudes should be de-ethnicized. That's why the manager is very important in balancing these things, and in immediately exposing the real problem rather than leaving it to go to these ethnic clashes.

Of course, ethnicization doesn't always come from a person's ethnic background. Sometimes a non-Turkish or a Greek person can act more pro king than a king. For example, our current Director Harry Tzimitras is a Greek citizen. He had been chosen for the post by our local staff (by both TC and GC staff) and PRIO director at the time Kristian Harpviken. Although Harry is of Greek origin, he has proven to be very neutral in managing the place. I sometimes find myself defending Greek Cypriot policies against Harry's criticism [laughs]. Until him, we had only people from Oslo to run the place: Gina Lende, Arne Strand, and Gregory Reichberg. Like Harry, they also contributed positively and immensely to the centre, especially in capacity building.

## Having the International Community on Their Side

*You mentioned ‘the antagonistic tolerance towards the PCC from local officials on both sides’, where you felt you were increasingly having an influence. What is it that made it possible for the PCC to have that kind of influence, you think?*

There is more than one reason of course. One is that the international community stood by us, which was very important. Initial attacks were resisted by all international diplomats living on the island. They saw our work, they praised our work, and they also defended our work, which was very important. But of course, this didn't come out of the blue: they really used our work and they benefitted from our existence.

On the other hand, the academic community on both sides support the PCC, because of the good work that we do. The academic community likes us also because we prepare neutral grounds for academic debates. For example, academics at universities in the north cannot use their titles when they go to the south to participate in an academic event. But when we do it, everyone uses their own titles. For academicians, we are the third space. For diplomats, we are the third space. And for civil society, we are the third space.

*What I've learned from conversations with two of the founders of PRIO is that this academic activism type of engagement has been part of PRIO from way back. Has this been a good thing for the PCC or has it caused challenges too?*

We've always felt that support as a good thing. The way PRIO handled their management of the PCC has always been supportive and there was encouragement to do more activist things as well. It was not just limiting us: 'Oh, don't do that because the government might not like it. Don't do that, the United Nations might not like it'. No, never. We never received any sort of intervention from PRIO; always support. As long as we do proper academic work and our work is impartial and doesn't have any agenda apart from building peace, they are supportive. They have been supportive. That's the activist soul that we feel from Galtung. The people we know in PRIO are the same, that is an encouragement to us.

*But I think there's still a big difference, and that is that you're actually living in a conflict, and the researchers in Oslo, most of them don't and never have. One of the questions we ask everyone for this project is ‘what is your intellectual and emotional relation to peace?’ And I'm not really sure whether that's the right question to ask you. Maybe it is, but you're in such a different position.*

Yeah, because we get the feedback the next day. Which has been difficult sometimes, but usually constructive. People respect us. That's the thing we established here. That's very important. On both sides, the media respect us. Once you become an influencer in the media, this helps you to defend yourself. They cannot get at you that easily. I can answer back.

But it is of course different than writing an academic article. The politicians here haven't read my academic articles, but they know my newspaper articles. Which is the juice of what I write. That's why it's important to have this outreach I believe,

to them. It also brings up the question of wider academic debates: how much can we lock ourselves in just the academic arena and not take our research back to the people? I think that's very important.

## Resolving Problems—Not ‘the Problem’

*For many, many years the PCC has been trying to contribute to a solution to the Cyprus problem or to have coexistence in some peaceful way. What is your main inspiration to continue doing what you're doing, considering we're now in 2019, and the solution at least hasn't been found yet?*

As I said, I'm not concentrating on this wholesale solution. I concentrate on Cyprus problems, in the plural. And there are many problems in Cyprus that we have to tackle. To tackle those on an everyday basis gives me meaning in life. Because I love this country, I love this island.

But also, it means something to ... for example, I have been campaigning for the Maronites to return to their villages. And initially, last year it was announced that they were going to allow Maronites to come back to their villages. To work on that and to see results coming out from your push, or from your work, that gives meaning to life. It gives you energy.

I concentrate on Cyprus problems, in the plural. And there are many problems in Cyprus that we have to tackle. To tackle those on an everyday basis gives me meaning in life. Because I love this country, I love this island.

Of course, you have a very pessimistic world order now when you look around. You see a lot of lunatics and you know, authoritarianism is becoming the general norm now in a lot of countries including in the EU. Certain countries are really changing fast, and xenophobia, islamophobia, all these phobias, even democrophobia, are everywhere. It is important to have an input slowing down this terrible change. Having a positive input in the debates on further democracy, which is a must in a sense to establish a peaceful coexistence for people.

*Yeah. Of course, I phrased it wrong also, ‘the solution hasn't been found’. Of course, it is important to think of all the small contributions you're making. I'm doing quite some research on societal transformation and the role of individuals in it, and I think most of the people I speak to, when they manage to have this kind of inspiration and drive to continue, it is because they see all these achievements*

***that are there, and don't just think about the larger picture. It is depressing once you start looking on the larger levels, you might easily think 'what's the point?'***

It's very easy to be melancholic. It's like the leftist melancholy after the Cold War: there is no longer revolution, there is melancholy. That's why, instead of having one revolution, it is important to have little, little reforms, and this keeps us going until the big revolution happens, you know? So I'm always very anti-nostalgic and anti-melancholic in my way of life.

I constantly produce. I try to be a model as well for young people, without imposing myself on them. So that's another input that I have in the society. They can see that I'm DJing, I'm writing, I'm being very critical, but on the other hand also trying to find a solution to problems rather than just whining. These are I think important things for the youth to hear. Because in Cyprus, they're very cynical, it's beyond melancholy. It's a toxic societal attitude we have. Everybody says: 'Nothing's going to happen, nothing can happen'. Constantly.

In order to challenge that, you have to show that some things can happen. To make people believe that some things can be achieved. Sometimes a revolution, mass mobilization, is important; but sometimes you don't have that, so you have to do your reforms in everyday life.

***Really important. All right, then I wish you good luck with the DJing, and the writing and everything else.***

I have a concert.

***Coming up?***

Next Saturday, yes.

***Nice! Thank you very much, Mete.***

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## Chapter 24

# Johan Galtung at 90: His Enduring Legacy to Peace Research in Oslo



Essay by Nils Petter Gleditsch



Johan Galtung in 2012 © Niccolò Caranti/Wikimedia Commons

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*The banner on the front page of PRIO's Annual Reports and other publications proudly reads:*

***Independent, International, Interdisciplinary.***

*These three key points for PRIO today, as well as other important features of contemporary peace research in Oslo, can be traced back to PRIO's founder, Johan Galtung. He turns 90 today (24 October 2020).*

## **Independent**

While PRIO started out in 1959 as the Section for Conflict and Peace Research of the Institute for Social Research, the goal was clearly an independent institute. Greater autonomy was reached in 1964 when Norwegian government funding was provided through the new Council for Conflict and Peace Research. This was signaled through the section's new name, Peace Research Institute Oslo, which remains the name today. Full independence with a separate Board was achieved (amicably) two years later. But the independence went well beyond the secession. When Johan Galtung was hired by the University of Oslo to a new Chair in Conflict and Peace Research in 1969, PRIO was not incorporated into the University. A final measure of independence is that the core funding has always come through the Ministry of Education and Research and from the Research Council and not from the Foreign Ministry. This independence is alive and well today. Even if the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has become a significant source of project funding, its importance is dwarfed by funding from the Research Council of Norway and similar sources.

## **International**

The choice of name was no coincidence. 'Oslo' was part of the English name, but only to indicate the location—a model copied later in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Tampere, and elsewhere. In Norwegian, the institute's name is simply Institutt for fredsforskning ('Institute for Peace Research'). There are numerous institutes labeled 'Norwegian Institute for ...'. PRIO is not one of them. Although the core staff has been mainly Norwegian, guest researchers from other countries have played an important part in PRIO's life from the start, including students recruited by Galtung through his extensive international network. To achieve an international impact, the two academic journals founded by Johan Galtung, *Journal of Peace Research* (1964) and *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* (1969, now *Security Dialogue*) are published in English. With a discreet nod to the dominant international conflict at the time, the first ten volumes of *JPR* even carried a *kratkoye sodержanie* (later *rezhume*)—a translation into Russian of the articles' abstracts.

The perspective on conflict was truly *international* rather than 'we' versus 'them'. The themes were of general relevance. There were some case studies and articles

with mainly Norwegian empirics, but they were framed in a way to gain knowledge of wider relevance. One of Galtung's early and most frequently cited articles, with a theory of foreign news,<sup>1</sup> had data from Norwegian newspapers about four international conflicts—but that is definitely not why it has become such an important text in media studies. PRIO's staff today is even more international and includes several tenured non-Norwegian members. The research portfolio reflects the same international orientation.

The perspective on conflict was truly international rather than 'we' versus 'them'.

## Interdisciplinary

While the three members of PRIO's core staff in 1959 were sociologists, Galtung's first graduate degree was in mathematics and he recruited adjunct staff members from history, social anthropology, psychology, and law and eventually a large number of graduate students from across the social sciences. The first Editorial Board for *JPR* listed 32 members from nine disciplines. A similar diversity is very much reflected in PRIO's staff today, as illustrated by the work of philosophers in the study of civil war, the use of economic models in the study of conflict, the cooperation of anthropologists, geographers, and sociologists in designing fieldwork, and the widespread adoption of geographic information systems in the work of political scientists. It might be more accurate to use the term cross-disciplinary (or multi-disciplinary) than interdisciplinary for some of this work, and Galtung's ambition for transdisciplinary research is more rarely achieved.

## The Nonviolent Tradition

But there are additional continuities. Galtung's first academic work in peace research was a study with Arne Næss in 1955<sup>2</sup> that attempted to synthesize Gandhi's political ethics. Nonviolence had a prominent place on PRIO's early agenda. When I was hired as a research assistant in 1964, my first project was on nonviolent resistance as a means of national defense. Since then, the study of nonviolence has wandered in and out of PRIO's active research portfolio. Today, it occupies an important place in the study of means and agents of conflict and political change.

## Publish or Perish!

Galtung's most widely cited work (see addendum at the close of the chapter) is found in articles, notably from *Journal of Peace Research* in the period 1964–71. He co-authored with contemporaries and students and encouraged (even pressured) his colleagues to get their work published, as those of us who grew up under his mentorship well remember. A classic reflection of this is found in the acknowledgements section in a 1966 article in *JPR* by Nils Halle: 'The author wishes to express his gratitude to Johan Galtung for constructive criticism and ingenuity in making the writing an experience of horror, thus enhancing the relief when the paper was delivered ...'<sup>3</sup>

But his pressure for publication was also a mark of confidence in his colleagues and students. Peter Wallensteen and Raimo Väyrynen, who went on to become professors in Sweden and Finland respectively and gain a high international standing, had no reason to regret that *JPR* published their articles when they were just 23 years old. Such a feat is more difficult to achieve in the age of rigorous peer review and publication lags. But the high frequency of article-based dissertations at PRIO is an illustration of an environment that encourages early publication, as is the continuing co-authoring by mentor and student. PRIO's overall publication profile shows that a pattern of active journal publication persists in the later career of PRIOites.

'The author wishes to express his gratitude to Johan Galtung for constructive criticism and ingenuity in making the writing an experience of horror, thus enhancing the relief when the paper was delivered ...'

## Policy Implications

The first editorial in *JPR* in 1964 (unsigned but written by Galtung)<sup>4</sup> stressed that peace research should not be limited to an evaluation of existing policies; 'it should also be peace search, an audacious application of science in order to generate visions of new worlds'. For years, *JPR* authors were encouraged to round off their work with a section on policy implications. Even today, 'Without sacrificing the requirements for theoretical rigor and methodological sophistication, articles directed towards ways and means of peace will be favored.' The combination of first-rate academic articles with the PRIO Blog and other means of research communication to a general audience represents a continuing effort to live up to the institute's ambition to achieve what is now called 'engaged excellence'.

[Galtung] stressed that peace research should not be limited to an evaluation of existing policies; 'it should also be peace search, an audacious application of science in order to generate visions of new worlds'.

## PRIO as a Community

One of the intriguing aspects of being introduced to PRIO in its founding years was to experience a research community that went well beyond a work fellowship and the publication of written products. Research thrived in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation. This tradition has survived, although the community-building now relies more on the work of dedicated staff members than on the heroic efforts of the founder's then wife.

## Methods

Finally, and perhaps most controversially, methods. Given that Galtung was trained as a mathematician and sociologist, it is not surprising that PRIO and *JPR* formed part of the behavioral revolution in the social sciences. Galtung's 1967 methods textbook<sup>5</sup> remains his most influential book. The starting-point for peace research in the first *JPR* editorial, 'under what conditions are people in general willing to ...', is a question calling for nomothetic research, aiming at finding general relationships, although Galtung also specified the need to 'use the tools that suit the problem'. The four articles by Galtung that make it to the top ten of *JPR*'s most-frequently-cited articles all provide precise definitions suitable for operationalization and building testable hypotheses, although only two of them engage in empirical testing. His two *JPR* articles on structural violence<sup>6</sup> and cultural violence<sup>7</sup> are probably chiefly remembered today for their conceptual innovation and ideological overtones, but they were also attempts to put problems raised in the political debate on a more rigorous footing for systematic research.

Although Galtung moved on from the behavioralism of his youth (as early as 1974 he called for 'invariance-breaking'<sup>8</sup> as an alternative to establishing regularities), his positivist legacy lives on, as his citations statistics demonstrate clearly.

PRIO's present project portfolio is methodologically quite diverse and the staff's work in new areas like studies of critical security, gender, and migration has gained wide academic recognition. But the institute's international standing is still to a large extent tied to quantitative data projects, models of civil war, and systematic studies of liberal and realist conceptions of peace. The Centre for the Study of Civil War, PRIO's Centre of Excellence (2003–12) and the first such center to be established in the social sciences in Norway, had a clear nomothetic agenda, as does the first PRIO

project to be hosted by the Centre for Advanced Studies at the Norwegian Academy of Science.

## Galtung's Legacy

The continuity from the founder to today's PRIO, even after 60 years, may seem trivial. But the founder himself has moved on in so many ways. This is not surprising. Kenneth Boulding's assessment in 1977 is still apt: 'There are some people like Picasso whose output is so large and so varied that it is hard to believe that it comes from only one person. Johan Galtung falls into this category.' In his interview for this volume (Chap. 1), the founder tends to see peace research in Oslo as too conventional, strongly tied to Norwegian government policy, and largely monopolized by political science. *JPR* has become 'an American journal'. (As the journal's former editor for nearly three decades, I strongly dispute this statement, but that is beside the point.)

While Galtung still has a wide and possibly even growing circle of supporters, in Norway<sup>9</sup> as well as internationally,<sup>10</sup> his links to PRIO have progressively weakened over the years. This is reflected in a modest poll that I conducted among the present staff regarding how Galtung's work had influenced their own.<sup>11</sup> Very few of today's staff consider Galtung as an important influence in their own academic work, while over 60% respond 'not at all' or 'not very important'. The same percentage applies to staff from the Conditions of Violence and Peace program, the most positivist of PRIO's departments. At times, PRIOites have gone on record distancing themselves from some of Galtung's more controversial polemics in the public debate,<sup>12</sup> while at the same recognizing his pioneering contribution.<sup>13</sup> Today's Director of PRIO, Henrik Urdal, says in the Norwegian transcript of his interview with Galtung (see Chap. 1) that 'we do not know each other'.<sup>14</sup>

But despite the apparent divergence, Johan Galtung continues to exercise considerable indirect influence on how peace research is conducted in Oslo. I rest my case and extend my congratulations to PRIO's founder for a long, varied, and controversial research career.

## Journal of Peace Research's Ten Most-Frequently Cited Articles

*According to Web of Science, as of 22 September 2020.*

### Citations Author, Title, and Volume/Issue/Page Range.

1609	Galtung, Johan (1969) Violence, peace, and peace research 6(3): 167–191.
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- 1579 Gleditsch, Nils Petter; Peter Wallensteen, Michael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg & Håvard Strand (2002) Armed conflict 1946–2001: A new dataset 39(5): 615–637.
- 1011 Galtung, Johan & Mari Holmboe Ruge (1965) The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian Newspapers 2(1): 64–91.
- 750 Galtung, Johan (1990) Cultural violence 27(3): 291–305.
- 738 Jagers, Keith & Ted Robert Gurr (1995) Tracking democracy's third wave with the Polity III data 32(4): 469–482.
- 695 Galtung, Johan (1971) A structural theory of imperialism 8(2): 81–117.
- 560 Fearon, James D (2004) Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others? 41(3): 275–301.
- 518 Ross, Michael L (2004) What do we know about natural resources and civil war? 41(3): 337–356.
- 435 Raleigh, Clionadh; Andrew Linke & Håvard Hegre (2010) Introducing ACLED: An Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset 47(5): 651–660.
- 321 Goemans, Henk E; Kristian Skrede Gleditsch & Giacomo Chiozza (2009) Introducing Archigos: A dataset of political leaders 46(2): 269–283.

The four articles by Johan Galtung included here are also Galtung's most frequently cited articles. On this top-ten list, we find four additional *JPR* articles and two in other journals (*World Politics* and *Social Science Information*). All these figures are somewhat underestimated because some citations are not linked in the database to the article itself and can only be found in a 'Cited author' search. This applies to an even greater extent to Galtung's articles because they are older than the others.

## Notes

1. See Galtung, Johan & Mari Holmboe Ruge (1965) The Structure of Foreign News. *Journal of Peace Research* 2(1): 64–91.
2. See Galtung, Johan & Arne Næss (1955) *Gandhis politiske etikk* [*Gandhi's Political Ethics*]. Oslo: Johan Grundt Tanum. Available at: <https://www.nb.no/items/7a2bd3fdc2f50d497b65909af2516170?page=5&searchText=gandhis%20politiske%20etikk%20tanum>.
3. Halle, Nils H (1966) Social Position and Foreign Policy Attitudes: A Comparative Study of France, Norway and Poland. *Journal of Peace Research* 3(1): 46–74.
4. See (1964) An Editorial. *Journal of Peace Research* 1(1): 1–4.
5. See Galtung, Johan (1967) *Theory and Methods of Social Research*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. Available at: [http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digibok\\_2010091705010](http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2010091705010).
6. See Galtung, Johan (1969) Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3): 167–191.

7. See Galtung, Johan (1990) Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 27(3): 291–305.
8. See Gleditsch, Nils Petter; Odvar Leine; Hans-Henrik Holm; Tord Høivik; Arne Martin Klausen; Erik Rudeng & Håkan Wiberg (1980) *Johan Galtung: A Bibliography of His Scholarly and Popular Writings, 1951–1980*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. Available at: [http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digibok\\_2016061508037](http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2016061508037).
9. See Urban, Susanne (2020) *Galtungs metode for fred [Galtung's Method for Peace]*. Oslo: Skrifter fra Hardangerakademiet for fred, utvikling og miljø. Available at: [http://hardangerakademiet.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Galtungs-metode-for-fred\\_2\\_opplag\\_komplett.pdf](http://hardangerakademiet.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Galtungs-metode-for-fred_2_opplag_komplett.pdf).
10. See <https://www.transcend.org/galtung/>.
11. This survey and its results are available at the PRIO Blog: <https://blogs.prio.org/2020/10/johan-galtung-at-90-his-enduring-legacy-to-peace-research-in-oslo/>.
12. See <https://www.transcend.org/galtung/statement-may-2012/>.
13. See PRIO (2012) Intolerable Comments. PRIO statement, 23 May. Available at: <https://www.prio.org/News/Item/?x=1630>.
14. The original Norwegian transcript of Henrik Urdal's 2018 interview with Johan Galtung in the PRIO Stories series is available at: <https://blogs.prio.org/2019/05/inspiration-from-a-father-johan-galtung-interviewed-by-henrik-urdal/>.

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