

Det Norske Nobelinstitutt's Skriftserie  
*The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series*



**Asle Sveen:**

**The Nobel Peace Prize:  
some aspects of the decision-making process,  
1919-31**

**Vol. 1 - No. 3  
Oslo, 2000**



*Asle Sveen:*

The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-  
making process, 1919-31

Det Norske Nobelinstitutt's Skriftserie  
*The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series*  
*Vol. 1 – No. 3*



## **Table of Contents:**

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Norway and the League of Nations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Norwegian foreign policy interests .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Nobel Committee .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The advisers .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The decision-making process .....</b>	<b>10</b>
1919 and 1920 - Woodrow Wilson and Leon Bourgeois. Prizes to the League of Nations.....	10
1921 and 1922 - Hjalmar Branting, Christian Lous Lange and Fridtjof Nansen. Three new awards to the League of Nations. ....	13
1925 and 1926 - The Pact of Locarno laureates. A Prize to détente and four major powers? .....	16
1927 - Ferdinand Bussion and Ludwig Quidde, veteran champions of peace. Prizes for détente between France and Germany. ....	21
1930 - Frank Kellogg for 1929 and Nathan Söderblom for 1930. Disagreement once more. ....	22
1930 - Nathan Söderblom .....	24
1931 - Jane Addams and Nicholas Murray Butler .....	25
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>27</b>



## Introduction

The question underlying this study is as follows: *What considerations influenced the decisions of the Norwegian Nobel Committee during the years 1919-1931?*

My study is based on a number of sources in the archives of the Norwegian Nobel Institute and the collection of manuscripts in the National Library in Oslo.

Before discussing the prizes awarded, I find it useful to describe Norway's political and foreign policy situation after the first world war and to present the members of the Nobel Committee and its advisers.

## Norway and the League of Nations

During the first world war, Norway managed to remain neutral. Norwegian public opinion during the war was overwhelmingly on the side of the Allies, and the Norwegian merchant fleet carried so much cargo between other parts of the world and Britain and France that Norwegian historians have called Norway during this period "the neutral ally". Norway's stance was a contributory factor when the great powers of France, the United States and Britain supported Norway's claim for political sovereignty over Svalbard (Spitsbergen) after the first world war.<sup>1</sup>

When the League of Nations was established by the Treaty of Versailles at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Norway found itself in a new foreign policy situation. Should the country abandon its policy of neutrality and join the League of Nations? That would mean accepting the principle of collective security, and Norway would risk having to take part in economic and military sanctions against aggressors.

There were differing views within Norway. Public opinion changed somewhat after the Paris Peace Conference. There were many who felt that Germany had been dealt with too harshly, and that the League of Nations had become the victors' organization. This scepticism was fuelled by the fact that the major powers of Germany and Russia (the Soviet Union) were not members<sup>2</sup> - and that President Wilson was not able to mobilize a sufficient majority among the members of the Senate for U.S. membership.

---

<sup>1</sup> Roald Berg: *Norge på egen hånd*. Norsk utenrikspolitisk historie (*Norway on its own*, A History of Norwegian Foreign Policy, vol. 2), Norwegian University Press 1995: 319. The Treaty of Svalbard also guaranteed the great powers' economic interests on Svalbard.

<sup>2</sup> Odd-Bjørn Fure. *Mellomkrigstid*. Norsk utenrikspolitisk historie (*The Years between the Wars*, A History of Norwegian Foreign Policy, vol. 3), Norwegian University Press 1995: 181. *The Storting* (the Norwegian

There were also divisions within the political parties with regard to membership in the League of Nations. The governing party, the Liberal Party (*Venstre*), was most in favour. Norway's prime minister in 1919, Gunnar Knudsen (1848-1928), was a shipowner, and considerations of Norwegian shipping and trade, particularly with Britain, were of crucial significance for many party members. In addition to their pecuniary interests, many Liberals also had an idealistic belief that after the first world war conflicts between nations could be resolved through arbitration agreements and a new international order.

The Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) was least in favour. During the war, the party had become substantially more radical, and it had grown equal in size to the Conservatives (*Høyre*) and the Liberals.<sup>3</sup> The Labour Party lauded Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' revolution in Russia, joining the international communist organization Comintern in 1919. The Labour Party considered President Wilson's politics and the League of Nations a counterattack on both the Russian revolution and the spread of socialism and communism.

Norwegian nationalism also played a role in the non-socialist parties. Norway had only become fully independent in 1905, after the dissolution of the union with Sweden. Many politicians were hesitant to relinquish authority to a new supranational organization. For instance, the influential Conservative politician Carl Joachim Hambro (1885-1964) felt that small countries would have too little say in the League of Nations.

Some of the general staff and the commanding general in the armed forces were also sceptical. Many officers believed that membership in the League of Nations would mean Norway might have to take part in wars between alliances of great powers.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, the final vote on the League of Nations in the *Storting* in March 1920 yielded an overwhelming majority in favour of membership by a vote of 100 to 20.<sup>5</sup>

Three factors were probably decisive for the Norwegian decision to join the League of Nations: fear of foreign policy isolation, a desire to be able to influence the policies of the League of Nations in co-operation with other small nations, and a

---

parliament) sent a telegram to the Paris Peace Conference calling for an international organization based on international law which should be open to all "civilized" nations.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1918 elections the Labour Party received 30.9% of the votes, the Liberals 32.7% and the Conservatives 30.4%. However, due to the electoral system Labour won only 18 seats in the *Storting*, compared to 54 for the Liberals and 50 for the Conservatives.

<sup>4</sup> Odd-Bjørn Fure: 184.

<sup>5</sup> This was also a result of Labour's underrepresentation in the *Storting*. See footnote 3 above.



conviction that the League of Nations in spite of its limitations represented an attempt to establish a new international order in the aftermath of a destructive war.<sup>6</sup>

Scepticism about the League of Nations declined during the 1920s. The Conservative politician Hambro was a delegate to the League of Nations from 1926 and, despite his reservations, played a prominent role in the governing bodies of the organization from the late 1920s. The Labour Party also gradually changed its stance as the party became more moderate. In 1923 the party terminated its membership in Comintern, and in 1927 Labour merged with the social democrats. They gradually rejected the revolutionary path and emphasized obtaining power through elections and reforms. But they nevertheless kept their scepticism towards the League of Nations into the beginning of the 1930's.

Jointly with the other Scandinavian countries, Norway worked ceaselessly so that the losers from the war, particularly Germany, could join the League of Nations as a major power. Norway also joined the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1921, and a paramount objective for Norwegian foreign policy was that as many countries as possible should bring their disputes before this court.

## **Norwegian foreign policy interests**

Norway had strong national interests to uphold in the 1920s. The most important issue was extending the national boundary at sea. Norway has one of the longest coastlines in the world, and it was of vital interests for the Norwegian fisheries that Norway controlled the fertile fishing banks. In 1921 Norway expanded its customs frontier from four to ten nautical miles.

This expansion brought Norway into conflict with Britain. The British had both fishing and strategic interests in Norwegian waters. They opposed the Norwegian expansion. The conflict with Britain was extremely complicated for Norway, because to a great extent Norway's security was implicitly based on the British fleet. Difficult negotiations on this issue were initiated in 1924 and continued until 1935.

In the Antarctic and the Arctic Norway pursued expansive policies after sovereignty over Svalbard was attained in 1920. That brought the country into conflict

---

<sup>6</sup> Fure: 184.

with Britain in the Antarctic and with Denmark and the Soviet Union on the issue of sovereignty over Greenland and influence over regions in the Arctic.

Norway's imperialism in the polar regions enjoyed relatively strong support at home. Such a key politician as Hambro declared that Norwegian unification was not complete until former Norwegian territories were returned to Norway.<sup>7</sup>

## **The Nobel Committee**

Within this domestic and foreign policy framework the members of the Nobel Committee carried out their deliberations.

After the first world war the committee still had a majority made up of Liberal politicians. Jørgen Løvland and Hans Jacob Horst, who have been presented by Ivar Libæk,<sup>8</sup> had been on the committee ever since it was established in 1897. They were joined by the Liberal politician Bernhard Hanssen in 1913. Another veteran was Francis Hagerup of the Conservative party.

Jørgen Løvland was the chairman of the Nobel Committee until his death in 1922, and both Horst and Hanssen were also members until they died, in 1931 and 1939, respectively. Francis Hagerup died in 1921. Both Løvland and Hagerup had served as prime minister. They were both extremely self-confident and intractable.

A new, influential member from 1919 was the historian Halvdan Koht (1873-1965), from the Labour party.<sup>9</sup> Koht had a background of extensive experience as adviser to the Nobel Committee. He remained a committee member until 1936. Throughout this entire period he kept a brief diary which gives us a picture of the committee's decision-making process. This diary, now in the archives of the Nobel Institute, is the most important source of information about the decision-making process in the Nobel Committee for the period that is described and analyzed here. Koht's perception of the other members is inevitably subjective, but there is little reason to doubt his reports of the choices the various committee members made. Unfortunately, he does not usually relate the arguments used for and against the various candidates.

---

<sup>7</sup> Quotes from Roald Berg: 320.

<sup>8</sup> Ivar Libæk: The Nobel Peace Prize. Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1901-17: 2

<sup>9</sup> See Libæk: 5-6, for a description of Koht's activities as adviser to the Nobel Committee.

Koht was originally positive towards The League of Nations. He kept in the background during the struggles within the Labour Party after the first world war, but he largely showed loyalty to the party line in foreign politics.

In 1922, Fredrik Stang (1876-1941) became the first non-Liberal chairman of the committee. Before the first world war Stang was one of the leaders of the Conservative party, as well as minister of justice in a Conservative government. After the war he became professor of law and rector of the University of Oslo. Stang remained chairman of the Nobel Committee until his death in 1941.

Another strong, influential politician who joined the committee in 1925 was Johan Ludvig Mowinckel (1870-1943), of the Liberal party. Mowinckel was a shipowner by vocation. He was both prime minister and foreign minister during the periods 1924-26 and 1928-31, and when not a cabinet member he was on the foreign affairs committee of the *Storting*. He was active in interparliamentary work and a delegate to the League of Nations on several occasions after 1925.<sup>10</sup>

## **The advisers**

After the first world war the Nobel Committee appointed new advisers in addition to director and secretary Ragnvald Moe and former secretary Christian Lous Lange.<sup>11</sup> This section presents the new advisers who are most significant for this study.

Wilhelm Keilhau (1888-1954) was an economist and historian and a member of the Liberal party. His experience of the first world war made him a pacifist. In 1918 he launched a Norwegian association in support of the League of Nations, and from 1923 he was one of the leaders of the Norwegian Peace Society.

Frede Castberg (1893-1977) earned a doctorate in law in 1921. From 1925 he was an adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in questions of international law - «one of the key actors in shaping Norwegian foreign policy.»<sup>12</sup> He had a strong national orientation and exerted great influence on Norway's negotiations with Denmark regarding Greenland. Because of Castberg's nationalistic orientation, the internationalist Mowinckel

---

<sup>10</sup> Mowinckel was a member of the Council of the League of Nations in 1930 and president of the Assembly in 1933.

<sup>11</sup> About Ragnvald Moe and Christian Lange as secretaries, see Libæk: 5.

<sup>12</sup> Odd-Bjørn Fure: 56.

excluded him from negotiations with Britain on the fisheries protection zone when he was prime minister.<sup>13</sup>

Jacob Worm-Müller (1884-1963) was an officer and historian. In the 1920s Worm-Müller was a senior lecturer and professor of history at the University of Oslo. He was a member of the Liberal party. He was also fiercely anti-communist, and he was briefly a member of the right-wing organization *Fedrelandslaget* in 1925. Worm-Müller discontinued his membership when this organization wanted to ban both the Communist party and the Labour party. He was a delegate to the assembly of the League of Nations in 1926 and 1927.

## **The decision-making process**

*1919 and 1920 - Woodrow Wilson and Leon Bourgeois. Prizes to the League of Nations.*

In 1920 the Nobel Committee awarded the 1919 Peace Prize to President Woodrow Wilson and the 1920 Peace Prize to the Frenchman Leon Bourgeois. Behind this award was a rather fierce struggle within the committee. Woodrow Wilson was the source of most of the strife. Wilson had been nominated for the Peace Prize in both 1918 and 1919, but there was no broad campaign for his candidacy. However, one of the members of the Nobel Committee, Bernhard Hanssen of the Liberal party, was among the nominators.<sup>14</sup>

In 1919 Ragnvald Moe wrote the report on Wilson. His report was completed before the vote on U.S. membership in the League of Nations. Moe's report was not overwhelmingly positive, but he pointed out that it was to Wilson's credit that "America has relinquished its isolation and extended its hand across the sea to Europe. The League of Nations stands erect."<sup>15</sup>

When the committee entered into deliberations on Wilson's candidacy, the negotiations in Versailles had been brought to a close. It was clear that the United States would not join the League of Nations and that Germany had received a much harsher treatment than many people felt was defensible in light of attaining a peaceful

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> NNC Reports (*NNK Redegjørelser*) 1919. The other nominators were Leon Bourgeois, 6 professors and politicians from Europe and one American (Fannie Fern Andrews, Boston), and the law faculties in Bologna and Naples.

<sup>15</sup> NNC Reports 1919: 72.

development in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Wilson's reputation was sharply waning, both at home and abroad.

The Conservative party's veteran member of the Nobel Committee, Francis Hagerup, so strongly opposed Wilson's candidacy that he had told the chairman, Jørgen Løvland, that he would resign from the committee in protest if the prize was awarded to Wilson.<sup>17</sup>

Both Hagerup's threat and a general frustration with the situation after Versailles probably had an effect. According to Koht, Jørgen Løvland suggested "that we should wait a year to make a decision as to whether to award the Peace Prize to Wilson."<sup>18</sup> Koht was also opposed to Wilson's candidacy, which secured a majority for Løvland's proposal even though the other Liberal members, Horst and Hanssen (understandably for the latter, as he was one of the nominators), were in favour of awarding the prize to Wilson.<sup>19</sup>

This reluctance on the part of the committee was not popular with the Liberal government. On 10 December 1919, the same day the Peace Prize should have been awarded in Oslo, Prime Minister Gunnar Knudsen wrote to the Nobel Committee and nominated Wilson for the 1920 Peace Prize. His letter expressed manifest irritation: "I know of no other living person who is more deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize than the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who in my opinion should have been the laureate this year. As he has not been chosen this year, I propose that he should be the winner next year, if he is still alive."<sup>20</sup>

The Norwegian minister of justice, Otto Blehr (1847-1927), also supported Gunnar Knudsen's nomination of Wilson.<sup>21</sup>

In 1920 there were also international nominations for Wilson, but none were submitted by Americans, which illustrates either lack of interest in the prize in the United States or his diminished position following the fiasco regarding membership in the

---

<sup>16</sup> This was a view widely held in the international peace movement – and among nearly all the Peace Prize laureates in the 1920s.

<sup>17</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 3 December 1919.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> NNC archives. Letter of 10 December 1919.

<sup>21</sup> Otto Blehr was one of the Liberal party's true veterans. He was the prosecutor for the Court of Impeachment that laid the basis for the introduction of parliamentarism in 1884. For two periods he was prime minister in Stockholm, and he played a key role in preparations for the dissolution of the union in 1905. He was a delegate to the first meetings in the League of Nations in 1920 and from 1922-25. He was prime minister from 1921-23.

League of Nations.<sup>22</sup> The first president of the League of Nations, the Frenchman Leon Bourgeois, was also nominated in the same year. He was considered the most important European architect behind the League of Nations and had been nominated for the Peace Prize almost every year since 1908.<sup>23</sup>

Ragnvald Moe wrote the report on Wilson once more, while the secretary of the Interparliamentary Union, Christian Lous Lange wrote the report on Bourgeois. Even though Moe defended Wilson against the Republicans' "doctrinaire, tradition-bound Americanism,"<sup>24</sup> he concluded that Wilson had largely failed in his policies, both in Versailles and in the United States. "And the results should certainly weigh heavily, when forming an opinion as to whose contributions have been best and who has done the most to promote fraternity between nations."<sup>25</sup>

Bourgeois was given a good report by Lange, who wrote that he was the statesman who in the first years of the League of Nations had "exercised the strongest personal influence on its activities."<sup>26</sup>

When the Nobel Committee convened in the autumn of 1920, the chairman, Jørgen Løvland, addressed the matter directly and proposed that "we should honour the League of Nations by awarding the prize to Wilson and Bourgeois."<sup>27</sup> Løvland attempted to coat the bitter pill of Woodrow Wilson both by proposing that he should share the prize with Bourgeois and by arguing that the prize was in reality for the League of Nations, perhaps in hope of winning Hagerup's support. Halvdan Koht, reflecting the views of the Labour Party, was still opposed to both Wilson and the League of Nations. But Hagerup was just as intransigent as before. He could accept Bourgeois, but threatened again to resign from the committee if Wilson was awarded the Peace Prize.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> NNC Reports 1920. In addition to Knudsen and Blehr, Wilson was nominated by a number of professors from the new nation of Yugoslavia, by Mexican politicians and the Swedish interparliamentary group, with a declaration of support from the Danish laureate in 1908, Fredrik Bajer.

<sup>23</sup> NNC Reports 1920. Bourgeois was nominated by previous French laureates and by a Norwegian politician – the radical Liberal politician Johan Castberg.

<sup>24</sup> NNC Reports 1920: 22.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> NNC Reports 1920: 13.

<sup>27</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 5 November 1920.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Koht mentions that Hagerup spoke of "Wilson's deceit". It is not clear what he meant, but most probably it is the harsh treatment of Germany at Versailles compared to the "peace among equals" Wilson had espoused during the war.

Two more meetings had to be convened before a decision could be reached. Rather than Hagerup making a dramatic resignation from the Nobel Committee, deputy member Wollert Konow (1845-1924) met in his stead when the decisive vote was taken.<sup>29</sup>

In the end Løvland, Horst and Hanssen voted to award the deferred 1919 Peace Prize to Wilson and the 1920 prize to Bourgeois. Konow voted in favour of Bourgeois, whereas Koht voted against them both. The Liberals in the Nobel Committee and former prime minister Gunnar Knudsen and minister of justice Otto Blehr had prevailed.<sup>30</sup>

*1921 and 1922 - Hjalmar Branting, Christian Lous Lange and Fridtjof Nansen.  
Three new awards to the League of Nations.*

The 1921 and 1922 Peace Prizes were awarded to three Scandinavians: one Swede and two Norwegians. These awards created little controversy. Hjalmar Branting was the prominent leader of the Swedish social democratic party. In 1920 he was prime minister in the first Swedish government composed of only social democrats. He had supported the Norwegians to a certain extent during the dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden in 1905, and he had championed the democratization of Sweden by non-revolutionary means. In addition he was an eager supporter of the League of Nations. As a delegate in Geneva he assumed the role of leader for the small nations by speaking out in favour of disarmament and arbitration.<sup>31</sup>

Christian L. Lange had been the secretary of the Nobel Committee from the time it was established until 1909, when he was “headhunted” to serve as secretary general for the Interparliamentary Union. It was chiefly due to his efforts that this union was expanded substantially before the first world war – and that it survived the war intact. Lange was a historian, a committed internationalist and a warm supporter of the League of Nations. At the League’s first meeting in 1920, he was one of two experts who were invited to speak on earlier peace negotiations and issues of disarmament.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. At the meeting Konow opposed Wilson and supported Bourgeois. Wollert Konow was another Liberal party veteran. He had initially belonged to the radical wing, but in 1909 he was one of the founders of the Liberal Right (Frisinnede Venstre). He was briefly prime minister in a coalition government with the Conservatives. In 1912 he withdrew from active politics.

<sup>30</sup> Gunnar Knudsen’s government resigned in June 1920 and was replaced by a coalition of Conservatives and the Liberal Right under prime minister Otto Bahr Halvorsen. This government lasted until June 1921, when Otto Blehr became prime minister in a new Liberal government.

<sup>31</sup> Branting negotiated a peaceful solution between Sweden and Finland regarding sovereignty over the Åland Islands.

Backing the nomination of both Branting and Lange were chapters of the Interparliamentary Union in Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom. In addition the most radical member of the Nobel Committee, Halvdan Koht, had nominated Lange the previous year.<sup>32</sup>

These candidates were so uncontroversial that no reports were commissioned by the Nobel Committee.<sup>33</sup> According to Halvdan Koht's diary there was considerable discussion in the committee nevertheless, but that was primarily because one of the committee members, Hans Jacob Horst, had also been nominated for the Peace Prize by prominent Norwegian politicians, among them Otto Blehr, who had now become prime minister.<sup>34</sup>

The chairman, Løvland, wanted to award the prize to Horst, but Fredrik Stang, the newly elected Conservative member, and Halvdan Koht refused to confer the prize on a member of the Nobel Committee. Koht spoke in favour of Lange and was supported by Horst, whereas Stang did not want to make an award. Finally, "after much deliberation Løvland, Horst and B. Hanssen agreed to divide the prize between Branting and Lange."<sup>35</sup>

In 1922 one of Norway's greatest heroes, the arctic explorer, nation-builder, scientist and diplomat Fridtjof Nansen was nominated for the Peace Prize for the work he had done to repatriate prisoners of war after the first world war and for the humanitarian aid he helped organize in Russia during the famine there in 1921. In 1922 he was appointed the first high commissioner for refugees of the League of Nations. Nansen had worked in close co-operation with the Red Cross and with the leaders of the League of Nations, represented by the British statesman Philip Noel Baker.<sup>36</sup> Nansen was an ardent supporter of the League of Nations. In 1918 he had been inspired by Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points for Peace. As chairman of a private association established to support the founding of the League of Nations he took part in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

---

<sup>32</sup> Koht and Lange had worked closely together while Koht was an adviser for the Nobel Committee and Lange was its secretary. Lange was not a member of any political party, but his political stance changed from a Liberal view to social democratic sympathies. The Labour newspaper *Sosialdemokraten* also wrote that Lange deserved the prize and, although they as communists had little faith in parliamentary peace work, "we fully respect the honesty and good will in the work of Mr. Lange." (*Sosialdemokraten* 10 December 1920)

<sup>33</sup> Reports had been written about Branting twice before, by Lange (1906) and Koht (1913). Jacob Worm-Müller should have written a report about Branting in 1920, but he fell ill, and the secretary, Ragnvald Moe, had not had time to "gather and process the extensive political material." *NNC Reports* 1921: 5.

<sup>34</sup> The veteran Horst had been active in the Norwegian Peace Society since 1895 and had participated substantially in interparliamentary work. He was also nominated by Wollert Konow (who became a member of the Nobel Committee the following year).

<sup>35</sup> *NNC Koht's diary*. Notes from the meeting of 3 December 1921. What is strange is that Horst obviously did not withdraw from the debate about his own candidacy.



Nansen was above political strife and party divisions in Norway in 1922. The chairman of the Nobel Committee for many years, Jørgen Løvland, had died the previous year, and for the first time a non-Liberal was elected chairman of the Nobel Committee. The new chairman was the Conservative politician Fredrik Stang. And it was Stang who nominated Nansen jointly with the radical Labour party politician and historian Edvard Bull.<sup>37</sup>

The report on Nansen, written by Frede Castberg, gave a highly favourable portrayal of Nansen. Castberg concluded that Nansen had great influence on work in the League of Nations because of "the high esteem which Nansen enjoys, and the energy and wisdom with which he has championed his and his government's proposals in the Council of the League of Nations."<sup>38</sup>

Even so, the award to Nansen was not decided entirely without discord in the Nobel Committee. Horst, who had been nominated once more (by Gunnar Knudsen, Otto Blehr and Wollert Konow) "felt that Nansen's contributions were not within the scope of what Nobel had in mind."<sup>39</sup> However, when matched against Nansen, having been nominated by both a former and the present prime minister as well as a member of the Nobel Committee was not enough. Horst received no support for his objections to Nansen.

The prize to Nansen was met with universal praise. Most panegyric was one of the main Danish newspapers which stated that Nansen "had done honour to the Peace Prize by receiving it" and "as long as he is living amongst us there still exists a lighthouse for mankind in its journey through the tempests."<sup>40</sup>

The only other person, in addition to Horst, who seems to have had objections was Nansen himself. When he was informed that he would be awarded the prize, he sent a telegram to the Nobel Committee expressing his fear that "it would not feel right that a Norwegian was to be the recipient again this year, and that he felt Robert Cecil should have been given precedence."<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Noel Baker was the 1959 Peace Prize laureate.

<sup>37</sup> Nansen was also nominated by the Danish interparliamentary group. Lloyd George, President Harding and the British economist Keynes were also nominated the same year. It was Koht and Bernhard Hanssen who had nominated Lloyd George.

<sup>38</sup> NNC Reports 1922: 48.

<sup>39</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 27 November 1922.

<sup>40</sup> Politiken quoted from Sosialdemokraten 11 December 1922

<sup>41</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 1 December 1922. Lord Cecil was awarded the Peace Prize in 1937. Nansen also wrote to Philip Noel Baker that it was his merit that he had been chosen, and that

*1925 and 1926 - The Pact of Locarno laureates. A Prize to détente and four major powers?*

During the next two years the Nobel Committee did not reach agreement on an award. Horst and Konow advocated the Interparliamentary Union, but they were not able to enlist the support of the other members.<sup>42</sup>

When the Nobel Committee convened for its meeting in November 1925, the Pact of Locarno had just been negotiated. This was an agreement between the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Britain to bring to an end the tension between Germany and France. Germany recognized France's eastern frontier in return for a concrete plan by France and Britain for a withdrawal of the allied troops occupying Germany. Germany was also allowed to join the League of Nations. At the same time, economic support and loans from the United States helped stabilize the German economy. Italy and a considerable number of other European countries had also taken part in the negotiations. For the most part the Pact of Locarno was greeted with hope and enthusiasm.

The situation in the Nobel Committee had also changed, as the new Liberal prime minister and foreign minister, Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, had become a member.<sup>43</sup> According to Koht's diary, chairman Stang and Mowinckel favoured awarding the Peace Prize to the League of Nations.<sup>44</sup> Mowinckel is to have reasoned that "this was the only way of expressing our gratification over the Pact of Locarno."<sup>45</sup> This reasoning was peculiar, as the Pact of Locarno was negotiated without the involvement of the League of Nations. Within the international peace movement, some activists feared that such an agreement between major powers would undermine the importance of the League. Perhaps Mowinckel felt that awarding the Peace Prize to the League of Nations could counteract just that.

Another explanation is that Mowinckel saw the Pact of Locarno in the traditional Liberal foreign policy context of détente, disarmament and arbitration. Peace between France and Germany meant less tension and less need for Norway to use resources on

---

Baker deserved it more than he did. Roland Huntford: *Fridtjof Nansen. Mennesket bak myten (The man behind the myth)*, Aschehoug 1996: 537.

<sup>42</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 1 December 1924. Horst might possibly have obtained a majority for awarding the prize to the Interparliamentary Union if Konow had not died. His deputy was the Labour party veteran Christian Holtermann Knudsen, who supported the candidacy of the American socialist leader Eugene Debs. Koht and Stang did not want to make an award.

<sup>43</sup> Mowinckel's first government, from July 1924 until March 1926.

<sup>44</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from the meeting of 30 November 1925.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

military preparedness. By linking the Pact to the League of Nations, he underlined these factors.

Koht, Hanssen and Horst all opposed awarding the prize to the League of Nations. Koht insisted that according to the statutes the Nobel Prize could not be awarded to an association of nations, adding that “if there should be a majority in favour of awarding the prize to the League of Nations, I would resign from the Nobel Committee.”<sup>46</sup> Following bitter contention between Koht and Mowinckel, chairman Stang got everyone to agree that the prize should not be awarded in 1925.

In 1926 the Pact of Locarno entered into the nomination process in earnest. Two of the committee’s key advisers, Frede Castberg and Wilhelm Keilhau, proposed dividing the 1925 and 1926 Peace Prizes between the German prime minister Hans Luther, his foreign minister Gustav Stresemann, British foreign minister Austen Chamberlain and the Frenchman Aristide Briand for the “significant easing of tension that the Pact of Locarno has brought about between Germany on the one hand and the western powers on the other.”<sup>47</sup>

Wilhelm Keilhau himself was assigned to write a report about the persons he had nominated. He also wrote the report on the Republican vice president of the United States, Charles Dawes, who was nominated because he was responsible for the Dawes plan of 1924, a plan many felt laid the economic foundation for the easing of political tensions that resulted from the Pact of Locarno.<sup>48</sup>

Keilhau must have grown highly sceptical of his own proposal as he worked on the candidacy reports. In the report he submitted to the Nobel Committee, he wrote that his report aimed to “inquire into whether any of the four nominees during their earlier political careers should have expressed views regarding the cause of peace and its ideals that must be considered more or less unworthy of receiving a peace prize at all, even though they have signed an agreement which should prove to be of major significance for peace in Europe.”<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> NNC archives. Letter of 30 January 1926 from Wilhelm Keilhau to the Nobel Committee. There was no international campaign for awarding the peace prize to the men behind the Pact of Locarno. In addition to Keilhau and Castberg there were four Italian, French and German professors and some Swiss politicians behind the nominations. Briand was also nominated by the law faculty in Bordeaux.

<sup>48</sup> The Dawes plan provided for loans to Germany on generous terms so that the country would be able to make reparation payments to France while rebuilding its economic base.

<sup>49</sup> NNC Reports 1926: 21.

Apart from Luther, the candidates were subjected to severe criticism, particularly Chamberlain and Briand. Keilhau felt that in advance of the Locarno negotiations they had conspired against Germany in a manner that “aroused bitter disappointment in pacifistic circles, and the newspapers that were supportive of peace expressed extremely sharp reproaches against Chamberlain and Briand.”<sup>50</sup> Chamberlain was also held accountable for the fact that Germany was subjected to excessively harsh economic terms in Versailles, and Briand had torpedoed important disarmament negotiations after the war. According to Keilhau, Briand considered only France’s well-being, representing a “peace imperialism”<sup>51</sup> that in the long term would impair the efficacy of the League of Nations.

The report on Stresemann was not much more favourable. Keilhau emphasized his past as a German expansionist. During the first world war he had wanted to dismantle Belgium and annex countries to the east. Keilhau felt that Stresemann, in co-operation with Briand, had sought “a compromise based on power politics” for “exercising power over the European mainland.”<sup>52</sup>

For Keilhau, Hans Luther was the true hero and the architect behind the Pact of Locarno. But as he had obviously co-operated with Stresemann on the fundamental concepts behind the pact, the latter could share the peace prize, even though he had “a great number of violations of the cause of peace on his conscience, while Luther has never exhibited any anti-pacifistic behaviour.”<sup>53</sup>

Charles Dawes was given a reasonably favourable assessment as a competent organizer, although Keilhau also perceived behind the Dawes plan the desire of American business for “profitable capital placement.”<sup>54</sup>

When the Nobel Committee convened for their autumn meeting in 1926, a debate ensued as to what the statutes of the prize permitted in terms of letting more than two persons share a prize. In spite of Keilhau’s negative reports, Stang and Mowinckel wanted to award the prize for 1926 to Briand, Chamberlain, Stresemann and Luther.<sup>55</sup> Bernhard Hanssen wanted to include Dawes as well.

Halvdan Koht disagreed entirely. He vehemently attacked the “Locarno men,” and he “stated in no uncertain terms that after the deceit Briand (and Chamberlain) had

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid: 38.

<sup>51</sup> NNC Reports 1926: 45.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid: 39.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid: 49.

<sup>55</sup> NNC Koht’s diary. Notes from the meeting of 15 November 1926. Only Mowinckel wanted to include Luther.

planned in Locarno had become known, I would not take part in awarding them a prize, and it was these remarks of mine that set the agenda for most of the debate.”<sup>56</sup>

It is somewhat unclear what Koht meant by Briand and Chamberlain’s deceit, but it probably refers to their harsh policies towards Germany, which Keilhau underscored in his report. In concrete terms, their ”deceit” was that these two statesmen used the date for the withdrawal from Germany of the occupying allied troops as leverage to extract concessions from Luther and Stresemann.<sup>57</sup>

According to his diary Koht initially received some support from Horst, but eventually Horst gave his support to the proposal to award the 1926 Peace Prize to the negotiators in Locarno.

However, this decision was postponed because of uncertainty about the statutes. The secretary, Ragnvald Moe, went to Stockholm to discuss the matter with the Nobel Foundation. He obviously received a negative response to the question of letting so many people share the award, for “after that Stang did not dare agree to award the prize to the three Locarno representatives jointly. Therefore he wanted to include General Dawes and divide the two prizes four ways.”<sup>58</sup>

Luther had been eliminated, and the awards in 1926 went to the four major powers: the United States, Britain, France and Germany, represented by Dawes and Chamberlain (the 1925 Peace Prize) and Briand and Stresemann (the 1926 Peace Prize).

Halvdan Koht felt such indignation about this decision that he boycotted the award ceremony on 10 December.<sup>59</sup> This was in line with the Labour Party whose main newspaper wrote that the Dawes plan was “directed against the labour movement” and that the three foreign ministers awarded the prize, were all “representatives of the European and American capitalism which is the basis for imperialism as well as militarism.”<sup>60</sup>

It is possible to conjecture as to why a majority of the members of the Nobel Committee chose this solution, despite Keilhau’s report on Chamberlain and Briand – and in defiance of Koht’s sharp protests. There were no international campaigns calling for an award of the Peace Prize to the Locarno negotiators. In 1926 there were also plenty of

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> NNC Reports 1926: 35-39. Keilhau provides a detailed account of the co-operation and communications exchanged between Briand and Chamberlain and is highly indignant. A note to Germany was characterized by an “utter lack of simple courtesy” (: 38).

<sup>58</sup> NNC Koht’s diary. Notes from the meeting of 19 November 1926.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. “10 Dec. I did not attend the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony.”

<sup>60</sup> Arbeiderbladet 11 December 1926

other worthy candidates who were far less controversial. Foremost among them were later laureates such as the veteran German champion of peace Ludwig Quidde and the Swedish bishop Nathan Söderblom. Another candidate was the Czech foreign minister Edvard Benes. Reports were submitted on all of these candidates in 1926. According to Koht's diary, both Quidde and Benes were mentioned during the debate. Quidde's candidacy was so strong that Koht wrote: "But everyone, with the exception of Mowinckel, spoke of awarding next year's prize to Quidde."<sup>61</sup>

The most straightforward explanation may be that a majority of the committee members simply wanted to highlight the easing of tensions the Pact of Locarno was widely acknowledged to represent. If so, it was a good solution to divide the prizes so that all the most important major powers from the first world war were included. By awarding the prize to Dawes, the United States was linked to the process of easing tensions in Europe. Perhaps the committee also hoped that awarding the prize to the Republican Dawes could in a small way help prevail upon American politicians to reconsider their membership in the League of Nations. If that was the case, the Nobel Committee was now actively trying to influence the politics of peace, and not solely awarding the Peace Prize to honour past accomplishments.

However, some of the committee members may have had additional motives. As recent prime minister and foreign minister and current member of the foreign affairs committee of the Storting, Mowinckel held a key position in the difficult negotiations with Britain on the fisheries protection zone in 1926.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, as mentioned above, Norway was pursuing an expansive policy in the polar regions. Mowinckel in particular was keenly interested in avoiding conflict with Britain.<sup>63</sup> That may be a contributory factor explaining his vote to award the Peace Prize to Chamberlain even though Keilhau's report was perhaps most scathing in regard to precisely his candidacy.<sup>64</sup>

There are strong indications that both Halvdan Koht and the former secretary of the Nobel Committee and 1921 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Christian L. Lange were

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Mowinckel's first government resigned in March 1926. His second government was in office from January 1928 to May 1931. When he was not in the cabinet, he was a leading member of the foreign affairs committee.

<sup>63</sup> Fure: 88: "...no other Norwegian politician was as concerned about relations between Norway and Britain as Mowinckel."

And on: 93: "Mowinckel would have been willing to sacrifice substantial national interests to avoid conflict with Britain."

among those who felt that the award could be seen as an instrument of Norwegian foreign policy. It is difficult to interpret otherwise the following comment in a letter Lange sent to Halvdan Koht: “I have formed my own opinion as to your feelings about the Peace Prize award. Mowinckel – as I wrote on another occasion – reacted very crossly when I said I had the impression that four exclusive visiting cards had been deposited with the four major powers.”<sup>65</sup>

There were those who felt that even more countries should have been honoured with the Peace Prize after the Pact of Locarno. The chairman, Fredrik Stang, was paid a visit by the Italian ambassador to Oslo who “found it remarkable that Mussolini had not been included.”<sup>66</sup> For Italy was also one of the signatories to the agreement.

*1927 - Ferdinand Bussion and Ludwig Quidde, veteran champions of peace. Prizes for détente between France and Germany.*

Halvdan Koht correctly observed that there was nearly complete agreement that Ludwig Quidde deserved the Peace Prize, but in 1927 he had to share it with another veteran champion of peace, the 86-year-old Frenchman Ferdinand Buisson. Both of them had, with great personal sacrifice and peril, worked since the French-German war of 1870-71 for reconciliation between Germany and France.

And both had supporters in Norway. Quidde had contact with both Lange<sup>67</sup> and Halvdan Koht, and in 1927 the Nobel Committee adviser Jacob Worm Müller enthusiastically endorsed Buisson’s candidacy. According to Worm Müller, Buisson was “one of the most noble personages in French politics, as the country’s vigilant conscience.”<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Fridtjof Nansen gave the main address to the laureates during the award ceremony in December 1926, which none of the winners had time to attend. In this speech he did not mention Chamberlain, but spoke favourably of Luther. Only Stresemann held a Nobel lecture, and that was only first a year later.

<sup>65</sup> The manuscript collection of the National Library. Letter of 12 February 1927 from Lange to Koht.

<sup>66</sup> NNC archives. Letter from Stang to the Nobel Committee dated 29 January 1927. The Foreign Ministry had also been drawn in by Irgens, the Norwegian ambassador in Rome.

<sup>67</sup> Lange tried to help Quidde when he had financial problems in the 1920s. One of his initiatives was the suggestion that Quidde be engaged by the Nobel Institute as a paid lecturer because he was «an outstanding speaker» (Lange in a letter to Koht dated 10 December 1922 in the manuscript collection of the National Library.)

<sup>68</sup> NNC Reports 1925: 15.

There was not an extended debate in the Nobel Committee about this award. “It was decided fairly quickly,” Koht wrote in his diary. He himself wanted Quidde to receive the prize alone, whereas the remainder of the committee was in favour of dividing it.<sup>69</sup>

*1930 - Frank Kellogg for 1929 and Nathan Söderblom for 1930. Disagreement once more.*

In 1928 and 1929 the Nobel Committee was unable to reach agreement on a prize winner, even though there were candidates who on several previous occasions had received favourable reports, and who did so again. Among them were the American peace activist and founder of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Jane Addams, and the Czech president Thomas Masaryk.<sup>70</sup>

Halvdan Koht and Bernhard Hanssen half-heartedly supported Jane Addams’ candidacy,<sup>71</sup> whereas Stang and Mowinckel in 1929 “discussed mainly the pros and cons of the American Secretary of State, Frank Kellogg.”<sup>72</sup> Kellogg had entered the picture because he, at Briand’s initiative, had agreed to the so-called Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1928. The purpose of this pact was to outlaw war as an instrument of policy. Briand’s true motive was to prevail on the United States to guarantee France’s security. However, the United States and Britain managed to dilute the wording of the pact so that it did not affect the U.S. spheres of interest in Latin America nor the British empire. The Kellogg-Briand Pact became so vague and contained so many qualifications that it was signed by nearly all the nations of the world.

Submitting Kellogg’s nomination were Peace Prize laureates Charles Dawes and Gustav Stresemann. They were joined by Bernhard Hanssen, member of the Nobel Committee.<sup>73</sup>

Frede Castberg wrote the report on Kellogg. It was not very favourable. In Castberg’s opinion Kellogg was passive in relation to the League of Nations. Kellogg

---

<sup>69</sup> NNC Koht’s diary. Notes from the meeting of 29 November 1927. Horst had the Interparliamentary Union as his first choice, but voted subsidiarily for Quidde and Buisson.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Masaryk (1850-1937). Masaryk was nominated in part because of his efforts to prevent Jewish pogroms. In the Nobel Committee archives there is a letter of recommendation from Albert Einstein.

<sup>71</sup> NNC Koht’s diary. Notes from meetings in 1928 (not dated) and on 27 November 1929. Addams was Koht’s second choice in 1928, but his first choice in 1929, while the opposite applied to B. Hanssen.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 27 November 1929.

<sup>73</sup> NNC archives. Letter of nomination, January 29 1929. The reason given was simply: “the Kellogg pact”.



undeservedly was credited for work done by Elihu Root, and Kellogg pursued traditional imperialistic policies in Latin America.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to Bernhard Hanssen, it was Mowinckel in particular who supported Kellogg's candidacy. One of his motives may have been once more that awarding the Peace Prize to such a leading Republican politician as Kellogg could in a small way help turn sentiments in the United States in favour of the League of Nations. Mowinckel was now both prime minister and foreign minister once again, and at this specific time Norway was working actively in Geneva to strengthen the League of Nations and the International Court of Justice in The Hague.<sup>75</sup>

Halvdan Koht was thoroughly opposed to awarding the Peace Prize to Kellogg, and as chairman Stang and committee member Horst wanted to defer the award, Kellogg was defeated by a vote of three to two in the autumn of 1929.<sup>76</sup>

However, the following year the way was open for Frank Kellogg. This time there was an American campaign to promote his candidacy. Behind the campaign were Secretary of the Interior Wilbur, Peace Prize laureate Dawes and other Republican politicians of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Once more the report on Kellogg was written by Frede Castberg. He was about as negative as the previous year. His conclusion was: "The only possible reason for awarding the Peace Prize to Kellogg must be assumed to be his merits in bringing about the Pact of Paris. In his own reflections on what his contribution has been, Kellogg is rather modest."<sup>77</sup>

Koht's diary from the Nobel Committee in 1930 is extremely brief. The majority awarded the prize for 1929 to Kellogg and the prize for 1930 to Nathan Söderblom. Halvdan Koht was obviously so strongly opposed to both of these candidates that he boycotted this committee meeting. That is the only possible way to interpret the following remark in his diary: "The Peace Prize was awarded to Kellogg for 1929 and Nathan Söderblom for 1930; Koht did not attend the meetings – but he was in town."<sup>78</sup>

Koht was again in line with the Labour Party whose main newspaper wrote that all the talk about peace from the winners and their advocates was hypocrisy because "they

---

<sup>74</sup> Reports 1929: 49-50.

<sup>75</sup> Fure: 90-94.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> NNC Reports 1930: 48-49.

<sup>78</sup> NNC Koht's diary. This entry from 1930 is strange. It uses a different written form (*bokmål*) than the rest of the diary, and Koht speaks of himself in the third person. Could these remarks have been added by someone else?

know so well that the Kellogg Pact and Mowinckel and the League of Nations and all that are all rubbish..." and that "... they very well know that they are without influence. Capitalist forces rule the world no matter how many archbishops, excellences and Mowinckels who get money from the will of the dynamite king."<sup>79</sup>

That Mowinckel saw archbishop Nathan Söderblom in the light of the Kellogg pact is established by the following passage written by Øivind Stenersen.

### *1930 - Nathan Söderblom*<sup>80</sup>

The Swedish Archbishop, Nathan Söderblom, was first nominated in 1926, and was supported by an international campaign organized in the aftermath of the ecumenical assembly in Stockholm of 1925 called The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work. The conference was attended by more than six hundred delegates from 37 countries and was orchestrated by the Swedish bishop. By bringing representatives from different Christian communities together agreeing upon certain basic principles he firmly believed that the ecumenical movement had the ability to influence both ordinary people and statesmen in a peaceful direction

The campaign for Söderblom was initiated by people working in the secretariat of the Stockholm conference. They mobilized contacts inside the General World Union of Churches for International understanding, and some of them decided to nominate Söderblom. The Swedish initiative was followed up by the Norwegian section of the World Union in Bergen, which succeeded in getting a member of the Storting to nominate the bishop. The nominator was the Liberal representative Hans Seip.<sup>81</sup> But the campaign of 1926 ended without success and Söderblom was not nominated the two following years.

Then in 1929 he was proposed by a group of Swedish parliamentarians and the next year by the British Lord President of the Council, Lord Parmoor, the bishop of Winchester, a German professor of law and six members of the French Parliament, and Söderblom was put on the shortlist again.<sup>82</sup> This means that Söderblom's lacked the support of Norwegian nominations in the last part of the process. But in spite of this, and

---

<sup>79</sup> Arbeiderbladet 11 December 1930

<sup>80</sup> The section on Söderblom is written by Øivind Stenersen

<sup>81</sup> NNC Archives. Nomination 30/1926. Letter from Hans Seip to the Nobel Committee dated 28 January 1926 and letter from the Bureau on "Life and Work" Fredrik Klaveness dated December 1925.

<sup>82</sup> NNC Reports 1929 p. 12 and NNC Reports 1930: 12.

the comparatively short and superficial reports from the advisers, the Nobel Committee decided to award the prize of 1930 to Söderblom.

Because Koht probably boycotted the meeting as a result of his dislike of Kellogg, we have no references in his diary about the voting in the committee from November 1930. But let us present some arguments that could have been crucial in the final discussion this year. Söderblom's strong support for the principles of arbitration, disarmament and the League of Nations was in harmony with key elements in Norwegian foreign policy and may have had a special appeal to Prime Minister Mowinckel, who delivered the presentation speech for the laureate. In his speech Mowinckel praised Söderblom for his support for The Kellogg Pact, hoping that "the light of the Word" would animate the agreement.<sup>83</sup>

Mowinckel may also have wanted to fulfill the wish of his deputy to the Storting, Hans Seip, who represented a Christian pressure group from his own constituency, Bergen. Here we can see that the Christian part of the Liberal party – representing the counter-cultures of Western-Norway – may have managed to influence the committee.

It also seems reasonable to assume that the Christian pacifist Bernhard Hanssen, with his background from the Norwegian Peace Society, sympathized with Söderblom's efforts for a more peaceful world, because ecumenical work could be looked upon as part of the international peace movement.

### *1931 - Jane Addams and Nicholas Murray Butler*

In 1931 the way was paved for an award to two new Americans and a victory for Halvdan Koht. It was time for a woman. Jane Addams had been nominated time and again since 1916 without being chosen. In 1923 Woodrow Wilson was one of the many who endorsed her nomination, and Wilhelm Keilhau wrote a glowing report: "The most sympathetic thing about Jane Addams as a champion of peace is the fact that she the entire time – during and after the world war as well as before – has maintained the same confident, steady course without wavering and without vacillating. Just think if all the leading champions of peace had done the same!"<sup>84</sup>

Despite this report, and despite the fact that before the war Halvdan Koht had visited her famous settlement house in Chicago, Hull House, and had conversed with

---

<sup>83</sup> *Les Prix Nobel* 1930: 64.

her,<sup>85</sup> according to Koht's own diary none of the committee members advocated her candidacy at the committee meeting in 1923. The explanation for this is probably partly that she was a woman. Women's work for peace was not taken seriously, not even by the Nobel Committee. No women had been chosen since Bertha von Suttner was Peace Prize laureate in 1905.<sup>86</sup> But her supposed radicalism may also have worked against her for some of the members of the committee. Jane Addams had opposed American participation in the first world war, and in the beginning of the 1920's she was still labelled a dangerous woman and a semi-communist by the American authorities.

However, the repeated campaigns for Jane Addams during the 1920s finally made an impression. The attitude to her in the USA also changed. Jane Addams was praised as a "Mother of Peace." 1928 Bernhard Hanssen was among those who nominated her, but as we have seen above, he and Koht did not strongly promote her candidacy.

In 1929 and 1930 there were new campaigns for Jane Addams, but she was eclipsed by the controversy about Frank Kellogg. It did not help that Wilhelm Keilhau, in his 1930 report, concluded: "There is no doubt that it is Jane Addams who is the creator and the soul of the women's peace movement throughout the world."<sup>87</sup>

The award to Nicholas Murray Butler was a much simpler matter. He held a key role in international peace work as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Since before the first world war he had had close contact with Christian Lange and Halvdan Koht. He had asked Lange for advice on delegates to peace conferences, and Halvdan Koht had been an enthusiastic visitor at Columbia University, where Butler was the president.<sup>88</sup>

Among Butler's nominators were former laureates Elihu Root, Austen Chamberlain and Aristide Briand. The adviser who wrote his report, Jacob Worm Müller, wrote that «Butler is no original thinker. He seems – like so many leading American public figures and politicians – rather simplistic and somewhat trite. His thinking is easy

---

<sup>84</sup> NNC Reports 1923: 28.

<sup>85</sup> Halvdan Koht: *Minne frå unge år* (Memories from my younger years). Aschehoug 1968: 410.

<sup>86</sup> In 1915, a women's delegation was sent by Jane Addams to Norway to influence the government to take a peace initiative. This delegation met with the King, the prime minister, other politicians and the chairman of the Nobel Committee, Jørgen Løvland. (Reports 1923: 23) However, this delegation's visit was not reported in the newspapers, and when Halvdan Koht wrote about international peace initiatives in the periodical *Syn og Segn* shortly after their visit, no mention was made of the women's delegation.

<sup>87</sup> NNC Reports 1930: 17.

<sup>88</sup> The manuscript collection of the National Library contains several letters in which Butler and Lange share their experience and advice. In a letter to Koht dated 21 August 1909, Lange recommends Butler «as a first-rate individual». In *Minne frå unge år* (Memories from my younger years), Aschehoug 1968: 333-34, Koht describes how well he was received by Butler when he arrived with Lange's letter of recommendation.

to follow and clear and thus is suitable to be adopted by the masses.»<sup>89</sup> Even so, he concluded that Butler had made a substantial contribution for the cause of peace.

Butler had to wait until 1931, but then the way was open for both him and Jane Addams. At the Nobel Committee meeting, Halvdan Koht proposed that the prize should be divided between these two. He was supported by Stang, Bernhard Hanssen and the new Conservative member of the committee, Axel A. Thallaug (1866-1938). Only Mowinckel did not want to award the prize. If it was to be awarded, he voted for an award to Butler alone.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps Mowinckel was opposed to awarding the prize to Jane Addams because she, as a peace activist, had been unpopular with both British and U.S. authorities. And Mowinckel wanted to remain on good terms with them. His scepticism towards Jane Addams may have been a natural consequence of his support for the awards to Chamberlain, Dawes, Kellogg and Butler.

It was Halvdan Koht who spoke of the laureates at the award ceremony.<sup>91</sup> This presaged an influential period for him in the Nobel Committee in the years to come.

## Conclusion

This presentation of the laureates from 1919 to 1931 tells that it was necessary for the candidates to have advocates among the members of the Nobel Committee in order to have a chance of being chosen. The advisers did not have the same influence as in the period 1901-1917 described by Ivar Libæk. Several times their advice was neglected by the majority of the committee. Another qualification to get the prize was to be of significance for Norwegian foreign policy. International campaigns were not enough if you did not have advocates within the committee or were in line with important Norwegian foreign policy goals.

This is perhaps best illustrated by Jane Addams. Few, if any, candidates had more campaigns for their candidacy throughout the 1920s than she did. The Nobel Institute archives contain hundreds of declarations of support and petitions to the Nobel Committee to award her the prize for her life-long contributions to peace. In 1923, for instance, there was a massive campaign for her, but the committee chose not to award a prize. Not until Halvdan Koht and Bernhard Hanssen had mercy on her was she awarded

---

<sup>89</sup> NNC Reports 1930: 22.

<sup>90</sup> NNC Koht's diary. Notes from meetings in November 1931.

the prize in 1931, few years before her death. In contrast we see the person she shared the prize with, Nicholas Murray Butler. For many years he had had close contact with secretary of the Nobel Committee and laureate Christian L. Lange and committee member Halvdan Koht. Butler did not have to wait for the prize for long.

Laureates Wilson, Bourgeois, Branting, Lange and Nansen were all nominated by Norwegian politicians or by committee members, and they could be seen in the context of Norwegian foreign policy. When Norway chose to join the League of Nations, the next step was to make it as influential as possible. All the prize winners from 1919 to 1922 played a prominent role either in establishing the League of Nations or as key supporters during the first years the League existed. In 1920 Jørgen Løvland stated explicitly that the purpose of the awards to Wilson and Bourgeois was to support the League of Nations. The Liberal majority in the committee forced this through despite protests and threats of resignation from the conservative member.

The awards to the statesmen behind the Pact of Locarno meant that the Nobel Committee ventured into a current foreign policy situation. All the winners were nominated by two of the committee's most prominent advisers. There was no international campaign in support of their candidacy. Although the adviser, Wilhelm Keilhau, advised against Chamberlain and Briand, and Halvdan Koht protested sharply, the Liberal majority in the committee decided to award them the prize. Mowinckel played a prominent role in reaching this decision, and there are indications that besides supporting détente and disarmament, one of his motives was to make friends for Norway among the major powers. He was in the midst of difficult negotiations with Britain on the fisheries protection zone, and Norway was pursuing expansive policies in the polar regions.

The awards to Quidde and Buisson also fit the pattern. Quidde's candidacy was supported by both Koht and Lange, while Buisson was nominated by adviser Worm-Müller. They were both seen in the same context of détente between France and Germany.

Nor was Frank Kellogg any exception. He was nominated by several former laureates, and committee member Bernhard Hanssen was behind his nomination. A negative report by Castberg, and Koht's boycott of the committee meetings, proved no hindrance. It may be that Mowinckel again saw the award in a larger context. Perhaps

---

<sup>91</sup> Jane Addams was too ill to attend, and Butler made do with a speech broadcast on the radio in the United States.

awarding the Peace Prize to a Republican Secretary of State could open the possibility of U.S. participation in the League of Nations. That would strengthen international peace efforts, arbitration and disarmament.

All the laureates in this period are in line with these goals for the foreign policy of the Liberal party, even Jane Addams. She was a strong supporter of the League of Nations, but she was for a long time perhaps too controversial for the majority of the members of the Nobel Committee. If she also was prejudiced against because of her sex, remains to be established by further research.





The Norwegian Nobel Institue  
Drammensveien 19, NO-0255 Oslo  
Phone (+47) 22 12 93 00 – Fax: (+47) 22 12 93 10 – e-mail: [postmaster@nobel.no](mailto:postmaster@nobel.no)