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THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

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October is the month when the Nobel Prize winners of the year are announced. The Nobel Prize is maybe the most prestigious and distinguished award of them all for the fields of physics, chemistry, medicine, literature—and the work for peace. The instigator of the Nobel Prize, Swedish inventor, industrialist and philanthropist **Alfred Nobel**, left it to Sweden to choose the recipients of the science and literature awards—but he wanted the Norwegian Parliament—the Storting—to select the winner of the Peace Prize.

His reason for doing so is not clear. He may have wanted to soften the Norwegian/Swedish conflict which eventually ended in the dissolution of the union between the two countries in 1905. He may also have wished to give recognition to the **Norwegian Storting** for their stand on international questions in 1880. Whatever his reasons, he left a great legacy and honor to the Norwegian Storting.

The Norwegian Storting appoints a special Nobel Prize committee. This committee is an independent body and its five members do not have to be members of the Storting. By February of each year, the names of candidates have to be submitted and all pertinent information about each nominee is forwarded to the Peace Committee members. The average annual number of nominees is approximately 80. The candidates are reviewed carefully and the committee's decision is usually reached at the beginning of October. At this time, the prize winner as well as media are notified. But the award ceremony itself always takes place on December 10, which is the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896. In Stockholm, the Swedish king presents the prize, while in Oslo this is done by the chairman of the Nobel Committee. **The Norwegian King** is, however, always present.

On several occasions, the Nobel Committee has found it impossible to confer the award on any of the nominees. In such cases, the prize money goes back to the main fund. In some years, the prize has been shared between two individuals or organizations. There have also been years when the committee has been unable to arrive at a positive decision until later that year or early the following year. And during the two World Wars, the **Peace Prize** was, naturally, put on hold until the world had come to its senses.

The United States of America has won its share of Nobel Peace Prizes with 15 individual winners and one award-winning organization of the 65 recipients in the years between 1901 and 1985. Among them are two presidents: Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson; one vice-president, Charles Dawes; and two ex-Secretaries-of-State: Frank Kellogg and Cordell Hull. Two American women have received the Nobel Peace Prize: Sociologist Jane Adams and Professor Emily Balch, while the only American organization to be honored by the **Nobel Committee** is the American Friends' Service Committee, a Quaker organization.

The world will remember American recipients like George Marshall, Martin Luther King, Ralph Bunche and Norman Borlaug. Norway has had only one Peace Prize winner, explorer and scientist **Fridtjof Nansen**, whose efforts for European refugees in the wake of World War I saved thousands of lives and found a way to give identity to thousands of people who lost their citizenship when Europe was torn apart.

The Nobel Committee selects a winner based solely on the recipient's merits as a **promoter of peace**. Award-winners like Henry Dunant, Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa have shown the world the true meaning of dedication to your fellow man. And Martin Luther King, Lech Walesa and Desmond Tutu demonstrated that the possibility for a peaceful solution to a conflict can always be found—if one wants to.