

REPORT FROM NORDIC PEACE MEETINGS, DENMARK, JULY 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following is a report from two Nordic peace meetings in Helsingør in July 2023,

- **PART 1:** The Nordic Peace conference with five thematic seminars 14.-15.7
- **PART 2:** Minutes from the founding meeting for a Nordic Peace Alliance, a network for Nordic peace organizations 16.7.

The main target group for the report is the participants at those two meetings. The aim is to support participants in the important follow up of themes, decisions, and ideas, especially the elected coordination committee.

PART 1: THE NORDIC PEACE CONFERENCE 14.-15.7.2023

1.1. OPENING SESSION

Welcome, by the organizing committee.

Ida Harsløf and Hasse Schneidermann, Denmark

Ida Harsløf opened the conference and gave a warm welcome to the participants by expressing how happy she was that about 65 Nordic peace friends had come to Helsingør, in the middle of the summer.

Hasse Schneidermann stated that it was during a development meeting in November 2022 that the organizing committee was asked to arrange a Nordic peace conference during the summer of 2023 and where the theme of the seminars had been proposed. He then presented the other members of the organizing committee who received well-deserved applause.

Welcome by principal of International People's College

Søren Launbjerg

Principal Søren Launbjerg gave a warm welcome by stating that a Nordic peace conference perfectly suited the school's foundation and history.

The International People's College was founded in 1921 by visionary idealist Peter Manniche, who believed that if people from countries that had former been enemies came to live, work and study together in a Folk Highschool it would generate mutual respect and acceptance.

Since the start, many students from five continents and more than thirty countries have proved the vision right and have become "active global citizens".

[Link to International People's College web page](https://ipc.dk/about/history-of-international-peoples-college/)

<https://ipc.dk/about/history-of-international-peoples-college/>

Greetings from the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers

By Gudmundur Gudbrandsson, Icelandic Minister for Cooperation

Iceland holds the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2023 and has as customary formulated their program for their presidency, "The Nordic Region – a force for peace!"

(Norden – En kraft for fred!) In this, they put special focus on how peace is a prerequisite for human rights, women's liberation, social stability and environmental protection.

In his video greeting, Gudmundur Gudbrandsson, mentioned the goals of the Council of Ministers "Nordic Vision" from 2019, to be green, competitive, and socially sustainable. He

emphasized, that the issue of peace should be one of the cornerstones of Nordic cooperation both in times of war and in times of peace: *“Organizations coming together across the borders, as you are doing here today is a key element in grounding the peace movement within our Nordic societies. Grassroots initiatives like these are needed and encouraged by us”*, he said, wishing us a fruitful conference.

Iceland will host an international conference in October to promote dialogue and peace.

[Link](#)

[Video-greetings from Gudmundur Gudbrandsson:](#)

Opening Song «To the Youth» (Til ungdommen) by Nordahl Grieg Søren Launbjerg on electronic piano accompanied everybody singing together.

The Norwegian author, journalist and war correspondent Nordahl Grieg came to stand during the Second World War and in the years after as one of the great poets of the time for the youth of the Nordic region. He wrote the poem "To the Youth" as a reaction to the growing fascism and Nazism in 1936. The poem can be seen as an expression that Grieg's attitude to life at that time was pacifism. The melody was written by the Danish composer Otto Mortensen, and the song is also known under the title of the first line "Surrendered by Enemies" (Kringsatt av fiender)

The state of the world and the role of the peace movement

By Ingeborg Breines, Norway

Ingeborg Breines opened her presentation by rejoicing over the historic moment when so many Nordic peace organizations came together to form and formalize a Nordic Peace Alliance.

She pointed to previous times when the idea of increased Nordic peace cooperation had arisen but not been implemented. Based on the horrible war in Ukraine and the political tension and the polarization in our societies, she stated that one important challenge in this diverse time is to tackle disagreements within the peace movement. She took us back to the historical split during WW1 between patriotism – the willingness to kill and be killed for your country - and pacifism and stated that the old peace organizations still function as guardians of peace history and fountains of experience.

Referring to a poem by the Persian poet Rumi, she hoped that we want to go beyond the existing, dominant polarization, the black and white thinking, of us and them, the good and the bad, and develop our own field, based on friendly cooperation and open, honest and respectful discussions.

Members of peace organizations should help each other not to be overwhelmed and destabilized by the present-day war rhetoric, war propaganda, disinformation, hate speech, fake news and creation of enemy images and with a clear anti-war stand, as persons with dreams and visions of a just and peaceful world. In times of war and tensions, it is particularly important not to lose sense of direction but keep alive the vision and dreams of the kind of society we want for our children, grandchildren and all the children of the world in the future.

She spoke in length of The International Peace Bureau, the International Trade Union Corporation, and the International Palme Centre updated version of the famous report on “Common Security”, and the ground-breaking UNESCO/UN culture of peace concept as major inspirational rethinking of security strategies.

She ended her presentation by saying that we should not allow the destruction of humanity and our beautiful planet and consequently cannot accept a continued misuse of the world's resources, natural, financial, and intellectual, for military purposes.

She hoped that the culture of peace thinking would be more closely linked to the implementation of the very important UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well the Paris Agreement on Climate and the Montreal Treaty on biodiversity.

Links

- Ingeborg Breines' presentation (20:29 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjI8cUmskh8>
- **Manuscript** Ingeborg Breines ...

1.2. PEACE AS A PRECONDITION FOR WELFARE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Welcome and introduction

By moderator, Hasse Schneidermann

Hasse welcomed and began his introduction by recalling that the purpose of this seminar was to develop cooperation between Nordic decision-makers and peace organizations from civil society on the development of Nordic peace policy - as a prerequisite for welfare and sustainable development.

He stated that the Danish organization "Ministry of Peace" (Fredsmiisterium) over the year has worked to develop a comprehensive alternative Danish and Nordic security and peace policy and had given high priority to Nordic peace cooperation by participating in many Nordic peace meetings.

He had found a growing political and popular interest and appetite for stronger Nordic cooperation and had noticed that leading Danish politicians distanced themselves from Nordic countries' "small state mentality" and wished for much bigger voices and visions. Many talks about increased defense and security policy cooperation while "Fredsmiisterium" of course argued that the Nordics should become a peace-politics superpower in the world!

This means he said that we should be critical of the increasing militarization and military cooperation - but also applaud when the Nordic decision-makers takes steps in our – more peaceful - direction.

That happened in April 2019 when the Nordic Council of Ministers launched a report on "New Nordic Peace - Nordic peace and conflict resolution efforts" with a lot concrete recommendations on how the Nordic cooperation on Peace, could be strengthened.

It also happens this year, when Iceland holds the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers and as is customary have formulated their program for their presidency, "The Nordic region- a Force for Peace" ("Norden – En kraft for fred") The program says that they will "*emphasize that the issue of peace should be one of the cornerstones of Nordic cooperation*", and" put *special focus on how peace is a prerequisite for human rights, not least women's liberation, social stability and environmental protection*".

Link to "New Nordic Peace - Nordic peace and conflict resolution efforts."

<https://www.norden.org/en/publication/new-nordic-peace>

Video introduction of Nordic Peace - "Norden – en kraft for fred!"

By Pia Hansson from the Reykjavik Peace Center, the Institute for International Affairs, the Institute of Iceland

Pia presented the main points of their program on behalf of the Icelandic Presidency. She stated – with reference to the war in Ukraine – that, *"the discussion on peace, disarmament and peaceful resolutions of disputes has therefore rarely been more important."* She concluded her greeting by inviting everybody to the "International Peace Conference "The Imagine Forum" in Harpa, Reykjavik 10th – 11th of October.

Here they will *"highlight the importance of peace as a prerequisite for human rights, welfare, women's liberation and environmental protection and link this to the vision that the Nordic region must become the world's most sustainable and integrated region"*.

Link to the Icelandic program "Norden en Kraft for fred"

<https://www.norden.org/da/publication/norden-en-kraft-fred>

Approaches to a sustainable security policy – a necessary consideration

By Steen Folke "No to Armaments – Yes to Sustainable Security Policy" (Nej til oprustning – Ja til bæredygtig sikkerhed, NTO)

Before Steen Folke spoke on the contours of a Sustainable Security Policy, he presented his organization 'No to Armaments – Yes to Sustainable Security Policy' and touched upon a subject that he knew was controversial in the Danish peace environment, namely that Denmark should continue to support Ukraine's defense but also work for an armistice under international control and diplomacy, aimed at negotiations between Ukraine/USA and Russia.

NTO has argued strongly against the massive armaments race that is now underway in Denmark and the other NATO countries. He encouraged the Nordic peace movements to find ways to influence NATO in a more constructive and peaceful direction, and to take a firm stand on a loud No! to US American bases and nuclear weapons in the Nordic countries. Addressing the term 'Sustainable Security policy' he pointed to two important developments which must be considered in contemporary security policy. The globally growing inequality – both economically, socially and politically, and the accelerating climate- and biodiversity-crisis, which threatens the planet's existence and is thus the greatest threat to the security of all people.

NTO is greatly inspired by Olof Palme's ideas of "Common Security", that nations and populations can only feel safe when their counterparts feel safe. Steen Folke drew the attention to the Palme International Centers new report, "For Our Shared Future" with updated principles that is like the security policy that NTO is developing.

Links

- "For Our Shared Future": https://ipb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CommonSecurity_Report_2022_EN.pdf
- Presentation by Steen Folke: (24:51 min.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVA6B8JCrXA>
- Link to the pamphlet (in Danish): "Bæredygtig Sikkerhedspolitik – en nødvendig omtanke" ("Sustainable Security Policy – a necessary reflection") <https://nejtiloprustning.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/pamflet-Baeredygtig-Sikkerhedspolitik-NtO-020323.pdf>

Dialogue between presenters and audience on Nordic Peace

The NTO pragmatic stand on NATO and double stand about the war in Ukraine led to some interesting debate.

As the overall purpose of the Nordic Peace Alliance is to develop and promote a Nordic non-military sustainable peace and security policy - many welcomed the inspiring work of the think-tank “Omtænketank,” and proposed that they translated the pamphlet into English. Some believed that the concept of “sustainable” was overwrought and empty of content – as goes for the UN sustainable goals.

Since the representatives from the Icelandic presidency was not present, we could not talk to them about future cooperation between Nordic decision-makers and peace organizations about development of Nordic peace policy. However, the content of the Icelandic program is completely in line with the thoughts and plans for the work in the Nordic Peace Alliance. Many was delighted with the invitation to the conference in October, and we will send representatives to Iceland.

1.3. THE NORDIC COUNTRIES AND NATO

The seminar was organized as a panel discussion with representatives from the four Nordic countries present and from the Åland islands. The interventions by the five panelists were recorded by Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse. Hence, only some main points from their talks will be reported here, whereas more space will be given to the unrecorded remarks by the moderator and to the discussion following the talks.

Link to the interventions

<https://www.youtube.com/@esbjergfredsbevægelse3430/videos>

Introduction by moderator Thomas Wallgren (Finland)

The moderator reminded the audience that the world has experienced two hard years with wars, increased tension, floods of refugees, starvation, pandemics, etc. He then introduced the seminar by reading the instructions given to the panelists:

“We encourage you to cover from your personal perspective some of the themes listed here: Recent dynamics in the debates in the peace movement in your country, including debates about NATO-membership: What are the possible convergencies and disagreements and the sources of them? What is difficult, perhaps divisive? What are the proposals, what continues, what changes? What inspires and mobilises? Is the movement growing? What is the role of cooperation with environment, anti-racist, feminist and other movements?

Please include considerations on the questions of nuclear weapons and foreign bases and "special zones". Which are the promising paths to a sustainable peace in the Nordic area? What would you like from our Peace Alliance? In what way can we benefit from cooperation in the Nordic countries?”

The present situation in the Nordic countries

Tove Jensen, The Peace Initiative, (Fredsinitiativet) Denmark highlighted the secret negotiations going on between the U.S. and Denmark concerning a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA). There is no certainty that the U.S. will abstain from deployment of nuclear weapons; Denmark remembers well what happened in Greenland. The issue” No to foreign bases, no to foreign troops on Danish soil” has united the Danish peace movement. A campaign is being mounted, culminating in November 2023, when the DCA is expected to be published. The Baltic Sea as a sea of peace is another theme in the campaign.

An important lesson from the campaign has been that young activists favor an inclusive approach uniting peace and environment (peace with earth and peace on earth – a slogan

recently used in Sweden to emphasize the unity of peace and environmental issues), whereas older people can still be caught in a cold war syndrome.

[Link to presentation by Tove Jensen: \(13:39\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BREvtv9xu3M>

Timo Virtala, “Christian peace movement”, Finland

Timo answered the question what has inspired him: The daily protests against the Russian attack on Ukraine which have been going on outside the Russian consulate in Mariehamn, Åland, done without hate against Russians being displayed. This is an example of what Martin Luther King Jr. called channeling aggression into something constructive. Timo reminded us about the history of the peace movement recommending the book by Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro: *The Internationalists*. The peace movement has indeed achieved results: both the number of wars and the number of victims of war has gone down. Cooperation with Russian peace movements should be taken up again when it is possible, and TIMO recalled the positive experience of the Baltic Glory exercises held in Åland and Lovisa, Finland.

[Link to presentation by Timo Virtala: \(13:38 min.\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrgPgSvh-AM>

Kristine Mollø-Christensen “Stop NATO”, Norway

Kristine stated that Norway is not a peace-loving country. Firstly, it is a major weapons exporter, a recent example being launch units for cluster munitions delivered through the UK to Ukraine. Secondly, Norway takes part in wars outside its own territory. Thirdly, Norway is deeply integrated in NATO and is an important transit country for NATO when it comes to supplying Finland, Sweden and the Baltic states, as was emphasized in the NATO summit in Vilnius. The new NATO regional defense plans and the Special DCA concluded with the U.S. imply that the Nordic area has become an integrated part of NATO strategy to a greater extent than before, leading to greater pressure on the Arctic.

Finally, Kristine felt that democracy and free speech are being threatened in Norway.

[Link to presentation by Kristine Mollø-Christensen \(11:44 min.\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYSypNPGebo>

Eva Jonson “Nej till NATO”, Sweden

Eva described how the recurrent military exercises in Sápmi disturb the lives of the Sámi people, especially the annual Arctic Challenge exercise during the reindeer calving season. Swedish membership in NATO will increase the capability of NATO to wage war against Russia: Dominance of the Baltic Sea, high levels of Swedish technology and armaments, Swedish facilities for electronic surveillance. In the process of striving for NATO membership Sweden has compromised its stance on civil liberties through new legislation on terrorism and espionage (terroristlagstiftningen, utlandsspionerilagen).

[Link to presentation by Eva Jonson: \(6:54\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvT5U-1wcUY>

The Baltic Sea and demilitarization

By Sia Spiliopoulou-Åkermark “The Åland Islands Peace Institute”

Sia concentrated her message in: “Do not destroy things that work well”, the demilitarization of the Åland Islands being an obvious example. She emphasized that militarization and the erosion of the international legal system affects different parts of countries unequally and spoke in favor of territorial disarmament measures. Åland is the only nuclear weapons free zone in the Nordic region at present. On a positive note, she noted the recent UN Convention

on Biological Diversity adopted by the UN International Law Commission and endorsed by the UN General Assembly Finally, she noted that NATO not only deals with military matters, but also with civil issues, and she argued that these should also be discussed regularly in the parliaments of the member countries.

Links

- The Åland Peace Institute <https://peace.ax/>
- The presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sTXZidPv8o> (10:36 min.)
- The UN Convention on Biological diversity
- <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>
- The principles of Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict (N2274164.pdf (un.org)).
https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/8_7_2022.pdf

Dialogue

In the discussion following the interventions, several speakers noted the importance of questions related to nuclear weapons and that the following issues could form common points of action: No to NATO's first strike policy, signing and ratifying the TPNW by all Nordic countries, the establishment of a Nordic nuclear weapons Free Zone.

- Ingeborg Breines (WILPF Norway) stated that strategies of exit from NATO should now be considered.
- Tord Björk (Artists for Peace, Sweden) called out that we are on the brink of a catastrophe and called for education of needed change makers.
- Lena Angviken (Women for Peace, Sweden) expressed concern about the outsourcing of war (Blackwater, Wagner).
- Jouni Sirén (Finnish Peace Committee) had noted that the speech by President Biden in Vilnius was full of pompous words and suggested that they be used as an agenda to push NATO to live up to its own words.
- Einar Brathen (Peace Initiative, Norway) found the Finnish thoughts naive; the U.S. and Pentagon cannot be reformed. He noted the deleterious effect of U.S. bases in the Nordic countries on Nordic-Russian relations.
- Per Botolf Maurseth (No to nuclear weapons, Norway) regretted that the old exceptions that Norway had posed on nuclear weapons could no longer be considered valid.
- Kristine Mollø-Christensen (Stop NATO, Norway) remarked that the DCAs were drawn up according to a common scheme. She stated that the private sector is getting more linked together with the military than before, and that NATO itself stresses the importance of linking the military and research environments closer together.

1.4. ALTERNATIVES TO WAR: IF YOU WANT PEACE, PREPARE FOR PEACE

The purpose of this seminar was to specify and examine some of the elements that constitute the bases for peace, elements that concerns our individual thoughts and ideas as well as national and international structures.

How do we prepare for peace?

by Liss Schanke, Norway, moderator

Liss Schanke gave some introductory remarks to this panel. She started by quoting the old Roman saying "Si vis pacem, para bellum" – If you want peace, prepare for war – and that this also is the philosophy of NATO. She described the contrary method if we tried to achieve

peace by preparing for peace. This would imply profound changes, to our ways of thinking, to our educational system, to national and international institutions.

She also mentioned that the Nordic countries were among the first to introduce Ministries for environmental protection and for Equality. These ministries were ridiculed at the time but have contributed to change the public discourse and policy regarding environmentalism and gender equality. The same would probably happen with a Ministry of Peace?

Link to introduction by Liss Schanke [missing]

A theory of peace, from deterrence to common security

by Karin Utas Carlsson, Sweden

Karin Utas Carlsson presented “A theory of peace: from deterrence to common security” based on the ideas of the Australian diplomat John W Burton. Military deterrence has proved not to work, and we need alternative solutions: to go from collective security to common security and realize that no one can feel secure until everyone feels secure. She went on to quote John W. Burton, who said that “Deterrence theory, the basis of domestic enforcement and international strategies, is undermined, because deterrence cannot deter in conditions in which human needs are frustrated.”

There are similarities between conflicts at the local and the global level, and instead of the pathway of escalation we have to seek out the pathway of conflict resolution. She suggested that an emerging paradigm should replace the power paradigm. The emerging paradigm includes recognizing that conflicts is a natural part of life, and that the handling of conflict determines the outcome. It also involves seeing that the responsibility for conflict solving is common, instead of assuming that all responsibility lies with the other party. There are also differences between micro and macro conflicts since macro conflicts also include a complex network of actors and problems of structural violence. But Karin Utas Carlsson believes that the traditional form of security policy actually creates insecurity, and that we can use knowledge of conflict resolution on the micro level to solve security problems on the macro level. She mentioned that she is considering an association called” Burton´s Friends” to discuss with likeminded people these ideas to try and change general thinking on security policy.

Link to presentation by Karin Utas Carlsson (15:16 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QITThVsT-c>

Peace education now

by Hanna Niittymaki, Finland

Hanna Niittymaki talked about peace education, believing that peace education needs to start already in elementary school, to help pupils learn how to get along with each other. She formulated her definition of peace education as “to live like a human”, implying: awareness of one’s values, empathy skills, dialogue skills, reconciliation skills, non-discrimination, nonviolence – and love towards people, other animals and the whole planet

She also emphasized that you could *act* in an emphatic way without actually *feeling* empathy, and that a constant feeling of empathy towards others suffering can be exhausting. We should also be aware of who we include in our empathetic outlook, so not do discriminate. At the end she stated specific ways to behave like a human, including to recognize the dignity of all human beings and live accordingly – hate increases hate and love increases love.

Link to Power point presentation by Hanna Niittymaki: (12:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTtrd53gAfM>

The role of a Ministry of Peace by Hasse Schneidermann, Denmark

Hasse Schneidermann spoke of the role of a Ministry of Peace. In Denmark, activists are working for establishing a Ministry of Peace as an integral part of national government. However, he stated that it had been difficult to make this a part of the political agenda despite years of working both in Denmark and internationally.

Schneidermann thought that the establishment of disarmament committees could be a starting point, and that we need to speak more of peace than of security policy. Peace researchers and activists should be consulted before major foreign policy decisions are made, and we should be educated about resistance without violence. All political decisions now need to take the effects on environment and equality into account, the same should be the case with peace. He hoped that the new Nordic Peace Alliance could establish a working group and have seminars about Peace Ministries and recommended organisation, GAMIP, Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures of Peace.

Link to presentation by Hasse Schneidermann: (13:56 min.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH0Be1_KPzg

Alternatives to Conflict and War by Ingeborg Breines, Norway

Ingeborg Breines presented alternatives to conflict and war. She finds the UNESCO culture of peace initiative to be the best formulated alternative to war, violence and militarism. She mentioned the preface to UNESCO's Constitution: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defenses for peace must be constructed" and The Manifesto 2000 on a Culture of Peace, signed by 75 million people who commit themselves to: Respect all life, reject violence, share with others, listen to understand, preserve the planet and rediscover solidarity. Peace culture can be achieved by working for peace education, sustainable development, democracy, freedom of speech, tolerance, peace departments and peace tax, and civil and social service as an alternative to military service.

Breines underlined the importance to keep existing Nordic, European and international organizations and institutions working for peace, such as the UN, the OSCE and the Arctic Council, which must include Russia. Erica Chenoweth showed in the broad study "Why civil resistance works" that non-violent actions are more than twice as successful in reaching their goals as actions allowing the use of force and weapons. Research also shows that for peace negotiations to be sustainable they must take as point of departure the real and fundamental problems at hand, involving the local, affected people. When women participate in peace negotiations the agreements tend to last much longer than if made by the warring parties. To truly constitute an alternative to war, it is important to avoid condemnation and humiliation that makes diplomacy and reconciliation impossible.

Link to presentation by Ingeborg Breines (16:57 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo38vGIspIA>

Dialogue

During the following questions to the panelists and group discussions, several points were raised by the audience, including:

- We need to prepare for a post-war security architecture in Europe that includes Russia, with the Nordic countries as a nuclear weapons free zone as part of this peace architecture.
- We should not be moralistic but show how alternative use of military budgets can be used for environmental protection and social welfare.
- A Peace Ministry might exist in addition to the ministry of defense even if they would disagree, like the ministry of Finance and the Ministry of environment.

- Self-sufficiency should be seen as a natural and important part of national security.

1.5. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE PEACE AND CLIMATE MOVEMENTS

Introduction

by facilitator, Tim Liebenhoff, The Norwegian Peace Association, Norway

The Seminar started with a 10-minute introduction by Tim Liebenhoff, campaigner for the campaign 'Peace & the Environment' at the Norwegian Peace Association. The aim of the introduction was to create a baseline for the attendees concerning the intersectionality of peace- and environmental/climate work. The focus was on a holistic approach which showed that short-term decisions within the fossil fuel dependency of our economic and social systems are leading causes for war of autocratic regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, but also for market-based representative democracies such as the USA.

It was pointed out several times that time to work on these issues is running out.

Environmental degradation and climate change are threatening democratic values and bring the exploitation of disenfranchised communities in the spotlight. The goal of the Seminar was to kick off a working group within a Nordic framework which tackles these issues in a holistic approach.

Professor Ove Jakobsen, The Hardanger Academy, Norway.

With an initial analysis of our current global system, he stated that current economic values are in conflict with both society and the environment. Based on the theories of positive and negative peace by Johan Galtung, the concept of a holistic approach to circular economies was introduced, which aims to combine nature, economy and culture. The lecture ended with a showcase of courses on peace, environment and development (ie Ecological economics for sustainable local communities; Ecological farming for food security, human well-being and healthy ecosystems; Dialogue society for co-creation and co-responsibility) which are and could be developed in co-creation.

Link to presentation by Ove Jakobsen (27:17 min.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ18_kYsT0s

Palle Bendsen, ICAN and NOAH Friends of the Earth, Denmark

Palle took the stage to inform on the work he has done. Setting the baseline, it was emphasized that all aspects concerning our society are connected: Climate policy is security policy. Climate, war, power and the military are defined by the same problems and solutions. Especially concerning the climate debate, geopolitics is kept out of the discussion, as the conversation has been framed by actors in the global north. It was especially refreshing to hear that Palle Bendsen has worked on the intersectionality between environmental- and peace- work since many years in collaboration with "Fredsmiljøministeriet" in Denmark. The lecture ended with a message of positivity, saying that hope can be found within the climate-peace-disarmament nexus which is being worked on globally.

Link to presentation by Palle Bendsen: (25:10 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT7WUTIEYEs>

Thea Emilie Maubach-Vindenes and Ragnhild Bergli, Changemaker, Norway

One of the highlights of the conference was Changemaker's introduction to the holistic approach the organisation works for a fairer and more just world. Anticipated by many, the Norwegian Church Aid's youth organizations' representatives presented their toolkit of campaigning, lobbying, activism and representation at international meetings (f ex COP). Their main areas of work for creating change is a holistic approach including: peace, climate

& the environment, finance, debt and international trade, as well as global health. Changemaker has had success in collaborating with a broad movement of civil society organizations and political parties.

The Seminar started with a 15-minute delay due to general delays throughout the day, causing that the Q&A session after the Seminar was cut short, so that the rest of the day could continue as planned. Even though discussion on this topic is necessary, it is necessary to continue this conversation on a constant level. An open invitation to participants in forming a working group on the topics presented in the last hour was issued as a last statement. This was understood by many attendees, and first commitments to work on these topics together were made just shortly after the Seminar ended.

Link to presentation by Thea Emilie Maubach-Vindenes and Ragnhild Bergli: (14:12 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVqzakNz-uQ>

1.6. THE WAR IN UKRAINE: EXPERIENCE, ALTERNATIVES AND SOLUTIONS

Introduction

by moderator Ida Harsløf, Denmark

Moderator Ida Harsløf welcomed the participant and presenters. She underlined the purpose of the seminar, that was to have a dialogue between presenters and participants on how we can work together to stop the war, via ceasefire and negotiation and in the longer term to develop a Nordic sustainable peace and security policy.

After the war – the peace and our common future

The Secretary General Anna Sundström from the Palme Center could not participate. She instead sent her best wishes, and pointed to a video on the new initiative from the center

The International Palme Centre in Stockholm, the International Trade Union Corporation (ITUC) and the International Peace Bureau (IPB) have developed an updated version of the famous report of the Olaf Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security from 1982. The Common Security report from the eighties was instrumental in guiding the world out of the last cold war. It helped many to understand that if one country builds a strong military, the neighbours will be afraid and will do the same, then the others get scared and continue to militarize with the risk of an endless spiral of militarization - profiting only the arms industry and the big powers.

This new “common security”-plan builds on these well-known and UN principles, such as freedom from fear and need, disarmament and confidence-building measures, respect for international law, dialogue and conflict prevention measures.

Link to Olof Palme International Center, After the war – the peace and our shared future.
 Video <https://commonsecurity.org/>

The consequences of prolonged war and options for conflict resolution

by Jørn Boye Nielsen, Denmark

Jørn Boye Nielsen, who is a well-known expert in international conflict resolution and co-author of several books on this subject, based his presentation on how conflicts usually develop. He criticized the warring parties - including the Danish government - for leading an old-fashioned win-lose conflict-escalating policy that, with increased arms support for Ukraine, and fighting until they win the war - over the nuclear power, Russia.

He presented various scenarios of how the war might develop, predicting that during the winter it would lead to neither side making any progress on the battlefield and that Western support would cool off. Maybe a stalemate on the battlefield would be followed by a political solution where neither party wins nor loses, a frozen conflict, like the one we know elsewhere, e.g., in Korea.

In a peaceful conflict resolution (win-win) perspective, Jørn Boye Nielsen said that we can now only work on helping the parties get down off the conflict ladder, with de-escalation, post-conflict and peacebuilding measures.

Jørn Boye Nielsen called on the Nordic peace movement to be prepared to push to get the warring parties to find common grounds and negotiate a solution that all parties in the conflict can live with.

Links

- Jørn Boye Niensens presentation on video here (30:11 min.)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_I-iIL7hHo

The mutual escalation and the danger of nuclear war

by Tarja Cronberg, Finland

Tarja Cronberg began her speech by stating that wars end with peace negotiations and peace treaties, only if there is political will, on both sides, to reach for peace and that so far there has not been any political will to end the war. She mentioned several of the peace proposals that have been and are in play and drew attention to the fact that one critical actor was absent: The United Nations is the organization in charge of maintaining peace in the world.

She subsequently explained the mutual escalation, and emphasized, that while the western side supports Ukraine with increasingly advanced technology, the Russian escalation is mainly based on the mobilization of more and more soldiers and mercenaries. A parallel line of the Russian escalation is the use nuclear threats, which is an organic part of nuclear deterrence, but in this situation, is a real risk that that Russia might use tactical nuclear weapons - even though the likelihood is not very high.

Tarja said that despite the serious threat to Mankind, the international community is poorly prepared for it and pointed to the urgent need for a stronger international institutional responsibility for the governance of national decisions on nuclear threats and use.

She encouraged the Nordic peace movement to develop a strategy to promote the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the long term and in the short term to fight for international measures to control that no one person is able to initiate a nuclear war.

Links

- Tarja Cronberg presentation (24:22 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSlwcvVMO0>

Dialogue

The dialogue between presenters and audience revolved around the following issues:

- what the Nordic peace movement can do against the increased militarization in Finland and Sweden
- when a "hurting stalemate" in the war will occur and a cease-fire can be achieved and peace negotiations can begin.

- whether the expressed Russian security interests are legitimate in the sense of international law.
- which concrete reforms can strengthen the UN's role in the short and long term.
- whether we can and should propose that the USA and Russia withdraw nuclear weapons from the Europe and Belarus.

There seemed to be agreement that the Nordic peace movement must work for the Nordic countries to join the UN ban treaty and work for countries to participate as observers at the UN state party meeting in November.

1.7. CLOSING WORDS

The coordination committee had two main goals for this Nordic meeting:

1. Hold an interesting seminar with at least 50 participants at the International College in Helsingør with good presentations and discussions on key peace issues.
This goal was fulfilled, there were a total of 65 participants at the meeting 14.-15.7 attending the seminars.
2. Assemble peace organizations from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, found a Nordic Peace Alliance and elect a new coordination committee.
This goal was fulfilled as well. The Nordic Peace Alliance was established 16.7 with representatives from 24 peace organizations.

Even though the coordination committee has had participation from one Icelandic peace organization in some of the preparatory meetings, there were no Icelandic participants at the meeting in Helsingør. Including Icelandic peace organizations will be a priority task for the new coordination committee.

The task of the new coordination committee is to discuss the proposals made at the founding meeting on 16 July and to make suggestions how to organize cooperation between interested peace organizations to realize the proposals and ideas.

PART 2: MINUTES FROM THE FOUNDING MEETING FOR A NORDIC PEACE ALLIANCE, 16.7.

International People's College Monte Bello Allé 1 A, Helsingør 16. July 2023 10.00-16.00 Present

Denmark: *Spokespersons:* Ida Harsløf, WILPF. Martin Mørch, Aldrig Mere Krig, Hasse Schneidermann, Peace ministry, Poul Eck Sørensen Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse, Palle Bendsen Forbyd Atomvåben ICAN, Sten Folke Nej til oprustning – Ja til bæredygtig sikkerhedspolitik, Carsten Andersen Aarhus Mod Krig og Terror, Tove Jensen Peace Initiative.

Observers: Hanne Petersen WILPF, Solveig Sieg Sørensen WILPF, Helge Ratzer Peace ministry, Käte Sørensen Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse, Kiss Eck Sørensen Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse, Oluf Dragsbo, Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse, Lisbet Skou Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse, Birgit Sørensen Peace ministry, Jørgen Manniche Peace ministry, Hanne Thomsen Aarhus Mod Krig og Terror.

Norway: *Spokespersons:* Liss Schanke, WILPF, Per Botolf Maurseth No to Nuclear Weapons, Kristine Mollø-Christensen Stop NATO, Bjarne Lavik Anti-war Initiative, Johanne Hartwig Hardanger Academy, Tim Liebenhoff Norwegian Peace Association (Fredslaget), Einar Braathen Peace Initiative 2022.

Observers: Ove Daniel Jacobsen Hardanger Academy, Ingeborg Breines, WILPF, Gro Finne WILPF. Lisbeth Kristiansen WILPF, Anne Kersti Bjørn Peace Initiative 2022. Aslak Storaker Stop NATO.

Finland: *Spokespersons:* Marianne Laxén Finnish Peace Union/WILPF, Ronja Iso-Heiko Finnish Peace Union, Claus Montonen Technology for Life, Timu Virtala Finnish Christian Peace, Teemu Matinpuro, Finnish Peace Committee.

Observers: Tarja Cronberg, Finnish Peace Union, Daria Tarkhova Finnish Peace Committee, Hanna Niittymäki Finnish Peace Committee, Jouni Siren, Finnish Peace Committee.

Sweden: *Spokespersons:* Ingalill Bjartén, Women for Peace, Eva Jonson, No to Nato, Tord Björk Artists for Peace.

Observers: Caroline Runesdotter Swedish Women's Left Union, Kristina Post Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, Sylvia Rönn Women for Peace, Karin Utas Carlsson Women for Peace.

1. Welcome

by Hasse Schneidermann

2. Formalities

Election of moderator and rapporteur Moderators: Marianne Laxén up to lunch, Ingalill Bjartén after lunch. Rapporteur: Karin Utas Carlsson

3. Short presentation of spokespersons and observers

4. Presentation of Nordic Peace Alliance

Description by Tim Liebenhoff Norway.

Decision: The Nordic Peace Alliance Description, previously sent out was accepted with one change: “the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania” to “the Baltic Sea region”. **This change was taken in consensus as was the entire description (attachment 1).**

5. Dialogue on Nordic current peace issues

The participants came up with various suggestions on which activities could be started and which working groups could be formed. See Attachment 2. It was decided that the coordination committee would consider the proposals.

6. Breakout into national groups

7. Official founding of Nordic Peace Alliance.

There was a consensus for the description and the founding of the Nordic Peace Alliance. **The founding of the Nordic Peace Alliance was declared with acclamation.**

8. Appointment of the coordination committee

Two representatives and one deputy from each country. The following persons were elected in consensus:

Denmark: Lisbet Skou, Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse and Hanne Petersen, WILPF Denmark. As deputy: Palle Bendsen, Forbyd Atomvåben – ICAN in Denmark.

Norway: Tim Liebenhoff, Norwegian Peace Association (Fredslaget) and Einar Braathen, Peace Initiative 2022. As deputy Aslak Storaker, Stop NATO.

Finland: Teemu Matinpuro, Finnish Peace Committee and Marianne Laxén, Finnish Peace Union/WILPF Finland

As deputy: Jyry Virtanen, Finnish Conscientious Objectors.

Sweden: Ingalill Bjartén, Women for Peace and Karin Utas Carlsson, Women for Peace. As deputy: Tord Björk, Artists for Peace.

9. Debate on current Nordic peace issues and joint initiatives 2023-2024

The discussion started in agenda point 5 continued. See Attachment 3.

10. Adoption of political statement from the meeting

There were three proposals to decide upon, which had been discussed in the national groups before lunch. 1. Open letter: Peace talks instead of war! No consensus. The proposal was sent to the coordination committee for further discussion. 2. Appeal to the Nordic governments to help ensure that the USA does not deliver cluster bombs to Ukraine. No consensus. The appeal was sent to the coordination committee for further discussion.

11. Appeal for a nuclear-weapon-free Nordic region

This appeal was taken in consensus (*attachment 3*).

Decision about a press release was left to the coordination committee.

12. End of meeting & decision on place for 2024 conference

The Nordic Peace Alliance was invited to hold the next conference in Finland in 2024. The exact time and place will be decided later. The moderator thanked the delegates and those in the interim coordination committee leaving and declared the founding meeting closed.

Marianne Laxén
moderator

Ingalill Bjartén
moderator

Karin Utas Carlsson
rapporteur

Attachment 1: Nordic Peace Alliance Description.

Attachment 2: Suggestions about activities and working groups.

Attachment 3: Appeal for a nuclear-weapon-free Nordic region.