

Henry Kissinger, Johan Galtung and the Nobel Peace Prize

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Introduction

Within a span of three months, two titanic figures passed away. Henry Alfred Kissinger, former US Secretary of State and National Security Adviser between 1969 and 1977, died on 29 November 2023 and Johan Vincent Galtung, father of peace studies, on 17 February 2024. Both were global influentials in their own way. Through their teaching, research, publications and discourses on war, conflict, violence, governance, power, security and peace, both influenced the power political world and the world of ideas for more than 60 years. Both significantly, albeit starkly differently, contributed to the evolution of political culture at local, regional and international levels in the post Second World War era. They will be remembered for the position they took on the challenges faced by humanity during the Cold War and after. Both will also be remembered for the unfortunate decision taken by the Oslo-based Norwegian Nobel Committee to award the Peace Prize to Kissinger in 1973 and deny the same to their native son – Galtung.

This paper discusses the life, achievements and works of Kissinger and Galtung and attempts to understand why Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and Galtung was not. It also discusses the salient features and trends of the award and assesses the impact of the two opposite decisions on the credibility of the Peace Prize itself and on the worldwide movement for peace, justice and change.

Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Peace Prize is the most prestigious international prize awarded to one individual or two, or a maximum of three individuals for their services to promote peace in their lifetime. Official announcement of the Prize is made during the first two weeks of October, and the Prize is awarded on 10 December in a formal ceremony in Oslo. On 10 December is also the death anniversary of the founder of all the Nobel Prizes – Alfred Nobel. So far, 141 Nobel Laureates have been awarded this Prize. The Laureates include 111 individuals and 27 organizations. Among the

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organizations, the Red Cross received the Prize three times (in 1917, 1944 and 1963), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) two times (in 1954 and 1981).¹ Even a cursory glance at the list of the Noble Peace Laureates and a sketchy review of the careers and services of the recipients may indicate that the selection process isn't too rigid and inflexible. It is ever evolving and improvising. For instance, a statement of Nobel Peace Prize Organization informs: 'Up until 1960, the Nobel Peace Prize was almost exclusively the preserve of highly educated white men from Europe and the USA. Only once had the prize gone to a candidate from a country outside Europe and the US, when it was awarded to the Argentine Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas (1936)'.² The gradual globalization of the Peace Prize began in 1960, when Albert John Luthuli, the Zulu chief, teacher and religious leader from South Africa, was awarded the prize. The speed picked up in the 1980s and 1990s, and the trend has been further firmed up from 2001 on. Again, while the first Nobel Peace Prize awarded to a woman, the Austrian novelist and peace activist Bertha von Suttner, within five years of the launch of the Prize (in 1905), only 19 women have been awarded the Prize so far. In contrast, 92 men have received this award. However, the Norwegian Nobel Committee responsible for the final selection of the candidate or candidates for the Prize seems to be keen to make amends for neglecting the peacemaking and peace building role of women from around the world and causing a huge gender imbalance in the awards given. While only ten women were awarded the prize during hundred years (between 1901 and 2002), nine women received this prize during the next 24 years (from 2003 to 2024).³

Similarly, a closer look at the list of the recipients and their background, their clout and role in peacemaking and peace building may indicate the Nobel Committee's flexible approach towards making the final selection. It may further indicate the shift in the Committee's

¹ The Nobel Prize Organization, 'All Nobel Peace Prizes', <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-peace-prizes/>, last accessed 17 June 2024.

² The Nobel Peace Prize 'Peace Prize laureates and geography; The Globalization of the Nobel Peace prize', <https://www.nobelpeaceprize.org/nobel-peace-prize/about-the-nobel-peace-prize/peace-prize-laureates-and-geography>, last accessed 18 June 2024).

³ <https://www.nobelpeaceprize.org/nobel-peace-prize/about-the-nobel-peace-prize/women-laureates#:~:text=Only%2019%20women%20have%20been,Prize%20%E2%80%93%20compared%20to%2092%20men>, last accessed 18 June 2024.

concern towards old and emerging global issues from time to time and era to era. A report of the Nobel Peace Prize Organization says ⁴:

In the earliest years of the Peace Prize - up to World War I - the prize was often awarded to pioneers of the organized peace movement. In the inter-war years, the focus shifted to active politicians who sought to promote international peace, stability and justice by means of diplomacy and international agreements, but prizes were also awarded for humanitarian work (Nansen, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

Since World War II, the Peace Prize has principally been awarded to honour efforts in four main areas: arms control and disarmament, peace negotiation, democracy and human rights, and work aimed at creating a better organized and more peaceful world. In the 21st century the Nobel Committee has embraced efforts to limit the harm done by man-made climate change and threats to the environment as relevant to the Peace Prize.

The above statement indicates the extent to which the areas of global concern can be stretched by the Nobel Committee. Unlike the Nobel Prize in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature as well as the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, which seem to have defined boundaries, the Peace Prize is almost without borders. The open-ended approach and readiness to confer the award to any individual or organization to highlight any issue of global, regional or local concern as of utmost importance at any point of time for the entire humanity may have merit of its own. However, it is also likely that the selection is made to ensure that it doesn't cause a radical upset in the rules of power and governance games. For instance, the Nobel Committee's decision to offer the Peace Prize to Kissinger in 1973 and deny the same to Galtung during the following 50 years (1973-2023), like its unwillingness to award the prize to Mahatma Gandhi, indicates that sometimes the Prize may not be given to the most deserving candidates because of the fear that the rules of the power game may be crucially upset. The discussion below elaborates this point and suggests that certain awards were conferred without following Nobel's will in letter and spirit.

Alfred Nobel, a Swedish engineer and chemist, owner of 355 patents and an industrialist who had built some 90 factories and companies in 20

⁴ <https://www.nobelpeaceprize.org/nobel-peace-prize/about-the-nobel-peace-prize/>, last accessed 19 June 2024.

countries, was an amazing internationalist and philanthropist.⁵ Signing his will in 1895, he set aside a substantial part of his wealth to fund five prizes in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and peace to those 'who, during the preceding year' conferred 'greatest benefit on mankind.' His will says that the proposed peace prize would go to 'the person who shall have done the most or the best work for brotherhood between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.'⁶ While the prizes for physics and chemistry were to be awarded by the Swedish Academy of Sciences, that for physiological or medical works by the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, that for literature by the Academy in Stockholm, and that for 'champions of peace' by a committee of five members of the Norwegian Parliament-Storting - to be elected by the House itself.⁷

In other words, all the awards excepting peace are conferred by Swedish institutions, whose selection committees comprise leading experts in the relevant fields and whose recipients are usually distinguished educators, scholars, scientists and writers. In contrast, the final selection for the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize is made by five sitting members of the Norwegian parliament, who belong to different political parties and are selected by the parliament. Over the years, the decision for the award has often been censured on one ground or the other. For instance, the Norwegian Nobel Committee is criticized for often deviating from Nobel's will, not focusing on the challenge of abolishing or reducing standing armies, showing little respect for international peace congresses held from time to time, insulting the peace visionaries and peace academics by not selecting them for the award, presenting the prize to undeserving persons occupying high position in the governments or international organizations, and stretching or contracting the eligibility and selection criteria to confer the award on less deserving persons. According to Norwegian lawyer and peace activist, Fredrik Heffermehl, the prizes offered to UN agencies and other humanitarian prizes such as Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) and International Red Cross, though praiseworthy for their contribution to the alleviation of suffering, 'do not strive actively and as a matter of principle against war itself.'⁸ He devotes a full chapter of his

⁵ Nils K. Stahle, *Alfred Nobel and the Nobel Prize*, Stockholm: The Nobel Foundation, 1978, p. 9.

⁶ Derived from the will translated into English from Swede and reproduced in *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Fredrik S. Heffermehl, *The Nobel Prize: What Nobel Really Wanted?* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2010), p. 50.

book to discuss the political and corporate control of the prize since 1990 and observes elsewhere in the book:

The following awards were so distant from Nobel's idea of 'Champions of Peace' that they must be considered serious mistakes: Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin (shared, 1994); Anwar al-Sadat and Menachem Begin (shared, 1978); Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho (shared, 1973); George C Marshall (1953), Elihu Root (1912); and Theodore Roosevelt (1906).

Keeping the above in view, the following discussion on the life and works of Henry Kissinger and Johan Galtung attempts to understand why Kissinger was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize and Galtung was denied the same.

Henry Alfred Kissinger

Henry Alfred Kissinger is now history's baggage, which the history of the 20th and early 21st century will carry for a long time. It is, indeed, likely that new facts will be dug up in due course of time and credible new research on his life and times will eclipse the halo around him. However, history cannot abandon this settler in the corridors of power, a darling of the deep state of the US, a dear friend of the power-political international media, one of the most prominent proponents of realism and realpolitik, author of a series of globally influential books, and 'a man of three centuries.'⁹ Having lived for a hundred years (27 May 1923-29 November 2023), he will doubtless live in history for much longer, not only because of what he accomplished for himself and his country, but for being awarded the Peace Prize he didn't deserve. While the story of Kissinger doesn't begin or end with the Nobel Peace Prize, it is this prize which will determine his place in history and the place of the Nobel Peace Prize in history. Kissinger and the Nobel Peace Prize seem to be walking together forever and shaming each other.

The story of Kissinger's rise to fame and power is spectacular. Born at Furth, a city in the Bavarian region of Germany, in a Jewish family as Heinz Alfred Kissinger, this son of a teacher had bitter childhood memories of humiliation and intimidation at the hands of the local gangs of Nazi youth. In 1938, when he was 15, he and his family fled Nazi Germany and emigrated to the US as Jewish refugees. He became a naturalized citizen in 1943. The same year, when he was 20, he was

⁹ This expression was used by Angus Reilly in 'Kissinger: a man of three centuries', <https://engelsbergideas.com/notebook/kissinger-a-man-of-three-centuries/>, last accessed 23 June 2024.

drafted into the US Army and sent to Germany/Europe. From 1943 to 1946, he served in the US Counter Intelligence Corps Army. His enthusiasm for the chase and hunt of the Nazis didn't go unnoticed and unrewarded. 'Identifying, arresting and interrogating Gestapo officers and securing confidential informants,' observes Yale University Professor Greg Granden, 'Kissinger won a Bronze Star for his bravery and effectiveness.'¹⁰ Not unsurprisingly, he was retained as a captain in the Military Intelligence Reserve from 1946 to 1949.¹¹

On return from Germany in 1946, Kissinger focused on his studies, which was always his first love. He entered Harvard in 1947 and graduated *summa cum laude* with a Bachelor's in political science in 1950. In 1952, he did a Master's from Harvard, and earned a PhD degree from the same institution in 1954. The same year he joined Harvard as faculty, and became Professor of Government in 1962. He served as a member of the Harvard faculty from 1954 to 1969, obtaining tenure in 1959. In addition, he served as Director of the Harvard International Seminar from 1951 to 1971 and Director of the Harvard Defense Studies Program from 1958 to 1971. He also served as Study Director, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, for the Council of Foreign Relations from 1955 to 1956; and Director of the special projects for the Rockefeller Brothers Funds from 1956 to 1958.

Nevertheless, the German boy who was humiliated for being Jewish, later went through the pangs of being uprooted in his native country and the challenges of resettlement in faraway US. Harvard was doubtless a perfect launching pad for him. It was a world class university, attracting students from the business and power elites around the world, facilitating a number of distinguished teachers and researchers to get closer to the corridors of power in the US, and promoting worldwide networking with the powerful around the world. However, Harvard was a small world for Kissinger and his ambition. He remained a sort of academic throughout his life, energetically connecting with the leading universities, active research centres and major policy making centres within the US and outside, regularly travelling to near and far off destinations, building personal contacts with the prominent leaders of the developed and developing world, delivering lectures at leading international forums on the art, craft and compulsions of power, and making the best use of the opportunities that landed at his doorstep.

¹⁰ Greg Granden, 'Henry Kissinger: To Die at the Right Time' <https://jacobin.com/2023/11/henry-kissinger-to-die-at-the-right-time>, last accessed 24 June 2024.

¹¹ <https://www.k-state.edu/landon/speakers/henry-kissinger/>, last accessed 26 June 2024.

Small wonder, therefore, that back in 1955, only a year after obtaining a PhD degree and joining Harvard as faculty, the young scholar accepted a governmental assignment as consultant on security affairs, and served in this capacity to a number of government agencies including the Department of State (1965-68), United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1961-68), Rand Corporation (1961-68), National Security Council (1961-62), Weapons Systems Evaluation Group of the joint Chiefs of Staff (1959-60), Operations Coordinating Board (1955), Director of the Psychological Strategy Board (1952), Operations Research Office (1951), and Chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (1983-84).¹²

During the hectic period, which spanned the administrations of presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson, Kissinger established himself as a leading scholar of American strategic and foreign policy. Way back in 1957, he published a book titled *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* and instantly became a celebrity and the blue-eyed boy of the American establishment. This book was published when the Cold War had put the entire world on fire and when a ferocious nuclear arms race was already in full swing between the US and the Soviet Union. While his study opposed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' policy of planning a massive nuclear retaliation in case the Soviet Union attacked, it neither called for the end of the Cold War nor for the abolishment of nuclear weapons. Euphemistically called a 'Realist' and a 'Champion of Realpolitik,' the author had little concern regarding the devastating consequences of the Cold War and nuclear arms race for humanity. Instead, he was hugely concerned about the power, prestige and security of his adopted country-the US. He fuelled the American desire to fight out the Cold War on all its fronts and even a nuclear war with the enemy if the need arose. He, however, advocated a flexible response in nuclear war fighting with the Soviet Union.¹³

A big breakthrough came in the life and career of Kissinger, when he was appointed Assistant to the US President (President Richard Nixon) for National Security Affairs in January 1969. He held this position until November 1975. He also served as the 56th Secretary of State from September 1973 until January 1977, and earned the distinction of being the first foreign - born American to become Secretary of State. In addition, he earned the distinction of working simultaneously as Secretary of State and Foreign Security Adviser for some time, and

¹² <https://www.k-state.edu/landon/speakers/henry-kissinger/> last accessed 26 June 2024.

¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Kissinger>, last accessed 24 June 2024.

remained highly connected with the centres of power in his own country and abroad till the end of his life. He advised six US presidents, from John F. Kennedy to George H.W. Bush, and was frequently approached by other high officials working in important centres of power in the US and by the leaders of many foreign countries.

Between January 1969 and January 1977, when Kissinger held high positions in the government, he played a pivotal role in formulating and executing US security and foreign policy. The détente between the US and the Soviet Union during his tenure and the gradual improvement of Sino-US relations culminating in the historic visit of US President Richard Nixon to China from 21 to 28 February 1972 and ending 25 years of isolation between the two countries manifested the triumph of Kissinger's belief in the power of triangulation as a tool of diplomacy. It brought three most important powers of the time into a triangular and receding hostile relationship. Furthermore, the war in Vietnam and the neighbouring countries was temporarily brought to an end and Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy before, during and after the fourth Arab-Israeli war, waged between 6 to 26 October 1973, paved the way for improvement of relations among the warring parties and the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel on 26 January 1980. Kissinger is also given credit for eliminating or reducing the toxic power of several Third World regimes believed to be a threat to the vital interests of the US.

When Kissinger finally moved out of the office of Secretary of State in January 1977, he decided to make the best use of his time by writing books, giving lectures and interviews, and visiting centres of power all over the world. In total, he published more than 20 books. These include *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (1957), *The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (1961), *The White House Years* (1979), *Years of Upheaval* (1979), *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extraction from the Vietnam War* (2002), *On China* (2011), *World Order* (2014), *Diplomacy* (2014), *The Age of A.I. : And Our Human Future* (with co-authors Eric Schmidt and Daniel Huttenlocher, 2021), and *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy* (2022). A number of his publications ran into several editions and significantly impacted the power political circles around the world. Almost all the works strongly defended the actions and policies of the US in the name of national interest and security, and considerably strengthened the bastions of realpolitik in his country and beyond.

Kissinger was given many awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship (1965-66), the Woodrow Wilson Prize for the best book in the fields of government, politics and international affairs (1958), the

American Institute for Public Service Award (1973), the International Platform Association Theodore Roosevelt Award (1973), the Veterans of Foreign Wars Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal (1973), the Hope Award for International Understanding (1973), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977) and the Medal of Liberty (1986).¹⁴ However, one recognition he could never obtain was an honorary degree from his alma mater, Harvard.

However, there was one honor which was thrust on him, the Nobel Peace Prize. It was awarded to him and co-negotiator Le Duc Tho from the North Vietnamese regime for brokering peace and signing a ceasefire agreement on 27 January 1973 to end the Vietnam war. This war had protracted for more than a decade and resulted in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in the Southeast Asian region. Tho declined the award, saying that the war was still going on and Kissinger didn't turn up to receive the award during the lusterless ceremony held on 10 December 1973 in Oslo, saying that 'the press of business in a world beset by recurrent crisis' doesn't allow him to leave his fortress in USA.¹⁵ The ceasefire agreement was subsequently blown into pieces and a deadlier phase began soon after. It resulted in the retreat of the American military from Vietnam in 1975 and Vietnam officially got reunited in 1976. The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Kissinger continues to be bitterly criticized in many circles. This criticism is now all the more louder after the passing away of Johan Galtung on 17 February 2024.

Johan Vincent Galtung

Galtung was born on 24 October 1930 in Oslo, Norway. The Second World War and the experience and memories of the war considerably influenced his understanding of war and peace from an early age. In April 1940, when he was nine years old, a German warship, with over 2000 soldiers and sailors on board, was dispatched to Oslo Fjord to invade Norway. The ship burst into flames and sank after getting hit by an old torpedo. Galtung's father, who was an ear, nose and throat surgeon, worked day and night to save the life of as many soldiers as possible. When the young Johan asked his father if he wasn't sometimes tempted to let his 'scalpel slip a little,' the father's reply was: 'Absolutely not! The most essential duty of a physician is to save lives, anyone's life, without distinction.' The humanitarian approach of his father had a deep impact on little

¹⁴ Henry Kissinger: Former U.S. Secretary of State, <https://www.k-state.edu/landon/speakers/henry-kissinger/>, last accessed 26 June 2024.

¹⁵ Nobel Prize Organization, 'Award Ceremony Speech,' <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1973/ceremony-speech/>, last accessed 28 June 2024.

Galtung.¹⁶ He learnt more about war when he witnessed the destruction of Norway because of German occupation, and when his father, along with other prominent Norwegians, was taken to a Nazi concentration camp in Norway in 1944. He lived with his family in fear for months that the father would be killed by the Nazis. His father returned home only a month before the end of the war. When he was 17, he learnt about the assassination of Gandhi on 30 January 1948, and he cried. By that time, he was already beginning to hold a vague idea that there were alternatives to war and violence.¹⁷ Galtung was already a peace activist when the 1950s unfolded. He refused to join military service which was mandatory, declared himself a conscientious objector and opted to serve 18 months of social service instead. After a year, he sought permission of the government to allow him to spend the remaining six months doing peace related work. His request was turned down and he was sent to prison. While in prison, he wrote his first book together with his mentor, Arne Naess, titled *Gandhi's Political Ethics*. It was published in 1955.

Galtung's passion for peace and firm belief that peace is possible for all societies never dwindled. He obtained a degree equivalent to PhD in Mathematics and a degree in Sociology from the University of Oslo. At the age of 27, he joined Columbia University in New York as Assistant Professor for Mathematical Sociology. He was offered a tenure post there, but his passion for peace studies brought him back to Oslo, where he established the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), the world's first academic research centre focusing on peace studies, becoming the first Director of the Institute. Later he helped to establish dozens of peace research institutes around the world. He founded two high quality and influential research journals- *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964 and *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* in 1969 (now *Security Dialogue*). Furthermore, he assisted in founding the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) in 1964. IPRA has now grown into the largest global professional organization in the field of peace research.

Galtung left the directorship of PRIO in 1969 and joined the University of Oslo as Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, the world's first chair in peace and conflict studies, holding this position till 1978. Over the course of his seven-decade career, he was visiting professor of peace studies in 30 universities in different cities, including Berlin,

¹⁶ Dietrich Fischer, *Johan Galtung: The Pioneer of Peace Research*, Heidelberg: Springer, 2013, p. 3.

¹⁷ Henrik Urdal, 'Inspiration from a Father: Johan Galtung Interviewed by Henrik Urdal', *Prio/ Blogs*, 15 May 2019, <https://blogs.prio.org/2019/05/inspiration-from-a-father-johan-galtung-interviewed-by-henrik-urdal/>, last accessed 28 June 2024.

Belgrade, Paris, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Ritsumeikan (in Kyoto), Princeton, Tromsø, New Delhi, and Berne. He inspired thousands of students and researchers from all over the world and encouraged them to study peace studies and do serious peace research work. He also induced them to get actively involved in peace movements, including the anti-nuclear movement, pro-democracy movement, movement against violence to women and children, and movements against economic and cultural exploitation, human rights violations, slavery of all kinds, extremism and racism. Perhaps it won't be an exaggeration to say that the history of these and several other movements for peace and change won't be complete without referring to Galtung's ground-breaking studies on peace and change.

As peace teacher, peace scholar, globe-trotter and conference and seminar frequenter, Galtung was also a prolific writer. He was author or co-author of over 150 books, sole author of 96. He also published more than 1,700 articles in research journals and popular magazines and as book chapters. His works have been translated into 30 languages. Especially the peace knowledge world is immensely indebted to him for his original research and insights into many areas of intellectual inquiry such as peace studies, peaceful conflict transformation, reconciliation, education, macro-history, theory of civilization, human rights, basic needs, life-sustaining economy, future studies, deep culture as well as non - offensive defense, religion and peace, ecology, sociology and health sciences. Besides earning worldwide reputation as the founder of the discipline of peace studies, he is highly rated in leading academic and research circles as an exceptional thought leader who gave a new peace perspective to various academic disciplines including mathematics, physics, medical sciences, sociology, psychology, international relations, political science, history, journalism, anthropology and gender studies,

An idea of the wide range of his intellectual and philosophical explorations can be ascertained by referring to the title of some of his recent books. These include *A Theory of Conflict: Overcoming Direct Violence* (2010), *A Theory of Development* (2010), *Reporting Conflict: New Directions in Peace Journalism* (with Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, 2010), *A Theory of Peace – Building Direct – Structural – Cultural Peace* (2012), *Reconciliation: Clearing the Past, Building a Future* (2012), *Peace Mathematics* (with Dietrich Fischer, 2012), *Peace Economics – From a Killing to a Living Economy* (2012), *A Theory of Civilization – Overcoming Cultural Violence* (2014), *The South Shaping the Global Future* (2014), *Abolishing War – Criminalizing War, Removing War Causes, Removing War as Institution* (with Erika Degortes, Irene Galtung, Malvin Gattinger and Naako Grant-Hayford, 2015), and *The Art of Peace* (2017).

In many ways, directly or indirectly, all these studies and several others not listed here revolve around wars, conflicts and violence and attempt to offer solutions for peaceful resolution. According to Bishnu Pathak, a leading South Asia peace scholar, some of the major ideas put forward by him include: 'Direct, Structural and Cultural Violence, Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means (Transcend Method), Transcend Method in Conflict Mediation Across Levels, Mahatma Gandhi as the Master of Masters, Peace Journalism, and from a 20th Century of War to a 21st Century of Peace.' Pathak adds that 'Democracy for Peace and Development, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, the Six and Fifteen Contradictions of USSR and USA respectively, and Reconciliation are some of the other key parts of Galtung's findings,' and also points out that 'Galtung frequently refers to the negative vs. positive peace and peace-conflict lifecycle and their structural and institutional, individual, procedural, and political levels of relations.'¹⁸ Galtung – almost always – puts forward persuasive arguments to stress that wars can be avoided, conflicts can be resolved peacefully and a better future can be built for all. The medical profession was the main profession of his ancestors for several generations. He turned out to be a social scientist but also emerged as a physician of a different type. His patients were not individuals, but entire societies with their pathologies. He adopted the terminology of medicine, developed diagnosis (source of suffering), prognosis (what is likely to happen if not attended to) and therapy (what possibly can be done to reduce violence and sufferings). At a later stage, he added 'therapy of the past' or counter-factual history: how violence could have been prevented if different courses of action had been taken at a given point in the past.¹⁹ Explaining the parallel between disease/health and violence/peace in an excellent study published by the UN, Galtung observes: ²⁰

Peace can be defined as the capacity to handle conflict autonomously, nonviolently, creatively, with participation of everybody, just as health can be defined as 'the capacity to handle disease oneself, without doing violence to the body' (like surgery,

¹⁸ Bishnu Pathak, 'Johan Galtung's Conflict Transformation Theory for Peaceful World: Top and Ceiling of Traditional Peacemaking', 29 August 2016, <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/08/johan-galtungs-conflict-transformation-theory-for-peaceful-world-top-and-ceiling-of-traditional-peacemaking/>, last accessed 3 July 2024.

¹⁹ <https://www.galtung-institut.de/en/home/johan-galtung/>, last accessed 29 June 2024.

²⁰ Johan Galtung, *Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means (the Transcend Method)*, Module VII Unit 31, Geneva: United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme, 2000, p.2

chemotherapy, radiotherapy). Sometime we may have to use a minimum of violence for the greater good of health/peace. But we should not idealize those means; they are stop-gap measures, and nonviolent means should always be tried first

In 1993, Galtung founded Transcend International, a global network for peace. It comprised both peace scholars and peace activists. Ever since its establishment, the network has been galloping ahead and making its presence felt in the knowledge world as well as in the policy making centres. Since 2000, it has been running the Transcend Peace University, the world's first online peace studies university. It has pooled together peace teachers and scholars and dispute resolvers from all over the world. It offers dozens of online courses on peace and peace-related themes and issues to students drawn from different parts of the world. In addition, Galtung founded the Transcend University Press in 2008. It encouraged online publication of important works of peace scholars, and facilitated translation and their online publication in different languages. A media wing was also established to emphasize the importance of peace journalism and project its role in helping resolve conflicts at local, national and international levels. While the creation of an innovative institutional support system to pave the way for the resolution of conflicts and dissemination of peace thinking is itself a significant contribution of Galtung to peace building, no less significant is his novel approach to peaceful conflict resolution.²¹

Clearly Galtung was not simply a theorist of peace or a prolific writer on peace; nor was he only a major social science academic establishing peace studies as a social science discipline. He was also a practitioner and proponent of peace diplomacy and peace action and a peace visionary, who helped peace studies transform into an applied social science. His exceptionally busy life was, therefore, not only dedicated to theorizing, but also dedicated to the practical application of his peace building methodologies. He, in fact, offered concrete evidence to show that peace through peaceful means is possible. He mediated in over 150 conflicts between states, nations, religions, civilizations, communities and persons since 1957.

By any criterion, Galtung's contribution to peace studies and peace building is huge, and it is acknowledged, especially by peace academics and peace action constituencies around the world. He was awarded more than ten honorary doctorates from different universities and numerous

²¹ For a brief on Transcend, see Dietrich Fischer, 'A Brief History of Transcend,' 13 November 2013, <https://www.transcend.org/history/>, last accessed 3 July 2024.

other honors like the Right Livelihood Award (a.k.a. the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize), Norwegian Humanist Prize, Socrates Prize for Adult Education, Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values, Alo'ha International Award, First Morton Deutsch Conflict Resolution Award, Augburg Golden Book of Peace. However, he was never considered worthy enough to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Denying the Peace Prize to Galtung was a gross injustice as was awarding the Peace Prize to Kissinger.

Gross injustice

The decision to award the peace prize to Kissinger is usually described as controversial. In fact, history will not only describe it as a gross injustice to other contenders for the year 1973, but also a gross injustice to the prize itself and to the founder of the prize – Alfred Nobel. Again, the award being declined by the other nominated laureates – the Vietnamese general, diplomat and member of North Vietnam's ruling Politburo, Le Duc Tho, will never let history and the Norwegian Nobel Committee bury themselves in sand. Likewise, the fact couldn't be kept secret that two out of five members of the selection committee – all dead now – had resigned from the Committee in protest over the decision, and Kissinger was so hounded by the worldwide protest against the 1973 decision that he offered to return the prize.²² By then, the world had already acquired some idea about Kissinger's active support to the US Vietnam policy from mid-1950s onwards and his involvement in toppling the democratic government of President Salvador Allende in Chile in September 1973 – about a month before the announcement of Nobel Peace Prize for the year 1973. In due course, the world came to know much more about what Kissinger did when he was in power, in Southeast Asia and Latin America in particular.

When he held high positions in the US government, Kissinger strategized and acted like a realist, a power political mover and shaker, and a defender of US interests by all possible means. He knew when to blow hot or cold, when to blow red, which he did in a highly professional manner. By no stretch of imagination can he be called a Cold War resister, nuclear weapons abolitionist, human security man or democracy builder. According to Adrian Chorn, the Brookings Institution's research scholar, Kissinger was a power-hungry 'realist' 'who helped orchestrate one of the world's most destructive bombing campaigns during the secret war in Laos and operation Menu in Cambodia'. He says that the US dropped at least 2.5 million tons of ordnance over these two small

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/11/nobel-peace-prize-henry-kissinger-vietnam>, last accessed 4 July 2024.

countries from 1969 to 1973, whereas the Allied forces had dropped a similar tonnage of munitions in the entire European theatre from 1940 to 1945.²³

Questioning Kissinger's strategy in Southeast Asia, security scholar and executive director of Verve Research Natalie Sambhi says that the bombing campaign in Cambodia killed nearly 150,000 civilians and American UXOs contributed to over 64,000 casualties and 25,000 amputees recorded since 1979. In addition, a massive exodus of refugees was caused because of American military intervention in the region from mid-1960s onwards.²⁴ Kissinger's involvement, with the active participation of CIA, in plotting against regimes not considered to be loyal enough to the US, especially those in Latin America, is now well documented. Likewise, his role in the toppling of democratically elected Chilean president Salvador Allende on 17 September 1973, collapse of democracy in Chile and shoring up of General Augusto Pinochet's brutal 17-year old military government, are also well documented.²⁵ Referring to the book, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, by Christopher Hitchens and published in 2001, Adam Smith's article on Kissinger in *Washington Post* states that Christopher had laid out a case for libel, pointing to his role in scandalous policy in areas of the world as far apart as Chile and Cambodia, saying the US diplomat should be tried 'for war crimes, for war against humanity, and for offenses against common or customary or international law, including conspiracy to commit murder, kidnap and torture.'²⁶ For the Norwegian Nobel Committee, such a man was deserving enough to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, and Johan Galtung, an outstanding peace thinker, peace scholar and peace builder, was not deserving enough to be awarded this prize.

²³ Brookings, 'On Henry Kissinger's Legacy: Brookings experts respond to the passing of one of one of America's most influential statesmen', 8 December 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/on-henry-kissingers-legacy/>, last accessed 3 July 2024.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2004), pp. 206-215. See also online write-up by Jorge Hein, former Chilean Ambassador and Interim Director of the Frederick S. Pardee Centre for the Study of Longer Future, Boston University, titled 'Kissinger's obsession with Chile enabled a murderous dictatorship that still haunts the country,' *The Conversation*, 6 December 2023, <https://theconversation.com/kissingers-obsession-with-chile-enabled-a-murderous-dictatorship-that-still-haunts-the-country-218982>, last accessed 3 July 2024.

²⁶ Adam Taylor, 'Henry Kissinger: Nobel Peace Laureate, War Criminal', 30 November 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/henry-kissinger-war-criminal/>, last accessed 3 July 2024.

Conclusion

Galtung never received the Nobel Peace Prize and he won't ever, because he is no more. He passed away on 17 February 2024. However, he received the *People's Nobel Prize in conformity with the testament of Alfred Nobel* on 2 December 2017. This prize is awarded annually by the Swedish peace group based at Orust. It was established because of growing awareness that the Norwegian awards had lost 'all contact with the Nobel method for durable peace' and the Stortinget was selecting 'the Nobel Committee members based on party interests, not on knowledge of peace thinking and belief in cooperation among nations and the abolition of armaments that was the roadmap for global peace that Nobel intended to support with his prize.'²⁷

Perhaps it wasn't as important for Galtung to receive the Nobel Peace Prize as it was for the Norwegian Nobel Committee to present this award to Galtung. This 'Champion of Peace' has now joined the distinguished company of Mahatma Gandhi, who was nominated for the prize a number of times, but was never awarded the prize. However, the credibility of the prize has been severely diminished because of being given to Kissinger and never being given to Galtung. Worse still, the worldwide movement for peace, justice, human rights and human security has often been adversely affected by acts of omission, commission and discrimination exercised from time to time by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Perhaps the time has arrived to strengthen the Norwegian Nobel Committee by launching a focused international campaign against the intervention of power political constituencies of Norway and beyond, and of international corporate conglomerates. It is, moreover, high time that a Johan Galtung International Peace Prize is instituted to acknowledge the contribution of peace academics to peace studies, peace action and peace building. A coalition of universities and research centres with strong peace studies and peace research base, can be invited to pool their resources and institute a peace prize more credible than the Nobel Peace Prize.

²⁷ Transcend Media Service, 'Sweden: Johan Galtung Receives the People's Nobel Prize,' 4 December 2017, <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2017/12/sweden-johan-galtung-receives-the-peoples-nobel-prize/>, last accessed on 4 July 2024).