

SUMMARY

The book *In Battle for Peace* provides a multiple-time picture of the Norwegian Peace Office (*Fredskontoret*) – its start, development and termination during the period 1962–1972 from a wide range of standpoints. In all, 33 authors convey through 46 contributions the various societal frameworks for the position and activities of the Peace Office in Norwegian society, personal experiences (both humorous and serious), the importance of Peace Office in hindsight some 40 to 50 years later, side glances at major peace-political movements – like women’s marches and the peace movement in Northern Norway – and perspectives on the challenges and tasks facing a new generation of peace activists. Taken together, this rich material provides an important contribution to the understanding and description of the history of the peace movement in Norway after the Second World War.

The book is divided into six main parts in addition to introductions and attachments.

The book has **two prefaces**. Sonja Lid, who together with Lars Andreas Larssen started the Peace Office in Stavanger in 1962, tells about the background and inspiration, about strong local support, with role models like Ole F. Olden and Max Tau, and about challenges of today and tomorrow. Secondly, editors Sverre Røed-Larsen and Anne Hjort-Larsen explain the importance of releasing this book on occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Peace Office, before the sources have vanished into the darkness of history. That said, this book is the result of team work, with many contributions from peace activists of all ages. The *Tabula Gratulatoria* from people and institutions who wish to express their thanks to the Peace Office has provided a financial basis for the volume.

The contributions in **Part 1** sketch some of the societal conditions – national and international – that affected the start of the Office and influenced its progress through the 10 years of its existence. International factors included developments in nuclear weapons, with the testing at Novaya Zemlya and elsewhere; the global civil rights movement; protests against the war in Viet Nam and solidarity with liberation movements; student uprisings; the rise of the environment movement; the development of the European Union; and the Marxist-Leninist challenge. On the national level in Norway, the Cold War had several consequences, including controversy over the direction of Norwegian foreign policy and peace policy, and through police monitoring of Peace Office staff and other peace advocates. Culture radicalization found expression in many protest songs. Women rebelled against warmongers, and the anti-nuclear movement manifested in marches and organizations.

Part 2 focuses on the Office’s activities in the years 1962 to 1965, ‘from nuclear fear to peace efforts’. In addition to a documentary chapter with excerpts from letters between Sonja Lid and Lars Andreas Larssen, there are examples of success and failures in local peace efforts. The personal commitment shown by

the two leaders of the Peace Office influenced a great many young people. The Peace Office acted as a kind of open academy through its public education and presentation of alternative viewpoints. But some contributions give examples of local harassment and suspicion.

Peace efforts at the grassroots level are the framework in the contributions in **Part 3**, dealing with the period 1965 to 1972. There are descriptions of the Office's peace efforts, initiatives and activities – mainly after the move to Oslo in 1965 and the establishment of a National Secretariat for the 18 local offices – with examples of local peace efforts. Local contributions focus on peace offices in Lillehammer, Gjøvik, Fredrikstad, Oslo, Sandefjord, Skien, Stavanger, Trondheim, Mo i Rana, Bodø and Tromsø. Peace offices were also established and carried out important peace efforts elsewhere as well, in the towns of Hamar, Tønsberg, Arendal, Haugesund, Kristiansand, Bergen, and Levanger, although their activities are not specifically described in this book.

In **Part 4**, '10 years effort for peace' is the common denominator for contributions on the activities of the Peace Office and some future challenges for a new 'Office', as well as articles about the Peace Academy, about the attempt to establish an international folk high school, about the media and NATO, about the near-superstitious faith in military might – and personal memories and impressions.

The Office's peace efforts have had many spin-offs. Some of them are traced in **Part 5**, which focuses on major events like the women's marches to Paris, Moscow and Washington DC. Also highlighted are important aspects of peace efforts in Northern Norway through the establishment of the Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Tromsø, the High North movement and peace conferences.

The **final part** of the book highlights some challenges facing peace efforts and peace research in the 21st century. The possibilities of using nonviolence as a strategy and option are explored, as is the issue of Norway as a weapons exporter that profits from wars. The reader will find both a theoretical basis and practical examples for the use of dialogue as a tool in peacemaking in conflict areas around the world. The pessimistic view that characterized the peace movement after the Second World War – the "Doomsday Clock" that is ticking toward midnight – is set up against the fact that fewer people are now killed in combat than before and that international conflicts have fundamentally changed. Optimism can be found in the efforts of organizations like 'No to nuclear weapons', in the international youth mobilization against nuclear weapons, and – on the national level – the new Peace House in Oslo as a unifying centre for peace initiatives on a broad basis, for young and older peace activists alike.

The **Appendices** describe the evolution of the objectives of the Peace Office during the 10 years of its existence, the location of offices around the country, and examples of people active at the local offices. Unfortunately, the list of co-workers is far from complete. The index of names should make it easier to locate mentions of specific individuals.

The book contains many photos, illustrations and facsimiles of posters, ads, newspaper clippings, and publications. They provide insight into the breadth and depth of knowledge and engagement so characteristic of those important years.