

# Fredrik Heffermehl – Fighter for the ethics of the Nobel Peace Prize

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by Rainer Schopf,\* Germany



Fredrik Heffermehl. (Picture <https://alchetron.com>)

*Fredrik Heffermehl was born in Norway and studied in Oslo and New York. As a lawyer and author, he has written numerous books, given lectures, and campaigned for the legacy of Alfred Nobel. He was a staunch critic of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which in his opinion often failed to fulfil Nobel's will when awarding*

*the Nobel Peace Prize.*

For *Fredrik Heffermehl*, the criteria of the prize should explicitly apply to disarmament and peace work. He was President of the *Norwegian Peace Council* (NPC), Vice-President of the *International Peace Bureau* (IPB) and the *International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms* (IALANA), Honorary President of the NPC, President of *Nobel Peace Prize Watch* (NPPW), and so on.

In 2013, when the *Dresden Peace Prize* was awarded to *Stanislav Petrov*, I got to know and appreciate *Frederik Heffermehl* at an IALANA conference in Berlin where I had the opportunity to interview both. In 1983, As head of the missile alarm system, the Soviet officer *Petrov* detected an alleged US nuclear attack on the USSR as a false alarm and prevented a counterattack. It is thanks to *Petrov* that the Third World War was not triggered at that time. Unfortunately, this

threat is not a matter of the past, but highly topical and explosive.

*Heffermehl* had proposed *Petrov* for the *Nobel Peace Prize*, but unfortunately Norway declined. However, *Heffermehl* remained active. In 2017, he asked the members of the German Bundestag to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize. Nobel had intended to support the “Never again war” idea of the Austrian *Bertha von Suttner*, with whom he was close friends. The German MPs did not come out of hiding.

*Heffermehl* learnt just how much military interests were protected during further attempts to make *Alfred Nobel's* anti-military idea heard. His friendship with the German journalist *Udo Ulfkotte*, the author of “*Gekaufte Journalisten*”, was based on their joint work against the corruption of the media.

*Fredrik's* work was characterised by his unwavering commitment to peace and disarmament. His last book in the field of peace literature, “*The Real Nobel Peace Prize. A Squandered Opportunity to Abolish War.*” was published shortly before his death and is currently only available in English. In it, he reveals how Norwegian politicians are not honouring *Alfred Nobel's* legacy but undermining the idea of the Nobel Peace Prize.

*Nobel's* vision of a world without war, with disarmament, peace, and co-operation between peoples, was the driving force and motive for *Fredrik Heffermehl's* work. For him, peace was not a dream, but a possibility within our reach.

The peace activist *Fredrik Heffermehl* died shortly after his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have lost an exemplary, wonderful person.