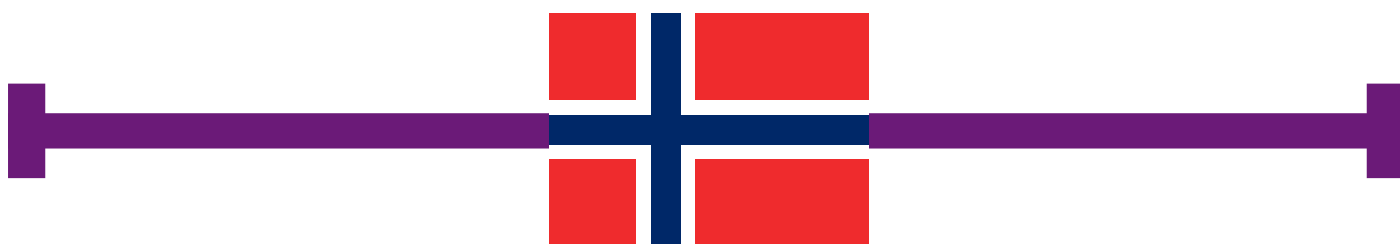


NORWAY

4



Norway becomes a democracy 1800-1884

Constitution and Union—1814

The movement towards modern democracy in Norway began with the dissolution of the Danish-Norwegian union in 1814. Denmark was forced to relinquish Norway following the Napoleonic Wars. At that point the two countries had been joined in a union that had lasted for over 400 years. The Norwegian elite, the state officials (*embetsmenn*) and leading merchants, saw an opportunity for declaring independence in 1814. Elected representatives from throughout Norway met in a national assembly at Eidsvoll to write a constitution for the country. In the Kiel armistice, however, Sweden had been promised Norway and had no intention of giving it up. Sweden had lost Finland during the war, making a union with Norway even more vital.

The new constitution was influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution. Norway became a constitutional monarchy where governmental power was shared between an executive, a legislature, and a judiciary, respectively the king, the Norwegian parliament (*Storting*) and the courts. The constitution

was adopted on May 17th, 1814, and this date has subsequently been celebrated as the national holiday in Norway.

Norway had to concede that Sweden had the support of the major powers in demanding a union. The Swedish army marched into Norway when political pressure failed, and the war soon made it obvious that the Swedish forces were superior to the Norwegian divisions (See also *When the Napoleonic Wars...* page 86). Nevertheless, when established, the new Swedish-Norwegian union granted Norway considerably more freedom than it had possessed under its union with Denmark. Norway and Sweden shared a common king and a foreign consular service. In other administrative respects, the countries were relatively independent. The Norwegian *Storting* passed the laws in Norway, and determined how income from taxes should be spent. Until the end of the union, the Norwegian government had two subdivisions. The prime minister and two cabinet ministers were stationed in Stockholm, while the rest of the administration was in Kristiania (as Oslo was then known).

The rule of state officials

Norwegian historians characterise the period between 1814 and 1884 as dominated by state officials

(*embetsmannsstaten*¹). While Norway was in union with Denmark, a powerful group of state officials entrenched themselves throughout the country. The class of state officials consisted of civil servants, judges, county governors (*amtmenn*), bailiffs, officers and the clergy. This group controlled most of the local and central administration for much of the century. Prior to the introduction of parliamentarianism in 1884, members of the government consisted almost exclusively of state officials. The *Storting*, which was elected every three years, also consisted primarily of state officials. Up until 1903, the *Storting* was selected by indirect election. That is, electors were chosen in each constituency, and these in turn selected who should represent the constituency in the *Storting*. Individuals were elected, rather than representatives of parties or political groups. The literate and well-spoken state officials therefore had an advantage.

The political awakening that followed 1814 encouraged new groups to consider the possibility of participation in democratic processes. Political decisions in Norway were no longer the exclusive prerogative of the authorities in Copenhagen and their representatives, the state officials. The peasants were the first such group to gradually attain a measure of political power.

The constitution gave voting privileges to state officials, burghers and peasants who owned property worth more than a stipulated amount. In 1814, 40% of all men over 25 years of age had the right to vote. Although this represented a limited electorate, it nevertheless opened the door towards political influence for new groups. However, during the nineteenth century the percentage of men who were qualified to vote sank, because the number of cottars (*husmenn*) and landless agricultural workers increased rapidly. They did not have the necessary economic basis to qualify for the right to vote. Women were still not allowed to vote.

A growing number of peasants were elected to the *Storting*. In the 1833 election, the peasants' representatives together with the bourgeois liberals formed a majority in the *Storting*. The election results were associated with the increasing political interest that followed in the wake of the July Revolution in France. The peasants wanted to limit the powers of the state officials and to expand local self-government. The Local Government Laws (*Formannskapslovene*) were passed in 1837, allowing the residents of each municipality to elect representatives to local

committees, municipal councils and the executive committees of local councils. Many more people became involved in political efforts and acquired an understanding of how democratic processes worked in practice. During the 1850s and 1860s, the peasants increased their influence in the *Storting*. The peasants' representatives protested against increasing taxes and bureaucratic control. Social and cultural differences between peasants and state officials were manifested in political disagreement in the *Storting*.


In 1865, the first local branch of the 'Friends of the Peasant' (*Bondevennene*) was established by Soeren Jaabaek (1814-1894). The Friends of the Peasant organised electoral supporters, and promoted stronger local democracy and the election of peasants to the *Storting*. Jaabaek served as a leading *Storting* politician for the peasants, and efficient economic policies and local self-government were two of his key policies. After 1868, the peasants became the largest group in the *Storting*. An increasing number of middle-class representatives from the towns were also elected; these included teachers, lawyers and businessmen. Many of these wished to dislodge the state officials from their dominant role, and therefore allied themselves with the peasants' representatives. The alliance between these two groups was decisive in the struggle against the rule of the state officials.

Nationalism and popular movements

In the second half of the century, national movements in Norway gained momentum, as in many other countries. Norwegian cultural heritage was pitted against the culture of the state officials and the union with Sweden. This way of thinking found acceptance in popular movements. Several of these were shared by other Scandinavian countries, and some remain significant today. The popular movements had great significance for the development of democracy.

The most powerful movement was the lay preachers' movement (*lekmannsbevegelsen*). It had its roots in the revival movement established by Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824) in the late 1700s, and it expanded significantly in Norway during the mid-nineteenth century. As more groups acquired political influence, the populace gained self-confidence in challenging the traditional interpretation of Christian faith and traditions. More people could read, and as religious

1. *Embetsmannsstaten*: literally translated, this means 'the officials' state'.



texts became available in Norwegian, it became easier for them to re-evaluate religious questions. Elite religious leaders still exercised a great deal of influence, but more religious leaders also began to emerge from the lower classes. The main requirement was that each individual should have experienced a personal religious awakening, and active missionary efforts were promoted both within the country and in other parts of the world. The lay preachers' movement became widespread throughout the Nordic region. In Norway, it has maintained its influence to the present day, particularly in South-Western Norway and in the far North.

In Norway, language became an important symbol of national identity. Danish was the official written language during the period of union with Denmark. The writer Henrik Wergeland (1808 – 1845) was a pioneer in the battle for linguistic independence. He aimed at a modification of Danish in accordance with current Norwegian usages. Wergeland was followed by other authors, and Danish was slowly changed into a generally acceptable “language of the realm” (*Riksmåal*). New Norwegian (*Nynorsk*), based on samples of local dialects collected by Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), was established as a written language in the 1850s and 1860s. *Nynorsk* provided many, particularly those who lived outside the towns, with their first opportunity to express themselves in a written language which resembled their spoken language. The *Nynorsk* movement won an important victory in 1885 with a ruling in the *Storting* which legally placed *Nynorsk* on an equal footing with *Riksmåal*, (*Jamstellingsvedtaket*).

The folk high-school movement (*Folkehøgskolebevegelsen*) was a powerful source of inspiration for popular culture and national identity. The movement developed out of an idea of the Danish poet and bishop Nikolai Grundtvig (1783-1872). The schools based their instruction on a freer structure than other schools, and promoted a creative and imaginative kind of education. The folk high schools became highly regarded as an alternative to the traditional higher-education system with its demand for discipline and rote learning.

Youth groups were established throughout the country, and the local organisations were founded under the Norwegian Youth Organisation (*Noregs Ungdomslag*) in 1896. The youth groups enlightened the public with regard to Norwegian folklore and traditions. They

built meeting houses across the country, and in this way strengthened community spirit in rural areas.

The temperance movement gained much support towards the end of the century. Alcohol constituted a major social problem, and many were worried about its misuse. Poor families in particular were adversely affected when meagre wages were spent on drink. Temperance organisations were established throughout the country, and temperance became an important issue in the programme of the workers' movement.

Population growth and migration

The population in Norway rose dramatically during the nineteenth century. The census of 1801 recorded that Norway had a population of 880,000 inhabitants. This figure had increased to 1.5 million by the 1850s, and over the next 50 years it reached a figure of 2.25 million. During this period, 500,000 Norwegians had also emigrated to America. The need to integrate young people seeking livelihoods resulted in a strain on society.

The population growth reflected a general trend in Europe. However, between 1815 and 1875, Norway had a stronger population growth percent than any other European country. More children reached adulthood, and there was an increase in life expectancy. People's diet had improved and became more varied, resulting in a greater resistance to disease. In 1810 compulsory smallpox vaccination was introduced. The health services were developed, and the municipalities employed local medical officers and midwives. Hospitals were built in the large towns, and the use of qualified personnel and better equipment resulted in more people being cured. Norway had low child mortality compared with other countries, but every tenth child still died before reaching the age of one year. Cholera epidemics, tuberculosis and pneumonia took many lives.



Illustration 4.1: The potato became increasingly important in Norway in the 19th century. Here we see children harvesting potatoes outside Odda in Hardanger in the mid-1860s. (Knud Knudsen, UBB)

As the population grew, more people had to earn their living by farming. Around 1850, 70% of the population were still employed in agriculture. Resources were scarce, and became even more stretched during the agricultural crisis in the 1860s caused, amongst other things, by cheap imported grain that undercut Norwegian grain. Many agricultural workers were soon forced to find employment elsewhere, such as in fishing, timber export, shipping, industry and trade.

As a result there was considerable migration within the country. People moved from inner regions to the coast and from rural to urban areas. In 1850, one-sixth of the population lived in towns and urban areas, while by 1900 this had increased to one-third. Migration patterns also followed a south-north direction. Also Finns sought new opportunities in Northern Norway; descendants of these people were called *Kvens*.

Emigration to America

The first Norwegian emigrants to North America were a group of Quakers who left in 1825. During the years until 1865, 78,000 people emigrated. Many of the pioneer emigrants were religious dissidents or political oppositionals. After 1865 emigration grew to

large proportions, connected to economic depressions in Norway. From 1865 to 1915, 750,000 Norwegians emigrated to America. In fact, emigration figures were greater than the population growth. In 1920, 1.2 million Norwegians lived in the USA, while in Norway the figure was 2.3 million. In relation to the size of the population, the only country to exceed the scope of Norwegian emigration to the United States was Ireland.


‘Push’ reasons for emigration were poverty and the lack of farming and employment opportunities in Norway. ‘Pull’ reasons included legislation in the USA that made it cheap and simple to purchase farming land and to find work. The Homestead Act in 1862 provided farming land almost free. And salaries were higher than in Norway. The reports sent back home to family members and friends were powerful motivating factors for poor people.

Whole families or small rural communities emigrated. During the initial phases, especially people from the coast and mountain areas in Western Norway emigrated; later also many people from Eastern and Northern Norway left. Emigrants often first migrated from a rural area to a town before finally sailing across the ocean to America. The majority were young people, and there were more men than women. The emigrants came from all parts of society. Around 1900, the pattern of emigration changed somewhat: from then on it was mainly young and unmarried men and women who travelled to America. Many aimed to earn money over a period of years, and then return to the home country. About a quarter of those who emigrated after 1880 returned home to Norway.

Agricultural development and industrialisation

Traditionally, Norwegian peasants combined agriculture with other economic activities. Coastal farmers were fishermen as well, while inland farmers often generated income from forestry. Self-sufficiency among farmers was an ideal; however, they needed to purchase some goods and necessities such as salt and iron. Once more consumer goods became available, it also became more important for the farmers to have purchasing power.

The transition from self-sufficiency farming with some sales, to production mainly for sale, arrived relatively



late in Norway. From the 1850s onwards, new farming equipment was taken into use, and the development towards more specialised farming and production for sale grew rapidly. In Norwegian historiographical tradition this process has been called 'The Great Transformation' (*Det store Hamskiftet*). Strip farming was practiced during this period; throughout large parts of the country the land was divided up into parcels of varying quality, and each farm often consisted of many such parcels or strips of land spread over a large area. In order to encourage more efficient farming the *Storting* passed a new Land Consolidation Act (*utskiftningslov*) in 1857. Under this act a landowner could demand that all the land which belonged to the same 'farm number' (*gardsnummer*)² could be consolidated, offering farmers the opportunity for greater specialisation. Industrialisation, new forms of communication and new markets accelerated the pace of change in agriculture. Free trade policies were also a strong influential factor, as well as emigration to America which drained the country of labour.

The cottars belonged to the lower classes in rural society. Their families cleared land for their smallholdings on existing farms; their rent was paid in the form of work done for the farmer. Work on their holdings had to be done outside the working hours allotted to them by the farmer. They often had no written contracts, and many of them were chased off their land when they became too sick or too old to fulfil their work-related duties. The number of cottars grew as the population increased: in 1801 there were 40,000 cottar families in Norway, and by the 1860s this figure had risen to 67,000. The mechanisation of farming, resulted in a fall in demand for agricultural labour, which in turn meant that the number of cottars dwindled. However, these families found new ways of making a living by migrating to the towns to seek work, or by emigrating to America. Nevertheless, the class of cottars survived right up until the Second World War, but their numbers were considerably reduced after 1900. The Land Act (*Jordloven*) of 1928 gave the cottars the right to buy the holding they lived on.

Up until the 1870s, the development of Norwegian industry was limited. The first textile factories were established in the 1840s fashioned on the British industrial model and with imported raw materials and machinery. Labour was plentiful, and from the middle of the century industry developed which utilised

Norwegian natural resources to a greater extent than before. There was a great demand for timber in Europe, and after the steam saw was introduced around 1850, timber became an important Norwegian export commodity. There was considerable industrial growth at the start of the 1870s, but the recession in Europe towards the end of this decade resulted in a reduction in timber exports.

However, during this period technology was developed for the production of paper based on cellulose. Cellulose factories were built at various locations throughout Norway. Production based on Norwegian raw materials and using Norwegian expertise helped to develop the technology, and production was also aimed at export markets. These features came to characterise much of Norwegian industrial development. The canning industry grew into an important part of the economy, with herring and mackerel comprising two important products. However, most important around the turn of the century was the iron industry, which produced mainly for the home market.

Since ancient times the sea had provided the most important means of communication for many people. From the middle of the nineteenth century communications were improved: road building, new steam ships, railways and telegraph provided a better infrastructure for business and industry, and made life easier for many people. The telephone network was established early in Norway, and contributed to better communications in a long, narrow and sparsely populated country.

Norwegian fish exports increased substantially between 1850 and 1900, and domestic consumption also developed. The most important fish species were herring and cod, and from these salted herring, dried cod (*tørrfisk*), dried salted cod (*klippfisk*), and cod liver oil were produced. In addition, fish provided the raw materials for the canning industry which developed towards the end of the century. From the 1870s onwards, the fishing industry became more efficient as fishermen combined to build large fishing sailboats together. The great transformation to motorised fishing boats came after 1900.

2. The 'farm number' was used to register a particular plot of land with the authorities. The land which constituted a 'farm number' could be subdivided into smaller farms.



Illustration 4.2: Fishermen catching herring outside Haugesund in 1900. (Knud Knudsen, UBB)

The Norwegian mercantile marine experienced an extraordinary growth from 1850 onwards. In 1880, only Great Britain and the USA had larger fleets. This growth may be understood in light of the large increase in international trade that followed in the wake of industrialisation. The 1849 repeal of the British Navigation Act, part of the country's free trade policy, was also a strong contributing factor; the repeal enabled foreign ships to transport goods to and from British ports regardless of a cargo's origin or destination. Norwegian ships were part of the tramp trade, and carried goods between many different ports, receiving new contracts when their boats were docked in a port. This was profitable as long as there was ready access to new contracts, but it meant that the shipping trade was very susceptible to the ups and downs of the market.

The international transformation from sail to steam started in the 1880s. However, the international economy suffered a crisis during this decade and there was a recession in world trade. The Norwegian mercantile marine comprised many small ship owners, and many of them were unable to raise the necessary capital to invest in steamships. Ship owners kept to wooden sailing ships as long as it was possible. Lower profits meant that the standard of the ships was reduced, resulting in too little investment in maintenance and renewal, the consequence being a number of shipwrecks and bankruptcies. The transformation to steam became a necessity, and during the period up until the First World War the mercantile marine was gradually built up so that Norway once again became one of the leading mercantile nations.


Parliamentarianism

Parliamentarianism entails a government being accountable to parliament, and if the government does not receive majority support in the parliament, it must resign. Norway was one of the first countries in Europe to make use of parliamentarianism as a form of government. Two important conditions were present in Norway. First, Norway lacked an aristocracy or class of landed proprietors which could hinder a process of democratisation. The state officials might have possessed a lot of power, but they were relatively few in number, and there existed no climate for the use of force. Second, the Norwegian constitution was also a democratic one, and the *Storting* did not include an upper house that might have vetoed decisions made by a popularly elected government.

The democratic developments after 1814 laid the foundations for the introduction of parliamentarianism towards the end of the century. The Local Government Laws of 1837 had provided people with more opportunities for political experience. The peasants had reached a position of power, and represented a large group within the *Storting*. Many of the peasants had also gained belief and confidence in their own culture and ability to govern through their work in organisations and popular movements. This provided the courage to support politicians who challenged the king and the government.

The struggle to introduce parliamentarianism was waged by the peasants and liberals. At the head of this struggle was *Storting* member, Johan Sverdrup (1816 – 1892), a lawyer, who was a gifted popular orator and a politician of the highest rank. His goals were representative government and national independence.

King Oscar II (1872 – 1905), his government and the conservative representatives in the *Storting* were opposed to the introduction of parliamentarianism. Government supporters believed that to oblige government ministers to appear before the *Storting* represented a breach of the principle of the separation of powers, which was embedded in the constitution. Although Sverdrup and his followers did not wish to contravene this principle, they believed that the government must be accountable to the will of the people.



In 1869, the decision was made to hold *Storting* sessions every year, instead of every third year as had formerly been the case. This change made it possible to carry out a cohesive policy of opposition. Those who had fought for the introduction of parliamentarianism were now able to engage in the struggle with greater strength and continuity.

The *Storting* passed a constitutional resolution in 1872 stipulating that government ministers must appear before the *Storting*. According to the constitution, the king has the right to veto an act, but only until it has been passed by three different *Storting*. King Oscar declined to sanction the resolution following advice from the government. This provoked a major political conflict regarding the king's right of veto in constitutional matters. The king, government and a minority of the members of the *Storting* were of the opinion that the king had an absolute veto in constitutional matters, whereas the *Storting* majority claimed that the king only possessed a veto of delay, as was the case in other matters. There were yet others who believed that the king held no power of veto at all in constitutional matters.

By 1880, three different *Stortings* had passed similar resolutions regarding the obligation of government ministers to appear before the *Storting*, but on each occasion the king refused to sanction the resolution. The conflict between the two opposing parties steadily escalated. The lines of division were drawn between the conservatives, later called the Conservative Party (*Hoeyre*),³ and the peasants and the liberals, who later formed the Liberal Party (*Venstre*).⁴ The king and the government were supported by the upper social classes and segments of the middle classes in the towns. Sverdrup had followers in both the towns and the rural districts, especially in the areas where the popular movements were strong.

After that the resolution regarding the government ministers' obligation to appear before the *Storting* had been vetoed for the third time, Johan Sverdrup and the liberals planned to bring the king and the government before the Court of Impeachment (*Riksrett*). The Court of Impeachment is composed of High Court (*Hoeyesterett*) judges and members of the *Storting*. In

3. 'Hoeyre' in Norwegian means 'right', but the party is usually called the Conservatives in English texts.

4. 'Venstre' in Norwegian means 'left'. In some English texts they were called the Left Party, but 'Liberal Party' is more appropriate as 'left' in a political context may be confused with the political left, i.e. socialist parties, which is something the 'Venstre' were not. See also the chapter on Denmark.

order to build support for the case among the members of the *Storting*, the supporters of parliamentarianism waited until the *Storting* election of 1882. This election may be said to be the first fought between political parties in Norway. The political parties had still not been fully established, but the names 'Hoeyre' (the Conservatives) and 'Venstre' (the Liberals) were in common use at the time. The Liberals won a great victory.

In 1884 the Court of Impeachment reached a decision: the supporters of the king were required to resign their positions. However, King Oscar had still not given up hope, and he attempted to form a new government relying on his own supporters. But he finally had to accept the judgment of the court, and Johan Sverdrup was allocated the task of forming a new government. Parliamentarianism was thus introduced in Norway.

Towards independence 1884 - 1905

Organised society

When parliamentarianism was introduced, the power of the king and the state officials was severely restricted. Instead, their power was to a marked extent transferred to the elected representatives of the people. The extension of voting rights in 1884 reflected this democratising trend, but it was still only a minority of men who had the right to vote.

During the last part of the nineteenth century there occurred a major period of organisation of people into groups, associations, unions and the like at all levels throughout Norwegian society. A number of humanitarian and religious associations were founded from the 1830s onwards, and from the mid-nineteenth century many professional bodies were organised. The trade unions followed in the 1880s. The first political parties were also founded, and not only peasants, but merchants, businessmen, workers and women also formed organisations. The Liberal Party and the Conservative Party were both founded in 1884. The parliamentary system benefited from the organisation of the parties: the government now had an organised party behind it, and voters were able to differentiate between clearly defined political alternatives.

Reform policies and conflict within the Liberal Party

The Liberal government led by Johan Sverdrup introduced a number of important reforms during the 1880s: a jury system was established for criminal cases; the sheriff's department (*lensmannsetaten*) was expanded; and *Nynorsk* and *Riksmaal*, the two Norwegian language varieties, were placed on an equal footing. One of the most important pieces of legislation was the Primary Education Act (*Folkeskoleloven*) of 1889, which further developed the principle of obligatory schooling established by the Elementary School Act (*Allmueskoleloven*) of 1860. More subjects were included in the school curriculum, and it became possible to use *Nynorsk* as a teaching language. The opportunities for further education were extended in the last part of the century, and girls were given the opportunity to pursue higher education. The educational reforms contributed to an expansion of democracy and to a process of social levelling.

Despite the fact that a number of important reforms were passed, there were still many people who were displeased with the Liberal Party leadership and Johan Sverdrup. They believed that progress was too slow. The Liberal Party split into moderate and radical wings, and Sverdrup lost the support of large groups of voters in the towns. Disagreement within the party was especially evident in the debate concerning culture and outlook. The author Alexander Kielland (1849 – 1906), had applied for a stipend, such as had been granted to other great authors including Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906) and Bjoernstjerne Bjoernson (1832 – 1910). However, Kielland was controversial and a number of Liberal supporters opposed granting Kielland a stipend. The supporters of the lay preacher movement were especially opposed to giving a stipend to someone whom they felt undermined society's morals. On the opposite side of the debate were the radical liberals in the towns. The case ended with defeat for those who had supported Kielland. Sverdrup did not speak for him and, after this episode, he lost the support of the radical intellectual milieu and the leading Norwegian authors.

Gradually, the differences within the Liberal party became more evident, and three groups subsequently emerged: the moderates, the radicals and the 'pure' liberals. Sverdrup's position became steadily weaker, and consequently he resigned in 1889. The Liberal government was replaced by a Conservative one. The


Conservatives had consolidated their position, and now received broader support from the middle classes and wealthier farmers.

The Liberal Party went through an even greater radicalisation after Sverdrup's departure. The demand for universal suffrage for men and a direct progressive taxation system were now included in the party programme. The union question also grew in importance. The Liberal and Conservative governments alternated up until 1905, although the Liberals had a majority in the *Storting* for most of this period. This ensured that the party's reform policies were implemented. In order to extend voting rights a constitutional majority was needed (i.e. a two-thirds majority). The Liberals achieved this independently in 1898 and, as a result, universal suffrage for men was introduced.

The working classes organise themselves

As long as Norway remained an agricultural society, peasants and cottars were the largest groups. However, with the advent of industrialisation, the industrial working classes grew in numbers. The transition from working in agriculture to working in industry resulted in great changes for workers. The working hours in factories were 10-12 hours per day and six days a week, and it was often shift work. Accidents at work and work-related injuries were common. Women earned only half of what men were paid, but nevertheless received better wages than maids-in-service or seamstresses. Child labour was widespread, as it also was in agricultural society. Children were a source of cheap labour, and families sorely needed the income. Child labour legislation was first introduced in 1892, which set the minimum age for workers at 12 years, with youths under 18 years prohibited from working more than 10 hours per day. In 1894, industrial workers were provided with accident insurance. This was an important step on the road towards the modern welfare society.

The first workers' leader in Norway, Marcus Thrane (1817-1890), organised the cottars, smallholders and craftsmen in 1849-51. They demanded universal suffrage and better working conditions for workers. The movement was influenced by the February Revolution of 1848 in France. However, the time was not ripe for an organised workers' movement in



Norway. The authorities drove back Thrane and his supporters, and the leaders were severely punished.

During the years that followed many workers were organised into philanthropic associations led by the employers. These were often charity organisations that cared for the very poor and which attempted to tackle alcohol abuse. However, the workers did not form their own organisations until the end of the century. In the 1880s there was a recession, and unemployment rose while wages fell. The workers formed unions with leaders chosen from within their own ranks, and demanded rights from their employers. A number of local branches of trade unions were founded, and in 1899 the trade unions combined to form the Workers' National Trade Union (*Arbeidernes Faglige Landsorganisasjon*).

The Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) was founded in 1887. The goal of the party was to organise the workers, and to cooperate closely with the trade unions. The party's principal demands were: universal suffrage for men and women; shorter working hours; and a progressive tax system. The industrial working classes were gradually becoming an important factor in Norwegian society's decision-making processes. However, in its first years the Labour Party achieved little success at elections. Their progress was hindered by the fact that few workers had the right to vote, and the party also lacked the funds to carry out a satisfactory election campaign. For the time being it was the Liberal Party which received most of the support of those workers who did have the vote.

The women's movement

Also the women formed organisations and achieved more legal rights. Unmarried women attained the rights to be considered 'legal persons' in 1863, married women in 1888. In 1854, women were given the same rights of inheritance as men, except as far as primogenitural land tenure was concerned (*odelsgarder*).

The Norwegian Association for Women's Rights (*Norsk Kvinnesaksforening*) was founded in 1884 by amongst others Gina Krog (1847-1916), who was a writer, teacher and politician. The organisation attracted mainly professional women from the middle classes and sought support from Liberal Party voters, many of whom viewed equality between the sexes as an ideal.

In 1885 the Norwegian Women's Suffrage Association (*Norsk Kvinnestemmerettsforening*) was founded with Gina Krog as its leader. When men gained universal suffrage rights in 1898 the organisation became divided. The majority supported a gradual extension of women's voting rights in much the same way as men had finally gained universal suffrage rights. However, a minority, led by Krog, wished to retain the demand of universal suffrage rights for women. This group broke out and founded the National Women's Suffrage Association (*Landskvinnestemmerettsforeningen*). Also the Labour Party Social Democratic Women's Association (*Arbeiderpartiets sosialdemokratiske kvinneforening*), founded in 1895, fought for the right to vote.

In 1901 the first women were given the right to vote at local elections, although this depended on their income level. Women were not allowed to vote in the referendum on the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905. However, 250,000 signatures were collected from women. This action strengthened the women's cause, and the Liberal Party included universal suffrage rights in its party programme. Voting rights were gradually extended and in 1913 all women were given the right to vote.

Towards the end of the 19th century middle class women could find employment as telegraph and telephone operators. Office work and teaching were other avenues of employment that were available. Many of these kinds of positions required a certain level of education that was only available to middle and upper class women. As before working class women were restricted to working as servants or in the growing industries.

The dissolution of the union

After 1814, King Karl Johan (1818-1844) attempted to strengthen the monarchy by means of various measures. He proposed a right of absolute veto on bills and a right to dissolve the *Storting* and to dismiss officials. His proposals were rejected by the *Storting*, and he retreated, so no conflict ever developed. In the following decades there were no major confrontations between the *Storting* and the king until the struggle involving the introduction of parliamentarianism in the 1870s and 1880s.

However, towards the end of the century the situation came to a head between the two union partners. The

Storting allocated a special defence budget, and the government ordered modern ironclad warships from Great Britain. From 1900 onwards forts were built along the border with Sweden, and advanced cannons were purchased from Germany. A large number of soldiers were mobilised, put on the alert and were ready to go to war against Sweden. The situation could easily have escalated into a war. The conflict concerned two issues in particular: firstly, the removal of the union emblem from the Norwegian flag, which was of symbolic importance; and, secondly, and much more importantly, the Norwegian demand for its own consular service.

The relationship between the countries was regulated by the November Constitution of 1814 and the Act of Union (*Riksakt*) of 1815. The May 17th Constitution of 1814 had been changed in November of the same year so as to accommodate the terms of the union. The Act of Union determined which rights and duties the two countries had in their relations with each other. Under the Act, Norway shared a common diplomatic service with Sweden. However, Sweden's strong position in the union was reflected by the fact that the foreign minister was always Swedish, and that diplomatic reports were dispatched to the Swedish government and not to the Norwegian ministers in Kristiania. The majority of the highest positions in the diplomatic service were also held by Swedes. The Union Trade Act (*Mellomriksloven*) of 1827, which regulated the trade between the two countries, functioned as a free trade agreement.

Under the Norwegian Constitution, Norway had the right to conduct its own consular services, but in order to save money the *Storting* decided not to take advantage of this right. However, by the 1890s, the Norwegian mercantile marine had grown three times as large as the Swedish. Norway had interests in foreign places where Sweden was not represented, and it thus became of vital importance for Norway to have its own separate consular offices abroad.

The Liberal Party gained a majority in the 1891 election, and one of the party's demands was a separate Norwegian consular service. However, the king and the Swedish government would not accept this demand. They feared that this could be the first step towards the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian Union. The Swedish authorities required that the state of the union-relationship had to be discussed first, and the situation escalated in the following years. In 1895, the relationship between the two countries became


so tense that the Swedish parliament (*Riksdagen*) put the army on the alert in case of war. The Norwegian armed forces were by no means prepared for an armed conflict, and the *Storting* decided to negotiate with the Swedish authorities without requiring that a separate Norwegian consular service should be an absolute condition. However, the Norwegians also prepared their armed forces for war.

In order to protect its trading interests Sweden repealed the Union Trade Act in 1895. This resulted in conservative groups in Norway, who had previously supported the union for economic reasons, no longer supporting it.

In 1898, the Norwegians gained the right to use a Norwegian flag without the union emblem. Nationalist sentiments grew ever stronger, and in 1905 the *Storting* passed an act establishing an independent Norwegian consular service. However, King Oscar II refused to sanction the act, and the government resigned from office in protest. The King realised he would not be able to form a new Norwegian government, and therefore refused to accept the resignations of the government members. On June 7th the *Storting* determined that the union with Sweden was dissolved, because the king was unable to form a new government.

The Swedish authorities refused to accept that the union could be dissolved unilaterally, and the danger of war was a real one. However, powerful forces in both countries supported a peaceful solution, and the parties met for negotiations in Karlstad, Sweden. During the negotiations the question of the border forts proved to be the most difficult hurdle, and this led to a breakdown in the talks, with both sides mobilising for war as a result. War appeared to be imminent. However, the Norwegians finally agreed to dismantle their forts, and a demilitarised zone was established on both sides of the border.

In August 1905 a referendum on dissolving the union with Sweden was held in Norway. The result was an overwhelming victory for the dissolution of the union (368,208 voted yes and 184 no). Later in the autumn another referendum was held on which form of government would be most suitable for the newly independent Norway: 80% voted for a monarchy, while 20% voted for a republic. The Danish prince Carl was offered the Norwegian throne, and he accepted, taking the name Haakon VII (1905-1957). He was married to Maud, the daughter of the British king. Norway had



traditionally had strong ties to Great Britain, and the government wished to strengthen its ties to the west.

How was it possible for Norway to tear itself loose from the union in 1905? The second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by strong national currents in Europe. Germany and Italy had become independent nation states in the 1870s, and several peoples in Europe fought for national independence towards the end of the century. In Norway national sentiments were especially strong amongst the politically radical, but a majority of the population also supported nationalist sentiments to some degree. Artists and writers were active in the struggle for independence, for instance, the author Bjoernstjerne Bjoernson, the composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and the painters Erik Werenskiold (1855-1938) and Theodor Kittelsen (1857-1914) all played important roles. The scientist Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) became a national symbol after carrying out expeditions to the poles.

The peasants and the Liberal Party led the struggle to dissolve the union. Opponents of the union felt that Norway was not on an equal footing with Sweden. Democratic developments throughout the nineteenth century had strengthened opposition to the conservative establishment. A broad segment of the population had gained more belief in their political strength, and gained experience by making demands and pushing through resolutions. The popular movements represented a real counterweight to the previously dominant culture of the state officials, and they had educated new groups with regard to organisation and participation in decision-making processes. The introduction of parliamentarianism signified a breakthrough for Norwegian independence in relation to Sweden, as well as a modernisation and heightened awareness of political life.

After 1814, Norwegian state officials had defended Norway's independent position within the union. However, around the middle of the nineteenth century a more union-friendly attitude developed amongst the state officials. This may be explained by the fact that the number of peasant representatives increased in the *Storting*, and the state officials were probably afraid of losing control of the national assembly. Scandinavianism, a political movement that had fellowship and understanding amongst the Nordic countries as its goal, was also of some importance. Amongst the students and intellectuals in the towns

the movement led to union-friendly attitudes from the 1850s onwards.

The Conservatives wished to preserve the union as long as Norway retained economic advantages from it. The party also viewed the union as a shield against radicalism and socialism. Republican trends abroad influenced groups in Norway, and the Conservatives wished to protect the monarchy and the union. However, when Sweden repealed the Union Trade Act the situation changed and many diverse forces combined in Norway to achieve the dissolution of the union. The Conservative party was posed with a problem as long as the union-related conflict lasted. It was difficult for them to adopt an offensive political position, because the Liberal Party claimed the major part of the votes from nationally minded Norwegians from the 1890s onwards. This situation resulted in the Conservatives gradually adjusting their policy until it resembled the Liberals' view on the issue. Consequently a united Norwegian front stood behind the demand to dissolve the union with Sweden in 1905.

The development towards democracy both in Norway and Sweden was important in ensuring that the dissolution of the union in 1905 was a peaceful one. Members of the workers' movement and the peace movement in both countries were united behind the common goal of peace and democracy. Another important condition for the successful dissolution was the fact that the great powers did not become involved in the conflict.

A new beginning 1905 - 1940

Concession laws and social reforms

Two issues dominated political debates in the years following 1905: the Concession Acts and social policies. After the turn of the century, industry became the dominant force in the Norwegian economy. The mechanisation of agriculture continued, and farmers received better prices for their products. The towns continued to grow and transport was greatly improved with the introduction of electric tramcars and automobiles; also, the introduction of motor-driven fishing and merchant vessels made these sectors more effective. Between 1905 and 1935, the Liberal Party led

several governments, while gradually losing support among the voters.

The physical geography of Norway is mountainous and contains many waterfalls which have favoured the development of hydroelectric power plants. In the early twentieth century efforts to exploit these numerous waterfalls increased rapidly. However, Norway had no desire to relinquish the rights to its natural resources to foreigners on a permanent basis, although some foreign investment was considered desirable during the initial construction phase. Consequently, both Norwegian and foreign companies were required to seek concessions before being allowed to build hydroelectric power plants. In this way, the government was able to establish standards for capital investment. Reversion rights ensured that waterfalls with dams or reservoirs would revert to the Norwegian state after a period of 60-80 years.



Illustration 4.3: This factory at Knarrevik outside Bergen produced herring oil and fertilizer, and was operated on hydroelectric power. We can see the penstock running down the hill, and the workers' houses beneath. A steam ship is in the fjord. Around 1918. (Atelier KK, UBB)

A series of socio-political reforms was passed in the years prior to World War I. The Labour Party and the trade union movement were a driving force behind the reforms, and some non-socialist politicians, particularly members of the Liberal Party, also believed that the government was partly responsible for the welfare of its citizens. A Labour Protection Act (*arbeidervernlov*) was passed, as well as laws that mandated sick leave pay and a 10-hour working day. In 1919, industrial workers achieved an 8-hour working

day as well as the legal right to one week's paid holiday a year.

In 1915, illegitimate children were granted the right to use the surname of, and inherit from, their fathers. Fathers' child-support obligations were enforced more rigorously, and unmarried women received the right to economic support during pregnancy. The Conservative Party and some elements within the Liberal Party strongly opposed the new children's rights legislation, because they believed it would encourage immorality and undermine marriage and the family. However, the *Storting* majority, under the leadership of the Liberal cabinet minister Johan Castberg (1862 – 1926) finally managed to get the reforms approved.

The radicalisation of the Labour Party

The Labour Party was founded in 1887. During World War I, the party developed in a more radical direction than most other similar 'labour' parties in Europe. The late industrialisation of Norway led to rapid social and economic changes, and people's lives were subjected to sudden and drastic changes. Large numbers of redundant farm labourers migrated from their rural homes to seek work in urban areas, in factories or on construction sites. Such conditions provided fertile soil for political radicalisation. In addition, World War I witnessed unstable economic conditions in Norway with boom periods, high prices and a shortage of consumer goods. Wages did not keep pace with price rises, and the social differences in Norwegian society widened and became more apparent. In addition, Norway had a non-proportional electoral system prior to 1919, which resulted in the labour movement achieving little success at the elections. This led many to believe that reforms would never be approved through the parliamentary system. The influence of the Russian Revolution also contributed to the radicalisation of the labour movement.

Martin Tranmael (1879-1967), who led the radical wing of the Labour Party, became party secretary when the entire leadership was replaced in 1918 by a more radical group. At this point in its history, the party was considered 'revolutionary' and was registered as part of the Comintern. But those who still wished to work within the parliamentary system broke away from the rest of the party in 1921 and



formed the Norwegian Social Democratic Labour Party (*Norges Socialdemokratiske Arbeiderparti*).

During this period a debate raged within the Labour Party regarding which political direction the party should take, especially regarding whether the party should strictly adhere to the Moscow Theses or not. The Comintern required all associated member parties to follow directives from the central leadership when circumstances warranted. In 1923, after a long debate, the Labour Party decided to withdraw from the Comintern. Einar Gerhardsen (1897 – 1987), who later served as prime minister for many years, was voted into the new leadership. The minority, who wished to remain in the Comintern, founded the Communist Party of Norway (*Norges Kommunistiske Parti*).

The trade union movement was weakened during the 1920s. The long-term economic crisis led to unemployment, and many members could no longer afford the cost of membership. During this period there were several major conflicts between workers and employers, and the authorities passed laws to control the labour organisations. The divisions within the Labour Party also weakened the workers' movement's political influence. In 1927, however, the trade union movement succeeded in drawing the Social Democrats back to the Labour Party. This consolidation strengthened the movement, and parliamentary efforts were again emphasised. In the 1927 election, the Labour Party received 37% of the votes, and the first Labour government was formed, with Christopher Hornsrud (1859 - 1960) as prime minister. However, the government only remained in power for two weeks. The other parties feared the radical programme of the Labour Party, and the government gained little support in the *Storting*.

Norwegian neutrality policy during the First World War

Norwegian foreign policy after 1905 was drafted on the principle that Norway should remain neutral in any future international dispute or conflict. The authorities were apprehensive that the country could easily be drawn into a war for several reasons. Norway was an important mercantile nation, and would therefore be strategically important to the great powers. Russia was a great and powerful neighbour to the north and east, and the Norwegians were afraid

that Russia would demand access to ice-free ports in Finnmark. Finland was a part of Russia, and Norway also feared that Russia would attempt to gain stronger control over the Finnish population, the Kvens, in Northern Norway. It was also felt that Svalbard could easily become a source of conflict between the two countries, because Russia opposed the Norwegian wish to attain sovereignty over the island.

Norway, Sweden and Denmark agreed on a common declaration of neutrality when World War I broke out. Norway and Sweden also reached an additional agreement that they would not initiate armed conflict against each other, if either were drawn into the war. Considered in this light the cooperation between the Nordic countries was strengthened during these years, and amongst other things they cooperated on drafting legislation.

Despite the Norwegian policy of neutrality, the country was gradually drawn closer to Great Britain. A substantial portion of Norwegian fish exports initially went to Germany, and the Germans offered high prices to secure the supply of fish after the outbreak of war. In order to disrupt this trade, the British began to purchase large quantities of Norwegian fish, which led to a rise in prices and a shortage of fish in Norway. Nickel, copper and sulphur ores for German ammunition production were also imported from Norway. Great Britain wished to put a stop to these exports, and threatened to cut its exports of coal, oil and tin to Norway, if Norway continued to export to Germany. Norway, who was wholly dependent on British coal, was consequently coerced into complying with British demands.

The German submarine war cost the lives of about 2,000 Norwegian sailors. This resulted in a strong anti-Germany feeling in the country. Norway finally agreed that almost the whole Norwegian mercantile fleet would be put at the disposal of the British, and in return Britain supplied Norway with coal, oil and other important commodities. Officially, Norway was still neutral, but in reality the country was closely tied to Britain and its allies.

Economic crisis and parity policy (*paripolitikk*)

Up until World War 1 the value of the Norwegian crown was tied to the gold standard, and paper money could be exchanged for gold at the Bank of Norway. During this period the interest rate remained low and stable. However, the war resulted in economic instability, and although a few speculators became very rich the great majority suffered. The 1920s and 1930s were also unsettled times for the Norwegian economy. Economic crises and social distress formed the everyday reality for many, although considered in a broader perspective the period was one of economic growth.

During the two first years of the war trade and business grew in Norway. The great powers imported large quantities of goods from Norway, which resulted in a rapid growth of the shipping business. Some investors speculated on the price rises and made enormous profits. However, after a period of time the war caused problems for shipping, which resulted in increases in the price of goods. Those who received fixed salaries suffered financially. The authorities attempted to stabilise the situation by means of rationing and price controls.

The demand for Norwegian goods and services led to inflation during the war. The value of the Norwegian crown was halved during this period, and Norway finally abandoned the gold standard. A brief upswing in the economic climate after the war was followed by a large decline in world trade in 1920. After a fall in prices, factories closed down and unemployment rose. Owners of industry and farmers who had taken up loans during the period of economic growth now had difficulties making the interest and instalment payments. This led to many banks going bankrupt, and the banks' customers lost their deposits.


The world economy improved from the middle of the 1920s, and prices in Norway also rose. Production figures improved in industry and unemployment figures dropped. Emphasis then shifted to restoring confidence in the Norwegian crown. To do so, the Norwegian authorities wished to fix the exchange rate of the Norwegian crown in relation to gold, the so-called parity-exchange rate (*pari kurs*). In order to regulate the value of the crown, the amount of paper money in circulation had to be reduced. The banks needed to be more restrictive in making loans and

raised their interest rates. In 1928 the Norwegian crown reached a parity exchange rate (in other words, it was fixed to the value of gold, and had the same value as its 1914 value).

The parity policy favoured debt-free people on fixed salaries who now received more for each crown. However, people with bank loans experienced problems, especially farmers. The fall in prices was met by an increase in production, and the result was over-production and a crisis in agricultural sales. Many farmers had taken out loans on their farms, and forced auctions were common. However, the farmers helped each other by attending such auctions and intimidating any 'outsiders' in order to prevent them bidding for farms auctioned by force. Often banks were forced to buy back farms at their fixed valuation prices and then resell them to their original owners who consequently had their debt considerably reduced. Fishermen were also hit by the economic crisis. A large part of the fish catch was exported to the world market, which also experienced a fall in prices at this time. The resulting loss of income especially affected people living in the coastal regions and in Northern Norway.

The shock waves of the stock market crash of 1929 hit Norway with full force from 1931 onwards. Production was dramatically reduced and many workers were forced into unemployment. Welfare services for the needy were poorly developed during this period. The unemployed could receive food vouchers or be allocated relief work, and the authorities implemented projects to keep people in work. However, the results of these measures were meagre. Young people and women often ended up at the back of the queue with regards to both available employment and welfare payments, because it was assumed that they were supported by the male head of the family. Moreover, poor people could no longer freely emigrate to the US, because the American government had passed an immigration law in 1929, which restricted immigration. From 1933 onwards the world economy improved, the demand for goods on the international market increased, and world trade grew.

The 1930s have traditionally been perceived exclusively as a period of recession. However, in recent years research has also revealed that Norway underwent considerable industrial development during this period. New technology contributed to the rationalisation of industry and necessary readjustments were implemented. Many new



businesses were established, amongst them furniture and clothing factories.

From class struggle to cooperation and welfare arrangements

During the crisis period at the beginning of the 1920s the relationship between employers and workers was adversarial, and many major conflicts developed. Workers went on strike to protest against the reduction in wages, and employers reacted by imposing lockouts. The largest conflict in Norwegian history between capital and labour took place in 1931. The workers demanded shorter working hours in order to counter the high level of unemployment, and there were a number of lockouts and strikes over the course of several months. The conflict finally came to a head in what has been called the Battle of Menstad (*Menstadslaget*). A group of non-union workers were given police protection at Norsk Hydro's installation at Menstad. Union workers considered this to be an act of strike-breaking, and demonstrators chased away a contingent of police. Some of the police were injured in the process, and the government sent in a military force as well as a contingent of national police to the location. The conflict was finally resolved, but the differences between the workers' movement and the authorities grew sharper from then on.

Several organisations were founded that actively opposed socialism and the goals of the workers' movement. Society's Helpers (*Samfundshjelpen*, 1920) was an organisation supported by banks, ship owners, insurance companies, merchants, craftsmen and farmers. The aim of the organisation was to assist the authorities during large capital-labour conflicts, for instance, by recruiting strike breakers. The Fatherland Society (*Fedrelandslaget*) was founded in 1925. This organisation demanded non-socialist opposition to the workers' movement and strong regulation of the economy. Through the active use of national symbols the Fatherland Society achieved significant support for a period at the beginning of the 1930s. The Rural People's Crisis Assistance (*Bygdefolkets krisehjelp*, 1931) fought against high rates of interest and was also involved in intimidating buyers during forced auctions. The organisation cooperated in the elections with the Norwegian fascist party, the National Unity Party (*Nasjonal Samling*), founded in 1933.

The Liberal Party led the majority of governments in the interwar period, but gradually the Conservatives became the largest non-socialist party. The Liberal Party wished to impose limits on the freedom of capital and to focus on price control and social reforms. The party attracted votes especially from the *Nynorsk*, temperance and lay preacher movements. The Conservative Party aimed at developing trade and business, and wished to protect the status quo in society and actively opposed the radical working class.

The Farmer's Party (*Bondepartiet*) was founded in 1920 (*from 1959 called Senterpartiet*). The party worked to protect the interests of the farmers and promoted nationalist values. The Farmers' Party was in government from 1931 to 1933. The Minister of Defence in this government was Vidkun Quisling (1887 – 1945), who later founded the National Unity Party, which was modelled on the fascist parties in Germany and Italy. The Christian People's Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*) was founded in 1933 by liberals who felt that the leadership of the Liberal Party was too radical on religious matters.

As a counterweight to the worker movement's internationalism, nationalist currents spread throughout different layers of society. For instance, Norwegian nationalism manifested itself in the various efforts exerted to gain control over areas of land with which it traditionally shared economic interests. The Spitsbergen Treaty of 1920 declared the arctic archipelago of Spitsbergen (now called Svalbard) to be an overseas part of Norway, though with certain limits. Other nations had the right to utilize the territory as well, and Norway could not build military installations on the archipelago. In the 1920s, Norway claimed control of the Island of Jan Mayen and Bear Island (*Bjørnøya*) in the Arctic Ocean. Bouvet Island and Peter I's Island in the Antarctic Ocean were also annexed by Norway. Under the Farmers' Party's government of 1931, Norway occupied parts of Eastern Greenland, where Norwegian fishermen and whalers wished to establish ports and whaling stations. Greenland was under Danish control, however. The matter was eventually taken up by the Court of International Justice in The Hague, who ruled in favour of Denmark.

During this historical period 'race-hygiene' issues were discussed in society at large and at governmental levels. Social-Darwinist ideas were prevalent at the time and permeated thinking regarding humans

and society. According to this ideology only the 'strongest' should have the right to procreate and thus convey their genetic material to future generations. A consequence of this thinking was that the government actively restricted certain social and ethnic groups from having children (see also *Race biology ideology...* page 99). The *Storting* passed the Sterilization Law (*Steriliseringsloven*) in 1934; the Law institutionalised the practice of the sterilization of travellers (*tatere*), the mentally handicapped, psychiatric patients, homosexuals and epileptics. Racist ideology also characterised Norwegian immigration policies of the period. During the period 1927 – 1956 gypsies were prohibited from entering the country, and Jewish immigration was also limited to a small number of refugees during the interwar period.

In 1935 the 'Basic Agreement' (*Hovedavtalen*) was reached between the employers' and employees' organisations concerning their future cooperation. The workers accepted the employers' right of ownership and leadership, while the employers accepted the workers' right to join trade unions and to push for better wages and working conditions. The same year also witnessed the cooperation between the Labour Party and the Farmer's Party, under what was called the 'crisis compromise' (*kriseforliket*). The Labour Party formed a government led by Johan Nygaardsvold (1879 – 1952), and a number of programmes were introduced which offered financial support for farmers and fishermen, as well as more funding for the municipalities. Government plans also included the building of new roads and new housing. In order to finance these new measures taxes were increased, and a new sales tax was introduced.

The Labour Party government developed new social welfare arrangements between 1935 and 1940. Their aim was to supply each citizen with a safety net to provide security during sickness, unemployment and old age. Old age pensions were introduced in 1936. Sickness and unemployment benefits were further developed, and the functionally disabled were given rights. Worker protection legislation was strengthened, and more workers achieved the goal of an 8-hour day. A large and important advance was that more people now had the opportunity to access higher education.

Norway during German occupation 1940 - 1945

The Norwegian policy of neutrality came under fire when the World War 2 broke out in 1939. The Allies wanted to prevent the export of ore from Kiruna in Sweden to Narvik in Northern Norway. From Narvik, it was transported further south for use in the German war industry. Under the umbrella of Norwegian neutrality, the ore could be transported within a 3-mile limit along the Norwegian coast. The Germans could thereby circumvent the blockade established by the British Navy. In the early spring of 1940, the Allies considered military operations in Scandinavia with the twin objectives of blocking the ore transport and assisting Finland with its Winter War. The French also wanted to keep the Germans busy in the north, in order to reduce pressure against themselves. The operation was cancelled, however, when Finland and Russia signed a peace agreement in March 1940 (See also *World War Two from the Finnish viewpoint*, page 40). The Germans wanted to control Norway to prevent German ships from being isolated in the Baltic Sea and to use as a base for military activities in the Atlantic. As the British gradually increased their attempts to gain greater control of Norwegian waters, Norwegian neutrality no longer provided the Germans the protection they needed.

On 8th April 1940, the British laid mines along the Norwegian coastline, and on 9th April, Germany attacked Denmark and Norway. Norwegian forces resisted with allied assistance, but were gradually pressed northward. The Norwegian armed forces had been neglected during the interwar period, and were unable to cope with the German offensive. In June, Norwegian military resistance collapsed. When the Germans attacked France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, the Allies pulled their forces out of Norway to counter the new threat.

The Norwegian Nazi leader Vidkun Quisling took power on his own initiative when the government, the *Storting* and the king fled from Oslo on 9th April. Hitler supported Quisling, and demanded that the king proclaim a new government with Quisling as its leader. The king and the government refused to comply, and chose to continue their struggle against the occupation forces. They fled to the north, and were finally forced to retreat to Great Britain.

With the aid of the merchant fleet and new military divisions, the legitimate government and the king carried on their resistance from Britain. The Norwegian merchant fleet provided a vital service in helping supply the Allies on all the world's oceans. Around 4,500 Norwegian seamen lost their lives, and many others suffered serious physical and psychological injuries. However, the Norwegian sailors who served during the war had to struggle for many years to obtain appropriate wartime pensions from the Norwegian government.

In Norway, the Germans attempted to nazify Norwegian society with the backing of Quisling and the National Unity Party. This was largely unsuccessful, however, due to the widespread resistance movement involving representatives from schools, the church, sports organisations and the major workers' organisations. The resistance movement primarily carried out civil-disobedience actions. It was only towards the end of the war that armed resistance came to the fore.



Illustration 4.4: The Nazi flag above the *Storting* building during WW2. (Gustav Brosing, UBB)

Norway was strategically vital to Germany. At the height of the occupation, 430,000 German soldiers were stationed in Norway. From air and marine bases in Norway, the Germans attacked convoys in the North Atlantic, and the country also served as a staging area for the war against the Soviet Union. Norwegian metals and fish were also vital products for Germany's war efforts.

The National Unity Party experienced a powerful upswing during the occupation. The main cause was probably that many Norwegians believed Germany would win the war, and hoped for a future within the party. Anti-communism also led some people to support the National Unity Party. In addition, a number of public employees buckled under the pressure to join the party exerted by the Nazi regime, and others were undoubtedly attracted by the militarism, symbols and racism that the party represented.

Two Norwegian Nobel-prize winners in literature, Knut Hamsun (1859 – 1952) and Sigrid Undset (1882 – 1949), took diametrically opposed stances during the occupation. Hamsun supported Quisling and Nazi Germany, and was convicted of treason in the trials held after the end of the war. Undset supported the resistance struggle while in exile in the USA.

Over 10,000 Norwegians lost their lives as a result of the war, or around 0.3% of the population. 2,000 members of the resistance died, 40,000 people were jailed and 8,000 were sent to prison camps in Germany. German brutality in Norway was less than that experienced in many other occupied countries in Europe. However, the fate of the Norwegian Jews stands as a particularly dark chapter of Norwegian wartime history. Forty-five per cent of the Norwegian Jewish population died in German concentration camps. The Norwegian police provided the Nazi regime with support and assisted the Germans in the registration of Jewish citizens. Tens of thousands of Soviet and Yugoslavian prisoners were also placed in prison camps in Norway. The conditions were miserable and 17,000 of these prisoners died. The Germans were also responsible for enormous damage to property, particularly in the northern part of the country. When the German forces were driven out by the Soviet Army in the north at the end of the war, they burned virtually all of the buildings in Finnmark. Nothing was to remain which could be used by the enemy.

In the war crimes trials after the war, Norwegians who had aided the Germans and the National Unity Party were convicted as traitors. Norwegians who had fought for the Germans on the Russian Front were also convicted.

The welfare state and oil nation 1945 – 2005

The Golden Age of the Labour Party

The period from 1945 to 1965 is often characterised as the Labour Party's Golden Age. The party held power during the whole of this period, apart for a 3-week period in 1963. Einar Gerhardsen (1897 - 1987) became prime minister in 1945, and held office for fifteen years. Gerhardsen had humble beginnings and had only attended elementary school (*folkeskole*). During the war he was active in the resistance movement, and was imprisoned in a German concentration camp. He had the ability to cooperate with other politicians and reach compromises in difficult cases. In 1945, the political parties collaborated on a Joint Programme (*Fellesprogrammet*) aimed at the country's reconstruction; their goal was economic growth and improved welfare policies. Unemployment was to be reduced, and living standards were to be levelled out.

To achieve these ends the government adopted a planned economy. Prices, wages, exports and imports were strongly regulated. Restrictions were imposed on all construction and renovation work, and, in principle, the government could decide what was going to be produced in the country. However, in 1948-1952, when the government opted to take part in the Marshall Plan, the Labour Party had to adopt more liberal economic policies and to some extent relax some of the restrictions of the planned economy. Nevertheless, the Labour Party still exerted strong control of the economy. Nationalised industries flourished during this period, especially aluminium and steel production. As the 1950s progressed, the mixed economy was further developed. The government provided state subsidies for privately owned companies. The *Storting* passed the national budget and four-years of economic programmes for the country. The government now adopted more indirect means of steering the economy through taxes, duties, subsidies, house-loans and educational support policies.

Employees and employers formed large federations and organisations to protect their respective interests. These federations and organisations cooperated with the authorities, and became advisors to the government and the state apparatus. The organisations

had participated in active resistance during the Second World War, which gave them more influence and power during the post-war period. The Labour Party cooperated in particular with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (*Landsorganisasjonen*), which represented the majority of trade unions throughout Norway. In reality, this resulted in the *Storting* having less power, while the government and the large organisations gained more power. Through informal channels, and formal hearings regarding important questions, decisions were often reached before resolutions were actually passed in the *Storting*.

From the cradle to the grave - the welfare state

The development of the welfare state went through several stages. The foundations were laid between the 1890s and the First World War. The next stage of development arrived at the end of the 1930s; and when the Labour Party formed a government in 1945, they launched a large-scale welfare programme. The welfare plan sought to establish a safety net 'from the cradle to the grave' for each individual. The reforms resulted in an increase in the population and life expectancy. Housing and diet were improved, and new medicines were introduced; especially important was the fact that it now became possible to cure tuberculosis.

Child benefits were introduced in 1946. All families with children received support from the state, dependent on how many children they had. A mandatory insurance scheme was introduced, which provided employees with benefits in the event of sickness. Workers' protection laws became more stringent, and child protection laws were strengthened. Government support for the functionally disabled was also developed, and social services were improved. In 1966, a national insurance scheme was introduced that coordinated the various welfare benefits, which covered sickness and age based on a principle of universality. It also provided benefits for expectant mothers and single parents. A basic state pension was introduced which was not indexed to wages. During the 1950s and 1960s, a large number of women were homemakers without income. Consequently, the basic state pension was very important for this group.



Illustration 4.5: Seeing the public health nurse. Espeland in Bergen around 1955. (Atelier KK, UBB)

Norway in Nordic and International cooperation

The United Nations was founded in 1945, and the Norwegian politician Trygve Lie (1896 – 1968) was appointed its first general secretary. Norway wished to contribute to building a bridge between East and West during the period from 1945 to 1948. The country wanted to remain outside alliances and maintain a strong defence. However, during the Cold War it became ever more clear that Norway's neutrality was not a viable policy. Marshall Aid had drawn Norway closer to the United States, trade had increased with the West, while it was reduced with the East, and anti-Communist sentiment grew.

In 1948, negotiations took place between Norway, Sweden and Denmark regarding the forming of a Nordic defence alliance, but different traditions and experiences from the war resulted in a shipwreck of the planned cooperation. During the process it became clear that Sweden still wished to remain neutral. Norway, on the other hand, wished to build stronger relations with Great Britain and the USA. Norway had been occupied by the German forces, while Sweden had managed to remain outside the war.

In a crisis situation Norway wished to secure quick aid from the Western countries. The country also wished to secure a rapid supply of weapons. Sweden did not wish to commit itself to a defence alliance with Western countries (See also *The direction of Danish foreign policy...*, page 24 & *In the conflicts between the East and West...* page 100).

Norway and Denmark chose to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1949. After joining NATO, the government took steps to reassure the Soviet Union by adopting the so-called Bases Declaration (*Baseerklæringen*), which stipulated that Norway would not allow foreign troops on Norwegian territory in time of peace; from 1960, it was specified that this also included atomic weapons. It was no easy decision for the Labour Party to join NATO; there was a strong opposition against it within the party. In 1961, the opponents of NATO broke away from the Labour Party and formed a new party, the Socialist People's Party (*Sosialistisk Folkeparti*).

Although Nordic efforts to create a defence alliance were unsuccessful, there still existed a strong desire to cooperate on other issues within a Nordic context. In 1952, the Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic national assemblies agreed to establish the Nordic Council (*Nordisk Råd*), which Finland joined three years later. The Nordic Council consists of representatives from the legislative and executive bodies of the respective countries. The Council convenes once a year, and has an advisory function. Several bridge-building initiatives between the Nordic countries were implemented during these years. A common labour market was established, and passports were no longer required for travel between the countries; Scandinavians could also apply for welfare benefits in their neighbouring countries. After 1960 the Nordic countries cooperated even more closely.

The struggle concerning Norwegian membership of the EU

After the European Economic Community (EEC) was established in 1957, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Switzerland and Portugal formed the European Free Trade Association (EFTA, founded in 1960). Great Britain and Denmark decided later to apply for EEC membership, and in 1962 the

Norwegian *Storting* decided to follow suit. However, their application was vetoed by Charles de Gaulle, the French President, who did not wish to have Great Britain as a rival in the leadership of the EEC. He believed that Great Britain was too closely tied to the USA. As long as de Gaulle remained president, the EEC was not enlarged. However, after he left office, renewed applications were once again placed on the agenda.

The *Storting* renewed its application in 1970, and the government initiated negotiations with the EEC. In 1972, a referendum was held in Norway regarding EEC membership. The Labour Prime Minister, Trygve Bratteli (1910 - 1984), put his position as prime minister on the line when he advocated membership of the EEC; so when 53.5% voted no, he resigned from office. Norway remained outside the EEC, but entered into an agreement with the EEC countries regarding the trade of industrial products. Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark became EEC members in 1973.

The Common Market (EEC) debate in Norway caused more controversy than any other political issue since the parliamentary system was introduced in 1884. The Conservative and the Labour parties were both in favour of membership, as were leaders within the trade union movement, the major business organisations and the leading newspapers. Proponents believed that the EEC could help to preserve peace, and held a positive attitude towards increased economic cooperation between the Western countries. They also felt that membership would enable Norway to exert greater influence over the development of Europe.

In the opposing camp were the Centre Party (*Senterpartiet*), the Socialist People's Party (*Sosialistisk Folkeparti*), the Communists, and the majority of the members of the Liberal Party (*Venstre*) and the Christian People's Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*). Farmers and fishermen, the lay preacher and temperance movements, the *Nynorsk* supporters, students, environmentalists and radical members of the labour movement also joined the opposition. Like the popular movements of the 1800s, the grass-root movements played a comparable role in the debate.

The opponents viewed EEC membership as a threat to democracy and self-government, and feared plans to move towards even closer cooperation within the EEC, ultimately leading to a union. Norway was a young nation, and the battle for independence was still fresh in its collective memory. Many were also critical

because they felt the objectives of the EEC were too exclusively concerned with economic growth and a free European market. The EEC refused to grant special terms to Norwegian farmers and fishermen, and many feared the consequences in a country with such special geographic conditions. The fear that Norway might not be able to sustain viable communities and population levels in sparsely populated districts was important for many of the groups that opposed Norwegian membership. The Norwegian EEC debate was, to a large degree, a debate between town and countryside. The new political climate in the 1970s resulted in the implementation of decentralisation policies, and increased financial support for farming and fisheries. Policies favouring environmental conservation were also forced through. This was economically feasible, largely because Norway had begun to earn more income from its oil fields.

In 1992, Sweden and Finland applied for membership of the EEC. The Maastricht Treaty included plans for an economic and foreign policy union, and in 1993 the EEC changed its name to the EU (European Union). The Norwegian Labour Party government, led by Gro Harlem Brundtland (1939 -), negotiated a membership treaty for Norway. The debate on Norwegian membership raged again, following roughly the same lines as earlier. One difference this time, however, was that the level of opposition was greater among women. For this group, the protection of the welfare state was an important issue. Women also supported values such as equal rights and opportunities, which were deeply ingrained in the Norwegian culture. The large oil and fishery resources, which Norway had gained jurisdiction over in the 1970s, also made the Norwegians more reluctant to relinquish power to international authorities. The oil income provided Norway with economic independence and alternative options. A new referendum in 1994 resulted in a 52.2% majority against membership. Together with Iceland and Lichtenstein, Norway entered into a comprehensive economic agreement with the EU covering the EEA (European Economic Area). At present, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland are the remaining members of EFTA. Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the EU in 1995.



Economic growth and the creation of prosperity

Productivity and investment in the Norwegian economy increased greatly in the 1950s, but the growth of the Norwegian GNP was lower than that of most other countries in Western Europe. As a member of the OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Co-operation), Norway had to open its borders to increased imports, and Norwegian industry found it difficult to compete with imported goods. Norway concentrated its efforts on energy-intensive industry and shipping. The iron and metal industry was developed, as were chemical factories, the production of electro-technical equipment, the graphics industry, wood processing industry and shipbuilding. Shipping quadrupled between 1945 and 1973. However, most of the new jobs were in the service industries.

The period between 1960 and 1973 was a golden age for Norwegian industry, characterised by strong economic growth. The international economy thrived, and Norway was the largest exporter of aluminium in Europe and a significant exporter of steel products and ferrosilicon. The mechanical workshop industry was doing well, as were the furniture and graphics industries. The thriving economy meant that the economic situation improved for the vast majority, and a demand for more labour resulted in more women seeking paid employment. Norway was exposed to strong influences from the US. Both the lifestyle and culture of Norway became more Americanised. In 1960, the rationing of automobiles was abolished, and as prosperity increased more families were able to buy their own homes, cars, leisure cabins and boats.

The mechanisation of farming expanded rapidly following the war. Most farms acquired tractors and milking machines, and silos and grain-feed replaced hay and straw. Farmers became increasingly specialised, and many sought work outside the farm. Co-operative organisations expanded, and in 1950 the first agricultural agreement appeared; the government and the farming organisations agreed upon prices and subsidy programmes. Almost half of the Norwegian farms went out of operation between 1945 and 1975, but the land continued to be cultivated by neighbouring farms, and new farmland was also cultivated. The authorities wanted to ensure that the land was cultivated, in order to ensure a food supply in the event of war or other type of emergency. In

terms of food self-sufficiency, Norway had the lowest production in Western Europe.

In the 1950s, the trawler law was modified, and the fishing industry became much more efficient. Offshore trawling and fish-processing enterprises expanded, and frozen fish became the most important export product of the fishing industry. The government supported the industry with various measures, and annual fishery agreements were introduced. The catch was tripled between the 1930s and the 1960s, and over-fishing of certain species became an issue.

Changes in the economy during the first decades following the war led to the largest migration of people since the emigration to America in the 1800s. This, however, was an internal migration, from the countryside to the towns. Immediately following the war, around half of the population lived in towns and cities. By 1970, the ratio had increased to two-thirds. In order to counter this centralisation, the government established 'regional centres.' Norwegian policies also ensured more support for agriculture than that found in neighbouring countries.

The international economy stagnated in the 1970s, and the oil crisis in 1973 aggravated the situation. Norway borrowed money to keep the wheels turning. As a result, the foreign debt grew. The years between 1973 and 1993 were difficult for industry. New technology had improved efficiency, and the demand for labour was greatly reduced. In the 1980s, many government industries found it impossible to continue operation, partly due to reduced subsidies, and many had to close their doors. At the same time, the Norwegian economy became more internationalised, and Norwegian businesses engaged in activities in other parts of the world. Fish farming became a growth industry, and Norway became an important exporter to various markets around the globe.

In 1993, a new economic growth began. Employers and employees agreed to limit wage increases in order to strengthen Norway's ability to compete with foreign rivals. New jobs appeared, particularly within the fields of information and computer technology. The majority favoured a reduction in economic control and many municipal and state monopolies were discontinued or partially privatised.

Natural resources on the Norwegian continental shelf - oil and fish

In 1966, test boring for oil and gas was initiated in the North Sea, and in 1970 it was apparent that one of the 10 largest oil resources in the world lay off the Norwegian coast. Norwegian authorities were unprepared for such major finds, and were forced to act quickly to determine how they might handle the situation. Foreign capital and expertise were required, but the government also had to protect Norwegian interests. Similar to the situation when Norwegian waterpower had been harnessed around the turn of the last century, concession laws were passed. The Norwegian government ensured that it had full control over its resources in the North Sea. Foreign companies were invited to participate in development, but the government also claimed a major part of all the oil and gas that was extracted. The government also established its own corporation, Statoil. Simultaneously, the government purchased the majority of the stocks in Norsk Hydro and gave the company access to large oil fields in the North Sea. In the 1980s, oil was also found in Northern Norway (north of 62 degrees north latitude). The production of equipment and platforms for the oil industry provided many jobs in Norway, and a petrochemical industry was created. A large part of the enormous oil and gas income has been placed in an oil fund for future use.

Through international negotiations in the 1970s, Norway acquired the right to exploit all of the resources on the continental shelf along its coast. The country also established its right to manage all the fish species in the economic zone (200 nautical miles) in this part of the ocean. In this way, Norway ensured its right to administer large natural resources. In the north, disagreement on where the economic boundaries lay led to complicated negotiations with Russia. A temporary agreement on fishing quotas and responsibilities was reached in 1978, the Grey Zone Agreement (*Gråsonavtalen*). The debate with Denmark regarding the borderline between Jan Mayen and Greenland was settled in the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1993. Disagreement on the amount of fish which could be harvested near Svalbard and in the international section of the Barents Sea led to a heated debate with Iceland. At the end of the 1990s, Norway and Iceland managed to reach agreement on the exchange of fishing quotas.

Protests against the system and grass-root movements


Towards the end of the 1960s, people began to question the unilateral emphasis on economic growth. The consequences of pollution and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources were becoming more pronounced, and many became engaged with environmental conservation issues. A number of river systems were protected by regulation during the 1970s. An environmental conservation act and a water pollution act were passed in 1970, and in 1972 a new Ministry of Environment (*Miljødepartementet*) was established.

The student protests in Paris in 1968 also inspired youth rebellion in Norway. Secondary school and university students protested against how the universities were organised, which triggered changes in both the content and structure of the system. With the advent of the Vietnam War, large groups of youths became engaged in political activities and various grass-root movements. In 1973, a new Marxist-Leninist party, the Worker's Communist Party (*Arbeidernes Kommunistparti - AKP*) was created. Although the party had no representatives in the *Storting* prior to 1993, it still strongly influenced public debate. Radical movements in art and literature also achieved a breakthrough.

In the aftermath of the protest movement, a new women's rights movement developed. The new feminists focused especially on self-awareness and women's liberation issues, and were organised in small, self-governed groups. From the early 1970s, it became popular to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8th.

The right-wing movement

The popularity of the Conservative Party (*Høyre*) increased in the late 1970s. In 1981, the party experienced its best election since the 1920s, winning 31% of the votes, and the party formed a government with Kåre Willoch (1928-) as prime minister. Inspired by the economic policies of Great Britain and the USA, the conservatives proposed lower taxes and a freer economic market. The government discontinued the programmes for regulating housing prices and controlling the personal loan market. Private consumption exploded. It also became easier for



foreigners to buy Norwegian securities, and people could gain tax write-offs by buying shares in mutual funds. Many new jobs were created in the commodity market, banking, and the hotel and restaurant sector. However, the foreign debt rose dramatically due to massive imports, and oil prices fell simultaneously. In order to re-establish foreign confidence in the Norwegian economy, it became necessary to increase taxes and reduce government spending. The Willoch government collapsed in 1986, and the Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) assumed power.

A new party, the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), was founded in 1973. The party has gradually acquired a large following, and in the 2005 election it gained 22.1% of the votes. The Progressive Party favours a liberal economy, and conservative cultural values, and is severely critical of current immigration policies. The party chairman for 25 years, Carl I. Hagen (1944-), has received heavy criticism for his populist approach and for exploiting xenophobia. None of the other parties has been willing to form a government with the Progress Party.

The welfare state under pressure

During the 1970s, Norway underwent a last period of major socio-political reforms. The educational system was expanded, and access to higher education became independent of personal wealth. The retirement age was reduced from 70 to 67 years, and sick leave was compensated with 100% pay from the first day of illness.

Norwegian equal opportunity and family policies have revolved around the right to work and programmes which provide women with equal rights in the job market. In the 1960s, only 23% of Norwegian women over the age of 15 had paid employment. It was financially possible for most women to remain at home with their families, and the general consensus was that a woman's place was in the home. The 1970s witnessed a demand for labour, and more women found jobs. At the same time, new household appliances made housework easier, and it became more socially acceptable for women to work outside the home. Better birth control became available in the 1960s, and the birth rate was drastically reduced. In 1978, the law on self-determined abortion was passed, as well as a law on women's equal rights. Paid

leave in connection with childbirth, the building of kindergartens and after-school programmes have been given high priority since the 1980s. In 1981, Gro Harlem Brundtland became the first woman prime minister in Norway, and her government strongly influenced women's equal rights and family policies.

During the 1980s, despite the comprehensive social safety net, invisible poverty became an important issue in Norway. 5% of the population were classified as poor. These included the aged, single mothers, the handicapped and unemployed youth. The cost of living increased, and social expenditure increased formidably. During the last decades, crime and drug abuse have become major social problems.

The increase in life expectancy has resulted in a higher average age in the population, and consequently, increased strain on the social security system. The number of people living on old age and disability pensions has increased. Major upheavals in trade and industry have forced many out of active employment and into public assistance programmes. The authorities have had to meet serious challenges in financing the social network, and the participation of private interests in pension and health services has also increased.

A multicultural society

The Sámis are the only aboriginal population in Norway. The Sámi population is spread across four countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. There are around 30-50,000 Sámis in Norway, most of them living in Finnmark and Oslo. Norway promoted an assimilation policy up until the 1950s. The Sámi language was not permitted as a teaching language, and the Sámis were unable to represent their culture through songs, religion, tales or dress. Although, the inflexible assimilation policy was abandoned after World War 2, the earlier cultural oppression made it difficult for many Sámis to acknowledge their heritage.

A turning point came with the Alta case. In 1978, the *Storting* approved the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Alta River in Finnmark. There was widespread resistance to the project, which would lay large areas of land underwater. Environmental activists chained themselves along the Alta River, and representatives of the Sámis staged a hunger strike in front of the *Storting* building in Oslo. The

struggle against the Alta development project was unsuccessful, but the Sámis had become conscious of their identity and culture to a much higher degree. The Sámi people came more into the public eye, and gained understanding from the population at large. In 1989, the Sámi Parliament (*Sámetinget*) was established, with an administration and assembly building in Kautokeino in Finnmark.

A major challenge for all the Norwegian governments during recent decades has been immigration. Since the mid-1970s, Norway has experienced immigration from non-European countries. Initially, most of those who sought employment in Norway came from Pakistan, but there were also immigrants from other parts of Asia and from Africa. Although the authorities adopted more stringent immigration rules in 1975, the number of immigrants has still continued to increase. Refugees and asylum-seekers have arrived to Norway from a number of countries, including Vietnam, Chile, Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran and Somalia. Racism and mistrust of foreigners have increased in recent years. The authorities, in cooperation with various organisations, have established programmes which highlight the positive aspects of cultural diversity and encourage integration.

Since the 1990s, Norway has increasingly stressed engagement in international humanitarian and peacekeeping activities. Through participation in peacekeeping forces, mediation and emergency assistance, the country wishes to contribute to international peace and development. Economic aid has increasingly become contingent upon attitudes towards human rights and democracy in the recipient countries.

Discussion questions

1. Describe Norway's situation in 1814 and characterise the Norwegian constitution.
2. What were the characteristics of the society dominated by state officials and how was this society challenged in the 19th century?
3. How did popular movements influence Norwegian society after the middle of the 19th century?
4. What caused the large-scale emigration from Norway to the United States and when did it happen?

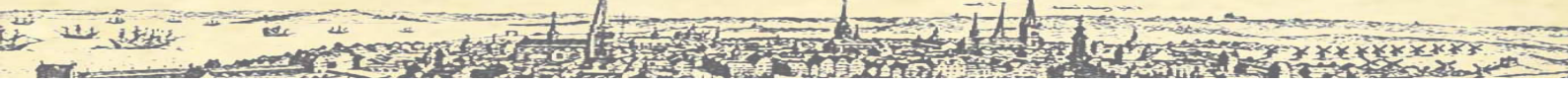
5. Define the parliamentary principle of government and explain the development towards this system of government in Norway.
6. Explain the dissolution of the Union from a Norwegian and a Swedish viewpoint (use the chapters of this book on Norwegian and Swedish history).
7. Describe the growth of the labour movement in Norway and explain why this movement came to have such a great impact on Norwegian politics.
8. Describe Norway's situation during WWI.
9. Characterise the economic policy in Norway after WWI. How did this policy affect people's lives?
10. How was Norway affected by the economic depression in the 1930s and how did the authorities manage the situation?
11. Explain the term 'welfare state' and describe the Norwegian development towards a welfare state in the 20th century.
12. Explain why Norway since the 1970s has chosen a different course from the other Nordic countries regarding integration into Europe.
13. Characterise Norwegian economic history after WWII. Show important traits in agricultural and industrial developments and describe the most important changes in the exploitation of resources and economic growth.

Essay topics

Assess the factors that led to such a high degree of democracy in Norway in the 19th century.

Assess what effect the fact that the country is situated on the northern border of Europe has had on economic and political developments in Norway in the 19th and 20th centuries.

How have the dissolution of the Danish-Norwegian Union in 1814 and the Swedish-Norwegian Union in 1905 affected Norwegian political development in the 19th and 20th centuries?



To what extent has the Norwegian nation state been a successful unit for economic, social and political development in the 19th and 20th centuries?

How did Norway's course in WWII differ from that of the other Nordic countries and how did it affect Norway's foreign policy direction after the war?

Timeline

	1905	Dissolution of the union with Sweden
	1913	Universal female suffrage
	1914-8	WWI, Norwegian neutrality under pressure
	1915	Children born out of wedlock obtain the right of inheritance from their father
	1920	The Farmers' Party (later Centre Party) founded
	1928	The Norwegian crown at par
1814		The union between Norway and Denmark dissolved, new union between Norway and Sweden
1833		The farmers win the majority in the <i>Storting</i> together with the bourgeois liberals
1837		The Local Government Laws, municipal self-government
1849-51		The Thrane Movement
1860		Legislation about elementary education in the agrarian area
1865		Soeren Jaabaek's Friends of the Farmers Associations, emigration to US greatly increased
1869		Annual sessions of the <i>Storting</i>
1884		The Liberal and Conservative Parties founded, verdict against the cabinet handed down by the High Court of Impeachment
1885		Equal status to the two versions of Norwegian – ' <i>Bokmaal</i> ' and ' <i>Nynorsk</i> '
1887		Foundation of the Labour Party
1889		Primary School Act
1895-1905		
		Tension between Norway and Sweden, Norwegian armament
1898		Universal suffrage for men, right to use the Norwegian flag without the symbol of the Union
	1931	The effects of the world economic crisis hit Norway on a large scale
	1933	Christian People's Party and National Unity Party founded
	1935	General agreement between Workers' National Trade Unions and the national employers' associations, compromise between the Labour Party and the Farmer's Party
	1936	Old age pension introduced
	1940-5	German occupation
	1945	Reconstruction under the leadership of the Labour Party
	1946	Social security legislation for children
	1949	Norwegian membership of NATO
	1961	Socialist People's Party founded
	1965	Right-of-centre cabinet takes over after the Labour Party
	1966	National insurance scheme
	1970s	Full development of North Sea oil exploitation
	1972	Referendum on Norwegian membership of EEC, negative majority
	1973	Progress Party founded

- 1978 Law of free choice in abortion and law of equality passed
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- 1981 Cabinet of the Right Party, legislation to decrease state controls
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