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# THE BARNES REVIEW

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... TO BRING HISTORY INTO ACCORD WITH THE FACTS

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## NULLIFICATION: STATES' RIGHTS VS FEDERAL POWER



JOHN C. CALHOUN

**ALSO:** The Suppressed Story of Black Confederates . . . The Age-old Battle for the Money Power . . . Norway's Vidkun Quisling—Traitor or Patriot? . . . Degrelle—Germany's Amazing Social Transformation . . .

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... TO BRING HISTORY INTO ACCORD WITH THE FACTS

*In the tradition of the Father of Historical Revisionism,*

*Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes*

MARCH 1996

VOLUME II NUMBER 3

**P**ictured on the cover of this month's TBR is John Caldwell Calhoun, born on the 18th of this month in 1782. This enigmatic, prickly and ambitious man served as a congressman, secretary of war, vice president from 1825-1832, senator and secretary of state. But he is best known as one of the staunchest advocates of states' rights and the doctrine of nullification: the belief that the Constitution is a compact among sovereign political entities (the states) which each hold the power to nullify acts of Congress they consider unconstitutional. He clearly saw the struggle between the states and the federal government as one leading to disaster. In 1850, the year of his death, he told a friend that the Union was doomed to dissolution: "I fix its probable occurrence within 12 years or three presidential terms." Our cover story this month discusses in depth the controversy which has raged throughout the two centuries of U.S. history over the states' struggle to assert their sovereignty in the face of an obstinate federal government.

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THE BARNES REVIEW (ISSN 1078-4799) is published monthly by TBR Co., 130 Third Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional mailing offices. Send payment with order to above address or call toll-free 800-522-6292 and use your Visa or MasterCard. All editorial, business or circulation matters: 202-546-1586, all subscription inquiries: 714-548-5530. All rights reserved. Copyright 1995 by TBR Co. No copies or reprints may be made without written permission. All manuscripts submitted must be typewritten and double-spaced. No responsibility can be assumed for unreturned manuscripts. Change of address: send your old, incorrect mailing label and your new, correct address neatly printed or typed 30 days before you move to assure delivery. **Advertising:** TAB AGENCY, phone 202-319-9866 or 202-265-8588; fax 202-319-9867.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BARNES REVIEW, 130 Third Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.S.A.		
<b>Regular second class:</b>	<b>First class: (in envelope)</b>	
1 year, \$38	1 year, \$58	
2 years, \$65	2 years, \$105	
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<b>Regular surface:</b>		
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<b>Quantity Prices</b>		
(current issue U.S.A.):	1-4	\$4.50 each
	5-9	\$4.00 each
	10-19	\$3.50 each
	20 and up	\$3.25 each

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# VIDKUN QUISLING: TRAITOR OR PATRIOT?

BY S.E. NORLING

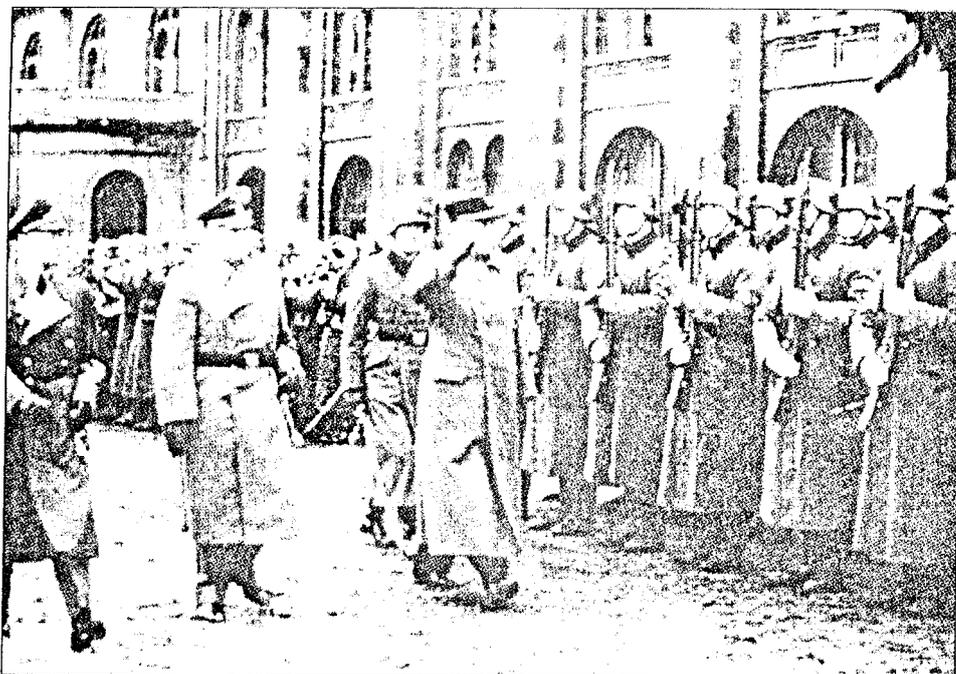
**T**he name of the chief of the Norwegian World War II collaborationist government, Vidkun Quisling, has passed to posterity as a synonym for "traitor." The hated label, applied amid wartime passions and propaganda, hardly fits the truth relative to this complex figure of multiple facets. In fact, few if any Norwegians of the 1930s and early 1940s could claim a greater share of the struggle in behalf of their country's interests.

Vidkun Quisling's character and career have become highly distorted in literary and in popular imagination. The reality is far from this misleading generalization. In his classic early study of the fascist movements the German professor Ernst Nolte summed up in one phrase Quisling's tragedy: "The English press succeeded in promoting the idea that Quisling was the most vile of the collaborators, but the reality, until the execution squad ended his life in October 1945, is that he remained, as ever, an obstinate and convinced doctrinaire."

Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonsson Quisling was born July 18, 1887 in Øvre Telemark, son of a well known family of the Fyresdal Parish, in southern Norway, a rather mountainous and forested region. His family had been represented chiefly by farmers, Lutheran pastors and officers during the last 10 or 12 genera-



*The author writes that Vidkun Quisling was possibly the most misrepresented personality of World War II Europe. In the immediate prewar period Quisling had urged Norway to adopt a strong defense and a neutral stance. In fact his personal leanings were toward England rather than Germany. Soon after war began on September 1, 1939 Quisling cabled British PM Neville Chamberlain, urging an end to hostilities.*



*Vidkun Quisling arrives at the Stettiner railway station in Berlin on February 12, 1942. He was received as head of state. Quisling had hoped to build a strong national government that would prove self-sufficient and cooperative with Germany, thus allowing a nominal occupation such as Denmark experienced throughout the war. These unrealistic hopes could not come to pass due to very different conditions and situations.*

tions. His father, Jon Lauritz Quisling, was the dean of the parish and his family could even trace ties with the Norwegian Nobel Prize winners Ibsen and Bjornson. In 1905, the same year Norway left the union with Sweden, a wave of nationalism ran through the country. Quisling chose to follow a military career and, after graduating high school first in his class, he entered the Military Academy that same year at age 17.

He became a lieutenant in 1908, receiving the best average grade obtained by a graduate in the existence of that school. He was appointed as the most brilliant cadet to the General Staff in 1911 and became adjutant to the General Staff with the rank of captain in 1917. This period of his life left a deep impression on his character, with many good memories and sincere friends that were to follow him in his political career.

At the General Staff he first chose China as his field of study, but some years later he received instructions to start to learn Russian. He learned the language, geography, economy and anthropology of the czarist empire. In April of 1918 he was appointed military attaché to Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) and served in that post for two years, where he was to witness first-hand the devel-

opment of the Bolshevik revolution.

For the 12 years between 1918 and 1929, Quisling was away from Norway most of the time. The young military attaché traveled around half of Europe and almost all the former czarist empire, most of the time as assistant to the well known Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen, the high commissioner of the League of Nations, in his relief work for the suffering people as a consequence of the Red Revolution. Quisling was extremely busy during these years, eventually leaving his Norwegian Army position in 1928. He had met personally many of the communist leaders, and was well acquainted with Norwegian communists and socialists. What he discovered during his "field trips" as part of the League of Nations delegation changed his opinions about communism.

He witnessed the holocaust committed by Stalin against the Ukrainian people in which more than 6 million died of starvation. With a new perspective owing to his personal experiences in the field—despite the fact that he expressed some sympathies for the communist revolution at the beginning—he soon realized how destructive it was for humanity. He decided to fight against it with all his might.

His experiences in Eastern Europe

were summed up in his political-philosophical book containing his ideology, *Russia and Us*, which was translated and published in England in 1931. The book—and the fact that it had been published in England—made him a popular person in Norway when he returned to his home country.

The book first appeared as a series of newspaper articles. It provoked a strong impression within Norwegian conservative groups that feared the extensive subversive activities of the left-wing groups in the country after W.W. I. But Quisling was also a lover of the Russian people; he learned the language, and even married a Russian woman, Maria, who would remain loyal to his memory until her death in 1980.

When Quisling returned to Norway for good at the end of 1929 he was a man filled with political ambition; 42 years old and a recognized and prestigious personality. He came with dreams to create a political movement able to regenerate Norway. His mentor had always been the well-known Arctic explorer, scientist and statesman Fridtjof Nansen, who died in 1930. Nansen had also tried to create a patriotic political movement, called *Fedrelandslaget* (Fatherland League), and Quisling considered himself its political heir.

Quisling also brought with him a manuscript, which may never be published, that contained his philosophical theory. He called it *Universism*, according to his biographer, Hans Fredrik Dahl, who studied the manuscript.

Quisling used many sources for his philosophy, including Oswald Spengler, Georg Hegel, Baruch Spinoza and Immanuel Kant. This is another proof of the intellectual capacity of Quisling, far from the intellectual pauperism accusation bestowed by his enemies.

Early in 1931 he convinced a group of friends to start a new movement. He intended to absorb the Fatherland League and reunite, under his own leadership, the broad center of Norwegian opinion that was tired of Norway's current drift. The movement was called *Nordisk Folkereising* (Nordic Folk-awakening). But the movement was short lived. On May 12, 1931, Quisling was convinced by the Agrarian Party to accept the post of minister of defense.

In this post, he denounced Bolshevik revolutionary plans for Europe and the demilitarization of his and other West-

ern countries. He became an ever more popular man in Norway, especially among conservative groups. As it was clear it would be impossible to implement his policies in a liberal government, his experiences within that government made him more skeptical about the parliamentary system. The Agrarian Government finally fell at the beginning of 1933, but Quisling had been planning to leave for a number of months. He was going to start his own movement this time.

On May 13, 1933, Quisling founded *Nasjonal Samling* (National Union), adopting as his party's symbol the Saint Olaf's Cross, an old national emblem. The platform of the party was fascist in character. The term refers to the corporate national state, the leadership principle, anti-communism, strong nationalism and a simultaneous attack on socialism and capitalism. But this should not be interpreted to mean that Quisling advocated a dictatorship. What Quisling really wanted at this stage was a national government of experts under his own guidance. He was not a man of modest self-assessment. Quisling still believed, at this stage, as he would for many years, that he could reform the parliamentary system.

His opponents accused him of being a "Nazi," as is often the case when a politician opposes the established system. But as the British historian Ralph Hewins wrote as early as 1965: "He was an indigenous product of deep-rooted Northern origin . . . Had he been more experienced politically, he would not have called his party NS and himself Forer, since the German concept of those names is alien to Norway." Quisling and his followers took the NS platform to the Norwegian people at the polls. The general election was held that October. The results were disastrous: a total of 27,850 votes (a 3.596 average in areas where they presented candidates) did not give them any seats.

Despite this initial setback, Quisling and his loyal supporters did not dismay. They reasoned that the country was not prepared for the changes they suggested, and that their party machine was not sufficiently organized. Now, they reasoned, they had three years before the next general election in which

to profit from experience and to build support. They worked hard, bringing their program to every part of the country, but failed again in the next general election (1936), winning even fewer votes. This time there was no excuse and, as usual when defeat comes, there were internal recriminations and resignations.

However, despite these poor results in the general elections Quisling was not abandoned by his most loyal followers. His movement was far from defunct. A high level of activity continued. Supporters launched newspapers and other publications and printed propaganda; political meetings were held everywhere in the country, in cities such as Stavanger and Oslo, where the party had strongholds. Subsequently, with good results at the polls, their participation in the towns' political life became considerable. Despite some

desertions, the number of active supporters increased and the political program was improved thanks to the contributions of party intellectuals.

Nasjonal Samling received the support of a large share of the Norwegian cultural and artistic society. Among the leading supporters of Quisling at one time were, in the arts, Knut Hamsun, Norway's leading living writer and a Nobel Prize winner; his wife would be one of the movement's most active members; Jacob Somme and Kaj Fjell, well known painters; and Alf Larsen and Geirr Tveit, musicians. In science there were Professor Almar Naess and the well-known medical doctor Maus Hansen. All were authorities in their fields, along with many other personalities. Members of the country's leading families were supporters of Nasjonal Samling.

It was during these crucial years (1935-1939) that Quisling developed his personal concepts regarding foreign relations. It is on this point that most myths have been built around him and Nasjonal Samling. Quisling's continuing image was built by way of wartime Allied propaganda. Quisling was not a Germanophile in the sense that it has been propagated; he was more pro-British. He read *The London Times* each morning; he admired the English classic writers; he had family ties with the United States and was also a member of the highly esteemed Order of the British Empire. He even published an article in the bulletin of the movement led by the British fascist, Oswald Mosley (*BUF-Quarterly* 1-1 Jan/Apr. 1937).

On the other side, Germany was, for him, a strange country. He understood the German language poorly and could use it less well. He also had his suspicions about the geopolitical aspirations of that country. Despite the fact that Quisling was a man who had traveled around Europe and loved to theorize about international problems, he was not the kind of person who wanted to be away from his beloved Norway.

His relations with foreign fascist movements were few, even during the war, and his experience relative to the German freedom



*A German poster urging young Norwegians to join the Waffen (combat) SS. To a degree it would become an international anti-communist force drawn from volunteers throughout occupied Europe. Most of these volunteers embraced National Socialist ideology far more than Quisling. In Quisling, Paul M. Hayes wrote that his subject's political ideas were "a strange amalgam of romanticism and authoritarianism" that were never clearly defined.*

movement was negative. Therefore we should not consider it strange that Quisling chose to become part of the CAUR (Committee for Universality of Rome), an Italian organization that advocated the expansion of Fascism, and openly criticized German National Socialism during those years. Quisling was also, personally, a member of the International Entente Against the Third International (an international anti-communist organization, not a political party).

Between 1934-1935 Quisling was an active member, holding the post of secretary of the Central Committee. It is interesting to study Quisling's approach to Italian Fascism during these years. This could explain his more corporate rather than national socialist view of the state and the country. But the Germans were not interested in Norway or Quisling's movement. They had enough problems during these years and were little concerned with a politically insignificant movement in a small northern country. This despite postwar propaganda to the contrary.

Quisling the person, in his private life, was extremely Spartan. He did not drink or smoke, and ate only what was strictly necessary. His private assets consisted of a small apartment in Oslo and his countryside house. During the war he lived in an official mansion without any luxuries. He was married, without descendants, to a young Russian woman he had met in her country. He was tall, with a strong constitution. He always provoked respect from the people who met him. His supporters loved him even if he hated to be considered as their leader. His circle of friends was small, and he enjoyed spending his vacations between the mountains and lakes of his native Telemark. Although they tried, his opponents were never able to find any corruption during the time he was head of the government during the German occupation.

During the immediate pre-war years (1938-1939), convinced of the stupidity of a new European war, Quisling dedicated much effort and time attempting to stop it. At the national level he fought for a rigorous neutrality and the rearmament of his poorly defended county; this in order to protect its declared neutrality. But his demands were not heeded, and Norway slipped closer to catastrophe. Internationally, he requested the involved parties to stop it before it started. He contacted other Nordic national-



*Walking Quisling meets Adolf Hitler several times. Quisling tried to get Hitler to agree to a German leader to a Norway's independence would be a good idea. Quisling's plan was to get the Reichskommissar, Nomme, to get Hitler to agree to a good idea.*

ist movements with the aim of building a Nordic anti-war front.

In the fall of 1939 Quisling sent a long telegram to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, pleading with him to come to an agreement with Germany and to end Europe's new war. Quisling, who had been the military attaché in Russia for some time and was a former Norwegian defense minister, considered himself authorized to try to contact both parties directly. This can be considered as a sign of his naiveté, but also of his sincerity. When the first attempt led to nothing, he turned to the leaders in Germany for the same purpose. This was the first time he had contacts at high levels in Germany, and he even succeeded in meeting with Adolf Hitler in December, 1939.

After the war, especially in the process that condemned him to death but also in the official history, it has been claimed constantly that Quisling offered himself to act as a "fifth column" to help Germany to occupy the country. This version can simply not stand serious scrutiny. There was nothing of military importance that Quisling could reveal, and the strategic German plans were already so complete that they did not need help from a small if well known group such as Quisling's. The real culprits were others, people who had no open connections with Germany nor with far right groups.

Now, many years later, the real con-

tents of these contacts with Germany have been revealed. We now know that Quisling only exposed his peace plans, as he had done for the British months before, and the way Nasjonal Samling was working to prevent Norway's involvement in the war. Hitler's impressions regarding Quisling's overtures were simple: he explained to Quisling that Germany's will was that Norway remain neutral and that he too was an anglophile. Nothing else came of these meetings.

Norwegian opinion relative to the great nearby powers of Britain and Germany swung rapidly in early 1940. On January 20 Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, made a provocative speech urging neutral countries to ally with Britain against Germany. Paul M. Hayes wrote in *Quisling* that the speech "offended opinion in Scandinavia as a whole, and in Norway in particular."

But by the early spring of 1940

Norway was increasingly leaning toward the Allies. In February, a German ship was attacked in Norwegian territorial waters and it was made public that the Norwegian government, in November of 1939, had arranged the transference of almost all its cargo ships to Britain. Soon after, the Allies prepared plans to use Norway as a military base to attack Germany. On April 9, 1940, German troops landed in Norway as a counterstroke. Hitler had decided to act

before the enemy, reasoning that the omission of strict neutrality on the part of the Norwegian government gave Germany the right under international law to take the necessary measures to protect its vital interests. The Norwegian army offered a heroic defense (it lasted three months, ending in capitulation in June), but the government and the king fled to England, and the country found itself without a government.

Suddenly, Quisling proclaimed that he had formed a National Government to save the country from a military occupation. This was a very patriotic act in accordance with his plans, but was misunderstood by the Norwegian people. They concluded, quite incorrectly, that he was in league with the invaders. But Hitler had planned to deal with the existing legal government, as in Denmark, not with Quisling. Immediately Quisling was forced to recant, an administrative council was formed and the country set under the rule of a German *Reichskommissar*.

Despite the failure of the attempt to take over government power, Nasjonal Samling became an important piece of the new game. The party grew fast, thousands applied for membership, their uniformed ranks took to the streets and their members took over posts in the civil administration. As a matter of fact, most members of the official administrative council became or were Quisling's supporters. The strategy planned by Quisling was clear, and should not be interpreted as a simple collaboration with the occupa-

tion forces. Quisling became a shadow leader; he said "no" to the invitation to become a member of the council, and worked hard to preserve Norway's independence and prevent suffering of the people.

First, he suggested that all resistance against the occupiers should be avoided in order to save precious Norwegian blood; secondly, an efficient management of the scant food and energy reserves should be organized and, third, as a consequence of the other points, this would prove to the Germans that they did not need a military occupation force in the country and that Norway could receive the same treatment as Denmark, maintaining their formal independence under loose occupation.

In September of 1940, Hitler chose finally to trust in Quisling's movement, despite reports from *Reichskommissar* Terboven who was a strong opponent of Quisling. Nasjonal Samling had grown now to a size that made the movement able to take over the government. Before the end of the war the party had 60,000 members, which represented two percent of the total population of 3,000,000. It was an extremely significant figure, given that Hitler's NSDAP had only 806,000 members in 1931; corresponding to less than 0.9 percent of Germany's population.

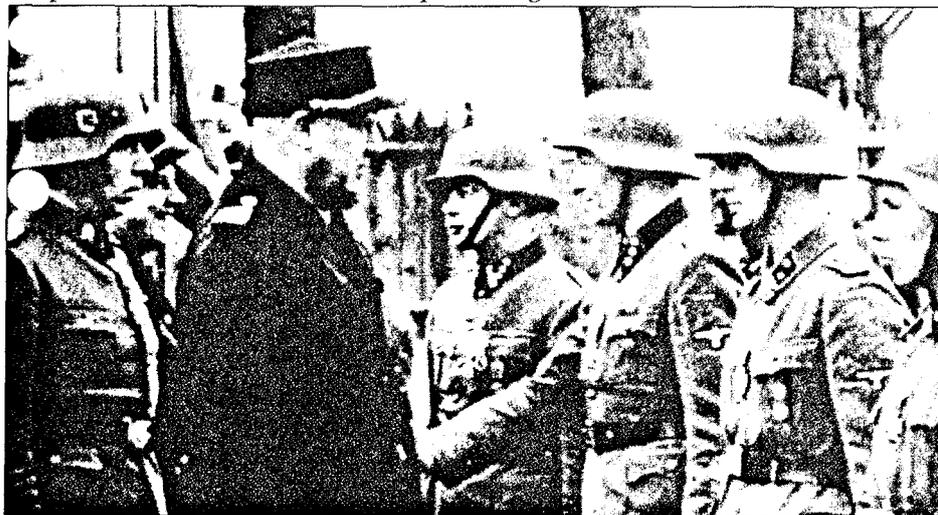
Nasjonal Samling became the sole authorized party and administered the country well and with efficiency, as even their opponents would admit.

The arts, cultural and intellectual pursuits flourished again. The youth camps and labor services covered the country. Negotiations with German authorities to

achieve a peace treaty, which would legitimize the situation (Quisling always wanted to keep the formalities) and the return to Germany of the *Reichskommissar* were his goals. Quisling proved to the Germans that this was the right course, and in February of 1942 he was appointed minister-president. This goal was always clear for Quisling himself: to preserve Norway's independence and to do the best for the country, and this was what he required from his followers. His appointment as minister-president was the peak of his political career and the one his opponents despised and manipulated. It was not only the government in exile in London and Allied war propaganda that denigrated Quisling, but also his colleagues who preferred German rule and considered Quisling too anti-German.

The course of the war, with the German defeats in the East, and the deaths of the Norwegian members of the Waffen SS—who numbered 10 times more than the Norwegians who saw action in British uniforms—made Quisling's last years especially hard. After the war the official history has tried to show us that the clandestine resistance movement was the main problem Quisling had during his mandate, but the reality is that Mil-Org (the name the resistance gave themselves) was exactly as they said, "clandestine." They were so "clandestine" that not even the Germans were interested in their activities. Almost no terrorist or sabotage attacks were made during the war; only some murders of NS members. But this never reached the magnitude the resistance had in other occupied northern countries such as Denmark or Belgium.

The Norwegian government in London passed several laws that would have retroactive effects, among them the announcement that all "quislings" would be prosecuted and the example of the savage repression in France and



Vidkun Quisling is pictured during a visit with his party members on the Eastern Front. The soldiers formed the Norwegian Legion and fought at Leningrad 1942-43.

Erik Norling is a writer and TBR subscriber living in Fuengirola, Spain. He is in the process of preparing his doctoral dissertation in law relative to post-World War II repressions in Europe. He is conversant in the Norwegian, Swedish and Danish languages and is a member of the Norwegian INO-Institute, which specializes in the study of World War II Norwegian occupation history.

Belgium—at least 75,000 civilians were killed between 1944-46 after the hour of the liberation—gave them something to worry about. Some of Quisling's most radical cabinet members proposed to him to resist until the end and assist the German plans to make a "Festung Norgegen" (Fortress Norway). Quisling rejected the idea. There exist plenty of written proofs about his last-days efforts to avoid a civil war in Norway and he prepared himself to make the transfer of powers in a civilized manner.

On the first of May, notice of Hitler's death reached Oslo. Now they knew that everything was lost. But Quisling rejected the opportunity to leave the country. He wanted to accept his destiny. In fact, it was Leon Degrelle, the

Ionian leader, who used a flight available at Oslo to reach Spain.

On May 8, 1945, Quisling was detained by the Allies. He expected to get fair treatment, as he had extended to his enemy during the war. He always interceded before the German occupation authorities to avoid death penalties for convicted terrorists: in fact, there were few executions in Norway during the war. But he was imprisoned in extreme conditions and indicted as a traitor. He tried to explain his patriotic reasons, but in vain; no one wanted to listen to him. The death sentence was prepared long before the defense even gave their speech.

A veritable reign of terror spread, affecting nearly 100,000 persons with their families; it has been estimated that every seventh or eighth household in the country was affected. Imprisonments, prosecutions, deprivation of civil rights, loss of jobs, confiscation of properties, etc. as well as summary executions and an environment of hate against the losers and their families overran the country. Even today there is lingering bitterness in Norway. Quisling's closest supporters would be executed or incarcerated for many years. Not only party members were imprisoned and convicted. To be a simple party member of a legal pre-war party was a criminal offense following the new *ex post facto* laws. Many intellectuals and artists were prosecuted, such as Knut Hamsun, just as Ezra Pound was incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital in the United States.

Quisling was executed on the morning of May 24, 1945 at the Akershus fortress in Oslo. With him died one of the names that will forever mark

Norway's history. While imprisoned he said to his captors: "I know that the Norwegian people have condemned me to death, and the easiest thing would have been to take my own life. But I want to see how history judges me. Believe me, in ten years' time I will be like a new Saint Olaf." He was referring to the Christian king who died for the unity and Christianity of Norway in the Middle Ages.

Vidkun Quisling, a strong personality, may have been a man of considerable vanity and limited practical capacities. But few serious students could conclude that he was not a highly dedicated patriot, and one whose name should rest in peace, not as a synonym for traitor. ♦

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