

**"I really earned this"**

Sprinter Geir Moen netted more medals after winning and setting a new Norwegian 200-metre record (at 20.29) and winning the King's Cup in the national championship. "I feel I've earned this," said Moen of the trophy. Discus thrower Mette Bergman won the women's King's Cup.

**Still one point to go...**

It should have been the match that would take Norway's soccer team to the European Championships, but Norway only tied 1-1 with the Czech Republic on home ground after being one goal ahead for 84 of the game's 90 minutes. With two matches to go, Norway now has to win one point to be certain of going.

# Glasnost in Norwegian?



By Inger  
Bentzrud

Arts journalist in the  
newspaper  
Dagbladet

The 50th anniversary of the country's liberation has been commemorated – wreaths placed, veterans honoured. However, the hope that the commemorative activities in May would provide a worthy conclusion to a traumatic chapter in Norway's history seems to be premature. The war is still controversial. Who "owns" the history of the war in Norway? What do we post-war generations have a right to know, for instance about the 50,000 of our countrymen who were convicted for collaboration and treason in the court proceedings after the war? Are we right to believe that there are lessons to learn from a deeper understanding of the ideology and motives which led so many to serve the occupying forces? "No", claims the National Archives of Norway. "No", claims the Ministry of Culture, with its freshly completed legal evaluation of the confidentiality which still applies to the post-occupation trials. This assessment has balanced the public's right to know against the convicted individual's right to privacy, and has included that serious cases which are over 50 years old are to be withheld from the public.

The issue is in focus because five historians – all from the postwar generation – have collected material and recently published a Norwegian WW II encyclopaedia, "Norsk krigsleksikon 1940-45". An impressive battery of historians has contributed – serious researchers well versed in the use of sensitive historic documents. As a result, information is alphabetically listed from "A" to (the last Norwegian letter) "Å". Future generations can find condensed and concrete information about everything from surrogate coffee to the injunction against dancing, from quislings to their patriotic opposites, "jössinger".

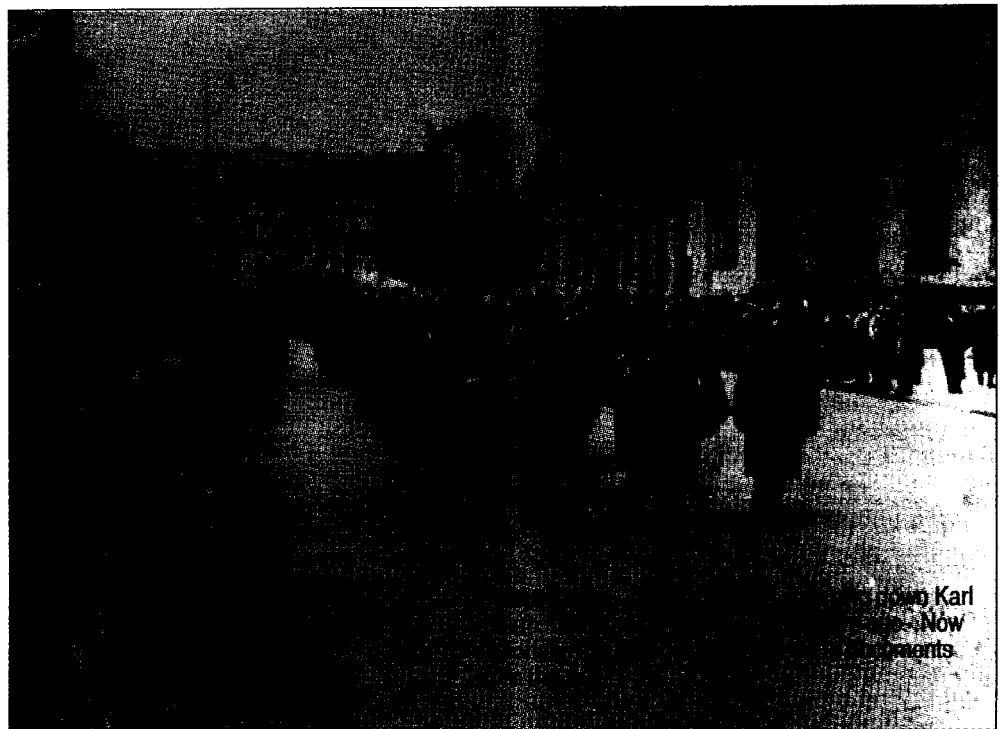
Key members of the resistance as well as major Nazi sympathizers are presented in short biographies. All were people with central positions in

Norwegian society. And this is where the National Archives, and thereafter the Ministry of Culture, put up a smoke screen around the historic material. They simply denied the historians access to the material.

In a time of openness about former political "sins", and while "forbidden" archives covering, for example, the whole of post-communist Eastern Europe have been opened so that future generations can learn from past mistakes, Norwegian authorities hang extra padlocks on our own Pandora's box; out of respect for individual rights. They're apparently unimpressed by the fact that serious historians are seeking access to sources. They're indifferent to the fact that this

processes which should be retained in the country's collective consciousness. The folders at the National Archives contain all the documentary evidence from court proceedings – not just the clerks' transcription, but detailed documentation of the occupying forces' day-to-day activities in Norway. Since such additional information is also filed in the archives under the convicted persons' names, and must still be protected half a century later, it too is inaccessible to the Norwegian public.

During the WWII liberation commemoration, there was much talk of reconciliation. But in the same breath, all stressed the necessity of preventing a new growth of treacherous



doesn't involve your everyday car thieves, cheque forgers or drunken brawlers. Among the 50,000 who were convicted in the postwar trials, only 143 are mentioned in the war encyclopaedia. They all played major political roles in occupied Norway. They were convicted – and are of historical interest – for a political crime, treason.

The treason sentences were political

ideologies like Nazism and racism. The means of prevention, ceremoniously reiterated in public speeches, is to promote knowledge and insight. But a prerequisite for such knowledge is insight – access to the facts. And as everybody knows, *glasnost* is not a Norwegian word.