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Sir -

Good stuff - this Graham Greene autobiography. But as a fellow ex-Stockholmer I trust he will forgive a protest from me about his dated use of the word "quisling" four times in Part 1 of The Sunday Times extracts.

I happened to be one of the inventors of this eponymous word for "traitor" (Daily Mail 23/4-40) - independently of The Times (15/4-40) - when I was with Anglo-French Forces during the Norwegian Campaign. I also used it in the same opprobrious sense twice in reference to Rashid Ali, the pro-German rebel in Iraq in 1940 (pp 217/8 of my "Mr Five Per Cent", 1957). In all cases the term is wrong.

Dr Olav Riste, head of the Norwegian Defence Ministry's historical department, says: "To the consternation of the Norwegians and without previous arrangements with the Germans (my italics), Quisling on the evening of 9 April (1940) made his way to the microphone of the Norwegian radio and 'deposed the existing Government ..." (p 9, "Norway 1940-45: the resistance movement", published by Tanum, Oslo, in English, 1970, and co-authored with Berit Nøkelby).

He also says: "The Führer ... rejected sharply any suggestion of a political action originating from Norway". (p 40, "Norway and the Second World War", also published in English, in 1966, by Tanum).

In the latter book, Professor Magne Skodvin (Contemporary Norwegian History, Oslo University) says: "The idea of a Quisling coup in Norway had been dismissed by the German planners at an early stage as completely unrealistic. About the practical side of Weserübung (invasion of Norway) Quisling knew as little as anybody else". (p 36).

Quisling did not *in fact* come forward and 'depose' the Nygaardsvold Labour Government until 7.30 pm on invasion day (April 9), when Oslo had been surrendered by the Police Chief, Kristian Welhaven, at midday on cabinet instructions, and the King in Council, the fount of Norwegian sovereignty, was fleeing towards neutral Sweden, as planned at dawn, and a power vacuum had arisen. (Haakon VII and government leaders entered Sweden on April 12 and were refused leave to set up an emigré regime there)

Quisling ^{spontaneously} ~~actually~~ sought to serve as a buffer between the dismayed, deserted Norwegian people and the Germans. He made three attempts to persuade the King to return to Oslo to do likewise - as the latter's brother, Christian X, did in occupied Copenhagen. Indeed, Chief Justice Paal Berg, later the co-ordinator of the "resistance", congratulated Quisling on his "patriotism" when the alleged "traitor" was ousted by his supposed German friends. (April 15).

"The word "quisling" should be removed from the dictionaries of the world - and from any new edition of Anglo-Norwegian history books. As Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper ~~EMK~~ is quoted in The Sunday Times (4/7-71): "The stereotype, once established, creates its own folklore, which becomes itself a centralising force". This has happened under the postwar "establishment" in Norway. ~~EMK~~ It is unhealthy, unjust and unfactual. The worst that can now be said of Vidkun Quisling by his academic enemies is that he "intended" to commit treason or was "prepared" to do so. This was not in character and it remains unproven, despite the monumental case mounted against him in 1945 by his political ^{opponents} ~~enemies~~ who ran away in the face of the invader, leaving their people in the lurch. A scapegoat was needed.

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Cuts optional.