



To NATO strategists, Norway represents the Northern Flank, guarding the North Atlantic, close to Soviet arctic bases. To American scholars, Norway, with King Olaf V as its constitutional monarch, is known for its orderly democracy, its high overall tax burden, and its generous welfare state.

Norway

Since World War II, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Kuwait have all experienced the euphoria—and the subsequent pain—that accompanied an explosion of national affluence produced by a sudden gush of oil or natural gas. Since the 1960s, when oil was discovered in the North Sea, politicians in Oslo have vowed not to squander the nation's new wealth, not to repeat the mistakes of others. In large part, they have succeeded. Today, Norway's pristine landscape and its "quality of life" are intact. Rates of divorce, crime, and drug abuse are still low, even by Scandinavian standards. The Norwegians remain committed to NATO and wary of their Soviet neighbors. Nonetheless, oil wealth has changed some things, notably the ability of Norwegian industries to compete in international markets. Here, our writers survey a Norway in transition, still trying to keep the rest of the world at arm's length, but clearly vulnerable to the political and cultural trends that have already changed life elsewhere in the West.

PARADISE RETAINED

by Robert Wright

In the year 1000, Olaf Trygvason, the Viking king, prepared to do battle against an alliance of Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian warriors. At stake was control of southern Norway, part of Olaf's plan for a unified, Christian nation. According to chronicles compiled two centuries later, the King approached the conflict with no fear of the "miserable" Danes, or of the Swedes, who, he said, might as well "stay at home and lick their sacrificial bowls." But from the fighters led by Earl Erik, he warned his aides, "we can expect a sharp battle, for they are Norwegians like ourselves."

Ten centuries after the Battle of Svold (King Olaf was defeated), tranquility reigns in Norway. But time has not extin-

guished the Norwegians' ardent nationalism, nor dulled their sense of intra-Scandinavian rivalry. On any given day, the red, white, and blue national ensign flies from flagstaves in tidy front-yard gardens from Kristiansand to Hammerfest. And, although the Norwegians now participate in numerous Scandinavian joint ventures, notably the Scandinavian Airline System (SAS), the prosperous Swedes still are the targets of unflattering, if lighthearted, remarks on the streets of Oslo and Bergen. "Do you know how to save a Swede from drowning?" one of countless ethnic jokes begins. "No," is the typical reply. The punchline: "Good."

A Model Nation

The conventional explanation of Norway's chauvinism draws on the past. Norwegians learn as youngsters that their country spent much of its history dominated by Scandinavian neighbors—under Danish control from 1536 to 1814, and under nominal Swedish rule until 1905, when formal independence was finally won. (Flags first appeared in front yards as an unspoken invitation for the Swedes to vacate Norway.) Middle-aged Norwegians remember that during World War II, Nazi occupation troops were sustained by supply trains that passed unimpeded through a neutral Sweden. And all Norwegian adults are old enough to know firsthand that Sweden and Denmark have received most of the attention allotted Scandinavia by the international press since the war: The Swedes have stayed one step ahead of Norway in expanding the modern welfare state; Copenhagen's recent tolerance of sinful fun (to the chagrin of many Danes) has earned it a reputation as the "Paris of the North."

According to some analysts, history has thus instilled in Norwegians a certain insecurity. "You wouldn't think that there was any man in the world as brave and carefree as the Norwegian when he stands smiling or laughing, hands in his trousers' pockets and jacket nonchalantly unbuttoned, at the street corner, on the amateur stage, in the witness box," Agnar Mykle, the 20th-century Norwegian novelist, has written. "But women and critics and examiners and judges and executioners will tell you that in his heart of hearts the Norwegian is full of uncertainty. . . ."

Yet, today, Norway boasts a combination of material security and "quality of life" found nowhere else in Scandina-

Robert Wright, 27, is an associate editor of The Wilson Quarterly. Terje I. Leiren, 40, a professor of Scandinavian studies at the University of Washington, assisted in the preparation of this essay.



"I shall paint living people who breathe, feel, suffer, and love," wrote Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Norway's famed artist, seen here in a self-portrait.

via—or, perhaps, in the rest of the Western democracies. In *The Moral Order* (1983), Raoul Naroll, an American social scientist, assessed the countries of the world in 12 categories—ranging from per capita gross national product to per capita combat deaths—in order to select a "model nation." He concluded, "Norway not only is the nation with . . . the best overall average on my 12 meters; of the four leading nations on my list it is also the best balanced."

The macadam streets in Oslo are as close to spotless as streets can be. Citizens stride purposefully along the sidewalks. They are not generous with smiles and greetings, perhaps, but their eyes are not burning with tension, or vacant with alienation, either. In winter, children who look as if they just stepped out of a first-grade primer—rosy cheeked, bright eyed, wearing wool scarves and mittens—frolic in the parks. But, in school or at home, they accede to the requests of teachers and parents without undue resistance. They will live to be older than citizens of almost any other nation, and it is no mystery why: They ski and hike, and the typical Norwegian's diet sounds like a public service message from the American Heart Association—fish, vegetables, fruits, whole-grain breads. Chocolate and coffee are the token vices. A Norwegian's idea of "junk food" is the white bread reserved for weekend festivities.

Citizens partake of one of the richest smorgasbords of social

entitlements found anywhere. Hospital care costs them nothing (except in high taxes). By law, workers get four weeks of paid vacation per year. One-fourth of them own vacation homes. Those few who wind up unemployed receive more than half of their previous salaries while they seek new work.

A college education is free to all who can pass the stiff entrance examination. Norway is a world leader in books published per capita, thanks partly to government subsidies. Newspapers, too, receive support from Oslo—both directly and through a ban on TV advertising. While three million people in Chicago, for example, must choose between two major daily newspapers, Oslo's 450,000 citizens can scan nearly a dozen.

The government also subsidizes the past. While all nations pay homage to tradition, few have taken such pains to preserve old ways of living as has Norway.

Buying Waterfalls

One example is Finnmark, Norway's northernmost county. There the 20,000 remaining Lapps are newly conscious of their ethnic heritage. Indeed, the word "Lapp," though still used in the American press, has been disowned by the Lapps, just as "Negro" was disowned by many blacks during the 1960s. Lapps now call themselves *Same*. Oslo pays to train Lapp-speaking teachers and helps support the 2,500 remaining reindeer herders (thus securing the place of reindeer salami in the Norwegian diet). Government-backed linguists are gently updating a language that has 120 descriptive words for snow but few for modern technology.

In spite of the government's generosity, Norway's solvency is not in doubt. And it never was. As economic problems mounted for Denmark and Sweden during the 1970s, Norway was exempted from alarms about the "crisis in Scandinavian socialism." By the fall of 1983, Norway had the lowest unemployment rate—3.1 percent—in Scandinavia. It is a sign of Norway's prosperity since World War II that the opposition Labor Party has seized on such a modest jobless rate in trying to mobilize public opinion against the ruling conservative coalition.

Moreover, Norway seems to have resisted the side effects of postwar affluence and urban growth which, in Denmark and Sweden, have eroded the conservative Lutheran tradition that the three nations share. Its divorce rate is the lowest in Scandinavia—and one of the lowest in the West. Its murder rate is one-fifth of Sweden's and one-third of Denmark's. In many small Norwegian towns, front doors are never locked. And, notwith-

standing the morbid themes conveyed by Norway's most famous painter, the turn-of-the-century expressionist Edvard Munch, Norwegians tend not to succumb to the suicidal depressions that stereotypically afflict Scandinavians. The nation's suicide rate is about one-third of Denmark's and is less than Sweden's by almost half.

Theories differ as to why Norwegians are not prone to taking drugs, divorcing their spouses, or killing themselves or each other. Less puzzling is their success in building a welfare state virtually impervious to economic shocks. While hard work and careful planning have been essential, so has Norway's natural endowment of energy—first hydroelectricity, and now North Sea oil.

At the beginning of the century, when England, the United States, and other coal-rich countries were already reaping the rewards (and suffering the pains) of the industrial revolution, a young Norwegian engineer named Sam Eyde began buying up mountain waterfalls. After Eyde's hydro-powered factory in Rjukan began producing fertilizer, legions of capitalists followed in his footsteps. The resulting industrial base—aluminum smelters, paper mills, wood pulp factories, all run on "white coal"—financed the expansion, during the 1950s and 1960s, of the Labor Party's welfare program: *Folketrygden* ("the people's security"). Today, Norway produces more electricity per capita than any other nation.

The oil discovered in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea during the 1960s has helped keep *Folketrygden* intact, and the economy close to full employment, even in the worst of times. Today, petroleum accounts for 17 percent of Norway's gross national product and one-third of its exports. During 1981, oil levies brought in \$4 billion—about \$1,000 per citizen.

Like the Scots

But oil worries some Norwegians. It attracts foreign laborers, European financiers, American technical advisers, and, above all, lots of money. In 1970, before commercial drilling began, Norway's GNP per capita was 71 percent of Sweden's. By 1980, the figure had grown to 93 percent. Oil threatens to make Norway look more like Sweden, Denmark, and the rest of the industrialized world than its citizens would like.

Except for the explosive extroversion of the Viking age (800–1066) and the massive emigration from Norway to America during the 19th and early 20th centuries (see box, pp. 120–121), Norwegians have more or less kept to themselves (al-

THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICANS

Only Ireland contributed a greater share of its population to the American immigration of the 19th and 20th centuries than did Norway. Some 800,000 Norsker—driven by scarcity, drawn by the promise of cheap, fertile land and by the American ideals of equality and liberty—became U.S. citizens between 1825 and 1925. They settled mainly in the Midwest—Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas. Among them were Ole Evinrude, who built the first commercially successful outboard motor, and Knute Rockne, Notre Dame's football coach during the 1920s. Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale's last name is the Anglicization of Mundal, the village on the Sogne Fjord in southwestern Norway from which his great-grandfather, Frederick Person Mundal, emigrated to Minnesota in 1856. Here, drawn from the essay, "Letter to a Grandfather I Never Knew," is TV commentator Eric Sevareid's sober 1975 tribute to immigrant Erik Erikson Sevareid:



Walter F. Mondale



Eric Sevareid

... You were at ease with the word "duty." You knew there could be no rights and privileges without responsibility. You found it natural to teach probity to your children, and self-denial, so that others, too, could have elbow room in which to live. You blamed yourself for misfortune, not others, not the government.

You knew what was known by ancient philosophers you never read—that civilized life cannot hold together without these values. Now, some speak of them as the "puritan ethic," as a curious, out-

moded illusion. But you were not wrong.

You knew your values were right because you carried to the new land no evil cargo of hatred or guilt. You and your contemporaries were freemen born, not slaves or serfs. You had much to learn but little to forget.

though 28,000 of them roam the seven seas aboard the world's fifth largest merchant fleet). The Norwegian gene pool is considered the most homogeneous in Western Europe. By one reckoning, two-thirds of the people have pure blue eyes. Even today, ordinary residents of Drammen or Tromsø may point and stare upon seeing a black man. Like the Scots, Norwegians are not

Now there are some who believe your sojourn was in vain. That you and the others sought freedom and equality but found neither.

You knew such things are not found but created. This grandson believes that is what you did. I have seen much of the world. Were I now asked to name some region on earth where men and women live in a surer climate of freedom and equality than that northwest region where you settled—were I so asked I could not answer. I know of none. What you built still stands upon that prairie.

We are not entirely sure, anymore, that it will stand forever. You thought of democracy as natural; but it is far from certain that any law of nature will preserve it. In nation after nation, the people find it too difficult. They cannot combine justice with order, nor free thought and speech with life in unity.

The capacity to do this developed, in modern times, among the men and women who lived in the rocks and forests from which you came, and in other lands washed by the waters of the North Sea.

The secret of democracy was made manifest there. It was nurtured in the wooden churches, propagated in the small, clustering towns and the growing cities, passed on through the school rooms and the books. The secret was the knowledge that each man is his brother's keeper.

The secret knowledge is still manifest in those North Sea lands. It is still manifest in this new land, now growing old.

But it is in danger. We have been careless of what you bequeathed us. We have allowed self-interest to sicken the American idea. We have rotted some of it away by surfeit and indifference, and wounded it by violence.

We know that this society remains the central experimental laboratory in human relations. Success moved with you in this direction. There is a fear that failure here would spread eastward, back to the origins of success.

But not all the dangers have their origin here. Great wealth can poison life as we here have learned. And great wealth from beneath your native sea threatens the ways of life that have held so steady, so long, in your native land. The people see the danger. They know from our heedlessness here what could happen to them. A test of foresight and common sense is in the making. Norway, now, will become a critical experiment, testing man's capacity to live the life of reason under enormous contrary pressures. We and the world will watch and perhaps we will learn.

known for their friendliness to foreigners. (Whether their reserve reflects shyness, complacency, or hostility is a matter of debate among foreign travelers.) Nor do they embrace foreign ideas, or products, readily. In few Western nations did manufacturers of paper milk cartons fight a longer, tougher battle to replace glass bottles than they did in Norway.

Norway's reclusiveness is grounded in climate and geography. The spectacular mountains in the east, the open seas to the west and south, the ice to the north, and the long winters do not add up to a natural invitation to foreign visitors. In *The Scandinavians* (1966), Donald S. Connery wrote, "It is almost as if the weary and sophisticated Continent had set Norway apart as a national park or royal preserve and had appointed the Norwegians as custodians to keep the waters clear, the mountain snows untouched by industrial soot, and the wonders of nature unspoiled by thoughtless trespassers."

The greater part of Norway is rugged and inhospitable. Two-thirds of the territory is more than 1,000 feet above sea level, and only three percent is arable. Nearly half of Norway is within the Arctic Circle. The flip side of the "midnight sun" is the "noontime moon"; in Hammerfest, the sun is not seen at all between November 21 and January 23.

Staying Aloof

Not surprisingly, most Norwegians have chosen to settle along the shores in the south; there they are only as far north as *southern* Alaska. Four of five live within 10 miles of the sea, near one of the fjords which, together, make the length of the Norwegian coastline a matter of definition. Overflying it by airplane, one would cover about 1,650 miles. Traversing it by foot (an impossible feat for all but the expert cliff-climber) would be a journey of 10 times that length.

Norway is larger than Michigan and Illinois combined, and its population of 4.1 million is only the size of greater Detroit's. So there is some room to spread out even without climbing mountains. Four Norwegians in five live in one-family houses.

The white, wooden, two-story houses in Norway's seaside villages would look at home in Middletown, U.S.A., but there they would be arranged more coherently. Around the typical fjord, what land there is between water's edge and mountain's base offers foothills, jagged boulders, and various other geological enemies of order and symmetry. Main Street is often a narrow lane snaking through town, rather than a broad, straight thoroughfare. Homes and shops—wedged between boulders, straddling knolls—form a crazy quilt covering what little flat and near-flat land nature has provided. Only in the broader valleys, notably around Oslo, can the Norwegians build exurbs that match those of Sweden or the United States.

The pleasures of exurbia were a long time in the winning, a fact that has not escaped the attention of many Norwegians. In



Norway's fjords, some nearly a mile deep, were formed during the Quaternary Period of the Ice Age, less than 2.5 million years ago, as glaciers deepened and broadened existing river valleys.

Returning to the Future (1942), Sigrid Undset, winner of the 1928 Nobel Prize in literature, wrote, "If any people in the world owns its land with honor and right, has conquered it, not from other people, but in obedience to the Creator's stern commandment that man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, it is we Norwegians who call Norway our country."

Alone for centuries, aware of the evolution of Europe but largely untouched by it before World War II, the Norwegian people have come to view the world with a curious mixture of detachment and compassion.

While belonging to NATO, Norway keeps its distance from the Alliance, refusing to permit the stationing of allied troops on its soil (see box, pp. 134–135).^{*} The nation has been aloof in other respects, too. In 1972, some 53 percent of the electorate voted not to join the European Economic Community—fearful, perhaps, that integration would adulterate the national character, and confident

^{*}Norway actively supports peace and world order. A 700-man Norwegian battalion now serves in a United Nations peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon. Norway provided the first secretary-general of the United Nations, Trygve Lie, who backed U.S. efforts to repel Communist aggression in Korea in 1950.

that North Sea oil would make Norway a sought-after trade partner with or without Common Market membership.

Yet, Norwegians seem to relish participation—albeit vicarious—in the great global controversies of the day. South Africa, Afghanistan, or Central America may provoke as much parliamentary rhetoric and dinner-table conversation as the possible demise of a local fish cannery. In 1799, when the English economist Thomas R. Malthus visited Norway, he recorded in his diary: “I talked with a Mr. Nielsen who was a great Democrat and admirer of Thomas Paine. He abused a great deal the English government for their interference with the French—thought that Kings were now receiving a proper lesson, and that the light of the French revolution could never be thoroughly extinguished.”

Today, Norwegians are likely to share Mr. Nielsen’s sentiments. Reflecting Norwegian history, they tend to come down on the side of national self-determination and against the big outsider, Eastern or Western.

Similar sympathies apply in domestic matters. Underlying the long popularity of the Labor Party is a deeply ingrained antipathy toward the “haves.” Serfdom did not gain a foothold in Norway during the Middle Ages, and in 1821, seven years after the end of Danish rule, the Storting (Parliament) abolished all titles of nobility. Norwegians agree on one point, wrote the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen: They should “drag down what is most lofty.” Today, a man without a family or a tax shelter must give the taxman 80 cents of each dollar he earns over \$50,000.

The cost of mandated equality has begun to worry many Norwegians. In 1981, they went to the polls and gave the Conservative Party its first electoral triumph in 53 years. The Conservatives, led by Prime Minister Kaare Willoch, are now in the unaccustomed position of seeing the youth vote—long a property of the Left—siphoned off by parties to the *right*.

Candy Cigarettes

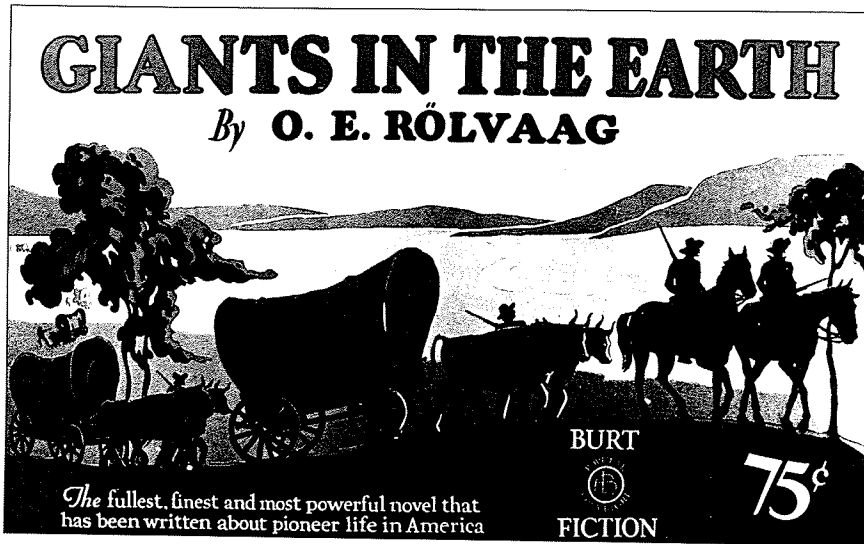
The most notable of these, the Progress Party, was formed only 10 years ago amid a tax revolt. The party has been compared by local analysts with the “Reagan Republicans”—a bit off the mark, perhaps; in Norway, “right wing” translates as “left of center” on the American political spectrum. Still, the Progress Party’s leader, economist Carl I. Hagen, does echo the Reaganites’ calls for drastically scaled down government, less regulation, and simpler solutions to social problems. His party

has endorsed exiling drug offenders to the Arctic island of Spitsbergen and shrinking Norway's tomes of legal codes to the size of a pocket diary.

The Conservative Party and parties to its right collected 40 percent of the vote in 1981. In 1969, the Conservative Party garnered 19 percent; then there *were* no parties to its right.

Part of this conservative resurgence was simply a matter of being in the right place at the right time—out of power during the worldwide "OPEC recession" that began in 1974. Half of Norway's GNP comes from exports (mainly oil, shipbuilding, and shipping), so the governing party will always reign at the mercy of global economic ups and downs.

Conservatives have also profited from popular reactions to the Labor governments' relentless expansion of the welfare state and their passion for high taxes and economic regulation. As Oslo borrowed against future oil revenues to ward off bad economic times, the government came more and more to be the economy's chief actor. Between 1977 and 1981, some 85 percent of all new jobs were provided by the state or by municipalities. Today, 47 percent of Norway's GNP ends up in the coffers of the national, county, or municipal government (versus 49 percent in



Ole Edvart Rølvaag's 1927 novel about Norwegian settlers in the Midwest has become a minor American classic. Rølvaag (1876–1931), an immigrant who attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., founded the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

Sweden and 32 percent in the United States). At government-run liquor stores, taxes drive the price of a fifth of scotch to \$35.

Under the Labor Party, Oslo's paternalism sometimes reached comical proportions. A law introduced in 1975 would have made it illegal not only to advertise cigarettes in the newspapers, but also to sell *candy* cigarettes to anyone under 16. (The law passed, but not until it was stripped of the latter provision.)*

Willoch did not enter office in 1981 with a sweeping mandate for change, and he knew it. "Norwegians are not tired of the welfare state," he told reporters. "But they know you cannot pay for a welfare state without economic growth, and you cannot have economic growth with taxes as high as ours."

Thus far, the Prime Minister has found it hard to follow even his own modest prescription. With unemployment rising (the number of jobless grew from 28,000 in late 1981 to 68,000 in late 1983), reducing state outlays has proven difficult. Willoch has cut income taxes marginally, but has raised the sales tax on new cars—which already ranged between 100 and 200 percent. The betting in Oslo is that the Labor Party stands a good chance to regain control of the Storting in 1985.

No to Cohabitation

Norwegian political pundits are debating not just whether 1981 marked a long-term drift to the right—but whether it marked the erosion of the middle ground. The Center Party, the Liberal Party, and the Christian People's Party, which stand between the Labor and Conservative parties on the ideological spectrum, have seen their share of the vote shrink considerably over the past decade.†

The three parties of the center have long drawn their strength from Norway's hinterland, thriving on long-standing differences between city slickers and country folk. But between 1960 and 1980, the urban share of the population grew from 32 percent to 43 percent.

*The government's war on vice is often waged more conventionally. In a land where "lost weekends" provide an escape from tranquility for many workers, drunk-driving laws are reputedly the toughest in the world—and are well obeyed. Driving with a blood-alcohol level of 0.5 percent, which in many U.S. states is considered proof of sobriety, draws a minimum penalty of three weeks in jail.

†Political polarization, if it grows, could add to recent strains on the nation's long habit of seeking consensus. Management-labor negotiations, often government-mediated, have traditionally been civilized affairs. In 1972, there were only nine industrial disputes lasting more than one day. They involved a total of 12,000 workers. But in 1981, more than three times as many workers engaged in twice as many strikes.

RESISTING THE NAZIS

During the early hours of April 9, 1940, German warships crept into the harbors of Narvik, Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, Kristiansand, and Oslo. For the first time in World War II, Hitler had launched an invasion without first issuing an ultimatum.

At peace for 125 years, Norway had only 7,000 soldiers to protect her neutrality. Allied reinforcements were too little and too late. The Nazis soon controlled all of Norway. But amid growing repression and economic hardship, the Norwegian people began a dogged resistance campaign that remains a source of national pride.

The brief defense of Oslo Fjord proved crucial. There, coastal artillerymen sank the cruisers *Blücher* and *Brummer*. The Germans, surprised, were held at bay for eight hours, allowing King Haakon VII to escape to the north. From England, he led the resistance.

Norwegians listened to his speeches on contraband shortwave radios hidden in their basements. Young men fled to the forests to escape forced labor for the Nazis, and some became expert saboteurs. The Norwegian underground blew up railroads and helped British commandos destroy heavy-water plants at Rjukan that Hitler had hoped would help the Third Reich produce an atomic bomb.

Haakon requisitioned all Norway's merchant ships abroad—most of the 4.8-million-ton fleet—and placed them in Allied service. Some 3,600 Norwegian seamen died during the war.

The Nazis appointed Vidkun Quisling, founder of Norway's unpopular fascist National Union Party, as "minister president" of Norway. Quisling tried to turn churches and schools into founts of Nazi propaganda.

(Until Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Quisling's chief local supporters included the Communists.)

On Easter Sunday, 1942, most of the nation's clergymen resigned. Many escaped to neutral Sweden. Some 1,300 teachers who refused to use Nazi texts were sent to a concentration camp at Grini. Thousands of other Norwegians were arrested by the Gestapo.

In the spring of 1945, King Haakon greeted with reserve the news of German offers to capitulate. "Dignity, calm, discipline," the king exhorted from London. Nonetheless, he received a properly jubilant reception upon his return to Oslo.

Quisling was tried and executed. Today, his name lives on in English and Norwegian dictionaries as a synonym for traitor.



Vidkun Quisling

At the same time, the contrasts between urban and rural folkways have diminished. The Christian People's Party had long benefited from the tendency of rural Norwegians to answer with an emphatic No such questions as: Is cohabitation without marriage morally acceptable? Should the state continue to provide free abortions, no questions asked? But these days, abortions and premarital cohabitation raise fewer eyebrows, even in remote villages. The Christian People's Party lost seven seats in the 1981 election.*

Roughing Up the 'Pakies'

For much of this century, Norway's "language problem" has aggravated rural-urban tension, and, hence, provided support for the parties of the center. Until 1852, the only written Norwegian language was Riksmåal—the "administrative" language, with a heavy Danish flavor, imposed by the Danes centuries earlier and spoken mainly in the cities. During the early 1800s, Ivar Aasen, a peasant and self-educated linguist, set out to codify the native Norse tongues spoken in the upland valleys. Lacking a single model, he wove dozens of dialects into a synthetic "genuine" language, "Landsmaal." This artificial vernacular was adopted widely in rural areas during Norway's late 19th-century cultural renaissance, having been propagated by such artists as the novelist Arne Garborg and the poet and journalist Aasmund O. Vinje. The result was a linguistically divided nation.

However, urbanization appears to be dimming the prospects for Landsmaal. Today, only one in six elementary school children speaks it regularly. And the distinction between the two tongues is blurring somewhat. Partly because programs in both languages are broadcast nationwide, TV in Norway—as in the United States—is serving as the great cultural homogenizer. The average Norwegian spends nearly two hours per weekday watching TV—half the average American's television time, but much more than that of the average Norwegian two decades ago.

The electronic media may also bring Norway into the mainstream of modern mass culture. American movies—with Norwegian subtitles—have long appeared on television. Now, with

*In theory, the Norwegian constitution would lend strength to a religion-based party such as the CPP. It mandates that "the Evangelical-Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State. The inhabitants professing it are bound to bring up their children in the same." But Norwegians have complied with the letter, more than the spirit, of this dictum. Today, while nine in 10 citizens are baptized in the Lutheran Church, only one in 10 goes to 10 or more services a year, and half attend none at all.

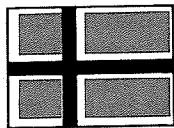
the advent of cable TV, viewers are exposed to an unpredictable array of imported distractions.

Other foreign influences are at work. Since the oil boom hit Norway in the mid-1970s, visions of good wages and equitable treatment have drawn Pakistanis, Turks, and other "guestworkers." The government has treated them humanely, extending to them the welfare benefits enjoyed by natives. Some natives have not been so kind. Juvenile gangs in Oslo or Trondheim sometimes rough up the "Pakies."

To date, no more than 10,000 Pakistani guestworkers have immigrated. Only in a country of Norway's ethnic homogeneity could such a small-scale influx attract so much space and discussion in the newspapers. Similarly, levels of youth crime and drug use that many American big-city mayors would welcome stir anguished debate among Norwegians.

An article titled "Norway Breaks into the World of Violent Crime" appeared in the *Norseman* two years ago. The writer noted that Oslo's murder rate had doubled in 1981; in a single weekend, three women had done away with their husbands. And a nursing home director had admitted to killing no fewer than 27 of his patients.

Even so, the author remarked, Norway's crime statistics stand up well in international comparisons. "Paradise," he concluded, accurately, "is not yet lost."



COPING WITH OIL

In 1965, when Esso secured the first license from Oslo for offshore oil exploration, hopes ran high that the North Sea fields would provide a stable source of energy for the West—and a stable source of income for Norway.

By the autumn of 1969, those hopes were fading. More than 200 exploratory wells dotted the seabed between Norway and Britain, and none had yielded enough petroleum to warrant commercial development.

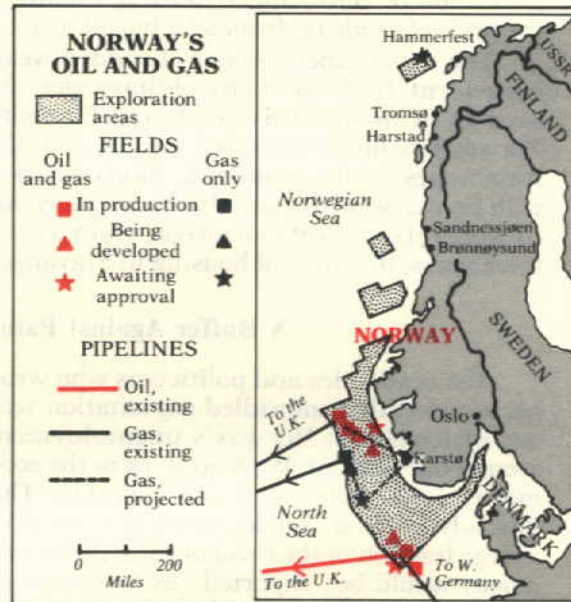
In December, workers on the Phillips Petroleum drilling rig "Ocean Viking" suddenly struck oil 180 miles off the Norwegian shore, two miles beneath the ocean floor. By 1971, Phillips was extracting 40,000 barrels per day from "Ekofisk"—a dome-shaped formation of limestone eight miles long and four miles wide. Within a few years, the North Sea would rank second only to the Middle East in "proven oil reserves." One-third of those reserves were under Norway's waters.

But there was no dancing in the streets of Oslo. The Norwegians, for the most part, reacted soberly to their windfall. Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli of the long-dominant Labor Party warned in 1974 that Norway's undersea blessing could become a curse; oil wealth had to be handled judiciously. The nation, he vowed, would not allow revenues from oil and natural gas to overheat the economy. It would not let the petroleum business displace traditional export industries, such as shipbuilding and forestry, leaving the country's prosperity hostage to fluctuations in the worldwide demand for energy. Only with great patience and self-discipline, he cautioned, could his fellow countrymen parlay their new-found inheritance into a sound economic future.

Oil Minister Ingvald Ulveseth concurred. "It is not our aim that every Norwegian have big automobiles," he told a correspondent for *Dun's Review* in the summer of 1974. "And we don't plan to become sheiks with golden furniture and so on. That's not the Norwegian way."

Yet, by the late 1970s, some Norwegians were caustically referring to their homeland as the "Kuwait of the North." The *Economist*, a British newsweekly, declared in 1978 that "the Norwegian nightmare of oil wealth drowning the existing industrial base is becoming a reality." Indeed, although oil money has kept Norway prosperous amid global recession, the underlying *health* of the Norwegian economy remains in doubt even today.

Ninety percent of Norway's estimated recoverable under-sea oil and natural gas reserves lie in fields not yet under development.



Once-robust industries—shipbuilding, aluminum, forestry—suffer from inflated costs. Some companies flounder; others stay competitive in world markets only with the help of government subsidies; still others have died.

Increasingly, Norwegian journalists and politicians wonder aloud whether such wrenching domestic changes are the inevitable by-product of exploiting the country's offshore Klondike—and, if they are not, how to cure or prevent them.

The drama is best viewed against the backdrop of the 1970s. It was then that the Norwegian petroleum policy, willy-nilly, began to suffocate the nation's private enterprises.

In a 1974 white paper, Bratteli laid out his government's policy on petroleum. The oil boom had not yet materialized. Mobil, Shell, Esso, Amoco, Phillips, and other multinationals had sunk hundreds of millions of dollars into the Norwegian sector of the North Sea but as yet were producing less oil per year than Norway consumed.* Even so, the eventual value of the nation's undersea assets was becoming clear. In October of 1973, the Or-

*Norway became self-sufficient in oil in 1975, and today it produces seven times as much petroleum and natural gas as it consumes. Under a 1964 agreement, the North Sea is divided into five sectors: Norwegian, British, Dutch, Danish, and West German. To date, most of the oil yielded by the sea has come from the British and Norwegian sectors. Production figures for 1982 were: Great Britain, 103.4 million metric tons; Norway, 24.5 million; West Germany, 4.9 million; the Netherlands, 1.9 million; Denmark, 1.7 million.

ganization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had raised the price of crude oil from \$3 a barrel to \$5.

The social repercussions of sudden wealth were also becoming evident. In the port city of Stavanger, shipbuilding and engineering firms hired Swedish and Finnish laborers to replace Norwegians lured out to oil rigs by pay three times as high as their wages on the mainland. Storeowners stocked their shelves with French's Cattlemen's barbecue sauce to please the palates of roustabouts and oil executives from Texas and Oklahoma. In three years, the price of housing in Stavanger doubled.

A Buffer Against Pain

The academics and politicians who wrote the 1974 white paper worried that unbridled exploitation would entail more serious dislocations. Norway's unemployment rate then hovered around one percent. With no slack in the economy, an influx of oil money could bring rampant inflation. The Labor government thus advocated a "moderate tempo" for drilling and argued that a large fraction of the revenues should be invested abroad. The oil money would be "exported" as loans to countries better able to absorb it. The Storting endorsed the proposal.

The ink on the white paper had hardly dried when Bratteli decided, in effect, to ignore the plan. The reason: The optimistic economic forecast on which it was based appeared less realistic with each passing day. As 1974 progressed, Norway began to feel the pinch of the OPEC-induced worldwide recession. Layoffs hit the shipping, shipbuilding, forestry, and fishing industries—all dependent on exports. Although the unemployment rate had not risen even to two percent, Labor Party leaders agreed that a new economic policy was in order.

Finance Minister Per Kleppe decided to use oil revenues as a buffer against the pain. And, since Norwegian oil was not yet flowing in abundance, the *anticipation* of oil revenues would

This essay is adapted by permission of the publisher from Petroleum and Economic Development: The Cases of Mexico and Norway by Ragaei El Mallakh, Øystein Noreng, and Barry W. Poulson. (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath and Company, Copyright 1984, D. C. Heath and Company). Ragaei El Mallakh is professor of economics at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and executive director of the International Research Center for Energy and Economic Development. Øystein Noreng teaches at the Norwegian School of Management, Oslo, and is research director of the Institute of Energy Policy. Barry Poulson is professor of economics at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

have to serve. Drawing on Norway's Triple A credit rating, the government would borrow enough money to stimulate the economy. When the oil began gushing, the debts could be repaid. The Storting approved the plan unanimously. Borrowing abroad, particularly from U.S. banks, accelerated. The 1974 white paper had called for channeling about 6 billion kroner of petroleum revenues into the Norwegian economy each year and sending the rest abroad. In fact, roughly twice that much annual domestic spending was financed by borrowing against untapped oil reserves between 1974 and 1977.

Much of the money went to prop up ailing industries. Subsidizing "endangered" enterprises, such as farming, had long been government policy. As the list of the needy grew, the cost of that policy soared. Oslo paid shipowners to mothball idle freighters rather than sell them at a loss abroad. Paper, aluminum, and steel mills kept producing in spite of sagging demand, secure in the knowledge that the government would pay them to stockpile their excess output until markets revived. By the beginning of 1978, about one-fourth of Norway's manufacturing jobs depended on direct government subsidies.

Blue-eyed Arabs?

Superficially, the borrowing plan seemed to work. From 1973 to 1980, full-time employment grew at an average of 1.3 percent annually—more than twice the historical rate. The quarterly rate of unemployment never edged above the 1.6 percent it reached in 1975.

The standard of living also rose. In early 1978, a visiting *New York Times* man reported that Oslo "reflects prosperity at every turn: Mercedes Benz taxicabs, shops bulging with fancy imported goods, and well-filled restaurants where the prices on the wine list look like telephone numbers."

Indeed, prices had jumped by 9.2 percent in 1977. More importantly, wages were rising faster still. Since shipbuilding and metallurgy firms were paid, in effect, to hoard labor, and the oil business consumed more and more man-hours, unions found themselves in a strong bargaining position. *Real* wages in the manufacturing sector rose by one-fourth from 1974 to 1977.

Also contributing to wage inflation was the infusion of government cash into the welfare system. Retirement pensions, aid to the handicapped, and other benefits became more generous. New hospitals were built, principally in rural areas. Doctors, nurses, and a host of new bureaucrats swelled the government payroll. Between 1973 and 1981, public employment grew by

NORWAY AND NATO

Two NATO members—Norway and Turkey—share borders with the Soviet Union. Sixty miles east of the Norwegian frontier lies Murmansk, home base for more than 400 Soviet naval vessels, including two-thirds of Russia's ballistic-missile submarines. This reality, Western analysts suggest, underlies Norway's importance in any conflict between the Soviet Union and the NATO nations.

"World War Three may not be won on the Northern Flank," American military commentator Robert Weinland has written. "But it could definitely be lost there."

In the event of a non-nuclear war, NATO could use listening posts in northern Norway to help track Soviet naval movements. Therefore, the Soviet Union, as NATO analysts see it, would begin any attack on Western Europe by trying to subdue Norway. That accomplished, Norway's dozen airfields and its sheltered fjords—kept ice-free by the Gulf Stream—could variously serve as staging points for air attacks on Britain or Central Europe or submarine forays against supply routes between Europe and the United States.

Advancing Red Army ground troops would encounter unfriendly terrain in northern Norway. The roads snake through easily defended mountain passes which, Norwegian military planners hope, would help stop Soviet armor columns. Each of the two 13,000-man Russian motorized rifle divisions routinely based on the Kola peninsula already includes 266 tanks.

In wartime, Norway would rely on NATO reinforcements, its own American-made F-16 fighters armed with locally produced Penguin missiles, and a small but agile navy, consisting mainly of corvettes, fast attack craft, and small submarines. Within 48 hours, 225,000 reservists could be mobilized. But the first shock would be borne by only 42,000 active duty troops—mainly one-year conscripts.

180,000, or 60 percent, further increasing the demand for labor.

Normally, companies competing in an international marketplace would feel the effects of higher labor costs immediately; forced to raise prices, they would lose business at home or abroad to more efficient foreign firms. But government subsidies insulated Norwegian industrialists from such painful repercussions. With a guaranteed market at home, they could afford to lose customers elsewhere. They did—in textiles, paper, and metals. Not until 1983 did exports of "traditional" goods climb back to 1973 levels. Meanwhile, worldwide demand for such products had grown by 30 percent. Norway had missed the boat.

Subsidies also left managers with little incentive to keep abreast of changing technology. Even as computerized record-keeping and automated production swept Japan, Western Europe, and the United States, the Norwegian government, in

Like Denmark, Norway has long prohibited the stationing of NATO troops and nuclear weapons on its soil. When NATO conducts joint exercises in Norway, allied forces are normally kept at least 300 miles from the Soviet border.

Such caution is partly a vestige of Norway's traditional neutralist sentiment and partly the result of an implicit bargain with Moscow. As a quid pro quo, some Western analysts believe, the Russians have limited troop deployments near the Norwegian border. But a recent Soviet build-up on the Kola Peninsula, as well as continuing disputes over boundary lines in the oil-rich Barents Sea, have made Oslo re-examine its neighborly policy. Last spring, a Norwegian frigate fired 10 rockets at an unidentified (but probably Soviet) submarine submerged in Hardanger Fjord. Despite Moscow's protests, the government has permitted the U.S. Marines to "pre-position" equipment in central Norway.



Soviet-backed repression in Poland and Afghanistan has also chilled Norway's relations with Russia. Many Norwegians see U.S. policy in faraway Central America as no better. Antinuclear protests by young Norwegians are aimed at both superpowers.

But most middle-aged Norwegians, remembering the Nazi invasion in World War II, endorse the Western Alliance. One poll found that more than 80 percent of all adults back continued NATO membership. Indeed, William Bogie wrote from Oslo last year in *National Defense*, "It is impossible to start a real debate on the subject."

effect, discouraged innovation. And the "boom" atmosphere may have eroded the national tradition of pride in one's work. If, as it seemed, oil offered a better life for less effort, why should employees exert themselves unduly? Already in 1978, a Norwegian economist, sensing the broader implications of the government's "countercyclical" policy, remarked that 1977 had been "a good year for Norwegians, but a bad year for Norway."

Worse still, the oil revenues against which Norway's leaders had mortgaged the country's future were slow to materialize.

To be sure, the government had cut itself a big slice of the pie. One provision of the 1974 white paper was faithfully followed. Oslo insisted that the multinational corporations that had mapped out and searched the ocean floor play second fiddle when harvest time came. The government's zeal in dealing with the oil giants earned Norwegians the nickname "blue-eyed

Arabs" among some of their multinational partners.

The government created its own oil exploration and recovery firm, Statoil, in 1972. Within a decade, Statoil would grow to be Norway's second largest corporation in terms of revenues—thanks largely to the enterprise of American oil companies.* It was given the option of claiming *at least* 50 percent of each petroleum find, regardless of whether it had invested in the search. (Even when Statoil located and retrieved oil unassisted, it had foreigners to thank; Statoil president Arve Johnsen hired a former Chevron executive to head the company's exploration program and a former Shell officer to oversee drilling operations.) In 1975, the government passed a steep tax on windfall petroleum profits. Between that levy and standard corporate taxes, Oslo aimed to take about 70 percent of net profit.

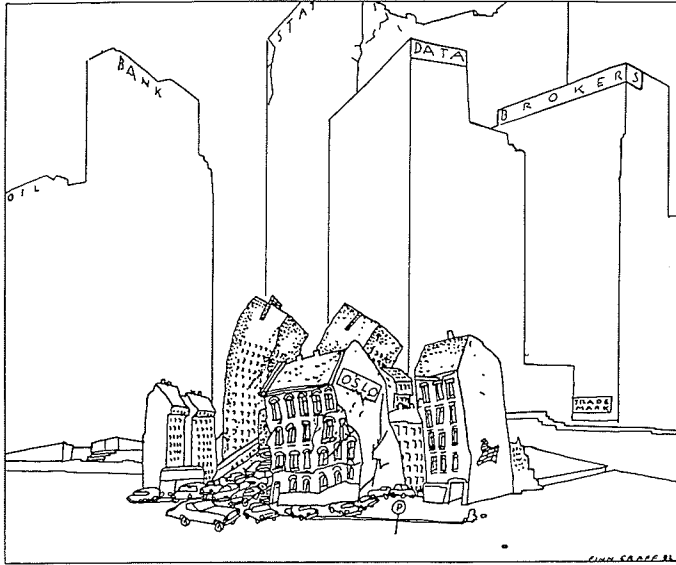
Neglecting Reality

But during the mid-1970s, there was precious little to tax. Facing long winter nights and storms that pushed waves as high as 80 feet, the oilmen found the job more time-consuming than expected—and more costly, in both financial and human terms. By the spring of 1977, accidents had claimed the lives of more than 80 workers on the North Sea oil rigs.

In that year, production reached only 107 million barrels, roughly half of what Oslo had projected. By midyear, the comfortable budget surplus that the government had expected by 1978 was nowhere in sight. The Ministry of Finance quietly pushed the date of the anticipated bonanza forward to 1981. During the spring of 1978, foreign debt reached \$20 billion, equal to half of the gross national product. Norway now had the highest debt ratio ever attained by a member of the 24-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The government's profligate ways drew fire not only from Conservatives, but also from Social Democrats. By 1978, Prime Minister Odvar Nordli of the Labor Party had decided that it was time to shift gears. He stepped up petroleum licensing, cut back on public spending, devalued the krone (which today is worth about 13 cents), and imposed a 16-month wage and price freeze—despite claims from spokesmen for leftist fringe parties that such measures constituted "the biggest treason since [that

*The government owns 100 percent of Statoil and appoints five of its seven directors; the other two are elected by Statoil's 3,000 employees. Norsk Hydro, the 51-percent state-owned company founded in 1905 to harness hydroelectricity, is the largest company in Norway. It manufactures fertilizer, processes metals, and now competes with Statoil for oil business. Saga Petroleum, a private firm, is the third major Norwegian oil company.



Norwegian cartoonist Finn Graf depicts the impact of oil wealth on Oslo. Norway's urban population grew by one-fifth between 1960 and 1980.

of the quislings in] the Second World War." This austerity program yielded some immediate benefits. Between 1977 and 1980, a trade deficit equal to 10.8 percent of the GNP was replaced by a surplus of 4.8 percent. And since 1980, accelerated oil production *has* begun to pull Norway out of debt.

But much damage has been done. To this day, Norway's industrial competitiveness lags. The loss of world market shares in shipbuilding and aluminum production continues.* Knut Lofstad, president of the Union of Industries, Norway's employers' organization, declared last year that "Norwegians have gradually developed a tendency towards neglecting the economic realities."

In the end, the Labor government created what it had at first tried to avoid—an economy, and a welfare state, addicted to oil revenues. The result was a sluggish private sector, more dependent than ever on government subsidies.

Yet, it would be wrong to lay all the blame for the obsolescence of Norway's manufacturing industries at the feet of the

*Oil is, however, spurring a few companies to new heights. Aker, a Norwegian shipbuilder, had by 1975 become the second largest oil rig builder in the world, breaking the longtime American monopoly of that business. And Statoil is gearing up for what its chairman, Finn Lied, has called "the Norwegian man on the moon project"—drilling in the Troll field, which lies under 984 feet of water.

Labor Party. Partly, the problem is one of culture.

Norway is an old, highly homogeneous Scandinavian society that places a premium on social and economic equality and on cultural continuity. The "good life" is not equated with conspicuous consumption, and the individual quest for material gain that spurs entrepreneurship in many countries is not so highly regarded in Oslo. Nor is competitive ingenuity; factory foremen and executives often view new ideas as threatening. Many firms are family owned, and company strategy sometimes amounts to preserving the status quo until a competitor's success clearly seems to warrant imitation. And "marketing" (which in some U.S. corporations seems to take precedence over quality control) plays only a minor role in Norway's commerce. Managers cling to the notion that "good products sell themselves."

A Morality Tale

Thus bound by tradition (and weakened by government paternalism), Norwegian businessmen were psychologically ill-equipped to cope with the worldwide recession and technological flux of the mid-1970s. This same psychology now makes it hard for the average Norwegian to accept the consequences of failure in the marketplace—the slow death of industries that date back to Norway's independence in 1905. Norwegians worry that the decline of factories and mines in the hinterland could lead to an exodus of the rural folk and of the strong culture that has survived modern times so far. Oslo, Trondheim, and other cities could overflow with people dependent on government make-work for their livelihood.

In some respects, of course, this is the specter haunting many Western industrialized nations on the brink of the "information age"—masses of well-paid workers rendered unemployable by the transition from a "manufacturing" to a "services" economy. But in Norway, that transition is lubricated by oil. Traditionalists fear what the *Financial Times* of London calls the "Venezuelan effect": The petroleum industry becomes "the only provider to a population left mainly, otherwise, to cut each other's hair."

The Conservative government of Prime Minister Kaare Willoch was elected in 1981 partly on the basis of his promises to halt the slide toward a stagnant, government-dependent services economy. The plan was simple. By slashing subsidies, Oslo would expose Norwegian companies to international competition, leaving them to sink or swim. If "sunset" industries died, "sunrise" industries would be born. One way or the other, the dead weight would be eliminated, and the private sector resuscitated.

In practice, such rigor has proven difficult to sustain. Norway has hundreds of tiny towns tucked away in the hinterland. The survival of each may depend on a single factory or mine. The vision of entire villages left without a local source of employment has proven politically forbidding—particularly now that the Conservative Party depends on the rural-based Christian People's and Center parties as partners in a ruling coalition.

In its early days, for example, the Willoch administration refused on grounds of principle to rescue a dying aluminum smelter in Tyssedal, a village in southern Norway with a population of 1,400. But as protest grew, the government could not leave the townsfolk to suffer the agonies of economic Darwinism. Oslo recently agreed to help build an ilmenite smelter there instead.

Thus, the long drift toward a state-financed economy is difficult to reverse. No one likes to suffer or inflict pain. By the end of 1982, the "sheltered" sector of the economy—government services plus government-subsidized industries—accounted for 80 percent of Norway's employment. Only seven years earlier, the figure had been 59 percent.

In purely financial terms, Norway can afford such self-indulgence. Total output of oil and natural gas is likely to rise to 60 million "tons of oil equivalent" (TOE) by 1985, and to 75 million TOE by 1990. With some 11 billion TOE beneath its allotted ocean floors, Oslo could maintain the projected 1990 production rate well into the 22nd century before supplies ran low.

But what will Norway look like after decades of such "prosperity" if its people do not reject the course charted during the 1970s? Will every worker's paycheck come from the government? Will the nation's mines and factories be idle, each surrounded by a ghost town? Or will they be artificially sustained in spite of sagging efficiency and stagnant technology, until finally they are little more than state-supported museums? Such questions grow more urgent each year as Norway's leaders seek to reconcile its newest tangible asset with its oldest intangible assets—rugged individualism, pride in work, the "quality of life."

Even in Norway, as in other new "oil countries," the chronicle of sudden wealth has become a kind of morality tale.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

NORWAY

The long, rocky half-peninsula that is now Norway could not be populated until it had thawed out. "If we disregard all fanciful notions of people living here before or during the last Ice Age," writes Anders Hagen in *Norway* (Praeger, 1967), an overview of prehistoric Norway, "we can set the . . . earliest settlements in the period 10,000–8000 B.C."

From that time, when glaciers finally receded from Norway's southern shores, until the dawn of the Bronze Age in 1500 B.C., the tribes that had migrated from the south and east increasingly supplemented their diet of fish and game with agricultural products. The sea remained central to life. By 500 B.C., boat-shaped graves—with tall stones at either end representing prow and stern—were common.

The boats themselves, Hagen notes, were growing sturdier. Around A.D. 600, Norwegians built the first full keel—a single, arched beam, usually oak, which undergirded the hull. Ships now could survive long voyages; Scandinavia had the technology to enter the Viking Age.

Of the many accounts of the Vikings' extraordinary outward surge during the ninth, 10th, and 11th centuries, the best include Per Sveass Andersen's *Vikings of the West: The Expansion of Norway in the Early Middle Ages* (Tanum, 1971) and Johannes Brøndsted's *The Vikings* (Penguin, 1965, rev. ed., paper).

In *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1968), Gwyn Jones complains that too much of the Viking literature filtered down from "European

Christian annalists and chroniclers" who turned "a many-faceted and durably important contribution to our European heritage into a sensational tale of raid, rapine, and conquest." Jones focuses on the Vikings' more constructive legacies, such as local representative assemblies and the jury of twelve, which was exported to England in the ninth century. In *Political Life and Institutions in Norway* (Univ. of Oslo, 1980), Gunnar Arntzen and Bard Bredrup Knudsen trace the "consensus-striving" in modern Norwegian politics to the insistence within Viking bands on equality and social stability.

By the end of the ninth century, most of Norway's tribes were united under King Harald Fairhair. National distinctions had emerged. The Danish Vikings headed southwest, to France, northern Germany, and what is now England; the Swedes went east, to Finland and deep into Russia; the Norwegians sailed west, to the British Isles, Iceland, Greenland, and Canada.

Jones's complaints about historical sensationalism notwithstanding, the Vikings wrought plenty of havoc. In Ireland, the Gaelic word for Scandinavian, "Lochlannach," soon came to mean "demon." And, as Jones notes, Erik the Red decided in A.D. 982 to colonize Greenland for lack of alternatives: The hot-tempered explorer had been banned from his native Norway, and from Iceland, for committing a series of murders.

The Vikings absorbed—and brought home—a new faith sometimes at odds with old Norse traditions. Christianity taught that the

meek shall inherit the earth, whereas Norse mythology reserved Valhalla for those who died bravely in battle. "Christianity and classical civilization had an unquenchable vitality which in the end subdued the invaders," Karen Larsen writes in her excellent, if overly romantic, **A History of Norway** (Princeton, 1948). The Norsemen were tamed.

In 1397, familial ties among the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian monarchs led to the unification of Scandinavia. But Sweden seceded in 1523. Norwegians were now expected not only to pay taxes to Copenhagen, but to provide soldiers for Denmark's periodic wars with Sweden. Peasants rioted in Telemark and Trondelag during the late 1500s. As Ronald Popperwell observes in **Norway** (Praeger, 1972), the best book on Norway's past and present, "It did not . . . take the Danish kings long to discover that Norway had to be governed in her own way."

The Swedish kings were similarly enlightened. In 1814, after Denmark delivered Norway to Sweden as part of a peace settlement, prominent Norwegians met at Eidsvoll and drafted what is now the second oldest written constitution in the world, after the U.S. Constitution. The Storting, which it established, governed with little interference from Sweden until Norway won complete independence in 1905.

As Norwegians forged a political

identity, they sought to revive their cultural identity. The peasant, long overshadowed by Danish-dominated city life, was now deified by Oslo intellectuals as the guardian of genuine Norse culture—a turnabout thoroughly examined in **National Romanticism in Norway** (Columbia, 1933; AMS, 1968) by Oscar Falnes.

The realities of peasant life were less glorious. Hundreds of thousands of Norwegians immigrated to America, a saga best covered by Ingrid Semmingsen in **Norway to America: A History of the Migration** (Univ. of Minn., 1978, paper only).

The literature on Norway's harsh World War II experience includes firsthand accounts, such as **I Saw It Happen in Norway** by C. J. Hambro, and the more detached **The Bitter Years** (Morrow, 1974) by Richard Petrow.

Hilary Allen, in **Norway and Europe in the 1970s** (Universitetsforlaget, 1979), provides a chronicle of "what was probably the hardest fought political issue in the country [in] this century"—the decision not to join the European Economic Community. In **A History of Modern Norway 1814–1972** (Clarendon, 1973), T. K. Derry suggests that social and economic trends may yet reverse that decision. "In the nature of things, [Norway's] society and way of life on the outskirts of Western Europe are indissolubly linked with events at its center."

—Terje I. Leiren