Norway at War: The Great Resistance to the Nazis During World War II

Benjamin J. Shook
Western Oregon University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/his

Part of the European History Commons, Military History Commons, and the Political History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/his/293

This Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Theses, Papers and Projects (History) by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@wou.edu, kundas@mail.wou.edu, bakersc@mail.wou.edu.
NORWAY AT WAR:
THE GREAT RESISTANCE TO THE NAZIS DURING WORLD WAR II

by
Benjamin J. Shook

HST 499
Dr. John Rector
Western Oregon University
May 31, 1999
On April 9, 1940 German forces landed a surprise attack along the lengthy Norwegian coastline in a Blitzkrieg, known as "Operation Weserübung". The Germans used nearly all of their navy, six army divisions and a large air force in this attack on Norway.¹ The Norwegian military was defeated fairly easily because it lacked the manpower and weaponry to withstand the overwhelming German attack. Norway was a neutral nation and was not prepared for an invasion. It had shared a positive trading partnership with Germany up to April 1940 and had no reason to fear such an attack.

When looking at the Norwegian resistance movement during World War II it is necessary to examine the resistance movements of the rest of Europe to put Norway's experience into context. Examining the exact roles in which the Norwegian people played in their struggle against the Nazis compared to that of the French, Germans, and Danish will help us to better understand the actual successfulness and significance of Norway's resistance to the Nazis during World War II.

The exception to the lack of initial Norwegian military resistance occurred at Oscarborg, which had been established to guard the narrows of the Oslofjorden, a few miles south of the capital city of Oslo during the Crimean War. This

¹Dagre, Tor. "Norway and WWII". Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1995 Available at http://odin.dep.no/ud/nornytt/uda-318.html.
location was superbly defended and received advanced warning of the Nazi progress up the fjord. The Norwegian army was able to sink the enemy’s newest cruiser, the Blucher, killing 1000 specialist and Gestapo troops bound for the occupation of Oslo.\(^2\) The Norwegians also halted the advance of the remaining convoy. Oslo was later captured by German airborne forces that encountered little military resistance. This initial resistance by the Norwegians was critical because it allowed the royal family, the members of parliament (Storting), the general staff, as well as the gold reserves in the Bank of Norway to be withdrawn. They were taken to the interior of Norway which at that time was not yet occupied by the Germans.

In the end, Norwegian military resistance to the Germans lasted nearly two months. The Norwegian army was most successful in the north of the country where the terrain is mountainous and rough. Here the specialized Norwegian ski troops had an easier time with the Germans because they were aided by Allied forces. These forces, (mainly British, along with Norwegian, French, and Polish troops) pushed the Germans occupying Narvik (Nordland) all the way back to the Swedish border. After accomplishing this task the Allied forces were forced to pull out because

\(^2\)Ibid.
of the collapse of the front in France, leaving the Norwegians to fight for themselves in the north. At the same time the outnumbered Norwegian troops in the south of Norway had no help from the Allies and were broken by the beginning of May. Sixty-three days after the invasion of Norway the country was finally under control of the Nazis. The country's citizens experienced a feeling of numbness and uneasiness about the new situation that they found themselves in. The Norwegian people began to pull themselves together and started various organized forms of resistance.

Resistance to the Nazis was evident throughout Europe during World War II. France, Germany and Denmark all experienced different forms of resistance, some being similar to the Norwegians and some different. The resistance movements were all important to the particular nation in which they occurred and filled the needs of some of the population. Different ideologies played different roles in different areas of Europe. However, neither France, Germany or Denmark were as successful and effective as Norway in resisting the Nazis.

France was overrun by Nazi troops in a matter of days and the government decided to give in to the Germans instead.

---

of fighting them. The French had a quite complex system of factions within the government, and that made their response quite different from Denmark and Norway. French resistance groups began to organize within a few months of the German occupation, although it was not until 1941 that resistance groups of any size began to emerge. Among these underground groups were British intelligence agents who sought to enlist Frenchmen to supply military information. The French resistance movement was also responsible for sabotage of occupying forces and an attempt to rebuild the French morale to pre-war standards.

By 1942 three large resistance groups emerged in the unoccupied zone of France. At the same time smaller and less organized groups were evident in occupied France. These groups members held largely left-wing views, while the right-wingers remained loyal to the Nazi established Vichy government of unoccupied France. The French Communists, on the other hand, held a neutralist view until Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in the east. After this occurred the Communists jumped into the resistance movement with vigor.

Also in 1942 the underground groups found themselves holding a close relationship with Charles De Gaulle’s Free French movement in London. De Gaulle, who needed the support of the French Resistance movement in order to be accepted to speak for France, decided to align himself with
the underground groups. After a meeting of labor organizations, parties of the old republic, and principle leaders of underground groups, the representatives decided to combine the resistance groups into one, creating the French Forces of the Interior, or FFI.

The Maquis, another resistance army, emerged in France during the war. They were a guerrilla army that was formed in the mountains from the young men that fled from German forced labor camps.4 At the point of D-Day there were almost a half a million men and women involved in the French resistance movement. About 24,000 FFI volunteers were killed in action and another 25,000 resisters were executed by the Germans during the occupation of France. After D-Day, FFI units took part in the liberation of France. De Gaulle rose to the leader of France.

The French resistance movement was not effective because of the tight grip that the Germans held over France. French resisters as a whole were unorganized and lacked significant assistance from the Allies to fully resist as the Norwegians did.

The German resistance movement seemed to be stronger before the war, when many churches, workers, and students voiced their opinions against the Nazi Party. As it became

---

more risky to speak out against the Nazis during the war. Fewer people were involved, and many people were executed for their participation.

Just after the invasion of Poland most Germans were in favor of peace. Most German officers feared for the future of Germany as controlled by the Fuhrer. Many high-ranking officers were skeptics of Hitler and planned to do what they could to stop the expansion of the war into additional neutral nations. In fact, most of the senior officers stalled the invasion of Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg claiming bad weather and a lack of resources. This, of course, was not an effective ploy as these neutral nations were run over rather quickly. The non-commissioned officers were born as National Socialists and stood behind Hitler 100 percent. The German Air Force was made up of younger officers, who were therefore more loyal to Hitler and the Nazi Party than the officers in the army. In every instance the senior officers used a stall tactic, the non-commissioned officers reported them and undermined their resistance.

Resistance by workers, students, and the clergy continued throughout the war. They were also assisted by British Secret Service disguised as foreign workers. These

---

agents of the British Secret Service committed acts of sabotage but this help from abroad was very scarce. The resistance by the workers was in the form of strikes and minor acts of sabotage, but they were curbed by the Nazis through the execution of many leaders of the movement. For example, from June 1943 to the summer of 1944, twenty-five priests and pastors were executed and about 500 were sent to the concentration camp at Dachau. The student resistance was led by the brother and sister team of Hans and Sophie Scholl. Hans and Sophie Scholl led a student rally against the Nazi regime in Munich. They opposed the Nazis for quite some time and headed a group on campus called the “White Rose”. They handed out “White Rose” letters that acted as anti-Nazi propaganda. One such pamphlet asked the question “Is it not a fact that every decent German is afraid of his government?” The White Rose called for all the youth of Germany to “avenge and atone” in order to contribute to “a new spiritual Europe”. Hans and Sophie Scholl were arrested and later executed on February 22, 1943.

The most visible actions that the resistance movement had in Germany were the several attempts on Hitler’s life. The first happened in March of 1943 when a member of the

---

6Ibid., 29.
resistance placed a bomb on a plane that Hitler was flying on to the Russian front. The bomb did not explode because its wiring failed. Several other attempts failed as Hitler changed his travel plans. The last and most well-known attempt on Hitler's life occurred on July 20, 1944. A briefcase containing a time bomb was left under a table by a resistance leader at a conference in which Hitler attended. The bomb exploded but only three people were killed, Hitler escaped with minor cuts and bruises. The men involved in the plot were either killed or committed suicide within days of the assassination attempt. This led to a weakened resistance force due to the fact that most of the leaders were dead.8

Historian Henri Bernard considered the German resistance movement a complete failure by the end of the war.9 Several different factors led to this failure. One was the lack of support and aid from allied countries. Nothing had been done to support the movement from inside or outside of Germany. Another element that contributed to the failure was the lack of solidarity among the leaders. Each leader had their own methods and ideals for the results. These factors led to the ineffectiveness of the German resistance movement.

8Bernard, Henri. 31.
9Bernard, Henri. 38.
The experience of Denmark to the invasion by the Germans was similar to that of the Norwegians in that it occurred on the same day and with the same overwhelming force. The major difference between the two invasions was that the Danish decided that it was useless to fight the "unbeatable" Nazis. The king and the government came through the invasion secure and the nation remained complete. This action, that some believed to be cowardly, became more embarrassing as the people learned that the Norwegians had decided to fight. To the government of Denmark it was a common-sense reaction and was in their best interest.¹⁰ As the German occupation forces began to take away rights and freedoms, the Danes began to realize that the Germans would indeed do as they pleased. The press in Denmark began to be monitored by the 'new order' and the Danish people began to feel more and more oppressed.

A catalyst to the formation of resistance occurred in June 1941 when Hitler turned against the Soviet Union. All of the Communists Party leaders in Denmark were arrested and the party was banned. Another element was the formation of the 'Free Corps', a group of volunteers made up of some Danish regular army officers as well as young men to go fight for the Nazis on the eastern front. The result of

this was a large organized anti-German demonstration in Copenhagen. In August of 1943 there were many strikes and demonstrations in several towns and cities around Denmark leading to the killing of many citizens and the imprisonment of 500 Danes by the German occupation forces. The Germans took official control of the government after the Danish government had abdicated control. German troops attacked naval depots and army barracks killing 23 Danish military personnel.\textsuperscript{11} The beginnings of the resistance movement in Denmark sprang to life at the end of 1941. An underground press began to print and distribute tracts, random acts of sabotage began to occur, and the banned Communists became a fundamental part of the resistance. The allies dropped some agents into Denmark to help them establish communication with the government in London as well as organize their ranks.

The Freedom Council was founded to organize the underground groups. Railroad lines were blown up, and factories were damaged. Beginning in October 1943 the Danish resistance movement was responsible for the evacuation of nearly all of Denmark's 7000 Jews to Sweden to escape sure death in concentration camps. Nazi oppression

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 246.
began worse for the Danish as many underground resisters were killed in the streets of Copenhagen. The Freedom Council remained in contact with the Allies in London and were supplied with arms. By May 1945, at the close of the war the underground army in Denmark had nearly 43,000 men ready to assist the Allied forces when they reached Denmark from the south. As it turned out the Germans had laid down their arms as the Allies were about to penetrate into southern Denmark.12

With the exception of the initial fighting and the refusal to abdicate by the Norwegians the Danish had a similar experience during the war as did the Norwegians. The acts of sabotage as well as the transporting of Jews to Sweden, and an underground army were all aspects that were important to both the Danish and the Norwegians during World War II.

When comparing the resistance movements of France, Germany, and Denmark to that of Norway it becomes evident that the Norwegians were much more effective. The resistance in Norway also represented a much broader segment of society. Norway's resistance was different than the other three nations in several areas. The most important element was the initial military fighting against the German forces

12 Oakley, Stewart. The Story of Denmark. (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 229
when their nations were invaded. The Norwegians were able to hold out for sixty-three days, utilizing their comparatively small army, as well as help from some Allied forces. The French and Danish military gave up quickly to the advancing German army and their governments abdicated their power to the occupying Nazi troops. Although France did receive some aid from the Allies it was minimal and was of little consequence to the Nazis. The Danish also received aid from the Allies and it was effective in some areas of the resistance movement. The Germans who resisted the Nazis in Germany had a more difficult time than the French and Danish for obvious reasons. The Germans received little, ineffective aid from the Allies, and it was more difficult to keep their organizations of resistance underground. Another factor contributing to the unproductiveness of German resistance was the lack of solidarity among the leaders. This was also a common theme to the resistance movements of France and Denmark.

Many different factors contributed to Norway's success in resisting the Nazis. One advantage that the Norwegians had over the Danish, French, Germans, and other European resistance movements was Norway's history of subjugation by Sweden and Denmark. Norwegian people, who only gained independence in 1905, felt more strongly against being occupied by a foreign intruder. The rough and jagged
coastline with long and deep fjords and tall mountains in Norway also aided their resistance movement. The physical geography of Norway created somewhat of a natural fortress in which the Norwegians used to their advantage, especially in guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage. Another element responsible in assisting the Norwegian resistance movement was their renewed respect in their king and government. King Haakon VII kept the people of Norway enthusiastic in the movement through underground radio addresses from London. Lastly, the support by the Allies in both intelligence and military aid gave a big boost to the resistance in Norway.

Norway has had a long history of being ruled by other states. Until 1905, Norway had been ruled by Denmark and Sweden throughout its history. In 1397, with the Union of Kalmar, the three kingdoms (Denmark, Sweden, Norway) became a single administrative unit.¹³ Norway then became a province of Denmark, neglected by the various kings of Denmark. Sweden and Denmark thrived culturally and economically while Norway tended to decline in those areas. Chief factors in this isolation of Norway were the fact that the British had blockaded the coast of Norway from trade of

any kind during the Bodo affair in 1827.\(^{14}\) Large masses of ice had built up between Norway and Denmark allowing little interaction between the two. This union continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Norway continued to degenerate while under Danish control.

The Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) brought the Union of Kalmar to a close. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, Denmark, an ally of France, was forced to sign the Treaty of Kiel, relinquishing Norway to the king of Sweden.\(^ {15}\) This brought about the end of the 434-year alliance of Denmark and Norway. Norwegians saw this as a chance to resist the King of Sweden by repudiating the Treaty of Kiel.

The Crown Prince of Denmark, Christian Frederick, was then seen as the leader of Norway. He encouraged anti-Swedish sentiment to overturn Swedish rule and bring about the future reunification of Denmark and Norway. Military, administrative, logistical and financial preparations were made for a rebellion by Christian Frederick. The nationwide independence movement sprang up out of these proceedings. Frederick also tried to win the powers of Europe over to his side through clever diplomatic maneuvers. Prince Frederick met with important Norwegians

---


\(^{15}\) Ibid., 212.
on May 17, 1814, at Eidsvoll Norway, where they professed themselves an independent nation, wrote up a liberal constitution, and offered the throne to the Frederick; their only option for the throne. This move by the Norwegians and Frederick was unacceptable by the European Powers, and at the end of July in 1814 Sweden attacked Norway. The Norwegian forces were poorly commanded, and the Swedes advanced on all fronts as the new King of Norway showed little verve in his defense of Norway. Norway was forced to sign an agreement in Moss, Norway, on August 14, 1814 excepting the Treaty of Kiel.¹⁶

With this acceptance came the Act of Union, 1815, in which Norway was allowed to keep their newly designed liberal constitution. In addition to the allowance of the constitution, Norway was given their own army, navy, customs, and legislature and was recognized to have liberty and full autonomy within its own borders. Sweden, nonetheless, still held the ultimate authority over the Norwegian people.

During this, Norway’s second union with Sweden, the Norwegian legislature (Storting) main concern and emphasis was placed on restoring the Norwegian financial state as well as guarding its newly won self-government. Norwegian

¹⁶Ibid., 212.
nationalism increased due to the growing sense of autonomy and liberty as well as the liberal movement in politics. By 1848 this political nationalism was reinforced by intellectual and cultural nationalism.\textsuperscript{17}

By 1860 Sweden began to present amendments to the Act of Union of 1815. These amendments were designed to give additional powers to the Swedes. The main political parties in Norway, the Peasant Party and the Lawyers Party, conglomerated to form the liberal Venstre (Left) Party, and stopped the revisions of the Swedish government. The Swedes also attempted to overhaul the Norwegian constitution, as well as establish a royal right to adjourn the parliament (Storting). Under the leadership of the president of the Storting, Johan Sverdrup, the Norwegian assembly began a long battle with the King of Sweden Oscar II. By 1884, Oscar II was forced to buckle in the implementing of his policy. After postponed bargaining the Norwegian cabinet resigned and later declined to take back their positions in the Storting. It was then declared that Oscar II was no longer the ruler of Norway and that Norway was an independent kingdom. Through an election in August 1905 the Norwegian people voted nearly unanimously to separate from Sweden. In October the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag)

approved the disunion, and by November 1905 Prince Carl of Denmark accepted the Norwegian Throne as Haakon VII.\textsuperscript{18}

The Norwegian people have endured centuries of being controlled by a power other than their own. It is very important to understand the background of the Norwegian people to help put into context the resistance movement in Norway during World War II. The people of Norway have withstood many hardships and have experienced several ups and downs in nationalistic sentiment. The fact that Norway had recently experienced independence for the first time is an important factor to keep in mind when exploring the resistance movement during World War II. It is also significant to examine the support and enthusiasm portrayed by the people of Norway towards exiled King Haakon VII in London. This shows us how important their first king was to them, and how Norway was experiencing a time where their national identity was an important issue to many Norwegians.

The resistance movement in Norway was carried out by civilian as well as military groups and would not have succeeded without the underground military (Milorg) led by the “Home Front” in Norway and exiled King Haakon VII in London. This resistance by the Norwegians began with their efforts militarily to keep the Germans out of Norway. This

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 171.
was a difficult (and later to be found impossible) task for Norway since they were ill prepared for an all-out invasion by the Germans. After all, they were a neutral nation. Many forms of resistance from sabotage to basic disrespect of the Germans was practiced by the people of Norway. Resistance was reinforced by the knowledge that King Haakon and the Storting (parliament) had emphatically answered "no" to the Nazi demands for submission after the invasion. The people of Norway backed King Haakon and he continued to support the Norwegians via radio messages from London. I believe admiration of the King as well as a sense of national unity among the people were keys in keeping an active resistance movement in Norway alive throughout the war. Another factor in increased pride in their king is the fact that Haakon was Norway's first true king of an independent Norway.

The Germans wanted to have a Norwegian leading their Nazi party in Norway. Hitler selected Vidkun Quisling to be the leader of the new Nasjonal Samling (National Unification) or the NS party. It was similar to the Nazi party. This plan backfired as most began to hate Quisling for being a treasonous Nazi. King Haakon said of Quisling that "he would renounce himself and his house sooner than call to office a man who had no support 'either among our
people as a whole or its representative organ, the Storting".  

This was a difficult time for the Norwegians for many obvious reasons, but mainly the initial inconsistency with which the Allies aided the limited Norwegian Forces. Several engagements with the Germans in which the Allies had an upper hand ended with the British having to pull out to rejoin the fight on the continent, thus leaving the Norwegians to fend for themselves. This allowed the Germans to retake any territory previously lost. The Narvik Campaign in the north is a perfect example of this frustrating action by the Allies.

Sweden was not looked to as a big brother, especially after it failed to notify the Royal Norwegian navy of a German trap in which they took on heavy losses. The pro-German King in Stockholm continued his appeasement of Germany until it was obvious that the Nazis would lose the war. The Swedish administration allowed German transportation of medical supplies and wounded soldiers. In addition to this many of the weapons and men used in the campaign against Norway were also transported through Sweden. This support of the Nazis by the Swedes led to protests by Swedish citizens as well as accusations of

---

breaching neutrality from the British and the French governments. This lack of support by the Swedish to the Norwegians continued to be the case until the Soviets penetrated through the north of Norway at the end of the war. This is not to say that the resistance by the Norwegians was ineffective. In fact, the resistance became more and more of a thorn in the Germans side as the war went on.

The Norwegians came to the realization that they were going to have to help themselves out. As the German grip became tighter and tighter more Norwegians joined some form of resistance group while others joined Quisling and the NS party. More joined the resistance movement than joined the NS party. The key factor in keeping the national morale high was the respect and continued support of their exiled king, as well as the defense of his constitutional rights. As the resistance movement became more evident to the Nazis, their oppression of the Norwegian people increased. All of the hardships and cruelty did not break the spirit of the Norwegians. The resistance movement continued to grow. Workers, merchants, teachers, clergymen, officials, judges, as well as Right-wing and Left-wing politicians, the Labour Party and the trade unions, the young and the old, were all

---

together for the same cause, a liberated Norway. Their slogan was "No Norwegian is for sale!"\textsuperscript{21}

Sigrid Undset, a prominent Norwegian poet sums up her feelings of the German occupation of Norway. Many Norwegians would agree with her words:

Don't ask us what we think of those who have broken into our country and trodden our law and justice, liberty and humanity, underfoot. There is no word strong enough to express our hatred, and our contempt for them is even stronger. On the day when we recover our country and our liberties we shall put forward our just demands for the reparation of these crimes. We shall not be able to punish them as they deserve; to do that we should have to descend to their level, and that would be impossible for us, for behind all our passion for justice lies our sense of moral cleanliness. And whatever happens in the first flush of our just rage, we shall quickly gain control of ourselves and act as true Norwegians—even to Germans and Quislings.\textsuperscript{22}

Another form of resistance was in the use of the Norwegian Merchant Marine, the third largest in the world in the 1940's. These ships allowed the Norwegian government to continue trading with the Allies all over the world. Norway's merchant marine even helped support troops during the landing at Normandy. During the war over 4,000 seamen lost their lives aboard these supply ships. The continued use of this asset allowed Norway to build an army, navy, and air force.\textsuperscript{23} By the end of 1941 the Royal Norwegian navy was manning fifty-five vessels which supported the larger

\textsuperscript{21}Fridtjof. Why Norway. (Hutchinson and Co., Ltd.), 71.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{23}Worm-Muller, Jacob. Norway Revolts Against the Nazis. (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1941), 115.
British navy. In fact in December of 1943 the Royal Norwegian navy destroyer Stord helped in the sinking of a German battle cruiser off of the northern Norwegian coast. At the same time the Norwegian air force was being trained at “Little Norway” in Canada. By 1943 two particular Royal Norwegian air force squadrons took over first and third place among all the fighter squadrons in Britain in the toll they took on the enemy.

Few professional groups in Norway during the German occupation were subject to as many stresses as were the shipowners. Besides being heavily taxed and affected by economic burdens, they were told by the Nazis to have all of their fleets running supplies for the Allies to return to Norway for their own use. The shipowners refused unanimously. Several months later the president and the director of the Shipowners’ Union were arrested and eventually sent to prison in Germany. The Germans then tried to get an NS shipowner to head the union but the shipowners refused to elect him president of the union. This strengthened the resistance movement throughout the nation and helped to strengthen the opposition to the cooperation with the Nazis by the Farmers’ Union.24

Resistance also came in the form of helping Jews to escape to Sweden and other safe-havens before the Germans could send them to death camps. More than 1800 Norwegian Jews were sent to Sweden. This led the Germans to believe that the Norwegians were not their "Nordic brothers" as they had first thought. School teachers also did their part by boycotting the NS Youth movement and as a result about 1000 were sent to work camps in northern Norway. A total of 40,000 Norwegians were imprisoned by the Germans because they were reputed to be involved in some aspect of the Norwegian resistance movement. These were students, teachers, officers, doctors, and many other professionals who were sent to concentration camps for opposing the Nazis.

The underground military resistance movement in Norway was a significant threat to the Nazis through guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage. There were 13,000 Norwegian "police" troops training on Swedish soil. In addition to these troops there was the Milorg, military organization that reported German navy and troop movement to the Allies. The majority of the work of these two groups did was in intelligence work such as radio communications and sabotage. As the war continued, parachute drops of Allied arms added to the capabilities of the Norwegian Resistance Forces. At this time Milorg and the "police" troops firmly linked with the government in London. This allowed them to become an
active military force and many clashes between the Germans and the Norwegians came about because of these air drops.

The most significant act of sabotage committed by the Milorg was the destruction of the heavy water plant in Rjukan. This came at a pivotal time as the Germans were using this plant, the only one of its type available, to construct an atomic bomb. This plant was heavily guarded by the Germans but a handful of Norwegian Special Forces trained in Britain were able to sneak in and destroy the Germans hope for an atomic bomb. Heavy water en route to Germany was also destroyed at the cost of many Norwegian civilian lives.²⁵ This was a very important accomplishment for the Norwegian resistance movement as it began a long period of success and support.

By the close of the Second World War the Norwegians had built up quite a considerable military. All together there was about 28,000 troops, not counting the 40,000 Milorg troops that had disbanded. The Royal Norwegian navy had about 8,000 men and 52 ships and the Royal Norwegian air force had about 2,600 pilots and 80 different types of airplanes. These numbers, however, are quite a contrast with the Germans who had over 400,000 troops in Norway at the peak of their occupation.²⁶ Near the end of the

occupation as the Russians were pushing the Nazi's out of Norway from the north, Milorg troops numbering 1000 were able to halt nearly three-quarters of the German troop withdrawal by blowing up important bridges. During this time the Milorg made many sabotage attacks with limited losses.

Shortly after the invasion of Norway by the Germans the Norwegian people reacted with pride and faith in their constitutional monarch, King Haakon VI. The resistance movement in Norway took on many forms throughout all aspects of society. The people as a whole came together to fight the Nazis oppression the only way they knew how, by resisting the Germans' every request. As the war continued the Norwegian resistance movement became more and more complex and turned into something the Germans could no longer ignore. The movement was spurred on by the king's resilient attitude. King Haakon's pride and belief in his nation allowed the resistance movement to experience a high morale even when things were not going well.

This period of Norwegian history has shaped Norway into the independent self-reliant country that it is today. Norway showed its independence from the rest of Europe by not becoming a member of the European Community. I believe that their resilient effort to resist the Nazis during World War II has built great character into the people of Norway.
The fierce and determined way that the Norwegians effectively resisted has led them to sustain enthusiasm and has turned them into a strong independent nation. Norway, however, is a member of NATO. They learned a lesson in World War II: it is better to be in alliance with other nations and have an initial system of support to prevent the events of April 1940 from happening again.

Norwegians were unique in that they were able to discourage the Nazi occupiers as well as make the Germans take them seriously. When compared to the resistance movements in France, Germany, and Denmark it is clearly evident that the Norwegian resistance movement was more effective. Norway had a physical geography that was conducive to a resistance movement. They also had a strong sense of nationalistic pride and faith in a exiled king and government that resisted the Nazi demands. Support from the Allied forces, as well as the organized groups of resistance fighters within Norway contributed, to their success. The history of subjugation by Sweden and Denmark was also a critical factor that led to the successfulness of the resistance movement in Norway. The mentality of Norwegians had been shaped by the past subjugation in which they had endured throughout their history. Norwegians held a desire to continue their lives in a free, independent nation, thus leading to a persistent resistance movement. Norway’s
actions and achievements during World War II need to be recognized as one of the great resistance movements among oppressed people throughout the world and throughout history.
Bibliography

Primary sources:


Worm-Muller, Jacob. Norway Revolts Against the Nazi’s. London: Lindsay Drummond, 1941.

Secondary Sources:


