

## #370: NORWAY'S VE DAY - 1945



*Image: The Royal Family of Norway waving to the welcoming crowds from HMS Norfolk at Oslo, June 1945.*

On May 8, 1945 Norwegians everywhere could finally celebrate their freedom after spending five long years under unyielding Nazi rule. When the day of liberation came, "Hurrah! Hurrah!" was all that could be heard and the streets of every Norwegian city were flooded with flags. This momentous day was celebrated with singing, parades, and the warm embrace of fellow countrymen. Towns throughout Norway were awash in red, blue, and white.

Broadcasts from BBC were heard through the streets as people began emerging with flags and smiles restored to full strength. Infamous Nazi supporter Vidkun Quisling was tried and quickly found guilty of high treason, which brought an end to his reign as Minister-President of Norway. On June 7, 1945 the Royal family returned to Norway. King Haakon, Crown Prince Olav, Crown Princess Märtha and their children received a momentous homecoming in Oslo to solidify the country's liberation.

Unfortunately the end of the occupation did not mean the conclusion of all hardships experienced by Norwegians. Because of the loss of their trading partners and the German confiscation of food staples during the war, Norwegians everywhere were on the brink of famine. This would have a profound and long-lasting effect on the Norwegian psyche. It instilled a habit of frugality and fear of economic shortage. This, in turn, affected the way citizens voted in local and national elections, giving rise to the Norwegian government's Labour Party.

The Labour Party's motto became, "working for the people", and Norway recognized the importance of industrialization and the exportation of lumber and fish. But they needed help in beginning this long road back to recovery. America's world influence and economic strength was the answer. Aid was sent to Norway under The Marshall Plan devised and powered by U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, President Harry Truman, and the American people. Norwegian-Americans quickly collected goods to send to their relatives across the sea.

The U.S. and Norway's cooperation and friendship strengthened during this time of rebuilding. Norway became a stronger economic force in the world. Things had gone back to normal and the Norwegian people began anew. Norway continued to progress.

In the end Germany's occupation became a scar on Norway's history but strengthened their national pride and secured their relationship with America, a relationship that remains strong today.

