

OCT 2 - 1945

Vidkun Quisling Dies For Betraying Norway

Traitor Executed by Firing Squad To-day; King Rejects Wife's Plea For Clemency

Oslo, Oct. 24.—(AP)—Vidkun Quisling, Norway's arch traitor, was executed by a firing squad before dawn to-day, paying the final price for dealing with an enemy his king and countrymen defied throughout the bitter years of the war. The greatest secrecy surrounded the execution, a Foreign Affairs Office spokesman said.

Maintains Innocence

Quisling was awakened in his cell and rushed quickly before the firing squad of 10 Norwegian military police. The only witnesses were an unidentified member of the state prosecution, a clergyman and the officer who gave the order to fire.

The youths who formed the firing squad had been forced to flee the country during Quisling's puppet regime. Members of the squad had been on the alert for the last week for their task.

Quisling stumbled to his death through a murky, drizzling rain in the dismal execution square of the ancient Akershus fortress. To the end he maintained that he was a patriot. He had sent a letter protesting his innocence to King Haakon.

The Government had not planned to announce the execution for three or four days to avoid publicity and public curiosity. However, one Oslo morning newspaper learned of Quisling's death in time to catch its last edition with a brief sentence that he was executed. The story brought forth a Justice Ministry communique some seven hours later.

Remove Brain for Study

The body presumably will be turned over to relatives for burial in Quisling's native province of Telemark. A foreign affairs spokesman intimated that his brain would be removed for study.

Anneaus Schjoedt, state prosecutor who presented the case against the pallid former puppet dictator, and Henrik Bergh, Quisling's defence lawyer, said they had not been notified in advance that Quisling was to be executed to-day.

The Norwegian embassy in Lon-

don announced that Quisling was shot at 2.40 a.m.

The embassy said the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Justice issued the following statement:

"The sentence of death passed on Vidkun Quisling on October 13 by the Supreme Court of Oslo was carried out by shooting at 2.40 a.m., Norwegian time.



Vidkun Quisling

"The Supreme Court will recommend a reprieve. Neither could the state prosecutor.

King Rejects Appeal

Quisling sent the king a letter in which he pointed out he was innocent, but added he did not ask for a reprieve.

Mrs. Quisling, however, requested a reprieve on behalf of her husband. In a cabinet meeting yesterday, the king rejected Mrs. Quisling's petition for mercy and decided the sentence would be carried out.

Quisling's relatives were notified of the execution at 9 a.m. this morning."

Quisling was sentenced to death for treason by a high court September 10 and his sentence was confirmed October 13, when his appeal was denied.

In the slightly more than five years he ruled Norway as Adolf Hitler's puppet, the name of Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Quisling became a synonym for traitor.

Satellite of Nazis

He was virtually unknown outside his own country before he emerged in April, 1940, as a collaborator with the German invaders of his homeland. Behind him was a record of political failure and discontent with his profession, the army. Even after the Nazis lifted him to power he could rally no confidence among his people.

Strikes and sabotage marked his early rule, and his regime survived only by Nazi force of arms.

Born of peasant stock in the southern province of Telemark, July 18, 1887, Quisling became a brilliant student and entered the army, in which he won speedy advancement, serving as military attache at Petrograd and Helsinki in 1918-20. In 1922-23 he represented the International Russian Relief Organization in the Ukraine and Crimea, later working on Russian and Armenian relief problems.

He left Russia in 1930 and returned to Norway, where, having resigned from the army in 1928 after a quarrel with the general staff, he found himself forgotten.

Sentenced By Exiles

Entering politics, he was named by the Farmers' Party Government of 1932 as minister of defence and as such presided over his country's disarmament. After a few obscure political battles, he founded in 1933 his own party, the "Nasjonal Samling," which failed in two elections to gain a single seat in the Storting (parliament) or poll as much as two per cent. of the vote.

With his party's collapse, Quisling dropped into political oblivion, not to reappear until Norway was under the German boot.

Theoretically he became second to the German civil governor in internal administration of the country, although a host of Nazi civil officials and the Gestapo stood between him and actual power.

In October, 1942, the exiled Norwegian Government in London sentenced him to death for his puppet role, but his doom actually

was sealed with the collapse last spring of his one support—German military might.

He drove with six associates to the Oslo police station in a bullet-proof limousine and surrendered May 9. Immediately he was arraigned on a charge of treason. Then, as he was later to do at his trial, he maintained that all he had done was for the good of Norway.

Germans Given Information

His three-week trial began August 20, before a high court of three judges and four laymen. The prosecution accused him of conferring with Hitler and other high German officials months before the invasion, urging them to such action. Subsequently, it was charged, he delivered defence data to the Germans and aided their occupation of Norway by urging her troops not to resist.

He was accused also of collaborating with the Nazis in deportations and oppressions that led to deaths of hundreds of Jews and patriots.

Quisling's defence was that he acted solely to advance Norway's interests in a German-dominated Europe. Sometimes hysterically, he called himself "the saviour of Scandinavia," the "martyr of Norway." In his final plea he was "Quisling, the patriot."

Experts examined him and found him sane.

The court decreed him guilty September 10, and ordered his death before a firing squad. Allowed only to appeal his sentence, not the verdict, Quisling was granted unprecedented permission to appear before the supreme court personally to ask its leniency. His plea for mercy was unavailing, the highest tribunal confirming the death sentence October 13.

149
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