

= Halvdan Koht =

Halvdan Koht (7 July 1873 ? 12 December 1965) was a Norwegian historian and politician representing the Labour Party .

Born in the north of Norway to a fairly distinguished family , he soon became interested in politics and history . Starting his political career in the Liberal Party , he switched to the Labour Party around the turn of the 20th century . He represented that party in the Bærum municipal council for parts of the interwar period . He was never elected a member of Parliament , but served nonetheless as Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1935 to 1941 . In the latter capacity he sought to preserve Norway 's neutrality in the Second World War , an action that garnered him political infamy . Growing discontentment with Koht 's political decisions ultimately led to his exit from the cabinet . After the war , however , he returned to an academic career track and wrote major works in the 1950s and 1960s .

As an academic he was a professor of history at the Royal Frederick University (now the University of Oslo) from 1910 to 1935 , having become a research fellow in 1900 and docent in 1908 . Among many honors , he held an honorary degree at the University of Oxford . He was a prolific writer , and touched on numerous subjects during his long academic career . He wrote several biographies ; his works on Johan Sverdrup and Henrik Ibsen spanned several volumes each . He became known for syntheses on Norwegian history , and emphasised the roles of peasants and wage labourers as historical agents who found their place in an expanding notion of the Norwegian nation . He was also interested in the United States and its history , and was a pioneer in Norway in this respect .

Koht 's views on the Norwegian language also garnered him nationwide academic recognition . He championed the Samnorsk language reform , the declared aim of which was to consolidate the two standards of written Norwegian . A reform pushing the formal written language in this direction was indeed implemented in 1938 , but historical events led to the failure of this policy . A pertinacious and unyielding advocate of international peace , Koht was a founding member of the Norwegian Peace Association and an ordinary member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee . As an activist and politician he was described as a strong @-@ willed and individualistic , and nurturing a strong belief in taking an academic and legal perspective on political problems .

= = Background = =

Halvdan Koht was born on 7 August 1873 in Tromsø , one of the larger cities in Northern Norway . He was the second of four children born to Paul Steenstrup Koht (1844 ? 1892) , an educator and politician , and Betty Giæver (1845 ? 1936) , a part @-@ time teacher with a penchant for singing , languages and drawing . Betty 's antecedents were mixed : she was maternally descended from Northern Germany , yet on her father 's side she was of Norwegian origin ? a distinguished forebear on that side was her great @-@ grandfather , the civil servant Jens Holmboe from Tromsø . Through the offspring of his maternal grand @-@ uncle , Halvdan Koht was a third cousin of the parliamentarian Ola Krogseng Giæver . In Paul Koht 's lineage , Kjeld Stub was a distant ancestor . The name Koht stems from German immigrants to Norway in the 17th century .

He was intended to have the name Joachim , but this was stopped on request from Joachim G. Giæver who voiced his dislike for the name . He was then christened Halfdan , changed to Halvdan some years later . The family lived in Tromsø , where Paul Steenstrup Koht was a headmaster and mayor . The family moved to Skien when Halvdan was twelve years old , where his father again immersed himself in politics : he served as mayor as well as parliamentarian for the Liberal Party . Koht finished school here , taking his examen artium in 1890 . His father was among his teachers for a while in Norwegian and Greek . In 1893 , one year after the death of Koht 's father , the family moved to Bekkelaget , a borough in Aker . Koht studied at the Royal Frederick University (now the University of Oslo) .

In September 1898 in Kristiania , Koht married Karen Elisabeth Grude (1871 ? 1960) , an essay writer and women 's rights activist one and a half years his senior ; she bore him three children . One child died in infancy , but the remaining two had distinguished careers : Åse Gruda Skard (née

Koht) became a child psychologist and Paul Koht an ambassador . Through Åsa , Halvdan Koht was a father @-@ in @-@ law of literary scholar Sigmund Skard and a grandfather of politician and academic Torild Skard , psychologist and ombud Målfrid Grude Flekkøy and politician and organisational leader Halvdan Skard . In the late 1920s , Karen 's declining health and Halvdan 's preoccupation with his work placed a strain on their relationship . Disenchanted with the loveless union , Koht entered several extramarital friendships in the following decade , often pen friends . During the Second World War , there were rumors about a romantic relationship with his secretary Unni Diesen . After 1945 the relationship to Karen regrew in strength .

= = Education = =

Koht graduated with a cand.philol. degree from the Royal Frederick University in 1896 . He studied history with geography as a minor subject until 1895 ; his main history teacher was Gustav Storm . The next examination was in different languages , both classical and modern . Koht had the choice between Ancient Greek and Classical Latin or Norwegian and German (including Norse) ; he chose the Norwegian and German . In 1895 , after finishing his history studies , he spent three months in the Mediterranean , travelling with three ships , the first from Norway to Venice , the second from Venice to Constantinople , the third back to Norway . He studied German literature during this travels . In December 1896 Koht was finally examined by Sophus Bugge and earned his degree . He was one of just three students to be examined in Norwegian and German in late 1896 , and had been the only candidate in history the previous year .

A break from the studies came in the second half of 1892 . After his father 's death , he could not afford to attend university that semester . He worked briefly as a private tutor in the Skien district , and was paid to write in the newspaper Varden . On returning to his studies he worked as a Kristiania correspondent for the newspaper ; eventually he also worked for Päivälehti . In 1901 he took over from Erik Vullum as obituarist and anniversary writer in Verdens Gang . In the next years he would contribute extensively to publications such as Den 17de Mai , Nationalbladet , Nordmanns @-@ Forbundets tidsskrift , Syn og Segn , Samtiden , Unglyden , Dagbladet , Verdens Gang and Tidens Tegn ; these were mostly Liberal or Norwegian nationalist publications .

For some months after graduating Koht worked as an unpaid volunteer at the University Library of Oslo , while also continuing to attend university lectures . He was then given a scholarship , the " Gustav Bruun Endowment " of NOK 1 @,@ 800 . The University doubled Koht 's award to NOK 3600 . From 1897 to 1899 he studied abroad with this fellowship . He studied at the University of Copenhagen , the University of Leipzig and in Paris (École des hautes études , École des Chartes) . He was especially influenced by Karl Lamprecht in Leipzig .

From 1899 to 1901 Koht worked as a substitute at the University Library of Oslo , and part @-@ time as a school teacher . He was also engaged by Gustav Storm to help him with publishing the source text Regesta Norvegica . In 1908 , after eight years of work , Koht completed the two last volumes of Norsk Forfatter @-@ lexikon , a biographical dictionary of Norwegian writers . However , it was a posthumous work , the principal author ? Jens Braage Halvorsen ? having died in 1900 .

= = Academic career = =

= = = Appointments and doctorate = = =

In 1901 he was appointed as a research fellow at the Royal Frederick University . He rarely had responsibility for any teaching of the students , and since he was often busy with Norsk Forfatter @-@ lexikon he remained a research fellow until 1907 . In 1908 he took his dr.philos. degree on the thesis Die Stellung Norwegens und Schwedens im Deutsch @-@ Dänischen Konflikt 1863 ? 1864 . Opponents at the dissertation were Ebbe Hertzberg and Yngvar Nielsen .

Koht was then hired as a docent at the University in 1908 . Because Koht had internal opponents at the university , the docenture was designated to cover " cultural history " instead of " history " . A

while later the university changed it to " history " . The cabinet changed it back to " cultural history " , before the Parliament finally decided on " history " . Koht was going to start his tenure as a docent , but argued with Waldemar Christofer Brøgger that he deserved to travel abroad first . From 1908 to 1909 Koht travelled around in the United States , England and Sweden , visiting the peace conferences in London (1908) , Chicago (1909) and Stockholm (1910) . During these years , his wife , daughter and her nanny lived in Eidsvoll . Koht then returned to Norway and the university , and remained docent until being promoted to professor in 1910 . He remained professor until 1935 , and also served as the dean of his Faculty from 1912 to 1917 .

= = = Fields of research = = =

Koht faced considerable skepticism among academics when announcing his intentions to study social history from the farmers ' perspective . Gustav Storm claimed that farmers in Norway had " done no effort of their own " . Ludvig Ludvigsen Daae exclaimed that a person whom Koht wanted to study , the farmer @-@ politician John G. Neergaard , was a " crook ... oh well , trahit sua quemque voluptas " . Koht was given NOK 100 to do research in Nordmøre on Neergaard . In 1896 professor Cathrinus Bang replied to Koht 's wish to study social history : " Yes , do not go out and become a socialist ! "

In 1910 , Koht completed the dissertation *Bonde mot borgar i nynorsk historie* , in which he further developed his theories on the role of the farmers in history . Published in the journal *Historisk Tidsskrift* in 1912 , it featured an elaboration on Koht 's theory about class and the nation . According to Koht , the community of the nation was expanded in a democratic way when the agrarian movement , then the labour movement , both rose from political passivity to demand a place in the political and national sphere . He wrote about this in the 1910 article *Norsk folkesamling* as well . The book *Norsk bondereising* , published in 1926 as a compilation of Koht 's presented material in his university lectures , represented the culmination of Koht 's work on the topic of class conflict between the agrarian and the urban population . Koht argued that the peasant movement had abandoned the cause of class interest in favour of universal rights and social reforms . The same perspective had to be applied to the struggle of the labour movement , Koht maintained . An economic background for the farmers ' rising was presented in 1912 , in *Priser og politikk i norsk historie* , originally a lecture for the second Norwegian conference of historians . This lecture was also where his historical materialism came to fruition . In 1951 he stated that he " has never thought that the theories could be foundational for a political or social uprising " .

Koht 's stay in the United States had an impact on his historical views and adaptation of historical materialism , and he also tried to encourage the study of American history in Norway . American culture did not have a particularly high standing in Norway at the time . In school , Koht did not learn proper English . Before he embarked to the US , some historian colleagues insinuated that the country " barely had any history " and was not worth visiting . Koht 's first writing on the subject came in 1910 with the lecture *Genesis of American Independence* . He followed with *Pengemakt og arbeid i Amerika* (" Monetary Power and Labor in America " , 1910) , which was based on " People 's Academy " lectures , then *Amerikansk kultur* (" American Culture " , 1912) and *Den amerikanske nasjonen* (" The American Nation " , 1920) . He would return briefly to American academia during his career , for instance in the autumn of 1930 to hold a course at Harvard University .

Wishing to unite materialism and idealism , Koht became interested in psychology and the role of individuals in history . The latter focus led to his becoming , in the words of his biographer Åsmund Svendsen , " one of the greatest biographers of the 20th century " . Inspired by the work with *Norsk Forfatter @-@ lexikon* , he wrote a life of the author Henrik Wergeland in 1908 . Later he published biographies both of Norwegians and foreigners : Otto von Bismarck (1911) , Ivar Aasen (1913) , Johan Sverdrup in three volumes between 1916 and 1925 , Marcus Thrane in 1917 , Henrik Ibsen in two volumes in 1928 and 1929 , and Haakon VII of Norway in 1943 . He also wrote about 400 pieces in the first edition of *Norsk biografisk leksikon* , a biographical dictionary which would become a preeminent source on important figures in Norwegian history . Between 1909 and 1932 he published letters and original writings of Henrik Ibsen , Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson , Aasmund Olavsson

Vinje and Henrik Wergeland . He chaired Kjeldeskriftfondet from 1918 to 1927 and Norsk historisk kjeldeskriftråd from 1923 to 1928 , two institutions that dealt with publishing of source texts . He also chaired the Norwegian Historical Association from 1912 to 1927 and 1932 to 1936 , the Norwegian Genealogical Society from 1928 to 1940 and the Comité International des Sciences Historiques from 1926 to 1933 .

= = = Honorary positions = = =

Koht became a fellow of the learned society Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in 1908 . Between 1923 and 1939 he was both praeses and vice praeses . He held honorary degrees from the University of Oxford , the University of Chicago and the University of Warsaw . He was decorated by France as a Knight of the Legion of Honour , and in 1952 he received the Gunnerus Medal from the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters . He was also a member of the International Society for the History of Medicine .

= = Political career = =

= = = Early involvement and local politics = = =

Koht 's father introduced his son to politics , taking him to the Liberal Party national convention in 1891 , where he was allowed to enter since he studied at the university . Koht 's first political arena was the Norwegian Students ' Society , where he vehemently argued that the flag of Norway should not contain the union badge (the " flag case ") . In 1893 he left this forum , co @-@ founded a new students ' association called Den Frisinnede Studenterforening , and , as the students ' association collectively entered the Liberal Party , became a board member of the local party branch in Kristiania . He continued his fight against the union badge , and the union as a whole . In 1905 , when the union was dissolved altogether , he agitated for the establishment of a republic , but a plebiscite decided to keep the monarchy .

Though he never adhered to Christianity in his adolescent or adult life , Koht valued the faith in the perfectability of human beings , as prompted " the greatest religions " , and he started to feel solidarity with the labour movement and the working classes , leading to the radicalisation of his views : from 1900 he voted for the Norwegian Labour Party , and had four years prior to that began to consider himself a socialist . While living in the United States , he developed a form of historical materialism , which led to a fusion of history scholarship and political views . He viewed the Liberal Party as an important agent in Norwegian history , since it pronounced the rights of the farmers , but he now viewed the working class as the next class to be included in the political life , and specifically through the Labor Party . In Koht 's Liberal Party period , he cooperated with some of their more radical members , among them Carl Jeppesen , who later would join the Labour Party . He joined the Labour Party when he returned from the United States and moved to Bærum in 1909 . He lived with his family in Stabekk , but commissioned a house in Lysaker in 1910 . The house , designed by architect Arnstein Arneberg , was dubbed " Karistua " . The university offered him no office , so he had to conduct his research at home .

Koht served as a member of Bærum municipal council in the terms 1916 ? 1919 , 1928 ? 1931 and 1931 ? 1934 . In 1952 he wrote the 50 @-@ year history of Bærum Labour Party .

= = = Foreign affairs politician = = =

Internationally , Koht tried to prop up the institutions that maintained public international law . In 1923 he participated in the arbitrations between Denmark and Norway about the disposition of Eastern Greenland . Sovereignty was claimed by Denmark . Koht teamed up with the conservative politician C. J. Hambro , who had edited Nordmanns @-@ Forbundets tidsskrift to which Koht had contributed . The negotiations led to an agreement on Norwegian trade rights in the area , but a

question of sovereignty over Eastern Greenland remained unsolved . In 1931 , forces in and outside of the then @-@ Agrarian government annexed " Erik the Red 's Land " .

In the 1930s Koht became the foremost international politician of the Labour Party . He positioned himself in the Labour Party as the prospective Minister of Foreign Affairs should the party form a government . He did so because fellow historian and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1928 , Edvard Bull , Sr. , had died , making Koht the " Foreign Minister @-@ designate " . The Labour Party also polled well in the Norwegian parliamentary election , 1933 , leading them to prepare for office . The Labour government was formed on 20 March 1935 . Koht became Minister of Foreign Affairs in Johan Nygaardsvold 's Cabinet . Among Koht 's first actions as minister was to persuade the Labour Party not to pull Norway out of the League of Nations , something the party had declared that it would do as recently as 1934 . In foreign policy matters Koht and Nygaardsvold usually made decisions without consulting the other ministers , merely informing the rest of the cabinet of the decisions that had been made .

After the League of Nations failed as an effective international body , Koht again favoured the strict neutrality policy to which Norway had adhered before the League of Nations membership . For many years , he was reluctant to an expansion of a Norwegian military defense capacity . He did not vehemently and principally oppose such an expansion , and had been quite friendly to the principle of a national defense in the past . His neutrality policy nonetheless put him on the " defense @-@ skeptical " side together with Johan Nygaardsvold and most of his cabinet . Among the more " defense @-@ friendly " in and around the cabinet , not the least from 1936 , were Trygve Bratteli , Haakon Lie , Finn Moe , Trygve Lie , Oscar Torp , Martin Tranmæl and Minister of Defense Fredrik Monsen . In 1936 Koht expressed great concern for the consequences of the arms race taking place in Europe , which he felt could easily lead to war .

Following the 1936 outbreak of the Spanish Civil War , the Nygaardsvold Cabinet followed a policy of non @-@ intervention in the conflict between the Spanish government and rebels led by General Franco . Koht 's view of the matter was that Norway should not be involved in the conflict in any way ; this became the policy of the government for the duration of the civil war . The government soon banned the sale or transfer of Norwegian arms , aircraft and ships to Spain . Koht himself promoted a ban on the use of Norwegian ships to transport arms , ammunition and aircraft to foreign countries in general , to ensure that there could be no Norwegian connection to any such items that were delivered to Spain . The strict non @-@ intervention policy promoted by Koht and Prime Minister Nygaardsvold was heavily criticised by forces within the Labour Party . Martin Tranmæl , a central figure in the apparatus of the Labour Party and the editor of the party newspaper Arbeiderbladet , led the critics of the policy towards the conflict in Spain . Tranmæl and other critics saw the non @-@ intervention policy of the government as giving equal standing to both the elected government of Spain and the rebels . Koht went to great lengths to avoid any direct Norwegian involvement in the conflict , especially trying to block Norwegians from travelling to Spain to join the International Brigades . On 19 September 1936 , Koht attempted to have the League of Nations impose a ceasefire in Spain , to be followed by a popular referendum on the country 's constitution . Koht 's proposal received little support and failed .

For Koht personally the civil war in Spain came close to ending his cabinet career on several occasions . On 9 April 1937 , following a series of incidents where Francoist warships intercepted Norwegian vessels sailing on Spanish ports and confiscated both cargoes and ships , and Norwegian protests failing to gain results , Koht made a formal proposal to dispatch the Norwegian minelayer Olav Tryggvason to Spain to protect Norwegian shipping . After the proposal met opposition in parliament and was set to fail , Koht offered to resign . Prime Minister Nygaardsvold refused to accept Koht 's resignation , stating that he " would rather be shot than lose Koht " . The case came close to causing the whole cabinet 's fall in parliament , before it was agreed that it would be dropped . When Koht in 1938 attempted to establish a trade agreement with Franco , he was blocked by his own party and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions . Again requesting to be allowed to resign , Koht stayed after months of debating ended with the party giving the cabinet free rein to do what it saw as best with regards to trade with Franco . By October 1938 Koht had negotiated a trade agreement with Franco . The formal Norwegian recognition of the Franco

government as the representative of Spain followed on 31 March 1939 , three days after the fall of Madrid to the nationalist forces .

= = = Second World War = = =

= = = Pre @-@ war phase = = =

With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 , the Norwegian government declared the country neutral in the conflict . Both warring sides subsequently stated that they would respect Norway 's neutrality , provided that she protect her neutrality against trespasses by the other side . Koht was clear from early on that Norway should remain neutral , but also that in the event of her being forced to enter the war it was critical that it was on the side of the British .

Over the first months of the Second World War Norwegian neutrality was violated repeatedly in the air and at sea by both warring parties , most dramatically with the 16 February Altmark Incident in Jøssingfjorden . This , along with other incidents , and the lack of a firm Norwegian response , led the warring parties to the impression that Norway could or would not effectively protect her neutrality . Initially the German view of Norwegian neutrality had been one of it being positive for the German war effort , allowing German merchant ships to transport cargo via Norwegian territorial waters without interference from the British .

On 5 April the Allies sent notes to both Norway and Sweden warning that they would take any action necessary if the Germans were allowed to use the neutral countries ' territory to their advantage . Koht responded with a speech in which he said that the Allies had nothing to gain by interfering with Norwegian shipping lanes ? the British had a more significant trade with Norway than the Germans . The next day the Allies decided to launch a mining operation on the Norwegian coast , and to land troops at Narvik in case the Germans responded to the mining by landing in Norway . Shortly before the mining was carried out , Koht warned the British that no further neutrality violations would be tolerated , and that in the future the Norwegians would respond with force . The Germans too repeatedly violated Norwegian neutrality , and , following a visit from the Norwegian fascist leader Vidkun Quisling to Hitler in December 1939 , began serious planning for a possible occupation of Norway . Following the Altmark Incident , Hitler ordered the invasion of Norway . In response to the British mining operation on 8 April 1940 , the Norwegian government lodged formal protests with the British and French governments , while secretly remaining set on avoiding war with the Allies at all cost . Koht told the Norwegian parliament that he believed that the Allies were trying to bring Norway into the war . The Allied mining of the Norwegian coast coincidentally distracted the Norwegian government from realising that large German forces had been on their way to invade Norway for several days prior .

= = = German invasion and war = = =

At the advent of the Nazi German Operation Weserübung , the invasion of Norway of 9 April 1940 , Germany sent the envoy Curt Bräuer to present demands of capitulation . Koht personally met with Bräuer , and rejected his demands and threats of war , stating that " war had already started " . Koht and the cabinet fled Norway 's capital in the morning of 9 April . Even though Koht rejected Bräuer 's initial contact , he did convince the cabinet to listen to further German proposals for negotiations later the same day . All Norwegian negotiations with the Germans ended after a failed attempt to capture the Norwegian king and government in Midtskogen early on 10 April . Koht was willing to take up the fight against the invaders . He wrote several key speeches , some of which were delivered by King Haakon VII , to convey staunch resistance to the German demands .

Vital to the Norwegian effort to try to halt the German advance was assistance from the Allies , which Koht requested in the early hours of 9 April , although skeptical of the potential of Allied aid . When the rest of the government fled from Molde to Tromsø , landing on 1 May , Koht and Ljungberg (Minister of Defense) continued from there with the cruiser HMS Glasgow to London .

Here , from 5 May they negotiated with British government representatives (Lord Halifax , Chamberlain and Admiral Philips) on British aid to Norway . Koht also made a radio speech from London on the BBC , broadcasting to Norway , and a speech on American radio . On 8 and 9 May he met Reynaud , Gamelin and Daladier in Paris . The Norwegian Ministers departed from London on 11 May , arriving back in Norway on 17 May . The talks with the Allies resulted in concrete promises and plans for large French reinforcements for the Norwegian front . These plans were however abandoned by the Allies on 24 May 1940 , following the worsening situation for the Allies in France , and an evacuation decided . Koht was informed by British Minister to Norway Sir Cecil Dormer on 1 June that the Allied Forces had decided to retreat from Norway , owing to the difficult situation at the Western Front .

In response to the Allied decision to evacuate , the cabinet sent Koht to Luleå in Sweden to try to reinvigorate a previously rejected plan to create a demarcation line between the Germans and Norwegian in Northern Norway . Swedish troops were planned to occupy Narvik . The plan was named the Mowinckel plan , after its initiator , the former prime minister Johan Ludwig Mowinckel . During a meeting with the Swedish minister of foreign affairs , Christian Günther , who was to act as a middle man with Germans in relation to the plan , Koht revealed that the Allies were about to evacuate Norway . Although Günther never revealed the evacuation plans to the Germans , Koht was heavily criticised for doing so by his colleagues upon his return to Norway .

= = = In exile = = =

The cabinet eventually fled the country on 7 June . Koht landed in London on 19 June 1940 , now heading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in exile . Norway was now a close ally of the United Kingdom , but Koht was seen as clinging somewhat to his neutrality policy , and not embracing the alliance with the United Kingdom enough . From the autumn of 1940 , Trygve Lie championed a change in policy which meant seeking lasting allies in the western world . Koht viewed this as " distrust " . A schism between him and the rest of the cabinet grew as it also became known that Koht 's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received reports of a possible forthcoming assault on Norway , without Koht having informed the cabinet thoroughly . Furthermore , there was discontent over Koht 's decision to establish the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in exile in Bracknell , several miles west of the cabinet headquarters .

Koht was granted leave of absence on 19 November 1940 , and ultimately left the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs on 20 February 1941 , being succeeded by Trygve Lie . Koht decided to travel to Canada and then the United States . He lived with his daughter Åsa and her family in Washington , DC , returning to Norway after the end of the Second World War .

= = = Political legacy = = =

Trygve Lie , who after the war had become the first Secretary @-@ General of the United Nations , characterised Koht in his memoirs as an expert on foreign affairs , but introverted . He had relatively little contact with other politicians , kept to himself to study in peace , and spent much time on his extensive writing . Koht reportedly preferred to solve a problem by himself instead of involving co @-@ workers and employees , even the experts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs . His way of thinking was logical and rational , but he allegedly nurtured an " exaggerated belief in paragraphs " and a " dogmatic belief in international law " , and wrongly thought that other countries would obey formal regulations at most times . Koht had few or no alternatives to his neutrality policy , and in many ways he based his entire career in foreign affairs on that policy . Trygve Lie claimed that before the Second World War , the neutrality policy had " become a religion " for Koht .

Koht 's role in the weak and unorganised defense against Operation Weserübung was debated during and after the occupation . After the World War , a commission named Undersøkelseskommisjonen av 1945 (" Scrutiny Commission of 1945 ") was set to scrutinise the actions of the Norwegian government in 1940 . It concluded with a partial criticism of Koht 's dispositions . After receiving Undersøkelseskommisjonen 's analysis , Koht volunteered to undergo

an Impeachment trial . The Parliament of Norway did not find it necessary , and no such trial took place .

Since Koht lived in Lysaker , Bærum Municipality wanted to honor him by naming a street after him . When the street was named in 1967 , Koht was still controversial . The street was therefore named Professor Kohts vei (" Professor Koht 's Road ") to emphasise his academic , rather than his political career .

= = Language views = =

Hailing from Tromsø , Koht spoke a Northern Norwegian dialect in his early life . In Skien his dialect provoked negative reactions from his peers . He was inspired by the dialects of Skien 's surroundings (Telemark) ; from 1891 he wrote the " rural " language form Landsmål with strong tinges of Bø dialect . Before this he had attempted to write both " Knudsen Riksmål " and " Aasen Landsmål " , but neither stuck . Early publications on the Norwegian language controversy were Det norske målstrævs historie (1898) and Det vitskapelege grunnlage for målstræve (1900) . He became a board member of the Landsmål @-@ based publishing house Det Norske Samlaget , and edited the Landsmål periodical Syn og Segn from 1901 to 1908 , until 1905 together with Rasmus Flo . He chaired Noregs Mållag , an association the propagation of Landsmål , from 1921 to 1925 . In 1929 , Landsmål was renamed Nynorsk .

Koht spoke of language in a social context in general and of the class struggle in particular . He eventually used the Labour Party as a vehicle for his language activism , especially after being asked by the party to write Arbeidarreising og målspråk in 1921 . In it , he synthesised the class struggle and language struggle in Norway , and because he was an integrationist he wanted a popular gathering around one written language . Koht became a member of Rettskrivingsnemnda in 1934 , and in 1936 the Labour Party agreed that a language reform should be carried out , moving the two language forms Bokmål and Nynorsk closer to one another . The language reforms took place in 1938 and promoted the Samnorsk ideal . The reforms were reversed in 1941 under Nazi rule ; the original changes were reinstated after the end of the occupation of Norway by Nazi Germany . According to historian Kåre Lunden , Koht was much hated by many because of his language reforms , which were routinely perceived as attacks and degradations on their preferred language . His ideals were dubbed " det kohtske knot " , i.e. " the Kohtian mishmash " . For his own part , Koht often used spellings that contrasted with both Nynorsk and Bokmål . The definite article , which is formally the suffix " -et " , was substituted with the suffix " -e " , such as in the titles of his publications Det vitskapelege grunnlage for målstræve and Sosialdemokratie .

= = Peace activism = =

Koht 's first travel abroad was in 1890 , when he accompanied his father as well as Hans Jacob Horst and John Theodor Lund to an interparliamentary peace conference in London . In 1895 he was a founding member and board member of the Norwegian Peace Association , serving as chairman from 1900 to 1902 . From 1901 to 1902 he edited his own monthly periodical named Fredstidende (" Peace Times ") .

The Peace Association was dominated by Liberal Party politicians ? from a Marxist perspective , " bourgeois " people . Historian Nils Ivar Agøy had noted that the socialists who were active in the bourgeois peace movement ? the most prominent being Koht , Adam Egede @-@ Nissen and Carl Bonnevie ? were " radicalised sons of the bourgeoisie " . This meant that they were " capable of asserting themselves among the ship @-@ owners and county governors in the board " of the Norwegian Peace Association . Koht also followed his own goals during his first period as chairman . He wanted to tie the " apolitical " peace movement closer to the labour movement , to create " economic justice " and to employ the use of arbitration in labour conflicts . These goals were not embraced by all of the members , particularly not those who wanted to keep the Peace Association politically neutral . A larger problem , however , was that Koht rated Norwegian nationalism higher than pacifism . He had thus carried out his compulsory military service " with fervor " , notes Agøy .

Koht demanded that the Peace Association did not resist to an armed defense of the " fatherland " . The national convention in 1902 refused to acknowledge this principle , and Koht therefore resigned his membership . He was followed by others , as a result of a schism in the Peace Association between the pacifists and the more pragmatic peace activists . Koht has also been assessed as an ineffective organisational leader . The defense question more or less solved itself when the Swedish @-@ Norwegian union was peacefully dissolved in 1905 . Koht later returned to the Peace Association to serve as a board member from 1910 to 1912 .

He became a member of Institut International de la Paix in 1913 . He was a consultant for the Norwegian Nobel Institute from 1904 to 1913 , with the task of examining proposed candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize . From 1918 to 1942 he served on the Norwegian Nobel Committee . In 1931 , he gave the Award Ceremony Speech for the Nobelists Jane Addams and Nicholas Murray Butler , but was absent in the decisive meeting in 1936 that awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Carl von Ossietzky . He was also absent while serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs , not wishing to combine the two roles . He returned briefly afterwards , before leaving again in 1942 . Another reason for his inactivity was that he had not lived in Norway since 1940 , but either way the Prize was not awarded in any of the years from 1939 to 1943 .

Koht 's academic writing also encompassed the peace issue . His books on the subject include *Histoire du mouvement de la paix en Norvège* (" History of the Peace Movement in Norway " , 1900) and *Fredstanken i Noregs @-@ sogo* (" The Notion of Peace in the History of Norway " , 1906) .

= = Post @-@ political life = =

Having stepped down from the exiled cabinet in 1941 , Koht lived in the United States for the remainder of the war . There he continued his literary production ; however , the books *Norway Neutral and Invaded* (1941) and *The Voice of Norway* (1944) were both released in London . The first book dealt directly with the advent of war in Norway , and was released in Swedish in the same year . The second book , written together with his son @-@ in @-@ law Sigmund Skard , dealt more with older history and the literature of Norway . It was released in Swedish in 1944 and Norwegian in 1948 . Koht returned to Norway at the end of war .

Upon returning to Norway , Koht published three books on the war @-@ time events in Norway : *For fred og fridom i krigstid 1939 ? 1940* , *Frå skanse til skanse* . *Minne frå krigsmånadene i Noreg 1940* and *Norsk utanrikspolitikk fram til 9 @.@ april 1940* . *Synspunkt frå hendingstida* , all of which were released in 1947 . These memoir @-@ like books have been analysed as putting a self @-@ apologetic message forth . His political career was effectively ended , but some of his ideas had prevailed . For instance , his analysis of the class situation in Norway became a part of the general social @-@ democratic ideology of the post @-@ war years .

Despite not holding the professor chair any longer , Koht continued his academic writing ; his principal work from the post @-@ war epoch was the six @-@ volume *Kriseår i norsk historie* . The six volumes each describe a decisive moment in Norwegian history . The first volume , released in 1950 , centers on " Vincens Lunge contra Henrik Krummedige " . The second volume (1951) describes Olav Engelbriktsson and Norway 's descent into dependency to Denmark in 1537 . The third and fourth volumes , released in 1952 and 1955 , are about medieval kings : Sverre I and Harald I. The fifth volume (1956) focuses on " Queen Margaret and the Kalmar Union " . The sixth and final volume (1960) chronicles the years from 1657 to 1661 , when Denmark (and thus Norway) transitioned into an absolute monarchy .

Koht died on 12 December 1965 in Bærum . He was buried at Nordre gravlund in Oslo . Two works by Koht have been released posthumously : the memoirs *Minne frå unge år* in 1968 and the diary *Rikspolitisk dagbok 1933 ? 1940* in 1985 . His son @-@ in @-@ law Sigmund Skard wrote a biography of him , *Mennesket Halvdan Koht* (" Halvdan Koht the Man ") in 1982 .