

= Vidkun Quisling =

Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonssøn Quisling (Norwegian : [vɪdˈkʉn ˈkʉsˌlɪŋ] (listen) ; 18 July 1887 ? 24 October 1945) was a Norwegian military officer and politician , mostly known as the nominal head of government of Norway after the country was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II .

Quisling first came to international prominence as a close collaborator of Fridtjof Nansen , organizing humanitarian relief during the Russian famine of 1921 in Povolzhye . He was posted as a Norwegian diplomat to the Soviet Union , and for some time also managed British diplomatic affairs there . He returned to Norway in 1929 , and served as Minister of Defence in the governments of Peder Kolstad (1931 ? 32) and Jens Hundseid (1932 ? 33) , representing the Farmers ' Party . Although Quisling achieved some popularity after his attacks on the political left , his party failed to win any seats in the Storting and was little more than peripheral in 1940 . On 9 April 1940 , with the German invasion of Norway in progress , he attempted to seize power in the world 's first radio @-@ broadcast coup d'état , but failed after the Germans refused to support his government .

From 1942 to 1945 he served as Minister @-@ President , heading the Norwegian state administration jointly with the German civilian administrator Josef Terboven . His pro @-@ Nazi puppet government , known as the Quisling regime , was dominated by ministers from Nasjonal Samling , the party he founded in 1933 . The collaborationist government participated in Germany 's Final Solution . Quisling was put on trial during the legal purge in Norway after World War II and found guilty of charges including embezzlement , murder and high treason . He was executed by firing squad at Akershus Fortress , Oslo , on 24 October 1945 . The word " quisling " has since become a synonym for " collaborator " or " traitor , " reflecting the very poor light in which Quisling 's actions were seen , both at the time and since his death .

= = Early life = =

= = = Background = = =

Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonssøn Quisling (Norwegian pronunciation) was born on 18 July 1887 in Fyresdal , in the Norwegian county of Telemark . He was the son of Church of Norway pastor and genealogist Jon Lauritz Qvisling (1844 ? 1930) and his wife Anna Caroline Bang (1860 ? 1941) , the daughter of Jørgen Bang , ship @-@ owner and at the time the richest man of the town Grimstad in South Norway . The elder Quisling had lectured in Grimstad in the 1870s ; one of his pupils was Bang , whom he married on 28 May 1886 , following a long engagement . The newly @-@ wed couple promptly moved to Fyresdal , where Vidkun and his younger siblings were born .

The family name derives from Quislinus , a Latinised name invented by Quisling 's ancestor Lauritz Ibsen Quislin (1634 ? 1703) , based on the village of Kvislemark in Jutland , Denmark , whence he had emigrated . Having two brothers and a sister , the young Quisling was " shy and quiet but also loyal and helpful , always friendly , occasionally breaking into a warm smile " . Private letters later found by historians also indicate a warm and affectionate relationship between the family members . From 1893 to 1900 , his father was a chaplain for the Strømsø borough in Drammen . Here , Vidkun went to school for the first time . He was bullied by other students at the school for his Telemark dialect , but proved a successful student . In 1900 , the family moved to Skien when his father was appointed provost of the city .

Academically Quisling proved talented in humanities , particularly history , and natural sciences ; he specialised in mathematics . At this point , however , his life had no clear direction . In 1905 , Quisling enrolled at the Norwegian Military Academy , having received the highest entrance examination score of the 250 applicants that year . Transferring in 1906 to the Norwegian Military College , he graduated with the highest score since the college 's inception in 1817 , and was rewarded by an audience with the King . On 1 November 1911 , he joined the army General Staff . Norway was neutral in the First World War ; Quisling detested the peace movement , though the

high human cost of the war did temper his views . In March 1918 , he was sent to Russia as an attaché at the Norwegian legation in Petrograd , to take advantage of the five years he had spent studying the country . Though dismayed at the living conditions he experienced , Quisling nonetheless concluded that " the Bolsheviks have got an extraordinarily strong hold on Russian society " and marvelled at how Leon Trotsky had managed to mobilise Red Army forces so well ; by contrast , in granting too many rights to the people of Russia , the Russian Provisional Government under Alexander Kerensky had brought about its own downfall . When the legation was recalled in December 1918 , Quisling became the Norwegian military 's expert on Russian affairs .

= = = Travels = = =

In September 1919 , Quisling departed Norway to become an intelligence officer with the Norwegian delegation in Helsinki , a post that combined diplomacy and politics . In the autumn of 1921 , Quisling left Norway once again , this time at the request of explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen , and in January 1922 arrived in the Ukrainian capital Kharkov to help with the League of Nations humanitarian relief effort there . Highlighting the massive mismanagement of the area and the death toll of approximately ten thousand a day , Quisling produced a report that attracted aid and demonstrated his administrative skills , as well as his dogged determination to get what he wanted . On 21 August , he married the Russian Alexandra Andreevna (" Asja ") Voronina , the daughter of a pedlar . Alexandra wrote in her memoirs that Quisling declared his love for her , but based on his letters home and investigations undertaken by his cousins , it appears that there was never any question of romantic involvement between the two . Quisling merely seems to have wanted to lift the girl out of poverty by providing her with a Norwegian passport and financial security .

Having left Ukraine in September 1922 , Quisling and Asja returned to Kharkov in February 1923 to prolong aid efforts , with Nansen describing Quisling 's work as " absolutely indispensable " . Quisling found the situation much improved and , with no fresh challenges , found it a more boring trip than his last . He did however meet Maria Vasiljevna Pasetjnikova (Russian : ????? ? ? ????? ? ????? ? ? ? ?????????) , a Ukrainian more than ten years his junior . Her diaries from the time " indicate a blossoming love affair " during the summer of 1923 , despite Quisling 's marriage to Asja the year before . She recalled that she was impressed by his fluent command of the Russian language , his Aryan appearance and his gracious demeanour . Quisling apparently married Pasetjnikova in Kharkov on 10 September 1923 , although no legal documentation has been discovered . Quisling 's biographer , Dahl , believes that in all likelihood the second marriage was never official . Regardless , the couple behaved as though they were married , and celebrated their wedding anniversary . Soon after the wedding , the aid mission came to an end and the trio left the Ukraine , and from the summer of 1923 onwards they planned to spend a year in Paris . Maria wanted to see Western Europe ; Quisling wanted to get some rest following bouts of stomach pain that had lasted all winter .

= = = Paris , Eastern Europe and Norway = = =

The stay in Paris required a temporary discharge from the army , which Quisling slowly grew to understand was permanent : army cutbacks meant that there would be no position available for him when he returned . Quisling devoted much of his time in the French capital to study , reading works of political theory and working on his philosophical project , which he called Universism . On 2 October 1923 he persuaded the Oslo daily newspaper Tidens Tegn to publish an article he had written calling for diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government . Quisling 's stay in Paris did not last as long as planned , and in late 1923 he started work on Nansen 's new repatriation project in the Balkans , arriving in Sofia in November . He spent the next two months travelling constantly with his wife Maria . In January she returned to Paris to look after Asja , who took on the role of the couple 's foster @-@ daughter ; Quisling joined them in February .

In the summer of 1924 , the trio returned to Norway where Asja subsequently left to live with an

aunt in Nice and never returned . Although Quisling promised to provide for her well @-@ being , his payments were irregular , and over the coming years he would miss a number of opportunities to visit . Back in Norway , and to his later embarrassment , Quisling found himself drawn into the communist Norwegian labour movement . Among other policies , he fruitlessly advocated a people 's militia to protect the country against reactionary attacks , and asked members of the movement whether they would like to know what information the General Staff had on them , but got no response . Although this brief attachment to the extreme left seems unlikely given Quisling 's later political direction , Dahl suggests that , following a conservative childhood , he was by this time " unemployed and dispirited ... deeply resentful of the General Staff ... [and] in the process of becoming politically more radical " . Dahl adds that Quisling 's political views at this time could be summarised as " a fusion of socialism and nationalism " , with definite sympathies for the Soviet regime in Russia .

= = = Russia and the rouble scandal = = =

In June 1925 , Nansen once again provided Quisling with employment . The pair began a tour of Armenia , where they hoped to help repatriate native Armenians via a number of projects proposed for funding by the League of Nations . Despite Quisling 's substantial efforts , however , the projects were all rejected . In May 1926 , Quisling found another job with long @-@ time friend and fellow Norwegian Frederik Prytz in Moscow , working as a liaison between Prytz and the Soviet authorities who owned half of Prytz 's firm Onega Wood . He stayed in the job until Prytz prepared to close down the business in early 1927 , when Quisling found new employment as a diplomat . British diplomatic affairs in Russia were being managed by Norway , and he became their new legation secretary ; Maria joined him late in 1928 . A massive scandal broke when Quisling and Prytz were accused of using diplomatic channels to smuggle millions of roubles onto the black markets , a much @-@ repeated claim that was later used to support a charge of " moral bankruptcy " , but neither it nor the charge that Quisling spied for the British has ever been substantiated .

The harder line now developing in Russian politics led Quisling to distance himself from Bolshevism . The Soviet government had rejected outright his Armenian proposals , and obstructed an attempt by Nansen to help with the 1928 Ukrainian famine . Quisling took these rebuffs as a personal insult ; in 1929 , with the British now keen to take back control of their own diplomatic affairs , he left Russia . He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to Britain , an honour revoked by King George VI in 1940 . By this time , Quisling had also been awarded the Romanian Crown Order and the Yugoslav Order of St. Sava for his earlier humanitarian efforts .

= = Early political career = =

= = = Final return to Norway = = =

Having spent nine of the previous twelve years abroad , but with no practical experience in party politics outside the Norwegian Army , Quisling returned to Norway in December 1929 , bringing with him a plan for change he termed Norsk Aktion (" Norwegian Action ") . The planned organisation consisted of national , regional and local units with the intention of recruiting in the style of the Soviet Communist Party . Like Action Française of the French right , it advocated radical constitutional changes . The Parliament of Norway (Storting) was to become bicameral with the second chamber made up of Soviet @-@ style elected representatives from the working population . Quisling focused more on organisation than the practicalities of government ; for instance , all members of Norsk Aktion were to have their own designation in a militaristic hierarchy .

Quisling next sold a large number of antiques and works of art that he had acquired cheaply in post @-@ revolutionary Russia . His collection stretched to some 200 paintings , including works claimed to be by Rembrandt , Goya , Cézanne and numerous other masters . The collection , including "

veritable treasures " , had been insured for almost 300 @,@ 000 kroner . In the spring of 1930 he again joined up with Prytz , who was back in Norway . They participated in regular group meetings that included middle @-@ aged officers and business people , since described as " the textbook definition of a Fascist initiative group " , through which Prytz appeared determined to launch Quisling into politics .

After Nansen died on 13 May 1930 , Quisling used his friendship with the editor of the Tidens Tegn newspaper to get his analysis of Nansen onto the front page . The article was entitled " Politiske tanker ved Fridtjof Nansens død " (" Political Thoughts on the Death of Fridtjof Nansen ") and was published on 24 May . In the article , he outlined ten points that would complete Nansen 's vision as applied to Norway , among them " strong and just government " and a " greater emphasis on race and heredity " . This theme was followed up in his new book , Russia and Ourselves (Norwegian : Russland og vi) , which was serialised in Tidens Tegn during the autumn of 1930 . Advocating war against Bolshevism , the openly racist book catapulted Quisling into the political limelight . Despite his earlier ambivalence , he took up a seat on the Oslo board of the previously Nansen @-@ led Fatherland League . Meanwhile , he and Prytz founded a new political movement , Nordisk folkereisning i Norge (" Nordic popular rising in Norway ") , with a central committee of 31 and Quisling as its fører ? a one @-@ man executive committee ? , though Quisling seems to have had no particular attachment to the term . The first meeting of the league took place on 17 March 1931 , stating the purpose of the movement was to " eliminate the imported and depraved communist insurgency " .

= = = Defence minister = = =

Quisling left Nordisk folkereisning i Norge in May 1931 to serve as defence minister in the Agrarian government of Peder Kolstad , despite being neither an Agrarian nor a friend of Kolstad . He had been suggested to Kolstad for the post by Thorvald Aadahl , editor of the Agrarian newspaper Nationen , who was in turn influenced by Prytz . The appointment came as a surprise to many in the Parliament of Norway . Quisling 's first action in the post was to deal with the aftermath of the Battle of Menstad , an " extremely bitter " labour dispute , by sending in troops . After narrowly avoiding criticism by the left wing over his handling of the dispute , and the revelation of his earlier " militia " plans , Quisling turned his attention to the perceived threat posed by communists . He created a list of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition leadership , who had been the alleged agitators at Menstad ; a number of them were eventually charged with subversion and violence against the police . Quisling 's policies also resulted in the establishment of a permanent militia called the Leidang which , unlike the body he had previously planned , was to be counter @-@ revolutionary . Despite the ready availability of junior officers in the reserve following defence cuts , only seven units were established in 1934 , and funding restrictions meant that the enterprise included less than a thousand men before it faded away . Sometime during the period 1930 ? 33 , Quisling 's first wife , Asja , received notice of the annulment of her marriage to him .

In mid @-@ 1932 Nordisk folkereisning i Norge was forced to confirm that although Quisling remained in the cabinet , he would not become a member of the party . They further stated that the party programme had no basis in fascism of any kind , including the National Socialism model . This did not dampen criticism of Quisling , who remained constantly in the headlines , although he was gradually earning a reputation as a disciplined and efficient administrator . After he was attacked in his office by a knife @-@ wielding assailant who threw ground pepper in his face on 2 February 1932 , some newspapers , instead of focusing on the attack itself , suggested that the assailant had been the jealous husband of one of Quisling 's cleaners ; others , especially those aligned with the Labour Party , posited that the whole thing had been staged . In November 1932 , Labour politician Johan Nygaardsvold put this theory to Parliament , prompting suggestions that charges of slander be brought against him . No charges were brought , and the identity of the assailant has never been confirmed . Quisling later indicated it was an attempt to steal military papers recently left by Swedish Lieutenant Colonel Wilhelm Kleen . The so @-@ called " pepper affair " served to polarise opinion about Quisling , and government fears grew concerning reasonably open Soviet elements in Norway

who had been active in promoting industrial unrest .

Following Kolstad 's death in March 1932 , Quisling retained his post as defence minister in the second Agrarian government under Jens Hundseid for political reasons , though they remained in bitter opposition throughout . Just as he had been under Kolstad , Quisling was involved in many of the spats that characterised Hundseid 's government . On 8 April that year , Quisling had a chance to defend himself over the pepper affair in Parliament , but instead used the opportunity to attack the Labour and Communist parties , claiming that named members were criminals and " enemies of our fatherland and our people " . Support for Quisling from right @-@ wing elements in Norwegian society rocketed overnight , and 153 distinguished signatories called for Quisling 's claims to be investigated . In the coming months , tens of thousands of Norwegians followed suit and Quisling 's summer was full of speeches to packed political rallies . In Parliament , however , Quisling 's speech was viewed as political suicide ; not only was his evidence weak , but questions were raised as to why the information had not been handed over much sooner if the revolutionary threat were so serious .

= = = Popular party leader = = =

Over the course of 1932 and into 1933 , Prytz 's influence over Nordisk folkereising i Norge weakened and lawyer Johan Bernhard Hjort assumed the leadership role . Hjort was keen to work with Quisling because of his new @-@ found popularity , and they devised a new programme of right @-@ wing policies including proscription of revolutionary parties including those funded by foreign bodies such as Comintern , the suspension of the voting rights for people in receipt of social welfare , agricultural debt relief , and an audit of public finances . In 1932 , during the Kullmann Affair , Quisling turned on the prime minister for questioning his hard @-@ line stance over pacifist agitator Captain Olaf Kullmann . In a memorandum laying out his proposals for economic and social reform distributed to the entire cabinet , Quisling called for the prime minister to stand down . As the government began to collapse , Quisling 's personal popularity reached new heights ; he was referred to as " man of the year " , and there were expectations of forthcoming electoral success .

Despite the new programme , some of Quisling 's circle still favoured a cabinet coup . He later said he had even considered the use of force to overthrow the government but , in late February , it was the Liberal Party that brought them down . With the assistance of Hjort and Prytz , Nordisk folkereising i Norge quickly became a political party , Nasjonal Samling (NS , literally " National Unity ") , ready to contest the forthcoming October election . Quisling was mildly disappointed and would have preferred to head a national movement , not just one of seven political parties . Nasjonal Samling soon afterwards announced it would support candidates from other parties if they supported its key aim of " establishing a strong and stable national government independent of ordinary party politics " . Although not an overnight success in the already crowded political spectrum , the party slowly gained support . With its Nazi @-@ inspired belief in the central authority of a strong Führer , as well as its powerful propaganda elements , it gained support from many among the Oslo upper classes , and began to give the impression that " big money " lay behind it .

Increased support also materialised when the Bygdefolkets Krisehjelp (Norwegian Farmers ' Aid Association) sought financial aid from Nasjonal Samling , who in turn gained political influence and a useful existing network of well @-@ trained party officers . Quisling 's party never managed a grand anti @-@ socialist coalition , however , in part because of competition from the Conservative Party for right @-@ wing votes . Though Quisling remained unable to demonstrate any skill as an orator , his reputation for scandal nonetheless ensured that the electorate were aware of Nasjonal Samling 's existence . As a result , the party showed only moderate success in the October elections , with 27 @, @ 850 votes ? approximately two per cent of the national vote , and about three and a half per cent of the vote in constituencies where it fielded candidates . This made it the fifth largest party in Norway , out @-@ polling the Communists but not the Conservative , Labour , Liberal or Agrarian parties , and failing to secure a single seat in Parliament .

= = = Fører of a party in decline = = =

After the underwhelming election results , Quisling 's attitude to negotiation and compromise hardened . A final attempt to form a coalition of the right in March 1934 came to nothing , and from late 1933 , Quisling 's Nasjonal Samling began to carve out its own form of national socialism . Without a leader in Parliament , however , the party struggled to introduce the constitutional reform bill needed to achieve its lofty ambitions . When Quisling tried to introduce the bill directly , it was swiftly rejected , and the party went into decline . In the summer of 1935 , headlines quoted Quisling telling opponents that " heads [would] roll " as soon as he achieved power . The threat irreparably damaged the image of his party , and over the following few months several high @-@ ranking members resigned , including Kai Fjell and Quisling 's brother Jørgen .

Quisling began to familiarise himself with the international fascist movement , attending the 1934 Montreux Fascist conference in December . For his party , the association with Italian fascism could not have come at a worse time , so soon after headlines of illegal Italian incursions into Abyssinia . On his return trip from Montreux , he met Nazi ideologue and foreign policy theorist Alfred Rosenberg , and though he preferred to see his own policies as a synthesis of Italian fascism and German Nazism , by the time of the 1936 elections , Quisling had in part become the " Norwegian Hitler " that his opponents had long accused him of being . Part of this was due to his hardening anti @-@ Semitic stance , associating Judaism with Marxism , liberalism and , increasingly , anything else he found objectionable , and part as a result of Nasjonal Samling 's growing similarity to the German Nazi Party . Despite receiving an unexpected boost when the Norwegian government acceded to Soviet demands to arrest Leon Trotsky , the party 's election campaign never gained momentum . Although Quisling sincerely believed he had the support of around 100 @,@ 000 voters , and declared to his party that they would win an absolute minimum of ten seats , Nasjonal Samling managed to poll just 26 @,@ 577 , fewer than in 1933 when they had fielded candidates in only half the districts . Under this pressure , the party split in two , with Hjort leading the breakaway group ; although fewer than fifty members left immediately , many more drifted away during 1937 .

Dwindling party membership created many problems for Quisling , especially financial ones . For years he had been in financial difficulties and reliant on his inheritance , while increasing numbers of his paintings were found to be copies when he tried to sell them . Vidkun and his brother Arne sold one Frans Hals painting for just four thousand dollars , believing it to be a copy and not the fifty @-@ thousand @-@ dollar artwork they had once thought it to be , only to see it reclassified as an original and revalued at a hundred thousand dollars . In the difficult circumstances of the Great Depression , even originals did not raise as much as Quisling had hoped . His disillusionment with Norwegian society was furthered by news of the planned constitutional reform of 1938 , which would extend the parliamentary term from three to four years with immediate effect , a move Quisling bitterly opposed .

= = World War II = =

= = = Coming of war = = =

In 1939 Quisling turned his attention towards Norway 's preparations for the anticipated European war , which he believed involved a drastic increase in the country 's defence spending to guarantee its neutrality . Meanwhile , Quisling presented lectures titled " The Jewish problem in Norway " and supported Adolf Hitler in what appeared to be growing future conflict . Despite condemning Kristallnacht , he sent the German leader a fiftieth @-@ birthday greeting thanking him for " saving Europe from Bolshevism and Jewish domination " . In 1939 , Quisling contended that , should an Anglo @-@ Russian alliance make neutrality impossible , Norway would have " to go with Germany " . Invited to the country in the summer of 1939 , he began a tour of a number of German and Danish cities . He was received particularly well in Germany , which promised funds to boost Nasjonal Samling 's standing in Norway , and hence spread pro @-@ Nazi sentiment . When war broke out on 1 September , Quisling felt vindicated by both the event and the immediate superiority

displayed by the German army . He remained outwardly confident that , despite its size , his party would soon become the centre of political attention .

For the next nine months , Quisling continued to lead a party that was at best peripheral to Norwegian politics . He was nonetheless active , and in October 1939 he worked with Prytz on an ultimately unsuccessful plan for peace between Britain , France and Germany and their eventual participation in a new economic union . Quisling also mused on how Germany ought to go on the offensive against its then @-@ ally the Soviet Union , and on 9 December travelled to Germany to present his multi @-@ faceted plans . After impressing German officials , he won an audience with Hitler himself , scheduled for 14 December , whereupon he received firm advice from his contacts that the most useful thing he could do would be to ask for Hitler 's help with a pro @-@ German coup in Norway , that would let the Germans use Norway as a naval base . Thereafter , Norway would maintain official neutrality as long as possible , and finally the country would fall under German rather than British control . It is not clear how much Quisling himself understood about the strategic implications of such a move , and he instead relied on his future Minister of Domestic Affairs Albert Hagelin , who was fluent in German , to put the relevant arguments to German officials in Berlin during pre @-@ meeting talks , even though Hagelin was prone to damaging exaggeration at times . Quisling and his German contacts almost certainly went away with different views as to whether they had agreed upon the necessity of a German invasion .

On 14 December 1939 , Quisling met Hitler . The German leader promised to respond to any British invasion of Norway (Plan R 4) , perhaps pre @-@ emptively , with a German counter @-@ invasion , but found Quisling 's plans for both a Norwegian coup and an Anglo @-@ German peace unduly optimistic . Nonetheless , Quisling would still receive funds to bolster Nasjonal Samling . The two men met again four days later , and afterwards Quisling wrote a memorandum that explicitly told Hitler that he did not consider himself a National Socialist . As German machinations continued , Quisling was intentionally kept in the dark . He was also incapacitated by a severe bout of illness , probably nephritis in both kidneys , for which he refused hospitalisation . Though he returned to work on 13 March 1940 , he remained ill for several weeks . In the meantime , the Altmark Incident complicated Norway 's efforts to maintain its neutrality . Hitler himself remained in two minds over whether an occupation of Norway should require an invitation from the Norwegian government . Finally , Quisling received his summons on 31 March , and reluctantly travelled to Copenhagen to meet with Nazi intelligence officers who asked him for information on Norwegian defences and defence protocols . He returned to Norway on 6 April and , on 8 April , the British Operation Wilfred commenced , bringing Norway into the war . With Allied forces in Norway , Quisling expected a characteristically swift German response .

= = = German invasion and coup d'état = = =

In the early hours of 9 April 1940 , Germany invaded Norway by air and sea , intending to capture King Haakon VII and the government of Prime Minister Johan Nygaardsvold . However , alert to the possibility of invasion , Conservative President of the Parliament C. J. Hambro arranged for their evacuation to Hamar in the east of the country . The cruiser Blücher , carrying most of the personnel intended to take over Norway 's administration , was sunk by cannon fire and torpedoes from Oscarsborg Fortress in the Oslofjord . The Germans had expected the government to surrender and to have its replacement ready ; neither happened , although the invasion itself continued . After hours of discussion , Quisling and his German counterparts decided that an immediate coup was necessary , though this was not the preferred option of either Germany 's ambassador Curt Bräuer or the German Foreign Ministry .

In the afternoon , Quisling was told by German liaison Hans Wilhelm Scheidt that should he set up a government , it would have Hitler 's personal approval . Quisling drew up a list of ministers and , although it had merely relocated some 50 kilometres (31 mi) to Elverum , accused the legitimate government of having " fled " .

Meanwhile , the Germans occupied Oslo and at 17 : 30 Norwegian radio ceased broadcasting at the request of the occupying forces . With German support , at approximately 19 : 30 , Quisling

entered the NRK studios in Oslo and proclaimed the formation of a new government with himself as Prime Minister . He also revoked an earlier order to mobilise against the Nazi invasion . He still lacked legitimacy . Two orders ? one to a friend in the military (Colonel Hans S. Hiorth , the commanding officer of the army regiment at Elverum) to arrest the government and another to the Oslo chief of police ? were ignored . At 22 : 00 , Quisling resumed broadcasting , repeating his earlier message and reading out a list of new ministers . Hitler lent his support as promised and recognised the new Norwegian government under Quisling within 24 hours . Norwegian batteries were still firing on the German invasion force , and at 03 : 00 on 10 April Quisling acceded to a German request to halt the resistance of the Bolærne fortress . As a result of actions such as these , it was claimed at the time that Quisling 's seizure of power in a puppet government had been part of the German plan all along .

Quisling now reached the high @-@ water mark of his political power . On 10 April , Bräuer travelled to Elverum where the legitimate Nygaardsvold government now sat . On Hitler 's orders , he demanded that King Haakon appoint Quisling head of a new government , thereby securing a peaceful transition of power . Haakon rejected this demand . He went further in a meeting with his cabinet , letting it be known that he would sooner abdicate than appoint any government headed by Quisling . Hearing this , the government unanimously voted to support the king 's stance . It also urged the people to continue their resistance . With no popular support , Quisling was no longer of use to Hitler . Germany retracted its support for his rival government , preferring instead to build up its own independent governing commission . In this way , Quisling was manoeuvred out of power by Bräuer and a coalition of his former allies , including Hjort , who now saw him as a liability . Even his political allies , including Prytz , deserted him .

In return , Hitler wrote to Quisling thanking him for his good faith efforts to prevent him from losing face (perhaps should he become a future Norwegian leader) , guaranteeing him some sort of position in the new government . The transfer of power on these terms was duly enacted on 15 April , with Hitler still confident the Administrative Council would receive the backing of the king . Quisling 's domestic and international reputation both hit new lows , casting him as both a traitor and a failure .

= = = Head of the government = = =

Once the king had declared the German commission unlawful , it became clear that he would never be won over . An impatient Hitler appointed German Josef Terboven as the new Norwegian Reichskommissar on 24 April , reporting directly to him . Despite Hitler 's assurances , Terboven wanted to make sure that there would be no room in the government for Nasjonal Samling nor its leader Quisling , with whom he did not get on . Terboven eventually accepted a certain Nasjonal Samling presence in the government during June , but remained unconvinced about Quisling . As a result , on 25 June , Terboven forced Quisling to step down as leader of the Nasjonal Samling and take a temporary leave of absence in Germany . Quisling remained there until 20 August , while Rosenberg and Admiral Erich Raeder , whom he had met on his earlier visit to Berlin , negotiated on his behalf . In the end , Quisling returned ' in triumph , ' having won Hitler over in a meeting on 16 August . The Reichskommissar would now have to accommodate Quisling as leader of the government , then allow him to both rebuild Nasjonal Samling and bring more of his men into the cabinet . Terboven complied and addressed the Norwegian people in a radio broadcast whereupon he asserted that Nasjonal Samling would be the only political party tolerated .

As a result , by the end of 1940 the monarchy had been suspended although the Parliament of Norway and a body resembling a cabinet remained . Nasjonal Samling , the only pro @-@ German party , would be cultivated , but Terboven 's Reichskommissariat would keep power in the meantime . Quisling would serve as acting prime minister and ten of the thirteen " cabinet " ministers were to come from his party . He set out on a programme of wiping out " the destructive principles of the French Revolution , " including pluralism and parliamentary rule . This reached into local politics , whereby mayors who switched their allegiance to Nasjonal Samling were rewarded with much greater powers . Investments were made in heavily censored cultural programmes , though the

press remained theoretically free . To bolster the survival chances of the Nordic genotype , contraception was severely restricted . Quisling 's party experienced a surge in membership to a little over 30 000 , but despite his optimism it was never to pass the 40 000 mark .

On 5 December 1940 , Quisling flew to Berlin to negotiate the future of Norway 's independence . By the time he returned on 13 December , he had agreed to raise volunteers to fight with the German Schutzstaffel (SS) . In January , SS head Heinrich Himmler travelled to Norway to oversee preparations . Quisling clearly believed that if Norway supported Nazi Germany on the battlefield , there would be no reason for Germany to annex her . To this end , he opposed plans to have a German SS brigade loyal only to Hitler installed in Norway . In the process , he also toughened his attitude to the country harbouring the exiled king , the United Kingdom , which he no longer saw as a Nordic ally . Finally , Quisling aligned Norwegian policy on Jews with that of Germany , giving a speech in Frankfurt on 26 March 1941 in which he argued for compulsory exile , but warned against extermination .

In May , Quisling was shattered by the death of his mother Anna , as the two had been particularly close . At the same time , the political crisis over Norwegian independence deepened , with Quisling threatening Terboven with his resignation over the issue of finance . In the end , the Reichskommissar agreed to compromise on the issue , but Quisling had to concede on the SS issue : A brigade was formed , but as a branch of Nasjonal Samling .

Meanwhile , the government line hardened , with Communist Party leaders arrested and trade unionists intimidated . On 10 September 1941 , Viggo Hansteen and Rolf Wickstrøm were executed and many more imprisoned following the milk strike in Oslo . Hansteen 's execution was later seen as a watershed moment , dividing the occupation into its more innocent and more deadly phases . The same year the state police , abolished in 1937 , was reestablished to assist the Gestapo in Norway , and radio sets were confiscated across the country . Although these were Terboven 's decisions , Quisling agreed with them and went on to denounce the government in exile as " traitors " . As a result of the toughened stance , an informal " ice front " emerged , with Nasjonal Samling supporters ostracised from society . Quisling remained convinced this was an anti-German sentiment that would fade away once Berlin had handed power over to Nasjonal Samling . However , the only concessions he won in 1941 were having the heads of ministries promoted to official ministers of the government and independence for the party secretariat .

In January 1942 , Terboven announced the German administration would be wound down . Soon afterwards he told Quisling that Hitler had approved the transfer of power , scheduled for 30 January . Quisling remained doubtful it would happen since Germany and Norway were in the midst of complex peace negotiations that could not be completed until peace had been reached on the Eastern Front , while Terboven insisted that the Reichskommissariat would remain in power until such peace came about . Quisling could nevertheless be reasonably confident that his position within the party and with Berlin was unassailable , even if he was unpopular within Norway , something he was well aware of .

After a brief postponement , an announcement was made on 1 February 1942 , detailing how the cabinet had elected Quisling to the post of Minister-President of the national government . The appointment was accompanied by a banquet , rallying and other celebrations by Nasjonal Samling members . In his first speech , Quisling committed the government to closer ties with Germany . The only change to the Constitution was the reinstatement of the ban on Jewish entry into Norway , which had been abolished in 1851 .

= = = Minister President = = =

His new position gave Quisling a security of tenure he had not previously enjoyed , although the Reichskommissariat remained outside his control . A month later , in February 1942 , Quisling made his first state visit to Berlin . It was a productive trip , in which all key issues of Norwegian independence were discussed ? but Joseph Goebbels in particular remained unconvinced of Quisling 's credentials , noting that it was " unlikely " he would " ... ever make a great statesman . "

Back at home , Quisling was now less concerned about Nasjonal Samling 's membership and even

wanted action to clean up the membership list , including purging it of drunkards . On 12 March , Norway officially became a one @-@ party state . In time , criticism of , and resistance to , the party was criminalised , though Quisling expressed regret for having to take this step . He genuinely hoped every Norwegian would freely come around to accept his government .

This optimism was short @-@ lived . In the course of the summer of 1942 , Quisling lost any ability he might have had to sway public opinion by attempting to force children into the Nasjonal Samlings Ungdomsfylking youth organisation , which was modelled on the Hitler Youth . This move prompted a mass resignation of teachers from their professional body and churchmen from their posts , along with large @-@ scale civil unrest . His attempted indictment of bishop Eivind Berggrav proved similarly controversial , even amongst his German allies . Quisling now toughened his stance , telling Norwegians that they would have the new regime forced upon them " whether they like it or not " . On 1 May , the German High Command noted that " organised resistance to Quisling has started " and Norway 's peace talks with Germany stalled as a result . On 11 August , Hitler postponed any further peace negotiations until the war ended . Quisling was admonished and learned that Norway would not get the independence he so greatly yearned for . As an added insult , for the first time he was forbidden to write letters directly to Hitler .

Quisling had earlier pushed for a corporate alternative to the Parliament of Norway (Storting) , which he called a Riksting . It would comprise two chambers , the Næringsting (Economic Chamber) and Kultursting (Cultural Chamber) . Now , in advance of Nasjonal Samling 's eighth and last national convention on 25 September and becoming increasingly distrustful of professional bodies , he changed his mind . The Riksting became an advisory body while the Førerting (Fører Council) and parliamentary chambers were now to be independent bodies subordinate to their respective ministries .

After the convention , support for Nasjonal Samling , and Quisling personally , ebbed away . Increased factionalism and personal losses , including the accidental death of fellow politician Gulbrand Lunde , were compounded by heavy @-@ handed German tactics , such as the shooting of ten well @-@ known residents of Trøndelag and its environs in October 1942 . In addition , the lex Eilifsen ex @-@ post facto law of August 1943 , which led to the first death sentence passed by the regime , was widely seen as a blatant violation of the Constitution and a sign of Norway 's increasing role in the Final Solution , would destroy everything the convention had achieved in terms of boosting party morale .

With government abatement and Quisling 's personal engagement , Jews were registered in a German initiative of January 1942 . On 26 October , German forces , with help from the Norwegian police , arrested 300 registered male Jews in Norway and sent them to concentration camps , most in Berg and manned by Hirden , the paramilitary wing of Nasjonal Samling . Over @-@ 65s were quickly released by the Norwegian government . Most controversially , the Jews ' property was confiscated by the state .

On 26 November , the detainees were deported , along with their families . Although this was an entirely German initiative ? Quisling himself was left in the dark although government assistance was provided ? Quisling led the Norwegian public to believe that the first deportation of Jews , to camps in Poland , was his idea . A further 250 were deported in February 1943 and it remains unclear what the party 's official position was on the eventual fate of the 759 Norwegian deportees . There is evidence to suggest that Quisling honestly believed the official line throughout 1943 and 1944 , that they were awaiting repatriation to a new Jewish homeland .

At the same time , Quisling believed that the only way he could win back Hitler 's respect would be to raise volunteers for the now @-@ faltering German war effort , and he committed Norway wholeheartedly to German plans to wage total war . For him at least , after the German defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943 , Norway now had a part to play in keeping the German empire strong . In April 1943 , Quisling delivered a scathing speech attacking Germany 's refusal to outline its plans for post @-@ war Europe . When he put this to Hitler in person , the Nazi leader remained unmoved despite Norway 's contributions to the war effort . Quisling felt betrayed over this postponement of Norwegian freedom , an attitude that waned only when Hitler eventually committed to a free post @-@ war Norway in September 1943 .

Quisling tired during the final years of the war . In 1942 he passed 231 laws , 166 in 1943 , and 139 in 1944 . Social policy was the one area that still received significant attention . By that autumn , Quisling and Mussert in the Netherlands could be satisfied they had at least survived . In 1944 , the weight problems Quisling had been having during the preceding two years also eased .

Despite the increasingly dire military outlook , Nasjonal Samling 's position at the head of the government , albeit with its ambiguous relationship to the Reichskommissariat , remained unassailable . Nevertheless , the Germans exerted increasing control over law and order in Norway . Following deportation of the Jews , Germany deported Norwegian officers and finally attempted to deport students from the University of Oslo . Even Hitler was incensed by the scale of the arrests . Quisling became entangled in a similar debacle in early 1944 when he forced compulsory military service on elements of the Hird , causing a number of members to resign to avoid being drafted .

On 20 January 1945 , Quisling made what would be his final trip to visit Hitler . He promised Norwegian support in the final phase of the war if Germany agreed to a peace deal that would remove Norway 's affairs from German intervention . This proposal grew out of a fear that as German forces retreated southwards through Norway , the occupation government would have to struggle to keep control in northern Norway . To the horror of the Quisling regime , the Nazis instead decided on a scorched earth policy in northern Norway , going so far as to shoot Norwegian civilians who refused to evacuate the region . The period was also marked by increasing civilian casualties from Allied air raids , and mounting resistance to the government within occupied Norway . The meeting with the German leader proved unsuccessful and upon being asked to sign the execution order of thousands of Norwegian " saboteurs " , Quisling refused , an act of defiance that so enraged Terboven , acting on Hitler 's orders , that he stormed out of the negotiations . On recounting the events of the trip to a friend , Quisling broke down in tears , convinced the Nazi refusal to sign a peace agreement would seal his reputation as a traitor .

Quisling spent the last months of the war trying to prevent Norwegian deaths in the showdown that was developing between German and Allied forces in Norway . The regime worked for the safe repatriation of Norwegians held in German prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camps . Privately , Quisling had long accepted that National Socialism would be defeated . Hitler 's suicide on 30 April 1945 left him free to pursue publicly his chosen end @-@ game , a naïve offer of a transition to a power @-@ sharing government with the government @-@ in @-@ exile .

On 7 May , Quisling ordered police not to offer armed resistance to the Allied advance except in self @-@ defence or against overt members of the Norwegian resistance movement . The same day , Germany announced it would surrender unconditionally , making Quisling 's position untenable . A realist , Quisling met military leaders of the resistance on the following day to discuss how he would be arrested . Quisling declared whilst he did not want to be treated as a common criminal , he did not want preferential treatment compared to his Nasjonal Samling colleagues . He argued he could have kept his forces fighting until the end , but had chosen not to so as to avoid turning " Norway into a battlefield . " Instead he tried to ensure a peaceful transition . In return , the resistance offered full trials for all accused Nasjonal Samling members after the war and its leadership agreed he could be incarcerated in a house rather than a prison complex .

= = Arrest , trial , death , and legacy = =

The civil leadership of the resistance , represented by lawyer Sven Arntzen , demanded Quisling be treated like any other murder suspect and , on 9 May , Quisling and his ministers turned themselves in to police . Quisling was transferred to Cell 12 in Møllergata 19 , the main police station in Oslo . The cell was equipped with a tiny table , a basin , and a hole in the wall for a toilet bucket .

After ten weeks being constantly watched to prevent suicide attempts in police custody , he was transferred to Akershus Fortress and awaited trial as part of the legal purge . Despite initially losing weight and suffering from polyneuritis , his strong constitution meant that he soon started working hard on his case with Henrik Bergh , a lawyer with a good track record but largely unsympathetic , at least initially , to Quisling 's plight . Bergh did , however , believe Quisling 's testimony that he tried to act in the best interests of Norway and decided to use this as a starting point for the defence .

Initially , Quisling 's charges related to the coup , including his revocation of the mobilisation order , to his time as Nasjonal Samling leader and to his actions as Minister President , such as assisting the enemy and illegally attempting to alter the constitution . Finally , he was accused of Gunnar Eilifsen 's murder . Whilst not contesting the key facts , he denied all charges on the grounds that he had always worked for a free and prosperous Norway , and submitted a sixty @-@ page response . On 11 July , a further indictment was brought , adding a raft of new charges , including more murders , theft , embezzlement and , most worrying of all for Quisling , the charge of conspiring with Hitler over the 9 April occupation of Norway .

The trial opened on 20 August 1945 . Quisling 's defence rested on downplaying his unity with Germany and stressing that he had fought for total independence , something that seemed completely contrary to the recollections of many Norwegians . From that point on , wrote biographer Dahl , Quisling had to tread a " fine line between truth and falsehood , " and emerged from it " an elusive and often pitiful figure . " He misrepresented the truth on several occasions and the entirely truthful majority of his statements won him few advocates in the country at large , where he remained almost universally despised .

In the later days of the trial Quisling 's health suffered , largely as a result of the number of medical tests to which he was subjected , and his defence faltered . The prosecution 's powerful final speech placed responsibility for the Final Solution being carried out in Norway at the feet of Quisling , using the testimony of German officials . The prosecutor Annæus Schjødt called for the death penalty , using laws introduced by the government @-@ in @-@ exile in October 1941 and January 1942 .

Erudite speeches by both Bergh and Quisling himself could not change the outcome and when the verdict was announced on 10 September , Quisling was convicted of all but a handful of minor charges . For the numerous crimes he was found guilty of , he was sentenced to death .

An October appeal to the Supreme Court was rejected . The court process was judged to be " a model of fairness " in a commentary by author Maynard Cohen . After giving testimony in a number of other trials of Nasjonal Samling members , Quisling was executed by firing squad at Akershus Fortress at 02 : 40 on 24 October 1945 . His last words before being shot were , " I 'm convicted unfairly and I die innocent . " After his death his body was cremated , leaving the ashes to be interred in Fyresdal .

His widow Maria lived in Oslo until her death in 1980 . They had no children . Upon her death , she donated all their Russian antiques to a charitable fund that operates in Oslo to this day . For most of his later political career , Quisling lived in a mansion on Bygdøy in Oslo that he called " Gimle " , after the place in Norse mythology where survivors of the great battle of Ragnarök were to live . The house , now called Villa Grande , is today a Holocaust museum . The Nasjonal Samling movement was wiped out as a political force in Norway , though Quisling himself has become one of the most written about Norwegians of all time . The word quisling itself became synonymous with traitor . The term was coined by the British newspaper The Times in its lead of 15 April 1940 , titled " Quislings everywhere " . The noun has survived and for a while during and after World War II , the back @-@ formed verb to quisle / ?kw?z?l / was used . One who was quisling was in the act of committing treason .

= = Personality = =

To his supporters , Quisling was regarded as a conscientious administrator of the highest order , knowledgeable and with an eye for detail . Balanced and gentle to a fault , they believed he cared deeply about his people and maintained high moral standards throughout . To his opponents , Quisling was unstable and undisciplined , abrupt , even threatening . Quite possibly he was both , at ease among friends and under pressure when confronted with his political opponents , and generally shy and retiring with both . During formal dinners he often said nothing at all except for the occasional cascade of dramatic rhetoric . Indeed , he did not react well to pressure and would often let slip over @-@ dramatic sentiments when put on the spot . Normally open to criticism , he was prone to assuming larger groups were conspiratorial .

Post @-@ war interpretations of Quisling 's character are similarly mixed . After the war

collaborationist behaviour was popularly viewed as a result of mental deficiency , leaving the personality of the clearly more intelligent Quisling an " enigma " . He was instead seen as weak , paranoid , intellectually sterile and power @-@ hungry : ultimately " muddled rather than thoroughly corrupted " .

The Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung described Quisling as a mini @-@ Hitler with a CMT (chosenness @-@ myth @-@ trauma) complex , or alternatively , megalomania , more often diagnosed in modern times as narcissistic personality disorder . He was " well installed in his personality " , but unable to gain a following among his own people as the population did not provide a mirror for Quisling 's ideology . In short , he was " a dictator and a clown on the wrong stage with the wrong script " . As quoted by Dahl , psychiatrist Professor Gabriel Langfelt stated Quisling 's ultimate goals " fitted the classic description of the paranoid megalomaniac more exactly than any other case [he had] ever encountered " .

During his time in office , Quisling rose early , often having completed several hours of work before arriving at the office between 9 : 30 and 10 : 00 . He liked to intervene in virtually all government matters , reading all letters addressed to him or his chancellery personally and marking a surprising number for action . Quisling was independently @-@ minded , made several key decisions on the spot and , unlike his German counterpart , he liked to follow procedure to ensure that government remained " a dignified and civilised " affair throughout . He took a personal interest in the administration of Fyresdal , where he was born .

He rejected German racial supremacy and instead saw the Norwegian race as the progenitor of northern Europe , tracing his own family tree in his spare time . Party members did not receive preferential treatment , though Quisling did not himself share in the wartime hardships of his fellow Norwegians . Nevertheless , many gifts went unused and he did not live extravagantly .

= = Religious and philosophical views = =

Quisling was interested in science , Eastern religions and metaphysics , eventually building up a library that included the works of Spinoza , Kant , Hegel and Schopenhauer . He kept up with developments in the realm of quantum physics , but did not keep up with more current philosophical ideas . He blended philosophy and science into a new religion he called Universism (or Universalism) , which was a unified explanation of everything . His original writings stretched to a claimed two thousand pages . He rejected the basic teachings of orthodox Christianity and established a new theory of life , which he called Universism , a term borrowed from a textbook by Jan Jakob Maria de Groot on Chinese philosophy . De Groot 's book argued that Tao , Confucianism and Buddhism were all part of a world religion that De Groot called Universism . Quisling described how his philosophy " ... followed from the universal theory of relativity , of which the specific and general theories of relativity are special instances " . Quisling wanted universism to be the official state religion of his new Norway , and he said " the positing of such a system depends on the progress of science " .

His magnum opus was divided into four parts : an introduction ; a description of mankind 's apparent progression from individual to increasing complex consciousnesses ; a section on his tenets of morality and law ; and a final section on science , art , politics , history , race and religion . The conclusion was to be titled The World 's Organic Classification and Organisation , but the work remained unfinished . Generally , Quisling worked on it infrequently during his time in politics . The biographer Hans Fredrik Dahl describes this as " fortunate " since Quisling would " never have won recognition " as a philosopher .

During his trial and particularly after being sentenced , Quisling became interested once more in Universism . He saw the events of the war as part of the move towards the establishment of God 's kingdom on earth and justified his actions in those terms . During the first week of October , he wrote a fifty @-@ page document titled Universistic Aphorisms , which represented " ... an almost ecstatic revelation of truth and the light to come , which bore the mark of nothing less than a prophet " . The document was also notable for its attack on the materialism of National Socialism . In addition , he simultaneously worked on a sermon , Eternal Justice , which reiterated his key beliefs ,

including reincarnation .

= = = In Norwegian = = =

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