



Emnekode : TFL -110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
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Ark nr. : 1 av 8

① 1814 and 1905 are milestones in Norwegian history. Why?

The Norwegian history has been a history of unions, foreign crown's rule and dependency on other Nations. For a long time Norway has been in unions with either Sweden or Norway, where it lost only independence but also part of its culture such as its language.

The events in 1814 and 1905 were milestones in Norwegian history because they were turning points in the history of unions and independence. Both years are of high importance to Norway as they created the basis for independence. In 1814 the major idea of independence was distributed in the country and brought into the people's hearts. ~~1814 prepared~~ Events in 1814 prepared this and 1905 finally put an end to the Age of unions in which Norway was in for about 400 years.

This Age of unions started already in 1315 when Norway was lacking descendants of the king and needed a new crown. After the death of the king they turned to Sweden and were ruled by the Swedish king as well until 1355. When in 1380 the Norwegian king died his wife, a Danish queen, took over the crown and ruled Norway and Denmark together. By this Norway entered a union again, one that turned out to last until 1814 when it was ended with force in order to give Norway to Sweden under another union. This personal union was a result of the Napoleonic wars and lasted until 1905 when Norway finally managed to break out of the Age of unions.

As mentioned before, the Napoleonic wars, lasting from 1799 until 1813 played an important role in the Norwegian independence. During these wars Norway was in a union with Denmark. Denmark Norway, so the official name, ~~was~~ had become an unequal union as Denmark became the stronger power and started ruling Norway throughout the years. Norway - Denmark Norway was on Napoleon's, on France's side. The arch-enemy Sweden, to which Denmark Norway had



Emnekode : TFL-110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12. '10  
Ark nr. : 2 av 8

last large amounts of land, was on the side of England. When the Napoleonic wars were ended in October 1813 with the Battle of Leipzig, Napoleon was defeated. In the Treaty of Kiel in February 1814 Britain and other mighty powers redistributed land heavily and decided the direction after the wars. The new Swedish Prince Carl Johann had plans to annex Norway and so ~~the~~, in the Treaty of Kiel, Sweden received Norway. Denmark was forced to give up its union and Norway was to enter a new union with Sweden.

When this was decided in February 1814 the Danish prince Christian Frederik, who by no chance, wanted to lose Norway to Sweden tried to beware this from happening. He right away started to motivate Norwegians and initiated a rebellion against the Treaty of Kiel by Norwegians. The Norwegian society felt their chance for independence and very were convinced by this initiated rebellion. They wanted to prevent the union with Sweden and create an independent nation with an own king instead. They knew they would have to act fast if they wanted to succeed in their plans.

Mostly rather simple people, embedmen, were elected locally and send to Eidsvoll, where an assembly should take place to prepare this new independency of Norway. This had to happen within a couple of weeks and due to the geographic conditions and the, back then, not developed infrastructure there were no representatives of the northern part of Norway as they could not get to Eidsvoll fast enough. The Agenda for the assembly in Eidsvoll in March and April 1814 was clear: They wanted to elect representatives, elect a king and create a constitution.

In this assembly there were 112 representatives to work on these goals. These representatives were not all of the same opinion but they were divided into two different parties. These were the Independence Party and the Union Party. Both parties had not a common view on how to solve the issue.



Emnekode : TFL-110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12.'10  
Ark nr. : 3 av 8

The Independence Party clearly supported the view of Kristian Frederik of Denmark. They wanted an independent Norwegian state and were very patriotic. Even though they were discontent with Denmark and did not want to go back to Denmark, they saw Sweden as ~~their~~ their arch-enemy and with all power wanted to prevent the union with Sweden. Therefore they collaborated with Kristian Frederik and supported his rebellion.

On the other hand there was the Union Party. The people in the Union Party were not happy with the perspective of a union with Sweden either but they also were convinced that independence for Norway in this situation was unrealistic. Therefore they were in favour for the union and wanted to cooperate with Sweden. They wanted to negotiate with Sweden rather than get their independence with force to be able to enter the union with the best conditions possible. The Union Party was also very sceptical about Kristian Frederik because they feared that cooperating with him would lead Norway back into a union with Denmark.

Since there were 76 representatives in the ~~total~~ Independence Party and only 36 in the Union Party the idea of independence for Norway clearly won after the Assembly.

In this short time period the representatives managed to work out their agenda and they created a constitution for Norway which was finished and introduced on 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1814 in Eidsvoll.

On this day Norway declared independence.

Unfortunately this independence could not last long. In the long term Norway could not resist the great powers. In a war in July and August 1814, short after the constitution was signed, Sweden could reach a military win and Norway ~~for~~ was forced into the union with Sweden anyway. Sweden was more powerful and could therefore execute the decisions taken in the Treaty of Kiel.

After the great triumph of a Norwegian Constitution developed



Emnekode : TFL -110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12.10  
Ark nr. : 4 av 8

by simple Norwegians and declaration of Norway's independence this seems like a large step backwards and like a loss for Norway. Of course neither of the Parties at Eidsvoll achieved their goals and Norway was in a personal union with Sweden but the Assembly of Eidsvoll had a great meaning for Norway anyway. The events in 1814 help Norwegians to take the first step towards their independence with the constitution, which still is valid today, Norwegians lay the basis for their independence. Of even greater importance is the fact that the idea of independence and a nationalistic idea was put into people's heads. All in all one can say that 1814 was not a loss but a win for Norway.

Norway then, under force, entered into the union with Sweden. They had the same crown as well as the same foreign policy but were basically self-governed and kept their own "Storting". With the independence idea in their head Norwegians lived in the union throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But in the second half and at the end of the century especially, they more and more were unhappy and started showing their discontent publicly.

Major reasons for the discontent and the wish for independence in Norway at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were varying. Norwegians did no longer see any economic significance in or benefit from the union with Sweden. Furthermore they were involved in international trade by themselves but since they were sharing a foreign policy with Sweden, they were lacking representatives who could step in for interests of the Norwegian state in international affairs. They demanded a separate consular service which the Swedish king denied them to have. This caused a lot of frustration among Norwegians. They wanted to break away from the conservatively ruled Sweden.

Another major fact in this is the general Nationalism trend all over Europe which started spreading to Norway as well. Norwegians started looking at themselves in a more nationalistic and unique



Emnekode : TFL-110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12. '10  
Ark nr. : 5 av 8

way. Things Norwegian became a more popular concept and Norway was more clearly defined as an own nation. People started realizing what was special about their country. This was confirmed with what was started in 1814 and very much supported the Norwegian will to become independent.

The ~~urge~~ liberal party finally started to negotiate with the Swedish Crown about independence and the ~~also~~ dissolving of the union. But the Swedish King did not want to give up the union and declined this. He even threatened the Norwegians with war if they would continue to strive for independence in 1895.

The urge of Norwegians to become independent finally became so strong in ~~1895~~ 1905 that after the king had declined to sign a bill once more they started an armed race in order to prepare for war against Sweden when they part themselves from Sweden. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1905 the Norwegian Storting then declared that the Swedish King was no longer ruling over Norway and that the union was ~~dissolved~~ suspended.

Instead of a war, as a reaction, there were negotiations between Sweden and Norway and Norway was finally declared independent. The significance of the year 1905 can easily be explained by saying that this was the year Norway achieved independence after 400 years of being in unions. This was an important step for Norway in many ways. Norway did not only become independent economically, politically but also as a nation with its own values and culture.



Emnekode : TFL -110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12.10  
Ark nr. : 6 av 8

4. Why is Norway a wealthy country?

When a foreigner hears this question "Why is Norway a wealthy country?" the answer probably seems obvious to most of them: 'Because of the oil!'

But most people don't know that there is a history behind this and that Norway had been very active economically centuries before they even discovered the oil in the North Sea. The discovery of the oil only happened relatively late in history in 1969 and producing of the oil only started in 1973. This short time period is by far not enough and not the only reason for a country to be able to call itself rich. There is more to it than just the luck of finding and possessing raw material.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a British king travelled through Norway and noted his experiences with the Norwegian population. He was not very impressed by the Norwegians and their behaviour and describes them as lazy and undisciplined people. He furthermore found Norwegians are dirty and uncultivated and produce too many children. They also would not be able to use the opportunities given to them and could therefore not develop further. The misuse of alcohol created a large problem among the society as well. Taking this into account we must ask ourselves once more: How could these people manage to create a wealthy nation? Obviously even if they had chances such as raw material, they were not able to use them properly.

~~Basically raw~~ Obviously Norwegians either have not been as bad or they have change significantly to the better. Otherwise they would not have turned out where they are now. What this king ~~was~~ saw must have been the last remaining traits from their ancestors, the Vikings.



Emnekode : TFL-110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3. 12. '10  
Ark nr. : 7 av 8

Basically one can say that raw material and the blessing of Norway with diverse raw material played an important and major role in becoming a wealthy nation. Norway has diverse resources in its nature to benefit from. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Norwegians started fishing and discovered the opportunities given to them by their fish resources. The 16<sup>th</sup> century was determined by forestry and the export of timber to Europe. Further raw materials were found in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the discovery of metal such as copper and iron ore. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Norwegians learned how to benefit from the numerous waterfalls they had all over the country by using water power in the industry. Last but not least the oil in the 20<sup>th</sup> century made the collection of raw material sources perfect. Of course the timber and oil probably had the greatest significance in the Norwegian economy and export.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was ~~the~~ major importance to Norway as it stood in the light of export. With the extension of the fleet in the 1920's Norway had ~~the~~ one of the largest fleets in the world and was a big exporter of timber, iron ore and fish. The Navigation Act which allowed ~~free trade among also third parties~~ free trade and also third parties to transport goods between countries, Norway's export in the 19<sup>th</sup> century very much contributed to the wealth of this country.

From an exporter of raw material in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century up until 1970's, Norway developed, especially during the second industrialization in the 1970's and 1980's to an exporter of processed goods. This process started already during the 1840's in the first industrialization when machinery and engineering was imported from Britain and the first textile industry started in Norway. But the breakthrough as exporter of also processed and finished goods was later when Norway started producing in paper mills and even produced paper.

All this lay the cornerstone for becoming a rich country already.

There is also another way to look at the reasons for Norway's wealth by dividing it into 5 different areas which influenced the economic



Emnekode : TFL-110  
Kandidatnr. : 1536  
Dato : 3.12. '10  
Ark nr. : 8 av 8

development in Norway. These areas are geographical, economical, political, social development and culture.

Geography played an important role because Norway strategically was well positioned, close to Britain. Britain was the main economic power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Norway profited from its closeness to Britain in terms of machinery, engineering as well as export.

Economic reasons are of course the timber, water power and oil, to underline only those of relevance today. Through export of timber and oil Norway had great earnings and the use of cheap water power also allows cheap production in energy intensive industries such as metal. This gives Norway a great competitive advantage.

Politics were important because it is very democratic. Examples are all the referendums, for example about the EU membership. Norwegians like on letting everyone have a say in order to make better decisions than individuals.

The Social Development plays a role because a very small population managed to use their resources effectively. ~~Then~~

The Norwegian culture, which is very much influenced by Christianity and protestant thought, is a culture of hard working people. Movements such as Hans Nielsen Hauge's preaching of hard work and efficiency influenced the culture of Norway a lot and contributed to Norway becoming wealthy.

So basically all of these things also influenced the way Norway handles its great blessing of oil. Having raw materials is not a guarantee for a country to become rich as illustrated in some African countries. But Norwegians also managed to get the best out of their resources, e.g. by creating policies for foreign capital ~~in~~ in the oil industry which limits the power of foreigners and gives more control to the Norwegian state by partly nation owned enterprises.

Therefore we must state that not only the oil is the reason for the wealth but also other raw material and especially the Norwegian, smart and long-term oriented way of handling them.