



Emnekode : TFL-110

Kandidatnr. : 1516

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Ark nr. : 1 av 9

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

Norway is a very young independent nation considering the fact that the country had been under either Danish or Swedish rule for about 500 years ever since 1318, when the Norwegian king had no direct descendants and the country had to go in a Union with Sweden.

1814 and 1905 are important years on Norway's road towards independence. In 1814 the Norwegian Constitution was established, before in 1905 the country gained full independence.

In the following the circumstances of these events shall be depicted in more detail.

As already mentioned Norway entered a self-governed union with Sweden as early as 1318 when the kingdom was left with no descendants to the throne. The black death in 1345 weakened the nation and made it open to more foreign influence, ~~so that it~~ ^{the country} entered a Union with Denmark in 1380. Sweden joined that union and so the Kalmar Union was established in 1397 in which all 3 countries united with equal rights & power. However, Sweden left the Kalmar Union in 1523 and Denmark grew more powerful. When the Danes reformed their church to the Lutheran beliefs the Norwegians did not want to join the Christian reformation movement. So Denmark made Norway their province in 1536 and forced the nation to become Protestant.

In the following 200 years Norwegians grew more and more discontent under the Danes. They felt exploited and saw how all their taxes were used for the good of Denmark. A first wave of nationalistic feeling emerged

Ⓧ Since 1360 the Hanseatic League established their position as a trade force and controlled Norwegian fish export & grain import. Their main station point was Bruges in Flanders and they had influence till about 1500.



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and Norwegians felt the wish of being an independent nation. However, will and movements did not have the strength and persistence to actually cause effective resistance against the Danes.

In 1799 the Napoleonic Wars disturbed Europe and Denmark decided to fight on side with France. This brought times of famine & disease to Norway and the discontent in the population grew. When France lost the war in 1813 Norway was taken away from the Danes and given to the Swedes, who had been fighting on the winners side, through the Treaty of Kiel in 1814.

Now circumstances for Norway were very fortunate. While Sweden was still busy with post-war affairs on the continent, Norway ended up to be "forgotten" by the Swedish Crown. Norwegians now used that time to decide on 112 members in a committee to establish a Norwegian constitution and to claim their so-long wished for independence. The constitution was established on the 17th of May in 1814, which is still Norway's national holiday. The date is celebrated around the country to remember Norway's long way towards an independent nation. Even though the meaning of the holiday changed over the years dependant on whether the country was split between its own governmental issues, so that people protested on May 17th or just ignored the day to express their political standpoint, or whether the country was united in times of a need for national confidence as for example in times of WWII when the 17th of Mai represented unity and strength and was appreciated by the people celebrating it.

Nevertheless, in 1814 the celebration was only of a short time as Sweden eventually remembered their ruling-



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rights on Norway. The Swedish Crown fought a quick war against Norwegian peasants and claimed their rights on the country. But the Swedish rule was a rather loose one. The Norwegians accepted the Swedish king as their ruler but were still allowed to be self-governed and to keep their constitution. That is why the 17 May 1814 is still celebrated as the most important step towards independence even though the country should still be ruled by the Swedes for another roughly 90 years.

Since Norway never had a class system as developed as central European's and aristocracy never really emerged the country was run through the Embedsmenn which were appointed by the Swedish king. Norway was seen as "state of civil servants" as the Embedsmenn weren't really aristocrats but rather more wealthy elitarian clergy, merchants, military officers and so forth.

In the 1830s people started to claim more influence and Farmers movements started to develop. Eventually the Embedsmenn were confronted by the Storting, the people's assembly later becoming the Parliament, fighting for their position in the state. In 1868 the majority of people supporting peasants rights had joined the Storting and in 1884 Parliamentarism was officially established in Norway. ~~The industrial~~

The industrial revolution in the 19th century also influenced Norway. A merchants elite developed, the population grew and urban life started to emerge. Earlier self-sufficient farmers had to start change their work towards a market based economy and the state supported the economical growth through credits, better infrastructure and the improvement of communication matters which were a challenge to geographically wide-spread & divided Norway. During



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That time a strong nationalistic thinking struck Norway. People were again discontent with being under someone else's rule. Romantic feelings about the country, strongly represented through literature and art, strengthened the nation's self-confidence. The Union with Sweden had no benefits for Norway, neither politically nor economically. Not wanting to be in their ruler's shadow any longer the Norwegian government resigned the Union with Sweden in June 1905.

This step put both country at the 'brick of war', military forces were strengthened and sent to the borders. However, the countries negotiated, Norwegian border ports were destroyed and eventually they parted peacefully and Norway finally got its independence in 1905. The date is still very important to be remembered but since the rule under the Swedish king was a rather loose one and the country kept the constitution from 1814 the latter is still seen as the major step towards freedom and therefore celebrated more strongly.

Even though Norway was often self-governed during its unions it never really experienced freedom and independence for a long time. Still, one can say the nation came a long way even under suppression and has developed to one of the world's most wealthy and high-living-standard countries in the last decades. Norwegians value their nation and looking back on their long history of being under someone else's rule the country managed its situations very well, ~~and~~ considering the ^{historical} circumstances it becomes obvious that 1814 and 1905 are major steps to becoming an independent country as those years stand for the people of the nation's will to break free from foreign rule and influence.



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4. Why is Norway a wealthy country?

Economically Norway has come a long way considering the fact that it used to be rather less developed at the end of the 18th century and is now one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

The most obvious answer to why Norway is such a rich country is usually: Oil.

But the oil was only discovered about 40 years ago in 1969 so Norway must have managed to develop its economy through different measures than just oil during the last 200 years. In fact the nation went through a complex transition in order to keep up with Europe's more developed countries during these earlier times. In the beginning of the 19th century, the industrial age, Norway was rather less developed and could, descriptively spoken, be seen as a "mud puddle" in the North of Europe. In 1801 only 10% of the population were living in urban areas and not more than 3% of the country were actually useful for agriculture.

However, the country was rich in some natural resources such as fish, forest and iron ore. With its long coastline the nation had always been up front when it came to shipping. So Norway concentrated on the export of the resources they had and the trade to Great Britain, especially timber, was highly important for the country's economic success. After the Napoleonic War, ^{during} ~~under~~ which Norway had suffered a lot under Danish rule, the country's economy experienced a boom in ~~the~~ fish exports ^{especially dried fish,} as the population of Europe steadily grew and people needed food. The 1820th were golden ages of Norwegian shipping and in the following



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years Norway's fleet grew to one of the biggest in the world.

It was the states aim to support the growth of economy and so it supported the improvement of infrastructure and communication throughout the country. Mortgage banks enabled people to change from self-sufficient living to a capitalist market orientated work. More and more people of a growing population moved to rather urban areas and cities and a merchant bourgeoisie elite started to emerge. Taxes were kept low.

Telecommunication developed and train-connections were build throughout the country. Norway's long and split by fjords and mountains geography always made sufficient infrastructure and communication difficult so improvements in that areas were highly needed to modernise and industrialize the country.

Moreover, this new urban elite supported Norway's economic growth through investments. The combination of governmental aid and private investors worked well and Norway kept on developing and growing.

The first wave of industrialization began in the 1940s.

Norway was one of the first countries establishing a textile industry and workshops. A second important factor in that time was mechanical-engineering. Britain lifted their ban on machine-export in 1943 and so Norway was able to buy new machines and technology. They also imported whole systems of industrial production and developed their workshops and technologies in very sufficient ways. Even though Norway's only real invention during the ages was the cheese-slicer, they always succeeded in importing and profiting of new inventions and technology and developed them best to their needs.



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The state was watchful and quick in adapting to new efficient methods and needs. The country bought and invested in motorised shipping early to support its sufficient and highly important export.

Towards the end of the 19th century natural resources such as forest and fish were slowly decreasing and coming to an end so in order to ensure further economic stability the country needed new sources of income. They had to introduce new products and means of production. So the pulp industry started to develop in the 1860s and reached its peak in the 1980s. Norway needed to change from supplying just resources to producing first-stage or finished products. So the 1970s can be seen as a second wave of Norwegian industrialization.

The country is very rich when it comes to hydro-power. Consequently it started profiting from the energy economy and so developed a second base of income in order to not only be dependant on resources from forestry & fishery any more. This made a lot of foreign investors come to the country and the chemical industry prosper. Though most of the waterfalls ~~are~~ were inland new industrial settlements emerged. Transporting the energy was expensive so businesses were build right next to the energy sources.

As the state always had influence on Norway's economy a regulation law was passed between 1905 and 1910. One wanted to avoid the uncontrolled exploitation of ~~foreign~~ resources through foreigners and on the other hand still profit from investor's knowledge and technology.

The country experienced a little economic crisis between the world wars but still some economics were well-off such as shipping and whaling. ^(X)

After WWII the state had to cope with some major

(X) It is to state, that ever since the late 19th century the 2nd & 3rd economic sector increased in Norway. The 1st sector decreased but it is important to know that it only decreased in work-force, not in its productivity.



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post-war challenges and tried to control and plan the countries economy. However, in order to be eligible to the Marshall Plan aid the country was released into a more liberalized and market orientated economic way. Today this Scandinavian model of a well-working mix of state-support and free economy is seen as very successful in Europe. It is also after the war that the welfare-state is taking shape in Norway which supports a fair distribution to the whole population. This also helps support the economy as it ensures people as a ~~strong~~ consumer force who's able to buy. ~~European~~ Even though Norway still is no member of the European Union the country is member of all other European trade unions such as e.g. the EFTA which it joined in 1960. This is important as it became clear that Norway's wealth and growth is dependant on export and investment.

Then, in 1969, oil was found in the North Sea and brought a further wave of wealth over Norway. Production started in 1971 and even though there was an oil-crisis in 1973 the country managed to overcome this downward periode and is now one of the richest in the world. As already done in the periode of hydro-power Norway quickly decided to establish an oil community and to involve the state through ~~the~~ regulating laws. In 1972 Statoil, the states oil company was founded. It was partly privatised in 2001. Moreover the state has 50% influence on all the oil investments in the country.

Norway always was very efficient and considerate when it came to using its resources and economic potential to its best. They picked up and developed new trends and technologies clever and fast on their way from a less-developed country



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to a very influential economic power. So Norway is also using its oil reserves very considerably and responsibly. Looking and thinking ahead the nation does not celebrate a decadent way of living and ~~spend~~ it doesn't spend all its oil money just because it's there. This would on the one hand contradict the country's value of moderation but more important, on the other hand, the country is aware of the fact that the oil will not last forever. At some point the blessing will come to an end. In order to guarantee its people a good life ~~over~~ ^{lasting} ~~that period~~ longer than the oil reserves in the North Sea, a large amount of the nation's oil income is going into an oil fund. This fund contained over 300 billion € in the last year and will secure the country's situation in the future. And as it has been shown throughout history the chances are good that Norway will find its way to stay wealthy and with a good functioning economy in times ahead, when the oil will get short, ~~and~~ new challenges have to be met and new ways will have to be developed.