

# Norwegians are justly proud of how teachers stood up to fascist intimidation. Utahns should be, too.

**Oslo** — Appropriately, most of the Norway Resistance Museum is underground.

Also known as the Hjemmefrontmuseet (Home Front Museum), it lives in an old building on the grounds of the 700-year-old seaside compound of buildings known as the Akershus Fortress.

The museum isn't that impressive from the outside, a relatively small brick building on a hill. It's only when you enter and go down the stairs that you see inspiring stories of how the Norwegian people stood up for their culture after the Nazis invaded in 1940.

Exhibits tell the tale of everything from Crown Prince Olav leading the formation of an army-in-exile in Scotland — much credit is given to British and American alliances — to the every-day resistance of normal people, lawyers, clergy and, most of all, teachers.

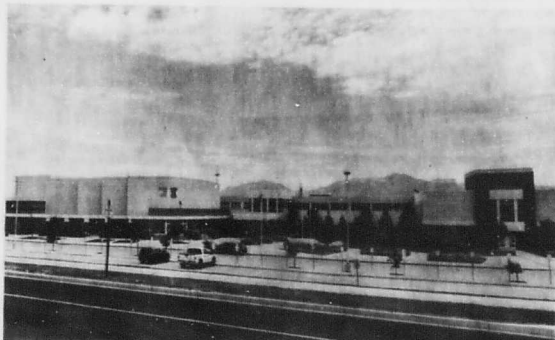
I don't know enough Norwegian history to judge if the information here is fair and accurate or distorted by patriotism and denial. But you see why there are so many museums and monuments to this era all over Europe. Why, nearly 80 years on, they still make movies and TV shows about the rise and fall of the Nazis.

And it leaves you hoping that we never have to build such museums in the United States after the MAGA regime has passed into history.

A lot of the Oslo museum, naturally, is about the kind of resistance that involved smuggled guns and secret radios and acts of industrial sabotage, including raids on a facility at Telemark aimed at stopping Hitler's version of the Manhattan Project.

Today, when efforts to communicate the truth and combat misinformation are so important, it matters that much of the museum focuses on how ordinary people labored to maintain their culture by simple — if illegal — acts of communication and loyalty to civil institutions, especially public schools.

Many Norwegians took to



Herriman High School, as shown in a 2021 Google Maps image, in Herriman.



GEORGE  
PYLE

The Salt Lake Tribune

wearing paper clips on their lapels. It was a simple symbol of holding their society together in the face of an occupying force.

Apparently the paper clip remains a political symbol here today. I saw one on the jacket of a member of the Storting — the Norwegian Parliament — on a video of recent proceedings.

(I've also seen some social media posts suggesting that the local anti-vaxxers have adopted the paper clip symbolism. Which is really dumb, as refusing to be vaccinated against a pandemic is

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selfishness — the polar opposite of standing together for the protection of your society.)

One thing the Norse are particularly and justly proud of is the story of their teachers.

The Norwegian Nazi wannabes, led by collaborationist Prime Minister Vidkun Quisling, created a national teachers union and ordered all teachers to join. It was a way of using the schools to instill fascist propaganda in the young.

Nearly all teachers objected to the attempted takeover of their classrooms and resigned from the union. About 1,000 of them — just enough to set an example — were arrested and about half of that number were sent to a prison camp in the frozen north of the country.

It was brutal, but only one teacher was recorded to have died and the teachers received open statements of support from

parents and from other professionals such as lawyers, doctors and the clergy.

After a while, as the larger resistance movement gained strength, the Quisling government decided that the teachers union wasn't really compulsory and wasn't really about politics. That it had all been a silly misunderstanding.

Many teachers rejoined the group, now that belonging to it didn't really mean anything, and all prisoners were sent home.

Today in the United States, and in Utah, teachers are again a bulwark against attempts to bend public education to fascist ends.

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The Herriman kids were not subjected to anything pornographic and they were not required to agree (or disagree) with the point of the commentary written by a transgender student in Texas. It was an exercise in analysis of how effective a piece of writing is in making its point.

The fact that some powerful people thought the essay insightful enough that the eyes of our precious high school students must be protected from it suggests the writing was effective indeed.

Worthily of being remembered in the museum I hope we never have to build.

George Pyle, opinion editor of *The Salt Lake Tribune*, is not adjusting well to a place where the sun rises at 4 a.m. and twilight lasts till midnight.

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