

'Bible versus EEC' from Der Spiegel (19 July 1971)

Caption: On 19 July 1971, German weekly publication Der Spiegel looks back at the lively debates whipped up in Norway by the country's second application for accession to the European common market.

Source: Der Spiegel. Das Deutsche Nachrichten-Magazin. Hrsg. Augstein, Rudolf ; R Herausgeber Engel K., Johannes; Gaus, Günter. 19.07.1971, Nr. 30; 25. Jg. Hamburg: Spiegel Verlag Rudolf Augstein KG. "Bibel gegen EWG", p. 65.

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Bible versus EEC

Over 30 % of Norwegians are still undecided whether to vote for or against Norwegian accession to the EEC. A propaganda war has broken out around these voters.

Norway's EEC opponents are using the spectre of Adolf Hitler to scare their countrymen off the European Economic Community. According to a trade-union official, Ragnar Kalheim, from Oslo, 'Resistance against the Common Market is "a continuation of the battle of 1940"' (against Hitler's invasion troops).

Mr Kalheim is the Vice-President of the 'People's Movement against Norwegian accession to the EEC', founded 11 months ago, whose shades of opinion range from Communists and People's Socialists to Agrarian Centrists and Christian People's parties.

Forecasting Norway's downfall, the People's Movement is warning against an invasion of big Western European capitalists and other intruders trying to drive out small farmers and fish the seas dry. Having gained its independence only in 1905 — after being subjected to the Danish and Swedish monarchies for more than 500 years — the country is being threatened by a new kind of bondage, this time from Brussels. In the 'Bible Belt', the Bible-respecting provinces of southern Norway, Lutherans have been using Holy Scripture to prove that the EEC is the devil's work.

The following poem by one of their readers was printed in the Centrist Party newspaper *Ostlendingen*:

A Reichstag majority wants to sell us,
We are to become slaves again,
But we want to govern ourselves, and
We shall not let EEC sharks enter our country.
We shall show our ancestors that reason will prevail.

The way to slavery: since 1962, three Norwegian Parliaments — always in line with their main trading partner Great Britain — have approved by vast majority votes the decisions of Social Democratic and Populist Cabinets to apply for EEC accession.

Norway's captains of industry also gave their approval — with the exception of the lobbyists of two branches in respect of which Oslo is now negotiating exceptions to EEC rules in Brussels.

Those branches are fisheries and agriculture, the sole livelihood for many people, particularly in the strategically exposed northern Norway. Totally free EEC competition would eradicate these sectors and accelerate depopulation.

As things stand, 5 000 people already migrate every year from the Far North. The total number of fishermen in Norway has been reduced from 75 000 to just half of that since 1950, while 60 000 out of 150 000 farming jobs have also been lost.

During the current financial year, the State has subsidised fishermen to the tune of 100 million marks, while agriculture has annually received 750 million marks over the past few years.

The Norwegian Government is now pleading with Brussels to change EEC fisheries regulations. Foreign EEC fishermen are to be allowed to fish inside Norway's 12-mile limit only if they establish themselves in Norway.

And Norway's agriculture is to be allowed to receive — if not from EEC funds — further subsidies from Norway's State Treasury, if only to make up for competitive disadvantages arising from the climate.

This climatic handicap is outlined in Norway's Memorandum to the EEC: Norway's farmers have to get by

each year with 120 (northern Norway) to 200 (southern Norway) growing days, far less than countries further south such as Germany with 240, Holland with 260 and Great Britain and Ireland with 280 to 365 growing days.

Oslo also wants to have special regulations adopted for milk, potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes and soft fruit — for tiny quantities: Norway's share in the total agricultural production of a ten-Member EEC is a mere 0.5 %.

The 'People's Movement against Norwegian accession to the EEC' nevertheless continues to express its opposition, apparently backed by 60 000 members. A protest march through Oslo in early June attracted 6 000 participants, while 12 000 Norwegians attended the final rally.

The first subsidies claimed by the Anti-EEC Movement were for its own budget: 250 000 marks from the State for propaganda purposes. The Government declined. Subsidised agricultural federations subsequently paid the Movement three times this amount.

Norway's pro-EEC Federation of Industry has been offering some advice to the Agrarians: it would be doubtful whether the State could continue to support them to the tune of 750 million marks per year if Norway remained outside the EEC and tax revenue from industry consequently decreased.

Moreover, as long as it remained impossible to sell within EEC customs barriers, it would also be impossible to develop a petrochemical industry for refining the recently discovered oil reserves in Norway's continental shelf.

There is a good chance, however, that Norway's principal trade partners will soon be united inside the Community fortress. In 1970, Norway traded 5 800 million marks' worth of goods with the EEC, 2 900 million marks' worth with Great Britain and 6 800 million marks' worth with the remaining EFTA countries. 80 % of Norway's industrial exports go to Western Europe.

The anti-EEC front is beginning to waver: the most recent opinion polls revealed that one third of Norwegians were still undecided whether to say yes or no to the EEC. They are now targeted by Norway's 'Movement for Europe' and the 'People's Movement' with pro and con pamphlets. The Government itself has also recently started to promote the EEC with an initial 1.2 million leaflets.

A consultative referendum is to take place in Norway in 1972. Parliament will take its decision afterwards. EEC accession will have to be approved by a majority for a constitutional amendment (of at least three quarters of the 150 Members of the Storting).

The Anti-EEC Movement's attacks have already started to lose their sting: its President, the farmer Hans Borgen, who, in June, had still been calling for the suspension of the accession negotiations, declared in July, 'There is no point now in calling for the talks to be suspended.'