

LIBERAL ARTS

Stemming the Communist Tide: Communist Groups in the Norwegian Resistance, 1940–1945

Student researcher: Lynch D. Bennett IV, Senior

On April 9, 1940, the German war machine invaded and occupied the parliamentary democracy of Norway. This study was conducted in order to ascertain how Communist resistance groups interacted with the Western Allies, and how popular opinion in Norway as well as fear of the increasing success of the Soviet Union affected those interactions. The records of the British Foreign Office, located in the Purdue University Libraries' *Conditions and Politics in Occupied Western Europe, 1940–1945* database, reveal that as World War II progressed, Communist groups, obedient to the commands of the Soviet government in Moscow, grew increasingly active in their resistance. British Foreign Office documents indicate that the people of Norway began to view the action of the Communists and military successes of the Soviet Union as a sign of strength, while the inaction of the Allies and Milorg

resistance movement were viewed as a sign of weakness. The growing popularity of this attitude became more threatening when Communist resisters, aided by the Soviet Union, overthrew the Nazi occupation in Yugoslavia in 1944 and established a Communist government. It became apparent to the Allies that if this were to happen in Norway, their ideological enemy would have possession of a country on England's doorstep. This study concludes that a realization of the Communist resisters' growing popularity, combined with a fear that a situation like that in Yugoslavia could occur in Norway, led the Allies to extend an offer of cooperation with Communist resisters in order to preempt that threat of Soviet invasion.

Research advisor Jennifer Foray said, "Lynch's research and findings shed light on a topic that has been underexplored in English studies of World War II. Using careful archival analysis, he has effectively demonstrated why Allied forces sought to woo the Communist anti-Nazi resistance in wartime Norway, as well as the consequences of this policy."