

The Teachers of Norway
Libretto

Soprano (Women)

Mezzo Alto

Tenor (Men)

Baritone, Bass

All Singers

Oh. Here's my husband He was sent to a concentration camp. (Oh)

The police knocked on my door in March nineteen forty two.

He was shocked. (Oh) We did not know what to do.

One thousand teachers were were arrested in Norway. They defied Quisling. They refused to join the Nazis. Oh! What to do!

Quisling said: "All teachers in Norway must sign an Oath to obey the Nazi State You must sign an Oath of loyalty to us ! !

"Obey!" Who are we? Will we stand here like trolls? No! No! Hail, Hail to Norway. We cannot let them do this! The king and his fam-ly must escape. All Jews must leave this country now.

Hitler says we are part of the Aryan race. (My God) He will save us from the British and from the Jews. He's mad He's insane. We will not (No) talk with Germans. Not at all! We will not talk to Germans. Do not speak German. I am not a pacifist. No, No!

Norway is controlled by the Nazis. We refuse to speak. Norway is based on terror. We must go underground. Norway is becoming destroyed. What can we do? Oh. Some of us are terrified. Others filled with rage.

Let's organize and go underground. No! No! No! No! NO! NO! We do not want a dictatorship based on fear and force. We will not obey! We will fight! We will fight them! We will wage war. We'll resist. We're going to fight

The Nazis try to control us. Quisling forced all citizens to give up their radios to the government. Radios were seized. We hide them. We hide them. We wore badges to identify ourselves. Then... Quisling then banned all badges of resistance. We hide them. We hide them. Resistance.

We talked of revolution. Dangerous. What could we do? We hold meetings. I was the "contact man" for our school district. Quisling said: "Obey or go to prison." We want our freedom. We want to be free again. Quisling created a Nazi union for teachers, He ordered his portrait hung in each school. We said "No"! We said No! He made plans for a Nazi Youth Movement. We said: No. No. We said No. This is our country. Here we live or die.

We organized. We put together our own movement underground. We wrote underground letters to each other. My job is to support teachers who resisted. We fought Quisling through our movement for freedom. (We will not join the Nazi movement.) We will not teach Nazi textbooks.

I will not teach. I will not teach. I will not teach. I will not teach. We will not teach. We will not teach. We will not teach Nazi texts. We refuse. We will fight all Nazis. We fight by not obeying them.

Ten thousand teachers fought the German state. Ten thousand said NO. They said NO! NO! NO! NO! We will not teach. We refuse to teach. Not us. It is a matter of Conscience. It's our conscience. We will not teach. Resistance grows.

We Bishops say "No." We parents say no! "No" Clergy resign. No. Professors quit. Quisling does not know what to do. What could this dictator do? He can do nothing. What will Quisling do?

Quisling shut down all schools. He made it official. Oh. We live in a total state. Yes! Quisling struck back and shut down all schools. Parents wrote thousands of letters. Dangerous. (Angrily.) They took the risk of their lives in this step. Woe to Quisling. We will stop him. "Open up our schools!" Or we will teach without your schools. We will teach our children how to fight Nazis. We teach now in private homes secretly in our own homes. Stop the Nazis. Quisling threatens parents with prison. One thousand teachers are arrested today. What can we (Oh) do now? We are helpless before Quisling.

I was among the thousand that were taken. They took me too. I was among the thousand that were taken to prison. Six hundred of us are sent to a concentration camp (where they suffered). Some were tortured, and beaten to death. My friend died. Oh God!

Children watched as we moved in cattle cars. So a long the way... Children came to sing songs to them at train stations. We were overwhelmed. They loved their teachers. Germans stood in charge. I became the translator as they began to starve us. In the morning, What? We got coffee that is all. In the afternoon we got some hot water soup. Dinner was small slices of bread. No mattress to sleep upon. Hard floors were for sleep and for collapsing. Each morning we do "torture gymnastics." Guards would tie our hands behind our backs tightly and make us crawl in deep snow. We were suffocating each day.

They are above the Arctic Circle, It is freezing there and we are worried that they will die there and no one will know what happened to them. Some are being tortured. (They are being tortured and they may be killed at any time. I know they are suf-'fring. What can we do? What can we do to help them? We know they are freezing there in the Arctic.

We are freezing here. Death is near. Some of us caught pneumonia and blacked out for days. (They will die.) Thirty-two of us gave up but six hundred and eighty of us stayed and lived through the wretchedness. (They lived through it. They lived to tell the story of these camps of torture, pain, and torment.) We stayed. (Thank God. They endured. They stayed to tell us the story. Some were maimed for life.) Some experienced emotional breakdowns. Ten died from torture, others lived in agony. (Tell us what happened!)

Torture and breakdowns. It was cold. It was freezing. Cold. It was very cold, cold, cold. (We worried. You would all die from the cold and be tortured to death,) Friends lost their eyes in hard labor, Oh. We worked night and day for Germans. (Were friends killed?) Yes, a friend of mine was killed loading supplies. (Torture?) My friend broke his arms and one leg carrying loads. Straining, pulling, carrying, laboring hard. We did not feel like heroes. We worked night and day in the Arctic cold and darkness. We sang songs and gave lectures in some spare time. We wrote our own songs and we strategized.

Some of us were put in fox cages. Forty prisoners slept in a row so close, so tight; so fixed that no one could turn without disturbing all. Contagious diseases swept the camp Men became deadly sick. This was the "dark time" in the Arctic. No sun. Just night all day and night; blackness (darkness), It was black cold. Pitch cold. And with you?

The government tried to test our stamina at home. We stood the test. (Good for you.) Quisling tried to open the schools and then tried to make us members of the state union. We refused Quisling knew not to take strong measures. We were organized. Quisling stormed and raged. He came to our school and arrested me. (What?) We said the Nazis should arrest us all. All of us. (All of you?) Put us all in jail. The Nazis were powerless at home. Did we help?

Four hundred of us were released. The Nazis lost. Oh. We won. Now we can come home to stay. Yes We won. What more can we say for others to know what happened? We stayed together and built a "fund" for all those families left behind without fathers. What did you do? What did we do?

(Singers all in counterpoint.)

Well, We kept track of the Nazis. They wanted to replace our Parliament with a total state. (I tore out the pages of textbooks that were based on Nazi propaganda.) What did you do? What did we do? Well, We all pledged to stay independent of them and hid all our money and put away our treasures from view. Quisling wanted to get control over all Norway in the eyes of the world. Well, Quisling wanted us in high school to dress in uniforms like the Nazis but we said we would wear our own clothes. You cannot stop us from wearing our own clothes in school. We would not allow Nazification in our public schools. (My father was arrested.)

The Nazis said to me to me "Let's have a Sports Day for all young people to join in a cross-country ski race. But, we said "No!" No! No!" We will sing patriotic songs to them and they could nothing to stop us from singing. The Red Cross tried to give food to prisoners but the Nazis stole it. Oh. My father took notes on all that happened and so I know I'm telling the truth about events in awful times. Professors were arrested; Bishops dismissed. People were fired but we kept on protesting everyday. Yes, to the end of those awful days before we got back our freedom.

Quisling admitted his defeat. Now we can dance Now we can dance and sing together once again and celebrate our win over Quisling. **Quisling admitted his defeat and so now we can dance and sing together about our victory** We won with the strength and power of our people to fight and stand against the demands of a dictator who depends on us. We would not obey him and this requires a faith. Yes, a lot of faith in our selves and

with courage to risk all lives for freedom and democracy for all our citizens. It requires courage to die for your country. Thank God we also had faith in our selves and that is how we won the war.

Here is our new Anthem. We defeated our invaders without killing them. We suffered but carried on to win a nonviolent war. We won back our freedom. We're proud of our work. We saved a lot of lives by civilian defense. We have a lot more to learn but let us teach our children and all future generations.