

SIGRID UNDSET DIES; NORWEGIAN AUTHOR

Winner of the 1928 Nobel Prize
for 'Kristin Lavransdatter'
Trilogy Was Foe of Nazism.

FLED HOMELAND IN 1940

Wrote and Lectured Here Five
Years During War—First
Book Published in 1907

OSLO, Norway, June 10 (AP)—
Sigrid Undset, winner of the 1928
Nobel Prize for literature and cru-
sader against naziam, died today
at Lillehammer. She was 67 years
old.

Mme. Undset had been ill
throughout the winter but had been
feeling better this spring. She suf-
fered a stroke two days ago and
was taken to Oppland County Hos-
pital.

Her prize-winning work was the
"Kristin Lavransdatter" trilogy,
which won world-wide acclaim as
a novel of the Middle Ages. Mme.
Undset's writings aroused the an-
ger of Hitler's Nazis long before
the war and, in 1940, when the
Germans invaded Norway, she de-
voted herself to work for her Gov-
ernment.

Lost Eldest Son in War

For years, before the Nazi invasion, Mme. Undset lived "above the battle" in a medieval house on a mountainside near Lillehammer. Her eldest son, Anders, 27, was killed in action early in World War II. With her youngest son, Hans, who had joined an ambulance unit, she fled to Stockholm in May, 1940, to elude the Germans. Then she traveled through Russia, Siberia and Japan, arriving in San Francisco in August, 1940.

Subsequently she wrote and lectured here, living in a hotel on Brooklyn Heights in a room with a view of the harbor. She returned to Lillehammer in July, 1945.

Mme. Undset's five years in the United States were active. She had bid her fellow Norwegians to resist submission to loathsome catchwords about "blood and race" and "nerves of steel." In 1942 she wrote "Return to the Future," an account of her odyssey from Norway to this country.

The same year she received an honorary degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., and the next May Smith College awarded her a degree, citing her as one of the great novelists of our time and a symbol of the struggle the Norwegian people continued to wage for freedom.

Foresaw Dark Future

In a letter to THE NEW YORK TIMES, Mme. Undset foresaw a dark future in which the Germans must suffer for the sins of their fathers. The Germans, she feared, would inherit the war mania of their fathers and never be cured of it. The people of Norway, she wrote, would never again be taken in by German traits and "sentimentality," for which she had no use.

She had won critical acclaim throughout the world for her historical novels, but English-speaking peoples first knew her for "Kristin Lavransdatter," which sold more than 150,000 copies in the United States alone.

Her early volumes of fiction dealt with modern times, and she made realistic use of her office experience. She shared in the researches of her father, Ingvald Martin Undset, a prominent Norwegian archaeologist, and familiarized herself with the Middle Ages in Scandinavia. Out of these studies came the frame for her more ambitious novels.

Mme. Undset was born on May 20, 1882, in Kallundborg, Denmark. While her father's research work took him all over Europe, she remained home with her mother, Charlotte Gyth Undset, a Dane. Later, she was taken to Oslo (then Christiania), where her father taught in the university and where she was sent to a private day school.

Assistant to Father

She was the oldest of three daughters and took the place of a son in the household at an early age. She became her father's assistant and her knowledge of the medieval ages dated from the time when she pored over old books of scientific and popular works of history, archaeology and religion, and developed a profound taste for sagas and ancient traditions of the Viking period.

Her father died when she was 11 years old. Sigrid was graduated from the Christiania Commercial College at 16, and, thrown on her own resources, worked in the office of a lawyer, who had been her father's friend. While supporting herself, she dreamed of a literary career and spent her evenings and holidays writing. Thus originated her first novel, "Fru Marta Oulie," the story of an unhappy marriage. Written in diary form and completed in 1907, it was received with mild approval.

Her second book, a bitter one, was published the next year, with the ironical title, "Den Lykkelige Alder" ("The Happy Age"). She made her first attempt at re-creating the past in a saga from the Viking time which appeared in 1909. She then gave up her office work and, in 1910, published a small collection of poems.

Won First Success in 1911

Mme. Undset achieved her first popular success with the publication of "Jenny" in 1911. Remarkable for its courageous treatment of erotic subjects the novel created a sensation. A study in feminine psychology, it followed the same general plot as her other novels of modern life, which were realistic descriptions of middle-class homes and families in Oslo, such as her own.

Her considerable research work into the history, life, work and manners of the Norwegian people resulted in the medieval trilogy, "Kristin Lavransdatter," the story of Kristin from birth to death. It has been called a glorification of the Roman Catholic Church of the

Middle Ages, and the chapter relating Kristin's pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Olav, in the choir of the Nidaros Cathedral, gives a vivid impression of what Catholic faith meant to people of that age. The author's admiration for the majesty and beauty of that church was unbounded. She was received into the Roman Catholic Church at the Chapel of Hammer in 1924.

Mme. Undset's tetralogy of "Olaf Audunsson" laid against a medieval background and richly detailed, was published in this country between 1928 and 1930, under the title of "The Master of Hestviken." It was followed by several other works in which the author turned back to the modern novel. Of these, "The Wild Orchid," and a sequel "The Burning Bush," were published in the United States.

Former Wife of Artist

Shortly after her success with "Jenny," Mme. Undset was married to the well-known Norwegian painter, Anders Avarstad, in 1912. Her marriage was ended amicably in 1925, and Mme. Undset lived with her children at Lillehammer, a small Norwegian artistic resort on a lake some distance from the capital. Her house dated from the year 1000, and it had been restored and furnished with genuine old Norse pieces.

She was the third Norwegian author to receive the Nobel Prize in literature. It had been given in 1903 to Björnstjerne Björnson and to Knut Hamsun in 1920.

Mme. Undset wrote in 1938 "Images in a Mirror," a novel about a happy marriage. She paid tribute to her adopted faith in "Men, Women and Places," a group of essays published in 1939. Afterward she wrote "Christmas and Twelfth Night" and "Happy Times in Norway." Her novel, "Madame Dorothea," was published here early in 1940.