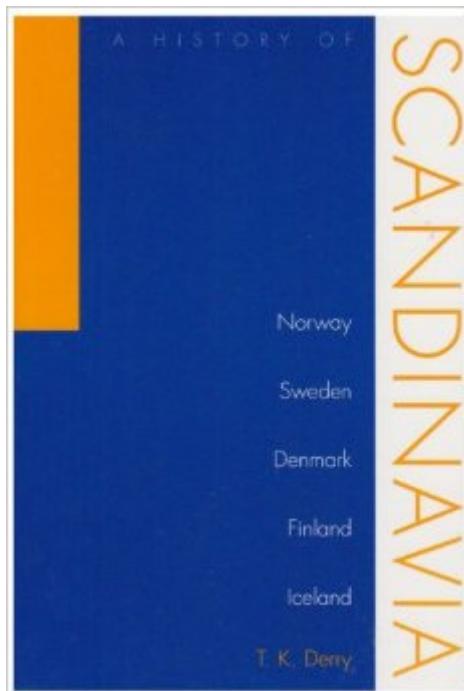


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A History Of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, And Iceland



Synopsis

HISTORY OF NORWAY, SWEDEN, DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a thorough, wide-ranging, scholarly work - a useful and insightful review that stretches over a millennium in time. Although the book charts the course in history of this geographically and culturally linked collection of peoples, it still emphasises the individuality of each. I hadn't realised just how complex a relationship of inter-dependence and rivalry existed between these nations for so long.

Among the more fascinating discussions in the book, I would list: church-state relations especially in the period following the reformation, the impact of the industrial revolution and the development of the welfare state, the period leading up to the second world war and the relationship between the various countries and the major powers during the war (i.e. Finland with Russia, Denmark with Germany, etc.) and the historical contribution of each nation to the arts and sciences. One small criticism: I would have liked to have seen some maps in the book - my knowledge of Scandinavia is not so extensive that I could picture the geographical relationship of the many places mentioned. I especially found the early part of the book very heavy going, and difficult to follow the many movements of people that were detailed.

In reading this book it becomes very apparent at how much the state-church relation influenced much of Scandinavia, and also it's people. It was also incredibly interesting to read about how the countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway kept separating, and uniting. For anyone who is

interested in Scandinavian history, that delves way beneath the surface, look no further, TK Derry writes a book that can't be ignored.

Four pages of maps in this book would have made me like it a lot more. But the writing is fairly tedious, with no nice high-level summaries to help you put what is going on in perspective, both relative to the region and its own history, and to what was going on elsewhere in Europe. I gave up after 60 pages or so. There's a lot of information, but it's not telling a compelling story.

The author does an excellent job of covering Scandinavia during the war years. His use of information from Eisenhowers private papers brings a whole new dimension to understanding what was going on in each country. I was not aware that near the end of the war Ike had a serious plan to liberate the Norwegian Allies from the NAZIS, by first liberating Denmark, then proceeding overland across Sweden. (I wonder if he would have given the job to Patton?)

Without a doubt, one of the most boring books I've ever tried reading. This is virtually nothing but an endless litany of names, dates, and places, barely held together by nebulous chapter themes (ex: "Monarchies in Equipoise"). My wife and I are taking a three week trip throughout Scandinavia, and I sought an interesting historical overview as background. This book is not it. I was a bit concerned since it originally published in 1977, but with 12 printings, I assumed it must have been updated (...wrong...) and was an interesting read (...wrong again...). There's only one illustration in the entire 400 page tome, and it's an out-of-date map. Definitely written by a scholar for other scholars. Perhaps this book would be of interest to someone willing to spend a year deciphering some runic inscription ... but for anyone seeking an interesting understanding of Scandinavian history, peoples and culture, this is death by detail.

This was the main history book I used decades ago when working on a minor in Scandinavian Studies. I have many other books that touch on Scandinavian society but most deal with Anglo Saxon or Viking history. Derry does not go into enough detail for me but it was intended to be an overview. It covers a large time period so it is a decent review. It does cover my favorite woman in history, Margaret I. After the viking era the Northern peoples went into decline. She united Scandinavia in the Kalmar Union. That union would have changed european history if her successors had her talent. The great powers like England and the Hanseatic League exploited internal cracks to tear it apart. The North again went into decline so it could not defend its neutrality

with Napoleon or Hitler.

I wanted a comprehensive but brief history and this book does it. Covers from ancient history up to WW II. I've learned things about the relationships between the 5 countries which I didn't know and that will make my travel there more interesting. I have read more interesting histories but also some which were boring. This is in between.

Whoa. Is this book ever dense! Well written; packed with information, some of it minutiae. The anecdotes about the personalities add a lively note. For example, did you know that Marie Antoinette's lover figured prominently in Swedish politics? You will if you read this book. Would have been better had there been more subheads, as it often wasn't easy to discern where the recitation of history of one Scandinavian country left off and another started. It's clear Dr. Derry did his research, and for those looking for a scholarly, well-researched tome, this is it.

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