

An outline of the history of the Unitarian movement in Norway 1893-1937

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(The Norwegian Unitarian Church)

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New information added for the years 1904, 1909, 1914, 1915, and 1917.

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Contents

Timetable p. 1.

Photos and links p. 4.

Timetable

1893

After many years working as Unitarian pastor in the USA Hans Tambs Lyche (1859-1898) returns to Kristiania (today Oslo) in Norway. Here he becomes the first editor of the periodical *Kringsjaa* in which he soon presents translated articles by American Unitarians.

This year also the Unitarian pastor and writer Kristofer Janson (1841-1917) leaves USA and again settles in Kristiania. Soon he delivers lectures on liberal Christianity and Spiritualism in many Norwegian cities.

1894

In Kristiania Hans Tambs Lyche publishes a leaflet on Unitarianism, discuss Unitarianism with the Evangelical Lutheran pastor Thorvald Klaveness (1844-1915). Tambs Lyche argues that the word «Unitarianism» is no longer an adequate label for the Unitarian movement. He also invites liberal minded people to establish a Unitarian church. This project fails. Instead he founds the first Unitarian periodical printed in Norway, *Free Words*. Thanks to Tambs Lyche Unitarianism is now discussed in several Norwegian books, periodicals, and lectures.

Mr. Axel Sabro (1847-?) becomes the first Norwegian Unitarian publisher.

1895

In January Kristofer Janson establishes the first Norwegian Unitarian Christian Church in Kristiania, The Church of Brotherhood. The Unitarianism preached by Janson seems to be a mixture of Christianity and Spiritualism. Only two weeks after the foundation of the church Tambs Lyche writes critical articles in Free Words warning against Janson's teaching of Spiritualism. He also argues that there should be another Unitarian Church in Kristiania.

1896

Conflict between Tambs Lyche and Sabro which forces Tambs Lyche to quit as editor of Free Words. From about April the periodical is no more Unitarian but continues to be published by Sabro until 1898. First Unitarian wedding takes place in Kristiania december 31.

1897

Kristofer Janson writes an article where he see himself as a savior sent by God to liberate the Norwegian people from the Ortodox Christianity. At the same time - or soon after - there is an increasing conflict between the executive committee of the Church of Brotherhood and Janson.

The Church of Brotherhood begins to keep official church records and adds Unitarian Society to its name.

1898

(1st critical year) Hans Tambs Lyche dies.

No more publications of Free Words by Sabro.

Kristofer Janson quits as Unitarian pastor to The Church of Brotherhood.

The first Unitarian confirmation takes place April 11.

1899

In December the Unitarian church only uses the name Unitarian Society.

1900 (2nd critical year)

In January and February many members leave Unitarian Society, including some members of the former executive committee and Janson's wife. In April Janson no longer uses the name Unitarian Society when inviting to Sunday meetings. He only uses the formula: Kristofer Janson speaks at the Worker's Association at 11 o'clock.

The 1900 Census tells that 88 Unitarians now live in Kristiania. 75 of them are members of the Unitarian Society. The rest is without any Unitarian membership. Total Unitarians living in Norway at this moment seems to be 106.

1901-1904

Kristofer Janson continues to invite to his private Unitarian meetings in Kristiania every Sunday.

No mention of the Unitarian Society in newspapers.

Between 1900-1903 no new members join the Unitarian Society.

1904

Unitarian pastor Herman Haugerud (1864-1937) returns form the USA and is engaged as the new pastor to Unitarian Society in Kristiania. For one year (1904-05) he and Janson invites to Unitarian meetings in Kristiania at the same time but in different places! Haugerud invites to Unitarian meetings in the Unitarian Society at Student Society Sunday's 11 at o'clock and Janson to Janson's meetings at the Worker's Association Sunday's at 11 o'clock.

March 11, Haugerud receives a letter from the American Unitarian Association informing him that they will send him a catalouge of publications to be used in is work as Unitarian minister in Norway.

This year 12 new members join the Unitarian Society.

1905

In April Janson stops inviting to his private Unitarian meetings. From now on only pastor Haugerud invites to Unitarian meetings at the Unitarian Society.

The foundation of a Unitarian Youth Association where Tambs Lyche's son is secretary and a Unitarian Choir.

1906

Haugerud publishes the Unitarian periodical *The Unitarian* and tries to establish a Unitarian group in the town Skien. No traces of this group has later been found. Nor any further traces of the Unitarian Youth Association and the Unitarian Choir.

1907

The periodical *The Unitarian* is no longer published. It seems *The Unitarian Society* no longer advertises its meetings.

1909

Herman Haugerud travels to England in order to collect money to erect a church building in Oslo. Haugerud visits London and takes part in the Sunday Evening Service at Clarence Road Unitarian Church March 14.

September 29, Joseph Ference, bishop of the Hungarian Unitarian Churches, writes a letter to Haugerud in which he informs that the Hungarian Unitarian Churches have collected money to be sent to Norway in order to erect a church building. The letter may be seen as a pdf-file at this URL: <http://unitarian.christian.net/foto/hungarynorway.pdf>

1914

October 13, Herman Haugerud establishes a new Unitarian youth organization in Oslo.

1915

The British & Foreign Unitarian Association invites Haugerud to visit England and to preach four Sundays beginning February 14 at Wandsworth.

February 24, Haugerud is given a letter of recommendation where Rt. Hon. H.J. Tennant, M.P. at the War Office is asked to: «His [Haugerud] object is to counter as far as possible the German propaganda going on in the Norwegian press, and if you can give him authority to visit internment camps or any other places where he can by personal investigation counteract some of the falsehoods being circulated about us in neutral countries, I will guarantee that you will find him entirely worthy of trust.» The letter is probably signed «Chancelhor».

1917

October 25, the General Assembly of *The Unitarian Association* writes a letter to Herman Haugerud in which he is asked to continue as Unitarian pastor. Haugerud accepts October 27.

1919-1937

Only 2 new members are recorded in the church books.

1930

69 Unitarians in Norway according to the Census.

1937

(final year) Pastor Herman Haugerud dies.

No new Unitarian pastor is appointed.

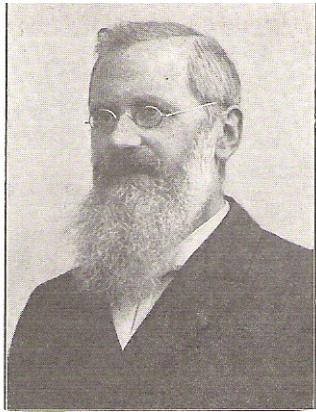
Last entrance in the church books.

The Unitarian Society in Norway no longer exists.

1950

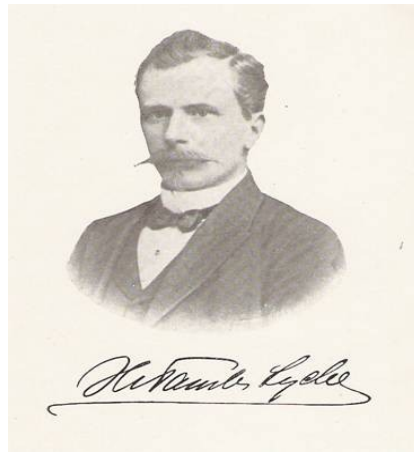
17 Unitarians in Norway according to the Census.

Photos and links



Kristofer Janson.

Kristofer Janson



Hans Tambs Lyche



Herman Haugerud

For more photos and handwriting, see <http://morgenstjerne.org/diverse2006/pastorbilder/index.html>

<http://unitaren.blogspot.com/>

The Unitarian, notes on the history of Norwegian Unitarianism. English.

<http://nordichistory.unitarforbundet.org/>

The Quick Guide to the History of Nordic Unitarianism, English.