

# The Rise and Growth of the Danish Folk High School

By *Roar Skovmand*

Let it be as it is and remain as it has been. That is the motto of a Danish novel that describes *the unchanged parish* – the little community carrying on old traditions, quite indifferent to modern technical, economic, social and cultural developments. But the man who talks that way is a tragic figure, for it is our experience that it cannot be as it is and stay as it has been. In our country, Denmark, the old community order was broken up, not with blood and iron as in Russia after the 1917 revolution, but much more quietly and yet completely. It did not cost one drop of blood, but it changed utterly the mode of life of the common man.

It began in 1788, the year before the famous French Revolution, and the forces behind it were the same as in many other countries. The old village fellowship could no longer master the tasks of production. It became necessary to redistribute the land, enclose areas of it so that it encircled the farm, and consequently it was necessary to move the farms away from the old closely built-up villages. So if you look at Denmark from the air, you will see farms and houses everywhere. Villages of the old kind are still to be found, and here the farms are still as they were before 1788, but everything new has been built outside the villages, out in the fields, and there are not nearly so many farms and houses in the old villages as there were a hundred and eighty-five years ago. But to move the farms and enclose land was not enough. Where previously communal tillage was the order, it was the slowest farmer who set the pace. After 1788, the peasants were enabled to acquire the ownership of the land they farmed, feudal tenure being abolished. As owners, the great advantage to them from now on was that it was the quickest and most efficient farmer who set the

pace. This led to an extension of production and to the improvement of its quality. But a hundred years later it was realized that this was not enough. Then it was seen that co-operative effort was needed if the small farmers were to compete with the large farming estates. So the small farmers united in building co-operative dairies; a new fellowship arose, – the fellowship of voluntary co-operation, and by virtue of this fellowship it was possible to produce dairy products of high quality that could compete on the world market. Co-operative slaughterhouses were also built, and purchases of fodder and fertilizers were made on the same principle. But all this presupposes political and cultural education. And it is here that *the Folk High School movement* appeared upon the scene.

Since the first Folk High Schools were founded in the eighteen-forties and -fifties, more than a hundred years ago, they have proved to be a vital force in the education of the Danish people for democracy. Just as the universities, both here and abroad, have often been hotbeds of national and political activity, so have the Folk High Schools; but whilst universities are to be found in every civilized country, the Folk High Schools, the poor man's university, have until recent years been a special northern phenomenon, most strongly represented in Denmark.

From the beginning of the eighteen-thirties *N.F.S. Grundtvig* had in his writings propagated his great idea: a Danish *people's* high-school, in contrast to the grammar (Latin) high school of the universities. Here the best type of young people of all classes should receive education of wider and deeper character than that provided by the alien training of the university. It should be a "school for life", where they who had the will and ability to represent the people in parish councils and Parliament, could gain instruction in matters concerning their own community, – instruction that might counterbalance the prevailing disrupting class interests. Grundtvig wanted this school to be founded in an existing building (Sorø Academy) in the South-West of Seeland. In this academy, belonging to the State, there were valuable assets, rich resources and historical relics that provided the right basis for such a school. But although Grundtvig even succeeded in winning the King over to his cause, his Sorø idea was never realized.

But even if his plan was not realized, the fundamental idea about how a Folk High School for his countrymen ought to be made, was created by Grundtvig himself. He did not agree with the thesis of Lutheran or Calvinistic Protestantism, that all men are absolute sinners, that there is nothing good in human beings. In his curious manner, he said, "man is not an ape, destined first to imitate other animals and then himself until the end of the world, but he is a matchless, wonderful creature in whom divine power will proclaim, develop and manifest itself through a thousand generations, as a divine experiment revealing how spirit and dust can impregnate each other and be glorified in a united divine consciousness".

Most wonderful of all is the fact, Grundtvig said, that man has received the gift of the *word*. The word is the deepest characteristic of "what is human", and the word means the *Mother tongue*. In the new school that he had in mind, the mother tongue, its care and attention, was to play a decisive role. In harmony with the German philosopher Herder's conception of nations, Grundtvig saw the world full of an infinitude of peoples, each with their own mother tongue and peculiar general spirit. These nations were not one another's enemies, but each a special expression of the human spirit's endeavour to strive on towards a solution of the mystery of life.

In finding, as Grundtvig did, that what is deepest in mankind resides in the mother tongue and in national life, it was almost inevitable that he turned against the Protestant Latin School, whose foundations were not in the people's own life and whose language was not the mother tongue. In vigorous terms Grundtvig proclaimed ideas, revolutionary at that time, about a school that would rise from the life of the people and whose sole task should be to act as its interpreter and inspirer. Against the concept of an academic culture he advanced the idea of a national, or as he said in Danish, a "folkelig" culture, a culture rooted in the people itself. "Folkelig" education, or, as he also called it, education and efficiency for life, must come from a new school where "our native country's natural and historical qualities, expressed in real life and in the demands of the present time" become the center.

In the year 1834 Provincial Advisory Councils were introduced in Denmark as a first step in the direction of democratic govern-

ment. Grundtvig expressed the opinion that in setting up the councils a page in the history of Denmark had been turned. He added that "education for the common people must necessarily go hand in hand with the councils, and it must not be given in a boys' school, but in a school for adults, and it must aim at giving its pupils the training and enlightenment that is desirable both among members of the councils and their electors". Here the whole teaching ought to centre round "the King, the nation, the native country and the mother tongue, not in order to encourage book-worms or to prepare for an examination, but simply to rouse and nourish love of country and to strengthen and enrich the mother tongue". The teachers must be persons who are inspired by the spirit of the people. Poets and authors must not be lacking at such schools, where they will find an opportunity of "doing good for their living".

Grundtvig fully realized from the beginning that democracy would lead to party divisions, and here he saw a danger of national fellowship being broken up and civil war resulting. This, he believed that his school could counteract, for here young people of all sections of the community would be concerned with the affairs of the nation as a whole, and experience fellowship that would extend beyond political opinions and parties.

But he did not get the opportunity of realizing the ideas himself. When he died in 1872, his disciples and friends had started schools strongly inspired by his ideas.

One of them, *Rasmus Sørensen*, an enterprising Seeland teacher, voiced in 1843 the idea of starting a school for the "good heads of the peasantry" that were able to represent the common people of the country districts at public gatherings. At that time 80% of the people were farm-hands, farmers or small-holders. However, Rasmus Sørensen did not go to the King with his idea: he went to the people. He spoke at religious meetings and privately with individual people about the matter, and it was discussed in the circles where he moved. But the people were reluctant. An influential Jutland peasant, a member of parliament, told Rasmus Sørensen straight out that his plan was being put forward a hundred years too soon.

Notwithstanding this reluctance, a year later, in 1844, the first Danish folk high school was opened at Rødding in South Jutland.

Why there? Because the powerful neighbouring culture, German culture, was threatening to undermine the Danish peasant culture. German was a world language and an esteemed language spoken by the educated classes in the border districts. But suddenly an independent-minded citizen, a member of the Advisory Council of Slesvig, decided to speak Danish, and, according to the minutes of the meeting, "he continued speaking Danish". This made an impression, and young liberal-minded people in Copenhagen (the capital) collected money for providing or facilitating Danish instruction in the districts where the Danish language was threatened. The professors of Copenhagen preferred the money to be used for a Grammar (secondary) School, but professor *Chr. Flor* made them see that the national cause stood or fell with the peasant class, and consequently there was need for a people's high school such as that envisaged by Grundtvig for Sorø.

Chr. Flor became the actual leader of the Rødding school and for a time acted as its principal. He called the school a "folk high school", although almost all of his pupils were of the peasantry, and he emphasized that the purpose was not to promote efficiency in farming, but to interest the young in their people's history and community conditions. Both he and his successor, *Sofus Høgsbro*, kept in mind the "Sorø School" when setting up a school for the youth of North Slesvig.

In other parts of Denmark, where social problems were much more to the fore and where the national cause did not mean as much as it did in the border districts, the first high-school for the peasantry came some years later. The first was Rasmus Sørensen's own effort to run a school in the district round *Uldum*, in 1849. In 1851, a member of parliament of Salling, supported by the peasant party, succeeded in obtaining a modest state grant for peasant high-schools, — after which, in the eighteen-fifties, some ten small schools for the adult or adolescent sons of the peasants were established.

The origin and character of these schools was not uniform, but almost all of them were local schools started by circles of earnest Christian or politically-interested peasants, and led by young graduates of training colleges. The largest of the schools, *Hindholm* in South Seeland, was established by a friend of the children, *Anders Stephansen*, aided by a countess and a leader of small-hol-

ders, *Peder Hansen*. Inviting people to collect money for it, he wrote, "If our class is not to go down in the continued struggle against our more enlightened and educated opponents, it is high time that we do something to ensure that our class has at least some men who, as farmers and small-holders, can in every respect be their leaders and defenders".

Thoughts of this kind were a spur to many of the peasants who set the school going. It was just as much Rasmus Sørensen's ideas as it was Grundtvig's that met a response among the peasants. And so it was with *Lars Bjørnbak* when, in 1857, he founded the peasant school at Viby, a small village near Aarhus. Its slogan was "Knowledge is power: ignorance is serfdom". Bjørnbak stressed the importance of imparting to his pupils knowledge and good manners. He taught them how to conduct themselves in refined company and to use standard Danish instead of the peasant dialect of the district. Somehow or other he managed, all at the same time, to be an elementary school teacher, a parish clerk, a high school principal, farm-owner, editor, lecturer and party-politician; but in all these fields of activity he pursued one purpose: the education of the peasantry for full equality with the "privileged" ranks of society.

There were several schools of the Bjørnbak type, but this type did not become the predominating. The school that proved to be a prototype was *C. Kold's*. In contrast to Bjørnbak, he was greatly influenced by Grundtvig, although he had not read much of the latter's writings. For that matter Kold read but little, but Grundtvig's "History of the World" he *did* study. Among his things there were detailed extracts from it. Rasmus Sørensen had probably read everything that Grundtvig had written, but had not learnt much from it. In Kold's case it was practically the reverse. In reading Grundtvig's History of the World he realized clearly that he had to build a small school with the aim of reviving both the Christian and the Danish spirit among the peasants, and getting them to believe in "God's love and the good fortune of Denmark" as he put it.

Kold's first attempt to run a school for young people dates, according to himself, from the autumn of 1849, when he joined the household of *Vilhelm Birkedal*, a pastor of *Ryslinge* in the island

of Funen. He was to work as family tutor. At the same time he ran a kind of continuation school for some boys in their years of puberty and, as he had done previously, gathered together young men from the village for evening lectures and readings. This encouraged him to continue work with the young. The following summer he bought a piece of ground nearby and erected a small school house which, by the way, is still standing.

Nowadays it is a very risky matter to start a high school, even if one can procure the necessary initial capital. Kold, too, procured financial help at the start, from Grundtvig and his friends in Copenhagen and also from religious circles in Funen. But what decides whether or not a high school can endure is its capacity for attracting students, and who wanted to attend a Folk High-School at that time? Kold's school was to begin on November 1st 1851, but even as late as the last days of October there had been but one applicant. People thought it too expensive to go to such a school. To be sure all that Kold charged for board, lodging and tuition was 12 kroner = shillings a month, and he promised people to work wonders with their children. They were to become so active and industrious that the like had never been seen; but people did not think that that was enough, they asked what their children could become after being at the school, whether they could be a parish clerk, or whether they could be exempted from military service. However, on November 1st, 10 pupils turned up and later others came, so that there were 15 in all.

It was indeed a small group to begin with, most of them just big boys; but things happened in the small rooms. The pupils learned writing and arithmetic, but what mattered most to Kold was arousing interest in, and making clear the Christian and national life. With the help of *Poulsen-Dal*, a training-school graduate, and Birkedal, Kold went through sections of world history, Church - & Bible history, Northern mythology and the earliest history of Denmark; and the works of Danish writers were read aloud. One of the pupils of this first winter term, which lasted five months, said later, "I had a dim, unconscious yearning for something higher and deeper than what I had learnt in the ordinary childrens' school, and I felt keenly the emptiness of my life. But Kold found a remedy for my distress. At that young age, full of desires and

very susceptible, I was like a piece of wax in Kold's hands, which he could fashion in much the same way as a sculptor makes models of clay".

There is no doubt that this characterization of Kold hits the nail on the head. When Kold told of his experiences and proclaimed his faith, something happened in the minds of the young people. Well known is a story of how he met a young farm-hand out in the fields and tried to persuade him to attend his high school. And when the young man asked what good there was in that, Kold asked him if he had a pocket watch. Yes, he had. That watch, said Kold, can go for a time, and then it has to be wound up again; but at my school you shall be wound up so that you will never stop! Almost unanimous evidence given by Kold's old pupils indicates that Kold really possessed a rare quality that savoured of genius, a quality that set young people going so that they never stopped. That such a quality might well be dangerous if it led to narrow nationalism and religious fanaticism, is obvious. But in Kold's case it was counteracted by a certain plainness and simplicity in his daily house-keeping and by a marked integrity in his nature and manners. He once said (in the eighteen-sixties), "It is up to us to see that the pupils think: "We are peasant youth who are staying some months with Christen Kold, the peasant at Hjaltese. We help him a little with what he is doing, we talk together about everything, we listen to lectures, we get practice in writing, arithmetic and such things, and when these months have passed, each of us will go his own way, take up his job, and we shall be the same plain and simple young people as before."

The teachers at Kold's school shared the same conditions as the pupils, eating from the same dish as they did. During the whole of the first winter Kold's house-keeping used up only six pounds of sugar, and the largest item of expenditure was for "klipfisk" (split and dried cod). Kold and Poulsen-Dal slept in the loft dormitory together with all the pupils. Although Kold was born and reared in a provincial town, he dressed like a peasant. A Swedish editor who visited his school gave this description of him, "Before me stood a middle-aged man with fine, sharp features, dressed like a peasant in grey home spun, with a cap on his head". In his lectures he told the pupils, who formed an intimate circle around him, how an irresistible influence that never let him rest had urged

him to transform his idea into action. Reason had warned him in vain of the debt he would incur by doing so. The spirit in him had said "You must", "The means will come as time goes by, in the degree they are needed. And that is how it went". – "All this told in a simple manner, devoid of anything stilted, was intended to inspire confidence and courage in efforts directed to higher things. That there was something overwrought in all this might well be, but it was not the overwrought state of an unhealthy kind which may arise from selfcentredness, but an expression of the sacred fire that is found in all powerful personalities that in some way or other bear the world forward."

Kold's high school activity, beginning in the little house at Ryslinge, became of epoch-making importance. It was not the first High School, nor was it the largest, but the ideas behind it were some of those that Grundtvig had propounded in the 'thirties and 'forties. Better than anyone else, Kold found a way in which the ideas could be realized. It was a genuine stroke of genius that led him to venture upon the building of a school regardless of what it could mean in the way of visible profit to the pupils. Grundtvig's high school idea, indeed, was concerned with promoting efficiency for the duties in civil life. When *D. G. Monrad*, an educationalist and school director, asked Kold what he proposed doing with his school, he answered, "When I was eighteen years old, I learnt to love God and my neighbour, and that made me so happy that I determined to devote all my time and energy to help others to do the same. The school will aim at teaching people to love God, their neighbour and their country". "Well", answered Monrad ironically, "It's a very good aim".

It is easy to understand Monrad's doubt about running a school on this programme, but it became clear that Kold had the ability to do so. However, his school was also a place where one learnt reading, writing and arithmetic somewhat better than at the ordinary children's school. Kold's assistant teacher, Poulsen-Dal, has often been underrated. He was an unusually efficient teacher and well able to keep on good terms with the pupils. But to Kold's mind the all-important matter was undoubtedly *a national and Christian revival in the life of the common people*.

Courage was, indeed, needed to run a school in that manner, setting himself up against the traditions of ordinary schools and

opposing the attitude that dominated the leading educational circles.

Whilst with the sureness of the sleepwalker Kold was able to state the purpose of his school, he also chose the right design: the five-month winter term, where the young peasants could leave their daily work, the homely intercourse between teachers and pupils living under plain and simple conditions. Kold was also the first to admit girls and young women to the High School. He said: "We must also have the young women at the High Schools, or we shall not get enough out of the work. It's not much use guiding half of the people to enlightenment and a sense of community, if the other half remains behind."

Unlike Rasmus Sørensen, Kold was able to see, as time went on, that his ideas were gaining ground. When he died in 1871 he was only 54 years of age, but by then his school had grown, being attended by more than 100 pupils. Young high school leaders, on beginning their work, took him as their prototype and regarded Kold's school at Dalum as a pattern. And not only did *Folk High Schools* follow his course, but the so-called free schools for children, which were started round about by his students, were also built up on his principles. And so were the schools for boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen years old.

Once a man said to Kold, "Things are not going well in our district now. Some years ago people came together and we enjoyed our pleasant social gatherings. We agreed with one another and lived peacefully and well. Now we find ourselves at loggerheads about free schools, High Schools, controversial parish matters, – and all this new stuff. Some want this and some want that. Then we had peace, now we have dissension and discord, and it seems that you are the one who has caused all this". Kold answered: "If my activities have caused such a change in your district, you ought really to thank me. For you are much mistaken in thinking that previously there was peace in your district; it was not peace at all, it was the quiet of the church-yard, and that is very unhealthy for people."

The numerical growth of the Folk High Schools did not make great strides until the eighteen-sixties. In 1863 there were only 15 peasant High Schools with rather less than 500 pupils. In the years 1865–67, 25 new schools were founded. It was a sign of cultural

progress, but it came immediately after a ruinous war in 1864, following which Germany annexed the southern border district of Denmark, including Rødding, where the first high school was founded. This territory, the Danish-speaking and Danish-minded part of South Jutland (Nord Slesvig) was not returned to Denmark until after the first World War, and Rødding High School was restarted. The bitter defeat and loss of territory, however, was by no means a knock-out blow for the people. They sought to make their outward loss an inward gain. In increasing numbers the young sons and daughters of the peasants attended the high schools. In 1867 the number of high school pupils was doubled; in 1870 it was over 2000, and in 1876 over 4000. There were districts, especially in Jutland, where every fourth young person of the country district attended the High School. There were other parts of the country, North Seeland in particular, where only one young person in ten went to the High School, and from the towns only few persons were attracted to the schools. What was the reason for this great influx to the High Schools in the latter half of the 'sixties? The war of 1864 was, indeed, a clarion call to all forces to parry the effects of the defeat. However, the importance of this factor has been somewhat exaggerated. The work of the Grundtvigian ministers in the church and among the people, together with the activities of religious gatherings, had prepared the way for the High Schools. But the great interest of the peasants themselves (in the middle of the eighteen-sixties) in the building of High Schools, must also be viewed in relation to economic progress, social self-assertion and clear political aims. When in 1864 Grundtvigian teachers and peasants in the district of Aarhus turned to *Jens Nørregaard*, a young university man, asking him to lead a school somewhat contrary to the lines taken by Bjørnbak, they put this question to him: "Although you cannot join forces with the political party of the peasants, do you accept the view that it is the peasant class that must advance, be enlightened and grow in strength so as to become the very heart of the people and take up the burdens of the new age?" Bjørnbak's solution was expressed in the slogan: "Push onward peasant, push onward". But it was also the watchword of his opponents (among the peasants), and here we find – quite apart from the war – the principal cause behind the building of the large number of schools.

But whilst, in the eighteen-fifties, the peasant High School had lacked the impress of oneness, it was the Grundtvigian Folk High Schools that set their stamp on the development after 1865. This was especially due to a number of gifted young theologians, a circle of friends who preferred the precarious, but attractive Folk High School calling to the church ministry or scientific activity.

The most notable of these young men was *Ludvig Schrøder*, who in 1862 had succeeded Høgsbro as principal of Rødding High School. He was compelled by him and his fellow teachers to move from Rødding to the small village of *Askov*, a little north of the new border. In the course of a few years the school at Askov attracted a larger number of pupils than the Rødding High School had ever done. It became the centre of the entire High School movement, and it has remained so to this day. Schrøder's success at Askov was due to his being able to unite the best traditions of Rødding (the objective teaching and the equal terms of fellowship among the teaching staff) with the example of Kold's school: the rousing effect of the well-spoken word and the pleasant home-like school-life. It was also due to Schrøder's ability in bringing into association the Christian and politically-alert peasants of the district. Schrøder was himself a mature and masterful personality, whose lectures on mythology and history made a deep impression upon his pupils.

But Schrøder was not an isolated figure. *Ernst Trier*, who built Vallekilde Folk High School in 1865, did not share Schrøder's thoroughness and influence, but his frankness, his warm and winning nature, enabled him to get on very intimate terms with the pupils and participate in their joys and sorrows. Although a Copenhagener, Trier was perhaps the one of this group of friends who most deeply understood the forces at work in the times and in the people. The eloquent *Jens Nørregaard*, who from the year 1866 led Testrup High School with considerable power and authority, came to grips with *Lars Bjørnbak* at numerous meetings.

What did the Folk High School students learn? What they could learn through lessons and lectures during a winter term of five months was, of course, limited. They learnt to sing, and they learnt to listen. Many of them would perhaps say that they learnt how to live at home and in the community. One thing is

certain: the generation that left the Folk High Schools in the period after 1865 was more capable than the generation of the eighteen-thirties. It soon became clear that the High School movement, arising from the people and bearing the impress of Grundtvig was developing a fund of inspiration and a wealth of power in all spheres of life. The schools transformed the simple, common peasant people into a nation and provided the backbone of a vigorous democracy.

Long ago, an author writing in Latin said about Germany when it was divided into many very small kingdoms and duchies, that it was an *irregulare aliquod corpus et monstro simile*; that is an irregular body, rather like a monster.

When the Folk High School started more than a hundred years ago, it seemed to be such an irregular body. The Minister of Education hesitated to recognize it. When Grundtvig, as a member of the first parliament in the year 1848, asked why the Minister had not taken any steps to establish a large State High School, the Minister replied that he would not support an institution which intended to monopolize a purely Danish education. If an education for parliamentary life is really needed, he said, it ought to be given here in this house, in the Parliament itself. Oh no, Grundtvig retorted, not here; but in this house we ought to find its fruit.

The Folk High Schools of Denmark were *not* founded on the initiative of the State, but on the initiative of private persons and groups of the population, not least of peasant stock. And the representatives of the peasants in parliament claimed that the State should support the Folk High School as it then was. In spite of warnings from the minister, who wanted education to be directed centrally by the Ministry of Education, some members of the farmers' party moved that State Support should be given to the new Folk High Schools, and the motion was passed by the majority of the House of Commons. Later on, the democratic majority of the Commons forced the conservative Government to increase this support. From 1851 the Schools got financial support from the State, and from 1868 financial assistance was granted to needy students.

But the conservative ministers were really confused when confronted by the problem of controlling these peculiar schools, these irregular bodies looking like a monster! In fact, they had no pos-

sibility of doing it efficiently. They tried to charge the education committees of the county councils with the supervision of the schools, and sometimes the deans of these committees called for examinations, but they did not succeed in this demand. The schools survived and the number of students increased, more than ever after the defeat in the year 1864, when the Germans had conquered and annexed Northern Slesvig. The Folk High Schools had now a supreme aim: to bring about a revival in the Danish people. A Danish poet of that time said in verse:

What outwards has been lost  
shall inwardly be gained,

by which he meant, what we have lost materially we will strive to gain spiritually, and if the Danish people succeeded in regaining in this way what was lost, a great deal of the credit for it is due to the Folk High Schools which restored the courage of the people.

During the 'seventies and 'eighties a violent political struggle was waged between the House of Commons, dominated by the liberal peasants, and the Upper House, under the sway of the conservative estate owners. The liberals wanted a parliamentary government, but the king preferred a conservative government resting upon the Upper House. This government looked upon the Folk High Schools as hotbeds of liberalism; the conservatives even feared that the school leaders might inspire young people to open rebellion. Perhaps there was no reason for this fear, but it can't be denied that the spirit of most of the schools was very liberal and hostile towards the government.

In the year 1876 the government appointed a permanent inspector to control the Folk High Schools. It was not the intention of the government to help the schools by this measure, but nevertheless the measure proved to be of benefit to the schools. The State Supervisor would not first and foremost control the schools, – he told the principals that he would just visit them. And *Mathias Steenstrup* turned out to be a true friend and a good defender of the schools. He wrote a book, *The Folk High Schools*, illustrated by facts; and the first attack from the government was repelled. Later on, however, the government tried to exclude the most-su-

spected schools from the grants list, but this measure succeeded no better than the first one. The Liberal party collected the money necessary to secure the economy of the menaced schools.

Not until the 'nineties, thanks largely to a widespread movement in favour of the Folk High Schools, did the relation between the schools and the State again improve. The conflict between the two chambers of Parliament found appeasement, matters were gradually accomodated, and in the year 1892, the first Folk High School Act was passed.

This Act did not set forth what the Folk High Schools were to do; the aim and methods of these schools have never been determined by law. The Act merely stated what the State was to grant to each school and to needy students. The leading principles of this Act are still valid even though they have been amended from time to time, always in favour of the schools. The Act of 1892 secured for the schools a fixed annual grant, payment of up to one-third of the teachers' salaries, and refundment of part of the cost of materials for teaching.

The Act was passed unanimously in the Parliament. It was an indication that all groups of the people now fully did recognize the contribution of the Folk High School to the service of education. The long years of struggle were at an end. The High Schools had won greater financial independence and could look forward with confidence to vigorous growth. The regulation affecting grants was destined to be amended several times in our century, but on each occasion to the accompaniment of more praise than adverse criticism. Relations with the State were to give rise to no further trouble.

In the year 1960 one of the champions of the Danish Adult Education in this century, *Johs. Novrup*, gave a lecture on the Folk High Schools at a conference in Washington D.C. After the lecture a delegate from the Philippines asked him if it was possible to import the spirit of Scandinavian Folk High Schools into his country in view of the fact that this spirit is rooted in the history of Scandinavia. And he received this answer:

"I don't think that this question can be answered with Yes or No. I think that an organic part of the Folk High School idea is that a Folk High School must develop out of the people to which it

belongs, and it will in each nation take on its particular form. What might be common for a Folk High School is that it is a residential school for adults – that it does not give degrees – that it does not train for a vocation – but that it looks upon men as men. This can really be done in thousands of ways and there is a possibility for developing Folk High Schools in all countries. Having said that, I would like to say, at the same time, that if Denmark were starting to day, I think it would be just as difficult in Denmark as it is in most other countries at present. I do not think that the development in industry and the whole sociological development in our countries are very stimulating for this specific type of adult education . . .”

Since that the words pronounced by Johs. Novrup seem to have proved true. The problems of our generation and of the changing community today are highly different from the problems a hundred years ago, perhaps one might say only twenty years ago. But nevertheless we are allowed to admit that it really was a wonderful experience that Denmark at the right time got such animating spirits as Grundtvig and his disciples, the founders of the first Folk High Schools. In our complicated age we need a lot of their originality, their aims and their courage. Their history does remain as a challenge from pioneers.