

men IV-E. No one knows how many young men went IA-O from a sense of concern, nor how many would have joined willingly the men in prison upholding their conscientious beliefs. The statistical record is all one-sided in favor of the men who have gone into the armed services, yet even there we hear of those who are frustrated. We are a small society, too small to generalize. We are loosely organized, widely scattered, and it is not just or accurate to make statements of a qualitative nature based on quantitative results. Quoting again from Rufus M. Jones—and do we have a more understanding leader?—there has been “a fine remnant of keepers of the faith. They have been badly dealt with by the Government. They have had hard dull days—even years—of unpaid labor. They have saved land from erosion, fought forest fires, cleared parks; they have been guinea-pigs for almost every known disease; they have formed starvation units—a dreadful experience; they have demonstrated that life can be maintained on salt water in place of fresh; they have manned hospitals for the sane and insane; they have lovingly guided the feeble-minded; they have been deprived of constructive service abroad in areas of danger where they desired to go; all of them have suffered and endured.”

And finally, what about our meetings for worship? It is remarked that in many Meetings it, the meeting for worship, is a mere preliminary to the First-day school which is the more important part of the religious activity of First-day, that our ministry is shallow and our periods of silence deadening. Well, in the past few years I have visited every Meeting in our Yearly Meeting (there are eighty-two of them) except the one in California. There is one Meeting and only one that I know of where the meeting for worship is so short and the First-day school so much better attended and so much more live that it seems to be the more important part of that Meeting. On the contrary,

in Meeting after Meeting the committees of Ministry and Counsel and the Overseers feel that the quality of their meetings for worship is much deeper and more spiritual now than in recent decades. Possibly that is not true all over America but again it is not fair to generalize without looking at the total over-all picture. But the constructive point is this: Where one finds live First-day school and conference classes for adults and children today one finds also good, live, helpful, vital meetings for worship. They are complementary, not mutually exclusive.

The familiar Quaker motto calendar which is to be found in over one million homes and offices in America and all over the English-speaking world contains this quotation from Emerson, “Nothing great was ever won without enthusiasm.” What we need today are enthusiastic Quakers, ambassadors of goodwill, apostles of the Light and Truth, followers of the Way. Emerson also wrote in his *Journal* a century ago: “Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee, and do not try to make the universe a blind alley.”

I should like to invite Friends disturbed by the present state of our Society to do some opening of doors in meeting houses and observe the new life to be found there. I admit I know well only about one hundred different Meetings, but I do not have the same feelings about the blind alley of twentieth century Quakerism that one gets from reading between the lines of some of those writing about the spiritual level of Quakerism today. I know a big city Meeting, a struggling suburban Meeting, a small rural Meeting, a Meeting formerly at the crossroads and now off the beaten track—and all of them, and a good many more, are to an appreciable degree more alert to their responsibilities as centers of religious life and growth than they have been for a generation. It is my conviction that Quakerism is being tried today by more Friends than ever before in recent times. Am I wrong?

## The Danish Folk Schools

BY LEONARD S. KENWORTHY \*

LARGELY responsible for the remarkable development of modern Denmark was Bishop Grundtvig, poet, philosopher, minister, educator, statesman. So profoundly did he affect Denmark and the other Scandinavian countries that he is called “the prophet of the North.”

He came from an old cultured Danish family and during his academic youth, the influences of German

philosophy and literature as well as the upheaval caused by the Napoleonic wars were wrestling in his soul with his absorbing interest in Northern mythology. He wanted to revive the pride of his people in their history and traditions. He was equally fervent in his desire to reform the ultra-conservative Danish Church, and after much defeat and discouragement, he succeeded in this regard. But his greatest contribution to Denmark and the world was the Folk School Movement which he started and with which his name will always be associated.

The school he envisaged was a school for the masses. It was to be a democratic institution rather than an aristocratic one. The university already

\* This article is an adaptation of a longer piece published by *New Europe*, a monthly review of international affairs. The author was a member of the staff of the American Friends Service Committee center in Berlin in 1940-41. He is now in the C.P.S. experimental jaundice unit at New Haven, Conn.

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existed for the training of officials; this new type of school would be for "that great part of the people who do not want to become, or cannot possibly become officials but who have to feed themselves and the officials, too." The absolute necessity of education for everyone was his constant theme. "Obviously," he said, "only the few can and must be professors and learned folks at one time, but we must *all* be Danish citizens—enlightened and useful citizens." In characteristically vehement language he declared that "only barbarians and tyrants can imagine that this root and kernel of the people—tenants and free holders, large farmers and small, artisans of all kinds, sailors and tradesmen—does not need any more enlightenment than they can obtain behind the plough, in the workshop, on the boat, and behind the counter."

To him the ages of eighteen to twenty-five were the most important and the most neglected educationally. He would have children remain in school until they were fourteen and then send them out for the next four years to learn from first-hand experience while their minds and bodies were developing. Then, when they were riper, more mature, they would return for short periods of time to a form of adult school where they could search with great teachers for the answers to their questions about religion, fatherland, sex, and society, the burning questions of that age level.

Attendance at such schools should be encouraged by all possible means but it should be voluntary, not compulsory. Their terms should be brief; those who were earning a living could not afford to spend a great deal of time in such a school. Inasmuch as the aim of such education was to inspire rather than to reform, to stimulate rather than to satiate, the term need not be long. As they have developed, the folk schools are open to men ordinarily during the winter months of the North, from November to May. For women they are open for three months in the summer while the men are busy during the long days ploughing and harvesting. These schools must also be inexpensive if they were to carry out their purpose, Grundtvig maintained. As they have developed, the cost has been about \$20 per month for room and board, with government aid to students who could not afford even this minimum cost.

The motivation behind these schools was to be religious. "If a man—even a peasant—seeks first the Kingdom of Heaven, all other things will be added to him" was Grundtvig's philosophy as stated by one of the writers of this folk school movement. The singing of hymns and the reading of popular religious poetry were therefore an important part of the curriculum. In teaching the history of the world not as a mass of detail but as a great continuity, Christ was to be the center of that continuity. Within the group the closeness of life developed by common activities and the intimacy of small numbers would tend to develop the sense of spiritual community which appealed so greatly to Grundtvig.

Nor were these to be academic mills. There were to be no examinations, no grades, no diplomas. This

was to be education for its own sake rather than for rewards.

Work, too, was to be a vital part of such schools. Grundtvig criticized the academic school because it stultified interest in physical work. "All these institutions have the fault," he said, "that they embitter their students against ordinary workaday activities, so that they lose all desire to handle hammer, tongs, and plow, and can no longer feel happy in ordinary manual activities." He wanted students to be thoroughly attached to the soil before they came to these schools so that the farm population would be enriched by education and not depleted by it. He was convinced that "it would be of great use and real pleasure if there were a well-managed farm connected with the folk high school and if this were surrounded by workshops of all kinds, where every young man at the school could see really efficient management of his trade. Such an acquaintance with the many-sided practical activities would be a necessary condition for a real understanding of Danish social life and national institutions, subjects which should not be taught through dull statistics, but by a lively and intelligent Dane who had travelled all over the country with his eyes open, so that he had come to know birds, animals, and human beings, and had gained a real insight into the peculiar characteristics of the Zealander, the Jutlander, and the inhabitants of the small islands, and who could help to bring the young from all parts of the country into a real and living intercourse."

The most important feature of each school, however, was to be the teacher. To this "prophet of the North" the best education was contagious, from heart to heart, sometimes by way of words and sometimes without. Such education necessitated small schools where teacher and pupil could learn to know each other quickly and intimately and where students could learn to know each other similarly. Only in this way could the respect for and interest in each other which is the basis of real democracy, develop.

In order that these schools might be free to teach what they wanted to teach and in the way which they wanted to teach it, they were to be private institutions. It is true that they have been subsidized by the State, but fortunately State subsidies have not meant State supervision except in minor details. Individuals (often the principal) or cooperative groups (often a local community group) have been the owners in most instances.

Grundtvig deplored the emphasis on languages, particularly Latin. "I question," he said, "whether in order to have competent Danish preachers and judges and so forth, they must from childhood on study Latin grammar and write an endless number of Latin compositions; whether, at the university, the clergy, besides studying mathematics, astronomy, physics and philosophy, need to learn to expound the New Testament in Latin; whether judges need to learn to apply Roman law to Danish conditions and to translate Danish law into Latin. I shall not argue the question because our cause will gain nothing by my combating a deep-



seated prejudice, but it is clear that studying Latin grammar will not teach one to know and love Denmark and the mother tongue."

Aside from its lack of practicality he was opposed to Latin on another basis. It represented to him a civilization based on selfishness and force. One authority on him says: "As educator, historian and preacher, he hated things Roman. He looked upon Rome as organized force and selfishness—a robber people who produced nothing of their own that was great. They had fed like drones upon the honey of Hellenic culture. Insatiable in their lust for power, they had employed their stolen knowledge only to destroy. Their history is one of violence and bloodshed ending in disgrace."

Danish language, history, sociology, and economics have been the most important subjects in these folk high schools ever since Grundtvig's day. Arithmetic, gymnastics, and the natural sciences and hygiene also occupy an important place in the curriculum of most of these schools.

As early as 1832 in the preface to his book *Great Mythology* Grundtvig had outlined the basic principles of the folk schools. In 1844 he attempted to found such a school himself. He was a prophet, however, not an executive or administrator, and the school was unsuccessful. It was not until 1851 that the first such school was successfully established by one of his followers, Kristen Kold. Gradually they spread until there were nearly sixty such institutions and about six thousand pupils in the decade of the 30's in Denmark. It is estimated that a third of the farm population of that nation has attended a folk high school. Certainly most of the cooperative society chairmen and most of the cooperative dairy managers have been at some time to such a school. One-half of the cabinet members during the period of the Social-Democratic party

control in Denmark were educated in the folk high schools. The influence of these institutions has been far out of proportion to the numbers of attenders because of the prominent positions within local communities that its students have held.

Denmark now is passing through a period of national crisis at least as intense as that through which she passed in 1807-8 and in 1864. She has one great resource now, however, which she did not have in those two periods and that is a faith in herself, a faith in her future. She has demonstrated once that external loss may be internal gain and she may demonstrate that again in our day.

That she has such a faith is in large part due to the efforts of her greatest leader of the last century, Bishop Grundtvig. It was he who delved into the past and presented all Danes with the great traditions handed down by their forebears. It was he who dug deep down to solid rock so that the nation might have a firm religious foundation on which to build anew so that its national edifice would not be swept away by the storms of the future. It was he who testified to his belief in the common man by setting forth the principles upon which the folk high school movement has been based. It was he who believed that "very few should have more than they need and fewer still should have less than they need." Out of this ideal has grown the cooperative movement in Denmark, for which he, too, is in part responsible. Because he dreamed so mightily and worked so intensively, Denmark in the nineteenth century underwent an internal peaceful revolution. What she has done once, she can do again and with greater ease and more far-reaching results. And what Denmark was able to do in a time of crisis others can also do where there is the vision of such men as Bishop Grundtvig and his followers.

## Plan for Closer Unity

**B**OTH Philadelphia Yearly Meetings of 1945 expressed a desire for closer unity. The concern was a very earnest one, both at Race Street and at Arch Street. Friends were encouraged to work and worship together and to seek new opportunities for strengthening those bonds of fellowship which make us more fully aware that we are members one of another.

The subject was referred to the Representative Bodies, and shortly there emerged a joint committee of twenty-four Friends to consider this matter which had been on the minds of so many for so long. It seemed to this group that what is needed is a new corporate entity which would be the outward expression of our inward unity but which would provide for the continued autonomy of the two Yearly Meetings. A subcommittee was appointed to work out the details of what might be called a "General Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia."

The subcommittee's report was carefully discussed and revised by the committee of twenty-four and submitted to the separate meetings of the Representative Bodies in Ninth Month. Both these groups felt that there was merit in the proposals and a special joint session of the two Representative Bodies was convened on Tenth Month 10th, 1945, to consider the subject in detail. This meeting, after making minor changes, gave the report its hearty endorsement, and directed that it be sent to the Friends' papers in Philadelphia for publication and to subordinate meetings for their study and suggestions.

The amended report in the form approved by the Representative Bodies is given below. The plan therein outlined may be modified now or later as the wishes of Friends may direct. It is desired that a plan based upon the report may be forwarded to the Yearly Meetings of 1946 for appropriate action. If favorably considered then, it is contemplated that the