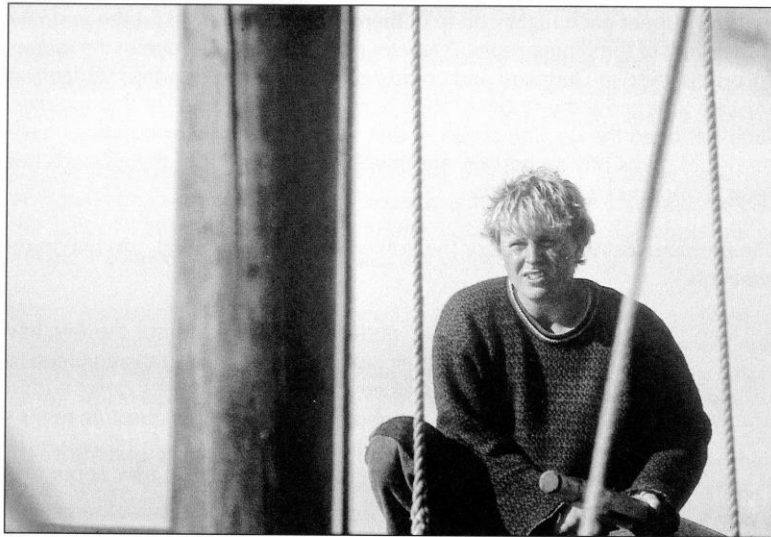


funds - as they see it - by only paying for courses that lead to exam-based and formal qualifications (which the 'folkehøjskoler' do not offer), and by spending money on the cheaper vocational courses offered by the 'daghøjskoler' (day high schools) and some other colleges.

There is now a heated debate within the 'folkehøjskole' movement about how to react to these recent and difficult circumstances. Will the 'folkehøjskoler' survive by offering exam-based courses (as many of the 'efterskoler' did some years ago); or should they continue to rely on the notion that real education comes from a desire to learn, and not a desire to impress?



*Fosen Folkehøyskole, Norway, 1990*

*Building and sailing traditional open boats, organic farming,  
weaving - a year for creativity and reflection*

## CHAPTER 8 — THE ORIGINS OF FREEDOM IN DANISH EDUCATION

— *historical and social roots*

The first 'Friskoler', 'efterskoler' and 'folkehøjskoler' were founded in the mid-nineteenth century. They did not, of course, just appear. They had origins in a much wider religious, social and economic context.

In 1536 Christian III came to the throne, established Lutheranism as the state religion and had the Bible translated into Danish - thereby not only laying the ground for mass literacy but also for the idea that each individual was responsible for his or her own salvation.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, land reforms led to the rise of a relatively well-off and independent class of small farmers. During the nineteenth century, these men and women, spurred on by constitutional and educational reforms, took greater control of their own churches, set up co-operative slaughter-houses and dairies, built village halls, started liberal and social-democratic political parties, and started their own village schools.

The Schools Act of 1814 had allowed parents to educate their children themselves, and in 1849 the new constitution set down in writing the rights to freedom of speech, worship and education.

The Prussian occupation of much of southern Jutland in 1864 came shortly after Denmark had retreated from its colonies in Africa and India, and it made the Danes very aware of the need to look after what they had left: their own home country and people. The 'folkehøjskoler' and 'friskoler' had started as schools for the sons of farmers. However their massive expansion after 1864 was based increasingly on the desire of men - and now women - to study Danish history and traditions.

When North Slesvig was returned to Denmark in 1920, German language schools were included in the 'friskole' grant system. After the second world war, minorities on both sides of the border were given state funds for their schools. (It sometimes happens now that German-speaking families in the German 'land' (i.e. state) of Schleswig-Holstein send their children to 'Danish' schools because they like the socially-orientated education).