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N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG

(1783–1872)

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Nikolay Frederik Severin Grundtvig is Denmark's only educator of international stature² as well as being a theologian, historian and writer who exercised a profound influence on Danish life, even if he is far less known outside Denmark than his younger contemporaries, the philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55) and the writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805–75).

A clear example of Grundtvig's abiding legacy in Denmark is that, of the 754 hymns contained in the Danish Hymnal, 271 were written by Grundtvig. Much of Grundtvig's prolific writings, however, remain unpublished—a collected edition would run to at least a hundred volumes—and it is only comparatively recently that Grundtvig's educational writings have been partially translated, for example, into English.³ Yet the Danish folk high-school movement, that these writings inspired, has led to Grundtvig being called 'the father of Western adult education' and interest in Grundtvig and the folk high-school movement has extended to developing countries as well.

Grundtvig's life, particularly the first half, spanned momentous changes in Danish society. In 1788 the laws of adscription, whereby male members of the population were not allowed to move away from the estate where they were born without permission from the landowner, were abolished. Christian VII followed this reform a year later with the establishment of an education committee. By 1814, laws for compulsory school education were passed. When Denmark took the first steps towards democracy in the 1830s with the establishment of advisory assemblies from the estates of the realm (including the peasantry), Grundtvig increased his writings on education, because if the 'lower orders' were to have a voice in these advisory assemblies they had to have an appropriate education so they could effectively participate in the proceedings. At first Grundtvig had been sceptical of these councils but was soon able to declare that 'the voice of the people' was indeed heard in them and hence he pursued his educational plans with great vigour.

Before his educational writings of the 1830s, Grundtvig had experienced quite a chequered career as a clergyman. He was the very opposite of his father, a clergyman in a country village, who was content with a theology which has been described as pietistic and conservative.⁴ The younger Grundtvig, while being influenced by such theology, made several departures from it. Because of his polemical writings and often abrasive behaviour, Grundtvig was for a considerable part of his life a preacher who was either forbidden to preach or allowed to preach but not administer the sacraments. It was only through the intervention of Christian VIII on his accession to the Danish throne that Grundtvig, at the age of 55, at last had a permanent position as chaplain to Vartov, a Copenhagen church home for elderly women. This minor post (which Grundtvig held till his death at the age of 89) gave him the opportunity to continue his voluminous publications; his collected essays on education⁵ appearing only some weeks before his death.

There is an almost regular pattern in Grundtvig's life of being helped out by royal patronage. Long before being appointed to Vartov and subsequently being appointed an honorary bishop by Frederik VII, in 1818 Grundtvig had been given a royal grant in appreciation for

translating Old Norse myths and sagas. Grundtvig had also been supported by the King, who gave him a series of three grants, and by the Queen, who later gave him one, to visit England in 1812, 1830, 1831 and 1843, respectively.

It was these first three visits, where Grundtvig was able to observe British education first hand while continuing his work on Nordic mythology, together with the rapidly changing political and social scene in Denmark, that coalesced and enabled him to produce in the 1830s a series of writings in which the idea of the Danish folk high school was born.

The living word

In Grundtvig's preface to his 1832 study of Scandinavian mythology, *Nordens mytologi* [Nordic mythology], the first glimpses can be seen of the Danish folk high school of the future:

There will be the common centre from which the institution branches out into all the main lines of practical life, and back to which it endeavours to gather and unite all the energies of society. Here, all the civil servants of the state who do not need scholarship but life, insight and practical ability, and all those who wish to belong to the rank of the educated should get the very best chance of developing themselves in a suitable direction and of getting to know one another.⁶

Although Grundtvig's ideas for a folk high school are in the merest embryonic form in 'Nordic mythology', nevertheless, this work does contain a full dress-rehearsal for Grundtvig's later attacks on the 'Schools for Death', as he called the Latin grammar schools. Latin is ridiculed mercilessly; its literature Grundtvig considers to be an 'abomination ... imitation work and unlike Greek and Old Norse did not spring from the life of the people'.⁷ In Grundtvig's contrasting of the 'spiritless and life-less learning of the Romano-Italian'⁸ with the vivid oral traditions behind Greek and Norse mythology, there is a foreshadowing of the great importance Grundtvig was to give to oral communication in his plans for education.

Grundtvig's first long book to deal with education, *Det danske fir-kløver* [The Danish four-leaf clover], was written in 1836 as a response to the first sessions of the Provisional Advisory Councils, promulgated in 1831 but not meeting till 1835–36. Although Grundtvig was delighted at these assemblies that 'the People's voice had risen from the dead', he nevertheless despaired about the then present state of the 'loveliness' of the Four-Leaf Clover—The King, the People, the Homeland, the Mother Tongue—and saw his task as 'to write on what in my opinion must be done so that the rare and fine flower, far from withering away, can be strengthened and lift its head to the glory of the field'.⁹

The solution was to be, Grundtvig claimed, 'the Voice of the People' demanding a Danish folk high school 'where everything will be about King and People, Homeland and Mother Tongue, and where the Bards who praised King and Homeland in the words which they took from the mouth of the People are forced to make themselves useful for both food and honour'.¹⁰

This stress on the centrality of the 'bard' or *skald* is consistent with Grundtvig's championship in 'Nordic Mythology' of Scandinavian over Roman mythology. With ironic justification Grundtvig referred to himself as a *skald* and claimed that the *skald* was the real teacher of the common people because of the ability 'to entirely awaken and nourish love for the Homeland and obtain strength and richness in the Mother Tongue'.¹¹ Hence the centrality of myths, legends and poems in Danish in the curriculum of the first Danish folk high schools and the great importance given to the oral traditions of the past and oral communication, particularly story-telling with its rich historical precedents, of the present. Indeed note-taking in the early folk high schools was often discouraged. There is an oft-told story that Christen Kold, the folk high-school headmaster who first gave a distinctive shape to the early folk high-school movement, made the

following comment in response to a student's complaint that he could not remember what was said if he did not take notes:

Do not worry about that. It would be another matter if we were speaking about dead knowledge. It is like what happens out there in the fields. If we put drainpipes into the ground, we must mark the place in order to find them again. But when we sow corn, there is no need to mark the place, for it comes up again. You may be sure that the things you have heard from me with joy will come up all right again when you want them'.¹²

Running parallel with Grundtvig's championship of the old bards and the centrality of the oral tradition in his concept of the folk high school is his continuing attack on Latin, 'the ruling language here [in Denmark] for six hundred years'¹³ and its grammar-school repositories, the 'Schools for Death' as opposed to Grundtvig's 'Schools for Life' which would embody the 'living word'.

It is in 'The Danish four-leaf clover' (1836) that Grundtvig spells out his basic educational aim, *Livsoplysning* [Enlightenment about life], claiming that enlightenment 'must originate mostly from the single person's own life or at least be tried to see how it fits',¹⁴ but it is not till two years later in *Skolen for livet og akademiet i Soro* [The school for life and academy at Soro] (1838) that Grundtvig (following a request by King Christian VIII) attempts to develop his educational ideas.

'The School for life' continues Grundtvig's onslaught on Latin studies wherein he claims that it took him thirty years to 'get Rome and Latin out of my system',¹⁵ but he is even more negative about book knowledge and examinations. In a poetic vein, Grundtvig claims 'for all letters are dead even if written by fingers of angels and ribs of stars, all book knowledge is dead that is not unified with a corresponding life in the reader'.¹⁶

This knowledge must involve 'living contact and interaction with others'.¹⁷ In the second part of 'The school for life', where Grundtvig sketches the beginnings of a programme for his proposed school, he talks of 'mutual education' and 'living interaction' as being at the heart of his educational proposals. As Professor K. E. Bugge has stressed, this idea of 'living interaction' is especially well suited to be the basic formula for Grundtvig's educational theory.¹⁸ Clearly Grundtvig's 'School for life' would have to be built upon such a foundation.

'Living interaction' can be seen as a secular corollary to Grundtvig's concept of the 'living word', a phrase intimately associated with Grundtvig and deeply woven into the fabric of his mature theological thought. In a theological context the 'living word' was the term Christ used at the Last Supper. The point is that this sacrament is not silent but, in Grundtvig's words, 'accompanied by the utterance of that wonderful invisible thing which is laid upon our tongue to unite spirit and body; that is the word, and hear not our weak words but the words of the almighty power of Jesus'.¹⁹ The sacrament is also interactive: in response to Christ's words, repeated by the minister, in which Christ's continuing presence is felt, the gathered Christian community partake of the elements of bread and wine. In a secular context, Grundtvig meant that the 'living word' was not formal instruction or lecturing as such but the communication of personal life between teacher and taught; either the teachings live in the life of the teacher and are actively responded to by the student or they do not live at all, the teachings being mere dead words. The 'living word' is not Biblical fundamentalism but the spiritual communication of 'the truth', words of power and authority evoking an active response in the listener. This concept, expanded from its theological context, is not confined to the actual classroom; indeed, its most appropriate expression may often be found in the wider life of the shared residential learning community of the folk high school.

During the 1840s Grundtvig continued to write on the need for Danish folk high schools, particularly in *Bøn og begreb om en danske højskole i soro* [Request for and idea of a Danish folk high school in Soro] (1840) and in a section on the Danish folk high school in *Lyknskoning til Danmark med det danske dummerhoved og den danske højskole* [Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish blockheads and the Danish high school] (1847), which latter work may be said to round off Grundtvig's development as a writer on educational matters.

In this period of writing Grundtvig becomes more concerned with the actual organization of the folk high school: details like students' councils, mutual teaching and conversation on Danish community matters. Grundtvig took up the issue that if ordinary people were to have a say in the shaping of Denmark's destiny through participation in People's Councils it would be good if they received training in self-government in the folk high schools wherein, on all important matters, 'the steward (or whichever name should be given to the headmaster) would have first to consult the School Council, the members of which were to be elected (almost all of them) by the students themselves'.²⁰

To this day student participation in the running of folk high schools—although varying in degree from school to school—is still important in the philosophy of the folk high-school movement.

Redefining a headmaster as a 'steward' is a clue to what Grundtvig meant by mutual teaching. The life experience the students brought to the folk high school was to be respected, and a primary emphasis was on exploring what the students and teachers had in common rather than on emphasizing differences.

Grundtvig had at first hoped to implement his ideas at Sørø Academy, an institution with rich historical associations dating from 1586—in fact, according to Grundtvig, from the time of Bishop Absalon (twelfth century).²¹ It flourished for some two hundred years, and was then closed only to be re-established as an academy again in 1826 by the Danish King. From this time onwards Grundtvig saw this venue as a distinct possibility for implementing his educational ideas.

The Sørø Academy underwent many reforms after its re-opening, culminating in 1847 when a royal resolution announced the opening of a practical high school at the institute. Although this school in many ways was not what Grundtvig intended, he nevertheless congratulated the King and Denmark on the establishment of the Danish high school: 'I have only one prefatory remark, namely that it become a really Danish school'.²² In the course of his congratulatory remarks in this 1847 essay Grundtvig hoped that all the students who attended, having already found a vocation before coming to the school, 'would return to their task with increased desire, with clearer views of human and civic conditions, particularly in their own country, and with an increased joy in the community of people'.²³

Grundtvig envisaged his folk high schools as having a mixture of students from different socio-economic strata as well as different age-groups, all coming together to further his stress on fellowship and to help realize his claims that our common humanity takes precedence over particular religious or political beliefs.

This stress on fellowship in the residential folk high schools is clearly related to Grundtvig's theological belief that the Church was not a Bible-reading circle but a fellowship of believers. Nevertheless, Grundtvig was adamant that the systematic teaching of religion had no place in the folk high school or, for that matter, in any state primary or secondary education—it was a matter for the Church alone.

It may seem surprising that Grundtvig as a clergyman would want to repudiate religious instruction in schools, but this must be seen in the context of another of his puzzling concepts: 'First, the human, then the Christian'. By these words Grundtvig meant that one cannot be a true Christian without first being a true human being.

Thus, despite frequent obscurity of expression, there are a number of common threads that run through Grundtvig's educational thought: the fellowship of teachers and students living and working together and learning from one another, as well as sharing in the running of the school; the importance of the 'living word'; the stress on common humanity even though one needs a thorough understanding of one's own culture before understanding that of others; and, most importantly, education as a matter of 'living interaction', leading to enlightenment, a coming to terms with the meaning of one's own existence rather than vocational training or formal instruction.

The first folk high schools

Grundtvig himself did not found any folk high schools and his relationship to the development of the folk high-school movement that invoked his name is sometimes puzzling. For his part, except for tending to the needs of his congregation at Vartov, Grundtvig rarely left his study, trying as he wryly put it 'to write himself into clarity'. At Vartov, however, there was 'a singular radiance'²⁴ about the church life that served as the focal point for the spread of Grundtvigianism throughout Denmark in the next generation.

While Grundtvig was tied to his study and his congregation at Vartov, it was left to others to develop the folk high-school movement. Although the first folk high school was founded at Rødding in South Jutland in 1844, it was not until Christen Kold founded his school in 1851 that Grundtvig was to have a disciple who ensured the development of the folk high-school movement, even if in a different form than that which Grundtvig had intended. Nevertheless, the link with Grundtvig remained strong because Kold used to visit him annually with long lists of questions which 'Grundtvig helped me so wonderfully to get all smoothed out'.²⁵

Grundtvig, however, did not visit the early folk high schools, not even the first one at Rødding, despite having received many invitations to do so. It was not until 1856, when Grundtvig became involved in the founding of Marielyst high school outside Copenhagen, that he became a regular speaker at such an establishment. This early reluctance of Grundtvig to be involved in the initial development of the folk high-school movement has been explained by Bugge as being because Grundtvig still held out hopes of realising his dream of a big state school at Sørø, hopes which were only finally dashed by the death of his benefactor Christian VIII in 1848 and the closing down of the Sørø Academy in 1849.²⁵

By 1864, fifteen folk high schools had been established but, in that year, Denmark, having been defeated by the Prussian-Austrian army, suffered the loss of Schleswig. This was to have ramifications for the burgeoning folk high-school movement.

The Schleswig-Holstein dispute was a complicated matter: the Danish King was a duke over Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig being the southernmost part of Denmark and Holstein belonging to the German Empire. This situation brought on wars in 1848–50 and in 1864. Denmark's defeat meant the loss of between 150,000 and 200,000 Danish North Schleswigians to German domination. It was not until 1920, following a referendum, that North Schleswig was returned to Denmark, while South Schleswig and Holstein remained as part of Germany.

The loss of Schleswig was of great symbolic significance for the fledgling folk high-school movement. Rødding, where the first folk high school had been opened, was now on German soil. Ludvig Schroder, the headmaster of this establishment, with two assistant teachers, moved to Askov three kilometres north of the new frontier and the high school founded there 'became the flagship and model that other folk high schools looked up to'.²⁷

Understandably, in such close proximity to Germany, a special effort was made at Askov to preserve all aspects of Danish culture. Other folk high schools followed Askov's lead in what was later referred to as the 'golden age of the folk high-school movement'.²⁸ Although, with hindsight, during this period the folk high school may seem to have been excessively nationalistic, this is a result of historical circumstances and a justification for such nationalism should not be sought in Grundtvig's own writings.

Although Grundtvig wanted students to have a thorough understanding of conditions in their own country, this does not mean that he was an ardent super-nationalist, as he is sometimes depicted.²⁹ Indeed, Grundtvig had a pronounced respect for other people's rights to protect their own identity, as is shown very clearly by his opposition to the Danish Government's attempts to promote Danish sympathy in Schleswig through language ordinances which barred the use of German during the period between the two Schleswig-Holstein wars.³⁰

Misunderstandings arise from Grundtvig's use of the term *folkelighed*. It is said to be untranslatable, but perhaps Peter Manniche's rendering of the term as 'community life that embraces everyone'³¹ is helpful. It is concerned with the preservation of identity, of a people's literature, poetry and way of life.³² Paradoxically, Grundtvig, following the philosopher Herder, argued that unless a nation has a strong sense of identity it is stuck in the nationalistic phase, and tends to expand and conquer at the expense of weaker neighbours.

Folkelighed, rather than promoting a narrow nationalism, must be seen as promoting, as Bugge has suggested,³³ a means of defending a small country such as Denmark from being culturally crushed by more powerful nations. Another Grundtvigian scholar, Erica Simon, sees similarities between Grundtvig's *folkelighed* and Léopold Senghor's 'negritude', which has been defined as 'that complex of attitudes and dispositions which make up the collective personality of black people and determine their unique outlook on the world'.³⁴

A citizen of the world

In many ways Grundtvig was a citizen of the world, symbolized by his writing not a history of Denmark but a three-volume history of the world. One of his twentieth-century followers, Peter Manniche (who, in 1921, founded the International People's College at Elsinore), always stressed Grundtvig's international dimension and claimed that the folk high-school movement, suitably adapted, had much to offer developing countries.

Not only was the folk high school an intensely personal form of education which helped restore a sense of security for people uprooted from 'family, tribe or clan',³⁵ but it adapted its curriculum to the students. For example, Manniche stressed that, over a long period, the Danish folk high schools had helped Danish farmers develop their full capacities to return and remain in their jobs. Accordingly, this principle, argued Manniche, recommends itself particularly to schools for rural development overseas: 'These must have leaders that can be educated without leaving their villages for a long time and becoming accustomed to and dependent on city amenities'.³⁶

As for Denmark itself, the nature of the population of the folk high schools changed, as did the overall structure of Danish society. Throughout the nineteenth century and for a considerable part of the twentieth, the Danish folk high-school movement was considered a rural phenomenon. But from the 1950s and 1960s, instead of the Danish economy changing from one form of agriculture to another, as it had done in the nineteenth century, Denmark changed considerably from an agricultural to an industrial economy.

Initially it was thought that Grundtvig's ideas and the educational innovation of the folk high school would not survive the twentieth century. By 1940 there were only fifty-four high schools in Denmark—hence the nostalgic looking back to the 'golden age' following the rapid expansion of these schools after the Schleswig-Holstein war of 1864. But the 1980s saw a remarkable resurgence of the folk high-school movement—even if its clientele, including urban unemployed and refugees, changed considerably. The number of folk high schools has fluctuated slightly around the 100 mark in recent years in Denmark, showing a similar vitality in Sweden, Norway and Finland, and continuing activities in other countries such as Germany and Poland. Indeed, Grundtvig's plans for short-term residential colleges, where life itself replaces dead knowledge and examinations may be an educational innovation, although promulgated in the 1830s and 1840s, have yet to come fully into their own.

Notes

1. Max, Lawson (Australia). Senior lecturer in education, Department of Social, Cultural and Curriculum Studies, University of New England, Amidale, where he also teaches courses in the history of education and peace education. Co-author with R.C. Petersen of *Progressive education: an introduction*, and numerous

- articles on the theory and practice of progressive education and alternative schooling.
2. I would like to thank Paster Folmer Johansen of the Danish Lutheran Church in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, for translating some of Grundtvig's educational writings hitherto unavailable in English, and Professor K. E. Bugge of the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, Copenhagen, for his unstinting advice.
 2. J. Knudsen (ed.), *N. F. S. Grundtvig: selected writings*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976 (out of print); and N. L. Jensen (ed.), *A Grundtvig anthology*, Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 1984.
 3. K. E. Bugge, *skolen for livet* [The school for life], p. 362, Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1965.
 4. *Smaaskrifter om den historiske højskole* [Lesser writings on the historical high school], 1872.
 5. N. F. S. Grundtvig, 'Preface to *nordic mythology*', in N. L. Jensen (ed.), op. cit., p. 50.
 6. Ibid., p. 39.
 7. Ibid., p. 41.
 8. N. F. S. Grundtvig, *The Danish four-leaf clover* (translated by F. Johansen), unpublished.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Ibid.
 11. N. Davies, *Education for life: a Danish pioneer*, p. 118, London, Williams & Norgate, 1931.
 12. N. F. S. Grundtvig, *The Danish four-leaf clover*, op. cit.
 13. Ibid.
 14. N. F. S. Grundtvig, 'The school for life', in N. L. Jensen (ed.), op. cit., p. 74.
 15. Ibid., p. 66.
 16. Ibid., p. 74.
 17. K. E. Bugge, 'Grundtvig's educational ideas', in C. Thodberg and A. P. Thyssen (eds.), *N. F. S. Grundtvig: tradition and renewal*, p. 30, Copenhagen, Danish Institute, 1983.
 18. Quoted in N. Davies, op. cit., p. 61.
 19. N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Request for and idea of a Danish folk high school in Søro* (translated by F. Johansen).
 20. A. P. Thyssen, 'Grundtvig's ideas on the Church and the People, 1825–47', in C. Thodberg and A. P. Thyssen (eds.), op. cit., p. 272.
 21. N. F. S. Grundtvig, 'Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish blockheads and the Danish high school', in J. Knudsen (ed.), op. cit., p. 161.
 22. Ibid., p. 162.
 23. N. Davies, op. cit., p. 171.
 24. H. Koch, *Grundtvig* (translated by L. Jones), p. 112, Yellow Springs, Ohio, The Antioch Press, 1952.
 25. K. E. Bugge, 'Grundtvig's educational ideas', in C. Thodberg and A. P. Thyssen (eds.), op. cit., p. 24.
 26. T. Rørdom, *The Danish folk high schools*, trans. by Alison Borch-Johansen, p. 46, Copenhagen, Det Danske Selskab, 1986.
 27. Ibid., p. 52.
 28. See, for example, E. F. Fain, 'Nationalist origins of the folk high school: the romantic visions of N. F. S. Grundtvig', *British journal of educational studies* (Oxford, UK), Vol. XIX, 1971, pp. 70–90.
 29. P. Ram, *Nikolay Frederik Severin Grundtvig*, p. 67, Copenhagen, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1983.
 30. P. Manniche, *The international people's college, 1921–1971*, p. 21, Elsinore, International People's College, 1971.
 31. K. E. Bugge, 'N. F. S. Grundtvig', in J. E. Thomas and B. Elsey (eds.), *International biography of adult education*, p. 223, Nottingham, Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1985.
 32. Ibid.
 33. Irele Abiola (ed.), Introduction to *Selected poems of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, p. 22, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
 34. P. Manniche, op. cit., p. 72.
 35. Ibid., p. 73.

Works by Grundtvig

The definitive Danish edition of Grundtvig's writings on education is:

Bugge, K.S. (ed.). *Grundtvigs skole verden* [Grundtvig's educational world]. 2 vol. Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1968.

The only collection of Grundtvig's educational writings (in English) is:

Lawson, Max (ed.). *N. F. S. Grundtvig: selected educational writings*. Elsinore, Denmark, International People's College and the Association of Folk High Schools, 1991.

The main writings of Grundtvig that deal solely or in part with education are as follows:

Det danske fir-kløver partrisk eller danskheden betragtet [The Danish four leaf clover or Danish nationality looked at from a partial viewpoint], 1836.

Af Grundtvigs rigsdagstaler [Grundtvig's speech before the constituent assembly], 1848.

Lykønskning til Danmark med det danske dummerhoved og den danske høiskole (Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish blockheads and the Danish high school), 1847.

Af nordens mytologi [Nordic mythology], 1832.

Til Peter Larsen Skraeppenborg i Dons [Letter to Peter Larsen Skraeppenborg in Dons], 1854.

Af statsmaessig oplysning [Education for state affairs], 1834.

Skolen for livet og akademiet i soer [The school for life and the academy of soer], 1836.

Universitet i London og akademiet i Søro [University of London and the academy at Søro], 1829.

The part of *Af nordens mytologi* (1832) dealing with education is in Bugge (see above) and also in English in:

Jensen, N. L. (ed.). *A Grundtvig anthology*. London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983.

A selection of *Af statsmaessig oplysning* (1834) is in the edition of Bugge (see above), but has also been edited in full as:

Bugge, K. E.; Nielsen, V. N. F. S. *Grundtvig: statsmaessig oplysning*. Copenhagen, Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1983.

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A comprehensive bibliography of Danish and English secondary sources on Grundtvig is to be found in:

Thodberg, C.; Thyssen, A. P. *N. F. S. Grundtvig: tradition and renewal*. Copenhagen, Det Danske Selskab, 1983.

For a select bibliography of Danish and English secondary sources on the Danish folk high school itself, see the excellent study:

Borish, S. M. *The land of the living: the Danish folk high schools and Denmark's non-violent path to modernization*. Nevada City, Calif., Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1991.