



### Kofoed's School The History

1928 - 2005

"Unemployment created new types of men. Men, who under different circumstances would have prospered, created value, and provided for themselves, became cheaters living off people's compassion. ... They lost their self-respect and by-and-by their faith in society, and they did not expect much of their future."

From the first chapter, this story is a living and fascinating tale of the compassion and idealism of Kofoed's School for unemployed in Copenhagen, Denmark. The school was founded by Hans Christian Kofoed in 1928. Kofoed saw the destructive force of unemployment ruin men and their families. He wanted to help – but not in the traditional way of handing out warm soup and bread to the miserable-looking. Instead, he wanted to help these men rebuild their lives. So he started a school of life, where "students", as he called the unemployed who came to him, were taught practical, mental and physical skills, to gain self-confidence and finally a job.

This philosophy exists at Kofoed's School today, where the school in Copenhagen has more than 150 educational courses and workshops, attended by 3.000 students every year. The students are still unemployed and socially marginalised citizens. Kofoed's School is today an international organisation, with schools and projects in many European countries, as well as in many Danish locations.

Ole Meldgaard

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Kofoeds Skole

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Fredag 30. maj 1958

*Pygtig film om  
Kofoeds skole*

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He is known in many NGO networks as a keen and serious spokesman for the socially marginalised, the poor and the unemployed, always looking to improve the role and the results of social work.



**Ole Meldgaard**

# **Kofoed's School The History**

**1928 – 2005**

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#### **KOFOED'S SCHOOL**

The self-governing institution Kofoed's School works on a Christian and popular basis, giving help to self-help to people with social problems.

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**Kofoed's School.** The History.

# Meeting the unemployed

Kofoed's School was started in 1928 during the recession in an attempt to help young unemployed men to get back to society as active and valid citizens.

After World War One and the following two decades, unemployment became a vast and seemingly invincible evil which cast a long shadow over thousands of families. Endless rows of men were daily forming lines at the checkpoints, and an understandable bitterness against society spread within the realm of the unemployed. They were not idlers, nor anti-socials, but young men and family fathers feeling unneeded by society, because society had no work for them. They longed for a job, so that they might provide for themselves and their families. Morning after morning they lined up at the factories, and were sent home again at the cry: "no more today" when the shop steward had picked the few, he needed.

The unemployed felt let down by the politicians and their own trade leaders. Some became angry and bitter, others became introverts or felt dejected, but they all experienced that the energy and the incentive to find work diminished as days and months went by with-



out anything happening. An inferiority complex had far too easy terms to develop. The jobless were too often left in a humiliating and often desperate situation. As unemployed they would in the best case receive a social subsidy for approximately two months. When this subsidy stopped, they had only two possibilities left: - to receive the humiliating poor relief, - or to turn to the just as humiliating begging at people's doors. Those were severe conditions for a man, who still had self-respect. But you had to live!

The situation left traces on the unemployed. Unemployment created new types of men. Men, who under different circumstances would have prospered, created values, and provided for themselves, became cheaters living off people's compassion. They learnt by experience that those, who understood to present themselves the most miserable and creeping, got the most - but they paid dearly for this experience and the few coins they would pocket. They lost their self-respect and by-and-by their faith in society, and they did not expect much of their future.

Meeting these men who by no fault of their own had been denied the right to a job and with that their livelihood, inspired parish clerk Kofoed to establish a school for the unemployed with the sole purpose of giving them back their self-respect and a hope for their future.

In the mid-1920's, Kofoed himself had stood in line for a job at Copenhagen factories, and he knew from the inside the psychology of being unemployed. He too had for a moment been twisted by hopelessness and melancholy, when after several attempts he still had no job, and money for food became scarce. He understood the desperation that hungry people are exposed to, and which can lead to a humiliation of themselves below their normal dignity in order to get a little money, especially parents who had to put their children to sleep crying with hunger.

In 1927, Kofoed got a job as parish clerk at Christianskirken (kirke = church) in Christianshavn, Copenhagen. However, his thoughts kept circling about the unemployed and their families. "I predicted



Hans Christian Kofoed (1898 – 1952).

that sooner or later they would become unfit to re-enter as worthy citizens in a society. Could society really afford to let them go on in this way?"

Kofoed never had illusions about being able to solve the unemployment problem by starting a school. The problem had been created by society, and had to be solved by society, but each citizen had the duty, he felt, to do their best to help the unemployed young people, so that they did not go under during the recession. "The usual excuse that the public must handle the problem, is of no use here. I found this case a common cause, and it cannot be solved till each individual undertakes his share of obligation."

As parish clerk, Kofoed was responsible for parish work, and as there were many unemployed in Christianshavn, he soon contemplated some form of employment and teaching, which could fill in the unemployed's idle hours, raise their interest for doing something useful, and improve conditions in their homes. After much consideration he decided to start an advanced course of handicraft in the winter of 1928.

However, he had neither capital, rooms or tools to realise his plan. He presented his idea to the vicar of the church, reverend Holmer. He immediately liked the suggestion and paid out of his own pocket 120 kroner to start working on the plan. Kofoed was permitted to use the basement of the parish hall in Ovengaden oven Vandet No. 6 for six afternoons each week. From the handicraft society he borrowed two carpenter's benches and some tools and with money from his own pocket he bought the most necessary articles for the course.

The basement was organized to the best, providing a shoe-repair shop, a small carpenter's shop, a basket maker's shop, and providing space for brush-making and carving.

His next step was to get the unemployed interested in the workshops. He called on the families, who had applied for financial aid at the parish charities, and he talked to them about the project. He

told them that the work shops could render assistance in repairing shoes, or mending furniture, and the like, which could contribute to improve their homes and make them cosy. His reception in the homes varied a lot. Some immediately said no as soon as they heard that the parish hall was involved, they wouldn't set a foot there at all. Others showed more interest and invited him in. The women were generally the more forthcoming, and during his visits to the homes of the unemployed it soon became obvious to Kofoed that he had to organize a course for housewives including dress-making, child-nursing, and cooking. "Just look in at our school", he would say, before he knew, wherever he could get hold of sewing machines or sowing material.

The poverty and hopelessness were outspoken in the homes. Parents were careworn, and the children pale and thin. Whatever values their home had held, had been pawned in order to get clothes and food. Of course, the homes were afflicted by this, and often there was a feeling of oppression.

Kofoed visited 36 homes. He dared not invite more to his school, as the basement shops could only hold 11 students (the term for users of Kofoed's School).

Alongside with the above-mentioned personal visits, people were invited to a meeting in the parish hall on March the 20th, 1928, where they were offered information about the school and work-shops.

The day came. The basement had been decorated with flags and flowers, coffee had been brewed, and entertainment prepared. But how many would attend?

25 persons came. Kofoed once again informed about his plans, and at the end of the meeting 15 women and 10 men signed up as students. The first day of school for the men was to be Tuesday March 28th. The women were to start the next day.

# Kofoed's own youth

Hans Christian Kofoed was born in Bodilsker on the island of Bornholm in 1898 as the youngest but one among 5 brothers. His father was a farmer, but he died when Hans Christian was 10 years old. The oldest brother took over the family farm, and the next two in line were trained as artisans. Hans Christian together with his mother and youngest brother moved to a new-built small farm that was run by a manager. It was implied that Hans Christian would take over, when he had grown up.

The home was Grundtvigian<sup>1</sup>, but at the age of 14, Kofoed became a "conscious Christian" which led to his adolescence within the society of the evangelical home mission. This did not go off quietly. On Bornholm the ecclesiastical movements were sharply lined up against one another, renegades were not welcome, and Kofoed's conversion really gave out sparks in the surroundings. Throughout his life Kofoed preserved a close relationship to Christianity, but he was also aware that the pietistic religiousness of his youth could have ruined him. "I think it would have been useful if my surroundings had said to me: take it easy and show the Christianity of your life instead of talking so

<sup>1)</sup> Congregations within the Danish National Church, characterized by "happy Christianity" in contrast to more pietistic movements. After N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783 - 1872), Danish clergyman, hymn writer, historian and national revivalist.



much. But they made me believe that I had to suffer for Christ. That would have meant a spiritual ruin for me, because there was no time to sound the depth and achieve a spiritual balance".

His brother Jens Brandt Kofoed has told of one Christmas evening, when he went to church service together with his mother and Hans Christian. "When the sermon was over and we sang a psalm, I noticed to my alarm Hans Christian. He sang louder than the entire congregation, and I thought that he had become mad. I pushed him, but he looked happily down on me, which made it all the worse."

After the sermon Kofoed made his way directly to the vicar, who took hold of his shoulders and slowly followed him out of the church. "I didn't understand any of it, but I heard a few sentences like "God's child, saved, grace and happiness", the brother noted.

In his memorial book "Beaten – no", Kofoed himself gives the reader an impression of his religious scruples during his adolescence. He felt an inner voice telling him, that an active service to God and mankind was awaiting him. Actually, he was more minded for becoming a farmer. Furthermore he had capabilities to accomplish things, and anyhow: there was a farm waiting for him to use these capabilities. He started on an agricultural education in northern Sealand, but one autumn day in 1914 the crisis broke through. He had been ploughing. When he came back around noon and took the horses to the stable, he fell into an ecstasy about the essence of the horse. The horse is a faithful animal and obedient to the smallest sign from a boy's hand. If one brings its harness, it bends forward its head by itself. "I was ashamed by having to admit all this; as I had for some time understood that I had been disobedient towards an inner voice in my soul. I felt that there was a service demanding me, a service that I was not willing to take up. I was not willing to bend my head to the harness and let someone else take the reins of my life. I wanted to decide for myself".

Standing there, alone in the stable, the inner voice called to him, louder and louder. He thought, that if not a farm had been waiting for him on Bornholm, his situation would have been quite different,

and in that case he would have reported himself ready for service. The voice inside him said, that if his mother died today, he would be too young to take over the farm, and what then? Well, all future plans of becoming a farmer would subside, and the farm would have to be sold to strangers.

"Suddenly I realized: "Would my unwillingness be the fate of my mother?" That thought nailed me to the ground..."

At the moment when the fight inside him was at its strongest, the maid brought a telegram from home. "Mother is dead", was his first thought, and it is my fault. "Therefore, not till then would you be harnessed and let Him rule. Oh God, this was too hard."

The telegram informed that the mother had been taken into hospital, and her condition was critical. "So mother is not dead! Not yet, at least! Mother's life is depending on my attitude ... The situation was obvious: he had no alternative."

A little later the boy was kneeling in the horse box alongside the horses. "There is only one way left: Prayer: "Please let me be a small part of Your great works". At this hour, his life was destined. The great privilege to be allowed to serve had become his course of life. The reins were put into the hands of He, who could alone reign.

Even if the fight had come to an end, the following years were not easy for the young man. Several times he suffered religious scruples at the thought of deviating from his vow to serve. He had also experienced a period of severe illness, physical as well as psychological, the cause of which was his endless religious pondering.

After a stay at Haslev folk high school<sup>1</sup> during the winter of 1916-17 he was employed by KFUM's (YMCA) soldiers' mission as the leader of the mission's tasks at Flakfortet (in those days a military stronghold on a small island off the coast from Copenhagen). He was actually too young for the job and had to go quiet about his age. The soldiers came to know him as a good and cheerful comrade, but in the early 1920's he again suffered nervous problems. After his time with the

<sup>1</sup>) Folk high schools: Boarding schools for adults, emphasising general existential learning-for-life education. The founder was N.F.S. Grundtvig.

soldiers' mission he had started studying again, first to achieve a school leaving examination and after that a general certificate, which would enable him to enter university. However, he failed to finish the general certificate, which was a blow to him. He had worked too hard and studied too tensely, and doubts and fear plagued him, and he ended up having a nervous breakdown.

One day he ran into reverend Kildeby at Copenhagen's central station. Kildeby was the head of Hoptrup Højskole (folk high school), and Kofoed knew him from Haslev and from the soldiers' mission. Kofoed asked whether Kildeby could use him as a teacher at the high school. Kildeby was shocked by the question. Kofoed had no education to speak of, he suffered from bad nerves, and he was only 23 years old. However, Kildeby dared the attempt, and no one ever regretted it. After a good deal of rest and sleep, Kofoed's work capacity, his cheerfulness, and his outspokenness returned.

From 1921 to 1925 Kofoed was a folk high school teacher in southern Jutland, and he remembered these years as rich in development and experience. Kofoed was good at associating with the young students, and he soon gained their confidence. Kildeby later said, that he had never had a teacher who did his job better or with greater spirits. "The abilities that later in his life saw such a rich development in his work for the unemployed started unfolding in these years as a folk high school teacher".

In his speeches and lectures delivered to the students, Kofoed admonished them to spend their precious time being industrious, and not to waste the years of youth. "I deplore the expression: To kill time – you kill rats, not time". Recalling his own infatuating youth religiousness, he strongly underlined, that Christian life should rather be known for its deeds than for its words. "Pray with your hand on the plough", became his motto.

In 1925 Kofoed returned to Copenhagen to resume his studies and prepare for studying theology. He started on theology at the university, but he never finished. The meeting with the unemployed gave him a cause, which occupied him till his death in 1952.

# A modest start

Kofoed's School is today a very large institution with 150 employees and 700 daily students. The start, however, was as modest as at all tolerable. No one in those days imagined that the basement room would grow into a large manifold institution.

The doors were opened for the first time on March 28th, 1928, at 13.30. Everything had been arranged in advance. In the shoe shop lasts, hammers and knives had been laid out. In the carpenter shop the workbenches were set up, and the tools were placed in frames on the wall. In the kitchen the helpers were busy making sandwiches, as the students should have some food and a cup of coffee before going home.

All were anxious and full of expectations. How many would come? One student came. That was Mr. Nielsen. The first and only on the opening day. His shoes were completely worn down, so he started in the shoe shop. Nielsen turned out to be very practical. "We had better train Nielsen to be our assistant", Kofoed remarked to his wife, Astrid.



Even if only one student came, the day was rounded off with coffee and refreshments, and the Lord's Prayer, and singing the favourite Danish psalm about going undauntedly through life. When you come to the last verse, everybody stands up and sings the lines of "fight for all you love/ die if demanded/ then life is not that hard/ death not either".

The next day it was the women's turn, and they were not hesitant. The school had a full house from the start. The workbenches and -tables from the previous day were set aside, and the basement was rearranged as a sowing and darning shop. The attendance was overwhelming, and kept on being so. However, something still went wrong. The women who came, kept on coming, even after they had done everything they could with the clothes of their homes. It soon developed into a place where they did needlework and drank coffee, while the children romped about them. "It soon developed into being a first class shelter and nursery".

That was not the idea of the workshop, and the women's shop was soon closed. Several years went by before Kofoed again opened a

*Above:*

The school's first rooms in the basement of the parish hall in Christianshavn.



women's shop, and this time on an entirely different basis.

After the slow start, the men's school rapidly became popular. On the second day Nielsen brought his father-in-law. On the third day another two young men came, and shortly the men's workshops were filled with students.

"They worked with energy and pleasure, and the results were good. I was very pleased. Through the work the students' attitudes changed completely. They sang and whistled while they worked. For a time they forgot that they were unemployed. Nature's inner desire to create was awakened", Kofoed writes in his memoirs about these first days of the school's history.

To Kofoed the home was the basis of society. Here the children were raised, and here the foundation for the coming society was formed. If the homes did not function, no one could expect an improved society. If you had a bad atmosphere in the home, it would weaken and oppress the children, so that they would develop into distorted beings. Kofoed therefore sincerely wished that the workshops would contribute to create an interest in forming the homes, not only materially in the shape of for instance better furniture, but just as much as creating a loving tone between parents and children. In various ways he tried asking the mothers whether they had any wishes, that the men could fulfil by working at the school. "It is so good to start giving each other joys; that is creation". Soon one, then another, came up with wishes, that they knew their wives had, and they started making these things. One father was given permission to borrow fretsaws and knives, so that he could start teaching his boys at home. Where surliness and bickering had been prevailing, the families now enjoyed their common task of making their homes happy and beautiful.

The first season was an experiment. Kofoed was satisfied with the result. However, the physical conditions could not be lived with for one more winter. The basement was too small for the school. All tools, benches, tables, and boards had to be put aside after each school day and set out again the next morning. Kofoed therefore

decided to look for other rooms before the next season.

Another reason for moving from the basement of the parish hall was that the parishioners were not too pleased about housing the school. Some found it an unnecessary project that was not part of parish work. They were also disappointed that Kofoed did not attend all meetings in the parish. Many years later, Kofoed's bitterness at this attitude from the church ministration could be felt. The parish members were so busy attending meetings, that they did not have the time to do a proper piece of work. It was common opinion that the unemployed needed most of all some sandwiches, coffee, and a sermon to finish off.

"In the beginning they did not understand one bit of the whole project. My aim was to run a Christian school, not a missionary school, but a place where what you did counted more, than what you said. The school is not a legitimate child in any religious disposition", Kofoed said many years later.

# The purpose of the school

We have no indication that Kofoed from the beginning had precise ideas as to the purpose and scope of his work for the unemployed. Kofoed was not a theorist; he formed his ideas as he went along. However, he had an unfailing instinct as to what the situation demanded and how he could set about helping people getting started again, and all the time he was working on new projects and methods. He was constantly engaged in solving new problems in society. He constantly went around wrapped up in considerations as to the school's success. From 1928 his thoughts never left the young unemployed.

In an application to the naval ministry in 1929, Kofoed asked to be allowed the use of the premises of the naval hospital in Christianshavn. Kofoed formed the purpose of the school to be: "Our innermost intent with this school is to give the unemployed man a helping hand to free himself from the danger of apathy, which so easily comes from being jobless. We also want to give him a feeling of accomplishment by participating in the various workshops, and by the general teaching of common school subjects which would be

useful to him, not only in this minute, but also later in life."

For the first time, teaching ordinary school subjects was mentioned as part of the school activities. Soon work and teaching became the two prime tools for the school to help the unemployed back on an even keel. In addition to this came the raising of the students' hygiene, a subject Kofoed attached much importance to. A bath, a shave, and clean clothes could make the whole difference. Jokingly, people talked about Kofoed's idea with the school as "the religion of the clean feet".

Next in Kofoed's forming the purpose of the school, one should notice, that it had to be useful not just now, but also later in life. This thought was in 1929 formed into the motto of "help to self-help". The help was to be immediate and to remedy a temporary emergency, and at the same time to give a long lasting effect, and furthermore to rebuild the man, so that he would be able to handle things whenever the next difficulties turned up.

This future idea of the school held one of the primary incentives to the extensive activity of the growing Kofoed's school. Help should not be given as a social measure. Help should be given as a social pedagogic training, helping the students to help themselves, so that they eventually could manage without the school.

Kofoed's special way of handling the social work had the aim of documenting to society, that the unemployed were more than a grey street army, who lived off other people's charity. The massive unemployment meant that all jobless were more or less seen as work-shy, asocial elements; they were lazy and indolent. They did not want to work. Unemployment was probably their fault. They should just pull themselves together. If they wanted to, they would find work!

Kofoed had also met the type of unemployed, who lived off others and whose inventiveness was vast, when it was a question of raising sentimental compassion with the people who were safe. He was indignant when the jobless bent low for money, when in doing so

they lost some of their worthiness. It was quite clear to him that help should not be given in a way that took self-respect from those who received the help.

The jobless were not to – in any way – qualify for help by pleading helpless. You often saw frightening examples of how people receiving parish help, became worse off, when they were given immediate help without being given the possibility of working themselves for their own rebuilding. If poverty and helplessness were the criteria of getting help, people would often live down to this. They were helped out of an emergent situation, but the help did not give any strength to the receiver, and soon their situation was as bad as before.

But many of the unemployed had energetic hands. They only did not have a possible place to go to achieve help in a worthy way.

The idea of the school was to give a chance to those, who would use their energy, who wanted to help themselves to "earn a living in an honourable way, and not to give oneself up to the ruling plague of the time: begging at peoples doors." The school was to show society, that a large number of unemployed would rather fend for themselves, if they were given the chance. The school was to be the sieve parting the willing from other elements. The school was to prove that there were people who were worth the help, and who understood to use it in a positive way. "Our object was not, and is not, to do anything but to employ energetic hands in a period, when they might not be able to get a job."

Kofoed had a great heart for the lower people of society, but he would not run a charity organization. In newspapers he was often named as the charitable sacristan, but Kofoed did not get his inspiration from the parable of the Good Samaritan. On the other hand he criticised the Samaritan, not for having taken care of a needful person, of course, but for helping out in the emergent situation only. After having helped the immediate needs of the assaulted, the Samaritan ought to have seen to the fact that the region should be cleansed of assaulters. "If you are satisfied by doing charity, you



get off too easily ... you have mistaken social responsibility for charity. You have lost yourself in the parable of the Good Samaritan and formed your ideals on that basis. As long as you just give some help, you think that everything is well. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, however, the good heart and the moment of help has been described, but what about the time hereafter? In social work you must have an element of social understanding and foresight."

In several newspaper interviews Kofoed used to illustrate the Danish lighthouse authority in order to show, what he understood by social responsibility. In the beginning they helped the poor seamen, who were unhappily shipwrecked, and they did what they could to help them ashore. But soon the local people began lighting fires on the beach to warn the ships off dangerous sandbars. Finally, lighthouses were built to guard against shipwrecks.

With Kofoed charity and social understanding mingled into a third factor: Pedagogical social aid – or the restoration of the man, who had ended up in social difficulties. The help to be granted were to have the same object as the teachings in the schools: To create better, skilful and happy people.

Soon the folk high school movement became the foundation of the school's work. Kofoed wanted to establish a contact to the large amount of young people, who drifted in the city without any goal in their lives. The school was to become the high school of the city for those, who would never consider frequenting a traditional high school. Kofoed's school was to be a life school, a place where you not only tried to help the young out of a backwater, but where they were also led to a rich youth. Kofoed's school differed from the traditional folk high schools as to its means, but the goal was the same: To awaken and train the young.

Kofoed was a practical man with great visions. In 1928, when he first informed about his school, he called his talk "an orientation about helping to keep up the clothes and shoes in your homes". No one saw the great perspectives and ideas hidden in this prosaic enterprise.

From the start Kofoed was aiming high. He was not occupied by material problems: clothes for the body, or food in the belly, or a bed to sleep in. To him that was a matter of course. At least it ought to be so in the home country of Grundtvig: where few had too much and fewer too little of these basic necessities. A social aid, which would only repair the necessary basic demands, would be too little. "The contribution must be given in such a way, that the elementary needs would not just be covered but would enhance the recipients' expectations to go for higher and greater values. Contentment, because he did it himself. Power, because you got more skilled to overcome the next difficulty. Happiness, because the dormant creative urge that lives in each individual, would be satisfied.

On the basis of his understanding of social responsibility, Kofoed criticized the ruling social policy. Even if large sums were spent on the social altar, the perspective seems too poor. "For the taxes we pay to other purposes, we demand to know the social value, or at least we demand to see an improvement in social conditions, but what do we expect from our social expenditure? – Nothing! We rather consider it to be a necessary evil or a kind of penance for being better off ourselves.

The heart of the matter in Kofoed's social work was to teach a new outlook of life and a new personal experience to the students. He would free the young jobless of their frequently distorted attitude and way of life. Many years in the rows of the job-seeking had made them bitter and harsh; it often led to depression and despair. Kofoed often used the expression 'slavish mind' about their manners. They would use anything at hand to survive. They metaphorically fell on their belly for a coin. They had started their lives from the reverse and soon came to see it as real life. However, it was a life that left them mentally wasted.

"We have to model these people", Kofoed once said to the fright of his colleagues. He wanted to reshape his worn down students into not just a physical, but also a mental harmonic rebuilding of character, strength, and a humane outlook by peeling off those layers of inferiority and incapability, so that they would be left feeling life as refreshing and young again.

Kofoed's entire restless energy, which in the years to come, resulted in one project after another, was aimed at this higher life. A privilege of youth is to dream dreams and have visions. That privilege had been destroyed for the young jobless. "I would so much enjoy to lead these young ones up the mountain to return the lost vision to them. They need more than others the great vision that can carry them through struggle and hardships and call the man inside them out to fight for a goal."

# The oil mill

After one season in the parish hall it was necessary to find new rooms, but where could they be found? Kofoed criss-crossed Christianshavn on foot, as he was to do many a time later, hunting for a building for his school. Naturally, it would cost something to convert the building to serve his purpose. The rent had, however, to be low, as there was no money.

In Dronningensgade (a street in Christianshavn) lay an old factory building. At some point it had been made into a clerical house. One vicar had actually lived there, and the building was therefore called the vicarage. Later it had been converted into an oil mill. Now it was nearly falling down and was doomed for demolition. Only the rats were left.

The rats did not frighten Kofoed, and as the building belonged under the city administration, he showed up there. Later the same day, the Government official went out with Kofoed to inspect the building. The official found that it could not be used for human activities, and the application was denied.

Kofoed, however, pushed on, and he had his application reconsidered at Copenhagen's municipal welfare corporation, which on November 20th, 1928, handed over the building to Kofoed without charge. Yet he had to declare himself willing to move out again with one day's notice.

"Hurrah! Now we had a whole building to ourselves. It runs in my blood to make something out of very little. To me this is pure sport. When I see something really miserable, like an old ruined piece of furniture, a tumbling down hovel, a ragged, dirty human being, my fingers just itch to start doing something, and my vision of that moment fills completely."

Kofoed's urge came now to a hard test. The lower story of the building was completely unfit. One meter of water stood in it. Now and again you could hear the splashing of a water rat or a toad. The ceiling had gaping holes. A foul stench of oil, fungus and decay met the nose of the intruder.

Together they rigged up a ladder and entered the first floor. There was no question of major repairs. That would be too expensive. While they all were looking dispirited at the premises, Nielsen, the school's first student, suddenly popped up and offered his assistance, and joking and laughing the men went to work at the floor.

But where would they get the material? Suddenly they heard someone coming up the ladder. It was the building's caretaker. He showed the way to spare laths, rafters and boards. "He didn't say that we could not use them; but when he had gone, we had the feeling that in this case the end justifies the means."

The building had no heating, nor light, the installations to these purposes had been removed and demolished. They tried kerosene stoves, but these gave such a bad smell that they were soon removed. They would rather weather the cold of winter.

Little by little things were mended and arranged, so that the school could take in the students again. When the fitting up was finished, the school could take 32 students. They gathered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. The Danish handicraft society again lent tools and instruments to be used by the school. However, not enough to engage all students and Kofoed personally guaranteed a loan in order to buy tools. Worktables and benches were made by the students. These wore well for another 7-8 years.





Workshops for brush making, shoemaking and various kinds of carving were set up. Kofoed's wife, Astrid, taught cane work. Her students produced sewing baskets, egg baskets, flowerpot bowls, and bread trays. At the start the work material were given to the students without charge. Later, some of the goods were sold, and at least some of the materials were paid for.

Kofoed's application to the municipality had been presented to the central office for homeless men and the application had been granted on the condition that the workshops were run in co-operation with the central office. The central office encouraged establishment of day homes in several places in Copenhagen, but the office also wanted a certain control as to who were received in the homes, including Kofoed's school. Kofoed was obliged to make a positive attempt to prevent the workshops from becoming a gathering place "where bad elements would influence the students in a demoralising way". The central office made it explicitly clear that the school

*Above:*

Woman producing baskets at the school.

did not solve any problems but giving shelter to persons who had left Sundholm (a Copenhagen doss house) or who lived by begging or spent their nights in the free shelters. Likewise the school was not allowed to help farm workers or others who had no connection to Copenhagen, as this would help these to stay in town.

It was doubtful whether Kofoed could keep his promise to ward off bad elements from the workshops. He was anxious to see what kind of men would feel at home in the miserable school building, which corresponded with their own primitive and hopeless way of life. The building itself held nothing to lead them upwards.

Kofoed's doubts proved true. The faces of the students flamed in all colours of the rainbow from too much alcohol. The common unemployed was a minority.

Yet the students produced for dear life and far too much especially in the brush making shop. By and by a lot of money was spent on materials, and the many products were not easy to sell. The students could only use one or two brushes themselves, but Kofoed did not have the heart to "sack" them, when they became too skilful. In this way brooms, scrubbing brushes, and soap brushes piled up in the workshop.

The students were paid for the goods they produced. It was not much, but enough to pay the nights lodging. However, the unprofitable production undermined the school's economy. Several times Kofoed had to turn to his wife to ask her for their own household money in order to give the men their pay. One day economy was absolutely at its lowest. There was not a single krone (Danish coin) to pay the students, when Kofoed left his home in the morning to open the workshops. As he went down the stairs, a young girl brought an envelope to deliver to Kofoed. In the envelope were 50 kroner. Economy was saved for that day. "It is very demanding to live like this, but it is a happy life."

A sales promotion was tried. One of the students claimed that he had been a sales representative in baskets and brushes, and he was



given a number of goods to sell. They were all sold, but he ate up the earnings. Kofoed got hold of him and gave him a proper blow up. It helped, and the man was allowed to try again. This time with a better result, but not good enough to better the economy sufficiently.

Kofoed was not quite satisfied with the work method. It was not sufficiently stimulating and rehabilitating, even if the jobless for some hours had the pleasure of feeling the blessing of work, and were cheered by it.

When the season was over, it was clear to Kofoed, that this winter in the oil mill had to be the first and the last. They had often started the day by breaking the ice on the soaking tubs in order to start the day's cane work. Carpentry was ruined by dampness, and the men were stiff from cold. Many attempted to work with their gloves on, but that was not possible. The highlight of the day was the hot coffee, which was handed out by the Copenhagen women's coffee stall.

That winter Kofoed suffered a severe influenza, one of the older shoemakers got pneumonia and died. Another helper drank of the methylated spirit to keep warm. "Educationally it was impossible to gain any real result", and at the end of the season May 1st 1929 Kofoed immediately started looking for new rooms.

*Above:*

Kofoed with some of his first voluntary employees.

# The naval hospital

Nothing happened till September. Kofoed had spotted the old naval hospital in Christianshavn. At once he wrote an application to the ministry of naval affairs, and after some unceremonious negotiations with a bluff naval officer, matters were settled in November. The school was given the ground floor to use for free. That was paradise compared to the oil mill. The floor held three large rooms, three pretty sitting rooms, a kitchen and reasonable toilet facilities. All in all it could hold 70 men. Later Kofoed was given the use of a further number of rooms at the hospital, so that the school could take in 130 students.

They immediately started arranging the workshops, and on November 3rd 1929 Kofoed opened the doors for the school's third season. This time it proved to be for many seasons. The school used the place till early 1935, and more important: Kofoed could plan a system for his school, a system that served his goals.

It soon showed that the good and handsome rooms attracted a different kind of men from those who frequented the oil mill. The com-

mon unemployed men were again dominating among the students. They wanted to fend for themselves. They wanted to get started, and the unemployment situation was like a nightmare to them.

Kofoed constantly considered the form of work. Seen from the outside it looked well. The men were busy. The school kept them from walking the streets, and they earned their own money to pay for night lodgings. He felt, however, that on the long term they did not achieve enough from their stay at the school. As artisans they became more skilful, but "the school could not offer them the ability to step upwards, which the work appealed to do."

One day Kofoed entered the kitchen. To his surprise he saw two men standing stripped to the waist busy washing their underwear and shirt - and the sight came to him: he knew what was needed! Cleanliness and clean clothes! That was needed. The dirty clothes signalled from afar that here was a man who could not fend for himself. Their clothes stuck to the back and front. No one could hope to get a job with that look and in such clothes. The man was dirty and unshaven, the clothes were creased because he slept in them, the trousers tatty, the shirt missing several buttons. The socks were soaked because of the miserable shoes. Mostly the sole of the shoe had a big hole in it. Feet got cold, and cold feet often make the whole man cold and hard of heart.

"Yes, that was how it was! It started with the clothes, then came a feeling of malaise, then carelessness then hopelessness, all this letting go of ideals. Now I knew where to start. I had found the guideline for our work. The most important of all."

Kofoed at once started to rebuild the school at the naval hospital. He was ecstatic. It couldn't wait one day. A laundry and wash room was set up. A depot of spare clothes was to be built; the men should be able to change clothes. Tailors should be employed to help the men repair their clothes. Ironing boards were to be bought, mirrors to be fixed, and warm lather and shaving gear should be ready for the students.



*Above:*

Personal hygiene was the first step in the rehabilitation of the student.

"A shave, pressed trousers, polished shoes and a clean collar shall from now be the admission order to the dining, sitting and school rooms," he explained to his helpers.

The personal hygiene became the first step in Kofoed's system to rehabilitate the unemployed. It started at one's skin. Not until the unemployed again had the feeling of wellbeing in his own body and when he would not be ashamed of his clothes, then he was motivated to apply for a job.

"The ordinary cleaning of clothes and body, which the rest of us take for granted, means much more to the character and stamina of the unemployed, than we do usually believe. I have so often experienced that the inner man deteriorates when the outer appearance is ruined. We now planned to turn the falling curve of the unemployed man's character scale by implementing a comprehensive cleanliness system, but first and foremost to stop the curve from falling. We would try to raise it by rebuilding it in the same manner as it had been torn down. And step by step we would seek to get to the central issue: Man's self-respect! If we succeed in helping that back, the rest will come of its own accord."

In this way the wash room and the clothes depot became the most important part of the new system of the school. They were very demanding activities, and here it was that you reached the best contact with the students.

However, the school had too few pieces of clothing. Even with the help of the newspapers taking up the subject with some positive effect, the school did not nearly have clothes enough for all those in need. In order to be given new clothes, the student had first to wash and repair his old ones, even if was just a piece of cloth around his legs. Kofoed didn't want to punish the man, but he wanted to see if he would do something positive for himself. Kofoed knew that some people would try to get into the school just to get clothes, and afterwards they would sell it to the second hand shop. This possibility had now been ruled out with the demand that the students had to do something themselves to get the clothes.



Being met with the demand to contribute, the students learned to keep their clothes in good shape. They were given an extra set when they had finished their old set. They were given the clothes as payment for rendered work. It was not charity to get clothes at Kofoed's school. The demand for their own contribution came to be the prevailing rule for everything that the school gave to the students. They had to contribute something in order to achieve the feeling of accomplishment. They owned the items they took home as they were earned by honest work. Hereby the school had developed a method to strain those out who wouldn't contribute. But he who could fend for himself and deserved help, got it. In this way the school came to have a body of students of interest: Men who wanted to help themselves. "We want to practise our motto "Help to self-help" in the very meaning of the word", Kofoed announced in 1929.

A major part of the students only came to get clothes and shoes, but along the way they were inspired by the other activities in the school, and they joined the workshops.

The new system did not lead to reductions in the former activities. On the contrary, the school still had a shoemaker's shop, a brush making shop, a basket making shop, a carpenter's shop and so forth.

However, the old problem of overproducing was still there. Too much was produced – or too little was sold. Various experiments were tried. One attempt was to sell the goods through a provincial agent, who was travelling in selling seeds and grain. Once Kofoed himself threw a sack of brushes over his shoulder and went about to sell them, but with a poor result. One man went for free around Amager (island connected to Copenhagen and Christianshavn by bridges) trying to sell the goods. But in spite of all these attempts a large number of brushes were piling up in the store. Of course, this influenced the budget.

Furthermore, Kofoed had trouble with the trade union of the brush-maker industry. They feared that their members were being threat-

ened by unfair competition. From other sides also the school was accused of setting too low prices on its products. In a letter one man accused Kofoed of keeping the money himself. On Kofoed's private door someone had placed a poster with the text: "Here lives the world's greatest hypocrite."

So one thing and the other led to closing down the brush making. But the production of wooden toys was extended with pushcarts, children's chairs and tomahawks. The Church Army ordered 1000 pieces of a prayer chair. A production of lamps was also launched.

However, there was not much money in it – the more energetic and productive the men were, the larger was the deficit.

# Money

Money and economy is a chapter by itself during the early phase of the school's history. The economy was all the time insecure and strenuous.

"Very often, so to speak each morning when I got up, I didn't know where to get the means for the evening's pay out. It was living from hand to mouth." Kofoed visited one, than another to ask for support. He hardly ever received a no, but as a lot of money was needed daily, he had to work hard for support and donations. Even if the newspapers soon began to be interested in the school, it did not make a great difference economically. Again and again Kofoed had to pay from his own pocket. There was never money for more than just getting through the day. Several times he feared that he would have to close down the school, because there was not enough money to meet the bills, even if he had been given a long credit. There were periods when the school was closed temporarily because of money shortage. This was the case in the winter of 1931. The situation made the students approach the public authorities requesting support. "We need the work at the school, because what we earn there very much help us, as we do not receive any emergency relief to keep distress at bay, and because having a job to do help us to keep our spirit going", they wrote.

Kofoed had a pious relationship to money. If God wanted the school to go on, the money would come. Not by coincidence but because God Himself wanted the work done! In the many incidences when in the last minute an envelope appeared with money, Kofoed was convinced that it was a sign from above to continue the work.

On the other hand the strained economy was still a spur to do an even better work. "Have we done our work as we should, God will take care of us", Kofoed said.

During the earlier years the school was run on voluntary contributions and a little economical support from the central office for homeless men and from the Christian co-operation. The co-operation consisted of all Christian charitable institutions in Copenhagen. Its goal was to establish day homes in the city, where the homeless could have a cup of coffee and some bread, while they warmed up in a heated room. This was not a way to treat the unemployed, according to Kofoed's intentions, and with this he might not have been donated as much money from the co-operation, as could have been. The co-operation did not really believe in Kofoed's ideas.

So much more important it was for Kofoed to be able to stand on his own feet and to build up the school as a self governing institution with its own governing body. This came true in 1930. Kofoed gathered a small circle of honourable men who would guarantee the solidity of the school. As chairman the director of the united vinegar brewers, Carl Petersen, was elected. The board was further elected with Professor J. Warming, ex. Headmaster, and parish clerk at Vor Frelzers Kirke (Our Saviour's church in Christianshavn) H. A. Rosendahl; architect Svend Møller, engineer; director H. Borgen; and vicar V. E. Brenk - and Kofoed himself. Carl Petersen was a great help to the school with his knowledge of economy and business. He soon had a cash credit opened to the school, and he himself was responsible for the credit. In spite of all, the season ended up with a deficit.

Many small shopkeepers and tradesmen supported the school with material necessary for the schoolwork. In this manner Kofoed got

food for the students from shops in the neighbourhood. He was donated sugar from a sugar refinery in Langebrogade (street in Christianshavn). On and off sandwiches was sent to the school. That was most appreciated. Each afternoon around 800 sandwiches were consumed. A delivery of 4000 sandwiches to the school gave quite some press covering. For several years a bank director had helped out people, who had ended up in the clutches of money lenders. The bank director simply sought out the money lenders and told them face to face that they were swindling and forced them to a deal to the benefit of the mistreated, who were given back what was actually their due. The bank director took care of the profit. He spent the money on social work – and among other things he bought the sandwiches for the students at Kofoed's school.

In spite of all these helping hands, economy remained the weak point of the school. Kofoed, however, was comforted by the fact, that it was the small contributors of society that were his most ardent supporters; they would give their last coin to the school. This proved to Kofoed that the school had a public anchoring, just as he wanted it to be. The sons of the people came to the school and after that they were going back into society to earn their living. He did not want the school to be for a small group. Neither did he want it to be a state school. Kofoed was wary of public support of fear of a public interference in the school affairs. Nevertheless, in the long run he would have to accept some kind of financing the school, if it were to continue and expand as hitherto.

# The Staff

You became a staff member of the school out of inclination and an interest in the project, not to be paid enough to live on. The school paid poor wages. If you got them at all! Kofoed himself never made it to be on the school's pay roll. Through all the years he kept on in his job as parish clerk at Christianskirken. As work at the school by and by demanded most of his time and power, he had a substitute to relieve him from some of the work in the parish clerk office, but every Sunday he was to be seen in the church as parish clerk. He still received his salary from the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs, but he never received one krone from Kofoed's school. He held grounds of principle on this. "As a person, friend and comrade, I want to be with the students, voluntarily and unpaid."

Kofoed had a rare ability to draw good people to work for the school, people who were enthusiastic, and who gave all they had in them. To these people the work was a vocation. Their effort came from enthusiasm and idealism for the love of their neighbour. Everyone pulled together in a common acknowledgement of the character of the work. Kofoed inspired them through his personality and his wish to do the best. Most people were afflicted by what was later called the "Kofoed-virus". A few moments under his charisma, and people were immediately doing some work at the school. If you had once started the work, it became a life cause. You never forgot your years at Kofoed's school.

Kofoed demanded everything from his staff. "You could join in the work no matter what abilities or skills or view of life you had, but when you were there, you did not have any work limit or work area. Kofoed himself lead the way every day from the moment he opened his eyes till he often very late closed them again. And he expected the same from his followers. He had a wonderful ability to make his staff consider our work not as an offer, nor as painful duty, but as a favour he gave us" one of the staff, who was very close to Kofoed, wrote.

In 1935 Kofoed established a work college for university students. 12 students were admitted, and university students worked 5 hours a day for free lodging and meals. Among these were students of theology, medicine and law. Apart from being of use to the school, they gained a practical knowledge of people, they were later to work among.

There was not much difference between rich and poor. Theologians, who came in the belief that they should give lessons on theology or perform prayers, were often put to work with foot washing in the wash rooms. Didn't Jesus wash the feet of his disciples? Or they were given the use of a typewriter to write out addresses on 4000 envelopes. Anybody who could and would work, was given tasks at the school. As Kofoed gradually extended the school with new functions, he needed more staff. However, way up in the history of the school, there was still a majority of unpaid staff. A few years before Kofoed's death in 1952, the school held a staff of 105. Of these 43 were unpaid, and 62 paid.

It was not just at the school that Kofoed was eminent at making people work. Caused by the ever ailing economy of the school, annual bazaars were held in Grundtvig's house. The surplus was used for the work at the school. Over the years, many of popular and beloved actors and singers have performed without pay to the benefit of the school: Henrik Malberg, Tenna Kraft, Chr. Arhoff, Ib Schønberg, Ebbe Rode, Ejnar Nørby, Karin Nellesen, Else Marie, Hans Kurt, Poul Reumert, Anna Borg, Mogens Wieth, Gerda Gilbo, Johannes Wahl, Ellen Gottschalk, Buster Larsen, Palle Huld, etc, etc.



Even today actors and artists are most willing to come to the school in order to perform for the students, for example on a Christmas night.

Famous actors sometimes invited Kofoed students to the theatre. Once Ib Schønberg arranged for 200 students to go to The New Theatre in Copenhagen to see Hostrup's "Genboerne" ("opposite neighbours", a well-known Danish play).

Everywhere where Kofoed went, he inspired his surroundings by his high spirits and his engagement. An eagerness spread with the students, whenever he walked through the room. New members of staff might be hesitant in meeting Kofoed's invitation to come to the school giving a contribution in form of work, but once they set foot in the school and felt the atmosphere, they often worked there for many years, not from duty, but because they experienced that working for the school gave a meaning to their lives. It was not just the students that were marked for life by their stay at the school. The staff got just as much in return. The work engendered a special kind of dynamics, and an esprit de corps developed, which would withstand unbelievable strains. You were never in doubt as to the justification and the meaning of the work, even in the worst crises.

# Education

Kofoed had not for nothing been a folk high school teacher for five years. Therefore, his idea of the folk high school came to mark his work with the school. Already in his Hoptrup days he had plans to establish a folk high school for the unemployed in Haderslev.

Instead in was now the school in Copenhagen that became his place of starting educating the unemployed. Very early in the school career Kofoed talked about work and education as the major pedagogical preambles of the school, but not until the winter 1930-31 the actual teaching was introduced; the first season, however, only in a small way. The subjects were English and German.

With the teaching Kofoed wanted to fill in the students' evening hours with something they needed. "Of course our students, like so many other young people, needed to qualify themselves. But they especially needed an occupation to free them from painful thoughts. They needed an occupation enabling them forget the bleak life. Something that could give them a lift up to a higher level, from where they would see that the world still needed young, healthy and knowledgeable men, whose will had not been destructed by misfortune, but who were firm and wanted to and could make an effort".

As of all high school activity the aim of the education was to strengthen perspectives for each individual's future as active and worthy citizens. "The goal, that I saw was no less than teaching Denmark's youth to live." To that purpose Kofoed needed staff who could stimulate and inspire the students. Kofoed had himself experienced what blessing a young person can feel from meeting a stimulating person. Many years later such inspiration may still seem animating.

Teaching was begun in the basement, in what used to be the hospital's morgue. The symbolism was striking – but soon life was pulsating in there. Kofoed got into contact with some young socially minded school teachers, university graduates, lawyers, theologians, engineers, and college students who were willing to work and do it for free. In the winter season 1932-33 the educational section had already grown to colossal measures. 16 classes were erected with 12-15 students at each subject. The teaching took place from 6 p.m. till 9.30 p.m., the only admittance pass was an urge to learn. Apart from English, German and French there were classes in Danish, arithmetic, mathematics, civics, first aid, gymnastics and singing. The school had its own choir and approximately once a month it was out performing. Anyone who wanted to sing could get into the choir.

The educational section was mainly frequented by the young jobless between 18 and 30 of age, "the part of the unemployed youth wanting to do something in spite of being knocked out, not giving up even under the dour conditions."

The teaching soon reached such a high level, that most classes were acknowledged by the Copenhagen educational authority. This implied that these classes came under the Copenhagen continuation school authority, which paid all expenditures. The teachers could now be paid for their work. However, Kofoed's school still retained the leadership of the education. "Quite another matter was that many teachers gave their salaries as a contribution to the school, it just underlines their attitude to the work."

Gymnastics soon became part of the school curriculum.



Once a week people were invited to talks about popular, political or religious subjects. The lecturers were either the school's own teachers or they came from outside. Kofoed was himself an industrious lecturer at the school. He also frequently invited the students to "comrade nights". Here you talked with each other and talked freely about down-to-earth subjects in which both students and teachers were engaged. These evenings became hugely popular, and on some nights 160 – 170 attendants could be counted.

# The Kofoed System

The school had good years at the naval hospital. Along the way more and more students came to, and cleanliness and personal hygiene were seriously promoted. 450 pairs of shoes were repaired during the first winter, and the workshops were used by more than 300 men. During the winter 1930-31 the school had 1100 persons coming. 1000 of the 1100 spent time in the tailor's workshop, and approximately 2000 pairs of shoes were repaired. When the cleanliness sector really got under way, 10-13.000 shavings were undertaken per season, 2800 haircuts were made, and 5500 foot baths undertaken.

The number of students reached 2000 a season. The daily number of students was approx. 200. But as everything was at its best, notice was given that the school must leave the old naval hospital. It had been sold to a home for the mentally deficient. The notice came in October 1934. The school was to clear the rooms by January 1st 1935.

Once again the school had no place to be. Help was asked through a circular address. Several hundred jobless signed a petition to Steincke, the Minister of Social Affairs. They underlined the great

helpfulness and kindness, that they had received at the school, and which contributed to keeping up their spirits in spite of unemployment and difficult times. But the minister would not help.

A very difficult period in the school history was now ahead. The educational sector could move to rooms at Amagerbroskolen (a primary school) and Christianshavns Gymnasium (a grammar school), respectively, but there was no option for the workshops. They were temporarily closed down, and tools, worktables, machines, goods and clothes were temporarily stored waiting for better times. The cleanliness section was moved to an old house in Amagergade (a street on the island Amager, closely connected to Christianshavn and Copenhagen). The house was doomed for demolishing. Conditions were horrible. Water ran through the floorboards and the basement was filled with water.

The school was disintegrating. Yet Kofoed managed to keep so much together, that it could be collected into a unit again, when new rooms were available.

It happened to be a school in Prinsessegade (a street in Christianshavn), where Kofoed started again in 1936. The building held 25 rooms. The impression of the building from the outside was sinister. Inside it was grimy, and everything was worn down. These were not the best surroundings, but yet it became the place, where "the Kofoed System" was seriously developed.

For quite some time Kofoed had considered how to connect the many activities of the school, so that you could really talk of rehabilitating the students. He had seen the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene for the students. But how did you give them further help towards higher goals? How could you start a process of development?

The school had three "enemies": Destruction of character, the bodily breaking up, and a ruined humane outlook. Could a social pedagogical work form be found to hinder these elements breaking down the body and mental power of the unemployed?



It was a slide down the hill from shoes worn down on one side and dirty underwear on the other to a ruined character. The unemployed became careless about themselves, and soon they were lost to all sense of decency. "They would go to unnatural extremes and would become unkind and hard. The asocial attitude takes over their former character." Self-respect was lost, and the unemployed slid further on the downward path. The idle life also attacked the body. The dole did not afford a heated room. You could only afford the most frugal meals. Shoes were worn down on one side, and soon you would have sores on your feet. "Unnoticeably his physics would be undermined day by day".

Kofoed had to find a method to stop this catastrophic development. The solution turned out to be a work card, which was given to the student on his arrival at the school. This little card held the secret.

Printed on the card you found all the departments listed in which the student could participate in order to achieve advantages. If a student desired a certain advantage he would have to work his way through several departments and work processes that all helped to rebuild his self-respect. Each department leader had a pair of pliers, and when the student had done his work, his card got a punch. Each punch gave a certain number of points. When the student had gathered the necessary number of points, he was handed out the desired object, e.g. a shirt or a pair of socks. Six points gave him the right to a meal. Gymnastics and bath gave him the right to a cup of coffee with bread. The sheet also gave admittance to the school's reading room and to entertainment. The student had to have earned six points in order to stay on at the school.

With this little work card the men wandered from section to section. They soled and polished shoes, they washed and repaired socks and shirts, they pressed trousers, they shaved and had a haircut, they had their wounds treated, they took cod-liver oil, etc. (In 1938-39 the school delivered 8000 portions of cod-liver oil and 16000 vitamin pills). The men gathered points for all this. Whenever they did something for themselves, they were rewarded by the school. When the students came to the school they might be shabby and in





The School in Prinsessegade. Signing in.

dirty clothes. After having been around the sections of the school they could look like gentlemen. They were dressed in clean clothes, their trousers had press-folds, the shoes were shining, their chin was smooth, the hair washed and combed. They had eaten and had coffee. It all meant that they had the strength to go out and apply for work. "We demand press-folds in their trousers, shining shoes and a clean shave, because we know that in this way a man can apply for a job in high courage and with an expectation of good luck", Kofoed said in 1936.

The more benefits the students wanted, the more they had to give. When they felt strong enough to work and they asked the school to help them find a job, they were enrolled in the school's graduation class. But before this they had to meet certain demands: They were to attend gymnastics with a following bath at seven a.m. each morning – and not five minutes after seven! They had to participate in a school subject at their own choice, and they were expected to be fervent guests at the vitamin inn. If the student lived up to these demands the school tried to get him a job according to his total number of points on his work sheet.

When Kofoed again had found rooms to work in, he threw himself into one project after another. The education department was especially extended. The school in Prinsessegade had a primary school as neighbour across the street, and here Kofoed could lend all the class rooms he wanted, after the children had finished school in the afternoon. The many classrooms made it possible for Kofoed to differentiate the teaching so that the school could offer a class for beginners and a class for advanced learners in e.g. the language classes.

A housekeeping school was established for unemployed men, the first of its kind in Denmark. Twenty students a time were participating – dressed in white coats and tall cook's hats. The classes began with the students' preparing their own meal, main course and dessert. After that common housekeeping was taught. The class was formed into four "families" of each five men, where one family made the main course, one the dessert, the third baked, and

the fourth laid the table etc. The class was also informed about the nutritional value of the food. The aim was to teach the students to make cheap and healthy food for themselves if they were single, or to give them skills to help their wife in their own kitchen. Some of the students actually got jobs as a ship's cook, one started his own bakery, one a sandwich shop, and one became a waiter.

There were also classes in wood and metal work, in boxing and wrestling, in first aid, in book keeping and in drawing. The programme often offered the subjects of family relations and sex instruction.

Work extended through these years. Kofoed's creative mind constantly worked on new plans and activities that would lift the men out of their unwanted idleness and into a active life where they not only met their material demands but also their spiritual ones. With the punch card Kofoed had found the right track. To many unemployed in the 30's the card presented a transfer ticket to a new life.

# The Homes

As mentioned earlier Kofoed understood the function of the homes and the family of the basis of society. He experienced with horror the growing numbers of divorces. Often it was due to failure in small practical things, that caused the dilution of homes: poor nourishment, failing cleanliness, socks with holes in them, a ruined piece of furniture, too little housekeeping money, many small things that suddenly became too much for the family.

To meet this development Kofoed started "the home section" which could support families that suffered from daily life problems. Here the family fathers and mothers could learn about the necessities of the function of a home. They would have to learn the basic necessities, not knowing them prior to marriage. You enter matrimony in a more irresponsible way than you pack a picnic basket. On what basis will the man build a home when he marries, and in which way has the girl shown that she knows the most elementary about housekeeping? Married life starts, but soon life's many small but yet important questions appear."

Kofoed actually found that it should be statutory for every young woman to learn housekeeping before getting married!

The women frequented the school during mornings.



They were allowed to bring their children. During class hours the children were taken care of in the school's kindergarten. The little ones were given food and milk and were stimulated by playing, singing and storytelling.

All the while the mothers worked with washing, sewing, repairing and cooking. They started in "the transit section" which implied tailoring, washing, ironing, mangling, storing, hairdressing, foot-care, doctor's room and dining room. They learned to remake clothes into children's clothes and into clothes for themselves. They were taught childcare, nourishment, hygiene, marriage problems, arrangement in the home, etc. Each season approximately 10.000 pieces of clothes were produced.

The women could bring their own dirty washing and have it washed, dried, mangled and ironed at the school. Very often they did not have washing or drying facilities in the building where they lived. This meant that clothes had to dry in the flat, and soon the living room was steaming from the dampness.

Any housewife could frequent the transit section. Next to this were the pedagogical sections with tailor, cutting and knitting courses, needlework, bookbinding, toy work, shoe shop, housekeeping and

*Above:*

Women washing the family's clothes at the school.



lectures for housewives. In the kitchen you were taught cooking, preserving, bottling and baking.

During the afternoon it was the men's turn in the home section, learning new skills. The separation was not due to sexual politics, but the men needed the mornings to apply for work. Kofoed rented an old pump station at Bådsmandsstrædes Kaserne (naval barracks) in Christianshavn and he set it up with carpentry, upholstery and paint shops for family fathers. The school collected furniture all over Copenhagen and took them to the pump station where the men repaired them, or they used the old furniture to produce new beds, tables, cupboards and chairs for their homes. In 1939 Kofoed announced a box room sweep to take place all over the Gammelholm quarter (a part of Christianshavn). 70 students were ready to clear out people's box rooms. The action paid an enormous surplus. There were old furniture dating a hundred years back, there were wash stands, curtain rods, paintings, lamps, couches, sofas, beds, books, etc. Truck after truck brought the items to the workshops. Altogether 100 truck loads! Now the home section could really unfold. The old worn down furniture was given a renaissance. Everything was repaired, reshaped and polished and placed in the homes.

The daily nourishment in the small homes was often insufficient, and this could be seen in the children. The families could not afford healthy food. To remedy this, Kofoed established a garden allotment school with 60 small gardens, where family fathers were given help to learn to grow vegetables, potatoes and flowers. In terms of money this meant a lot to the families, and healthwise even more. In this way they had vegetables for the winter together with the essential vitamins – and in addition many lovely hours during spring and summer with spades and hoes on the small plots.

In the legal and medical area the school also tried to support the families – and all students on the whole. In 1935 the school had a lawyer attached. That was C. P. Lauritzen, who later maintained the office as an energetic head of the board for a generation. A law student acted as assistant to the lawyer. Some of the students were





in conflict with the criminal law, or they were in financial trouble on account of non-paid instalment rates, collection of debts or alimonies.

The school employed a male and a female doctor. Especially housewives with children met up at surgery for children's examinations. A foot specialist was also employed. Often male students suffered from using poor shoes, they could show foot blisters the size of a clenched hand.

*Above:*

In the Carpenter's shop men repaired furniture – help to self-help in practice.

# The Training School

The German occupation of Denmark forced Kofoed to re-adjust the work. The occupying power soon spotted the school and put a stop to the work aimed at helping the unemployed men. The Germans could use all free work capacity, if nothing else the men could be sent to Germany to work there. Over a period there were literally speaking no men at the school. Secretly the school tried to help them as much as possible.

The home section was still much needed, and it was now extended. Education of house wives was given extra attention.

Kofoed soon saw that the German occupation and the post-war era would mean new problems for society and with this for the school. He especially feared a disillusioned youth with vast unemployment followed by juvenile crime. He quietly began to work on the post-war problems. A school and work form aiming at the young jobless who had had a bad start in life had to be established. They needed a place where they could start all over in order to be of use to society. The school was to be a branch of the Christianshavn school, but it should step a pace forward.

The school form was to be a combination of work, education and learning manners.

He had not quite worked out these thoughts when he one day in November 1940 went for a walk with High-Court lawyer C. P. Lauritzen along the southern point of Amager (island immediately south of the centre of Copenhagen). Kofoed knew that he would need a farm and by looking at a map he had got the impression that there would be suitable farms near Kongelunden (place on the southern point of Amager). The two men called on the farmers, told them of their errand and were finally shown to farmer Bødker whom they asked if he would sell his farm, Strandlyst, to a school for Kofoed's students.

Three days later they had bought the farm with 25 hectares for 105.000 kroner and with 40.000 kroner as down payment. It was a daring purchase. The buildings demanded a lot of investment before being suitable for trainee work. The soil was sandy and stony and in need of lime. Water came from a small well, which could not supply an entire school. New drillings only came up with brackish water. During the first years they therefore had to transport water in barrels by truck from 7 kilometres away.

But in this situation too, Kofoed's fingers were itching to build and after two and a half years "The Training School" was inaugurated in April 1943 with Prince Knud in attendance. The school could take 50 students.

The money for the farm came from sale of "homeless labels" in 1938. The labels were to the aid of the homeless, and were sold at 5 øre a piece. The famous brewer Vagn Jacobsen of the Carlsberg breweries printed two million labels to be sold to the benefit of the many homeless. A committee was set up to sell the labels and distribute the earnings. However, the sale was slow. The chairman of the committee came one day to Kofoed and said that if he could sell the labels, he could have all the money for the school.

Kofoed immediately banged the big drum. He had the scouts or-

ganize the sale, he informed the press and arranged for radio interviews, and during one week in 1938 most households of the entire Copenhagen had scouts calling on them to buy labels.

The net outcome amounted to 56.000 kroner, which was spent on buying "Kofoed's Training School".

The first to benefit from the training school were the housewives of the poor quarters of Copenhagen. Again and again Kofoed praised the little housewives who lived in poor conditions in small, dark and damp flats, and who with very small means during their husband's long jobless periods had been very brave in making ends meet in the homes. These women were given a three-week holiday at the training school with everything paid for! 75 women and 150 children were chosen by recommendation of a health nurse. Each woman had her own room and each child its own bed to sleep in – something most of them had never tried. That was a holiday! At the same time the women were offered classes in e.g. nutrition, child and woman hygiene, gymnastics, ball games, and nature studies. Each Wednesday evening and all day Sundays the husbands were invited to the training school as guests.

The holiday stay was financed by voluntary contributions. Here too, Kofoed was apt at mobilizing the press. The press found the idea outstanding. Kofoed needed 15.000 kroner, but he made 21.000 kroner, so that even more women and children could enjoy a well-earned holiday.

As an illustration of the need you might read the following examples:

A mother aged 38 came to the school one day, with two bundles in her arms. The bundles were twins aged 3 months. One of the twins looked more like a half-dead starling than like a baby. It seemed not able to survive. The woman was worn down and she had no more milk in her breasts. The school immediately required a doctor to come. He put the mother on a special diet and she succeeded in being again able to nurse the weakened child. The child recovered. In eight days it gained 350 grams in weight and it recovered.

In addition to the two little ones the woman had ten other children below the age of confirmation (approx. 15 years of age)! Her husband was jobless and sick.

Another woman, who applied for help from the school, was the mother of 21 children!

The school's external social workers reported the poor conditions and needs of the homes.

"The bedroom was awful – unbelievably cold and dark – no sheets on the beds, except the bed of the youngest child. One of the children's beds was filled with bits of newspaper – the mother told us that the boy, aged 9, wet himself during the night – she herself had had the same trouble until she had her first baby – was it possible that she could be given something like a rubber sheet or the like, as the boy often complained of being cold at night which is not good for a bed-wetter – he actually needed a blanket".

"Mrs. C's emergency situation was due to the fact, that the father of the two children was abroad for political reasons. She owns only one childbed and a stool. She sleeps on a mattress on the floor, and she has an old eiderdown for cover. The oldest child is sick with whooping cough among other things. The youngest is in hospital with a stomach poisoning."

"The family lives in an absolutely miserable flat in a horrible old housing block. Mrs. D. tells us that the flat had several times been disinfected to kill bedbugs. It helped a little while, but then the bugs were back. It is quite horrible now, as a second-hand dealer has moved into the ground floor. They have now given up as to the bugs. The family is applying for a bed for the ten-year old boy, as he is sick. It was strange to see the long boy sit in a baby cot – and he is only there because he is sick, otherwise he sleeps on the floor on a small child's mattress, and of course without sufficient bed-clothes."

Family F had six children. "...When I saw the bedroom – the living room was damp – but the bedroom was indescribable, and the

smell was terrible. The husband showed me how moisture had actually rotted the mattresses and eiderdowns. Of course they had no sheets or covers for the eiderdowns. It was all absolutely disgustingly dirty. It was unbelievable that people could live under such circumstances. The wall-paper had of course fallen off the walls. An in the middle of all this a two month old baby lay with his bottle."

The school was in daily contact with hundreds of mothers who were in need of even the most modest baby outfit, before the arrival of the little new one. The school workshop started producing and lending children's chest of drawers: a chest with a built-in cupboard for water basin, and drawers filled with a complete set of baby's clothes. Here the mother could wash and nurse her baby with everything at hand. After nine months she must give back the chest to the school, but she could keep the diapers and baby clothes.

After the war Kofoed organized a kind of home-help arrangement: "The flying Corps". The idea of the corps was to help the poor families. The members of the corps were from the Danish Women's Voluntary Army Corps, but other volunteers joined up when a special effort was needed for help in the homes.

# A New Type of Students

The school also felt the war at close range. One of the most trusted men at the school, parish clerk Ejnar Asbo, was shot by the Gestapo in his parish office. The Germans were after Kofoed too. He was looked up by the Gestapo some day when he was not at home, and after that he chose to go under cover with the oldest son, Erling. Kofoed spread the rumour that they had fled to Sweden. Actually, they took refuge at Fuglsang manor with the good friend of the family, Mrs. Bodil de Neergaard. Later they went to reverend Kildeby, Kofoed's headmaster from the Hoptrup days.

During the last 9 months of the German occupation Kofoed was away from the school. He used the time among other things to write his memory book "Beaten – No".

As soon as peace was announced, he was back at the school, ready to convert it into a first-aid station, in case of a possible "Night of the Long Knives".

From Kofoed's utterances during this period, you clearly feel his disappointment with the times. The pressure of occupation had brought out the best in many people, but also the worst in others.

The spirit of solidarity during the war soon faded with the return to normal life. "You would think that something good would come from the unity and concord that we had seen all through the occupation. And what was the result? Soon after the liberation, unity was blown away, and from what we see today, we experience that our people have not learned much during the years, which we called tough years – maybe they weren't tough enough?" Kofoed said to a journalist after the war.

For part of the youth everything had gone as bad as Kofoed had feared. Already in 1943 he had given a shout of alarm. He had noticed that "a more inert type" frequented the school, in opposition to the former students. "It is a type close to the chronic jobless. They are not actually inferior to the former students, only they have, due to unemployment, attained a different outlook towards life – and definitely towards work, a different outlook from what we have."

The problem was no longer a question of work or no work, it was a question of who managed best economically. What pays best? "To these men it was no longer a question of earning your pay or picking it up at the public assistance office. No here they ask: how much do I earn shovelling snow, when the office deduct this and that from my next assistance money, and I have extra expenditure, when I work which I don't have at home ... So does it all in all pay to take the job? ... Many of our unemployed have lost the joy of work, they don't appreciate the value of earning their own money, they'd rather live on the dole."

This type of young men had a good time during the war, when the differences between right and wrong, truth and lies, yours and mine were turned upside down. They had taken jobs offered and had not cared who paid them.

After the war the school therefore had more young students with adaptation difficulties, then the former unemployed students. The second generation of unemployment, Kofoed called them. They were young people that had grown up in homes where it was a common thing to live on the dole and social aid. Even if they could





work, they did not fit in with the norms of society. Some of them had lived a hectic, exiting and dangerous life during the war and they had earned fast money. After the war they collapsed mentally. They couldn't adjust to normal work with fixed working hours and rules. If they started work, they were soon fired again. They were not interested in the work as such. They liked the feeling of having money, and money might come from doing other things than working.

Kofoed has often used the term: "anti-social" about this group of students. The war and the lax social policy had created a fertile soil for a work-shy, degenerate youth that had experienced that the dole, supplied with bowing and begging, or denouncing a saboteur to the Gestapo paid their way. "We have participated in creating a youth which we today deeply lament", Kofoed said in 1946. "We have actually taken part in creating a type without a goal ... We

*Above:*

Male students in a classroom in the post-war era.

have formed a type of servile minds, who got their money from the social aid office, and then went out begging at doors to supply that money. They would bow for a 10-øre. (1 krone = 100 øre). If such a bloke was given 50 kroner for informing a name and address, he was flat on his belly to the bandits."

During the post-war years the teaching of manners became an essence to Kofoed. As early as in 1942, he said that the times were no longer a question of social care of the youth, but it was a question of manners and upbringing. The school must help to awaken what had died. "We have to establish schools where we can give the young ones a new outlook towards life and to make them understand, that work is not slavery."

He probably felt that his words fell on deaf ears, when he agitated for a grand style effort to help the youth that were left to fend for themselves and from whom no one expected anything. He constantly criticised the public sympathy towards helping the youth to get started on a healthy way of life. "The world could afford the earnings of a century to fight a war – but when it came to abolishment of unemployment, we had no money."

# Work and Education

After the German capitulation in 1945 the Training School was put to use in full scale. The work in Kongelunden had periodically been stopped as Kofoed feared that the Germans would confiscate the Training School for their own use. But in 1945 the school was reopened and soon it buzzed with activity.

Kofoed had listed the work of the Training School work in three major objectives:

- To recreate the joy of work.
- To encourage a sense of caring and to make way with what you had.
- To create strong and persevering minds.

The basis of the Training School was wedged in the folk high school idea. Kofoed wanted the importance, that the folk high school held for the youth of the agricultural society to be the same for the Training School as to the youth of the city. The young ones were to be enlivened and educated. They were to be aroused to an energetic calling. The school's curriculum lasted 6-9 months and it consisted

of practical work in stables and fields, and later on in work shops, classes in common subjects and in folk high school subjects, and – most importantly – in co-operation with the staff, who knew how to live “a happy and Christian youth”.

“In the school classroom the young ones must learn about the values of life for him who keeps his eyes and ears open for what is given us of beauty and greatness, and they must learn to appreciate what our good Danish men and women have created.” The students were not only to be trained physically, but they were also to experience the meaning of their lives from a new angle. They were not trained only to feel the satisfaction of being paid their wages once a week, but they were to undergo a personal revival.

The school admitted students at the age of 18 to 25 years. They came from the mother school at Prinsessegade. They got their first training in Prinsessegade and they were tested there over 1 to 2 months. They were judged as to their stamina, and if the judgement was positive, they were admitted to the Training School. In this way the schools developed a division of work between them. The school in Christianshavn was destined to be the “pound net” Kofoed said, the school that picked up everyone and prepared the youth for further training.

Kofoed had an imagination of the Training School on Amager to be the first in a total system of training schools, spread all over the country, covering each its work speciality. There was to be a training school for fishery and shipping, one for trade and handicraft, etc., which the students could choose according to their interest. Again and again Kofoed nourished the idea of acquiring a schooner, which was to be the mother ship of a flotilla of fishing vessels, where the young men could learn the trade from scraps – and along with the training have their interest in life and trust in the future awakened. The idea was not directly to train the students in special subjects. “Our goal is to introduce the students to the spirit of the folk high school – and on this basis give them work which they would later in life be inclined to continue.”

The Ministry of Labour contributed to the project with 50.000 kroner, and it furthermore gave the school a grant per student. The Copenhagen municipality contributed 25.000 kroner, and a committee was set up to collect money from Copenhagen businesses.

Kofoed himself sensed that the Training School represented a turn of page in the school's history. The first page was closely attached to Kofoed as a person, "but now when the first page has been turned over, I no longer stand alone. The second page in the school's history will probably be marked by my excellent staff which has been enrolled over the years."

The Training School hired inspectors and staff, but till the end Kofoed followed the work with great interest. The Training School was the apple of his eye, the part of his life's work that gave him the most pride.

In 1950 Thorkild Glad was elected to be the principal of the Training School. Prior to this he had been the agricultural advisor to the Danish Jersey association and he had been a teacher at the agricultural colleges in Tune and in Lyngby. Thorkild Glad was also very interested in working with the boy scouts association. For 16 years he had been in charge of scouts' leader training, and through the years 1960-68 he was a Chief Scout.

As principal of the Training School he could unite his two main interests. He made use of his knowledge of cattle breeding, and he established a model Jersey stock. At the same time he made excellent use of his experience from working with juveniles in teaching the students at the Training School.

Like the rest of the staff at the school Thorkild Glad possessed an optimistic attitude towards the students. He stated that even inside the worst scoundrel you would find at least 5 per cent goodness and this small element of goodness must be found and allowed to develop.

The Training School was from the start based on two main themes: gardening and fur farming. The fur farming soon turned out to be more demanding than you could expect the varying teams of student to be able to handle. The fur bearing animals were therefore exchanged with chicken. The gardening on the other hand was driven for a number of years with good results. The produce was taken to town and sold at the market. Later on, however, the gardening was substituted with common farming with herds of pigs and a large herd of cattle, which under the leadership of Thorkild Glad became the school pride. The animals were taken to the cattle shows at Bellahøj (northern outskirts of Copenhagen) and they won several first prizes.

The Training School soon added more subjects to its curriculum. As the need grew for maintenance, rebuilding and extension, new workshops were set up. The students and the staff did most of this work themselves. The first team of students left a substantial imprint on the school. In 1947-48 they built a small pig yard. In 1950-51 the old farm building was torn down. At the same time a cow house was built, and the school bought its first calves. In 1951-52 a 500 metres water pipe was dug out, so that the school at long last could have their own fresh water. This job was celebrated with a water festival, which was on everybody's lips for years after. The farmyard was levelled and covered with asphalt in 1952-53. With money from the Marshall Aid an engine house and a machine shop was built in 1953-54. This led to additional teaching in piping and machine work and a welding class for the unskilled. And it just went on. Each team did their job. A potato shed was built, a new large pig yard was made, new buildings with library, laundry and a classroom were erected, the school fields were drained and repair and motor shops were established.

Along with all the farming, gardening and building, etc., the students followed daily classes. Many students had bad memories from their school days and they had a lot to catch up on. There were classes in Danish, arithmetic, languages, geography, civics, work capacity and ethics. There were talks on common subjects within literature, social conditions and politics.



Welding classes were established at the Training School.

One hour a day was marked for personal cleanliness, darning of socks, repairing shirts and trousers, shaving and shoe polishing, etc. In the evenings students and staff gathered for singing, play and reading aloud. Lights were out at 10.30 p.m., as the student had to be up early for the first program of the day: morning gymnastics.

When the training at the school was finished, the school endeavoured to find jobs for the trained students. It succeeded in approximately half of the cases. Out of the 42 students from the first team, 23 got jobs immediately. 46 out of a team of 80 students in 1946-47 got a job.

The majority of the students – 80-90 per cent – were arrivals from the provinces, trying their luck in the capital. They were mostly unskilled, and many had been placed under child welfare.



# The migration from country to town

The school's overwhelming problem in the post-war years was the aimless migration from country to city. The migration was caused by the mechanization of agriculture. When machines and tractors moved in, the farms had lesser need of manpower. The young farm hands were sacked, and with the lost job they also lost their lodging. The only possibility for many of them was to try to get work in town.

In those years Copenhagen was a magnet to the young provincials. In 1945 approx. 19.500 persons aged 15-24 migrated to Copenhagen. The next year the number was no less than 28.600. Some came to the city to get an education or further education, others came with their parents. But a large number came just to try something new without having obtained work or lodging, they often became losers. They might not have been too bright at home in their county, they were somewhat slow, and in the sharpened fight for jobs at the farms, they preferred to disappear quietly and hide in the city to avoid any

candid or direct nasty remarks.

Some of them managed fairly well. They managed to get lodgings and work. Others didn't get very far before their money ran out. If they couldn't pay the rent, they were immediately thrown into the street, where they started wandering the streets. At night they slept in stairways, in basement steps, on park benches, or they gathered on the terrain around the central station, where they would sleep in goods wagons. In the central station you could count 100 homeless in just an hour and a half, most of them from the provinces.

The migration enhanced the negative effect of existing housing shortage in Copenhagen. The few lodgings and flats for rent became terribly expensive, so that not only the unemployed, but also many with jobs, could not pay the price of rent. A room cost from 200 kroner and up. This meant that many had to spend the night, where they could find shelter. The "underjordiske" (a passage under the town hall square) held hundreds of sleeping homeless each night, young and old, heaped together. To ease the problem a bit, the Danish Freedom Council initiated quarters for the homeless in many churches and parish halls. For a while the parish hall of Garnisonskirken gave shelter to 200 persons.

Of course the doss houses and shelters were quickly filled up, even if conditions were poor. The guests slept in large dormitories with 30-40 men on each floor, old boozers and young people together. To a younger person the environment of these places was demoralizing in itself. If they weren't criminal when they came to Copenhagen, they would soon be drawn into groups where they learned to be criminal. If they were approached by the police and could not give an address, they were arrested and came up before a judge where they were fined 30 kroner. If they could not pay they were detained. After serving sentence, they were transported to Sundholm, where they were placed under preventive detention for an indefinite time.

The housing sharks grossly exploited the shortage. Among other things they charged 25 øre per night for letting someone sleep in a stairwell. A stairwell could accommodate about a dozen men.

Other sharks overfilled rooms so that people were almost lying in layers. In one case a tiny two-room flat housed 12 men. One lived in the entrance, eight in the two rooms, two in the kitchen, and one in the larder! The latter, in this case a woman, also ran an illicit inn where the lodgers could buy their provisioning in the form of methylated spirits for 5 kroner a bottle.

In 1945 Kofoed converted part of the school into a shelter with room for 125 homeless. Bunks and mattresses were donated by the Guards' barracks and by the airport. The stay was free, but the school demanded that the guests should do 25 minutes exercise, take a bath, shave and polish their shoes in order to sleep there.

Establishing a shelter was actually against Kofoed's school principles. To maintain his principles, he always referred to it as an emergency shelter. "The shelter is not the part of the school that I like best, but I realize that it must be so. The need is the reason for the shelter – and therefore it shall exist as long as the need is there. We must make an effort, where we are needed today."

The shelter opened at 7.30 p.m. so that the guests had time to visit the reading room. At 9.30 p.m. they were served broth. After that the dormitories were opened.

After the guests had washed in the morning, they were served breakfast. Then they could leave, but many remained at the school and had a good contact with the staff. Here they found the support to save them from going under in the city.

# Night raids

Kofoed's School has always used flexible work methods. It has never been a school of only one single way to do the work. Again and again Kofoed told his staff that the school had to be where the suffering was and to do what was necessary to meet the demands of the day. The staff was therefore constantly adjusting the work form, breaking with customary methods. At Kofoed's School there was no such saying as: "We always do it in this and this way here." – "No, we have to be where an effort is needed, and we have to use the weapon demanded by the situation."

During the post war years Kofoed implemented the so-called night raids in Copenhagen where he picked up the young homeless and brought them to the school, before they started on something criminal. He knew where they usually spent the night: In goods wagons on the station grounds, around the harbour on ships and in warehouses. Together with his staff he went out and found them and talked to them. In most cases the homeless soon had confidence in the school people. It was usually sufficient to say: "This is Kofoed". Then the homeless knew that they need not fear.

The raids went on for many years. The city was divided into districts, and the various teams of staff were given each their district. After a night's raid they might come home to the school at midnight



with one hundred young men.

While the teams were out, other staff groups prepared the reception at the school. When the young ones arrived, they were first given something to eat and a cup of coffee in order to still the worst hunger, so that they would feel welcome and at ease. After that a midnight cabaret was given. Some well-known artist entertained to put the mostly cowed young people in a good humour.

When the cabaret was over they spent the night in the dormitories or slept on mattresses in the gym hall. The next day they were informed about the school and its possibilities to help them.

Some of the young ones who came to the school through the night raids were transferred to the Training School.

Sometimes the raids were suspended on grounds of lack of capacity. However, they were regularly carried out during the early autumn months. The school did not have the capacity to house all the young homeless that flooded the city during these years. In the height of this project the city authorities withdrew the use of two of the school's rooms for some other purpose, and 60 men were sent back to the street. The school solved the problem temporarily by es-

*Above:*

"It's Kofoed!"

tablishing a provisional shelter: The guests were given a stretcher to sleep on in the lecture room, when the activities there were finished at 11 p.m. If that did not suffice, the rest of them could sit and snooze on a chair in the heated canteen. The immediate problem was always solved.

The migration problem could not be solved in Copenhagen. Kofoed took up his work in the province, in the rural parishes where the young people came from. He gave many a talk about the fate of the young provincials when they came unprepared to the capital. He urged that the youth should stay where they belonged, or that they prepared their move to a new environment. But he was up against something that he could not control. The migration from country to town became one of the greatest social economical changes in our younger history. In the rural parishes they could not use the youth at the farms, and for many years the migration to Copenhagen continued.

# A cultural centre

We have many names for the things we love. The school has over the years been named first one and then the other. At the start in 1928 it was named "Christian's parish's work rooms" to underline the connection to Christianskirken and its parish. Later it was named "the artisan home for the unemployed". However, in common talk it was never called anything but "Kofoed's School".

Consequently, the school was renamed in 1946. From then on it was officially named Kofoed's School, with the addition of "social pedagogical training school". Kofoed himself was not too pleased with the change of name, but he accepted it on the ground that with this change, the school showed that it was no longer a school for the unemployed only. It was for any youth who needed a place to go to live "a healthy and happy youth". In addition to being a social pedagogical training school, it also became a cultural centre, where the young men and their girlfriends could meet for meaningful leisure gatherings. It was no longer sufficient just to take care of the working capabilities. You also had to give the youth mental ballast to use in their leisure time. Underlining that the school was there for the youth, an age limit of 45 years was set up.

In 1946 the school opened a dinner restaurant with good food at small prices and an entertainment bar with non-alcoholic beverages and entertainment by young artists. The idea was to give homeless an alternative to bars and cinemas during the time from finishing work till the opening of the shelters at 9 p.m. The school sported its own entertainment orchestra and an amateur stage, where the youth could blossom. If the guest was penniless, he could work for his meal in the school's cleanliness section. To further equal rights, the Kofoed-coin was introduced in 1948 - the school's internal exchange. It could be earned by working at the school and could be spent in the restaurant and the bar.

Apart from entertainment, talks on multiple subjects were offered, e.g. "Man after the chaos of war", and "Art in daily life". Participation in the talks gave Kofoed-points. There were study groups on subjects like public matters, national economy and religious knowledge.

Offering these leisurely subjects the school took a new step in its development, a step that some did not find understandable. Wasn't it enough that the young men were put in a good shape, so that they could support themselves? Why should they have a restaurant? Kofoed had a hard time arguing for an understanding of these measures which helped to stop the young men from going to bad public houses, and that the school in this way fought the dirty and sleazy minor music halls, that had sprung up like mushrooms during the war. Where could a young man spend his time from work till shelter opening, if not in these places? Only the shabby places would let a man in, unwashed and in his work clothes. Through the social gatherings at the school the youth would learn to understand each other, to heighten their interests and be given the manners of a healthy and strong Danish youth.

It speaks for itself that the many activities at the school demanded an effective usage of the various rooms. The school came to run a 24 hour schedule, and with its level of activity it meant that you had to move things around all the time. The lecture room was in the early morning hours used as a gym. When the housewives came



at 8 a.m., the lecture room was divided between a tailor shop and a nursery. At 1 p.m. it was again converted into a gym. At 5 p.m. lectures were given. At 6 p.m. the room functioned as a reading room. At 8 p.m. the second round of lectures were given, and in the late hours the room was used for entertainment.

Kofoed longed for more space. Only practical problems like money and space put a limit to his activity plans. Back in 1943 a national subscription has been undertaken to make it possible to buy the naval hospital, into which Kofoed would like to be back. The subscription rounded up 350.000 kroner. After the occupation it became more than critical to look for more space, enough to satisfy the school's constantly rising need.

# Activities outside the school

Kofoed was always aware that part of the school's work ought to be done in the environment or directly in the homes. That was where the effort often had the greatest effect. To remedy the shortage of space many activities were therefore placed outside the school.

Before the war the school had set up a household school for very young girls from the age of their confirmation (14 to 15 years old). The school chose this age on the grounds that once the girls started on factory work they would not later have the time for household classes. The household school was situated on Als (an island off Southern Jutland) and it was run in co-ordination with the "Als domestic science school". When the war broke out, teaching had to be stopped. The experience had, however, been positive, and after the war Kofoed took up the work and established a co-operation with Fårevejle folk high school to train young girls in the science of housekeeping. The age of the girls was from 14 to 18, and they came from Copenhagen working class homes. Many were the daughters of women who frequented Kofoed's School. The high school stay lasted three months and the curriculum consisted of - in addition to household classes - ordinary folk high school classes, where the

girls met the other students at the high school. In the household classes, Kofoed's School's own teachers taught the girls. The stay at the school was free for the girls.

A similar folk high school activity was arranged for 25 young girls in Hørsholm, and for this purpose Prince George of Greece placed his palace, 'Gurrehus', at the school's disposal for three months in 1950.

Another project outside the school was to teach people to build with their own hands. The devastating housing shortage inspired Kofoed to teach people to build their own houses. If they had a good pair of hands and were willing to work, the school would lend the building material. The builders need not pay back until the house had been mortgaged. The motto was 'Your own house by your own work'. The purpose was to make people put energy into projects that would be valuable for themselves. The school's architect made the drawings for a standard house, named a core house, of 24 square metres and a cellar.

The ground floor held a sitting room of 9 square metres, a toilet room with bath, a kitchen niche, an entrance room and a porch. The core house could be enlarged when the man could afford it. The price was low. A finished house cost 11.000 kroner.

Even with these various activities to relieve the pressure on the school building in Prinsessegade, the need for more space was still there.

# Dronningens- gade

In 1947-48 the school was in immediate danger of being closed down. The city administration informed the school that they wanted back a major part of the rooms that Kofoed had rented in Prinsessegade, as the city school system needed them for council school children.

At the same time the school's economy was ruined. The private means could no longer cover the expenses for the many activities that were started in these years. That was the reason for an outcry from Kofoed in the autumn of 1946: "Why on earth don't they legislate to make the money box spring open, when it is all about such an obvious problem as this youth. The youth is going to lead us to either richness or poverty. Yes, we get the youth we want! – Everyone agrees with me that something drastically must be done – and yet, here I sit today and cannot make ends meet, as has been the case over the 18 years, I have worked on this." The staff could earn a lot more working elsewhere. Some of the teachers had left first class posts with a pension to work at the school for a lesser pay and without pension, "... and yet the difficulties mount up in a way that I shall soon have to give up."

During the autumn of 1948 the situation became so serious that the

school needed help from outside. In order to handle the daily activities, the school had been forced to use some of the 350.000 kroner that had been collected in 1943 to build for. Now only 85.000 kroner were left. The yearly budget demanded at least 450.000 kroner. 350.000 kroner were found by voluntary contributions. The state paid 75.000 kroner, which, however, were to be used at the Training School only.

A meeting was held and a fast working committee was set up under the leadership of the later ombudsman Stephan Hurwitz. The committee divided into two sub-committees: one was to examine possibilities for housing. The other took care of the economy.

The question of housing turned out to be the more difficult. Kofoed had immediately, on being given notice to leave the housing in Prinsessegade, applied for using the naval hospital, where he had had good years in the 30'es. However, the army was also interested in using the building for a reserve isolation hospital – and the administration of the mentally deficient, and the Copenhagen school administration also wanted the building. It became a political matter. Everybody – including the politicians – appreciated the work that Kofoed did. In 1948 one of the newspapers held a competition as to the ten best men and women, and the readers voted for Kofoed as the second after Niels Bohr. But when it came to the major point – the naval hospital – the political goodwill was rather tepid. The subject was negotiated on the highest political level between the ministries of finance, of social affairs and the war office. The serious negotiations had, however, also an unintentional comic side. It turned out that both ministries under the double ministry of war and navy asserted their claim for the buildings. One of Kofoed's opponents in the negotiations was another Kofoed, the "strong man of the central administration", head of department, H. K. Kofoed, who wanted to use the old hospital for the mentally deficient. Kofoed versus Kofoed.

The matter was lively debated in the newspapers and was in public called the battle of the naval hospital. The papers wrote editorials and the readers wrote comments in letters to the editor. As the

matter dragged on the debate became indignant. New groups were drawn into the discussion. The Kaj Munk memorial foundation donated 30.000 kroner to Kofoed's School, provided it was given the naval hospital. The Copenhagen teachers, wanting the hospital for their pupils, were aggravated by this.

In the end the chaotic dispute was won by the Copenhagen school authorities. In return Kofoed was given the school in Dronningensgade. This actually formed one block together with the building in Prinsessegade, the parallel street. The finance committee granted a loan free of interest and repayment amounting to 263.000 kroner in order to buy the building. The municipalities of the city and its surroundings granted an equal amount, and the rest of the initial cost Kofoed's School raised by a national subscription together with a subscription that the Hurwitz-committee organized from large businesses.

The rebuilding was financed by one third Government loan, one third mortgage loan and the third subscriptions.

In March 1951 the committee could finish its work. On October 25th the same year the building in Dronningensgade was inaugurated. The total purchase price of the school amounted to 790.000 kroner. Rebuilding to 900.000 kroner. With this the school had acquired good, yet not luxurious frames for its work.

"We have now reached our years of discretion", Kofoed said at the inauguration of the new school. "We have met closed doors, but we have also felt the joy of seeing many of them opening up for us. Our school was once where only rats could live and where rats thrived. We have several times seen our moneybox empty, but when we were in serious trouble, a door was always opened to help us out. I wish that our new school shall learn from this, so that it will always be the school with open doors. At our school the door will never be closed to those in need who want to help themselves. People who do not want to contribute to their own mental and physical regeneration, will not be given anything here, but those who want to make an effort can be given everything to help them to a decent life."



Also in another sense new doors were opened. For many years the school had been a one-man-business. Kofoed supremely signed for the school, inwardly and outwardly. With the new buildings in Dronningensgade a greater public interest was taken in the school.

*Above:*

Kofoed's School in Dronningensgade.

It was therefore necessary to widen the circle behind the school, and in October 1951 the school board was enlarged with 25 new board members representing e.g. the trade unions, the employers' associations, the social sector, the church sector and youth associations.



# Kofoed's death

Now Kofoed had attained the work conditions that he had dreamt about for a long time. Finally he could start proper work for the youth that had been neglected due to unfavourable times! The organization of the school had all the while become so much better, and Kofoed could now allow himself step back a bit and leave a major part of the daily work to his staff. He could now devote his time to outward activities.

There is a Persian saying that when the work is finished the master builder dies.

Kofoed was only given a few months to enjoy the reasonable conditions that the school had finally achieved. October 16th 1952 he set out on a fortnight's lecture rally. It would take him around in the country where he would agitate for establishing local support groups, which would then be the school's long arm in social work. If you would seriously work on the problems of the migration to the capital, you would have to start where the problems stemmed from, i.e. the rural parishes.

The first talk was to be given on Funen. Kofoed never got there. He had an accident in his car between Roskilde and Ringsted (approx. 40 kilometres west of Copenhagen). He hit a road tree. The car was

totally wrecked. Kofoed was badly injured taken to the hospital in Ringsted. He was slightly recovering when he also got pneumonia. October 21st 1952 he died.

His death came as a chock, not just to the school but all over the country. Kofoed had attained a unique respect and popularity for his work. He had given aid to approximately 50.000 persons. "Just once each century a man of his cast is born", the actor Ib Schønberg said when being told that Kofoed had died.

He was buried from the Christianskirken on his and Astrid's silver wedding anniversary October 28th 1952. More than 2000 people came to the ceremony which began with the christening of Kofoed's grandchild who was named Hans Christian Kofoed.

The first year after Kofoed's death the staff kept the school running on a collective basis. The system and the solidarity that Kofoed had built were strong enough to survive its creator.

The board immediately started looking for a new director. The post was not announced, but the governing body interviewed about 40 persons that were judged as probably able to follow in Kofoed's footsteps and pursue with the school. The governing body gave itself ample time, as everyone knew that it was an almost inhuman task to follow after Kofoed.

Finally, in April 1953 the new director was chosen. It was to be the 34 years old rector Erhard Jørgensen, who came from a post on Funen. He also worked as vicar at the state youth prison Søbygård. He was born on Amager, and he had worked at Kofoed's School during his studies. His first job at the school had been to butter bread. Later he became the leader of the school library and of its laundry. Thus the new director knew the school from the inside and he was familiar with the Kofoed way of thinking.

Erhard Jørgensen started work in the autumn of 1953. On commencing he said among other things: "The aim for all of us, who work on the heritage left us by Hans Chr. Kofoed, is to make the



school a place of refuge for the distressed, unhappy or lonely people on their way out or down, a refuge where the kind of help that is given is part of the rehabilitation itself, a refuge where Christianity is taught, not in words but in the meeting with those who seek our help not as an institution but as a fellow human beings."

*Above:*

Kofoed and his beloved wife, Astrid.

# The students in the 1950's

In spite of the relatively prosperous times and a high employment rate, Kofoed's School experienced no drop in the intake of students. On the contrary, at the end of the decade it had the most students in the school's history, i.e. more than 1.800 male students and 6-700 female students. Out of 1.700 male students in 1957 the percentage of new students was 43. The rest had previously been in contact with the school for a long or short time. The same tendency applied to the women.

In other words you had a student group of incapacitated or maladjusted youth who under any circumstances would have difficulties in managing on their own, even in spite of the good times. The majority wanted to work and with help from the school, many succeeded. However, it was often only for a short while. They were either given notice or they just left. They couldn't manage the pace in the businesses and they had adapting difficulties in the general society.

The school noted the new kind of students shortly after Erhard Jørgensen had started as director. At the start of the season in 1954 the intake of students was 500. Of these 400 were former students.

75-80 men came daily to wash clothes, take care of their personal hygiene, to participate in exercises and to go to classes. But to the school staff it looked as if the well used work methods no longer applied. The group of students were more different than before, and they were more marked by psychological and social problems. The school consequently had a psychology advisor attached. It furthermore became necessary to have a far more intensive and personal contacts with students. You often had to spend much and many talks on them, before being able to help them.

The school therefore went through an internal development the next years. The first 'interest office' was established with social advisors to guide the students and to help them with practical and economical problems.

A workshop was set up for students who for one or the other reason could not be enrolled at the Training School. Instead they were given a three months course at the mother school. Through practical and theoretical teaching 8 hours a day the student was gradually accustomed and adjusted to a normal work routine. At the same time he acquired an elementary knowledge of tools and small machines. The students lived and had their meals at the school during the three month course, and they received a weekly cash disbursement from the municipality. Half of the money was saved up till the end of the course so that the students had something to help them when they were ready to start in a regular job. The workshop course represented the tender start of rehabilitation and it became the forerunner of the act of rehabilitation which was implemented in 1960.

The shelter in Prinsessegade had for long been in need of modernization. This work was begun in 1954. Instead of the large dormitories, rooms with six beds and proper sanitary installations were built. The shelter could room 82 guests a time. The school made a great effort to help the shelter guest with advice in order to stop his possible social down trip, e.g. by helping the guest settle his social difficulties, which could be many things from penalties to rates not paid, tax- and trade union arrears, failing report at the registration office, to law suits etc.

The school also helped the students to find rooms at a fair rent. That was a demanding task. In 1957 the school was in contact with 1.860 men, and approximately half of them were without a home or just a place to be.

The kindergarten was also modernised and improved and the attics were made into a students' hostel.

The work these years was stable. The work that Kofoed had started was carried on and extended.

To describe the function of the school in these years, one might look at the work areas or the sections of the school.

The work with the students fell into 4 categories: the men's section, the shelter for the homeless, the homes' section and the housewife section. Furthermore the school provided social guidance, legal aid, distribution of labour and accommodation service. In the rural districts the school was in charge of a preventive information service to enlighten the problems that came with an aimless migration to the city.

The Men's section was open every day from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. but only from October till mid April. Men of the age from 18 to 40 could apply for admittance here. At the inauguration of the new rooms in Dronningensgade the limit was set at 35 years of age, but the school was often faced with applications from older students, who wanted to get in to wash their clothes and take care of their personal hygiene. They were normally let in, but could not earn points or Kofoed-coins for use in the restaurant. This pushed the older students into a kind of begging, and the school then decided to slacken the age rule a bit, so that students over 35 could come three days a week with the same rights as the younger students.

The average age in the section was 25-30 years. Approximately two thirds were unskilled.

Several facilities were at the men's disposal. In the bath and washing section they could have a shower, a foot wash, foot care, a shave and a polishing of their shoes. In the laundry the student could have his clothes washed, dried and ironed. Free soap was handed out, and the student did the washing himself. The clothes depot consisted mainly in used clothes. If repair was needed, the students could get help in the tailor shop. Furthermore there was a shoe shop for the repair of shoes.

The curriculum held among other things: English, Danish, arithmetic, religious knowledge, book keeping, gymnastics, kitchen knowledge, hobby activities and folk dancing. The classes might also be taught as subjects, e.g. work, leisure, family, economy, democracy etc. In the educational section the students were further trained in making a budget and accounts.

A major part of the students stayed less than 14 days at the school. Teaching was therefore arranged as courses of a week's duration. For the stable students who stayed at the school for a longer period, courses of three weeks of 6 hours a day were arranged.

Talks were given every day. They often had a touch of vocational guidance. Taking part in the daily talk was a condition to get Kofoed-money to buy a hot meal and coffee in the restaurant.

An important element in the schoolwork in the 1950's was the effort in helping the homeless men. The school shelter was run according to the legislation on sheltering and in strict co-ordination with the central office for homeless men. The shelter was normally open all year, and it was always fully occupied. The guests paid per night for their use. During the season of 1956-57 the shelter gave room to 564 men. Nearly half of them were under 25 of age. Most managed with a stay of 7-10 days. The guests of the shelter had access to the cleanliness sector, teaching and to the restaurant.

In the homes' section they tried to help young people to establish their own homes. The school still collected used furniture, which was repaired by the students themselves, before they took it home.

Before this help was given, the school's social advisor paid a visit to the home to get a picture of the need, the standard of the home, etc. As an addition to the homes' section, a home study group was started. Here you looked into the possibilities of a poor family to find out how the home could be made more comfortable, or to discuss the children's upbringing. Another subject was the snare of paying by instalments!

The small, damp and overcrowded flats in the slum areas became an important field of work to the school staff in those years. Not far from the school the largest temporary camp in Northern Europe was situated along the embankment stretching out to Kongelunden. Several thousand people lived here in poor wooden sheds, that you could hardly call a home. Nevertheless, prices were indecently high, between 4 and 10 thousand kroner. The rent amounted in this way to more than was normally paid for a good flat. The hygienic conditions were deplorable, and there wasn't any drinking water. This had to be fetched from far off in buckets. The camp town was illegal, and therefore the residents could not get any help from the city. Kofoed's School drove out to them with old blankets, so that the worst holes could be tightened, and the school supplied bedding and clothes for the children.

Later the school established a branch in the area to remedy the worst suffering among the residents. The school bought a house and set it up with washing and bathing rooms, a sewing room and a nursery. One of the school's social advisors had a weekly consultation – and was very busy helping the residents with mortgages, loans and rates. To help the children a kindergarten and a child's centre were established and in the evenings the rooms were used as a youth club.

The housewife section was open in the mornings. The women were admitted to the school under the same conditions as the men. They had to work for the benefits they wanted. Most women came to get some second hand clothes but also to learn dressmaking, cooking, knitting, etc. All the while the children were looked after by voluntary staff. Childcare was divided into two sections: one for babies and one for younger children.





Eating in the restaurant in the 1950's. The photo is from a movie about the school.

Actually the housewife conception faded away in these years. In stead of focusing on the housewife role and the woman's tasks in the home, the school took up the viewpoint of how to get women started on a personal education. A 'weekly club' was started. Here you worked manually but also for pleasure. The idea was 'help your neighbour'. The women explained their participation by feeling lonely, or that they wanted to get out for a few hours, or they felt restless and found life sad.

The nightly raids for the homeless young continued. In this way the school came into contact with many new students. The school was often blamed for this action. The youth came to the city knowing that they would be helped if things went wrong. They had heard about Kofoed's School, and they just gambled on what aid they could get. So some people said. The school objected to this. The truth was that the school saw to it that hundreds of young ones lost in Copenhagen were sent home again – if they had a home to be sent to. Or the school arranged for them to work on a ship. Kofoed's School equipped many with clothes, a sea bag and a certificate of service so that they could go to sea.

The evenings were also filled with activities. On Mondays there was a lecture, discussion or film. Wednesdays were comrade evenings with entertainment. Saturdays had reading aloud of plays, often done by one of the voluntary college students. The other evenings were devoted to games: billiard, table tennis, chess etc. A folk dance club was started. This attracted a lot of interest. The women dancers were partly the students' own girls, partly female students from teachers' colleges and nurse schools.

The economy was still very tight with yearly deficits of 50.000 to 100.000 kroner. However, this did not give the school any sense of catastrophe. In 1951 a national annual lottery was started. A large number of prominent citizens stepped forward to recommend buying lottery tickets. The five annual lotteries from 1951 to 1955 gave a surplus of 1.5 million kroner which was equivalent to half of the school's budget.

One of Kofoed's last actions was to sign an application for state subsidy. The proceedings took a long time, but in 1956 the school was granted a subsidy of 30 per cent of its donations, yet limited to max. 100.000 kroner per year. It was thus the donations and not the school's expenditure that decided the subsidy.

# Youth hostel

The school had for some time felt that there was a need for some kind of youth housing or boarding house which could help the students' transition from Kofoeds school to going out in society to start work, a time when they still needed support. Many cases showed that the young ones stopped functioning after a short while, and it was obvious that they needed help when things started going bad.

In 1959 this need was met by the establishment of Holger Nielsen's youth housing, situated at the junction of Peder Lykkes Vej and Englandsvej on Amager.

The manufacturer Holger Nielsen from the 'Ginge-factories' left a large amount for social purposes at his death in 1955. Through many years he had supported the school's work. His son Kaj Ginge-Nielsen established the "Holger Nielsen Fund" and the amount of 200.000 kroner was set aside to build a youth hostel.

The youth hostel was inaugurated in January 1959. It was and is a self governing institution with its own board of directors, but it is run in close contact with Kofoeds's School and it receives students from Kofoed's School and the Training School – in recent years also from the criminal re-establishment service, the social service and the shelters.



The house was arranged with room for 17 boarders in twelve rooms, of which 5 were double rooms. The ground floor held kitchen, dining and sitting room, and the basement held billiard and table tennis, washing and hobby rooms. On the ground floor housing for the principal was made.

The boarders paid for food and lodging. Ordinarily they had a job when they arrived, or they got one at the same time as they moved in. It was a demand that they were in jobs, so that they were busy during the day.

Apart from the support that comes naturally from sharing housing, the inmates were given help and guidance to deal with practical and economical problems, e.g. filling in tax return, paying health insurance, servicing loans and maybe remission of debts, so that they could concentrate on their work.

And if something had gone totally wrong for the inmate during the day, he would have someone to come home to, someone who would listen to his troubles, someone he could discuss the matter with.

***Above:***

Holger Nielsens Youth Hostel was established in 1959 in a quiet residential neighbourhood in Copenhagen.

# Full employment - and a high intake of students

At meetings around the country in the 1950's the school staff was again and again asked: "Is Kofoed's School needed today when we have no unemployment?"

The school couldn't but confirm the need, pointing to the very high intake of students. However, at the same time they pointed out the fact that situation was essentially different from the school's first 10-15 years. In the 1930's the name had been "the artisan home for the

unemployed" and that described the work that was carried out in the old naval hospital and in Prinsessegade. In those days the students' major problem was unemployment. Society did not have jobs for them even if they really wanted to and could work. Their economical, social and human setback could primarily be put down to unemployment. The aim of the school was therefore to keep them in shape and help them until they again got a job.

15 years after the war the situation was entirely different. A development started during the war and it made itself more and more felt and led to a gradual change of the school's clientele and curriculum. The seeking out work like the night raids led young men with adaptation difficulties to the school; students that had become maladjusted due to the great changes of the time, e.g. the migration from country to city. But technical development and automation also played a role. The demand towards the workers was screwed up and became separating, so that the weaker part of the youth was pushed out. In general the many students at the school were jobless, but that was no longer the major problem. They were jobless because they had other problems to fight. Unemployment was a symptom of other damages. A number of deficiencies could be pointed out: lack of intelligence, character or education, and furthermore deficiencies deriving from a poor childhood, lack of contact ability in connection with a great and awkward need for contact – or simply being rootless.

In 1960 director Erhard Jørgensen described the student situation: "We have a heterogeneous collection of students. And yet, in spite of all the individual differences, certain traits are common: A feeling of loneliness, disappointment, depression or instability. They all hope for some kind of help from Kofoed's School. Some are trained supplicants, but not as many as you would expect. Others are racked with pain and unhappy about – as they say – "having to ask for things". There are quite a few of those. But a depressingly large number show lethargy or a beginning lethargy. The inclination to give up or just to yield to difficulties, to choose the easy way out and flee, is obvious with many of them. Some have ambitions, but many have resigned."

What happened to the students during and after their stay at the school? Approx. 100 students came to the Training School annually. Out of these 40-50 per cent got a job after the course.

About 50 stayed on for long courses. Out of these 75 per cent got a job. Many students came back to the Training School for short stays between the changing jobs they had. Less than half the students were in contact with the school for less than 15 days. Their problems were relatively easy. They came to the school to use its employment exchange or to get a set of work cloths or a bed at the shelter.

The vast majority of the students were in contact with the school from 14 days to 6 months. Their success was not easy to measure, but often the school functioned as a refuge where they met brotherly understanding and solidarity and where they could have guidance and encouragement. Erhard Jørgensen stated the work with this group as: "Breaking the loneliness of the lonesome, giving the uncertain some self-confidence, shaking the apathetic out of their apathy, calming the aggressive, supporting the weak of character, calling back the fleeing, awakening responsibility in the irresponsible, pushing a platform under the feet of those sliding down."

On this basis Erhard Jørgensen said about the need for Kofoed's School: "When we have no unemployment, the need for a school for the unemployed is no longer there. But Kofoed's School has for many years been much more than a school for the unemployed. If you acknowledge the value of the existence of a private school willing to do the work which – using a social pedagogical slogan – is called rehabilitation. And this rehabilitation should be understood as the ability to render a factual as well as a competent effort towards training the mentally and socially disabled and prepare them for a working life. At the same time Kofoed's School can render services of a far more comprehensive kind, done skilfully and in the proper way. The need for the school shall therefore be clearly seen and increasing, whatever the trade conditions."

That the need for the school has been growing no matter the ris-



ing tendencies of the market was documented by the rising intake of students in the next decades. The same tendency with the non-homogeneous students was seen at the Training School also. The school wanted to be a home to the rejected, the homeless, a school for the intelligent as well as the slow students - a training school for those with adaptation difficulties and those of weak characters. The school did not pretend to be all this, but those were the problems they were faced with, and the school constantly endeavoured to fight the problems by new and better methods.

In his time Kofoed had noticed the lack of stability in the students. They were off balance and at the slightest aggravation they would run amok and behave themselves in a crazy way. After an hour or two they had quieted down again and they acknowledged the inappropriate in such behaviour. To run a school with this type of students was very demanding as to methods and measures.

The students' restlessness was a fundamentally difficult thing to work on. The school had planned courses of 6 to 9 months, but only one quarter of the students spent more than 4 months at the school. The average was 3 months. The school saw that it was essential to find a way to make the students persist in attending school for a longer period, e.g. saving-up and seniority measures. Likewise the school tried to mix the teams, so that the strong could help the weak.

The conditions of work were improved when the school with help from the Marshall Aid erected a new workshop building in 1954. Now the school could offer workshop training in woodwork, machine work and engineering. The students could do examinations and attain a certificate on leaving school. The certificate stated their skills. This had a stimulating effect on the education, and the certificate was a benefit to the students when they were looking for work.

In 1954 the school also attached a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist was to refer severe psychiatric cases to treatment elsewhere. It was also his job to guide and help the students to overcome their psychiatric

difficulties. Furthermore the psychiatrist had the role of being the outward guarantee, stating that the work at the school was medically sound.

In his first report the psychiatrist grouped the 62 examined students as follows: Serious character flaws (psychopaths) 19, nervous sufferings (neuroses) 22, environmental maladjustment 16, mentally deranged (psychoses) 2, no psychotic sufferings 3.

Some of the students could not accept themselves. They looked down upon themselves and did not believe that they could reach a just bearable social position. They were shy and insecure, and they often saw society as an enemy.

On the whole one third of the students were referred to psychiatric treatment.

Other major problems were word-blindness and reading difficulties. Kofoed's School and the Training School started a co-operation with the Amager School of Dyslexia. When the student came to the Training School they were given a reading and writing test, and with this 15-20 per cent of the students were helped to overcome their handicap.

1960 became a turning point for the school. The high rate of children born during the war and post war years and a beginning over-employment meant that students at the school became younger and very problematic. The rate of 16-19 years old students went from 34 per cent in 1959-60 to 54 per cent in 1962-63.

These young ones were strongly marked by their environment. They had an aggressive style, they often came from gangs with norms of their own, which were hard to break. About one third of the students showed beginning criminal tendencies. They had experienced withdrawal of charges, suspended sentence, or short prison services. They did not necessarily come from bad environments, and they did not steal to survive but to add excitement to their lives, spending their energy in this way. Usually, the parents



Visiting Copenhagen coffee bars. The photo is from a scene in a movie about the school.

did not know what their children did during the evenings, and they were totally taken aback when the police called to tell them that their son had been caught stealing. The criminal acts of the youth often started as boyish prank, often inspired by American crime films and poor literature, where raw muscle, loud noise, and extreme speed were the ingredients. At Kofoed's School this influence was taken up in study circles in order to discourage an idolising among the students. The human brutalizing of the pulp magazines and bloody gangster films was analysed and pointed out.

At the bottom of it all it was probably the young people's crushing feeling of loneliness in the city that fostered much criminal behaviour. Youth itself started being a problem. Youth was a phase, a transition period. But going where? You could no longer see a natural cohesion between phases of life, making it possible for the young ones to gradually adjust to the valid norms. The young ones felt themselves to be outside the establishment and they consequently formed alternative subcultures with a strong group pressure, giving the members a feeling of identity.

This type of youth was common at the Training School: youngsters that did not really have criminal genes but strongly missed a father to identify themselves. In many cases they therefore looked up to an older comrade of dubious character but with a strong charisma: A tough who passed the time smoking cigarettes, impressing girls and doing death rallies in lent cars.

The youth is no worse nor better than earlier the principal of the Training School, Thorkild Glad, said in 1959. "They are rootless, because nobody ever told them what they had to do and what they were not to do... You cannot educate, if you don't know to what."

It was meant as a hint to the parents who neglected their children. In a further sense it was also a hint to show the oncoming break-up and lack of norms in society which in a rising tendency was seen in the students at Kofoed's School.

# The workshop course

In 1961 the school's shelter was made into a boarding house with room for 30 boarders. Running the shelter had been a remedy to fight homelessness and the aim then was just to give a roof over their heads. But along the way it turned out that several of the students needed more than a bed to sleep in, among other things they needed a long term effective support under more "homely conditions".

Part of the accommodation was reserved for students at the workshop course. In 1961 the course was acknowledged as a rehabilitation institution. The workshop course was started in 1955 for students with social and mental handicaps and it was a pioneer institution, as rehabilitation for the mentally handicapped was a most neglected subject in Denmark. The course was aimed at an individual help of a social-pedagogical and commercial character. One aim of the course was to teach the rehabilitee that he was able to do things, and that he wanted to do them. It was important that the aim of the rehabilitation course was not to train the ability to work to an either normal standard or to rejection. The social-pedagogical program consisted of 1) a common secondary social support, 2) a

– in the widest sense of the word – cultural impact and 3) a relevant treatment of commercial problems, e.g. a well prepared, selective placement in jobs and other secondary social relations.

The course comprised a number of workshops: Carpentry, engineering and an offset printer's shop. In the workshop all commonly used machines were set up. In the smithy the students were examined in subjects that normally were on the curriculum of the school for apprentices within the metal industry. Furthermore, a number of fitting projects was carried out, and classes in autogenous welding and electrical welding were given. The theoretical teaching about technical subjects comprised gauging instruments, reading technical designs, knowledge of materials and workshop theory and its object was to give the students an elementary knowledge of the subjects.

The additional teaching comprised Danish, arithmetic, psychology, engine knowledge, mathematics, English, German, political orientation, civics, vocational guidance, film and courses for the word-blind. In all these subjects the staff did their best to treat the subjects in accordance with the immediate needs of the students' situation.

The workshop course was based on a gradual increase of the strain put on the students, demanding an increased precision, stability and speed. The strains would uncover the deviation in the individual student. According to type and temper the student would react with e.g. physical symptoms like head ache and stomach ache or with psychological symptoms like affect or escape, when the threshold of strain was overstepped. At this point the strains were lowered. When the reaction had been safely distanced the situation and reaction was discussed with the student without holding forth any moral overtone. The school also tried in other fields than just the work to use a similar method.

Within the system with the strain release, a so-called "well-box arrangement" was established. This meant that the student by doing unqualified work on a self-dependence basis could earn his board and lodging.

Two social advisors were attached to the project. Among other things they took care of labour exchange and room designation. The actual performance of the course was also gradual to the student, so that he could get used to a development in his situation. The student might start on a job in the city, and stay on at the boarding house. After that he might move to rooms of his own, but still eat at the school. Step by step he was piloted out - if he could be rehabilitated at all.

In 1967 an examination showed that about half of the students at the course came from broken up homes. 56 per cent had grown up under economically poor conditions. 40 per cent had had problems at school. 45 per cent had been rejected for military service by the medical board. 64 per cent were doing badly economically. 66 per cent were unmarried. 46 per cent had suffered nervous symptoms during childhood like speech capabilities, incontinence, serious night fears and the like, and 28 per cent had been removed from their homes.

Many of the students at the course were in a mess as to the simplest social matters, and they had to be helped from the bottom and up: They had no housing. They did not even have essential clothing. They were not in any trade union or sick benefit association. They were often in acutely economical difficulties. To this came a rising abuse of alcohol. In the mid 1960's half of the rehabilitees had an alcohol problem to a degree, that it in itself disabled them for work.

# The alcohol clinic

Of course the school had always known of students with alcohol problems. Kofoed met them already in the old oil mill, but generally the problem was not a great one during the first decades of the school's history. Many students could simply not afford to buy alcohol.

In the mid 1950's society's total intake of alcohol was rising drastically. The average intake generated an increased abuse, also among the students of the school. In 1964 the newspapers started writing about Kofoed's School having problems with intoxicated persons.

The school's policy towards intoxicated persons was to dismiss them at the door, telling them to come again when they were sober. The school did not have the capacity to start a immediate treatment of an intoxicated but otherwise treatment motivated student, and the general attitude was for a long time, that alcoholism was off the area for school work. Treatment of alcoholics was in these days limited to a medical examination combined with an antabuse treatment.



In 1964 Erhard Jørgensen explained the school's attitude towards intoxicated students as: "No man on earth is unwanted here, but we consequently have one condition, and that is that the people that come here, are sober. We do not receive intoxicated persons, partly because it does not serve a useful purpose, and partly because it is devastating to the people, who really have a purpose by coming here, people who want a positive experience. That is why we always turn away the intoxicated and explain to them that they are welcome tomorrow, when they are sober ... anyone who knows the least about the work at Kofoed's School knows the absoluteness of this - that is that we will not receive intoxicated persons."

But the alcohol problem grew hastily among the students. In 1967 it was estimated that about one half of the 3.500 persons that annually came to the school had alcohol problems to some degree. The problem with the many alcoholic students was clearly expressed by the fact that every day the school had to turn down 40-50 intoxicated persons. At the same time the school was filled with 250-300 students.

This pressure on the school led to a never ending discussion and after some time also to a revision of the original attitude towards the intoxicated students, and in 1967 the school opened an alcohol clinic. In those days the school felt that the rejection of the intoxicated students seemed unreasonable, as the help in offering was taken from them at a point when the treatment was most needed. How would a student become sober when he was dismissed to the street, which is not the most suitable place for someone wanting to stop drinking. In opposition to the subject that treatment of alcoholism was not a task that the school should deal with, the school history was argued: Always to use the resources where the need is the greatest. As problems with alcoholism grew, it felt necessary to offer a treatment of dis-intoxication before the students could make use of the various pedagogical offers at the school.

The clinic's outer frames consisted of an office, a dormitory with three beds, a dormitory cum dayroom with 12 beds and a bath and toilet room. Weekly medical consultations were given.

Furthermore, three social workers and a psychologist were attached to the clinic on part time.

The small dormitory was used for students who were judged to have a genuine wish to be sober, but did not have the power to manage on their own. The stay lasted 3-4 days. The offer was aimed at students, who had their own housing and work.

The large dormitory was used for students who were motivated for therapy. Their stay lasted approx. one month. Through group therapy, pedagogical therapy, medical consultations and talks with the social advisors, the school endeavoured to get a balanced picture of the student in order to offer the best possible treatment.

The first experiences with the alcohol clinic did not meet up to expectations. The result of group therapy was modest. The social-psychological group dynamics, of which much was expected showed no results as the students simply fell out in the middle of the treatment, and new students came in. The interdisciplinary co-operation between psychologist, social worker and medical doctor did not work, and the medical consultation was cut down. Work therapy comprised in the beginning all sorts of hobby work. When it was closed down, only a cooking club persisted.

The original intensive offer of treatment ended up being reduced to just the offer given prior to the establishment of the alcohol clinic, apart from the detoxication.

The acquired experience was, however, far from useless, and it was later used at establishing a far more individually orientated treatment. If the high hopes for the original program were not fulfilled, the experience was enhanced to a high degree to be of help to the coming work.

# Longer opening hours

Along with the rising number of students and the addition of new activities, the pressing question of the school being open at all times, was discussed again. During the summer the school was closed on the account that the students had ample possibility to find work.

This was, however, not the case for all students. Their problem was no longer the seasonal unemployment, but personal difficulties and handicaps. In 1963 it was therefore decided to keep the school open all year. Only the housewife section was still closed for the summer.

This step represented the greatest work extension since the Training School was opened in 1945. The school was now open every day from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

At the same time the old punch card was annulled. The punch card meant that the students could earn points and Kofoed-money by working in the personal hygiene section by washing clothes, bathing, shaving, polishing shoes, cleaning, ironing, etc. The rising

number of students was so intense that the old system of rotation in the house, which was a prerequisite of the punch card, was no longer possible.

The various sections of the school were still at the students' disposal, but earning Kofoed-money was now conditioned by at least one hour's work or class. The work might be cleaning, help in the buffet and restaurant, packing prints, printing work cards or posters. Anyone could in this way earn his dinner through a reasonable amount of work. Distribution of the work tasks took place in register offices, where at the same time students were offered help with lodging and national registration matters. During the day the students could sign up for the classes of the evening school. Between 50 and 80 per cent of the students participated in at least one hour of evening classes.

# A new director

After 15 years as director Erhard Jørgensen withdrew in 1968 to start in a new post as director and vicar at the nursing sisters' institution.

He had faced the difficult challenge of following in Kofoed's footsteps. He met the challenge with dignity, and – as the chairman of the board C. P. Lauritzen said at the farewell party – “he brought the school forward to be a social institution, that is acknowledged by experts and enjoys sympathy and support from very large circles in our society.”

In spite of a rising standard of living, falling unemployment, and improved social legislation, a vast increase in the number of students took place during Erhard Jørgensen's days as director. The increase through the later three years was 10 –15 per cent per annum. From the end of the 1950's to the end of the 1960's the number of students was tripled. In five years the rehabilitation intake had likewise been tripled. The school's opening hours had been four-fold, and with the triple number of students, rooms as well as economy, were ready to burst.

The tremendous development in the 1960's can also be measured by the turnover of the welfare office. The office helped students with loans for acute needs and with administration of their wages

or pension. In 1960-61 the turnover was 45.000 kroner, in 1962-63 it was up to 140.000 kroner, in 1964-65 it was 283.000 kroner, in 1966-67 it was 695.000 kroner, and in 1968-69 it amounted to 1.356.000 kroner.

With support from the school staff one of their own was chosen to be the new director: social advisor John Lange Jacobsen who for many years had been an inspiring force at the school, e.g. the establishment of the alcohol clinic. Lange Jacobsen had started at the school in 1952. He was the first principal at Holger Nielsen's youth-hostel when it was opened in 1959, later he became the leader of the rehabilitation centre, which comprised the workshop course and the boarding house.

# Drug abusers

At the end of the 1960's drug abusers began coming to Kofoed's School which was placed centrally in Christianshavn in a neighbourhood with many empty clearance houses, in which hippies in large numbers settled down.

About fifty young persons came to the school in the summer of 1967 and soon a veritable throng of young drug abusers came to the school. In 1967-68 Copenhagen had about 900 drug addicts and Kofoed's School were in contact with about one third of them.

As the first social pedagogic school in Denmark, Kofoed's School took up the drug work. So far it had been a task left solely to the police and the hospitals.

12 of the young drug addicts, 8 girls and 4 men aged of 16 to 22, were chosen for a rehabilitation project. They came from most diverse environments: from the level of academics and directors to the lowest levels in society. On arrival at the school they were without lodging or means, they were sick and seedy. Apart from hash they took morphine, amphetamine and LSD.

With the help from a doctor at Sankt Hans hospital (a hospital for the mentally deranged) a procedure was made to enable the addicts to go directly to detoxication skipping all waiting lists.

Then an untraditional attempt at rehabilitation was started. The young ones lived and had their meals at the school, but the school quite deliberately did not make demands. They could do what they liked. Economically, they were granted a financial support equivalent to a handicap pension. They were given rooms at their disposal and own furnishing. They decided themselves who they would invite to their rooms. They could sleep as long as they liked, they could do what they wanted to during the day, and if they went out in the evening, they could come back whenever they wanted. They were told that rules at Kofoed's School did not differ from those at the outside society. Drugs were prohibited at the school, but the school did not check on a possible abuse.

As there were no restrictions as to the rooms, it had in the first instance the effect that many bundled up in each room. At the school they knew that there would often be 8-10 addicts in each room, and the staff was well aware of a risk of a gathering of drugs in the rooms, and that the rooms might even function as distribution places. This did not happen, and after some time the addicts wanted to find rooms in the city. A wish from the addicts to have a workshop at their disposal at the school was also granted. The workshop was redesigned many times. At the workshop they painted, made pottery and sewed, and at some point the addicts also started to produce furniture for their rooms.

The workshop also became the framework for long talks between the young ones. Here they discussed their own situation, freedom, society, relationship to their parents, etc. They didn't mind having observers in the group. They chose one of the school staff and in addition a student of psychology and a social advisor partook in the project.

By and by the addicts formed an anti-drug league and they suggested a placing outside the school premises. They were allowed to go in any direction they wanted to and for as long as they wanted, but after a while none of them seemed to be interested in carrying on in this way.





The group was spread after 9 months at the school. Ten of them achieved satisfactory housing and sustenance. Some of them started on an education. Two went abroad. The school lost contact to these two. The remaining ten showed that after their rehabilitation, they no longer used drugs, but they occasionally smoked pot.

Behind this complete dissociation from control on the part of the school, lay a deliberate view of drug abuse as being the youth's rebellion against authoritarian systems and old norms. The school considered this social deviation to be the same as the youth uproar that took place at the same time. With their drug abuse the young addicts turned towards their upbringing at home, at school and in society. When the project with the rehabilitation of the 12 young addicts was so successful, it was probably due to the fact, that for the first time in their life, they were allowed to live as they chose.

*Above:*

A new generation of youth came in the late 1960's and 1970's.

"It is reasonable to assume, that the addicts will not accept corrective measures, because the disorganization is based in a rebellion which we do not understand. The measures become unacceptable to the addict, because we in his eyes do not pose as authoritative experts, but as authoritarian, powerful, dominating persons. This happens because we do not have the same basis. The values that the establishment see as basic and acknowledged, are in the rebellious situation being critically tested or partly rejected," Lange Jacobsen wrote about rehabilitation of the drug addicts.

In these years the school changed its social pedagogic signals from being corrective to exercising strength. The school no longer said "you must, or you must not", but "try it". The strength exercising pedagogy was based on acknowledging that every person possesses positive and creative capabilities that may come to bloom under fair conditions. In stead of focusing on the deviating or disorganized part of the total situation of the student, the school worked with his positive capabilities and the organized part of his life. The deviating person was to have the possibility to establish and experiment to find a more authentic outlook.

In an article in the yearbook 1970-71 John Lange Jacobsen resumed the school's perception of alcohol and drug abuse: "Drug abuse, alcoholism or other social deviation is like any other human behaviour a reaction to the total situation in which you live. The deviation is first and foremost a symptom of various social misfits in a complicated relationship with e.g. psychologically and socially weak people. No kind of force in relation to the deviator could change these basic disparities. At the extreme, society could cover certain symptoms by placing the deviators out of sight."

The aim was to help the individual addict to take responsibility for his own life and his way of living, so that he would find the right form of life for him.

The project at Kofoed's School was followed closely in all parts of Denmark. In these years the school engaged itself in the drug debate, supporting the anti-authoritarian way.

It did not work to pursue the addicts with moral admonitions or trying to help them through a treatment, which was not based on their own acceptance. Consequently, the school did not see any meaning in trying to force them back in a society and a system, which they rejected. On the other hand they should be given time to find an attitude and a form of life that they could handle without drugs. The young ones had to create own values, and without the addicts' own free choice, any treatment was doomed to fail.

The school's old motto about help to self-help was consequently interpreted as "a democratization of remedial measures". This was a matter of the individual self-determination. "The only method to ensure that we adapt the offer to the applicant's condition, is to let him do the arrangement. The business of society and the establishment is hereafter to create attitudes and possibilities in order to give the applicant a practical chance to establish his own norm and to experiment without control", Lange Jacobsen wrote.

Another rehabilitation project with drug addicts, in which the school partook, was carried out in Tokkekøb Hegn (a small village in North Sealand). A Copenhagen club, mostly used by young drug addicts, was demanded to leave the premises – without notice - between Christmas and New Year 1968. The drug addicts turned to Kofoed's School for help. The school then made a deal with the Young Communists Party to rent a cabin in Tokkekøb Hegn. The cabin was situated in idyllic and rural surroundings bordering on a wood and with direct access to a lake. The cabin had not been used for years. It didn't have any sanitary facilities, no electricity or heating, and no glass in the windows.

However, with help from the school's various workshops, the young addicts started repairing the cabin. The plumbing was repaired and a second hand radiator was set up. The kitchen was renewed, and glass was mounted in the windows. The woodwork was repaired and painted, and the electrical installations mended, so that the cabin could be used at least for the next half year.

It soon turned out, that it was impossible to find an alternative to the cabin, and so the stay became of a longer duration.

The replacements in the group were frequent; constantly new ones moved in. 10-15 young ones were permanently in the cabin.

Apart from a few referred addicts, the group administered itself. The help from the school was first and foremost of a material and economic character. Members of the staff visited the group a couple of times a week to offer help of a personal character.

Quite a few of the young addicts succeeded in becoming drug free on their own initiative and without medicine. On a relapse they left the cabin, but they often returned on their own wish. In a few cases unwelcome guests tried to settle in the cabin, but each time the inmates showed them off. They usually handled critical situations themselves, and the cabin was on the whole free of drugs. However, a murder of one of the young inmates cast a long shadow over life in the cabin. The murderer came from outside.

The inmates received social subsidy and they also earned a bit by producing leather goods, like sandals, belts and bracelets. They also sold fruit at music arrangements. Sometimes the school helped a bit with a sack of rice or a small loan.

Also at the Training School a heavy increase in the number of drug addicts was felt towards the end of the 1960's. The Training School, however, used the hard method, giving as good as they got. Students smoking pot were fined. If they brought pot to the school, they were dispelled. Several students started their stay by being taken to the state hospital for detoxication. The school tried to stop the problem with information and guidance. The school tried ambulatory treatment to help the young abusers stepping down, but they could not handle it, and the increase of heavy drug addicts really put the school staff to a hard test. However, they had some success in getting the drug abuse under control, e.g. by offering more leisure projects.

Among the young students several had been idle for 2-3 years, and they found it very hard to catch up with a regular work rhythm. Their work capability was extremely low, and the school adjusted the demands to the lowest possible just in order to get them started. Anyway, quite a few left the school after a short time – some to come back later for a more settled stay at the school.

# The street drunkards

In July 1970 the alcohol clinic was temporarily closed down, as the school did not have sufficient room for it. The clinic was reopened a year later in rented rooms across from the public baths in Sofiegade (a street in Christianshavn). Like the old clinic it was divided into two sections: a detoxication section with room for 5, and a section for students who needed a longer stay, because they had serious social problems or suffered from complications in connection with alcoholism. This section could house 8 students.

On reopening of the clinic the street drunkards had a preferential position. On entering they were drunk and without work or money. By giving them a preferential position, the school wanted to test whether its offer of treatment had any effect on a group of alcoholics with a specifically poor prognosis.

The results of the first year showed that 65 per cent were sober when leaving the clinic, that 69 per cent had got lodgings and that 84 per cent had some kind of provision. 15 per cent had a job before coming to the clinic, 38 per cent on leaving the clinic. None of the treated returned to drinking in the street, even if quite a few returned to the clinic for treatment.



The entry procedure of the clinic was to take in those who were in the greatest need and had poor chances elsewhere. In 1971-72, 69 per cent were extremely drunk on entering, 22 per cent were drunk, 5 per cent were sober and 4 per cent intoxicated by medicine.

The entries were dominated by Finns and Norwegians, amounting to approx. 50 per cent.

The average age of the treated was 37 years. On the whole the Finns and Norwegians were somewhat younger than the Danes.

In 1972 the Ministry of Home Affairs approved the clinic as being in accordance with the hospital act.

*Above:*

The street drunkards were given a preferential position at the alcohol clinic.

# The Finns

The Finns made a great impact on the school in the late 1960's. They comprised 13 per cent of the students in 1969-70, i.e. 400 persons.

The Finns were on the whole younger and worse off than the other students at the school. One third of them were under 25 of age and very damaged by a serious alcohol abuse. They were often without money or lodging. Even if they led a poor life in Denmark, they would rather stay than go back to Finland. Thus it was only a very modest number of Finns that with the help of the school were sent back to Finland, even with the school's effort to use Finnish speaking social advisors.

On the whole the general condition of many of the students was very poor. Deaths were now more frequent. Out of 25 deaths among the school's students, 8 took place at the school or in an ambulance on the way to the hospital. 17 deaths took place close to the school. During the winter the school called the ambulance and medical service at least once a day.

These conditions led to protests from a number of persons in Christianshavn. They felt themselves bothered by the students. "On account of a rising number of especially foreign down-and-outs, the whole neighbourhood is now so strongly marked by alcoholics that



the residents feel insecure in their own streets. Heavy drinking on street corners and along the houses, urinating through letter slits and in stairwells, begging – often under threatening forms - violent riots, thefts, etc. seemed to have formed an ideal basis for criminal activities all over the Christianshavn environment" a written protest stated. Where the school earlier had been a natural part of the old Christianshavn, many now felt that it had developed into something that dominated the environment.

Even if the school was far from being the only one responsible for the above-mentioned conditions, they now found it natural and fair to find a solution to the problems. They started practising a more liberal intake to the school to ease the pressure on the streets – it became allowed to drink in the schoolyard. Furthermore, the school was kept open 24 hours a day to keep the down-and-out from sleeping in stairwells and open areas in the neighbouring buildings.

The real problem to the school was, however, the tremendous increase of poorly endowed students together with the school buildings that were by now overloaded as well as worn down.

It would soon be necessary once again to look for larger premises.

# Louise-stiftelsen

It was, however, another housing project that happened to have priority. For some time the school had wished for a house in the countryside, to which students needing a stay in scenic surroundings, far from the temptations of the city, could be sent. The wish was fulfilled in June 1971 when the school rented "Louisestiftelsen" at Sorø from the Danish nursing sisters' institution.

When the school found that they needed such a place, they did not have the money for an extension of the school activities. However, the school was given financial security through various channels, and in the end they dared starting to look for a suitable place. At the start they looked for places all over Sealand and Lolland-Falster (islands south of Sealand). Negotiations to buy a former school were started with a representative of the Lolland municipality.

When the local people heard of these negotiations they made violent protests. A petition was started, and nearly all the inhabitants signed up. The protest led to a major newspaper debate, which did not stop till long after the negotiations ended.



Instead the renting of the Danish nursing sisters' institution came through. "Louisestiftelsen" was in every respect very suitable for the school's use. The idea of a house in the countryside was to let students of all ages and both sexes use the place for holidays, recreation and as a refuge, i.e. a place for "pensiveness". In the beginning the students stayed for long periods at the place. It had a principal and several members of staff, but later on it was primarily used as a holiday home, where the students stayed one week.

"Louisestiftelsen" had room for 15 students. It is situated beautifully in the middle of a wood and on the Sorø Lake. In the late 1980's Kofoed's School bought Louisestiftelsen and modernised it.

*Above:*

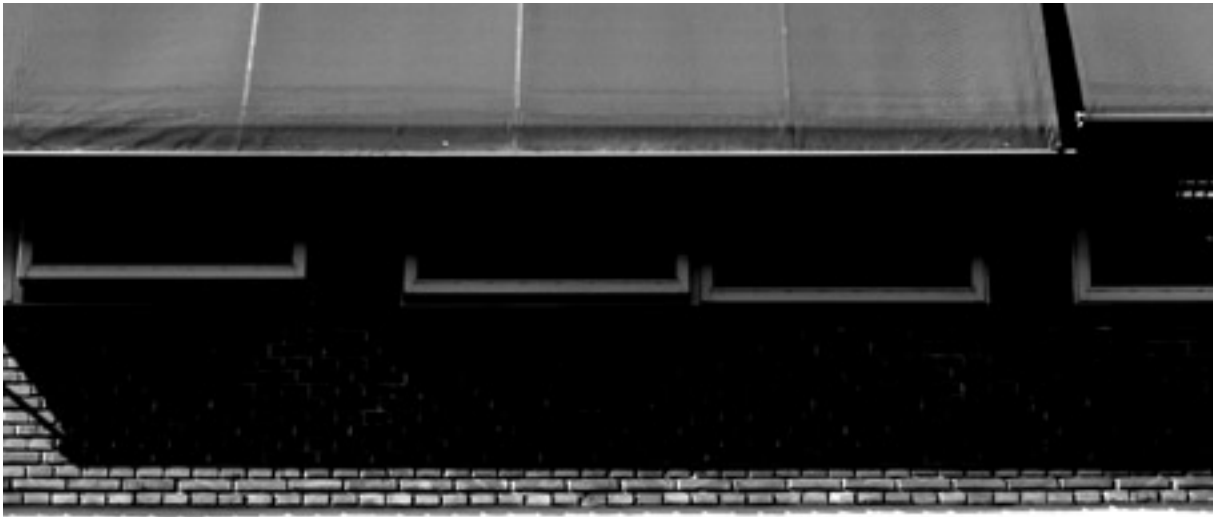
The holiday home is situated at the edge of the woods and on the Sorø Lake.

# The move to Nyrnberggade

Already in September 1969 the board of the school started negotiating the possibility of a fully or partly moving of the school.

The buildings were originally designed to receive approximately 1.000 persons a year, equivalent to 150 persons visiting daily. As time went by the school received 5.000 persons a year. During peak periods the daily number of students amounted to 500. The school direction concluded, that the increase in number of students by 10 per cent annually over several years put a limit to activities. The direction also saw that the premises could no longer live up to the needs. Capacity in all sections was too small to meet the rising number of students, and, finally, that the buildings were totally worn down. There was not one single square metre that did not serve at least two purposes during day and night.

A division of the school was considered, so that the quiet activities could stay on in Dronningensgade. Another possibility was to divide the school into several small sections and place them all over the country. However, a majority of the board preferred to keep the school as a unity in order to secure the communication between the



Kofoed's School in Nyrnberggade.

staff, to maintain the character of the work and also for economical reasons. It was likewise argued, that a central placing was crucial to the school as to acquiring students, but on the other hand also that a placing in a quiet area would be of great value to the rehabilitation work.

The possibilities of acquiring a new building was suddenly improved as the school received the news that the Danish-American "oil-magnate", Alfred Jacobsen had left a large sum to the school. The school received 5 million kroner in the first instance and then another 2 million kroner. With this money a major part of the school's own contribution to a move-out was secured.

Various placings were considered. The need for space was considered to be 10.000 square metres. In the first instance the interest was concentrated on an open plot at Uplandsgade, which rendered the possibility of building 18.000 square floorage metres. The cost was estimated to approx. 18 million kroner. The plot was however sold to somebody else. In stead they got in contact with an architect firm which was about to build an estate on the corner of Holmblads-gade and Nyrnberggade. Negotiations were started with the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as with the Copenhagen municipal administration to take over the building to which the school was given as an option until December 31st 1971.

The move to Nyrnberggade became a long lasting affair. The deadline was postponed several times. The school then spent a long period on thorough planning, discussions and negotiations with many bodies, and finally on January 14th 1975 the school could inaugurate the new premises. With the move the school got double space.

The move did not go off quietly. Several of the new neighbours feared that their area would be flooded by destitutes, resulting in a lowering of the reputation of the neighbourhood. Many felt that Amager already had plenty of socially problematic persons with Sundholm, Christiania and a gypsy camp on Amager Fælled.

The direction of the school chose from the beginning to publish all plans, and it gave current information on the development. Yet the air was thick with guesses and postulates. A residents committee was set up and signatures were collected. To stop the school plans, meetings were held with politicians from parliament as well as from the municipality. The most fanatical residents threatened with protests in front of Christiansborg (the Danish parliament).

The opposition towards moving out gathered into three main items: 1) Fear of begging and drinking in the neighbourhood, 2) Fear of the students spending the nights in basements, stairwells or attics in the neighbouring houses and 3) The unpleasantness of having the police come every day around the school.

The school was serious about the residents' fears, but along the way such a hostile atmosphere was worked up, that arguments could hardly be heard. An information and questioning evening with the school's direction developed into a row, where the school representatives were disrupted again and again by expressions of disapproval.

Everybody found that the school's work was good as well as necessary. Only, the school should not be placed in Nyrnberggade! Many more or less serious suggestions to alternative places were put forward, anything from a division of the school into smaller units spread all over Copenhagen to a deportation to a desert island.

The protests from the most unrelenting residents developed a personal twist. Dishonourable accusations were made against the school's chairman of the board, indicating that he was mixing the interest of the school with his own. All accusations were repudiated. At an action for slander brought by the school, all accusations were judged groundless, but as the fight became embittered and it spread outside Copenhagen, the school inevitably suffered damage to its reputation. In addition, people could no longer quite understand the school's developmental pedagogic or its attitude towards social problems. Wasn't the school becoming socialistic? Had it left its old values? A strongly right wing newspaper was leading in the

critic of e.g. the education at the school. The newspaper found it subversive and an expression of an extreme political agitation.

Director Lange Jacobsen took up the subject in the yearbook of 1973-74. "Today as through the 47 years of the school's history, it prefers to express its standard of value by its acts ... Social work at street level is about rather simple things: A bed for the tired, food for the hungry. And then the quite incomprehensible and crushing loneliness and hopelessness, in which any preaching is a banter, and in which sometimes only the silent being together and the simple touch has any meaning. "The action that in practice carries out the thought" (Kofoed-quotation, ed.). This shall express the school's basis ... every action taken at Kofoed's school has the aim that the single student achieves as high a degree of integrity in our society, as is possible for him and us.

We have no magic formula that can move a jobless and destitute alcoholic from his unbearable situation to a happy, satisfactory, industrious, taxpaying, productive, modest, optimistic, etc. citizen's somewhat utopian situation. But we know a number of practical doings that can give the homeless a roof over his head in the form of a flat, a room or a shelter. We know some simple mechanisms that may satisfy the hungry. We moreover master pedagogy, which allows us to use such mechanisms in a way that will withdraw the destitute from the situation of indigence. We have some, but too few, possibilities of curing the sick, or to take him to places, where he can get help. We have some possibilities to nurse the chronically ill. We possess attitudes that accept the outcast. All these possibilities – and I could go on mentioning many more – are actions that carry out the thought."

Lange Jacobsen furthermore stated that the changing times demanded alterations and adaptations, meaning that the school eventually would be different from what it was in the 1930's.

The chairman of the board, C. P. Lauritzen, also wrote about the question in the same yearbook: "Kofoed's School has always adapted its work to the immediate situation.



Each new problem has developed new offers, help and solutions. The strength of the school has been its flexibility, its ability to constant renewal along with a change in the problems. Psychological adaptation problems, narcotics, alcohol, word blindness, homelessness, loneliness – all variations of problems. For periods some problems dominate, in other periods other problems do. It has actually always been like that and it is more outspoken today, that tasks and problems on the whole decide the school's aims. It is against the school's principles to set a limit. Anyone can come to Kofoed's School, and it is free of cost."

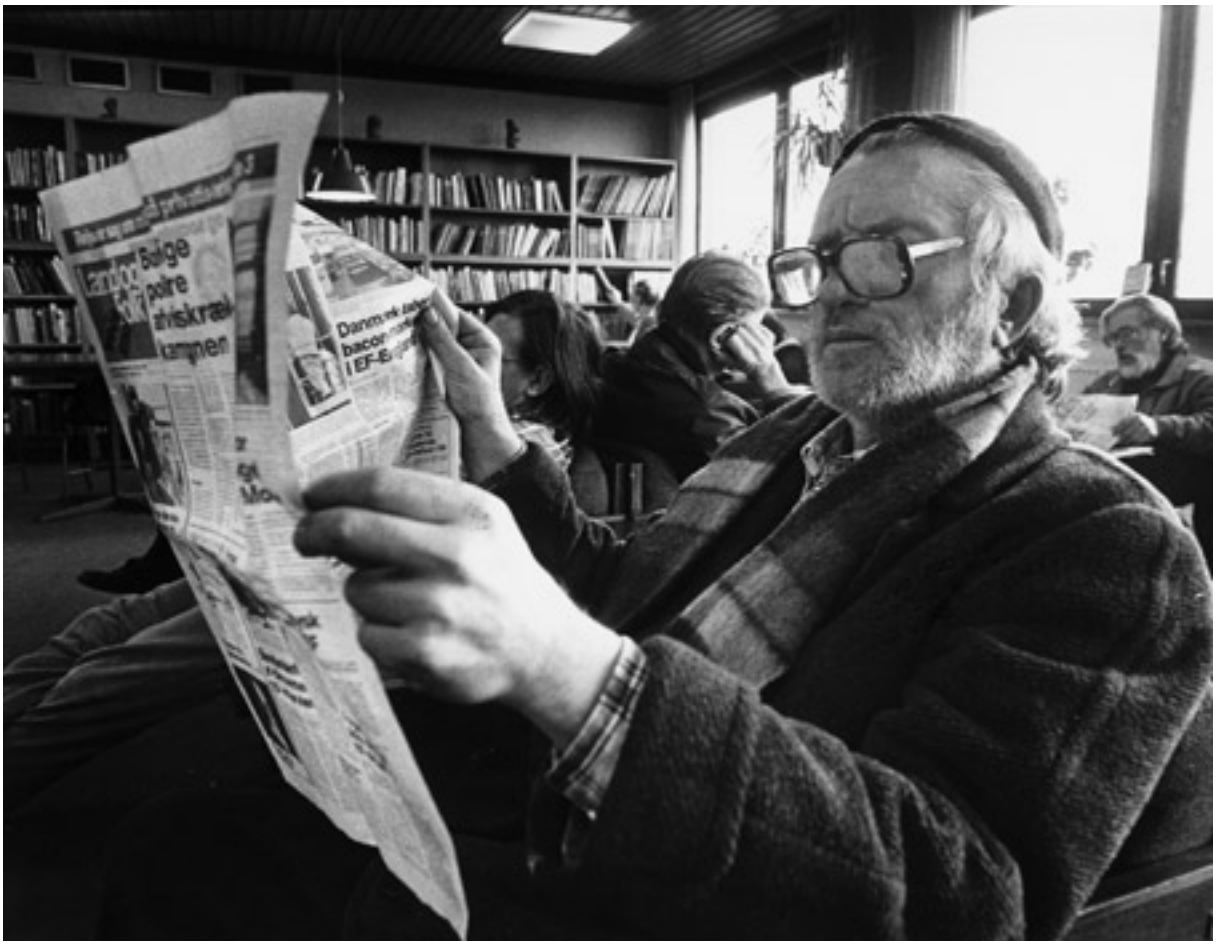
At the inauguration party Lange Jacobsen expressed his wish that the school could live peacefully with its new neighbours. "Our school is not only an inspiration. It is also an obligation that we must endeavour to fulfil in an optimistic and living belief that every person has potential resources regarding creativity, humanness and warmth. Therefore our door must be open to anyone wanting the school. And to those who sometimes say: "Well, he ended up at Kofoed's School" - I just want to say: You don't end up here. Our school is the place where you start."

The neighbours were invited to the presentation of the school on inauguration day, and they were invited to come to the school, if they felt themselves annoyed or disturbed by the school being there. This was, however, a rare incident.

# A school at street level

The way the school saw itself in the 1960's and the 1970's can be captured in the headline: "a contact establishing institution at street level". The school was a place, where you could come if you did not have anywhere else to turn to. People without work, family or housing – and people who had been given up by all other institutions, maybe because they couldn't make themselves understood in the social subsidy offices, or maybe because they could not see through the system of social rights. The school did not have a limitation. There was no visitation at the front door. Anyone who wanted to use the school could enter without formalities. No one was shut out. On the contrary the school saw it as its task to find those who were outcasts. The school had only few rules in order to use the house. For example, you were not allowed to bring or drink alcohol at the school, apart from in the schoolyard, which was considered part of the street.

Another headline at the school was "a social casualty ward" where people in trouble could come and from here were referred to specialised institutions, or they returned to their everyday life after having received assistance and treatment at the school.



After moving to Nyrnberggade the school offered a broad fan of activities from the requirements of everyday life to intensive social, medical and occupational aid.

The most open activities were to be found in the service section where the students could come as they liked. They could read newspapers and books, watch TV, play cards, wash themselves and their own clothes, or eat.

The advisory sector consisted in 4 interest-offices with advisors. In addition to these there was a daily doctors and nurse consultation. A couple of times a week the legal aid was open. The alcohol clinic was also placed in the advisory section. It could house 14 patients a time. In addition to the A-clinic's 14 beds, there were 38 beds that

*Above:*

Student reading a newspaper in the school library. 1980's.

could be used in acute situations like homelessness or other serious troubles. As a principal rule, however, you could not live at the school for any longer time.

A third sector at the school was the educational sector. It offered classes in anything from mere entertainment with film, billiard, table tennis and house parties to specialist classes, like word blindness.

The vocational education took place at the workshop classes, where a large smithy, carpenter and painting workshops were available, and in addition a large offset printing shop and a transport section.

In every way the school had become a large institution: In the way of activities offered, in the way of the number of students and staff, and also economically. A unique mass of resources had been gathered in one institution. The school could differentiate the activities, anybody's need could be met – from acute aid to long term rehabilitation courses. The school was established with many "gates" between the various sections, so that the students had ample opportunity to pass on from the open activities to more comprehensive and intensive help activities.

# The school economy

For many years the major income to run the school came from donations, grants, bazaars and the national lottery. In the mid 1950's the school started receiving state subsidies, in the first instance amounting to 15 per cent of the collected means. In 1959-1960 the state contribution was raised to 35 per cent of the collected means, in 1965-66 to 50 per cent, and in 1970-71 to 150 per cent. In spite of all increases there was never enough money, and at some points the school received considerable occasional contributions from the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 1972-73 the school received 1.5 million kroner, in 1973-74 1.8 million kroner, and in 1974-75 2.2 million kroner. The state contribution in 1975-76 amounted to 12 million kroner.

Even if the donations to the school showed an increase, they could not meet the explosive development in the turnover, which was due to increasing numbers of students and activities, and not least the common inflation. In the beginning of the 1960's donations and lottery proceeds amounted to 70 per cent of the school's income. In 1976-77 these sources of income amounted to 10 per cent of the school income – even considering that the donations had gone up from 500.000 kroner to 1.8 million kroner.

The economy had always been the school's weak point. In 1972 and 1974 the school's direction had to cut down on a number of activities to make ends meet. In 1972 a large deficit remained from the previous year and a new deficit of at least 1.3 million kroner was predicted for 1973, if state contribution was not increased. An application to the Ministry of Social Affairs dragged on and the school was forced to make drastic cuts in activities. The alcohol clinic was closed down on May 1st, and from the same day the opening hours were limited to be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. where it used to be from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. All sections had to save, and staff was given notice.

The problem reached parliament level in the form of a question to the Minister of Social Affairs. The minister promised to find new rules for subsidy, so that the contribution to the school could be increased if activities demanded it – without each time having to apply for an extra contribution. The Ministry of Home Affairs was positive as to find a solution to the difficulties of the alcohol clinic in a co-operation with the Copenhagen municipality. In June the finance committee granted an extraordinary contribution, which together with the contribution to the alcohol clinic from the ministry of home affairs made it possible to carry on without further cutting down.

In 1974 economy was once again poor. The "Louisestiftelsen" had to be closed down for a while, and reductions were made in a number of sections, and severe cuts were undertaken.

The Training School taxed an increasing part of the private funds. In the early 1970's it was between a quarter and a third. The Training School's economy was actually based on a state subsidy per student day. The subsidy amounted to 85 per cent of working expenses when the school was fully booked. In practice this was impossible, and it was pedagogically irresponsible to admit students just to meet budget demands. The school therefore started negotiations with the Ministry of Labour to find another way of being subsidised. Negotiations resulted in a public subsidy of 85 per cent of the acknowledged working expenses as from April 1st 1974.

The new form of subsidy demanded, however, a more independent position for the Training School in relation to Kofoed's School, e.g. having their own statutes and setting up their own board. That became the beginning of separating the Training School from Kofoed's School. In 1979 the Training School became a self-governing institution which is no longer financially subsidised by Kofoed's School.

With the passing of the Danish assistance act in the mid 1970's the administrative rules and conditions of subsidies were changed for institutions like Kofoed's School. In future they would be financed through the county borough based on an agreement between the individual institution and the borough. The direction of Kofoed's School found that the regulations in the act were not suitable to an institution of their kind. After negotiations with the ministry of social affairs, and after a meeting with the social affairs committee, the school got a dispensation on the grounds that it could not be called an institution with local tasks, as the students came from all over Denmark. And furthermore the school's work demanded a high degree of flexibility and possibilities of untraditional solutions. All in all Kofoed's School was less suited to come under the new assistance act. The school retained the previous form of subsidy. In 1976 the school made an agreement with the Social Welfare Administration. The agreement gave the school full state refunding for the net costs of running the main school, Louisestiftelsen and Holger Nielsen's youth hostel. The workshop courses that hitherto had been financed according to the rehabilitation act were now financially secured according to the regulations of the mutual assistance act in agreement with the Copenhagen municipal administration.

The agreement with the Social Welfare Administration was provisional and was to be followed by a final agreement. The decision made slow progress, and for a number of years the school was financed on provisional agreements. The problem was the privately collected means. How much freedom would the ministry allow the school as to the use of these means? The ministry's argument was that the private means should be part of the school's account, so that

the state subsidy could be decreased with the equal amount. This would in practice mean that some of the school's popular foundation would disappear. It would probably over time lead to Kofoed's School becoming a one hundred per cent public institution. Why should private persons contribute to the school if the only beneficiary was the national purse?

In 1984 an agreement was reached. The school could keep the collected money to be used for acute help to the students and for experimental and help projects. Finally, a proper operating agreement was signed, and the school was now provided for in the state budget.



# New groups of students

Through the 1970's more and more foreign speaking students came to the school. This development topped in 1979. The students speaking foreign languages at that point amounted to 46 per cent of all students. The high percentage was mostly comprised of Finns and Norwegians and to some degree Swedes. And then the new big group, the Greenlanders, accounted for 16 per cent of the students.

The majority of the foreigners needed help for quite elementary needs like food and lodging. In 1977-78 the school was in contact with more than 600 students that could not provide for themselves. 95 per cent of these were foreigners. The housing situation was no better. Out of 513 students without housing, 65 per cent were foreigners. Altogether 538 students lived in Christiania. Of these 75 per cent were foreigners. On the whole they were younger than the Danes. 58 per cent were below 30 years of age where the Danes comprised only 32 per cent below 30 years of age. The Greenlanders could count for 81 per cent below 30 years of age.

The Finns had by now been seeking the school for many years. From the end of the 1960's to the end of the 1970's the Finns comprised between 10 and 20 per cent of the total number of students.

In 1972-73 the school statistics started sorting out the Greenlanders as a special group. The vast majority was young ones below 25 years of age. Many of them were young girls that had come to Denmark married to a Dane. Later they got divorced, and now they were alone. Another group consisted of youth that had come to Denmark to study, but had given up. Or they were children adopted by Danish parents. The Greenlanders were often divided and broken people, having lost their identity, confidence and pride. They had not been able to handle the readjustment from a traditional hunting society to an industrial society. They drowned their tragedies in a violent abuse of alcohol or narcotics. On top of it all they had linguistic problems.

The school established a Greenland club in connection with the evening classes, and in the autumn of 1974 the school attached a bilingual employee. The Greenland club had a double function: partly to be a homely place of contact for the Greenlanders, partly to be a place where the school staff could contact them in an informal manner in order to guide them into a positive process.

The work with the Greenlanders was intensified in the early 1980's. It was characteristic of the Greenland students that they experienced a fast and violent down trip which was very difficult to stop. A Greenland section was now established and two Greenland consultants were employed with the sole purpose of seeking up the Greenlanders in order to motivate them to resocialize in Greenland. A part of the activities at school was aimed at a general strengthening of the Greenlander's self-confidence, pride and identity. Among the subjects were Greenland folk music and folk dance, bead work and preparation of Greenland food such as seal and whale meat and seal blubber.

The first year's work resulted in 25 Greenlanders going home to Greenland. Two thirds of the Greenlanders got a job or an appren-



Full concentration. A greenlander working with wood.  
1980's.

ticeship. At the end of the 1980's more than 250 had been helped to return to Greenland, and considering that they had been victims of violent drug abuse, consisting in a mixture of alcohol and euphoric drugs, most of them actually managed very well.

In the 1970's a considerable part of the school's most poorly functioning students came from Christiania (a former military area that had become a "free city" for young squatters), which is very close to Kofoed's School. Nearly one third of the women and 10 per cent of the men came from the "free city".

In order to help the squatters at Christiania, Kofoed's School established a medical clinic in Christiania's health house. The clinic was open one day a week. Here the school doctor and nurse worked side by side with homeopathy doctors and zone therapists. The need for medical help was great, e.g. treating infections in ear, throat and lung. Many showed up with skin infections caused by poor hygiene.

Soon a number of home confinements were taking place in Christiania. Problems in this connection were also taken care of in the health house. The school staff was increasingly called to the "free city" to take care of sick children in cases when the public emergency medical service would not visit the sick.

From the end of the 1960's many women began coming to the school with problems which were much like those of the men. It started with young female drug addicts and was followed by female alcoholics. In the early years of the alcohol clinic, only men came in, but from the mid 1970's six per cent were women. They often had serious psychic problems. The same tendency could be seen in the shelters where 12 per cent of the guests were women. Altogether the women comprised 10-12 per cent of the school's students, and among the very young up to 50 per cent.

During the 1960's and the 1970's a whole new population group entered the school. An increasing number of students came from the upper class and from environments where social down trips had

hitherto been unknown. Many had been given a good start in life, had had good jobs, been married and had a high standard of living, but a feeling of not sufficing or seeing any meaning in life led to an abuse of alcohol or medicine. For these people the down trip was especially hard, as no one in their environment had expected anything like that.

Likewise, the rising number of divorces created a new male group of students. They were mentally broken down by having lost their home and children.

The rising unemployment in the late 1970's could also be felt at the school as a slower flow of the students. The institutions traditionally used by Kofoed's School, e.g. schools for partly skilled workers, were now filled up by unemployed members of the trade unions, and the students from Kofoed's School were only admitted in the second or third intake.

# A new director

At the end of April 1979 John Lange Jacobsen left the school for a job as director of administration of the social care department in the Copenhagen municipality.

At that time he had worked for 27 years at Kofoed's School – the last eleven as director – taking care of a number of different tasks: In the 1950's: shortage of housing and jobs. In the 1960's: alcohol problems, and in the 1970's drug abuse and the young migrants from Finland and Greenland. Lange Jacobsen's greatest and most original project in the social pedagogical field was the rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug abusers, which he started in the 1960's.

Lange Jacobsen was also the school's sharp outward profile who fervently took part in the social political debate. He worked to create space and understanding for people of deviant behaviour and values. Each person is unique and has a right to an individual life, as long as it does not hurt anyone else. Lange Jacobsen was very popular as a lecturer giving approx. 100 lectures a year all over Denmark. For a number of years he was the chairman of the social political association and his expertise in social problems was much used on various committees.

As a young staff member Lange Jacobsen worked under Hans Christian Kofoed and he was extremely influenced by him.

This inspiration Lange Jacobsen transformed in his own way into practical action according to the new conditions of society.

At Lange Jacobsen's resignation as director the member of the board Henning Paludan wrote: "As director, Lange Jacobsen felt that his task was to unite the social and administrative duties according to the school's Christian basis. While Kofoed had always underlined the school's Christian basis, Lange Jacobsen has – according to the spirit of the new generation – always felt that the Christian basis was an offer to everyone, who came to Kofoed's School. Students and others who came to the school were not personally requested to show their attitude towards Christianity. During Lange's leadership the Christian basis was given a new dimension in the school work, without losing its importance."

As the new director of the school Jens Aage Bjørkøe was chosen. He came from a position as rector at Mariakirken, where he had a special task as a modern Christian crusader on Vesterbro (an area in central Copenhagen). Bjørkøe had also established and led Mariatjenesten, which does a visiting dialogue and help service in the Halmtorv area (a prostitutes' pick-up place). Bjørkøe started as director in November 1979.

The board also met a change in leadership in the late 1970's, as the chairman through nearly 30 years, the high court barrister C. P. Lauritzen, retired.

C. P. Lauritzen had graduated in law in 1931, and he had only just become a high court barrister in 1935, when he placed himself at Kofoed's School's disposal as a voluntary legal advisor to the students. At the same time he became a member of the school board, and in 1949 the chairman of the board. He performed this job till 1978. For 43 years he was, together with Kofoed, the man who secured and developed the school to be of high quality. His many years as chairman was of invaluable importance to the continuity of the schoolwork, not the least after Kofoed's early death in 1952. The continuity did not bring either lull or stagnation. On the contrary C. P. Lauritzen was a driving force behind the school's many projects and experiments, which led to developing the social area.

C. P. Lauritzen had been given his engagement in his home and from 20 active years in the Y.M.C.A. in the Christian Boy Scout movement. He always supported voluntary social work. Through his entire life he was deeply engaged in many kinds of social work. He was member of the board of the nursing sisters' home "Sankt Lukas", and he supported Abbe Pierre's ragpickers, the "Swallows" and the SOS dried milk project with strong connections to Mother Theresa's work in Calcutta, India. From the early 1940's till his death in 1981 he chaired the social building society called "Hjem" (= home). But first and foremost his name is attached to Kofoed's School.

When C. P. Lauritzen left the board, director Lange Jacobsen wrote about him: " C. P. Lauritzen had a wonderful way of uniting the personal obligation and engagement and giving the school staff a large amount of freedom. He was of unending ideas and he produced veritable waves of suggestions and thoughts of new initiatives. All this made him into a demanding and inspiring chairman."

As new chairman to take over after C. P. Lauritzen was chosen R. Watt Boolsen. Watt Boolsen had joined the council in 1965. For 11 years he was head of the Danish social high school. After this he was chosen as director of the defence information and welfare service.



# Unrest at the school

After moving out to Nyrnberggade in 1975 and up through the 1980's the school was affected by internal unrest, which was transmitted to the public through the media in a number of regularly returning "feverish attacks": In 1976, in 1978, in 1981-82 and again in 1988. The unrest was characterised by a fight between groups of staff and the school leadership. It involved ideological questions, attitudes towards social work, management dispositions and other subjects.

The disputes should be seen on the basis of the changes that took place in society in the 1960's and the 1970's, and they could be summed up as the concept of 'the youth rebellion'. The rebellion questioned all handed down norms and experiences, especially the power of the authorities. Per definition everyone over 30 years of age was suspicious. Part of the youth felt themselves partaking in a social revolution and they had Messianic expectations as to a whole new world. History and tradition belonged to the past. In the 1970's everything was turned into politics, especially social politics. The social workers now saw their job as a repairing service, which only served to maintain 'the rotten capitalistic system'. Instead of remedying social problems, the social workers found that they ought to

participate in a basic change of the conditions of society. Instead of rehabilitating people, the social worker ought to take part in overthrowing society – it was all about political consciousness instead of symptom treatment of something that could not be saved anyway.

The hierarchical structures and managerial systems should likewise be changed. Leaders should be replaced by collective leadership, and staff councils ought to be represented on the boards. Instead of making decisions came the 'password': "Let the 1000 flowers bloom". Instead of knowledge and skill the 'correct' political consciousness was decisive as to decisions. Democracy should be carried out in the institutions as part of the changes in society.

Kofoed's School offered good opportunities to play through these new ideas in grand orchestration. As a genuine child of the 1960's and with the increase in the national income, the school expanded violently and experienced added resources. Many young educated staff members were employed during these years, when there was an intense demand for manpower in society in general, especially for social workers in the growing municipal social administrations. The new staff often came with a socialistic inspired accession to social work and an enormous class engagement, which strongly marked the school for several years.

The school pedagogy took part in the anti authoritarian wave and it experimented with new forms of leadership and new organizations within the school, e.g. a staff education school and a council of school staff, all according to the trend of the time. The idea was that the school were to educate its own, often uneducated, staff. The council of school staff, however, also wanted an independent platform for the staff education school within the school system, and it wanted the staff to participate in governing politics and budget. The staff education school was wanted to be a critical body that could revive the pedagogical work at Kofoed's School.

The idea of the staff education school soon became an issue of dispute as to who should have the power to line out the work at the school and to be in charge of the school budget. With this, the scene

was laid for a struggle between council and the leading body of the school, especially the board and the director.

This crucial problem marked the school all through to the early 1990's with various issues like disagreement on leadership principles, work aims, methods, basic values, and priorities. For a time it seemed as if a civil war was taking place at the school on these subjects, involving an enormous emotional engagement. Discussions were harsh and often tainted by an obey-the-orders style and a highly emotional rhetoric as in the political arena. This in itself was not helping the mutual understanding.

The conflicts have been interpreted in many ways, but first and foremost the conflicts probably reveal a basic weakness of the school organization.

In spite of a violent extension of the school's student basis, and school offers of classes and training, and a multiplied number of economic and teaching staff, the school administration and organization had not been developed correspondingly. Throughout the years at the school it was said, that money was not spent on administration but on social work. The organization should be reduced to the smallest possible and to the absolute essential.

The somewhat informal organization did not cause any problems as long as the school was a "family institution" where everybody knew each other professionally and personally. In Kofoed's days all staff took their meals together. New members of staff were seated next to Kofoed, who informed about the school and introduced the new member to the staff. Problems and questions were settled around the dinner table.

In addition the Kofoed spirit was strong, even many years after his death. People knew that they took part in something very special, which had its own unwritten rules. An esprit de corps was the incentive for everybody to do his utmost. The staff felt the necessity of the task so strongly, that everything else was of minor importance.

Many saw their job as a vocation.

After moving out to Nyrnberggade and the years thereafter the situation was different. The school had now more than 200 staff members, sometimes 250. They were spread over 10.000 square meters and five floors, in addition to the activities outside the house. Periodically many were newly hired to the staff. Some were engaged full time, others part-time, and some paid by the hour. The work was spread over all hours of day and night and over all days of the year. The many new staff members were not "schooled in the Kofoed pedagogy". They came with a most varied background to handle the work.

In this way it became increasingly difficult to see the situation in its entirety, and the distance between the management and the staff was increased, physically and mentally. The management did not have a chance to get to know the staff or to obtain a personal relationship to it.

From 1967-68 to 1976-77 the income of the school increased from 2.2 million kroner to above 14.6 million kroner. In the same period the main school's salaries rose from 1.3 million kroner to 8 million kroner. The total cost of running the school amounted to approx. 40 million Danish kroner at the end of the 1980's. – And yet the central administration remained the same in number of staff during the entire period.

The relatively weak central administration had its compensation by a division into sections. The various sections have for periods been given budget and personnel responsibility by division of competence. Likewise the organization of work and decisions on the section tasks were decided in section meetings – without any formal rules of organization.

The delegation of responsibility led to a creation of a number of sub-sections, e.g. vocational sections, which had a heavy trade union opinion as to work rules etc. In the 1970's the school made agreements with the various trade unions of the staff. This resulted in

the staff coming to work more and more under conditions decided outside the school.

The division into sections led to more or less internal sub-sections or sub-culture, sporting some of the positive sides of the small institution. However, the division also involved the risk of creating closed systems and facing a lack of unity with the school ideas as such.

To this came that the old staff members and the new ones, the full time staff and the part time ones had to find a way to meet each other and co-operate in a somewhat diffuse structure.

The school's organizational structure contributed to a feeling of insecurity as to where the actual competence lay. On account of the size of the school, it was humanely impossible for the director to follow the school's work in details. On the other hand he was responsible towards the board, and he was formally responsible to make the decisions and carry them out. This happened via the section leaders, who were very influential in daily tasks in their individual section. They had, however, no formal competence.

The insecurity as to the school structure and the weak central administration had the effect that the directors were in focus each time of unrest. Outwards the fight was pictured partly as an ideological fight about the school's idea and pedagogy and partly as a banal power struggle between director and staff. In the late 1980's the Ministry of Social Affairs were intermediary to set up a committee to go deeply into the problems at the school. The committee was chaired by the former Government statistician N. V. Skak-Nielsen. He underlined the necessity of strengthening the central administration. He furthermore recommended formal written profiles of the leaders' competence and responsibility. Likewise there was a need for a formalisation of the pedagogical work with the students. In connection with the latter a registration of the students was re-introduced. The work of the individual section was described in operational aims. Furthermore new improved statistical descriptions offered a possibility of an evaluation of the results of the work with the students.

# Pedagogic reform

In the late 1970's and early 1980's the school was heavily afflicted by violence among the students. After moving from Christianshavn to Nyrnberggade the students had been allowed to drink alcohol on the school's outdoor premises. This had been allowed in order to meet the neighbours' demand to remove drunken students from the streets. The drinking developed, however, in such a degree that it led to a destruction of property, assaults and fights in the school-yard as well as inside the school. The students carried in beer and wine, and a part of the students only came to the school to find drinking mates, with no wish to take part in any of the school offers. In those years the school was given the reputation of being the largest pub with the longest outdoor bar in Copenhagen. At times a very infamous and poisonous climate developed, including life threats against the staff from dead drunken students. The police were called daily to remove the worst troublemakers. The more timid students dared not come to the school out of fear for the rough environment.

Another unhappy progress had developed starting with the pay out of money at the school's interest office earned from small jobs to the



effect that the students spent the money on alcohol, to the violent drinking in the school yard, and finally to the detoxication at the alcohol clinic. When the student hereafter felt better, the whole rigmarole started all over again. It was obvious that the students did not learn anything from the process. Far too many were locked in a passive situation, and students admitted to the alcohol clinic with a sincere wish to get out of the abuse, were exposed to enormous afflictions with drunken comrades being noisy outside the windows.

This growing strongly destructive environment at the school led to the fact that the central pedagogical and rehabilitating activities became very difficult to carry out. Far too many resources were bound in tasks that did not have a proper aim or perspective.

The wave of violence became the basis of a pedagogical reform in 1982. The reform was a combination of tightening and extension of the pedagogical activities. With code words like offers and demands, choice and consequence, the school's profile was changed from a prevailing line of treatment and safekeeping to an activating pedagogical line. The students were not to be treated as passive

*Above:*

The production workshop was the turning point in the pedagogical reform of 1982.

recipients. In stead the school aimed at giving the students a possibility of being responsible for their own situation. The students were to feel that they could actively and positively influence their own lives.

The principle of no pay and free service was toned down, and the treatment activity was considered a supporting function to the predominant pedagogy. In stead of focusing on the students' past and their weaknesses, the pedagogical effort was concentrated on today and the future. With this reform it was underlined, that the school was a place of learning and not a shelter, nor a recreation centre.

The reform meant that drinking on the school premises was forbidden. The original Kofoed principles of help to self help were in focus again. "We do not help in order to help out, but in order to help build up". The former principle of no pay and free service was followed by the principle of mutual dependence: "Give and earn. You have to do something yourself, then we'll help you". "The poor student attitude" was replaced by a consequence pedagogy, which aimed at changing the students' behaviour through the school's philosophy and activities.

In the 1980's the school invested considerable means in training and rehabilitation facilities, putting the weight on activating the students in the workshops and classrooms. In just a few years seven new workshops were established: textile printing, textile work, creative art, acid washing, music, car repair and productive activity.

The production workshop was the turning point of the reform as to those students that hitherto had not been constructive in their use of the school. At the productive activity workshop anyone could come and do some work and through this earn a meal in stead of just going to the social advisors for a free meal ticket, as they formerly could. The aim of the reform was to activate those students who knew how to con the school system and who built up a behaviour to make it possible. The students had learned to look miserable to achieve compassion, and they had experienced that it helped.



With the reform all free services were reserved for students who were genuinely in need of treatment. Everyone else had to learn that you had to give before you could earn.

The production workshop was established early 1982. The first activities were a production of holders for Christmas trees, candlesticks, sorting of rags and sawing wood. The workshop soon needed more space, and the school bought the neighbouring property, Holmbladsgade 122, which was repaired by the students with help from the school's professional artisans. The workshop was not very successful in selling its products on a large scale. However, after a short while it got in contact with various industrial businesses that placed part of their work at the school, e.g. wrapping of toiletries and mounting of architect lamps. By and by the workshop got a clientele that kept the students busy in connection with other tasks at the school.

Another element in the reform was the reintroduction of the Kofoed-dollar, which had been given up in 1963. The Kofoed-dollar is an internal currency which can be used at the school to buy food, coffee, cigarettes, educational material, a stay at Louisestiftelsen at Sorø, bus tickets and the like. The school created its own economical circulation modelled on the outer society, with work and consumption and its own currency. The student can spend his Kofoed-dollars immediately, but he can also choose to save up for e.g. a bicycle, a suit of clothes or a radio. The Kofoed-dollar was one of the tools to teach the student an ordinary, normal social behaviour. For 45 minutes of work the student could earn a meal – and doing more work he could earn dollars to buy coffee and cigarettes. The idea of reintroducing the Kofoed-dollar was primarily to prompt the students to use the various pedagogical activities at the school. The dollar was therefore in the first instance introduced in the production workshop, then in the other workshops, and finally in the educational section.

The major principles of the reform were gradually carried out during the 1980's. The production workshop started as an experi-



ment to get the students off the heavy drinking. Quite a few of the staff were hesitant towards the experiment, or they were directly against, as they found that you should not make demands to socially weak groups. But the results proved differently. The students liked being activated. They flocked to the production workshop, which developed explosively during the next years and had to be extended with several new workshops, which again developed into self governing units. The tasks were rather uncomplicated, so that anyone could be part of the work. However, the workshops managed to do a still more differentiated production, which could be sold to private and public businesses, e.g. producing cleaning tools, play houses for children, bongo drums, game boards, garden furniture and Dannebrog (the Danish flag). The idea was to create a secure workshop environment in order to give even the weakest students a feeling of working. The pedagogical principle was "the common third": Students and staff met to help each other to carry out a task. In stead of focusing on the student's problem and work on that in for example a therapeutic way, a short cut was made where the problem was worked upon in a social environment. The problem is then overcome when the student experiences a new per-

*Above:*

A three-week high school course at Kofoed's School could be the start of further education. The Data Section in the 80's.

ception of himself. The student might not have any self-confidence, he is always too late, he is unstable in his participation etc. But the engagement in a task and a cause can help the student to a different attitude, where he experiences usefulness and meaningfulness by doing the task.

The educational section was also extended with a number of new subjects and courses. The educational section gained importance all through the 1980's, resourcefully as well as idealistically. With this section the school proved its own perception of being a school for jobless people. The conception of school and students was significant to the school's development the next years, and the folk high school idea was accentuated. As in the ninetieth century where the farmers were levered from humble peasants to a free farmer class, so could education in our time give the poor and rejected a lift – if not always a social lift, then a personal one.

In the mid 1980's the school offered classes each day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Saturdays till 6 p.m. Everyday approximately 35 different classes were offered. In addition were special folk high school courses of three weeks duration of varying current themes. The weekly class hours on these courses were 28. The folk high school courses were introduced in 1983 especially to young students and to students with less severe strains. The courses became a frontrunner to the later so popular day high schools.

The classes were formed in units of two hours, and they all started at every second full hour to ensure that the students could always follow their chosen education. Weekly curricula were made and the students were helped to structure their week and choose their individual subjects.

The classes were a mixture of general education, musical and creative subjects and of special training. The aim was first and foremost to enhance the students' personal development.

The basis of the education was the subject and the students' interest

in the subject. The teachers met prepared for the classes and with a firm outline of the teaching, but at the same time they should be able to deviate from the plan to let the students' questions come through. However, the teaching was never to be reduced to a mere occasion to meet at class. The teaching was not occupational therapy. There was a sharp distinction between therapy and teaching – or rather: Good and genuine education was seen as the best therapy for the students.

The education might have several purposes, which the school sought to combine. Apart from giving knowledge, the teaching might hold problem solving within a given time. The question could be: "When was Stauning elected prime minister the first time?" The answer could be found by looking it up in the school library, but that meant that the student knew about a library's function and how to use a reference book. In this way the students were shown new methods to gain knowledge.

The teaching engaged the students' interest and the knowledge they had already. If you worked on calculation of percentages, the teacher might use the term "odds", which some of the students knew from horse racing. By starting in a known world, you could often create an increased interest in the subject, and the students got a small push to enhance their learning.

A popular subject was the Copenhagen history including excursions to various parts of the city. Starting with actual buildings the students learned about architecture, the history of styles and aesthetics. This subject also drew on the student's knowledge of a special part of the city, and the excursions sharpened their ability to observe and to refer their observances to other students.

Classes were given in literature, usually with readings and discussions, and in philosophy, where the history of philosophy from Socrates to Sartre was taught. That subject was suited to Kofoed's School. The existential themes of the education played up to the students' interest in putting words to their own feelings and experience of the world. The teaching was strictly factual, but with the discussions of the various themes the teaching also held some kind of conversation therapy



without anyone noticing it, because it took place strictly within the frames of the teaching.

Civics was one of the established subjects at the school. The students were taught the structure and organization of society. They were taught about constitutional law and democracy, political parties, terms of economy, labour market, culture, education and the Common Market.

In the chess classes the students' capabilities of concentration and logical reasoning were trained. The game of playing bridge was also on the program for a while.

The music workshop had new rooms in 1982, which immediately resulted in an increased activity. The teaching consisted of projects, where the students started playing together and later appeared with their music at celebrations and balls at the school or in amateur competitions. A few groups had engagements in the city. The groups were often given exotic names like 'hitching waltz', 'blue Monday' or "Fire and Forget".

Along the way the school acquired a number of musical instruments, synthesiser and other electronic equipment and a studio, where the

*Above:*

The music workshop had new rooms in 1982.

Here: intensive rehearsal in 2005.

students could make their own music cassette tapes. Many students wrote their own texts and arranged the music.

An important principle at the school was to teach the students to do things themselves. This practical pedagogy was very obvious in the repair workshop, where the students could bring their everyday things to be repaired, e.g. a bicycle puncture, framing of pictures, shoe repair or furniture repair. The students could also produce new things, like lamps, candlesticks, a shelf or a bookcase.

The cooking classes represented another practical subject. The students learnt to cook nourishing and cheap dishes, and they were taught nutrition. In the textile workshop the students sewed their own clothes out of second hand material or they repaired their clothes. There were a number of other creative workshops with leather and fur, textile printing, batik and ceramics.

Sport was still an important subject. Many students had too little exercise and they ate unhealthy food. The unhealthy way of living was attempted contradicted by swimming, badminton and rhythmic exercise.

In the early 1980's new groups of foreigners started coming to the school. Their knowledge of the Danish language was often very poor, and it was necessary to give classes in Danish for foreigners. Most of them came from the EU-area, but that was to change too, soon the school was sought by students from all over the world.

The workshop course also underwent a development as part of the pedagogical reform. The workshop course was, as mentioned earlier, introduced in 1955. With the rehabilitation act of 1960 the workshop course was acknowledged as a rehabilitation institution based on an agreement with the municipality of Copenhagen, but in 1983 the municipality terminated the agreement. The workshop course was threatened by being closed down, but it was saved by being acknowledged according to § 105 in the Danish assistance act, according to which the Copenhagen municipality still met the current expenses but were recompensed 75 per cent from the state.

In the mid 1980's the workshop course held six shops: smithy, carpentry, painting, printing, transport and car repair. The workshops were managed by skilled staff. Social advisors were attached to the course. The workshop course worked as a self governing section within the framework of Kofoed's School. The aim was to carry out tests of working and rehabilitation, but also to help the students with their economical and housing situation and to treat their possible alcohol abuse. Structurewise the workshop course represented the school's "graduation class". Students could come to the school for e.g. a detoxication or to try out the production workshop, and if the staff judged that the student held the potential of rehabilitation, he was moved to the workshop course. In 1985 75 per cent of the workshop course students were referred from internal sections. Half of the students had alcohol problems. A small group was drug addicts. 40 per cent were admitted on account of long term unemployment or other social circumstances. 10 per cent were psychic cases. Nearly all students were men.

The students worked in the workshops from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and in this way they had what was similar to a normal workday. The workshops were an integrated part of the school's activity. The smithy, carpenter and paint shops took care of the school's maintenance and they also did rebuilding. This has been of substantial importance to the school in order to carry out large changes and repairs of the buildings. Pedagogically it was of importance that the students helped maintain the school. It added a special responsibility towards the place. Considering the vast amount of people that come to the school, it is surprising that there is so little wanton destruction.

The transport section worked together with the school's clothes and furniture depots on collecting clothes and furniture. Each year the school was given tons of clothes. Those were sorted and given to the students free of charge. The pick up was undertaken by the students who in this way had driving lessons and got to know the streets of Copenhagen, to use street maps and to write driving ledgers.

The car repair shop was the latest addition to the workshops. It is placed on neighbouring premises and was bought in 1984 as a fully modern repair shop with lift and lubrication ditch and other equipment living up to any professional repair shop. It was a school

principle that work training should be done under circumstances that were comparable to outside places of work. The workshop did the repair of all the school's by now many vehicles: small trucks, vans, busses and cars.

As the only workshop, the print shop did production for customers outside the school. A photomechanical plant and a new large offset machine were purchased. About one third of the production was sold outside the school.

A large empty neighbouring lot, which had been bought in 1985, held possibilities of establishing an outdoor production based on recycling. Over the next few years a number of workshop buildings were set up here.

The alcohol clinic also experienced reforms. Here the school went for longer lasting treatments for students, who were admitted to be treated for alcoholism. Far too many students had been admitted and had then left the clinic after a few days to start drinking again. A small group of students occupied a large part of the beds by coming for repetitive treatments. From 1982 to 1986 the average time at the clinic rose from 9 to 15 days. At the same time the advisory work was intensified for difficult students. The work at the interest offices changed from counter service, handing out meal tickets, to a more intensive and individual work with the students. The intensive attitude towards the worse-off students at the alcohol clinic was followed up in 1988 with employing a process consultant, who was to ensure that no student on a beginning down trip was left to himself, nor that students at the clinic ran idle.

The Greenlanders represented a special problem. From 1973 to 1980 the number of Greenlanders at the school rose from 53 to 292, equivalent to 6 per cent of all Greenlanders living in Denmark. Half of them were between 20 and 24 years old. Some of them had come to Denmark to get an education, but they could not handle the transition to the Danish society. Many lived a miserable and isolated life with a massive abuse of hash and alcohol. In 1981 the school established a Greenland section and hired a Greenland consult-





ant. The Greenlanders accounted for 10 per cent of the students, and they needed special help. About 20 per cent of the school's total resources were spent on the Greenlanders in this period. The school tried to help them to retain their Greenland identity by offering classes in Greenlandic and in Greenland culture, in bead embroidery and Greenland folk dancing. Twice weekly they dined together and enjoyed film or culture evenings. Classes and consulting was done in Greenlandic. The aim was to motivate the Greenlanders to return to Greenland. Most of them wanted to go home, but they feared being mocked when they came back and had to tell friends and family that they had gone under in Denmark. On this reasoning many of them preferred to stay in Denmark, and the school had to add one more staff member to the Greenland section. The staff started acting against a spirit of violence through talks in which they attempted to remove the Greenlanders' feeling of insufficiency and to strengthen their self-esteem. This proved to be a long and hard process with setbacks and frustrations, but on the whole there was less and less violence committed by the Greenlanders after the school reform.

*Above:*

The car repair shop

Later the school succeeded in getting the Greenlanders to take part in the activities, especially when a special Greenlandic workshop was built for them. Here they had the possibility to strengthen their identity and self-esteem by building kayaks and sewing furs and skins.

When the school bought a fishing vessel in 1989 it was attached to the Greenland house. Courses in navigation and rules at sea were established. The vessel was used for short fishing trips and for summer cruises to e.g. Bornholm, the islands south of Funen and trips around the island of Sealand. To the activities were later added a diving school.

The pedagogical reform brought gradual changes in the students' use of the school. A number of students came to the school to handle their abuse. More and more students concentrated on the pedagogical activities, and the violence problem, which was the direct basis of the reform, decreased from 680 acts of violence in 1980 to 35 in 1990. This development was inversely proportional to the students' active or passive use of the school. In the early 1980's two thirds of the students were to be found in the passive sections. In 1990 it was only one third – and the increase of active students and the ongoing decrease of acts of violence carried through the 1990's.

# The new poverty

The societal based background for the school's work changed through the 1970's in two ways: The introduction of the Danish assistance act which secured the students a relatively high social subsidy, and the very high rate of unemployment that hit the Western world after the oil crisis in 1973. The combination of a public safety net and an extreme ejection from the labour market became the new background for the school's work. The former type of students – middle aged men in big coats – gradually disappeared. The new type of students were described as a single, divorced, jobless man about 30 years of age, without any family contacts or real friends. And having left school without further education, and with a very small work experience, but a long time in the unemployment system. In addition he had drug or alcohol abuse problems and no self-confidence. He was passive, lonely and despairing.

The new and seemingly contradictory situation was attempted captured in the concept of the new poverty: No one had to go hungry, any one who wanted it could have a roof over his head and clothes to his body. The basic necessities of life were secured, also in an unemployment situation. Yet, many persons had a bad life and were

poor of life quality. Persons who lived isolated outside productive communities and they felt lonely, cast off, useless and unwanted in the affluent society, losing their self-respect and belief in the future. Organization of their lives fell more or less apart for these persons, and even if they had a flat with a fridge and colour TV and other material goods, they were short of experiences, and life might be felt as heavy and sad and without meaning or perspective. The problems, that the school had to work on were less about material need than on lifestyle problems, purpose in life, and network poverty.

The assistance system was not good at helping out these problems, and many clients were left as passive recipients of social subsidies. Each month a cheque came from the assistance office without expectations, or offers of activation, or demands for giving anything in return. The system could support people, but it could not get them out of their passiveness or unemployment. Even if the system became more and more extensive and fine-meshed, you could only state that the number of people receiving social subsidies was constantly increased and amounted to 20 per cent of the adult population. More clients came to because of unemployment, but the system couldn't cope with activation of the jobless, so that they would manage for themselves outside the system. If you were once covered by the social subsidy system, it would easily become a permanent situation.

Kofoed's School was among the first to see the destructive force of the system, and they called attention to it in the public debate. The Danish assistance act was called the world's best social act, but people flocked to the private help organizations. You could see that the help made people weaker instead of rebuilding their personal resources. It was not popular to say so in these years, but Kofoed's School had weighty arguments as they had made the very first experiences with activating students. And the students liked being activated. They liked doing a job to earn a meal. Deep at heart they did not care to be treated as persons so inferior that no one expected anything or made any demands of them.

The school's argumentation was heard, and slowly the social political attitude of the society was altered, and when activating and an active labour market policy became part of the political issue in the 1990's, the school felt that they had contributed to this development.

One of the politicians who really pulled a load to change the social legislation was Aase Olesen. She was minister of social affairs in 1988-1990. When she left her ministry, she was elected to the school board and committee.

In 1995 Robert Watt Boolsen chose to stop as chairman of the board after having held the post for 17 years. Watt Boolsen chaired the board during a period with a heavy increase of the school's activities, e.g. buying the neighbouring premises, and he is credited with succeeding to enter an agreement with the state, which secured the school's basic economy.

Aase Olesen was then chosen as the fourth chairman of the board.

# Structural changes

The pedagogical reform was carried out alongside the cuts in state subsidy. The reform of the school profile with an extension of active offers to the students took place through a period with perceptible cuts in budget. Over ten years the state subsidy was cut by 25 per cent. The number of staff was cut by 16 per cent from 1983 to 1992. The number of students, however, was 15 per cent higher than in the 1970's.

If things were to work financially, it was necessary to rearrange, cut down or cut off school activities, and to make changes in the school structure. The reform and the reductions were managed and carried out according to idealistic considerations at the board and according analysis of student frequency at the various activities. If there were not enough students, the activity must be closed down.

In 1989 the school's opening hours were reduced. It had been open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. during winter and from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during summer. Now the opening hours were from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. all the year. The reduction was hard on the recreational activities and the shelter activities: The coffee room, billiard, table tennis, card playing, TV-room, film club and the so-called friendship nights with talks, en-

tainment and bingo – to which about 50 persons usually gathered. The reductions were undertaken with a bleeding heart, but the school was in a situation where you had to give priority to either an extension of the workshops and educational offers, or to extensive recreational offers which were also offered elsewhere in the city, e.g. at shelters. Part of the evening activities were replaced at other hours of the day, and a move of activities was made between the sections in order to retain as much as possible. The billiard table was saved by being handed over to students, who started their own self governing billiard club at the school with members, leadership and the paying of a fee.

The reduction in the school's official opening hours carried into the 1990's. The late dinner at 3 p.m. was closed. A gradual decrease in student frequency took place at the outer opening hours, especially at the weekends, and in 1996 the cafeteria stopped serving food during weekends. The school's main activities now took place during normal opening hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The reduction of the official opening time was to some degree met by the staff's possibility of doing activities outside the school opening hours. The staff takes care of letting the students into the school and out again.

In order to soften the structure and promote dynamics at the school, the sections were divided into groups with their own management and their own budget. The hierarchy of the structure was flattened and a conglomeration of the sections was prepared. The service section was stopped and its functions were delegated to other sections that were to support each other more intensely. At the end of 1995 the workshop course was shut down as a self-governing section in connection with a readjustment of finance from the Copenhagen municipality, and the workshops were spread out to three different sections.

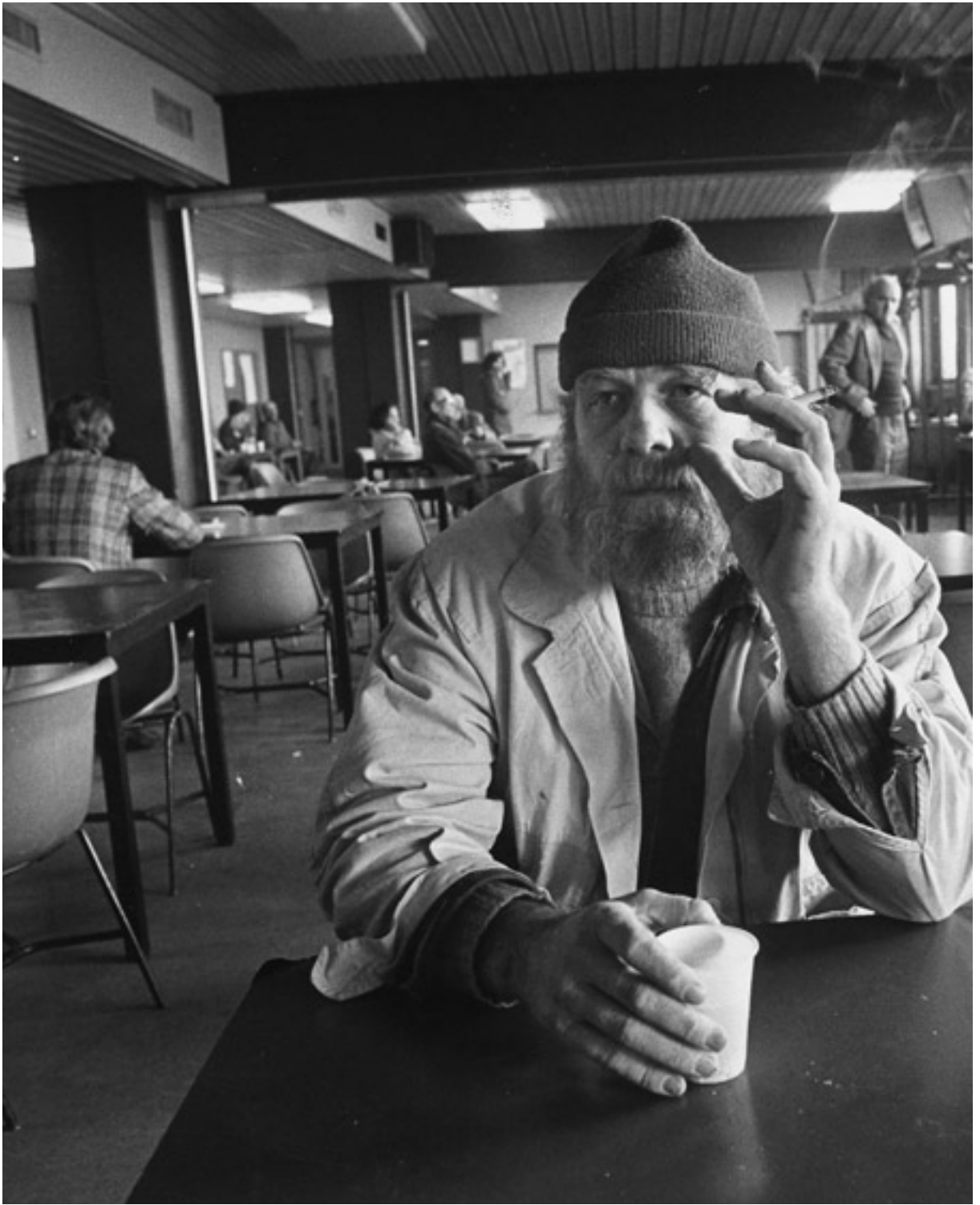
The education, which was mainly financed through the general education act, was not influenced by these cuts. During the 1980's and 1990's it even proved possible to meet an increasing demand from the students to a further increase in the educational offers.

# Applied pedagogy

The major aim of the pedagogic reform was to stop violence through an activation of the students. They succeeded. In 1991 another big step in restructuring the school was taken. A reform that aimed at a coherent and targeted pedagogy was carried out. It entailed that clearness, purpose and meaning were obvious in the student activities. And they were not only to be activated. They were to carry out a circuit. The stay at the school had to have a purpose and to end up with a dismissal, either to a job or to further education, and when that was not possible, then to a more independent and self-helped existence on public subsidy.

The reform was planned and described by the so-called 'matriculation committee', a temporary group of leaders and staff at the school. The basis of the committee was the school's uniqueness: The school is open to anyone who wants help to solve social problems. However, this openness is combined with a pedagogic work model, which calls for the student's self-activation. The school is neither a shelter, nor fully a rehabilitation institution, but both elements are found integrated in the school structure. This gives a daily mixture between solicitude, rehabilitation and forwardness. Where and when in the





A quiet moment. Student with coffee in the cafeteria.  
Late 1980's.

student's process should the one be forwarded and the other toned down?

The committee held 11 meetings and it concentrated on the following headlines: Reception of new students, orientation about the school offers to new students, consultations for the students in their choice of work and education, clarification of the student's social situation on arrival, matriculation, students' cards, gathering of social data, co-operative relations between the school staff, talks with the student every third month and, finally, the student's 'graduation' from the school.

Alongside with this work, operational objectives were worked out for the school sections and activities. All over the school groups and committees were set up to evaluate practice and to forward new ideas as to activities. Each single activity at the school was described and its objective defined, so that the students could know what was the aim of whatever workshop or subject they chose.

The structure of the school was re-established to have four pedagogical departments: 1) The production workshops, which were primarily starting and networking points for weak students, 2) The educational department with the primary aim of strengthening the student's personal development, 3) The workshop course with the aim of job-training the students, and 4) The consulting department with social, educational, job guidance, and personal planning consultation.

The reform work had a profound impact on the school and the work with the students for years to come. The coherence in the school's work was strengthened and the school came to appear an educational place for people without work. The school offered a vast number of possibilities but weighting educational circuits with activating, training and qualification. Dynamic conceptions like progress, process, completion, aim and school-leaving were central objects in the school's considerations. With the new structure the school was able to handle large groups of students with most varied social problems. The students could choose between increasing offers of activities and they could compile a training course, which was just right for his

or her needs. On a random morning in the early 1990's the students could choose between approximately 40 offers of consulting, education and workshops taking place at the same time.

The reform was an important basis for a number of new initiatives taken by the school, initiatives of rehabilitation, job-training, activation, distribution of work, apprenticeships, free youth education, commercial projects, courses for the non-skilled trade union members, projects for immigrants and day care for young persons with serious psycho-social problems.

With the mounting offers of activities a specialisation of the workshops emerged. The production workshops for instance were divided into three units, one of which, the so-called artisan house, soon developed into a genuine job-training workshop with norms and structures being very close to the outside work market.

The reform work was prepared in the educational department with a demand of the teachers to plan and describe the teaching for 6 months ahead. The educational plans were collected and presented in a catalogue, which every six months was sent to the employment exchange, social centres, re-establishment centres, district psychiatric centres, libraries, etc. with the aim of recruiting students for the school's educational program. The student group in the educational department was large. There were, however, many repetitive students from one year to another. And the school found that a wider spectre of people could use the educational offers to their advantage. A staff member was employed to launch the catalogues and to inform social advisors of the school activities. In the autumn of 1990 six courses were carried out for new students. They could choose between philosophy, painting, relaxation, Copenhagen's city history, EDP and ceramics. Participation was conditioned by signing up in advance. You could not just meet up at class, as it otherwise was the school's custom. Before starting the course the school had decided that the courses should be closed down again at the end of the year. In this way the students – and the teachers – had a clear conception of a course with a beginning and an end. 44 students signed up.

In the spring of 1991 a course was held for unemployed members of SID (trade union of non-skilled workers). The course was inspired by The Danish Trade Unions Congress, which had delivered a report "The right to the future". The report advocated a massive upgrading of adult education and underlined the need for general education for the over one million people without occupational education and without the basis of general schooling, which was demanded on the labour market. The educational department contacted trade leaders and a 10-week course program was planned. It held the subjects: Danish, literature, psychology, EDP, mathematics and civics. The course was an experiment, and even if the number of students fell during the last weeks, many good experiences were made as to the teaching of long term unemployed subsistence receivers. These were shortly to be used by the school in a massive educational enterprise. The course became a break through in the school's endeavours to reach a broader selection of students.

With the reform attention was placed on the students' attendance. A firm management of education did not entail fewer students. On the contrary, the school was soon to write waiting lists for students. Even if the educational offers were largely extended in the 1990's, and the number of class rooms and teachers were increased, the students sought the courses in large numbers and the school often had a waiting list of several hundred students.

Also the workshops registration of attendance was tightened in order to make the students meet regularly and to carry out their training. At the production workshops the students hitherto could meet up at any time of the day. Now it was decided that they could only meet up at full hours. If they were late, they had to wait for the next full hour. In the artisan house the students had to meet up at normal working hours which started at 8 a.m. and after some time they were to work a full week. Coffee and lunch breaks were scheduled to make the workshop act as any outside work place.

The reform also meant that the students were matriculated, were given students' cards and very soon after had a talk with the social advisors and after that talks every three months. Here they made



personal action plans, or they re-scheduled their former plans. After a thorough advisory and information, the student arranged a total plan, e.g. a stay at a workshop combined with classes in the educational department. The course of action was individual, not just in content, but also in form. In the cases where the student was judged able to be trained to enter the labour market, the plans could be very detailed and extensive as to courses at school and outside school, e.g. at technical schools. To other groups the personal action plans might be less extensive, e.g. for early pensioners who could handle their own life and only needed contact with other people to overcome the feeling of loneliness.

*Above:*

The paint and wood workshop.

The reform was followed by a number of rebuilding projects and new arrangements of the rooms at the school – which again underlined the school idea. The former coffee rooms and billiard rooms were converted into classrooms for EDP, mathematics, psychology, science, chess and languages. At the entrance level a reception area close to the school entrance was created, and the social advisors were moved to the same area, so that reception of the students were centralised around the main entrance.

The reform also meant a systemised co-operation between the social advisors, the workshop staff and the teachers to follow up on the individual student's personal action plan, especially on leaving the school. On matriculation the student was assigned a contact person, to whom he or she could go in the first instance if they were in trouble. The contact persons had a special responsibility to see to the realisation of the student's personal action plan, or to help correct the plan if needed. To prepare school leaving a job consultant was employed to do courses about job seeking and help finding work for the students, when they were ready for the labour market.

The reform also entailed systemised collection of data about the students: Sex, age, sustenance, housing, nationality, schooling, education etc. The students' participation in classes was also registered. The material was collected for internal use for the social advisors to help action plan work, and it was used statistically.

# New projects

The decreasing state grants forced the school leaders to find alternative finance. As the school was at the same time in the middle of a reorganizing and developing period, the project came to be of importance in the 1990's. The projects were financed through money from among others the common market social fund and various grants from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The projects made it possible to have the students known in public to a greater extent that had been possible before. Till now so to speak all activities had taken place within the school walls. With the new projects a part of the activities took place outside in the society and people began to have a different and more positive attitude towards the students.

It started with "The White Cleaners". It was actually an old idea that Kofoed had fostered but never had realized. "The White Cleaners" clean and clear up streets and squares according to negotiated public plans. They are dressed in white overalls with "The White Cleaners - Kofoed's School" written on them. Many citizens had hitherto seen the school students as problem children. The idea of "The White Cleaners" was to show the environment that the students could also clear problems.

The cleaners' first arrangement took place during Easter 1992. The church festivals are often difficult to get through for the students, if they don't have friends to spend them with. There is usually nothing going on at school to keep the students busy, and often they do not have the strength to fill in the days with something of value. In order to give the students a common experience a team of staff and students went out to the beach at Amager Strandpark to clear and clean the area of beer bottles, ice cream wrappings and other garbage and to clean the beach for the bathers of oncoming summer. The arrangement was finished off with a party with music and sausage barbecue. The weather did not show its best, but the students had a good time, and the beach was cleaned.

The press wrote about the arrangement and soon the school was contacted by other organizers, who would like the students to give a helping hand with clearing and cleaning, e.g. the Copenhagen carnival committee. The Copenhagen carnivals were very popular but were often criticised for their garbage problem. After the carnival central Copenhagen was flooded with rubbish like beer mugs, sausage wrappers and the like. The school agreed to take care of clearing up, during and after the carnival. About 50 students signed up for the job lasting three days. The school bought grabbers, brooms, shovels and containers. In teams the students worked the area and cleared the place. The students were spotted everywhere. The project was solved to everybody's satisfaction. People were happy about the constant cleaning and the students were much praised, and this gave them more self-confidence. They found that they were just as needed at the arrangement as the first aid people, the police, the fire brigade and other officials.

The students were given several projects like this: At jazz festivals at the Christiansborg riding range, at area festivals, at the social summit in Copenhagen. And when Copenhagen in 1996 was elected the cultural city of Europe, the students worked every day for four months on Holmen (island off Christianshavn), where great cultural arrangements took place with visiting theatres from all over the world. The biggest single arrangement was the



Cutty Sark Tall Ship's Race. The finest sailing ships of the world anchored at Langelinie (a Copenhagen quay), where they were looked at by thousands of Danes. 50 of the school's students took care of cleaning the long quay area on the days of the arrangement. After the tall ship's meeting, the school received many telephone calls with praise to the students.

"The White Cleaners" were organized in 1993 as a job-training project for long time unemployed, and grants were sought and given by the common market social funds. Apart from cleaning, the project consisted of classes in various commercial subjects and driving lessons.

The cleaners functioned as live advertisement boards for the school, and they helped giving the school's students a better image. The many white clad people with shovels and brooms made an impression. Slowly the people of Copenhagen had a good impression of the students from Kofoed's School. Where they had earlier on seen the students as a problem, they now saw them as persons who took care of society tasks. The students had often felt themselves as stamped when they told that they came from Kofoed's School. Coming from there they were considered poor weaklings, but with the cleaners things changed to the better. People saw that the students were also resourceful persons.

In the Holmbladsgade area the concept of the students also changed. People of the area had met the school with heavy opposition, when it moved out to Nyrnberggade from Christianshavn. People feared filthiness and drunkards in the stairwells. In stead they now saw the school's students cleaning the street, when the residents could not keep the pavements and squares free of rubbish. In stead of distancing themselves from the students, the residents began to contact the school when they needed help to erect a stage, put up tables and benches, set up tents and to do the cleaning. Where the school had formerly been telephoned and cursed because students had shouted in the street, or peed on stairs, the contacts were now quite different. Praise and encouragement was given.

The students also made themselves positively noticed by the neigh-



bours in other ways. In 1996 they started to drive out daily shopping to the old and people with walking difficulties in the Holmbladsgade area. They also carried the goods up to the flat and put them away in cupboards etc. At area festivals and local arrangements the students from the music workshop performed swinging blues and hard rock. The school workshops also did jobs for nursery schools, local residents' associations and for private persons. For example they renovated yards, painted walls and built playing ground tools for the local children.

During the summer of 1996 Kofoed's School arranged circus training. Professional artists were hired to train the students for 14 days, and

*Above:*  
"The White Cleaners"

after that the students gave circus performances for the area residents for a full week, doing clowning, fair funs, artistry, conjuring, juggling and acrobatics. The school invited all the nursery schools on Amager to come to the shows. And for a week the tent was filled with shouting children. The children were taking immensely part in the show, and the students had great pleasure from acting before such a live audience. The interest was so intense, that they could have done the show for three weeks. The shows were given at the same time as a culture week at the school. Here the students from the creative workshops presented what they had produced: Paintings, sculptures, poems, music, etc.

The immigrant section of the school had a lot to offer, and during the winter a music culture week was held with singing, drama, dancing music and readings from many cultures.

For the immigrant students two different projects were set up. The first in 1995 for women from Pakistan and Turkey – they were established according to the regulations of the Danish assistance act. The project gave the women job-training doing cleaning during the mornings. In the afternoon they had Danish classes nine hours a week, and one afternoon a week they were on an excursion to e.g. a library, a school, a hospital and so on. Or they were taught to use the public bus system. In the project the women learned to ride a bicycle. The project added colour to the school. At the start it was spectacular to see 10 immigrated women in large drapes walk around the school halls and classrooms with a broom and pail. Later they became a natural part of the school's varied daily life. During the first period of the project the women were taken to school by their husbands – and picked up again in the afternoons, but slowly the men gained confidence in the school, and the women were allowed to manage on their own. For some women it was their first time of being alone outside their own front door.

In 1996 another project was started for immigrants. Here the men could join up. The project gave refugees and immigrants intensive teaching in Danish and job training. The students were generally well educated, and many got a job after the project course.

Another project with good school leaving results was the EDP computer course for long term unemployed between 25 and 35 of age. The EDP education was programmed in the late 1980's when a student took the initiative to place his own computer in a corner of a workshop and started teaching fellow students. Soon the school established an EDP workshop and in the 1990's the education was given new rooms, more teachers and more programmes. The EDP training became the most popular subject in the 1990's.

Private donations also contributed to an extension of activities. In general the donations from the school's supporting circle have been decisive for the school's possibilities of being able to develop and meet new needs. This applies to the many small and few large amounts of money.

In 1992 the school was donated a four winged farm – Haugegård – in Sandbjerg north of Copenhagen. The farm was established as a community farm with room for six young persons. The community was run as a part of Kofoed's School, and the students had classes at the school.

A very large donation – nearly ten million kroner – meant that the school in 1996 could start on something they had wanted for a long time: Building a sports hall on the former mentioned neighbouring premise. The hall was partly built by the school's own workshops, engaging the students. The hall was inaugurated on the school's 70th birthday in 1998.

The School's "outreach work" among the homeless has since 2001 been enforced by recruiting more staff and establishing new rooms in central Copenhagen. Here the homeless can have a bath, be given clothes and a cup of coffee. It is not a shelter but a contact centre, from where the homeless can be helped on. The staff is in daily contact with 25-30 homeless and street people of a varied group: bag-women (or –men), newly released prisoners, psychologically ill persons, drug abusers and punchers. A number of voluntary staff and students are attached to the street work. The School's outreach work is part of a large network, including 40-50 co-operative partners like social cen-

tres, hospitals, churches and the police.

In 2004 the School set up a new project for already treated drug abusers. The aim was to prevent backdrops to a renewed abuse. The aim was also to carry out a clarification of work ability among the former abusers. The project combines the School's active pedagogical model with a preventive model, where the participants are helped to build an inner self-dependence without any stimulants. Through coaching, workshops and dialogues the former abusers are supported in their fight for an individual development. At the same time they are given classes in one of the School's educational offers or in the workshops. Many of them have been abusers since their youth. They meet twice a week and they support each other in a continual drug-free life. The manager of the project is a former abuser. The first year 21 students were enrolled. More than half of them finished off with job training or further education.

The School's educational department was given a new organisational frame in 2005 with the establishment of Kofoed's School's Information League. The background for this was that the School's co-operative partner for many years went broke. The partner had for years been the formal tender of education at Kofoed's School according to the Danish act of general education. Now the School took over this part of the work also. The education at Kofoed's School still receives grants according to general rules. However, with the establishment of the School's own information League, the School has now been given new possibilities to develop educational strategies, activities and projects to carry out analysis and documentation of more existential results of the teaching - which altogether supports the School's own conception of being a laboratory for methods of social work.

# Foreign contacts

In the 1990's the school had a rising number of foreign contacts with visits from all over the world. Without any priority we could mention guests from USA, Canada, Japan, Russia, Australia, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Holland, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, England, Scotland, Ireland and the Scandinavia countries.

The school staff began travelling on study and lecture tours to foreign institutions and conferences. In a couple of cases it resulted in establishing partnerships with foreign projects. In the early 1990's the school co-operated with a project in Dublin, and in 1997 the school was given money for a music project, which involved a co-operation with four foreign projects for young people. A folder was written in English about the school. It was sent out to foreign embassies, and the school received an increasing amount of foreign literature on social questions.

There has been an extended co-operation especially with Poland. With financial aid from among others the Democracy Fund the school held courses for Poles. The contact to Poland goes back to the post war years and was intensified during the 1980's with con-

tacts to the pedagogical faculty at the Warsaw University. Along the way the idea of transforming the Kofoed School ideas to Polish institutions was born. In the beginning the transformation was planned as mutual study visits. Several groups from Poland have visited Kofoed's School, and school staff has been to Poland to give lectures and render practical help to projects. Among other things the school has renovated an institution for drug addicts north of Warsaw, and it has given dentist equipment to another institution and has inspired institutions in Gdansk and Poznan with the Kofoed ideas. The director of the school, Jens Aage Bjørkøe, was especially engaged in Polish conditions, and in 1997 he became Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw based on a thesis on "Help to self help". His thesis was later published by a Polish publishing house.

Gradually the plans of establishing a branch of Kofoed's School in Poland took form. In May 1997 Kofoed's School was visited by social workers from Siedlce which is placed approximately 100 kilometres east of Warsaw. The object of the visit was "How do we establish a Kofoed's School in Poland?" The Poles were given lessons not only in the Kofoed principles, but also in "how to build an organization". It was agreed to establish an association with the aim to spread Hans Christian Kofoed's social pedagogic ideas in Poland.

The first school was established in July 1997 in Siedlce. It was inaugurated in January 1998. The aim of the school was to give help to self help for people with social problems like unemployment, homelessness, abuse, previous prisoners and young criminals. A staff member from Kofoed's School in Copenhagen helped out in establishing the school. She was stationed in Poland for a year. The school was soon established with ten programmes: therapy for abusers, consultation for women exposed to violence, legal consultation, telephone consultation, computer courses, English classes, courses in everyday law, and a clothes depot. It took only a few days before students were queuing up to get into the school, and after a few months, the school was given a new, larger building which was restored with means from the Danish foreign office.

Two more schools were established during the summer of 1998: One in Poznan and one in Warsaw. The school in Poznan was established in co-operation with an already existing Polish NGO, Barka. Barka had for many years worked for the homeless in the rural districts. The school was organized in a large building situated centrally in Poznan, and again with help from the Danish Foreign Ministry, some rebuilding was undertaken, so that the school could offer 28 programmes to the homeless in Poznan.

The program held: Social advice, shelters, canteen, nursery school, food depot, clothes and furniture depot, collection and sorting of building material, second hand shops, food shop, tailor shop, carpenter shop, smithy, electricity workshop, creative workshop, EDP classes, transport section, re-cycling station, cleaning section, laundry, baths, language classes offering English and German, a book binder workshop, a building section, an information service, therapy for addicts, and an ambulatory clinic with first aid, personal hygiene and a dentist. From the start more than 200 persons used the school daily, on a monthly basis more than 800 persons sought the school. They were homeless, long term unemployed, alcoholics, families or lone parents with children who had been thrown into the street, when they could not pay their rent or their electricity bill.

In Warsaw a school was established in a one thousand square metre building on the outskirts of the city. The building had formerly been used for agricultural purposes. The first task was to clean up after the animals and rebuild cowshed and barn. The first project was to rebuild a small building that had been used for storing hay and straw for the cattle. It was rebuilt and arranged with room for six homeless persons, who were to move out of a treatment shelter for alcoholics. After the rebuilding they moved into the school and helped to remake the cowshed to a place with rooms, kitchen, toilet, bath, classrooms and workshops. Here again the Danish foreign ministry helped out with money. The school had room for 20 homeless and it was set up with workshops and teaching for the community's poor and outcast people.



The schools soon got a lot of attention from the media and they were well known in Poland. Before establishing the schools, a lot of preparatory work had been done in the relevant Polish ministries and among the local politicians in order to gain understanding for the necessity of active social pedagogic methods. Several Polish civil servants, social scientists, and social workers had visited Kofoed's School in Copenhagen, and the Kofoed thoughts enjoyed such a spreading in Poland that in some instances they influenced Polish legislation, e.g. in the form of activation programmes for the social outcast persons. In the notes to the presentation of the act, the Kofoed's School model was mentioned several times as example and inspiration. Other NGOs were also partly or fully inspired by the Polish schools.

The Danish Foreign Ministry evaluated the schools in 2000. The evaluation concluded that the schools were a success and that they were examples of a praxis that would influence the development in social work and social policy in Poland. Seen on the background of the schools' results, the evaluation pointed to the importance of finding local responsible and engaged partners and leaders, and to the importance of a good co-operation between the schools and the local authorities, so that the schools were integrated and anchored in the local society together with a productive and broad co-operation between Kofoed's School in Copenhagen and the Polish schools.

Kofoed's School was also involved in social work in Estonia, in Tartu, where the Kofoed methods were transferred to a shelter for street children. The shelter was set up with a woodwork shop and with rooms for computer classes and sewing. Through a period it was possible to hire staff to help socially threatened children with doing homework, and to give them food and care. A co-operation was established with the social authorities to work with children and youth that shirked school and formed gangs, that drifted in the streets. The school staff did seeking-out work in town and they succeeded in getting many of the youngsters to come to the school, where they were given care. In order to get something to eat, they had to participate in the school activities. The youth were to a wide

extent without norms, and the activities at the school were used to teach them a normal behaviour. The Estonian school had been given a bag full of Kofoed dollars – the internal exchange at Kofoed's School – which the youngsters could earn by working in the school workshops. The Kofoed dollars could be spent on buying food at the school, or they could be saved up to buy e.g. cinema tickets, so that the young men could invite their girlfriends to the cinema or the like. Among the students were several ethnical Russians, who were given classes in Estonian.

In Vilnius in Lithuania Kofoed's School got in contact with an organization that worked with rehabilitation of freed prisoners, Lithuanian Prisoner's Aid Association. The organization had by the church been given the free use for 25 years of a building of 1000 square metres – in exchange for repairing and making it useable. The Danish government and a Dutch foundation raised the necessary money and the school was inaugurated in the beginning of 2001 with programmes especially intended for former prisoners and crime threatened youth, but also homeless, alcoholics and other groups of social outcasts. The school was arranged with workshops for woodwork, metalwork, kitchen, classrooms for EDP-teaching, English, singing and music, sewing, drawing and painting, and consulting. The students took part in the rebuilding, which was carried out by a professional firm, and they were paid in kind in the form of bread, sausage, cheese and cigarettes. As the first institution in Lithuania the school received prisoners as a preparation to their coming release. They were here re-socialised outside the prison in a full day program including the school's workshops. The schoolwork and methods were evaluated and became an important component of the further development in re-socialising prisoners all over Lithuania. The school has now taken over a large building outside Kaunas, the second biggest town in the country, and a new Kofoed's School has been built here.

Kofoed's Schools have also been established in the Czech Republic. The work was started by two Czechs who had come to Denmark as refugees, and who after a short stay at Kofoed's School were so impressed by the school's methods and activities, that they started to

use them in their homeland. A support association was established in Ostrava in the Northeast of the country. However, it was not until Kofoed's School got in contact with the Slezská Diakonie, that the work really started. A Czech student attached to the Slezská Diakonie was granted a study in Copenhagen to write her diploma about Kofoed's School. The diploma was written in such a character that it could spread knowledge of Kofoed's School in the Czech republic. In a very short span of time five schools were established in the country – and with a lot of support on top.

In 1999 a student from Armenia was on a sojourn to study at Kofoed's School in Poznan. That triggered the start of a school in Yerevan in Armenia. She was so taken in by what she saw and heard in Poznan, that she went home and started an association that was to work for the spreading of Kofoed's thoughts. The question of a Kofoed's School in Armenia was discussed in a government meeting and approved, because the government found the program important on the background of the difficult economical and social situation in the country. The Armenian State gave a large building to the association, which immediately started teaching languages. A grant from the Danish Foreign Ministry made it possible to undertake rebuilding to the effect of building rooms for homeless and kitchen, teaching and workshop facilities. A grant from the Soros Foundation was used on a rehabilitation program for released prisoners and long term unemployed. The school is also engaged in a program for children and youth from very poor families in Yerevan.

The foreign schools have become a success. Not only have they succeeded in transferring the Kofoed's School methods, but the schools also took roots in the countries and have engendered national finance, so that they have survived. The schools are not copies of Kofoed's School in Copenhagen, and they vary as to the local needs, but they all have the same aim. That is to help people get started again when they have been left behind by the development and are in need of new qualifications in order to find work or a better and fuller life under new circumstances. The schools are established as self-governing institutions with their own statutes, boards and

budgets. In this way they are no longer direct divisions of Kofoed's School and they are not directed from Copenhagen. Representatives from Kofoed's School are on the boards of the foreign schools. The contribution from Kofoed's School has mainly consisted in guiding, advising and supervising the schools. Meetings were held with the boards, the leaders and staff and students about pedagogical and social questions. Meetings were held with politicians and civil servants about co-financing. Literature about Kofoed's School was translated and published, and the school has taken part in international conferences on poverty and social outcasts. For a number of years Kofoed's School often used the so-called Democracy Fund, which made it possible to finance study sojourns in Denmark for hundreds of social workers from the new democracies.

The strategy has been to take root in the national context and to strengthen leaders and staff to take over the responsibility of the schools and lead them on. In this way the school has practised help to self-help in this connection. The first generation of leaders and staff at the school have been fiery souls who built up and established the new social pedagogic initiatives, and made room for and found finance for the schools. Gradually the tasks have new characters in the form of implementation in legislation, commitment to long-term co-operation and finance agreements, co-operation with government authorities and their own development initiatives, springing from local or national needs. This all-in-all points to the fact that the schools have found the proper projects to work on, and that they have developed an organizational ballast to handle the new challenges.

Some day in December 2003 a student count was made at every foreign school. On the day in question 1.300 students met up at the schools.

Abroad there are now 12 schools spread over five countries. New schools and projects are being planned, e.g. in the Ukraine and in Rumania. It is expected that quite a few of the new schools will be strong enough "to spread". A spreading factor can already be seen. For instance in White Russia and Russia where people hear of the social work at the foreign schools and are inspired by it.

Alongside with the establishing of the foreign schools Kofoed's School is engaged in other forms of international work, e.g. through a membership of the European network of social institutions. A representative of Kofoed's School was chosen for the international board for the EAPN (The European Anti-Poverty Network) and for various work groups in EAPN and in the homeless organization FEANTSA. Also through these channels the knowledge of Kofoed's School was spread, and other European social institutions came to Copenhagen for a study visit at the school. Kofoed's School participates in common European projects of transferring methods to social institutions for the homeless in Poland, in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania.

# New schools in Denmark

It was not just abroad that Kofoed's School expanded. In 1999 Kofoed's School, Aalborg municipality and the Ministry of Social Affairs made an agreement to establish a school in Aalborg with room for 40 students. The purpose of the school was to transfer essential elements of the school model and to test the possibilities of implementing the school idea according to the area's aims and methods of activating people in need. Aalborg city's own projects were to be inspired by the school methods. To supervise the project, a control group was established with representatives from Kofoed's School and the municipality. The Aalborg project was an element in a more extensive agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs with the aim of having Kofoed's School act as an intermediary in supplying the school methods to municipal activation of staff all over Denmark. Over two years a number of weeklong courses were held at Kofoed's School for more than 150 municipal staff, who were thoroughly introduced to Kofoed's Schools ideas and methods.

The school in Aalborg was inaugurated in May 2000 in a three-story building with large workshops, inviting classrooms with windows from floor to ceiling and a large well working kitchen and a

cosy canteen. The school was established with a production workshop, offers of education, consultation and cultural themes. The educational department offered e.g. English, Danish, Danish for bilinguals, relaxation and exercise, EDP, civics, sewing and a so called path finder project, which taught the students about the possibilities that the individual student had to realise his objects within work and leisure, life with society and family. The students were also offered training in metal, wood, bicycle and textile workshops – and in kitchen and canteen.

Staff was recruited locally. They were given a thorough introduction at Kofoed's School in Copenhagen, and one of the School's experienced staff members lived for a while in Aalborg to help the project getting kick started. He later worked as a consultant to the project with frequent visits to Aalborg.

The school was established according to the principles of the mother school in Copenhagen, and it soon had good results that were documented in an evaluation report. The primary target were long term job-less on social subsidy who had social problems in addition to being unemployed. The municipality referred the students to Kofoed's School. But the school was also sought by voluntary students who wanted to get out of their isolated life and thus found their way to the school.

To further the students' stability and attendance the school started a bonus arrangement. If the student's participation amounted to 85 per cent or more, he would earn a bonus to the monthly value of 200 kroner. The bonus was paid out when the student wanted to buy something, and when he had at least 500 kroner in his account.

The school was dependent on municipal co-financing, and an acute economic crisis in the Aalborg municipality meant that the school had to close down after three years. The buildings were to be used for other purposes. Kofoed's School is, however, still to be found in Aalborg with a section that works with Greenlanders with social problems. This project was started and carried out along with

the Kofoed's School project. With financial help from the Ministry of Social Affairs the project is by now firmly anchored in Aalborg, where many Greenlanders live.

In 2003 a Kofoed's School was established in Århus, Denmark's second largest city. The school is centrally placed and it can hold 175 students. As in Aalborg the aim of the school is to transfer the Kofoed methods to municipal activation in Århus. A number of students attend of their own interest and voluntarily, and for each single student an individual program is set up. Eight staff members are full time employed and a number of teachers is employed on a lesson basis. The offers to the students are kitchen and canteen work, wood, metal and production workshops. Classes are given in e.g. computer, English, relaxation, sewing, psychology, painting, drawing and singing. As a novelty, clear goals were set up to guide the efforts. External expertise was bought to help the staff to keep their focus on the aims through e.g. the use of diaries. The staff meets at fixed times, where they exchange experiences in a systematised way, so that they gain organizational learning from observations and reflections. The learning of the students has also been in focus, as the staff became more aware of making the goals of the work tasks clear and tangible.

In 2004 an anthropological evaluation of the schoolwork with the students in Århus was made. The evaluation showed among other things that the school was able to create a place where the students could define themselves in a positive and – to many of them – an entirely new way, so that the individual student's identification possibilities were set loose. The focus is not on the students' problems or stigma, but it is on the student's own resources and on co-operation and fellowship. "In this way Kofoed's School succeeded in reinstating the individual as the principal character in his own life. One student expresses this way of meeting the individual as "being at the school seems therapeutic in itself".

The school's work with the Greenlanders seemed also to expand in Denmark around the millennium. Apart from the project in Aalborg there are now activities for Greenlanders in Århus and Esbjerg in





addition to a many-sided work in Copenhagen. Kofoed's School has for many years worked with the Greenlanders, and the school's experiences have been converted into a spreading of methods to other actors, e.g. the municipalities. A house in Copenhagen was established as a settlement for Greenland women, and the school was involved in alternative settlements for Greenlanders and treatment of drug abuse.

In 2004 the school started preparations for moving the housing section with room for 25 students. The move was part of the wish to de-institutionalise the students' stay, and to establish a better framework for the pedagogical work. The school bought a large mansion and arranged it for 10 inhabitants and a flat for a pair of leaders. The school's plan is gradually to continue moving out by buying more houses in the city area and to focus on de-centralisation and learning instead of control.

*Above:*

Gymnastics class at the Århus Kofoeds School

# The learning organization

Since 2000 the school has defined itself as a Learning Organization and as a laboratory for methods of social work for poorly situated persons. The concepts are among other things used to challenge the school's potential for new demands from modern society. The concepts herewith reflect the social policy's new place in society: An active social policy must contribute to solve some of the structural problems in society. The traditional passive social policy worked as a safety net and protection against the impact of market conditions. The new active social policy of today must to a considerable extent be able to qualify people to meet the demands of the market and in this way to contribute to fighting social exclusion and poverty. Where the policy formerly was to deliver services so that the recipients could live on, it is now far more a question of education, competence, empowerment and participation, even for the social outcasts. A social institution formerly acted as a sort of asylum, or as a protection against a storm. Today social institutions are operative actors in society's disparity and development. The new concepts are focusing on quality goals: Competence achievement, documentation and mediation. The focus is also on the School's own ability to experience strategically from its own work with the students, and

to keep on developing offers that are relevant in improving the students' social situation seen in the light of the challenges of society. The challenges are partly caused by the ongoing globalisation.

In 2001 the School made an agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs. The agreement stated the school's strategic effort over a four-year period, built on four dimensions. They are: Effects on society - Student activities - Efficiency in management and organization - Competence and method development. Each dimension is again divided into strategic goals, e.g. Documentation and mediation of methods - International export of systems - Meeting the students' needs - Meeting the needs of active partners and coalitions - Result management and quality management - Result documentation - Systematic development of methods - Profiles for leaders and staff and accomplishments thereof. For each area goals were set up with corresponding measurability instruments with annual reports.

The implementation of The Learning Organization has been a huge and many-sided challenge to the management as well as the staff. There have been many discussions about the idea and about the question of how the learning organization should be planned, and about how the goals should be obtained. The learning aspect has been implemented on various levels of the organization. From a simple collection of data, analysis and reflections on results, to a critical attitude towards the school's ability to management and leadership, e.g. the ability to set up strategic goals and make them visible, and to carry out policies and strategies and to act on plans, management of resources and process. The school has carried out a strategic evaluation of quality in effort, process and communication. The staff has been taught self-evaluation of their pedagogical efforts with the aim to learn to be reflecting practitioners. Profiles of competencies have been worked out for leaders and staff. Questionnaires have been undertaken among the school's co-operating forces in order to expose their view of the school's quality. There has been a constant focus on the students' concept of the school's efforts as to repeated tests of the students' satisfaction with the school and its staff. The students are to evaluate whether their life

conditions have been improved, and whether they feel that they are learning at the school. There has also been focus on the qualitative goals as to the participation of the students and their educational results. The school's central management has made decentralised contracts with the various sections on developing the school's core services. Efforts and processes have also been in focus in the daily work with the students.

As a part of the work with The Learning Organization the school has published a number of books that among other things have documented the school's basic method and pedagogical practice and the school's understanding of itself as a learning organization. The students were given their own statements in a interview book, where they told their personal stories and their opinion of their stay at the school.

# The school today

At the entry to the new millennium, Kofoed's School has become a very large and versatile institution with approximately 700 daily students (on an annual basis more than 3.000 different persons), 150 staff members and a large offer of activities for the students with the centre being the workshop courses and education plus consultation and guidance.

An information board in the reception pictures the extent of the activities. You find references to: Bath and laundry, cleaning, social advisors, carpentry, technical section, furniture store, depot, job consultant, computer workshops, leather and fur workshop, billiard club, advisory office, psychologist, lawyer, hair dresser, art studio, ceramic workshop, language classes, youth section, cafeteria, kitchen and dining room, textile workshop, cooking workshop, sewing workshop, conference room, library, matriculation, educational guidance, student guidance, work-out room, transport section, painting workshop, music workshop, car repair shop, artisan house, wood storage, Greenlander section, ship project, production workshops, smithy, clothes depot, drama class, open workshop, driving school, the projects: Forward, UNO, and 'Getting going again'. In addition

you have the school housing at Christianshavn, the Louisestiftelsen at Sorø, the community at Haugegård in North Sealand and Holger Nielsen's youth hostel on Amager. Among the latest addition to the school activities is Kofoed's Cellar and a 1400 square metres sports hall, which can also be used for concerts, festivals, theatre, courses and conferences. In Jutland there are schools in Århus, Ålborg and Esbjerg.

The educational department offers 75 subjects and 200 courses, e.g. 33 EDP courses, art history, modern art, astronomy, philosophy, Nordic literature, film, the Copenhagen city history, psychology, writer's workshop, mathematics, science, chess, health classes, drama, creative art, ceramics and pottery, drawing and painting courses, wood and metal work, food and kitchen courses, sewing courses, leather and fur, exercise, relaxation, bodybuilding, yoga, dance, singing and voice training, chorus, musical instruments (guitar, accordion, drums, trumpet), ensemble, Danish for foreigners, Danish for Danes, English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Esperanto, etc.

The staff is of a broad composition. Around 1980 the major staff groups were practical and pedagogical care workers. That changed during the 1990's so that today the staff consists of workshop staff, teachers, social pedagogues, social advisors, advisors in study and occupation, a psychologist, a lawyer, kitchen personnel and an administrative staff.

The student group is very differentiated and it holds for example social subsidy clients, early pensioners and people receiving subsistence allowance. Student problems are for example alcohol and drug abuse, psychological problems, loneliness, adapting problems, psychosocial problems, homelessness, difficulties with staying in a job, long-term unemployment and boredom in the form of problems with filling in time during unemployment. In addition to this there are certain difficulties with languages and culture adapting in the group of immigrants. This group became very large during the 1990's, and it now counts for more than one third of the students. Today the school has students from about 70 nations. For many years the students at the school were men. That changed during

the 1990's, so that today male and female students are fifty-fifty. The educational department, however, has a majority of women.

The school plans job training and activation according to the labour market and social legislation. It performs pre-rehabilitation and rehabilitation. It trains young persons with special difficulties to live on their own. It carries out apprenticeships and it employs pensioners in protected jobs. In addition the school has activities for people who do not fit in with any of the above-mentioned groups, like early pensioners or especially vulnerable groups. The school works on a very wide scale with social centres, job centres, district psychiatry centres, immigrant institutions, hospitals, prisons, other institutions and centres for persons with special problems.

If one should briefly summarize the development of the school over the later years, one would bring out the conditions of expansion and a qualitative development of methods – and documentation. A secondary result of these conditions is a development of the organization. The school wants to spread the knowledge of active social pedagogic methods in Denmark and abroad among other things with the aim of establishing self-governing institutions. The expansion must be supported by a solid vocational development and a systematised documentation of methods. The school must be able to develop its own methods, not just at random, it has to design, test and evaluate new social pedagogic methods. This demands a systematic and targeted development of the management and staff competencies. The school has defined itself as a learning organization with its attention on the demands and complexity of society and the school's inner capacity. An organization – also a social organization – must all the time be able to see itself as challenged by a continual development and change of a rising complexity that reaches into the way the organization works. The solution is not just of technical reasons, but also of organizational and leadership reasons. An organization must have a double view: Out of the window and in through the window. Alongside with the organization's delivery of services, it must be able to reform itself and create not just an outward output but also an inner input. The organization's own learning potential is crucial as to getting such an input.

The school does not see a discrepancy between a qualitative development with goals, documentation and evaluation – and the school's mission: help to self-help – or to help people with social difficulties to develop their own resources and competencies to live a social and personally better life. On the contrary, the school has constantly been subject to development, but it has wished to maintain its basis, formulated by Kofoed in the late 1920's. When the school revised its statutes in 1994, the basis and aim for the school's work was stated in this way: "The school works on a Christian and popular basis in respect of each individual and in recognition of each individual's worth and equal rights in society. In the pedagogical work the school builds on a view of life that includes freedom, responsibility and understanding of choices and the consequences of choices. The aim of Kofoed's School is to give help to self-help to people with social problems. In doing so the school wishes to encourage the student's self-respect – to improve the state of health and to strengthen perspectives for each individual's future and to strengthen life competence. The school can offer teaching and education, training and rehabilitation, and it can give support to personal development and the creating of networks, prevention, employment and care, emergency help and treatment."





Student and trumpet in the Music department, 2004.

# Epilogue

From the beginning it has been characteristic of Kofoed's School to point out the positive, to look for possibilities and strength in the students – and not to focus on their weaknesses or oddities. The school has endeavoured to see each individual, who came to the school, as something more than a problem or a case, as something unique by just being. In even the most furrowed and ravaged face the school has endeavoured to see God's creation. The future of the students was given more importance than the past. And first and foremost the school has been lifted by the belief that its effort matters. The effort is all about finding the potential to make a person grow and thrive, so that he or she can have a better life. More than 75 years of experience and many defeats have not been able to create doubt about the meaningful work. Nothing is impossible as long as there is life. Even the weakest human being has in itself the potential to a small miracle.

This positive, optimistic attitude on behalf of the students has been exposed by thousands of staff members, who with their individual effort at the school have embodied the Kofoed spirit from the start in 1928 till today. Most of these staff members are anonymous, their names are not known today, but each of them has been important to the school history and to the people that came to the school.

Every new generation has its own problems and difficulties to fight, but as long as optimism lives, and there are people to carry it – even in situations of human tragedies, when you have to give up – there will be a Kofoed's School.





























