

RECORD OF A FRIENDSHIP

The Correspondence Between
Wilhelm Reich and
A. S. Neill

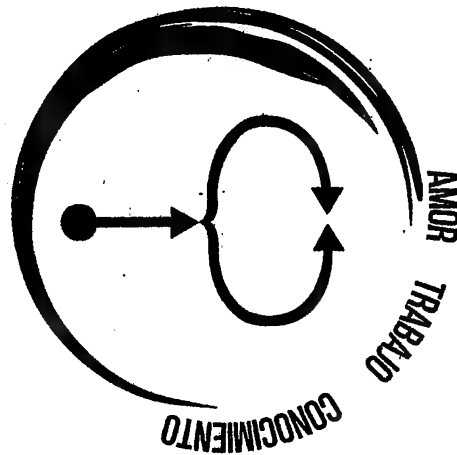
1936-1957

Edited and with an Introduction, by

R. PLACZEK



VICTOR



LONDON • 1982

to run our civilisation for us as politicians or bureaucrats. Take your own line of the moment—cancer research. Any State will want to organise this; and any State will put men above you who know how to add up figures, but know nothing about cancer; and you will be too busy in your lab to bother about the organising. I simply can't see a solution of the problem: how to run a State without the bureaucrat. After the war it is probable that there will be no private schools in Europe. Already the big schools like Eton and Harrow are appealing to the government for support. What hopes, therefore, for small schools like mine? They will either be closed or will come under govt. organisation, and that means that I have to treat children, not as I know how they ought to be treated, but according to the ideas of a Minister of Education or his subordinates. That would be death to free experiment.

You see I am taking men as we know them now; I am not postulating a new race of men who will be great enough to allow freedom to the scientist or artist. Yes, under your universal natural love and work and science it could be done. But, Reich, we have to face a post-war world in which stupidity won't have been killed by bombs, I mean an immediate post-war world. The Left people are just as retarded as the Right. After all, I wouldn't ask Karl Marx or even Einstein how to run a school.

I am so glad you met Einstein. I do hope that his interest is aroused and that he investigates the thing for himself. Be sure to send me everything you publish in English; even the smallest pamphlets.

My letter of a few days ago, sent via the Chief Censor, was not exactly what I meant it to be; for knowing that another man will read a letter is enough to inhibit the writer more or less. But what I said fits into what I am saying in this letter, viz. that in a world where sex is bound it isn't easy to love or rather to find love. So in occupation. You and I are both ahead of our time (you more than I) and we find so much difficulty in a truth-inhibited world in advancing our ideas, for sex and truth are both badly inhibited.

I still think you don't give enough credit to the Communists in spite of their great mistakes. Maybe I give too much importance to the mere abolition of profit,* of exploitation by private employers, but I think that the abolition of profit was and is a tremendous step forwards. Without it I can't see how your own idea of the future State can come about.

* In the margin of this letter, Reich wrote: "Not abolished."

I'd like to hear your comparison between the democracies of U.S.A. and Norway. It may be that you are finding New York more tolerant than Oslo because it is bigger, and you are left much more free from local silly criticism. Move on to a small town in the Middle West and you will find narrowness enough. In East England we were free to do what we liked. Last Sunday here we were gardening when a local religionist came and lectured us on profaning the Lord's Day. New York versus any Main Street.

Your English is vastly improved, but it hurts me to think you are possibly talking with an Ammurican accent now: can't think that you call a "bird" a "boird."

I have got back my interest in analysis again, but have also a great interest in mathematics. Last weekend I travelled to the east of England to lecture to a big meeting of teachers, a day's journey. I spent the day working out maths problems.

Well, well, Reich, goodnight. I long to see you again, but in a different way from before, for I have no wish to lie on the sofa and be the Emperor or anyone else; I just want to see you and hear all about what you are doing. I am convinced that your name is the successor to that of Freud. I hear little of the analysts now; most of them are out of London. Apparently bombing has not made more neurosis. One doctor wrote that it had lessened it.

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*Bion-Cancer Research Laboratory
Forest Hills, New York*

April 1, 1941

My dear Neill:

When I read your letter of March 4, I was struck again by an experience which I have made over years and years, that is, how it is possible that so many people, good, clever, honest people, still, only after years of their own experience get in touch within themselves with the problems I describe. Then for the first time they understand the problem as well as its details. Then they reread those books and come to understand my headaches. Quite a similar thing happened several weeks ago when I received a letter from a physicist in Zürich who had followed my work since about 1930, and who now for the first time, 10 or 11 years later, seemed to have got into contact with the real

*Ernst
Walter
Look in archive
for letter from him
from Munich 1941 to 42*

problem of human life, apart from reading my books. He wrote that matters are developing quickly and hopefully in Europe and that if the great breakthrough comes, my ideas would become of great importance. When I read such things and compare them with my everyday life and struggle then I am confused. How is it possible, I ask myself, that, as I know, I have given birth to a very great knowledge and that on the other hand all the many people whom I learned to know during the past 15 or 20 years and who know what was accomplished, do not do something about it. There is a great gap between the understanding of the people who encounter my work and the practical influence exerted by all those people together. Very often I phantasy that if all those who came and have gone or are still there would cooperate and act as usual political party members do, then I may frankly say, the greatest and most efficient political movement which the world has ever seen would be at work and would bring about with perfect certainty all that Churchill wants, as well as Roosevelt and every man in this world who honestly tries for the best—and [even] more than that. There is a gap between the fact that every single living human being in this world knows more or less clearly that the real life process is running on a quite different line than the apparent official process which is called diplomacy and politics. Still, the gap is there and somehow all those millions and millions do not seem to be able to find the proper form and organization for their knowledge of the real life process. Very often I felt the temptation and even the responsibility "to do something about it," that means to organize our knowledge as the political parties organize their nonsense. A definite consideration, or rather a feeling, always kept me from doing so. The feeling was that the first real step into a party-like organization of real knowledge, truth, decency and straightforwardness would kill immediately knowledge, truth, decency and straightforwardness. That is because these activities of the living matter are not to be organized, they are alive, and life which is productive, and swelling and acting and moving and making mistakes and correcting them and so forth, cannot be organized.

One of my students here told me once a story: "The devil in Hell had heard that human beings had found the truth, the real truth. His advisers were shaken with terror. But the devil told them: 'Don't be afraid, go there amongst them and let them organize the truth they found.'" This is a very good and true story. I don't know any answer to this greatest of all problems. You can organize gangs, crooks, profit-makers, a railroad, a war-machine industry, you cannot organize life and truth.

The way how my own thoughts and publications have become understandable to others and are affecting them is a very peculiar one. I had to learn that this knowledge about life and its laws cannot be conferred, as you confer the knowledge of the technique of an injection. Somehow every one has to re-find it himself amidst the varying life process. He cannot learn it, he can read and understand what is written, but he does not understand it really. There are very few only at this time who have gone through our famous mill and have found themselves in the reality that I have found first about 18 years ago. You know, for instance, and they know too—and many others know it without being able to formulate it—that real true work democracy is going to come. I would not call it socialism because this word has been dishonored by politicians. Why not call it "Work Democracy"? But we cannot bring it about; it will be the task accomplished by those who will have to build up and to secure it, that means: no political party and no special organization apart from the work and the consumers organizations.

I have tried to work out some ideas and phantasies about a possible outcome of this war into work democracy. But I would like to emphasize, as I often did, that I do not have the ambition, and that I even hate the idea of being looked upon or regarded as the one responsible for, as you call it, the new socialism.

Now to your questions: You are quite right saying that the orgasm reflex brings about the problem that so few partners can be found if you are perfectly healthy. But just that was the point which made me break through into the field of sociology and sex politics in 1927. It was the fact that a sick world is fitted for sick human beings and not for healthy ones; that healthy ones are lost in this world and very often despised and condemned. Your suggestion about the difference in the sexual structure in the adolescent and the grown-up is also correct. The problem of women being in the army is very difficult. It is quite clear that, as you write and everyone can observe, the army spoils the character because of sexual starvation and the roughness of the soldiers. Women in the army would settle the problem, but, on the other hand, every militarist will tell you that women in the army could mean a hampering of the most characteristic habit of the army and that is automatic, mechanical discipline. Here again, the incapability of life to be mechanized or organized hits against an institution in the mechanized civilization which is based (and by necessity) upon stiff stomachs, retracted behinds, high chests, rigid musculature.

The essence of all those things is a belief that the natural life process

has broken through in our age, striving for release and creating new forms of life and confusing all human beings. The old forms have brought society into the abyss of war and destruction. The new forms are not yet born and nobody knows what they will look like. But one fact is clear: the perversities and lunatic happenings which were brought to the peak by Hitler can only be conquered by life itself. I think we can only try to understand and help as much as we can. There is no authority born yet in this field and should an authority once be created, then I am afraid a new setback would take place.

I had very good news from Copenhagen. They are working, and more and more people are beginning to trust them and to help them. Please write again soon.

*Bion-Cancer Research Laboratory
Forest Hills, New York*

April 2, 1941

My dear Neill:

Your letter of March 20 arrived today, a few days later than your first letter. I was very glad to have it. You ask a very important question based on a very correct statement: How to run a state without the bureaucrats. It is my deep conviction that perhaps not the state in the usual old sense of the word, but human society can be run without bureaucrats, and even better so. It is my deep belief that bureaucracy is not necessary, but is to be compared to a cancerous growth on the body of the society which works, searches for truth, improves living conditions, and suffers from the bureaucrats. Today, the social process is run in two ways: by the real working process of its own, and by the bureaucracy which imposes itself upon this working process. In the future it may be that the first, the working process which exists and works today, will administrate life quite on its own.

I, personally, would never, happen what may, submit to any minister of education or any minister of anything who is not a specialist in the field and does not know more than I do.

What you call the immediate post-war world will be either a work democracy, a society based upon the rational working process carried on and cared for by the people who work in all the fields which are necessary for sustaining life—or it will be a pre-war world with a new war within the next 10 to 20 years. I do not think there is any other

*not up front
with article
final ch. up)*

possibility. I do not believe in state capitalism, nor in state socialism, nor in any isms any more. This world will crash with all its nonsense, hypocrisy, bureaucrats, diplomats, politicians in such a deep abyss that, in order to preserve life itself, the working human beings of all professions will simply *have* to take care of the social process.

I do not worry how my ideas of the future society can come about. I wish to state this, and I do not want to make any secret of it. There is and exists a definite kind of power which is beyond all limits and not accessible to any crook or any kind of politicianship, and I even want them to know it:

1) I have in my hands and I dispose of the orgone radiation which exists in the earth and in the atmosphere, and nobody but I knows how to handle it.

2) I have the knowledge how to determine the weather before any barometer in the world can do it. They will need it, and badly so.

3) I possess the secret of cancer, rheumatism, tuberculosis, neurosis, psychosis and many other diseases which devastate social life and even bring about wars. Nobody but I can handle this field at this time.

4) I have definite proof that it will be possible not only to fight many of these diseases, not only to direct the radiation, but there are many indications that the radiation which I have discovered will be indispensable for science as well as for every aspect of technique. *(i.e., technology)*

5) And finally, I alone dispose of the formula and the experiments which give mankind power over the raising of living substance from non-living substance.

I have known this for several years, and I did not publish a word about it. I spoke and have written about the radiation and cancer only to Einstein. My dear Neill, that means *power*, and be sure I am going to use it against every one who will not prove clearly and unmistakably that he is ready and willing honestly to secure human liberty and decency. I shall not cooperate in any way with any organization, be it political or otherwise, which is not thoroughly democratic and which does not mean what it promises or says. What could they do to me? Nothing. Put me in jail, hang me, or what? I am not afraid of them. I know them too well because I have worked with them for many years. I hate them and despise them, to the deepest bottom of my being. ** * **

I do not dream or phantasy ever doing to them what they did to human beings, to my work, to refugees, to Jews, socialists, children,

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and so on. But they simply will not get what is in my hands and depends solely upon my own free decision to do with it what I want. The U.S.A. patent for some devices to operate the orgone radiation is applied for since a few months. It is a great thing to fight for and I shall fight for it. And do not worry please, my dear Neill, about whether some bureaucrat or ignorant politician will try to destroy free research, free education, individual initiative and happiness. They will need it when this war will begin not only to impose death upon several thousands of people, but when death and illness and epidemics, etc. will harass hundreds of millions of people. Then they will need it, be sure of that.

And I repeat, I am not willing to give it unless human liberty and security of life and happiness are granted. I would stress and repeat what Roosevelt said the other day, that the administrators of today are to be the servants of the population and nothing else.

*Bion-Cancer Research Laboratory
Forest Hills, New York*

June 2, 1941

My dear Neill:

My experiments with cancerous human beings are doing well beyond any expectation. I think you and your colleagues will hear about it in detail in the course of next winter. I am going to write down the whole story this summer.

We are following here eagerly every bit of news from Europe. This does not mean, of course, much help, but at least an important contact is there.

*Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales*

June 6, 1941

My dear Reich,

It is some weeks since I had your most interesting letter, full of hope for the future of your work. I long to hear about it all in detail, and anticipate the day when it will all be in English print. People keep writing me asking when you are going to be read in English.

I have had a spell of not very good health. The Welsh air is not so

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bracing as that on the East Coast, even though it is a mountainous country, and none of us feels so energetic as we did. The appalling thing, Reich, is that I have completely lost all interest in psychology. It is possible that my analysis with you, by giving me freedom in the reflex, destroyed a complex which had been expressed in trying to cure the other fellow. I can rationalise that with my wife's breakdown in health, with shortage of staff etc., I have too many things to do, but I know it is only a rationalisation, that if I were keen, I'd find time for veg.-therapy.

I find I am happiest in writing, but here again, with paper shortage, it is almost impossible to have a book published. And also life has become so much more primitive in many ways. I spend hours digging to produce food, and so do the children. And thank God, I think I have more interest in the children than I ever had. They are grand and clever and lovable, and I know that this system is the only one of any value in the world. They don't seem to need any therapy of any kind, and that is the ideal education—to educate children in such a way that they won't need therapy later on.

I hear little from Sweden, no word at all of our old friends.

Two years ago I had just come back from Oslo. No, it wasn't two years ago; it was two thousand.

All the best, Reich, and the moment you publish anything send it to me.

P.S. I keep wondering if there is any connection between your cure by *Bione* and the Naturopath's cure of cancer by fruit and raw greens, for he cured a lady doctor I sent to him of cancer of the breast six years ago. Are the same sun rays in *Bione* and fresh grown vegetables? Or do both have a vitamin not yet known? The Nature Cure people talk of a cleansing diet (fruit) but they are all so moral that their idea of eliminating the "poisons" from the body has a strong link with their wish to eliminate the moral poisons too. They are nearly all very anti-sex.

*Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales*

22 JUNE GERMANY
ATTACKS RUSSIA

July 1, 1941

My dear Reich,

I am late in replying; felt run down and went off for a golfing holiday, and now feel fine.

For some reason I cannot trace, I can't do any psychological work at all. I am full of energy in my work; I believe more vitally in what I am doing, and I rejoice to see the result in the children, but I cannot bring myself to do individual analysis. Is it that you destroyed my saving Christ attitude? Is it that the O. Reflex gave me a satisfaction that I was trying to find in assisting others? Or is it that I didn't go far enough with you? I don't know, Reich, and it all troubles me. On the other hand I have an intense interest in your work, and long to read your journal in my own language. And the time I had with you has changed me much. The effect is seen on the school. The atmosphere is happier because I am happier. I can take decisions easily now, but still can't be aggressive.

I feel I have let you down; that I am not fighting in the front line for the new psychology. I have tried to face the question: Is my apathy due to not really believing in Reich? I think the answer would be: If I didn't believe in Reich wouldn't I seek the truth in Freud or Jung or Stekel or Adler or anyone else? I have no interest in any of these gentlemen now. Whatever the cause, I am not worthy to be the representative in England of your Veg.-Therapy. Best to expel me from the Society.

Like most people here now I am greatly interested in the Russian war. Even if U.S.A. stays out I can't see that Hitler has any chance to win, for even the German army can't keep down 180 million Russians. Look at their difficulties even in Norway where the people are fighting back. And what do the five million Germans who voted for Communism in '32 or '33 think of this new war?

One feels a desire to live for a thousand years to see what is to come to pass. I am no longer satisfied with the explanation that it is purely an economic war for profit and imperialism. The slowness of the masses is very disheartening . . . the army of Japan after all these years of fighting China should have demanded to know what it was leading to for each man personally, each man facing destruction, sex starvation, total lack of creative life. Yet the Japs still follow leaders blindly. How much of any army is conscious? Soldiers complain, but mainly about the small things—food or absence of leave, etc. When will all the soldiers of the world ask the big question: What is all this leading to? For they are the men who will build the new world. We see now the result of what we called education, which was mere learning about things that didn't matter. The education of the emotions was entirely neglected when it wasn't deliberately repressive. Hence the easiness with which a Hitler can get his millions of emotionally-starved men to let out their feelings

in blood and cruelty. What should have come out as love comes out as hate. In this connection it is interesting to hear my old pupils. They are all in it, fighting, on ships, in the army, the navy, in the air. They do well, but they are conscious of the inner meaning of it all. They are not fighting with any hate at all; their attitude is: here is a job that must be done and we must do it, but they see beyond the German soldier, beyond Hitler, beyond the war. They are all intensely interested in the life to follow the war, and if they live, they will do well in the reconstruction. They feel the tragedy of having to destroy when all they want to do is to build. I wonder how the German soldier feels? What future does he hope for? Surely not a Gestapo one. How does he see the new German State? I wish they would ask one to write the propaganda they drop over Germany. I would get at their hearts not their heads.

When shall I be able to cross the Atlantic to see you again? It is a great wish, one that can't be fulfilled for a long time, I fear.

Oquossoc, Maine

August 5, 1941

My dear Neill:

In the main statement [in the letter of July 1] you are, of course, completely wrong. Your breaking away from psychology and your turning over to nature is completely in accordance with our own way of thinking, being and working. I myself am digging more and more into the field of biology, and we can expect many enlightening results for psychology from this realm. So you don't have to be "expelled" from the Society and I privately believe that you have done more for the matter of sex-economy than many others in the field.

All your remarks about the slowness of the masses and the expectations of the young soldiers are very true. If only someone could be found who would connect and organize all those forces, then many of these problems could be easily solved.

Did you receive my latest private pamphlet about "Work Democracy"? I worked fine now for a few weeks in a little place on a lake which I bought a year ago. The experimental work is counterbalanced properly by working in the woods. So you see, I am not far from where you are.

instance, I am speaking about the bourgeois human, but meanwhile we learned that the so-called proletariat is in its structure not less bourgeois than the bourgeois. I have to replace such words by other words which reflect the real meaning in a better way.

I don't want to be taken for a Marxist any more, in spite of the fact that I have a higher regard and a better understanding of Marx's achievement than I had then. And I cannot subdue the insights of our new biological findings to old and wrong concepts. I believe that the elimination of the empty slogans and the addition of the new biopsychological and work-democratic facts, will bring the book up to date without changing its factual content. I am going ahead with the adjustment of the book and the publisher will obtain a copy of the manuscript in case he decides to publish it.

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

August 20, 1942

My dear Neill:

This letter is to ask your opinion about an idea which I had lately in connection with the further development of our work. I have encountered some uneasy feelings about describing the actual political and social tasks in plain language as I was used [to do] in Europe. You must understand that—in spite of the fact that American democracy is, due to the American Revolution, far more free of traditional thinking than the European world, and much further advanced in dealing with the "common man"—there are besides that still prevailing attitudes which don't like to see heavy scientific stuff brought forth together with actual social policy which never lacks the taste of the "soap box." I myself have the feeling that a pamphlet about "Work Democracy" which has been translated in England is too political in its nature to be quietly accepted together with the findings about the orgone. Yet they are closely connected; but not for the feeling of the average individual. I don't wish to yield to conservative views, but we have to be flexible where flexibility does not hamper our truth. In short: What would you think of editing a special journal in English within England's borders called, say, Work Democracy, Journal for the Social Evaluation of Depth Psychology and Orgone Biophysics. It would train specialists in social work; it would explain what work democracy is, its history,

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1.5 treatment

different work-democratic trends in different places in the world, as for instance, the new work democratic Labor-Management Committees which begin to function in America; the natural existence of work democracy in primitive society; the difference of formal, parliamentary from natural work democracy, and so forth. I believe firmly that we should weigh the idea and prepare for its possible realization. Please tell me whether you would be willing and capable of directing the issuance of such a journal under the auspices of the Institute, with the help of your co-workers in England. I expect your advice as quickly as possible.

Did you receive the second issue of the *Journal* yet? And did you receive enough copies? The *Journal* and the book are received very well here: in a Westchester, New York, newspaper I was proclaimed again, as in France and in England, as the successor of Freud. I only hope that this honor will not make people forget that the succession of Freud's discoveries has been added to by a new, decisive discovery of its own. I would like to hear more about you personally than you have let me know recently.

Did you have an Orgone Box built for yourself? Why not?? Give my best regards to all friends over there and also my best wishes for the future.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

August 24, 1942

My dear Reich,

I have just got your long letter. At the moment I am in Edinburgh having a Cure with Thomson the naturopath. All summer I have not felt well. Always tired. Having no faith at all in the ordinary doctor with his drugs, I am trying the only alternative offered me. I shall return to wet Wales unwillingly, for there is little chance of exercise there. Also the work is full of difficulties these days. The kids are as always delightful; it is the adults who give trouble. My original staff left to help the war, and the children whose fathers and mothers are all in the war don't like the pacifist attitude.

I see I am telling you all this partly to explain why I have not done enough about the magazines. I sent out copies to the well-known psychological mags, and only Rickman replied. I am keeping my eyes open for reviews. I can't see how I can send any literature to Sweden or

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Switzerland. The law here is that only the publisher or a recognised bookseller can dispatch books abroad.

I still don't know what to do about distribution. I show the journal or the book to the ordinary reading man—teacher, doctor, etc. He is delighted with it, wants to know more about your work. The big man, the man with a name, doesn't even reply thanking me. The big man in any line hates to hear of another's good work.

No, I never made the Orgone Accumulator because material is impossible to get, especially metals. I can only spend one pound a month buying wood. Also, I forget about my own health until I break down. But I wish I could set one up. You know how ignorant I am of science. In my ignorance I don't understand the cage as you describe it in your letter, and I don't recollect your ever telling me how to make it. If in a letter, it must have gone down.

I don't like to hear about your stomach convulsions. You must live another 40 years, friend. I want to live long enough to see you king of the new Trobriands, so to speak. This cursed dependence on the body is so tiresome. I want to work and forget all about the damned body, and then the body has its revenge and stops the work. If the span of life were 150 years or so, a man could do something in his life. I feel bitterly about the body at present. The pleasure went out of the Reflex two months ago, and I have been sexless since then. I can't decide which is cause and effect. Or how much an age of 59 affects the world of desire in general.

Well, I shall wait and write more cheerfully when I get some health back. I have no news from Stockholm.

Death of Henera

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

September 25, 1942

My dear Reich, ^{of 24 Aug.}

Your letter came today just as I sat down to write you. I am touched by your concern and most grateful for your advice re: the BOX. I am not clear on a few points. (1) Must I sit in it naked, or does the Orgone work through clothing? (2) Wood is most difficult to obtain. It is severely rationed. Would a small room lined with tin sheeting do? Behind the sheeting would be brick or wood and plaster. I am

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trying to buy a moveable wardrobe or cupboard which I could line, but do tell me if tin will do. After all, tin is thin iron sheeting dipped in molten tin.

Reich, I have so complete a faith in your genius that when you tell me the box is the "goods" I believe you, and I accept it without requiring any proof. Your Journal No. 2 convinces me entirely, and it by the way is much better than No. 1 in my estimation.

I returned from Thomson's much better. I think his "theory" all bunk, but his practice certainly is good and gets results in physical *but not in psychical health*. It does not release the orgasmic reflex, indeed nature cure is anti-sex and Calvinistic and moral. I go to it simply because it does not treat bodily symptoms. I should think that this "cleansing" diet plus your box should keep a man alive to the age of 150 or so.

Smoking I still keep off but as to drink I have no intention of keeping off it. With whiskey at over £1 a bottle and wine almost unprocurable I guess alcohol won't be any problem during this war anyway.

Life is more complex with me now. War conditions are not easy. True we are safe from bombs in Wales, but it is always wet and relaxing and far from all culture and companionship. I can't get teachers or if I can they are usually inferior—mostly conscientious objectors to military service, negative folk who won't face reality. Then with an invalid wife I have a double load to carry, having to do a thousand things I never had to do before . . . food, servants, children's clothing, etc. And settling the differences of opinion among the female staff who all want to have things their own way. But in the main things are tolerable. So far the children haven't suffered for lack of good food, but they suffer for lack of good exercise, for in this mountain land there isn't one flat field for hockey or football, and the snow is never good enough or lies long enough for winter sports.

Of late I have taken up in an amateurish way scientific agriculture. Here the land is very poor and no good farmer will sell manure. My problem was to feed 100 people on home-grown veg. and fruit. I have the same attitude to inorganic artificial manures that I have to drugs in medicine; both are dead things, and artificial manure can never make the first essential to growth—humus, which must come from decayed organic stuff. Hence my problem has been to compost all veg. rubbish so as to get good manure. Unfortunately grass, nettles etc. will not make a compost without animal manure, but I was lucky enough to buy 20 tons of mule dung, and have some fine heaps now. I am most inter-

ested in the ideas of Sir Albert Howard* who says that all spraying of trees with tobacco, mercury, etc. is wrong, merely treating symptoms. He traces all plant diseases back to poor soil and manures, and says that in India he had cows on grass artificially manured and they took foot and mouth disease, but in the next field he had cows on naturally manured pasture and they rubbed noses over the fence with the infected cows but none of them contracted the disease. The trouble is that an editor of a *Gardener's Weekly* can't easily condemn artificials when so doing would lose an advertisement worth £2,000 a year, say. This may be boring to you; it only shows how land-minded the war makes us all. You will guess by all this that the war has converted me from a psychologist into a damned farmer . . . not much difference between the two, for both waste time dealing with muck, yet it is better to fork farmyard muck than to sit and listen to psychic repressed muck.

Well, Reich, I shall end this rambling letter. Do answer the main questions . . . must one be naked? Is stone suitable instead of sawdust, etc?

P.S. A thought: That cancer case in No. 2 Journal. Danger . . . unskilled men will put their cases in the Box, cure the cancer, or rather reconvert it into sex repression and not know how to deal with it then. Probable result, too much suicide. How to cure what causes it. Another thought: A parent, expert in radio, says: "I sit in a Faraday box† for hours at a time, testing apparatus. Neither I nor anyone else in the profession have ever noticed any difference to health or skin. Ask Reich why the effects of an F. Cage hasn't been discovered by the many engineers who have used one." He says that the cage can be of copper wire netting of one inch mesh. That sounds odd to me.

* *An Agricultural Testament*, by Sir Albert Howard (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).

† Better known as a Faraday cage. An electrostatic shield made of wire mesh or a series of parallel wires.

Forest Hills, New York

October 17, 1942

My dear Neill:

I have just received your letter of September 25th. I am glad that you are ready to use the Orgone Accumulator and I am hurrying to answer your questions. The outer walls can be of stone too, but it would be better if you would fill the gap between the inner metal lining and the stone wall with, say, newspaper. The main point in the functioning of the box in regard to the organism is that the inner metal lining should not be at a greater distance from the body than six to eight inches. If your closet has the dimensions of *about* five feet high, three feet deep and two feet wide, then it is all right. That answers your thought concerning the radio operator within the Faraday cage, who did not observe any effects. A Faraday cage has too big holes in the metal wall, also the metal walls are too far removed from the body. Well, I want you to make all the experiences quite by yourself, but you have to use the Orgone accumulator every day once or twice for about a half hour and for weeks and months in one stretch.

I want you to do that also for another purpose. The longer the war will stretch, the more diseases will arise, the more the value of a cheap and highly effective biological energy will be appreciated by the common people, and I want you to have the experiences gathered by then.

Your discourse on manure and *Maul und Klauenseuche* [foot and mouth disease] was a great help. I understood suddenly from what you told about Howard's work, that the chemical industries are not only not curing diseases, but more, they are creating diseases, and I am going right ahead to clear that question. Thank you for your suggestion.

It is better that you are naked than with clothes on within the box, and please, watch your temperature, whether it rises when you are in the box for some time and how much.

Your suggestion regarding the danger of easy cancer cure is very true. I had it myself. But let's see later, first we have to put the boxes into action. Write again soon and much.

old, with a strong will, serious in his facial expression; just discovering the world around him and developing together with his mother very nicely. I assure you that after 25 years of intensive and extensive psychiatric work I am discovering for the first time, like a new student of psychiatry, the real nature of a new-born baby. It is amazing and frightening how little this high-boasting psychiatry knows about the most primitive things of human life. I hope sometime to be able to write down what I learned during these last 3 months. Would you ever have imagined that an unborn baby will stop kicking in the mother's womb when it hears good music; that after birth the same baby has real oral orgasms with twitchings of the face muscles, rolling of the eyes, twitchings of the tongue after a good exciting feast at the breast? I am very happy in spite of the fact that the little fellow has upset my whole schedule, that, for the meantime at least, the quiet to which I was used while working at problems of natural science is gone. I can only hope that we shall at least succeed in making the next war happen not within the next 25 years but after the next 50 years, so that this boy won't have to die for liberty but will be able to live for liberty.

I am always happy to hear from you. Please, write more often. I really hope after 5 years of separation to have an opportunity soon to have a good and long personal talk with you.

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

May 18, 1944

My dear Neill:

I read in the *New York Times* that your wife has died.* Though I did not know her personally, I know what she meant to you since she had participated in the hard struggle for Summerhill School. As you probably know, I am very bad at making long speeches on such occasions, but you know that I am in deep sympathy with you. I really

* The first paragraph of the obituary notice in *The New York Times* (May 4, 1944) read: "Mrs. Alexander Neill, co-founder of the famous 'do as you like' Summerhill School, where students were permitted to smoke, swear and, inner urges demanding, even kick out windows, has died at a nursing home in Wales, it was announced today."

hope that you can take a rest soon from all the worries you have gone through lately, and keep yourself going on the highest level possible. Did you receive the note which appeared in the *New York Times*? It was a rather funny mixture of admiration and poking fun at you out of self-defense.

Don't you think that you should write something about this slogan "Do as you like" which they apply to your school? As a matter of fact your boys don't do as they like in the sense of our enemies, but they do as they like in our sense, which is a completely different matter. And they are made to do as they like in our sense, because your authority can make them do as they like in our sense and not in theirs. I really hope to get an opportunity soon to talk the matter of the dangers of freedom over with you again. Do you think it would be possible to transfer your educational principles to a society of 130 million people with about 30 million children? We should discuss such a problem right now. Please let me know what you think about it.

Did you hear anything from Sweden? Let me know if you did.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

May 22, 1944

My dear Reich,

Your telegram [Reich had wired condolences] and letter arrived; the latter today. Thanks a lot for the former; how you knew I can't guess, unless the *Times* goes to N.Y. by air. It was a relief in one way, for life to her was a misery for three years, but I felt the parting keenly. Made me feel so much alone. You can't work closely with a woman for 24 years doing the same important work without feeling a strong bond. There is a big question in this relationship to women. To have the ideal love mate and ideal companionship and co-working in one woman is almost a rarity. And in the days of Helga I had this conflict most strongly, for the real interest in the work wasn't there, so that today I can meet H. without having any special interest now that passion has died. I suppose it is that now I am 60, and the glands are slowing up, companionship becomes more vital than other human relationships. I find that I give more energy to work, whether cutting grass or writing or dealing with kids. Ambition sinks into the back-

ground. Fame? What is it but a soap bubble? But it is good to see the young making good. We have a new art master with a genius for teaching and he got such marvellous work that we had an Exhibition in Bond Street, London. It was crowded out daily and the talk of the town . . . the joy was to see how happy the kids were with their success. I felt keenly that my wife hadn't lived to see it.

No, laddie, I think you are wrong. My name is writ in water. I don't really care if my name lives or dies. What I do care about is the *Tatsache* [fact] that S'hill has influenced countless parents and teachers all over the world.

Congratulations on E.P.R. [Reich's baby son]. But a word of warning . . . don't let anyone ever mention the word psychology to the little chap, nor allow anyone to deal "psychologically" with him. I've suffered lately by having a few teachers in the school who were amateur psychologists, and if a child of 4 picked up an earthworm they began to suggest it was a phallus . . . the fools. I've got rid of them luckily. Your observations of the kid are going to be interesting, and I expect that in six months time there will be a new Reichian discovery to shock the world.

Worried about finance now but I have opened a branch junior school nearer London which I think will pay its way. So the work expands . . . until the day when the State suppresses schools like mine. Under socialism I'd simply be classed a bourgeois school and shut down.

Slowly your ideas permeate Britain. Quite a lot of people know your work already, but not the scientists and doctors, only the searchers after truth.

Letter from Elsa Backer. She says it is terrible in Norway, hardly any food, children thin and weak.

I have begun to analyse a girl of 17; Veg. Therapy technique of course. Difficulty is time, for I have to teach and organise and mend water pipes and plant potatoes and all the time interrupted by 75 kids wanting nails or string or to know the time.

Weather still very cold here. It is never too warm in Wales . . . but I am tired of telling you how difficult it would be to use an Akku here.

Well, Reich, that's about all my news. A separation of 5 years is a long one, but it will be great to meet again. But I won't come as a patient next time. Too old now, but I did get a hell of a lot from you, a greater personal freedom, a wider outlook, best of all a warm friendship. I have written of my wife that she belonged to tomorrow. We all do who are in the work.

My blessings on you and wife and the kiddie. Let's hope that by the time he is of military age the war will be against poverty and ignorance only.

[Neill included with this letter a page of his notes on two issues of the *Journal (of Sex-Economy and Orgone Research)*, Vol. II, nos. 2 and 3, which Reich had asked him to comment on.]

Deliberately put off reading it fully in case it should influence the book I was writing.

You make a splendid case for Work Democracy. Analysis of politics most masterly; I agree with all you say about them. But I criticise the style. May be partly the translation, but I feel you are over-explanatory, using a page to rub in a point that might be tersely put in a sentence. More important criticism is that you leave it all so vague. You want no organisation, but when your doctor and plumber and teacher in the village want to discuss a new water supply you are in danger of bureaucracy at once, for some fellow with a gift for talking will get up and say: "You guys, you leave this to me. I'm a teacher with short hours and have more time on my hands than you do. I'll take on to organise the bloody thing." And when you apply that to the State and a new housing plan is put forward, someone resembling the politician of today will be commissioned to carry it out, and all your teachers and tradesmen will be too busy at their jobs to watch him and see he does what they want. The politician today does in his way represent workers . . . You will always require executives to carry out national work and laws, and the moment they are tempted to serve even secretly a vested interest they will become politicians. So that your W[ork] Dem[ocracy] postulates first the public ownership of all means of production, that is socialism. True, we see the Soviet abolish co-education, but on the other hand isn't Russia a country without politics? Yet without its politicians why does it regress? Because as you say, the people are not ready for democracy. The men who started the 1917 revolution are now old, anti-youth, anti-life, and that is a problem not yet faced—the father role which becomes conservative, timid, safety-firstish against youth.

I can't see any practical Work Demy until schools like S'hill are many and powerful in influence. Today your electrician after a hard day's work goes to his local political meeting *as a relaxation* . . . same as I play golf and you ski, or as I love to talk to an engineer about lathe work rather than talk to a fellow teacher about kids or psychology. And are you right in saying that the political man is always against? They are only against the guys who have another opinion. Politics are only the

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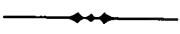
voice of interests, and until you get a Utopia in which all workers will have nothing to kick against, you'll have grumbles and men to air those grumbles—the professional politicians.

By a miracle, loosen all the adult stomachs of the world and you can have Work Demy. Until that happens, what? Only the slow process of education. But of course if this war forces the pace, condenses 100 years into five as far as movement is concerned, the masses may come quickly to your truth that the Caesars and Hitlers of life leave nothing behind. But already the reaction forces are very busy preparing to keep the status quo of 1939, to keep the old world alive on the same basis of rich and poor, worker and drone.

Rest of journal good. Feel proud and humble to see my name quoted so often as an authority.

On the whole every journal is a bit heavy. You have got something new and fine and it ought to be dished up in the best way. I spent two years of my life editing an encyclopedia* which had to be condensed in one volume, and got into the way of using as few words as possible. [James M.] Barrie said to a young writer: "Cut it down by half, leaving nothing out."

I know it is difficult to make translation run easily. Why don't you write in English? Your letters to me are perfect English.



Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

June 24, 1944

My dear Neill:

I was glad to have your letter and your note on the subject of work democracy some time ago.

The objections which you bring forth in regard to the practicality of W[ork] D[emocracy] are the same as those I have put up against myself when I realized the existence of the natural W.D. interrelationships of working human beings and the babylonian tower of ideologies and messy institutions of the same species. As you have well understood,

* Neill's first job after graduating from Edinburgh University. In his own words: "The work was extremely useful in one way: it gave me a dread of superfluous words."

W.D. is an existing fact, and not a political program. Not being a politician, I have no answer to the question as to how to clean the natural W.D. from its irrational entanglements and political mess. As to the ability of a socialistic regime to carry through this clean-up, I have my well-founded doubts. Maybe that I am wrong, but experience and consideration both leave no hope in regard to socialism, this word understood in its everyday meaning. The only hope I see is a sudden, rational upheaval of the greater part of the people who carry the burden of work and social interrelations upon their shoulders. It is interesting to note that it is just the socialist leader who is most averse to such a turn of events.

In spite of all, I have the definite feeling that once the fact of natural W. Democratic interrelationships is revealed and has entered the arena of human thought, it will not disappear again and will possibly develop its own course of logic. It is beyond me to feel responsible for this development. But I may add that the organization of the existing working groups of our Institute proves that a work-democratic orderly functioning, without politics and red tape, is possible.

I was impressed by your remarks about what the Summerhill School means to the world and the way it is not mentioned by plagiarists. People are stealing progressive ideas and revolutionary knowledge not in order to carry them through and defend them. If that were the case, they would gladly and with the humbleness of the decent worker mention the origin of their information. If they do not do so, it is for the sole reason that they take the raisins out of the cake, and leave the dirty work and the dangerous statements to the pioneer, not caring whether he or his work live or die. Thus the thief has all good hope to survive any change of social structure, to sneak in with his irresponsible thievery into any kind of job, in order to determine the course of society backward, just in the reverse direction which you showed him, i.e., forward. In that way he appears modern and revolutionary without danger. The Russians now acknowledge the fact that it is the masses who make Hitler and not vice versa, a fact which they fought like devils 15 years ago, on the basis of higher proletarian values. But in acknowledging this fact, finally, they leave out the main thing, namely the question why the masses are Hitlerian. The fact that it is the rotten sex-economy of the masses which renders them capable of submitting to every political crook. Some psychoanalysts stole my principle of character-analysis without mentioning me, because to mention me as the originator of the character-analytic technique would mean to defend the orgasm theory,

Neill is a teacher who won't be so blunt confronted with a student. He prefers capital. Self-deprecating humor as well as to reach that student. By mid 1940s Neill is firm of that (see photo). He's not a teacher but a researcher (see Neill's letter to me with 2nd and 3rd pages attached).

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and to stand the blows which follow in its path. So they have thrown out the orgasm theory, and are taking over a kind of ghost, which does not mean yes or no, black or white, mah nor bah. You are helpless against such procedure on the part of the so-called common or little man, who grabs without being punished, and pays tribute where he is treated in an authoritative manner. Take, hit and run is their motto.

Don't worry, no "psychologist" will enter the life-sphere of my boy during the first five or six years of his life. What I said before about the politicians applies naturally to the psychologists too. They took the wrong and superficial in Freud's theory and left out the dynamite.

About my boy another time. He is a great joy, but also a complete upset of my routine, quiet remote life. For months now I could not do much except routine work. But I shall cope with all that. I discovered first of all that a baby is a fully developed being and that we great biophysicists etc. know damn little about what a baby really expresses. Second, I found out that the baby is born without a trace of irrationalism. It always has a good reason when it cries, never cries without a reason, whether we understand it or not. He is very curious, studies whatever crosses his field of vision.

Write again and soon. My congratulations on the success of your school. I am dreaming of getting you here.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

June 18, 1944

My dear Reich,

Odd that since my wife died I have had a burst of creation. Have written a play and finished my book. Have given up teaching and am doing only veg.-ther. analysis. The more I see the results with adolescents the more I consider that bloody man Reich a great man. But why haven't I done it till now? Some *Hemmung* [inhibition].

Did I ever acknowledge the two registered letters you sent? Sorry if I didn't. I am keeping them in my safe meanwhile.

I haven't any special news at present. Will let you know how the veg.-ther. goes. Marvellous why patients weep so easily when lying on their backs. Some do so the first *Stunde* [hour]. Why?

At last I expect to get enough tin to make if not the Akku, at least the bed cover. Buying today isn't easy; so many things are controlled. I

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can't even get enough wood for the school, and no brass nor iron at all. Thank heaven our food is good. My own theory is that rationing has improved health, for so many can't now eat too much.

Well, Reich, all the best, and let me hear from you soon. The last journal I had was the Work Democracy one. I have sent it on to Herbert Read, the art and philosophy writer, well-known here; he is a director of the great publishing firm of Kegan, Paul and Routledge. Meant to send him my copy of *The Function*, but as usual someone has taken it from my bookcase. Quite a few people in England now know of Reich, and some are sending direct for the journal.

I'll be interested in that kid of yours. I still have a little fear that the raised voice of the father when he gets angry will be dangerous to it. That man Reich may be a genius but he ain't got too much patience!

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

July 1, 1944

My dear Neill:

I am enclosing a few photographs of "the family." I think you never met Eva. She is twenty now. I also want you to meet my wife and Peter.

Would you kindly inform me whether the rumours about my "lunacy" are still around, or whether they have died out. The other day I had a letter from a co-worker in Palestine, to the effect that he had clamped down on the Palestine Psychoanalytic Association for its rumour-mongering with great success. I never wrote you the story of the origin of this rumour. I shall do so extensively very soon, "in order to have things on file."

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

July 9, 1944

My dear Neill:

I just received your letter regarding Mrs. K. [an acquaintance on whose behalf Neill had written to Reich]. She can rent an accumulator for prophylactic purposes, and she can visit me when I

Neill is doing
honest work
direct

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shall be back in New York by the end of September. A breast operation always means cancer, and since the removal of a breast does not touch the rotting process in tissues and blood, the use of the accumulator is indispensable to prevent reoccurrence if possible.

I would like to hear more about your vegeto-therapy experiences.

My baby is doing very well. My voice is going high only if I meet stupid emotional-pest reactions and when I feel helpless to cope with them. Else, I am known as one of the most patient of human beings. But I can shout all right if necessary and if there are no other ways of settling things. (If you think the father is impatient, just wait until you meet the son. His voice is even higher than his father's when he gets impatient. This is written by Ilse Ollendorff Reich.) Don't you think I have shown tremendous patience in waiting for nearly 2 decades now for people to understand the most simple thing in the world which I am teaching.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

July 15, 1944

My dear Reich,

Many thanks for the photos. I take back what I said about your being a dangerous father whose voice might give the kid fear . . . the photo convinces me that *he* will be the danger, and I see a fearful father hastening to obey his commands. He is a splendid kid, with most expressive eyes. All I get out of Ilse's picture is a great pride in what she is looking at. You are two lucky ones, and I hope I live long enough to see Peter and watch his career.

Your query about lunacy means nothing to me, for I don't know what is behind it. Of course a few Freudians dismiss you as *meschugge* [crazy] but that sort of thing is a compliment from them.

I am veg-therring 4 girls and 4 boys, adolescent. Often I wish I could run to ask your advice, but feel it is better that I can't. With a girl of 17 it goes easily and quickly, but with the others I am in the middle of strong resistance, which brings in a difficulty. I am analyst AND headmaster. In spite of the fact that I am not a feared headmaster, I can see the old difficulty arising. Suppose a boy has been stealing from me, or ruining a workshop tool of mine. His resistance to my knowing it goes over to everything. One boy of 14 sent to me two years ago as a bad

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bully and thief is going to be difficult and dangerous, for when his hate begins to come out I'll have to fight for my life!

So much for the difficulties. I find the method a million times more pleasant (for me) than the old, in which I sometimes nearly fell asleep listening to dull dreams. And the children like it better and come regularly, which they seldom did in the old days.

Lewis's Medical Library has just informed me that they have sold a dozen *Functions*. I am telling them to apply direct to N.Y. if they want more.

I get quite a few letters from N.Y. now. Your journal has given me some publicity there, and it looks as if I'll have to arrange a lecture tour the moment the war is over . . . if it is over by the time I am 80 or so. It should be a great event to meet you again. By your photo I see you haven't changed a bit. You must send me a photo of Ilse, one in which her eyes can be seen.

At last I am within sight of an Akku. Two weeks ago an Indian physicist came on a visit, read your journals and was most interested. He said he could get a cage made in his lab and would send it on soon.

It is almost impossible to make contact with people in the war period. Many are in the forces, doctors and teachers who, in peace time, might be interested in veg.-ther. The leading scientists are all on war work. Reichism will have to await the peace days.

Well, Reich, all the best, and may your loving study of Peter add new knowledge to your whole philosophy of life.

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

August 6, 1944

My dear Neill:

I have your letter of July 15th. I am glad you began to do vegeto-therapy, and especially that you tried with adolescents. Since all grown-ups are more or less hopeless, as far as basic change of structure is concerned, the only hope is, I firmly believe, establishment of rationality in children and adolescents when the biophysical reactions still can be molded.

The term "resistance" is still valid, but in quite a different way than used in psychoanalytic technique. If a patient "resists," it means that you did not find the correct words and actions on specific places on his

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body, which correspond to this specific emotional situation. For instance: You may have released a bit of the mask-like stiffness of the facial expression. An impulse to bite may be on the point of breaking through. To this biophysical emotion the patient may react, by way of protection, with a withdrawal in his shoulders, a kind of holding back. Now you cannot get out the biting impulse in the mouth unless you release the auxiliary muscular armouring in the shoulders first, by bringing the shoulders forward. It is always a matter of observing the patient in such a relaxed manner that you learn to realize where a muscular defense (which is of course identical with the character defense) appears anew when the muscular defense on which you are working is just about to yield. This substitution of armouring mechanisms may take place anywhere in the body. Another instance: If there is a withdrawal tendency in the right arm due to a blocked impulse to hit; you let this arm move and the hitting impulse wants to break through; the patient may, in order to avoid hitting, arch his back very strongly. If you recognize the connection, and you release the arching of the back, you have destroyed the auxiliary muscular defense, and the hitting impulse cannot help but come through.

I would be glad if you would care to let me know from time to time how you are getting along with adolescents. The main thing in all vegetotherapy is to know unshakably that the main obstacle to progress is always a tremendous fear of yielding to involuntary uncontrolled motion and emotional currents. There is always destructive energy blocking love emotions.

I am glad you finally will get your Orgone accumulator. Do you have it built with double layers and close around the body? You will enjoy it very much, I am sure. You should have also smaller accumulators for your boys and girls.

Peter is prospering. He is absolutely healthy, happy, eager, curious and interested in everything. I never would have guessed how little we know about newborn babies, how completely developed they are biophysically, and, accordingly, how stupid and preposterous this whole educational set-up of our society appears—now even more than it did already ten years ago. I am learning very, very much and many important things. I hope to be able to present them at a later date in a useful and helpful manner.

Every day Ilse or I take Peter into the Orgone Accumulator for 5 to 10 minutes. It does him very good. I urged his mother to be in the accumulator every day while she was pregnant. Somehow I cannot get

rid of the feeling that the liveliness, health and quick maturing of this boy is somehow connected with the fact that orgone was applied from the moment he was created. I can assure you that I feel most humble and very much like a religious man might feel in connection with what he calls religious experience, when I watch and enjoy this absolute perfectness of an animal organism unspoiled by education. I could not trace a single irrational attitude now in this boy, and I have, as you probably know, a very sensitive organ for irrational neurotic or biopathic behaviour. I cannot help getting more and more convinced that our views on education of children and on what follows in consequence are 100% wrong and upside down. This experience after 25 years of psychiatric work is very great. I had even to correct some of my own basic assumptions, that means to correct them in the sense that I was not true enough nor courageous enough to stand for what I thought with all vigour at my disposal. I feel now that I had a bad conscience, that I was inclined to compromise, that I was hanging on too long to theories which, deeply in myself, I knew were wrong. I should not have wasted nearly 14 years with psychoanalysis and its sublimation and false child-psychology. You may be astonished, but a baby of 3 months is not autistic whatsoever. It has its interest in its surroundings fully developed. I have to assume now that the contention of the psychoanalysts of the autistic character of the baby is an artifact. This artifact is apparently due to the armouring of the analysts which does not permit them to develop a full and natural contact with a newborn baby. The baby on its part, if it does not find natural response to its outgoing feelings and emotions, in other words if it is not understood emotionally in a simple manner and responded to, has to shut itself in. A baby of only a few weeks senses emotional blocks and unnatural behavior in grown-ups with absolute certainty. A baby will not take a dead mother's nipple, it will begin to cry when a cold armoured person wishes to play with it. We easily forget that a child has millions of different emotions and desires, but only one way, in the beginning, to try to make itself understood, namely crying. It took me several weeks to learn to understand what the boy wanted when he cried. I did not apply any scientific knowledge—the more I did so, the less I succeeded. The only thing that worked was identifying myself with his expression and then I knew what he wanted. What psychoanalysis calls identification seems to be rooted very deeply in what I might call the contact of the organotic system of a grown-up with that of the baby. Animals, if not domesticated, show this emotion-language very clearly to me now. It is a very vast

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and most important field of human life, which I have just begun to look into. My greater worry now is that I might make some mistakes due to my own difficulty which might spoil the further development of the boy in the direction in which he is moving. Would you believe that a child of three months, or even two, does not like to be all the time in his crib, where it cannot see things move and change their position. But it is true. When it does not sleep, it wants to have things happen, and it rewards you with the most moving thankfulness if you give it the opportunity to see things happen around it. During the first few weeks for instance, I could not get to work because the boy cried when he lay awake in the crib. Then we learned that we could work, my wife could type and I could dictate even very difficult stuff, if only we put the crib close to the typewriter, so that this boy could watch mother's fingers move along the typewriter.

Well, these are only a few examples about the course of study I am going through now.

I hope you are all well. Write again soon, and if I can be of any help to you in your vegeto-therapy work, I shall be only too glad to do so.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

August 30, 1944

My dear Reich,

Your latest letter to hand. Your description of the biting and hitting defence makes me feel I have a hell of a lot to learn.

Just off to Scotland to play golf, after a distressing time of disunion in the staff. Section against the lady in charge who happens to be very near to me in all ways. Tired of dealing with women; feel like having a male staff only!

My long awaited Akku is again off. Physicist who promised to make one says he can't get it done in his lab; the reason no doubt is that unconsciously he thinks it mad. When I say that I can't buy a tin funnel for petrol in England you may realise my difficulty in getting metal and wood too. But is it not possible for you to send me one? I'd rather have one made by an expert than trust to luck and the village carpenter.

Sex Econ is spreading fast among the young here, but the scientists still explain away all your orgone work. Curiously enough, they never seem to pick out any specific points and say that you are wrong; they

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just dismiss the whole thing as pseudo-science. I want-to-know how science reacts to you in U.S.A.

Your observations on your son are most interesting. So far, no one has solved the problem of why kids cry so much up to 3 years old. I look forward to a book *Babies*, by W.R. Much needed. So far the only good one I know is Homer Lane's *Talks to Parents and Teachers*, 1925. He was an American and my first analyst. At [redacted] never discovered him.

I have just come back from a branch S'hill I founded in Essex,* and when I return to Leiston I think of taking a house halfway between the two schools and having a bit of private life in my old age. Perhaps have a family, although it is a bit late at 60 perhaps.

Thanks for the photos of mother and child. I look forward to meeting them both.

Orgonon
Rangeley, Maine

September 11, 1944

My dear Neill:

I have just received your letter of August 30th. It is too bad that you cannot provide the metal, and that I am unable at present to send you one of our accumulators. But I promise you to keep three accumulators—one for grown-ups, one for 6-10 year-old children, and one "shooter" for healing wounds—in readiness, to be sent off to you as soon as it is possible.

You ask about the reaction of science in the U.S.A. It is far better than in Europe; though they are still keeping silent, I know that they listen very attentively to what we have to say. Some, of course, are very fiendish, but other groups are expressing their admiration. A palpable indication was given when I was asked to join, together with my laboratories, the register of "American Men of Science" which registers only experimental natural science. But I would suggest that we do not wait for any approval, but simply go on with our work. Recently, I was informed by a medical doctor in Palestine that he has built an accumulator and has achieved already some very amazing results on sick people.

* Named "Kingsmuir," it was in the charge of Lucy Francis, who had been the nursery-school teacher at Summerhill. Elsewhere, Neill refers to her as "my infant mistress."

[1944]

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character, or in other words, the danger of an attack of the emotional pest on decent living. I assure you again that I don't want to interfere, but I feel that it is proper to tell this: I had many encounters with the emotional pest during the past 30 years. My experience taught me that the *only* way to get through in this terrible fight is to stand up fully for one's own way of life, no matter what public opinion thinks about it.

My experience tells me further that you endanger yourself when you appear uncertain and that you gain a great following and admiration just when, in a simple and frank manner, you proclaim that which you think right and true. When I was still working among the suppressed masses in Germany, I had the typical experience that the police never touch the one who was walking calmly among them and who would face them in a simple natural way. You can beat the pest to its death if you slow up the falsehood and if you stand up for the inner laws of decent human behavior as against the outer compulsory laws. That is all I can say.

see from
N. W. J. R.
to E. J. R.
is at
10/11

Forest Hills, New York

November 8, 1944

My dear Neill:

I liked your article very much, although I cannot agree with everything you say in it. It goes to print, of course.

I still wonder why the opinions of the various biologists are so important to you. Is that not an expression of your own insecurity in the matter? The Orgone work is being acknowledged here more and more.

I hope you were able to clear the situation in your school. It is sometimes very bad to permit co-workers to mingle into private affairs. It is none of their business.

As to the question of fasting: I have nothing to say, because I am lacking experience in this field. But I can imagine that it could do some good.

When you write the next time to Herbert Read, it would be wise to tell him to drop the expression "anarchism" which means to the feeling of the average man the absence of any kind of law and order.

As to the heavy way of saying things: I do not believe that this is my fault or that of the translator. There are definite scientific matters which cannot be described the way you describe a football game. And why

see also
p. 167

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[1944]

should the so-called little man be spared the trouble of taking his time and thinking a bit? It won't harm him to think things over.

c/o Constance
124 Wigmore Street, London W1

November 24, 1944

My dear Reich,

Your short letter fearing I was having difficulty certainly was right. Not easy to say what it has all been about. Much better now that I announced to the staff that I was to marry the young lady who is my secretary. I explained the situation; that I don't believe in marriage as it is today, but that professionally I would be in danger of extinction if I lived without marriage. During a war all the stiff-stomached people seem to flourish with their so-called moral and religious self-satisfactions, so that in the recent parliamentary discussion on the new Education Bill, most of the time was devoted to religious education which is to be applied to all schools now. This shows the tendency during a war when so many lose their loved men and grasp the hopes that a religion, almost dead in peace time, has to offer. So that I fear that any cheap newspaper has the power to damage any professional man who is "immoral" in not believing in marriage.

see Swift Book
of Weston Smith
in these initials p. 450

The situation isn't perfect. The love one, yes, but my wife has to be more than a success with herself and me . . . she has to succeed with herself, me, and the work, and here she is most capable, but she expects too high a standard of work, and says so and gets disliked. Her ambition is to go to New York and have a Reichian analysis as soon as she can get over.

We hope to return to our own home this summer. I am trying to find a cottage near the school where I can have my own domestic life (which I've never had before), and, most vital of all, have my own workshop from which tools won't be borrowed or stolen.

Someone told me with surprise that your *Function* book is in Cambridge University Library.

Am trying to stop smoking, not on moral grounds, no, I find that I always oversmoke, from morning till late at night, one pipe or cigarette after the other, up to an ounce daily. Result always a bad throat, cough, bad tongue, lack of energy. I find I want about two hours less sleep

non-smoking, have a better appetite, but feel the lack of something to do when I am working. I am not optimistic (or pessimistic) enough to burn my pipes yet.

All suffering from a sunless summer. We stored no orgones . . . the land here lacks lime and for four years we have drunk water as soft as rainwater, lovely to wash in but lacking in all salts. Welsh children with their soft water have bad teeth; so in parts of Scotland.

This is a dull letter. The sun doesn't shine at all. I hope to hear more of the son and his mother.

Forest Hills, New York

December 22, 1944

My dear Neill:

The most important thing in your letter of November 24th seems to me the question of what has to be considered a "marriage." Time and again, I and many others working in our field of endeavour are meeting not only the difficult problems of social sex-economy, but, in addition to that, also wrong concepts which have been adopted from a dying world by the very same people who profess to change this world.

You write in your letter: "I explained the situation, that I don't believe in marriage as it is today, but that professionally I would be in danger of extinction if I lived without marriage." I am sure you won't mind if I object to this statement, not as a person but as the representative of a definite type of work which tries to abolish social ideologies without basis in facts. *You are married when you live married, and not when you possess a certificate of marriage without being married.* In almost all of the states of the United States the fact of factual marriage is acknowledged in the form of the common-law marriage. The same is the case in France and was the case in Germany and Austria.

It is not a matter of "believing" in marriage or not. It is a matter of correcting the irrational and pestilent notions of sick people about what marriage is and what marriage is not. The pestilent ideology that you are married when you possess a certificate of marriage and that you are a criminal when you are *really* married but don't possess a certificate of marriage has been spread for decades and centuries by sick people, all over the world. It is not the opinion of the healthy average man. The piece of paper called a certificate has under present conditions only the function of protecting the woman in case the man does not wish to

acknowledge the child. But a certificate in itself does not constitute a marriage. There is nowhere a law which forbids actual marriage without a certificate for adult persons. And giving in to pestilent public opinion in such matters means to counteract yourself if you fight for human health. Furthermore, not the law but the marrying people declare whether they marry or not. The certificate only certifies this decision of the marrying people.

We do not force anyone to live married without a certificate, but, taking human freedom deadly seriously, we have to object most severely to the pestilent attitude of some kind of people to force married people to take out a certificate if they don't want to.

I firmly believe that if we do not take the principles of freedom deadly seriously, we shall not accomplish anything, and all the talk about democracy will remain idle chatter. The essence of the matter is that you were actually married to your wife when you felt married. Whether you take out a certificate or not is of no importance at all. And if you live practically and functionally married, then you believe in marriage whether you acknowledge it or not. I regret not to be able to be at a meeting in your school and to shake the conscience of those teachers of yours who did not take the trouble to think a matter through.

I wish you all good luck for the New Year, much success and as much joy as you can gather in these times of disaster.

1945

*Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales*

January 13, 1945

My dear Reich,

We seem sadly enough to be drifting apart on what are fundamental questions. Let me try to be elementary about this marriage business. I think you will agree that there are certain outer forms that we "respect" when we don't believe in them. I see no use for royalty, but when the band plays "God Save the King" in the theatre I stand up with the rest. On the street I sometimes raise my hat to a woman I don't like nor respect. In short, one has not the time and energy to protest against everything one disapproves of. We all try to keep from compromising on the big things while we compromise on the minor matters. To me the big thing in life is my work, and I shall compromise always enough to keep that work from being stopped. If an enemy wrote to the Ministry of Education saying that a head of a school was "living in sin" I think that his work would be in great danger of suppression. You rightly say that a certificate in itself does not constitute a marriage, but your idea of a marriage or my idea is a *Nebensache* [minor matter] when those in power have the right to kill our work. And my work is not primarily sex reform; it is work with children from ages of 4 and 5 upwards to adolescence. The new Education Act is making Private Schools come under the State, to be inspected and closed if inefficient. The other day the Education Minister in a speech said: "If a head of a private school were a drunkard we should close his school." He might have said: "If the head of a school is an immoral man, etc."

What you say about marriage I agree with, of course. When I wrote

you that I didn't believe in marriage (certificate etc.) I simply meant that there must be no legal binding for an emotional union, that indeed the very binding is dangerous as every chain is dangerous. I have no intention of getting married on their terms; any marriage for me will be on my own terms, and I can use the word in my own way while they can use it in their certificated way. But again to the point . . . to publish MY version of marriage to all and sundry would mean the end of my work. If you say: To hell with your work; it is more important to be a martyr for the cause of free marriage, then we differ much. But I don't think you do. What you don't know is life in England. Last generation two able politicians had to give up their parliamentary careers because of their sex life . . . Sir Charles Dilke and Parnell, both brilliant men. It is the same today. A banker here sees his wife go off with another man. He says he dare not divorce his wife, and I ask him why? "Because I shall lose my job," he says. "What!" I cry, "but you are the innocent party." "Makes no difference," he says. "To the bank I am mixed up in a divorce and that is enough to get me fired out." That is in Scotland. We are ruled by the 11th Commandment . . . Thou shalt not be found out, and a man can remain a great public figure if he has a dozen concubines . . . and keeps the fact dark. So that when I shall introduce a lady as my wife I shall be o.k. because the outer forms are satisfied, whereas if I boldly introduce a lady as "my lover" I am in danger of disaster. But enough of this.

You are a big puzzle, Mister Reich. You complain because I want scientists here to be interested in your work, but why the hell did you let Wolfe send all the literature? Dozens of journals and books. What did you expect me to do with them? Sell or give them to shopkeepers or to educated men? You suggest I give them to biologists because of my own lack of faith. *Aber, Mensch* [But, man], it isn't so easy as that. Some of it is just infantilism . . . "Here, you guys, look what a friend of mine has discovered! Clever of me to have such a friend, eh what?" I hope you aren't going to get solemn in your old age, Reich. You won't be successful until someone has made a joke about Orgones: then you will know that they have arrived for good.

Letter writing is so unsatisfactory. Let us wait to talk it all over later. All good things this year including peace.

Forest Hills, New York

February 9, 1945

My dear Neill:

I have your letter of January 13th. You agree with me in the main points, yet you state that we are drifting apart on fundamental questions. I don't think so. I would not compare the paramount question of factual and formal marriage with standing up in the theater when some hymn is played. The latter does not inflict severe psychic and organic diseases on millions and millions of people and does not interfere with your private life. I wish to state that I am not a sex reformer but a research physician who discovered the biophysical emotional background of biopathic diseases and who has to fight these diseases just as you have to work with children. Other physicians before me who discovered that cholera and typhoid were caused by bacteria in infected water etc. had willy-nilly to upset the old rules and to create new rules in order to abolish epidemics. I had the bad luck to hit upon an endemic epidemic of much larger dimensions and much more devastating effects. I mean the emotional plague. What you describe about the hypocrisy in social life in England is a part, a consequence, and a cause, of this general disease. I cannot bow to it without giving up my work. Please understand my point of view as well as my social task. I don't force anyone else to think as I do, but I refuse to be forced to think according to viewpoints which are wrong, sick and devastating.

I feel that you were a bit annoyed at me and I understand that I should not have mingled into the affairs of your school. And, of course, I never thought of "to hell with your work."

After 26 years of hard work and building up one group of co-workers after the other, I find myself again alone. This whole job is, I understand now, too much, too hard, too strictly against the established ways of thinking. I don't feel that I am a big puzzle. The big puzzle is in reality the fact that social non-sense of such dimensions as we both know can exist for centuries and millennia, go on and go on in spite of the hard and dangerous struggle and endeavors of many good and honest men. I am not resigning, but I am facing more and more the deep abyss which separates honest natural science from the political life of the masses of the people. I did not create this abyss, I suffer from it most severely and I realize to my deep sorrow that I cannot expect or demand that others should stand against the tide and endure it for decades as I did. If I had a school as you have, I would have to take the attitude of the

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are not prepared
to be to take on
entire social life

Education Department as you have to take it. I know how you feel about it. And I understand more and more why so many men who were forced or preferred to stick to the principle of some truth had to withdraw from social life completely. I am afraid that will be my fate in the end too. But please, don't blame me for that. As my friend I ask you to understand the position I am in.

In the meantime, my work in the laboratory goes on quietly, and brick is added to brick in the understanding of the tremendous puzzle of life. I don't care when and how many others will know it too. I can wait 200 and even 500 years. When you succeed in drawing biological energy from earth into water, testing it on an exact instrument; when you filter this highly charged water clean of particles; when you autoclave* it to make sure that no bacteria are alive; when you then freeze it and let it thaw again and you see life matter in that orgone water, then I beg you to understand, you have the right, more, the duty, not to care, because that amazing experiment explains how life originated on this planet. No other reward can compete with the satisfaction of decent and honest insights into the origins of what has been talked about for millennia in dark, mystical terms of poetry and philosophy.

Some weeks ago some biochemists of a famous research foundation visited my laboratory to see the bions. Their amazement, their humbleness and at the same time their fear of getting in touch with the life process showed me again where I stand and where my way is leading. Sex-economy of human beings, to be frank, has become rather unimportant, compared with the steady progress into the realms of the origin of life.

I really hope that we shall see each other soon and talk things over. A talk of a few hours will do away with many a misunderstanding.



Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

March 14, 1945

My dear Reich,

Your letter of Feb. 9 plus *Journals* to hand. Excellent number. I seem to see in this number an optimism, a "having arrived" sort of

* Autoclave, a strong, pressurized, steam-heated vessel used to establish special conditions for chemical reactions, for sterilization, and for cooking.

feeling, although in your letter you sound not so optimistic. And don't you go telling me lies about your being willing to wait for 500 years! You aren't willing; you want to see it come about NOW in your lifetime. Why not?

Our little argument about marriage was hopeless. One can't express oneself in letters especially when a censor is to read them, at least I can't. We shall clear all that up in half an hour's conversation. And even when we do differ it cannot touch the warm regard we have for each other. Our main difference is that you are more of a Brand* than I am; you demand All or Nothing and are brave enough to stick to that demand. I cannot as long as I have a school.

Here I have sad news for you. I find that I have lost interest in curative psychology, even the Veg. Therapy. Maybe after thirty years of it I want to live my own life in the few years left to me, for my life has been one long living for others—*Christus Motif, ja, aber* [the Christ theme, yes, but]—I find my interest is in creative work now. Drama. Wrote a four act psychological play which no theatre will look at here. We acted it ourselves (I act well, by the way) and it was a great success locally. I want to create in my workshop, nothing special, just playing with a lathe and tools. Want to dig my garden and experiment with manures etc. That with a satisfying love life. Also with the children I find myself always joying in the creative side . . .

It is sad I say. I get many letters from parents . . . "My boy of 15 is stealing and you are the only man in England who can cure him." And I can't any longer, for curing such meant having no life of my own, having my tools and clothes sold by crooks, my furniture damaged. I did it for many years but now younger men ought to be doing it.

We hope to get back to our own house this summer, and that will be a great delight. The place will have to be remade after the military use of it, and that will be good work, for it is my own house and anything I do is mine, not a landlord's as it is here. I plan to build a small house outside the main school and have my own private life at last. And a joy will be to get golf again. I have had none for five years and I love the game as much as you do skiing.

But I am not retiring from educational work . . . nay. I have much to give yet, but I want to give it to normal kids, not the misfits of life,

* The central character in Ibsen's play of the same name, who sacrificed all to principle.

[1945]

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who after all seldom come to much. Once I thought and said that the problem child was the one with originality and guts, but I was wrong. He is mostly the super-egoist, the player to the gallery. I have had dozens pass through S'hill but I can't think of one who later showed brilliance in work. I feel and have felt for years that it is better to concentrate on the normal ones who are worth the trouble.

U.S.A. education sounds to me in a bad way. I get letters now from well-known American teachers, all progressive, but again compromisers on the main things, timid of freedom, moral about sex. I look forward to having fun when I meet them over there.

Constance. *Etwas* [Something] wrong with her. Unhappy. But what is the answer to the fact that a woman of her age does not attract lovers? She came down to help me here for two months, but I found her almost supporting the malcontents among the staff.

Your boy looks a wonder child. With the same post came the photo of a boy the same age, son of a late girl on our staff. Your lad looks twice as intelligent and alive. Another Willy Reich—poor kid! . . .

Well, Reich, all my best wishes to you and your Frau. Sad to hear you say friends have drifted away in the war years. Perhaps not. When human contact begins again it may be like old times; the touch of the hand, the glance, the laugh can't be kept fresh by letters. I know that when we meet over a bottle of the best we'll pick up the threads of life where we dropped them.

Forest Hills, New York

April 2, 1945

My dear Neill:

This will be a short letter. I understand very well your desire to get away from curative psychology. For a few months now, I am bothered terribly by the same wish to escape the world of the neurotic and to make *Schluss* [an end] with my psychiatric nuisance work. I am trying to find a way to secure my living somehow, and to give all my time to the investigation of living matter. I would only continue to re-structure educators who are dealing with nursery schools. That is justified by the only hope we have, which is in the new-born babies.

I agree with your judgment on U.S.A. education. But there are great possibilities here for a break-through, but also, of course, for being hanged for the break-through.

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Our research has for nearly a year now dug deeply into the problems of growth of animals and plants with amazing results.

My boy is a living proof of the inherent decency and honesty of the life process, if it is not disturbed. I am quite sure that all children could be that way if they were left to themselves during their growth and if no neurotic relatives were around.

Summerhill School
Festiniog, North Wales

June 6, 1945

My dear Reich,

I got married in the usual way three weeks ago. The other way too difficult when my main fight is for education, and any other fight—for reform in marriage, etc—would weaken my position re education. To fight too many battles is to lose the lot. Marriage agrees with me, for I have gained so much weight that my trousers won't button on me now. I begin to look like a successful pork butcher. Have been east seeing my own school and we hope to move back this autumn at latest.

Philipson's idea of a Sex Econ. Conference* at S'hill is fine, yet perhaps it would be better in London where it would get a better chance of interesting people outside.

Flugel's new book *Man, Morals and Society* mentions you five times quite kindly, but does not grasp your fundamentals.

Philipson seems to say that the Norway crowd has disintegrated. A sad comedown from Veg. Ther. to shock treatment indeed. Can't think in what way old Raknes has gone off the lines. Most odd that he was allowed to practice for over four years in Oslo, isn't it? The world is going to be very interesting now that the first phase of the class war is over.† The real fight between fascism and socialism is next on the programme, and there will be some great events in Europe in our time. For myself I think that the next era will be communism leading slowly to universal liberalism without profit. A queer situation here in which

* Neill enclosed a letter from Tage Philipson, suggesting an international conference.

† Surprisingly, this is the only reference either Neill or Reich makes to the end of the war in Europe, an event to which both men had looked forward for so long.

[1946]

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All good fortune to you and Ilse and Peter in 1946. Lang may your lum reek . . . get a Scot to translate that one.

Forest Hills, New York

January 12, 1946

My dear Neill:

This is to answer your letter of December 27th. First of all, I would like to discuss the project of Eastmond and Day. It is a tough proposition to decide upon. I am a bad police dog, and I don't like to supervise. I would say, let them go ahead and let's hope for the best. There is only one wish I would insist upon being fulfilled. They should not use the words sex-economy or orgone biophysics in the title of their journal, unless they are ready to cooperate with the Orgone Institute very closely, as Dr. Hoppe* in Palestine and others in other countries do.

I believe you are still adhering to an old antithesis of capitalist world and socialist world, which is a dead past. You say your feelings are with Russia against the imperialist idea. I wonder why you don't see that Russia is as imperialistic as any capitalistic country could be (see Iran, Finland, etc.) and that the American government has divided up the big estates in Bavaria. I also believe that you underestimate the truly democratic trends and forces in the U.S.A., the hate of imperialism and dictatorship. I wish we had time to discuss these things thoroughly.

Take my belated congratulations to the 25th birthday of Summerhill. I wonder whether you know how important Summerhill is, and how much more important it will become in the future. I don't believe that there will be a communist regime in the whole world. It is not honest, and will die out just because of that.

Please write soon again, and let me have a snapshot of yourself and your school.

* Walter Hoppe, German physician who had immigrated to Israel.

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Forest Hills, New York

January 21, 1946

My dear Neill:

A few days ago I received a letter from Eastmond concerning their plan to issue a periodical *Work Democracy*. Of course, I like their idea and I said so. They can have all my support. But the danger is that not working practically on sex-economic educational and social problems, they may slip into ideological, or still worse, political talking of the old type.

Now I must take your time for something else that concerns not only me, but everybody who is in touch with me and my work: a meeting with a federal judge at the office of naturalization in Brooklyn. It brought again to my consciousness something of which I have been aware for a long time: that my life is swinging back and forth between police actions on the one hand and honorary memberships and future Nobel prizes on the other hand. It is a rather interesting, though dangerous mixture.

When I received the document that conveys upon me the honorary membership of the International Mark Twain Society, I felt like the criminal Huckleberry Finn. I felt that I had done wrong in accepting or receiving this document of honor, that the illustrious gathering of well-known names on the letterhead would soon feel embarrassed about this new and strange honorary member.

I have to confess that I am not what is called a solid member of good society or a "good citizen." My name, though beloved in some quarters, is hated and detested in others. When I see a policeman, my heart beats faster, as if I had just stolen silver spoons, or as if I were a boy who had just punctured the tires on the car of the older brother of a bad friend.

The other day I stood before the bar of a judge in Federal Court of the Naturalization Office of the U.S.A. I felt afraid and spiteful. The judge, a young ardent officer of the law, eager to gain his spurs early, recriminated me for certain books which have been seen or found in my library; books by Lenin and Trotsky. "And what has politics to do with biology?" he asked. I could not tell him that if you are a writer on human affairs and conflicts, you must have read the writings of these two bad citizens of the world! I felt guilty because the offense was my silent thought that a judge of the Federal Court of the U.S.A. should not ask such silly questions.

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To be short: I am an embarrassing fellow. I might not turn out to be the Honorary Fellow to some after all.

Imagine a fiery horse racing over meadows enjoying a sunny morning in the spring. It jumps over high bushes and broad brooks. It overcomes seemingly unsurmountable obstacles. But behind a small bush far in the corner of the field, well hidden and protected, a small stick of 20 inches brings the horse to fall. It breaks its neck.

That's the course of life. Imagine now the honorary colleague of Einstein and Eisenhower breaking his neck in such a manner! To fall over a small, ambitious judge of a small court who does not know what a library is used for.

Honored and esteemed in the highest terms in many circles, the danger of a new mess-up of things, emigration, homelessness, is on the horizon again because the word communism is associated with emotions which cannot be handled medically in a court. To explain to the average mind the difference between the intended true democracy of Lenin and the sham democracy brought about by the irrationality of the masses is, I think, quite beyond present possibilities.

Maybe that my life, spent hitherto in about 10 changes of domicile, makes me look at things in this manner. It is not the troubles of life but the irrationality of procedures which I cannot overcome and which takes my guts.

*Summerhill School
Leiston, Suffolk*

January 26, 1946

My dear Reich,

Yours yesterday. I had often wondered what was happening about your naturalisation, and feared difficulties, but kept saying to myself: "When the world acknowledges the Orgone, R. will be safe in any and every country as a famous discoverer." I have become impatient waiting for your public success, and I confess that sometimes Mr Doubt would whisper in my ear: "Perhaps Reich has got hold of the wrong end of the stick with his new physics." But the doubt never lasted more than a moment or two.

What puzzles me is how the learned men of U.S.A. come to reward you with their gifts of membership of exclusive societies? It means you are known by the few who have no political influence. I think of my own

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case. I am known to the intelligentsia of this country; recently a few well-known newspapers have called me a genius. But if I had to appear in court on some or any charge, financial or criminal or what not, I'd be "a schoolmaster Alexander Neill etc." The judge and jury wouldn't know my name, and if the enemy counsel quoted from my books they would certainly not be in sympathy with my views. I take it the case with you is similar. Any hostile person can condemn you out of your own mouth as seen in your writings. It sounds insane that any judge should challenge a man for having Lenin and Trotsky books in his house. A wise judge would say that these two authors cancel each other out! You say I am out of date in my opinion that the old set-up Communism versus Capitalism is still alive. If it is dead why does your judge see danger in your library? Odd that your judge should fix on the political side, ignoring the fact that your sex-economy views are of greater moment than mere political set-ups.

After six years in N.Y. have you no friends at the top? It is usually easier to deal with a lord than with his butler. A way must be found. You can't go moving to another country which will get all your dossier before you arrive. I here admit a daydream . . . maybe after all Reich will come to live in London. I wish you could, but not as a compulsory expelled man from U.S.A.

Forest Hills, New York

January 29, 1946

My dear Neill:

I just received your letter of January 10th. I am, of course, strictly against my books being published by political organizations. That does not mean that I have anything personally against anarchists, communists or even individual fascists. You find useful and useless ones in all camps.

I am glad that your book is selling well. It deserves it.

Re your trip to the U.S.A.: I would suggest that you hook up with the Hamilton School in New York which could arrange a leisure-full lecture tour in the U.S. I would advise very much against the typical American touring. I am still longing for a good long chat with you.

[1948]

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Summerhill School
Leiston, Suffolk

February 24, 1948

My dear Reich,

I wish I could grasp what your attitude to publicity really is. I see that you don't want me to try to interest any scientist in the work. Good. I got that. But in my book I've given a list of your books and where they can be got in London. Is that allowed or isn't it? Let me know so that I can cut it out of the proofs if you want me to. You say: Let them come to us, not the other way round, but still you do send your books out to be reviewed by scientific journals.

Re our trip to U.S.A. nothing is settled yet. I'm sure we can fix up about living when we come, but I am alarmed about your no longer drinking whiskey, for with my non-smoking and your non-drinking that talk in your cabin from 4 p.m. onwards is going to be a bit dull.

The *Little Man*. I can't make up my mind about it . . . I advised waiting publication because I thought that if the State was against you owing to the Brady article, the *Little Man* might play into their hands, for they might cry: "See, this man is mad; he thinks we are little men and implies that he is a big man. The Brady woman was right, so let us crush this man."

You say I still underestimate your recognition. I possibly do because you are always alarming me about all the enemies and their work, giving me the impression that the chief ones who "recognize" you are the FBI, the Food & Drug Dept, etc. You tell me more about your enemies than your friends, and in summer actually gave me concern that the Ku Klux Klan or hired gangsters might invade your Orgonon.

My book* is being printed but it may take a year to get it published. Already I want to change what I wrote, and in a year's time it will be painful to me to look at it.

Had a good lecture on "Sex and the Adolescent" last week. Over 200 people were turned away. Haire in conversation at his house said that you haven't given proof that cancer has any connection with sex repression.

Ena and I find that the chief result of the Akku in cases of grippe is

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the curing of the head pains, and it seems to stop the nasal cold from going down to the chest.

Worried about my school staff. It seems that work is impossible without having trouble with staff . . . unless one is a disciplinarian who will chuck them out at the first sign of trouble.

[Reich never sent the following.]

Forest Hills, New York

February 28th, 1948

My dear Neill:

I just received your letter of February 24th. I think it will be important that I clear up a few points:

Of course, I want you to announce my books wherever and whenever you can. But that has nothing to do with trying to *convince* people and to beg them to accept my theories. You only become saddened and disillusioned if you do this. But I never meant to say that our friends and co-workers should not do all they can to make our work known.

I do not think that our discussions would be dull if you don't smoke and I don't drink, because I do not believe that our discussions depended in their subjects and luminosity on smoking and drinking alone.

The most complicated matter I have to deal with in my relation to you is the question of my recognition. When I said in my letter that you underestimate the actual recognition which I enjoy, I meant the following: To my mind, a man is recognized in the strict sense of the word, when he made a very great discovery—as a matter of fact, one of the greatest in the history of science—and when, accordingly, he is talked about everywhere in scientific, educational as well as political circles. Your idea of recognition seems to be that a man should be adored, or receive prizes. I don't think this is true recognition. They are meting out prizes and recognition today to men who did not accomplish anything, except complying with the rules. I would not like to be in their shoes, and I would not like to be mistaken for one of them. To have so many enemies as I have, alone proves that the world knows what I am doing, namely overturning a heap of stale and wrong self-damaging beliefs about nature and man.

The "State" is not against me. There are a few pestilent officials, who are a disgrace to the American administration, who are against me. If

* Neill sent Reich a copy of *The Problem Family* in manuscript. In his diary, Reich comments: "A very good book written by a child 64 years old; honest; playful; frank; full of love for children."

the State were against me, it would not, after so many thorough investigations of my activities have admitted me to the country and given me citizenship as well as recognition of my research activities, exemplified by the charter from New York State.

I feel most humble when I compare myself with the discovery I have made. Then I don't feel a big man, but a curious child which wonders and ponders. I feel humble and utterly simple at any simple honest question my child asks me. But when a pestilent, little fellow who shouts "Heil" or "Rot [Red] Front" all his life, accomplishing nothing, steps on my toes in order to annoy me, then I know how big I am compared with the rat.

Of course, I am telling you more about my enemies than about my friends. My friends don't endanger or impede my work, only the enemies do and, therefore, they are more important. And to count representatives of the Russian red fascism among one's enemies is quite an honor. Why should I go around bragging that at my 40th birthday I was hailed at a dinner as another Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Darwin and Galileo taken together? I don't find much joy in such comparisons, since I am only Wilhelm Reich and that is sufficient for me. And people always try to find out about me by comparing me with this or that great one, in order to feel safe, instead of really grasping what I accomplished. Why should I brag about Freud telling already in 1925 that I was the best head in the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society? Or should I go around telling people that about 300 universities and libraries are using my books to teach people to think straight? Or should I go around bragging that a recent bibliography, compiled from our archives, comprises some 40 tightly typed pages of books and magazines who wrote about me and my work? Or shall I go around telling all people that in France a medical journal called me the continuator of Freud? Or shall I publish the fact that there is scarcely a scientific or intellectual circle that does not talk about me and my work, in America and abroad?

The true recognition I enjoy is the fact that I am master over a vast field of natural functions, that millions of human lives depend on my knowledge and on the way how I apply this knowledge in the present and in the future. Is not your great concern about my being recognized partly due to true friendship, but partly also due to a wrong perspective in truly important human relations? When you asked that professor of psychology whom you met at my lab last summer, how she came to hear about me, I know that she felt most peculiar about it. And I think that you too felt peculiar when your audience in New York broke out in

cheers when you mentioned my name. I am writing all this to help you change your ideas about my status in this world. It is not lack of recognition, but too much and a too responsible situation which prevent me from making full use of my great social influence.

A great recognition lies in the fact that I find myself together with men whom the world hails today as their true sages and who have been persecuted, burned and slandered all through their lives. *This* is the recognition I enjoy. I would not give one iota of it for recognition which a Norman Haire could bestow on me. Don't you see that people like Norman Haire, who claim that I have not given proof that cancer has any connection with sex repression, belong to a dying world, to an old, worn-out group of people who did not dare to touch the natural sources of life, and instead brought phalluses, condoms, perverted homosexuality, and bananas and cucumbers before the world as the true issue of human love life. Do you want me to beg or to ask for their recognition? Is not the fact that my orgone can stop a nasal cold from going down to the chest more important than all the brass-heads and the academic fools of the world taken together?

I hope you don't mind, Neill, when I spoke out this time about my true feelings. The cosmic orgone energy will be enjoyed, handled and studied by the human generations of the next few thousand years, when no trace will have remained of any one of present people whose recognition today is demanded. And, therefore, my *Little Man* will be published, come what may, state or not state, GPU [Russian Secret Police] or FBI, this or that pestilent gossip. The orgone will exist and function, discovered by man and put to use for the human race when it will govern itself. And the mention and the memory of a dictatorial state official will be a painful and shameful one.

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Forest Hills, New York

March 3, 1948

My dear Neill:

I had written a long letter to you concerning the question of the recognition I am enjoying. But I decided not to send it off, and to keep it for a personal discussion this summer.

I want you, of course, to announce my books whenever and wherever you can, but that has nothing to do with trying to convince people who