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Green, James Lee

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SUMMERHILL MOVEMENT: 1916-1971

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1982

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A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SUMMERHILL MOVEMENT: 1916-1971

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

James Lee Green, B.S., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1982

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The History of the American Summerhill Society.
Educational policy making in private schools.
The history of higher education.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a descriptive history of the American Summerhill movement, and to accomplish that aim this work has been divided into two distinct sections. The first part studies the antecedents of the Summerhill movement by examining the written response from 1916 to the early 1960's in the United States to the published writings of A. S. Neill, founder of the Summerhill School, Leiston, England. The second section, and the major portion of the dissertation, is a history of the Summerhill Society, 1961-1971, an organization that was dedicated to promoting Neill's ideas and founding a Summerhill School in the United States.

This work thus spans approximately the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, from 1916 to 1971, using the latter date, in which the Summerhill Society ceased to exist, as a logical concluding point. It is organized chronologically, beginning with a survey chapter, number Two, for the reader who is unfamiliar with Neill's life or work. This chapter describes the historical development of Neill's thought, and it provides a brief summary of his mature ideas, as best expressed in his most important book: *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing.*
Chapters Three and Four examine the American written response to Neill's published writings beginning with 1916 and concluding with 1962, the latter being two years after Neill's most widely known book, *Summerhill*, was published in the United States. For many who might have associated A. S. Neill only with the liberal decade of the 1960's, it may be a revelation to learn that he had actually established the Summerhill School in 1924 and that he had first been published in this country as early as 1916—and that some Americans were aware of his work even at those earlier dates in his career. The sources for these two chapters include the published writings of A. S. Neill, as well as numerous book reviews in American publications of his major works. Notice is also taken of those articles either by or about Neill in American periodicals. Although much of these two chapters represents a description of an American written response to Neill's own writings, there is also an attempt to describe Neill's contacts with various Americans in that time period and to assess whether these contacts widened the American awareness of his work.

In Chapters Five and Six, the history of the American Summerhill Society is told. The creation of the Society and its early years is recounted in Chapter Five. The final chapter examines in depth the many internal conflicts which were a major factor in the demise of the Society, yet also surveys the scope and nature of its more successful activities. In the
conclusion of this work, we focus on the final collapse of the Summerhill Society in 1970/71 and attempt to explain why this took place.

The sources for Chapters Five and Six consist primarily of the Papers of the American Summerhill Society (see bibliography for the general nature of these documents), now entrusted to this author for use in this work and eventually to be deposited in a major research library. The Papers, which were generally unorganized, have been collated chronologically. When specific documents have been used, they have been referred to by the titles and dates listed on them rather than any archival numerical system. These papers are supplemented by taped interviews, other conversations, and correspondence with several former leaders of the Society. The reader will note that there were some unavoidable gaps in the research materials relating to the history of the Society. The Papers are very complete for some years of its existence and quite scanty for other years. Specifically, they are rather extensive for both the early and late 1960's, but incomplete for the mid-1960's, especially 1964. Likewise, just as not all of the Society's Papers were available, so, too, it has been impossible to contact all of the former leaders of the Society and thus there is more emphasis placed on the roles played by those who were located.

The Summerhill movement was only part of an overall free school movement which flourished in the 1960's and early 70's.
This study is not intended to treat the entire free school movement, for an understanding of which the reader may wish to consult Kozol's *Free Schools*, Graubard's *Free the Children*, Edmonds' "Definition of the Free Schools Movement in America, 1967-1971" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1971). Nor does this study attempt to analyze philosophically or conceptually Neill's educational philosophy, or attempt to prove the validity or practicality of his theories. The origins of Neill's thought, briefly surveyed in Chapter Two, have already been quite well studied by Ray Hemmings in *Children's Freedom: A. S. Neill and the Evolution of the Summerhill Idea*. To repeat, this is an historical account of the spread of A. S. Neill's ideas in the United States and the subsequent development of a Summerhill movement, culminating in the history of the American Summerhill Society.

Late in his life when Neill was world famous, he was persuaded to write an autobiography in which he humorously commented on his lack of immortality: "One day, some history of education will have a footnote about a man called S. A. O'Neill, an Irishman who ran a school called Summerville, and I won't be there to have a laugh."¹ The joke has a wry truth to it, but certainly the work of the British educator Hemmings, just referred to, will prevent the outcome Neill has predicted. However, more than two decades after Neill's *Summerhill* was published in the United States to wide acclaim, no American has yet undertaken to study the response in this country to Neill's ideas. In fact, only one dissertation even discusses Neill,
and then this is merely as a small part of an overall assessment of nine different educational reformers of the 1960's. Likewise only one dissertation even examines the theories and practices of a specific Summerhill-type school in this country. Most importantly, there has been absolutely no scholarly work at all about the history of the American Summerhill Society. Now is an appropriate time for this historical study. As we enter the 1980's, it seems increasingly apparent that the mood of the nation regarding education has taken a more conservative stance, in comparison with the 1960's and early 1970's. One can read in the major news magazines stories about the current failure of American public schooling. One such cover story attempted to explain why teachers were unable to teach effectively and thus students were unable to learn. In part, the reason for the above problem was attributed to the use of innovative classroom methods. The New Math, open classrooms, and the look-say approach to reading (which had replaced the more traditional phonics approach) were all found to be guilty culprits in lowering the academic competencies of students. According to this 1980 article, what was the solution? Reflective of the current back-to-basics movement, the suggestion was made for a return to an emphasis on basic academic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing. Ironically, when Erich Fromm wrote the Foreword to Summerhill twenty years ago, he also noted a rising conservative trend in education which was opposed to progressive education: in two decades, we have
come full circle. In the currently deepening conservative atmosphere, there is the danger that the educational innovations of the Sixties, including those inspired by Summerhill, will only be remembered in parodies, or worse yet, completely forgotten.
CHAPTER 1--Footnotes


4See "Help! Teacher Can't Teach!" Time, June 16, 1980, pp. 54-63.
CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF NEILL'S THOUGHT
AND A SUMMARY OF HIS MAJOR IDEAS

A famous American author, the late Henry Miller, once wrote of A. S. Neill and his work in these terms, "I know of no educator in the Western world who can compare to A. S. Neill. It seems to me that he stands alone.... Summerhill is a tiny ray of light in a world of darkness." At the time of his death in late September of 1973, Neill enjoyed a worldwide reputation. He was primarily known as the founder and Headmaster of the Summerhill School, located in Leiston, Suffolk, England, and as the author of the best selling volume also entitled Summerhill. His writings, which totaled twenty books and numerous articles, have reached millions of people. In 1970 alone, Summerhill was required reading in an estimated six hundred university courses and in the previous year, 1969, it sold over 200,000 copies, which was an increase of 100% over sales in 1968. By 1975, it had sold over a million copies. Indicative of the global interest in this book is the fact that it has been translated into French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Hebrew, Finnish, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Greek, and Croatian; and, as noted by Neill, his works have been read by people in North and South America,
Europe, Africa, and Asia. Only in the Communist world were Neill's writings not widely available. In addition, a short film about Summerhill was produced by the Canadian Film Board and used in American college classrooms as well as elsewhere, but it is probably impossible to calculate how many people have viewed it. Because of his fame, it is not surprising to learn that Neill was the recipient of a great deal of fan mail, nor that he could report as many as "two thousand visitors coming to Summerhill each year." Still, for many educators now working within the context of the conservative 1980's, Neill's life and work may be relatively unknown. To introduce the reader to A. S. Neill, this chapter undertakes to review historically the most important sources of his educational theories, as well as summarize his mature thought as it was best known in the late 1960's.

Although Neill enjoyed worldwide recognition toward the end of his life in the early 1970's, his origins were quite humble. Born on October 17, 1883, in Forfar, Scotland, Neill spent his childhood primarily in a rural setting, in a village where his father was the schoolmaster. Neill has written that, as a boy, he was not a very promising student. If so, that fact may have contributed to his father's apparent dislike of him, which produced in Neill a fear of his father. His mother, who was a housewife, had been a teacher and Neill felt especially attached to her. Both parents were class-conscious and strove for middle class values, which would distance themselves
from their working class backgrounds. For instance, in his autobiography Neill noted that his mother could not ever forgive his paternal grandfather for refusing to wear a proper collar, but instead choosing to wear about the neck a black handkerchief. For her, such neckware was an embarrassing betrayal of his lower class origins.6 Permeating this childhood environment was a rigid, traditional Calvinist religion.

As will be seen later, it was not until Neill attended Edinburgh University that he first became exposed to a wider world. Of course it could be assumed that Neill's radical ideas were in part a rebellion against his father. As Neill stated, "Many, many times I have been asked how I became a reformer in education. Was it rebellion against my village dominie father with his tawse?"7 In response, Neill was uncertain, yet he noted that his "brothers and sisters did not become rebels"8 even though they partook of the same "general environment common to the whole family."9 Both Ray Hemmings and Joseph Kirschner have correctly noted that the dedication to Neill's first book, A D ominie's Log, tends to disprove the above thesis. It reads, in its entirety:

"As a boy I attended a village school where the bairns chattered and were happy. I trace my love of freedom to my free life there, and I dedicate this book to my former dominie, my father."10

If one is searching for an object of rebellion, one might better focus on Calder, a very strict disciplinarian who was the headmaster of Kingskettle School, where Neill taught for three years early in his career from 1903 to 1906.
In an interesting article, entitled "A. S. Neill and the Anarchist Tradition," Joseph Kirschner attempted to locate the sources of Neill's libertarian ideas. He felt that one source may have been the socialistic unionism of Scottish coal miners, which developed during the 1880's and 90's at the time of Neill's boyhood. It is true that several members of Neill's family were miners, including all of his paternal uncles and his grandfather, William MacNeill. However, this theory is not totally convincing. In the first place, by the time Neill was old enough to be conscious of his grandfather's existence, the old man had already left mining and entered another line of work and, furthermore, Neill does not seem to have ever been close enough to his paternal uncles to have imbibed any radical sentiments from them. In his autobiography, Neill does not even mention his relatives as factors which influenced his thinking. Kirschner is probably more nearly correct in assuming that the time Neill spent in Edinburgh and London, first as a student and then as a journalist, was instrumental in liberalizing his thought. Unfortunately, neither the debate over Neill's supposed rebellion against his father nor a survey of those factors which may have influenced the development of Neill's overall liberalism can provide us with any concrete answers to the following more specific question: What were the sources of Neill's radical ideas in education?

To answer this question, one may possibly turn to Neill's writings. In his long autobiography, Neill devoted
an entire chapter to describing his relationship with just
two men--Homer Lane and Wilhelm Reich. This is indicative of
the fact that he felt these two men exerted the greatest impact
on the development of his educational ideas. Because of the
importance of these men to Neill, it is imperative that we more
closely examine their lives and work, as well as their influ-
ence on shaping Neill's educational theories.

Of these two men, Homer Lane exerted a greater influ-
ence on Neill and, in fact, may have been the single greatest
influence of his life. Born in 1875 in New England, Lane
attended the Sloyd Training College in Boston, which special-
ized in manual education. "Sloyd," the Finnish word for
"skill," refers to a "progressive" movement at the turn of the
century, which related character development to respect for
physical labor. The most significant feature of the Sloyd
method was the lack of coercion, which meant that children were
not forced to work or to learn. After receiving this training,
Lane began his career by developing manual-training programs
for both public and private schools in Southborough, Massachu-
setts. In 1902, Lane went to Detroit where he first served as
a manual-training teacher in the public schools and then became
superintendent of the city playground. In the latter position,
he observed that freedom, which was allowed children on the
playground, resulted in the expression of their basic goodness
and more positive qualities, such as resourcefulness. This
was a view of the child which was often unseen in the tradi-
tional classroom. From his observations, he theorized that
the perversion of young children into juvenile delinquents was due to coercion which denied them freedom. By freedom, Lane did not mean the conditional, illusionary freedom which Jean Jacques Rousseau had described in *The Emile*, in which Émilie was actually covertly controlled by his tutor. Partly because of his unorthodox thinking, Lane was forced to resign his position in 1906. In that same year, Lane was offered the superintendency of the Ford Republic, also in Detroit, which was a newly created residential facility for boys who were in trouble. It was at the Ford Republic that Lane's theories about freedom were translated into the practice of self-government at the institution by the children. After six years of service to this institution, Lane departed the United States and arrived in England in 1912, where he was invited by a group of prominent English reformers, including the ninth Earl of Sandwich and Lord Lytton, to help design an institution for delinquent teenagers. The end result was the Little Commonwealth, a co-educational camp located on a farm in Dorset, which was partially modeled on the Ford Republic. It opened in 1913 with Lane as the superintendent and operated for the next five years.

Toward the end of the existence of the Little Commonwealth, Neill took advantage of the close proximity of the artillery school where he was stationed at Trowbridge in Wiltshire to the Little Commonwealth in Dorset and arranged for a weekend visit in 1917. Just the year before, he had learned of Lane through a correspondent who had earlier read Neill's first
book, *A Dominie's Log*. The meeting between Neill and Lane was a turning point in Neill's life. Prior to this time, he had seemed quite certain of the problems associated with the traditional authoritarian methods of relating to children in the classroom, but he was vague about solutions. Recalling his first meeting with Lane, Neill wrote, "I had written two books before meeting Lane--books groping for freedom. Lane showed me the way, and I have always acknowledged it. To me, he was a revelation." At that meeting, Neill persuaded Lane to allow him to work at the Little Commonwealth, after he had finished his military service. Upon Neill's discharge and after a period of convalescence, he attempted to re-contact Lane in 1918, but then learned that the Little Commonwealth had been closed that same year due to a scandal involving Lane. Although the charges against Lane were never proven, nevertheless an investigator sent by the Home Office ordered the school's Committee to replace Lane. The Committee, which included Sandwich, Lytton, and Lady Balfour, were loyal to Lane and refused to comply with the order, choosing instead to close the Little Commonwealth.

The closure of the Commonwealth prevented Neill from ever working there, but it did not end his initial relationship with Homer Lane, who remained in England. In 1918 Lane went to London, where he lectured and engaged in psychoanalysis as a lay practitioner. At the same time, Neill found a teaching position in the same city at the famous King Alfred School, which had a very progressive reputation. Neill had learned of this school
and its headmaster, John Russell, through the same woman who had first informed him about Homer Lane. For approximately the next two years, Lane served as Neill's analyst, but even more significantly he was his close friend. As Hemmings has noted, Neill's close personal relationship with Lane even extended to his family. Two of Lane's children were enrolled at the King Alfred School and one of them, a boy named Allen, was in Neill's class. On Sunday evenings, Neill had dinners with the family at their home. Although, at this time Neill considered himself a disciple of Lane and their relationship was very close, disputes did occasionally arise between the two, such that the analysis was temporarily suspended at one point. In 1921, this direct relationship, although not their actual friendship, ended when a change in Neill's career took him to Europe for a few years. Lane continued to practice in London until 1925, when his career was finally ended by yet another scandal. He had been accused of seducing a woman patient, while concurrently official opinion had been mounting against his unconventional practices in psychoanalysis. Within this climate, he was brought to trial on an unrelated technicality, failure to re-register as an alien, and was deported from England that same year. Six months later in Paris, Lane was dead.

Neill felt that Lane's death had a profound impact on him, because he thought that his association with Lane during that time had been so strong, that he was unable to freely undertake his own original work until after Lane's death. There had
been the psychological problem of transference between the patient and the analyst. Thus, during their association, Neill had apparently felt compelled to seek Lane's opinion before taking any action. Hemmings has even suggested that Neill may have stayed in Europe in the early 1920's in order to break his dependence upon Lane. Even after Lane's death, his influence was concretely evident in the late 1920's at Neill's Summerhill School in Leiston. Hemmings has noted that, "Summerhill was in fact seen by the disciples [of Lane] as one concrete continuation of the dead Master's work, and at times during the last years of the decade they would meet at Leiston for weekends and Neill would hold informal seminars based on some notes of Lane's that he had inherited. The staff of the school would be present at these gatherings and so the doctrine would be fed back into the conduct of the school." On the staff at the time was Leslie Morton, an historian who taught there for one year in 1927, and he has also suggested that Homer Lane's influence was most evident at Summerhill during the late Twenties. So, it appears that even after Lane's death Neill's development of the Summerhill School in the mid- and late Twenties was not completely his own original work. As Hemmings points out, Lane's death possibly had not freed him to do as much original work in the late Twenties as Neill later thought.

The impact of Lane upon the development of Neill's thinking was immense, and Neill has always acknowledged this intellectual debt. As early as the writing of A Dominie Dismissed (1916), thus even before Neill personally met Lane
or had fully assimilated Lane's theories, he was referring to "the Christlike experiment of Homer Lane to encourage me." Many years later, in 1969, Neill began the introduction to the American edition of *Talks to Parents and Teachers* by noting that, "Homer Tyrell Lane, of all the men I have known, was the one who inspired me most."18

Exactly what intellectual baggage did Neill gain from Lane? Central to Neill's inheritance was the idea of acceptance or as Neill quoted Lane, "'You must be on the side of the child.'"19 This did not mean a mushy, sentimental love, but instead involved giving the child a feeling that he was understood and accepted. In the terminology of American Progressive educators, this would have meant child-centered education. In part, Neill's child-centered approach stemmed from his belief that the child was inherently good and definitely not a product of original sin. This belief was derived from Lane's concept of original virtue, which suggested that a child without adult interference would naturally choose to be good. From Lane, Neill also borrowed the idea of self-government, which later became an essential feature of the Summerhill School. Self-government meant school meetings in which important issues were handled and each child and adult had a voice and a vote. Lane also introduced Neill to child psychology, which caused Neill to begin to search more closely for the motivations governing a child's behavior. This led Neill, like Lane, to place more emphasis on the child's emotions than on the development of his intellect,
thus resulting in a de-emphasis on classroom academics. Even in certain specifics, such as both men's negative opinion of the Montessori method, Neill may have borrowed from Lane. Quite clearly the impact of Lane's thinking upon the development of Neill's educational ideas was immense.

Although of less importance than Lane's impact on Neill in the 1920's, Wilhelm Reich was still influential primarily by reinforcing Neill's thinking in the following two decades. Born in 1897 in a part of the Austrian Empire, Reich became a medical student after World War I at the University of Vienna, where he first became interested in psychiatry in 1919. From 1922 to 1930, he worked with Sigmund Freud at the Psychoanalytic Polyclinic in Vienna, but near the end of the 1920's differences began to arise between them. Essentially, Freud's thinking was socially conservative, whereas Reich was developing an interest in Marxism as well as participating in activist politics. Eventually, Reich's thinking produced a synthesis of Freudian and Marxian ideas. In 1930, Reich went to Berlin where he established, under the auspices of the Communist Party, an organization called the German Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics. While working for this organization, Reich spent the next few years traveling throughout Germany, both lecturing and establishing sex hygiene centers. By 1933, the rise of the Nazis had forced him to move his work to Copenhagen. It was also during the early 1930's that Reich's Freudo-Marxian synthesis came under heavy attack by both the orthodox
Communists and the Freudians. The Communists became displeased with his connection of sex and politics, while the orthodox Freudians felt that he had become too politically oriented. Almost at the same time, he was expelled from both the Communist Party and the International Psychoanalytic Association.

From 1933 to 1939, Reich continued his work in Scandinavia, where A. S. Neill first met him in 1937 in Oslo, Norway. Reich attended a lecture by Neill at Oslo University. Upon learning of Reich's presence, Neill telephoned and suggested a meeting between them, for he had just enthusiastically finished reading Reich's Mass Psychology of Fascism. They dined, conversing late into the night, and Neill became fascinated with Reich's work. Reflecting back upon the importance of their first meeting, Neill wrote, "'Reich, I said, 'you are the man for whom I have been searching for years, the man to link the soma with the psyche. Can I come and study under you?'"20 It seems that Reich's interest in discovering a biological basis for neurosis was somewhat related to Neill's own earlier search for causal links between the body and the mind of problem children. For the next two years, from 1937 to 1939, Neill spent his vacations in Norway, both studying and undergoing therapy with Reich. In 1939, the outbreak of war in Europe forced Reich, like many other Jews, to emigrate to the United States, where he eventually acquired citizenship and continued his work until his death in 1957. Their friendship, which had begun in Norway, was sustained and nurtured throughout Reich's
life in America, via visits and correspondence. Later in this work, the story of Reich's career in the U.S. and his long, personal relationship with Neill will be further elaborated, since it had some bearing on the reception of Neill in this country in the late 1940's.

To summarize Reich's original thinking and its impact on Neill is very difficult, because his inter-disciplinary theories spanned at least the fields of psychiatry, biology, physics, sociology, and political science. In *A Primer of Libertarian Education*, Joel Spring has provided a concise, useful summary of Reich's ideas as they affected Neill. Reich was critical of the authoritarian institutional framework of twentieth century society and felt that the practice of Freudian psychology was irrelevant to changing that society. For him, the source of the problem lay in repressive child rearing practices, which produced adults with authoritarian attitudes, which in turn supported authoritarian governments. Sexual repression was at the heart of repressive child rearing practices and resulted in adults who would be unable to experience pleasure, which Reich equated with satisfactory sex. Such adults would become aggressive and cruel, and prone to authoritarianism. For example, he connected the rise of Fascism with the repressive nature of the German family.

Operating as he did within the shadow of rising Nazi Germany, Reich felt that the problems of a sick authoritarian society, caused by widespread sexual repression, were too
extensive to be cured by individual therapy and that the only hope for curing society was in the prevention of such repression. In part, this was to be accomplished by abolishing "what Reich considered its [society's] most repressive institutions: compulsive marriage and the patriarchal family." What is meant by the patriarchal family is quite clear. By "compulsive marriage," Reich was referring to a societally determined institution in which it was demanded that all sexual relations were to be confined and that marriage was to be a lifelong commitment. In addition to destroying these repressive institutions, curing society would require the granting of freedom to children and adolescents, including sexual freedom. Ultimately, this would produce a society of self-regulated individuals, who would be free of hostility, who would own themselves, and who would seek pleasure by giving happiness to others. If Reich's preventive measures seem rather theoretical, the political platform of his German Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics was more explicit. It advocated the following:

"the abolition of laws against homosexuality and abortion, the changing of divorce and marriage laws, the issuance of free contraceptives and birth-control advice, health protection of mothers and children, abolition of laws prohibiting sex education,..."

Keeping in mind the complexity of Reich's thinking, just what was his contribution to the development of Neill's educational practices and theories? Judging solely by Neill's writing, Reich had very little impact on the operation of the Summerhill School: "Reich had no effect on my school. I had been running it for twenty-six years before I met him."
Likewise, one can find only a few, brief references to Reich in *Summerhill*, Neill's most important book. However, this latter fact may be explained by noting that Harold Hart, the American publisher who served as an editor for Neill by piecing together selections for *Summerhill*, might possibly have omitted material about Reich, since Reich had recently been a very controversial figure in the U. S. in the mid 1950's.

Possibly, Reich did not provide Neill with any new major ideas, unlike Homer Lane, yet it would be wrong to assume that he had no impact on him. Joel Spring has suggested that Reich "pulled together many of Neill's ideas" and Ray Hemmings has concluded that their association served to extend and expand some of Neill's own thinking. In other words, Reich often reinforced ideas which Neill had previously, and sometimes only partially, developed. For example, twenty years before Neill had even met Reich, he had exhibited an interest in changing society. This interest was deflected by his contact with Homer Lane, who was more interested in curing individuals rather than society, but Neill's association with Reich in the late Thirties and early Forties renewed his interest in societal reform. Writing in 1944, Neill expressed the hope that the development of a socialistic state in England might lead to the creation of a national system of boarding schools, modeled on Summerhill with its self-government and self-regulation, which would result in the reformation of society. Like Reich, but also pre-dating his contact with him, Neill had come to the conclusion that
individual psychological therapy was not the best tool for treating problem children. Neill's discovery that freedom cured as well as therapy, and much better than harsh discipline, was reinforced by Reich's concept of self-regulation. Although Neill did not use the term "self-regulation" in his writings until after he had met Reich, his definition of freedom, as practiced at Summerhill, was quite similar to Reich's idea of self-regulation. Reich also reinforced Neill's negative attitudes toward the organization of the traditional family. While visiting Reich in the United States in 1947, Neill wrote _The Problem Family_ in which he "reiterated his own idea--and Reich's--that the heart of civilization's problems was the organization of the family."26 The authoritarian state was the product of the repressive family.

To reinforce another person's thinking implies that new ideas have not been added and this was basically true of Reich's relationship with Neill, yet there were two areas in which Neill's thought was extended. As Hemmings noted, "On the professional side Neill's ideas expanded in two main directions as a result of this association: on the matter of adolescent sex, and on the question of infant-rearing."27 Early in his teaching career, and years before he became friends with Reich, Neill had suspected that there was something wrong with conventional attitudes toward sex, which he felt were damaging to the healthy development of children. Reich convinced Neill to openly take a favorable stance for the right of adolescents to
have a full sex life. Yet, Neill never went as far on this issue as Reich, who suggested that contraceptives should be made available at the Summerhill School for those students who wanted them. Always hardheaded, Neill refused to do this, knowing that it would most likely result in the government closing his school. With the subject of infant-rearing, Reich was responsible for introducing to Neill a new area which he had not previously studied in any detail. In Neill's earlier writings most of his focus was on children of school age. Reich's interest in self-regulation for infants soon stimulated Neill in the late 1940's to look into such topics as feedings and toilet training. No doubt, the fact that Neill's only child was born in 1947 provided a further stimulus. Like Reich, he soon concluded that infants must be self-regulated. For example, bottle feedings on a time table should be scrapped and baby should be fed whenever he is hungry. Neill's new interest in infants was soon reflected in his writings, culminating in the 1953 publication of *The Free Child*, which focused on the development and rearing of young children.

Thus far in this chapter, we have attempted to trace the historical development of Neill's thinking, by noting the importance of Homer Lane and Wilhelm Reich in shaping Neill's ideas. It remains for us to briefly summarize Neill's educational theories and practices as they existed in the 1960's, when they were fully developed and first became widely known throughout the world. For A. S. Neill, the aim of life, as well as the
primary purpose of education, was to find happiness, which he defined as "an inner feeling of well-being, a sense of balance, a feeling of being contented with life." As Neill cordially said to one of the government inspectors who visited Summerhill School in June of 1949, "You really can't inspect Summerhill because our criteria are happiness, sincerity, balance and sociability." Obviously, academic learning was de-emphasized by Neill and the development of the emotions was given as much priority as intellectual development. Yet, this does not mean that academic training was not available for those students wishing it, and some students were academically prepared to take the state examinations required for entrance into British universities and technical colleges.

In describing the origins of the Summerhill School, Neill noted that, "When my first wife and I began the school, we had one main idea: to make the school fit the child--instead of making the child fit the school." Underlying this idea, as we have seen, was a basic faith in the goodness of children, for they were not viewed as evil beings who were a product of original sin. Neill valued childhood and advocated, using Homer Lane's terminology, that adults must be on the child's side. "Being on the side of the child is giving love to the child--not possessive love--not sentimental love--just behaving to the child in such a way that the child feels you love him and approve of him." His early belief in the goodness of human nature, combined with an approval of childhood, easily blended later
with Reich's theory of self-regulation. For Neill, self-regulation meant freedom, and freedom was a necessary condition for the existence of happiness. Neill defined freedom as doing what one likes, as long as it did not interfere with the freedom of others to do likewise. However, freedom did not mean license, in which the child trespassed on the rights of others. Obviously, an individual's freedom had to be balanced with the needs of the school community and such compromise was achieved through self-government. As a pure form of democracy, the school community established community rules, punished offenders, and, in general, determined if and when an individual was transgressing on the freedom of other people.

What else did these theories mean for the life of the school? In regard to living arrangements, for it was a boarding school, it meant that children were free to choose what to wear or to eat, how to decorate their rooms, whether to clean their rooms, and whether to swear or not—for all of these were matters which affected only each individual. Likewise, children were not forced to undergo religious education or moral training, since that would have infringed upon their individual freedom of choice in those areas. Academically, freedom meant that there were no compulsory classes and children were permitted the choice of whether or not to attend. Optional attendance at classes became one of the most notable features of the school.

Thus, at the height of Neill's popularity in the late 1960's and early 1970's, the name Summerhill had become widely
synonomous with the granting of love, acceptance, and freedom to children. Eventually, the popularity of Neill's ideas would spawn a movement in this country--and in the next two chapters the antecedents of that movement are examined.
CHAPTER 2--FOOTNOTES


2Neill's complete name was Alexander Sutherland Neill, but he often used only the initial, A. S., in place of his given names. At the Summerhill School and in other situations involving direct contact with people, he preferred to be called simply "Neill," instead of Mr. Neill. In accordance with that preference, within this study he will be referred to as A. S. Neill or just Neill.


6Ibid., p. 29.

7Ibid., p. 207. Incidentally, the "tawse" is a type of a strap used in Scottish schools for corporal punishment.

8Ibid.

9Ibid.


This institution was called the George Junior Republic by Neill in his autobiography. However, all other accounts refer to it as the Ford Republic and it must be assumed that Neill's label was a misnomer.


Hemmings, op. cit., p. 44.

Ibid., p. 65


Ibid., p. 190.


Ibid., p. 88.

Ibid., p. 94.


Ibid., p. 107.

Hemmings, op. cit., p. 128.

From 1950 to 1973, there were no new influences on Neill's thinking, comparable to the earlier input of Homer Lane and Wilhelm Reich.


Ibid., p. 86.

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid., p. 117.
CHAPTER 3

THE Earliest American Reception: 1916 to 1925

The year, 1916, was the beginning point in which one can first find an American awareness to A. S. Neill's writings. In that year the New York publisher, Robert M. McBride and Company, published Neill's first major work, A Dominie's Log, previously published in Great Britain only the year before.

At this point in Neill's teaching career, he was employed as the temporary head teacher of the Public School ("public" having the same meaning as it does in the United States) in Gretna Green, which was a small, somewhat isolated Scottish village near the English border. He had come to this school in the autumn of 1914 to replace the headmaster, Thomas Blackburn, who had gone off to fight in World War I. This development in Neill's career was really due more to accident than by his design, for it appears that earlier, upon Neill's completion of his M.A. degree in English at Edinburgh University, he had no intention of becoming a teacher. As Neill wrote years later, in his autobiography, "Neill! Neill! Orange Peel!", "I had got my degree and didn't know how to use it. All I knew was that I didn't want to teach: to think of going on all my life as English master in some provincial secondary school or academy, made me
shiver. No, teaching would be the last resort, if every other line failed."¹

After graduating from Edinburgh University in 1912, with some financial assistance by a grant from the Carnegie Trust, Neill embarked upon a career in journalism, which was a logical choice for someone who had been an English major and the editor of The Student, an undergraduate magazine, during his final year of study. He went to work for T. C. and E. C. Jacks, Edinburgh publishers, and helped edit a one-volume encyclopedia as well as worked on what was entitled a "'Popular Educator'."² On both works, he often did more than edit the contributions and, in fact, wrote some of the articles, such as one on the Panama Canal. While working for Jacks, Neill moved to London since the editorial offices were transferred to that city. This eventually led, after a short period of unemployment,³ to his next position as the Art Editor of the newly created magazine entitled The Piccadilly. However, this advancement in Neill's journalistic career was abruptly halted in the autumn of 1914, when the outbreak of World War I killed the Piccadilly Magazine even before the first issue was printed. Thus, late in 1914, Neill found himself without a job, but he did possess a medical deferment which prevented his joining the army at the start of the war. It was at this time and under these circumstances that Neill returned to Scotland and came to Gretna Green, as a teacher of its public school.
A. S. Neill's return to Scotland was also a return to teaching for him, since he was not a novice in this profession. Prior to entering Edinburgh University in 1908, Neill had been teaching in various state supported schools in Scotland. In 1899, he entered the profession as a pupil teacher under his father at the Kingsmuir School. As a teenager, the choice of teaching as a career was apparently made by his family and himself as a last resort. By his own report, he had previously failed as a clerk in a gasmeter factory in Edinburgh and as a draper's assistant in Forfar, and he was unable to successfully study for the Civil Service exam. In his autobiography, Neill reconstructed his parents' desperation in the following dialogue:

"'The boy's just hopeless,' said my father gloomily.

'He might be a teacher,' ventured my mother.

'It's about all he's fit for,' said my father grimly, and without a smile."4

From 1899 to 1903, Neill had served as a student teacher and it was in his fourth year of this apprenticeship that he failed the King's Scholarship, or normal examination, which, if he had successfully passed it, would have gained him entrance into a Normal School. As a result of the failure, he had to serve as an ex-pupil teacher under a very strict headmaster in the school of a nearby village, named Kingskettle. For three years he labored under this headmaster's harsh direction and then, in 1906, he was able to secure a better position in the school at Newport,
which was a suburb of Dundee. He held this teaching position, which he enjoyed because of the humane leadership and friendship of the headmaster, from 1906 to 1908, when he entered Edinburgh University.

Thus, when Neill returned to Scotland in 1914, it does not seem unusual that he chose, even if unwillingly, to re-enter teaching, since he had already had nine years of teaching experience in Scottish schools.

It was during his tenure at Gretna Green that Neill wrote his first book on education, entitled *A Dominie's Log*. Neill's motivation for writing this volume was expressed on the opening page, where he noted that the Scotch Code forbade teachers from entering any "reflections or opinions of a general character" in the official school log-book. Neill decided to circumvent this restrictive rule by keeping his own private log (later to become *A Dominie's Log*), in which he would write his own thoughts on education, as well as describe daily class activities.

It appears that Neill may have also been motivated to write as a means of keeping his sanity. Going from a journalism career in exciting London to a teaching position in a small, rural village in Scotland must have been a dramatic change in Neill's life. Many years later in his autobiography, he noted that "Coming from Fleet Street to a slow village required some adaptation... I think I began to write books to keep myself from going balmy."
A Dominie's Log was not a work of fiction, but was actually a rather accurate account of daily happenings during Neill's first year of teaching at Gretna. For example, the reader learns that when Neill began at Gretna school that he used corporal punishment and, that one particular day, he whacked a Tom Wilkie for fighting with a smaller boy. In Children's Freedom, an excellent book which has traced the development of Neill's educational theories as later practiced at the Summerhill School, Ray Hemmings, a former Summerhill teacher and currently a lecturer at the University of Leicester, has provided some evidence illustrating that Neill's Log was nonfiction. He noted that despite the pseudonyms which Neill used in the Log, "many who were in his class and who are still living in and around Gretna have found no difficulty in identifying themselves and their friends both from the character portraits and from incidents that Neill related in the book." In light of this fact, the Log reminds one of the various accounts of classroom teaching experiences written by some of the New Romantics in the 1960's, such as Jonathan Kozol's Death at an Early Age or Herbert Kohl's 36 Children. Because Neill's book was a personal account of his thoughts on education and of his classroom experiences or perhaps because Neill was working in the comparative isolation of a Scottish village, Neill made very little reference to the theories of any of his great contemporary educators. Neill sensed this isolation and suggested that his thinking on education would be mostly original, and further noted, "there has
been no real authority on education, and I do not know of any book from which I can crib." Of course, this was at a time when both John Dewey and Maria Montessori were active.

The popular British press discovered A. S. Neill shortly after the publication of A Dominie's Log in 1915. The Weekly Dispatch, a sensational yellow press publication, published a review of this work, including two columns of quotations, on November 14, 1915. Three weeks later, (December 7, 1915), the Times Educational Supplement, a more respectable publication, reviewed the Log. It would be only four months later that America would also be discovering the work of A. S. Neill.

McBride's, a popular magazine, the first American publication to take note of Neill, published in April, 1916 an article by Neill entitled, "From The Notebook of A Scottish Schoolmaster." It was a lengthy article, thirteen pages, which consisted of a series of selections taken from A Dominie's Log in the same order as they appeared in that book. Conspicuously absent from the article were some portions of the book in which Neill expressed his political opinions and religious attitudes, and whether this was Neill's choice or that of the editor of McBride's is unknown. Not surprisingly, since the subtitle read in part, "Banishing Rules and Regulations," much of the early part of the article dealt with discipline. The American reader, being introduced to Neill's writings, quickly learned that Neill rejected the traditional concept of discipline, with children sitting silently throughout the day. Instead, he favored
self-discipline, rather than discipline imposed upon the child by the teacher, and the kind of discipline that resulted from a child's interest being stimulated. Not only were traditional ideas of discipline rejected, but so too were traditional theories of curriculum and testing. Grammar was greatly de-emphasized and his school's arithmetic text, a Rural Arithmetic book characterized by utilitarian problems of the "How-much-will-it-take-to-paper-a-room? type," was scrapped by Neill and replaced with more theoretical and creative work in math. Likewise, regular school examinations were replaced with Neill's own exams, which were full of originality and humor. Some examples of Neill's original exam questions were noted in the article, including the following two samples:

"'If Shakespeare came back to earth what do you think would be his opinion of Women's Suffrage (refer to 'The Taming of the Shrew') Home Rule, sweated Labor, the Kaiser?'

'Have you read any Utopia? If not, it doesn't matter; write one of your own. (Note... a Utopia is an ideal country--this side the grave.)'"

Near the end of the article, the reader found a vivid description of a typical day in Neill's school at Gretna. It involved a description of a visit by a Mr. Simpson, an experienced and important Scottish educator, who soon discovered that Neill's class was not the traditional classroom. The older children were allowed to select their own activities, which for one boy included reading the war news in the Glasgow Herald and for another student, working in the workshop. Other children selected novels and then were permitted to read either inside
or outdoors, while, at the same time, Neill conducted a class in arithmetic. During this class, the children were permitted to snack on candy and peanuts. In a brief note prefacing the article, the editor of McBride's, Edward Frank Allen, noted that the author had radical views on pedagogy and that the reader might not agree "with all of his views and theories," but he encouraged all parents and teachers in this country to give Neill a reading. Unfortunately, it is impossible to learn what the readers thought of Neill's article, since the April, 1916 issue of McBride's was the final one for that periodical.

Within a few months after this article appeared in McBride's, the Boston Transcript (June 24, 1916) printed the first American book review of Neill's A Dominie's Log, which had just been published in the United States in 1916. The American publisher was Robert M. McBride and, thus, the same publisher who had produced McBride's magazine and who later published two of Neill's other books, A Dominie Dismissed and A Dominie in Doubt. During the next several years, this newspaper provided more coverage of Neill's earliest books than any other American newspaper. It reviewed all three of Neill's early Dominie books (A Dominie's Log, A Dominie Dismissed, and A Dominie in Doubt), which was even more exposure that was given by the New York Times which reviewed only two of the above books. This particular review of the Log was extremely favorable, starting with the opening lines which claimed that Mr. Neill's form of discipline must have made his classroom a paradise. Admiration
was expressed about Neill's ability to sympathetically understand youth and the reviewer then suggested that a copy of the book should be distributed to all the school teachers, both public and private, in this country. Modern ideas of theoretical pedagogy were condemned when compared to Neill's humanistic approach to education. The reviewer enthusiastically, perhaps one could say even emotionally, concluded by stating, "We find ourselves wishing we could again be young and have Mr. Neill for our school teacher!"  

Almost at the same time, a review appeared in The Nation (July 6, 1916), which was as deeply negative about the book as the review in the Boston Transcript had been laudatory. This reviewer suggested that such reviews, which extravagantly praised the book, were examples of "the substitution of sentimentalism for sound judgment." Not only was sentimentalism a liability which might adversely affect a reviewer's judgment of Neill's writing, but it was even concluded that Neill's own emotionalism had discredited his educational theories. Neill was charged with not substantiating with facts his educational theories and it was assumed that the intelligent reader would not accept his views simply on the basis of Neill's say-so. Neill was also charged with frequently making reckless overstatements, which it was claimed lessened respect for his judgment on educational matters. It seems that the main criticism in this review which was being leveled at Neill's Log, dealt
more with "his views on society in general" than with his thoughts on education. Most of the review consisted of a negative critique of Neill's literary taste, as well as his political opinions and thoughts about newspapers. There was actually little analysis of Neill's educational thinking, yet the reviewer dismissed Neill as an educational authority by finally concluding that, "Mr. Neill appears to be a tender-hearted person who is fond of children, and who doubtless, in spite of his avowed methods, contrives to teach them something; but one who reasons with emotions, as does the author of this book, is not qualified to put forward a theory of education."  

These first two American reviews, printed in the Boston Transcript and The Nation, of Neill's first book are significant because they foreshadow two trends which were to characterize the American written reception to A. S. Neill throughout his career. First, the polarity of these two reviews, approval versus condemnation, became typical of the American response from 1916 to the early 1970's. Lukewarm praises or rejections of his thinking were rare. For example, much later in 1970 Harold H. Hart published a volume entitled Summerhill: For and Against in which the concepts of A. S. Neill were evaluated by prominent educators, sociologists, and psychologists. As the title suggests, at this date over-all conclusions were still rarely neutral. Although each individual writer may have subtly agreed with part of Neill while rejecting part of him, or vice versa, the basic summary conclusions were often either
strongly for or against the Summerhillian concepts. Secondly, the reviewer's attitude in The Nation appears to have become typical of some of Neill's later critics, who also rejected Neill's thoughts on education mainly because they disagreed with his social and political thinking.

Later in the summer of 1916, two other very brief reviews of the Log appeared. In the July 17, 1916 issue of The Independent, Neill was most notably complimented for his humorous approach. This kind of compliment was repeated in the New York Times review of August 6, 1916, which found the book characterized by joy and whimsicality. The latter review was favorable toward Neill's educational ideas and consisted mostly of quotations from the Log, including several which illustrated Neill's creative examples of examination questions. This review ended by suggesting that Neill was a very stimulating teacher.

The final American notice of Neill's A Dominie's Log was a short piece in the March, 1917 A. L. A. Booklist, which was a publication of the American Library Association. It had been nearly a year since Americans had been first introduced to A. S. Neill's writings via his article in McBride's. Like the editor of McBride's, this short piece or notice suggested that Neill's book would be of interest to teachers whether they agreed with Neill's thinking or not. Basically, it consisted of a one sentence summary of the book. With the appearance of this book notice, thus ended the earliest American written reception to A. S. Neill's first book.
In 1916, Neill's second book, *A Dominie Dismissed*, was published in Great Britain and, like his first volume, was published a year later in the United States by Robert M. McBride and Company. In one particular instance in this country, there appears to have recently been some confusion as to whether *A Dominie Dismissed* was in fact Neill's second book or his third. Harold Hart, in his compilation of Neill's three earliest Dominie books which he has entitled *The Dominie Books of A. S. Neill*, has arranged the works in the following order: *A Dominie's Log*, *A Dominie in Doubt*, and *A Dominie Dismissed*. Not only does the order of the books in this one volume seem to indicate that *A Dominie in Doubt* was Neill's second book, but Hart, in the introduction to this volume, referred to *A Dominie in Doubt* as Neill's second work. However, *A Dominie in Doubt* was originally published in 1920 and, as previously noted, *A Dominie Dismissed* was published in 1916. It seems clear that *A Dominie Dismissed* was Neill's second book and this fact is further supported in his autobiography, where Neill referred to *A Dominie Dismissed* as a sequel to his first book. Although the above confusion can be corrected, there still exists confusion as to where and under what circumstances his second book was produced. Ray Hemmings suggested that the work was published even before Neill left Gretna in spring of 1917 and the publication date of 1916 would seem to support his statement. Yet, Neill, in his
autobiography, claimed that he wrote the book during the time of his army service, which occurred immediately after his tenure at Gretna.

Despite the above apparent disagreement, both Neill and Hemmings have stated that *A Dominie Dismissed*, unlike the earlier *Log*, was a work of fiction. The basic plot of the book was indeed fictitious, yet in some instances the work was semi-autobiographical. For example, in the book the teacher was dismissed and although Neill was not actually dismissed at Gretna, he did encounter opposition from some of the parents, such that a few of them removed their children from his school. In some cases, events in the book closely paralleled actual events in Neill's life. Thus, the main character of the book, which was written in the first person, contracted neurasthenia, a physical condition from which Neill suffered while in the army. Also, a visit to the progressive King Alfred School, which Neill actually made in the summer of 1916, was described approvingly in the book.

The fictitious plot of *A Dominie Dismissed* revolved around the story of a dismissed school teacher, who was fired from a small village school because the local people found his teaching methods to be too liberal. After a short leave from the community, the dismissed dominie returned to the village, because of reasons of ill health, to assume the quiet life of a hired hand tending cattle on a farm. In this unlikely position, he continued to advocate his educational theories and to
contest with his authoritarian successor over both theory and the loyalties of the local children. In lengthy dialogues between the dismissed dominie and his successor, and between the dismissed dominie and his former pupils, the educational theories of the fired teacher were revealed. Of course, this was also a revelation of Neill's own educational thoughts, as Ray Hemmings has suggested when he noted that *A Dominie Dismissed* provided a rationale for the activities which Neill described in his earlier *Log*, which was relatively free of theory. The plot was embellished with a successful romance ending with the marriage of the dismissed dominie to a farmer's beautiful daughter. In comparison to Neill's actual life at that time, this part of the plot was completely fictitious.

In regard to American educational theorists, there is one particularly interesting scene in his second book in which the work of John Dewey was mentioned. This is noteworthy, because in Neill's first work, which was published only a year earlier, he claimed not to be aware of the theories of any other educators. In this particular fictitious scene, Neill described a visit by three Americans who came to see the local school, which they thought was still being operated by the innovative author of *A Dominie's Log*. Included in the scene were several pages of dialogue between one of the Americans and the dismissed dominie, in which John Dewey's *Schools of To-Day* (sic) was mentioned by the American and Dewey's ideas were briefly discussed by the former dominie. Whether this brief mention of
John Dewey's theories indicates that Neill at this time was knowledgeable about Dewey's thinking or just superficially aware of them cannot be known, but it is obvious from this reference that Neill had at least heard about John Dewey in 1916.

The first American book review of *A Dominie Dismissed* was published in the *Boston Transcript* of May 29, 1917. The basic tone of it was favorable, despite the fact that the reviewer regretted that Neill did not employ as much of his humor as he had used in his first book. He conceded that Neill probably felt forced to de-emphasize humor, since he wished to be considered a serious thinker and not just a humorist. In the book, Neill has the main character (himself) noting that, "'The worst of being called a humorist,' said I, 'is that everybody seizes on your light bits, and ignores your serious bits.'"18

As noted by Ray Hemmings, even Herbert Jenkins, the British publisher of Neill's earliest works, was concerned that the public would consider Neill as only a humorist. This difficulty was due, in part, because the humor in Neill's first book, the *Log*, had been so well received. Although this anonymous American reviewer thought that Neill's interesting ideas (his "serious bits") merited attention, he barely discussed Neill's educational theories. Without citing examples, he concluded that, "we may justly complain of the careless statements, the false premises, the disputable facts which mar the argument. These help to make Mr. Neill's views on education and sociology unconvincing."19

Because most of this review discussed Neill's use of humor
(lamenting over the deliberate suppression of it), rather than his educational thinking, it appears that Neill's concern, about being considered only a humorist, was valid. In short, this review did not seriously consider Neill's educational theories, dismissing them with little examination, while at the same time, it especially praised Neill's sense of humor and wished that there had been more of it in the book. Ironically, Neill's literary sense of humor often resulted in generally positive responses from reviewers who otherwise disagreed, like this particular reviewer in the *Boston Transcript,* with his educational theories.

The second American review of *A Dominie Dismissed* appeared in the July 1, 1917 issue of *The New York Times Book Review.* This reviewer agreed with Neill's perception of the various problems afflicting their contemporary society, yet he was "not as sure of his [Neill's] conclusions as we are of his perception that things are in a sad muddle. He makes us see the faults in the edifice humanity for so many generations has been laboriously rearing, but should it be demolished, and a new one built according to his pattern, we are not at all clear that we should be better housed." Likewise, the reviewer agreed with Neill's conclusions about the faults of traditional education, yet he felt that an application of Neill's educational theories would produce appalling results. Part of the review dealt with incidentals, such as Neill's character sketch of the American visitors who came to see his school. Neill was
found guilty of stereotyping American culture by producing characters who used the words "reckon" and "sure" in their conversation. Reminiscent of the previously mentioned reviews of *A Dominie's Log*, this review of Neill's second book concluded by noting that Neill's writing was humorous and interesting, whether one agreed with it or not, and that the reader would gain from this book "both pleasure and profit from the brilliant pages."21

Several months later during 1917, *The Dial* (October 25, 1917) published a brief notice about *A Dominie Dismissed*. Unlike the other two reviews, it did not flatly disagree with Neill's educational ideas. In a supportive conclusion, it was suggested that Neill's democratic approach to children, rather than an authoritarian one in which the teacher automatically ruled the child, was the proper spirit in which to establish a pedagogy.

Strangely enough, all three reviews of *A Dominie Dismissed* never clearly distinguished whether the book was a work of fiction or nonfiction. In *The Dial*, Neill was referred to as the hero of the book, apparently implying that he was actually dismissed from his teaching position in that small Scottish village. This conclusion was also reached in the *New York Times Book Review*, which identified Neill as the Scottish schoolmaster who "lost the village school because the fathers and mothers thought he diverged too widely from the beaten paths of pedagogy, and allowed the children too much
yet, later in this same review, the book was referred to as a humorous story and the characters were discussed as if they were fictitious creations of Neill's mind. In the Boston Transcript, the book was summarized as follows: "story of a Scottish schoolmaster dismissed on account of his radical departures in education, who returns to watch his more conservative successor restore the old-fashioned methods." Nothing in this summary or the rest of this review indicates whether the reviewer did or did not consider this book a work of fiction. Perhaps, this ambiguity is not so surprising, when one considers that A Dominie Dismissed actually was a curious blend of fiction and nonfiction, as previously noted.

During the same year that A Dominie Dismissed was published and was being reviewed in the United States, A. S. Neill entered the British army. In the spring of 1917, all men who had been previously rejected for medical reasons were ordered to report for re-examination. Neill passed this examination and joined the army in March, 1917. He briefly trained in Scotland and then he was sent to the Royal Artillery School at Trowbridge in Wiltshire (southern England) to become an officer. After achieving his commission, he awaited his orders to be sent to France, but these orders never materialized. At this point, Neill resigned his commission, because of ill health which involved a physical illness complicated by a nervous breakdown.
During Neill's term of military duty, he first met Homer Lane and during the next several years there developed a very close relationship between the two educators, which has already been described.

Yet although this American, Homer Lane, was the greatest influence on Neill's work, as admitted by Neill, their eight year relationship did very little to provide Neill with more exposure or recognition in the United States at that time. At least, there is no written record of it. Writing much later in the 1960's, Neill claimed that Lane was unknown in America, and in Summerhill he seems to have made a special point of telling his American readers that Lane was a New Englander by birth. It may be that Lane's scandal-induced exit from the United States, which caused the last thirteen years of his relatively short career (he died at age fifty) to be spent abroad, stopped his communication with Americans. If this was true, it would explain why their relationship did not further the awareness by Americans of A. S. Neill.

During this post war period, while he was in London with Lane, Neill produced three books in two years. Two of them, Booming of Bunkie and Carroty Broon, were works of fiction. The Booming of Bunkie, published in 1919, was a farcical description of a young visitor's attempt to transform a sleepy Scottish village into a booming summer resort as a part of his effort to win the heart of a local beauty. Published in 1920, Carroty Broon dealt humorously with the more serious theme of "the
struggle between an adolescent boy's fantasies and his realties." According to Hemmings, neither book was very successful. Unlike Neill's earlier two Dominie books, these two works of fiction were not re-published in the United States. It may be assumed that these two books were never readily available in this country, especially when one considers that even now, there is no record of any American library possessing Carroty Broon. Not surprisingly then, there were no American book reviews of either work.

Also in 1920, Neill produced A Dominie in Doubt, which became the third in his series of Dominie books. It was written in the form of an extended dialogue between a dominie and some local Scottish villagers, with occasional monologues by the dominie. The dominie, who was obviously Neill, had just returned to Scotland after a period of time in London. In the dedication to Lane, dated August 12, 1920, Neill wrote, "To Homer Lane, whose first lecture convinced me that I knew nothing about education. I owe much to him,... " and, in fact, much of Neill's inheritance from Lane was evident in the book. For example, the work was infused with the subject of child psychology, which was not discussed in his two earlier Dominie books, and the names of such prominent psychiatrists as Freud, Jung, and Adler, were mentioned. Furthermore, Lane's concept of original virtue was discussed as well as his idea of a self-governing school; and some of the anecdotes described Lane's practices at the Little Commonwealth. Although Lane had
provided Neill with a philosophical framework which assisted him in answering some of his earlier questions about traditional education, Neill was still unclear about the basic purposes of education, hence the book's title. His "doubt" centered on his definition of education, which equated education with life. Since the aim of life was unknown, according to Neill, so too was that of education.

Two years after the English publication of A Dominie in Doubt, Robert M. McBride and Company published an American version, the first American review of which appeared in the Boston Transcript on May 31, 1922. Like so many other reviewers, this one was captivated by Neill's humor. He suggested that the book was as good as a dozen humorous novels, comparing Neill favorably to G. K. Chesterton, a famous contemporary English writer noted for his humor. Neill's educational ideas were heartily endorsed, while at the same time the traditional educational system was consigned "to the most convenient of dumps." Although noting Neill's admission of doubt, this reviewer approvingly concluded that, "His ideas of education are marvelously and humorously set forth and they seem good."27

As with the two earlier Dominie books, the initial review of A Dominie in Doubt in the Boston Transcript was quickly followed by a review in a New York publication, which in this case was The Literary Review of the New York Evening Post (June 10, 1922). In a brief, but favorable notice, the various topics of Neill's book were listed after mention was made of the book's dedication to Homer Lane. Interestingly, Neill's new
interest in Freud was noted, but the reviewer did not seem aware that this new interest was a result of Neill's contact with Homer Lane. This reviewer was as much impressed by Neill's concern for children as by his educational theories and he especially complimented the author on his first hand anecdotes about children and schoolmasters in Scottish schools.

Later in the summer of 1922, the final American notice of *A Dominie in Doubt* appeared in *Bookman*. Unlike the other two reviews, this very brief review focused on the usefulness of Neill's book for those who were interested in psychology. In fact, this review, if read by itself, would mistakenly lead one to believe that the book dealt mainly with psychology rather than education. Like the other two reviews, this one was favorable.

To summarize the American reviews of Neill's first three *Dominie* books, the following can be noted. Neill's two earlier *Dominie* books prompted a mixed response, including some negative criticisms, during World War I; but five years later *A Dominie in Doubt*, the third volume in this series, received only a positive response. A change in the post World War I social climate to one in which Americans were more receptive to libertarian educational theories such as Neill's may possibly explain this change in the book reviews. In his important history of the American progressive education movement, *The Transformation of the School*, Cremin has argued that this pluralistic movement was predominantly characterized in the early 1920's by a
child-centered philosophy of education, as opposed to a social-reform approach. Within academic circles, the child-centered approach was advocated by Harold O. Rugg in *The Child-Centered School*. Marietta Johnson, the leading American practitioner of child-centered education, was instrumental in the creation of the Progressive Education Association in 1919 and was active in its affairs throughout the early 1920's. She was the founder of the Organic Schools, in Fairhope, Alabama, and Greenwich, Connecticut, in which the qualities of spontaneity, initiative, interest, and sincerity were encouraged in the children. In part, Cremin's description of her schools could have been a description of Summerhill in the 1920's. Considering this child-centered thrust within the progressive education movement in America, it is not surprising that *A Dominie in Doubt* received such a favorable response in this country. However, it is surprising that there appears to never have been any direct contact between the Progressive Education Association and Neill in the 1920's. For example, there is no evidence of Neill's work or writing ever being discussed in *Progressive Education*, founded in 1924 as the publication of the P. E. A., even though the initial issue of that American journal described other foreign educational experiments, such as the Dalton Plan as practiced in England and the Decroly Plan in Belgium.

Cremin has shown that the early P. E. A. "was conscious of being part of an international movement, and it early sought ties with its counterparts abroad."28 Yet, there is no record
proving that Marietta Johnson, an early leader of the P. E. A., had any knowledge of Neill, even though she led a small P. E. A. delegation in 1925 to the New Education Fellowship conference at Edinburgh. The N. E. F. was an international organization of progressive educators and Neill was involved with it, though never a member, throughout the 1920's. Thus, the progressive educational movement in the early 1920's may have been part of an intellectual climate which accorded _A Dominie in Doubt_ with exclusively positive reviews, but the leaders of the early Progressive Education Association were apparently unaware of A. S. Neill.

Earlier in the same year, 1920, in which _A Dominie in Doubt_ appeared in England, Neill was forced to leave his teaching position at the progressive King Alfred School in London. Even before Neill's arrival, King Alfred had eliminated prizes, grades, and corporal punishment, and was even co-educational—all innovative features for a private English school of that time. At first, Neill was somewhat intimidated by its famous reputation. Although he liked many of the features of the school, he soon found the atmosphere to be too restrictive, because of a strong emphasis on high moral standards and the finer aspects of culture. He argued that the school was not free enough and attempted to persuade the staff to adopt self-government for the entire school. In 1919, the headmaster, John Russell, permitted Neill to experiment with self-government in his own classes. The experiment was a failure, often
resulting in a noisy chaos in Neill's classroom which disturbed neighboring teachers. In addition, it permitted a situation in which some negative comments about another teacher were aired during a class meeting. The resulting alienation of the other teachers forced Neill's departure from the school early in 1920. Two years later, Neill reflectively commented on the experience, "I had to leave the freest school in London because it wasn't free enough to tolerate me."29

Fortunately for Neill, who did not wish to leave London, he was invited by a Mrs. Beatrice Ensor to become co-editor with her of a new journal entitled Education for the New Era. At a progressive education conference held at Calais in the next year, the name was shortened to The New Era, and the journal became the official publication of the newly created New Education Fellowship. Mainly, the journal focused on internationalism and experimentation in education, which at the time were inter-connected in the minds of English progressive educators. In his autobiography, Neill pleasantly described his work on The New Era and his working relationship with Mrs. Ensor. He wrote, "It was good fun having a paper to edit. Mrs. Ensor gave me a free hand to say anything I liked; and I soon saw that the more outrageously I attacked pedants and schools, the more delighted she was."30 Actually, Neill wrote very little about his time with The New Era and he rather tersely concluded that, "Pleasant as my work could be, The New Era was no abiding place; I knew that I must move on."31
Contrary to Neill's own description, Ray Hemmings has argued that the relationship between Neill and Mrs. Ensor was an uneasy one. At one point, her temporary absence permitted Neill to write the main editorial for a particular issue of The New Era. His editorial apparently created an uproar among the readers, which she was forced to pacify upon her return. The differences between them proved to be profound. For example, she favored influencing the child so that he or she would come to appreciate the finer aspects of culture. Neill saw this as indoctrination. Perhaps, the single most specific point of conflict between them was their differing opinions about the Montessori method. She favored it, especially because of its scientific basis. On the other hand, Neill opposed the Montessori method partly because it was so scientific, partly because the freedom it granted to children seemed superficial to him, and partly because Montessori's own religious and moral values—communicated by her methods to the children—repelled him.

Ultimately, their differences led Mrs. Ensor to write that,

"'Mr. Neill has very definite views on education and psychology, and it is probable that I print many opinions with which he would not agree. ...and therefore, in fairness to "The Dominie," I think his name must be dropped from the magazine as co-editor.'"32

Because Mrs. Ensor represented the thinking of most English progressive educators, Neill's split with her and The New Era also meant a split with English progressivism, which viewed Neill's thinking as too extremist. It was these same English progressives with whom the American progressives of the P. E. A. were
in contact during the mid 1920's, precisely at a time when Neill had already become an outcast of English progressivism. Thus, Neill's tenuous relationship with the English progressive education movement in the early 1920's did not increase the American awareness of his work.

Although Neill's two year relationship with Mrs. Ensor and the progressive *New Era* was an uneasy one, it indirectly led Neill to meet an American, living in Europe, who was to have a profound impact on his career. While he was still connected with *The New Era*, Neill had participated in the international education conference at Calais in the summer of 1921. Here, his differences with other English and European progressive educators were further revealed. After the conference, he stayed on the Continent and undertook an assignment for *The New Era* in which he was to report on the new, experimental schools in Germany. While on assignment, he visited the Dalcroze School in Hellerau, a suburb of Dresden, and here he met an American woman named Christine Baer. It appears possible that he was introduced to this woman by an old friend, Frau Doktor Neustatter, whom he had known during World War I in London, and whose son had been in Neill's class at the King Alfred School. Frau Neustatter was connected with the Dalcroze School, as was Frau Baer, who was the wife of a Prussian architect and whose American maiden name is unfortunately not known.

The Dalcroze School had been built in 1912 by a wealthy family for Jacques Dalcroze, who was the foremost proponent of
the Eurhythmic movement in education. Eurhythmics focused on dance and rhythmic movement as the central element in the total development of the child, through which other aspects of education could be integrated. It stressed creativity and attempted to connect the conscious with the unconscious part of the child's mind. Christine Baer had been personally trained by Dalcroze and, after the school was closed because of World War I, she reopened it in 1919. At that time the school consisted of two divisions--her Eurhythmic or Dance division and a progressive private school (really a school within a school) enrolling approximately one hundred German children. From the beginning, a strong mutual respect developed between Baer and Neill, for she was impressed by his educational theories, as well as his reputation, and he soon admired the quality of her teaching. However, his admiration of her did not mean that he unequivocally embraced Eurhythmics. He considered the method to be of value, but not sufficiently so as to be the sole basis of an education. At the time of his association with Frau Baer, Neill wrote, "It is obvious to me that Eurhythmics is not enough in education." Unlike his relationship with Homer Lane, Neill does not seem to have gained any new educational ideas from Baer. Even their shared faith in internationalism, as it related to schooling, was a piece of intellectual baggage Neill possessed before he met Baer.

If Neill gained little from Baer intellectually, then what was the significance of their relationship and did it
result in an increased awareness in the United States of Neill's work? To respond to the first part of that question one must return to the initial meeting between Christine Baer and Neill. At that time, she inquired about his plans and he informed her that he was about to travel to Vienna, where he was to search for a facility in which he could establish an International School based on self-government. Approximately two years earlier, in 1920, Neill had first expressed his intention of starting his own school in the conclusion of A Dominie in Doubt. Frau Baer responded to Neill's plans by inviting him to join her and transform the Dalcroze School, so that it could incorporate Neill's concept of an International School. Part of the resulting school, formed by their partnership, became the direct predecessor of the Summerhill School in England; and in this fact lies the real significance of the relationship between these two people. For approximately two years, from 1921 to 1923, they worked together very closely in operating this small school. Then, in 1923, political and economic instability in Dresden forced Frau Baer to remove her Eurhythmic division of their newly formed school to a location near Vienna. At this point, her relationship with Neill seems to have ended, but whatever finally happened to Christine Baer is unclear. In his autobiography, Neill mentioned that all of his Hellerau associates were long dead and that Baer had been shot by the Russians, but it is uncertain whether he was referring to Christine or her husband, Karl. Did their relationship result in an increased American
awareness of Neill's work? Based upon the little evidence available, it did not. Unfortunately, there is very little information about this expatriate American educator, who indirectly aided the creation of the Summerhill School.

The re-organization of the Dalcroze School, begun by Baer and Neill in 1921, eventually resulted in an institution which had three rather autonomous divisions—in more modern terminology, we might say three schools within a school. At first, organizational problems arose because of differences between Neill and those who had been operating the private German school within the Dalcroze School. These problems were increased by the intervention of the Saxon Ministry of Education which ruled that Neill would not be permitted to teach English to German children and that he must hire a German to do so. Obviously, the irony in their ruling lay in the fact that Neill was British and even possessed an M.A. in English from Edinburgh University. The above mentioned tripartite structure was an attempt to solve these problems. The school re-opened in September of 1922 and apparently adopted the name of the International School of Hellerau. In numbers, the German division was the largest, maintaining an enrollment of about one hundred students. The other two divisions were the Eurhythmic division, led by Frau Baer, and Neill's International or Auslander (foreign) division which had the smallest enrollment of the three. As the name would indicate, Neill's division enrolled only foreign children, since he was not legally allowed to have German students. In
September of 1922, Neill's division enrolled ten students, but soon increased to thirteen and included nationals from England, Russia, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Norway, and even Germany, since two Germans were "smuggled in because they needed psychological treatment."35 Although enrollment always remained relatively small, Neill at one time had students from every nationality in Europe except Spanish and Portuguese. The school even printed an English prospectus and syllabus, so that they could attract English and American students, but it appears that no American students ever attended. Yet, the reputation of the school must have reached the United States, because there were American visitors coming to Hellerau to see the school. In A Dominie Abroad, which was in part a description of the creation of the International School, Neill commented, "I am sure that during the summer [probably the summer of 1923] we shall have a stream of Americans and English. I shall be glad to see them, but some one else must act as guide."36

While Neill was in Hellerau and still technically co-editor of The New Era, he printed an appeal for money37 in that journal which read as follows:

"The children here (in Hellerau) are very keen to learn hockey, but in Germany the natives cannot afford luxuries. I wish some nice American would send me two dollars to buy twenty-two hockey sticks, a football, a cricket set, and a few tennis rackets. I could build a six-roomed house with the change."38

The humor referred to the fact that the exchange rate at the time made the dollar a very valuable currency in Germany. Later, the two dollars arrived from an American named Angelo Patri, who
was a prominent public school leader from New York City and the author of *A Schoolmaster in a Great City*. Patri was a member of the initial advisory council of the early Progressive Education Association and he was the featured speaker at the first annual conference of the P. E. A. in 1920. Earlier, it was asserted that the leaders of the early Progressive Education Association were unaware of A. S. Neill's work. Angelo Patri appears to have been the sole exception to that nevertheless valid conclusion. At an earlier date, Patri had sent Neill a copy of his book and Neill, writing in 1922, regretfully admitted that he had never acknowledged receipt of it. Apparently, the connection between the two was not strong. However, since Patri was aware of Neill's work at Hellerau via *The New Era*, then one may speculate that this journal may have been the vehicle by which some of the American visitors, whom Neill mentioned, could have learned about his work at the International School.

The tripartite structure of the International School was soon strained by the differences between Neill and the leaders of the German division. At first, Neill admired the German division and its director, Herr Harless. The school seemed progressive, for it had no punishments or rewards and it was co-educational. The students worked within an elective system, which provided a wide range of courses and allowed them to establish their own hours. However, Neill soon discovered that Herr Harless and his staff were idealists, many of whom belonged to the German Jugend movement, which disapproved of tobacco, alcohol, movies, and
modern dancing, such as the fox-trot. Emphasis was placed on inculcating the children with an appreciation of high culture, referred to as Kultur, such that, for example, children were exposed only to classical music and not to jazz. Neill viewed this moulding of the child's cultural tastes as a distasteful, under-handed means of moulding character. Considering the unbridgeable gulf between Neill and the Germans, one might wonder why they tolerated him. The answer involves economics and currency exchange rates, for Neill's Auslander division, financed by tuitions paid in sound foreign currencies, subsidized the financially troubled German division. Writing in 1924, Neill noted that, "One monthly account showed that my school with thirteen pupils had an income of five million marks, while the German school with a hundred pupils had an income of four million marks." 39

In 1923, the International School of Hellerau was closed, but not because of the differences between Neill and the German division. In his autobiography, Neill attributed the cause of the closing to the violent political unrest in Dresden, which in addition manifested anti-foreign sentiments that affected both Neill and the American, Christine Baer. In two earlier books written in the 1920's, Neill blamed financial difficulties related to the instability of the German currency, for the school's collapse. Probably both political and economic factors were to blame.

In 1923, Neill moved the school to Lower Austria, but retained the name of the International School. The school was
beautifully situated in a youth hostel at the summit of a mountain named Sonntagberg. In *The New Era*, Neill described the location as a paradise for children⁴⁰ and in *A Dominie's Five*, completed while he was in Austria, he elaborated by noting the farm with its animals and the opportunities for ice skating, skiing, and tobogganing. One drawback was the isolation of the locale; however, it did not prevent Americans, among others, from visiting the school. In *A Dominie's Five*, Neill mentioned by name three particular American visitors who spoke to his students. Unfortunately, it is not absolutely clear whether the three visited the school while it was at Hellerau or on Sonntagberg, although it was more likely the latter. One was an individual named Foreman, who talked about racism, and another was an American schoolmaster, named Sherwood Trask, who told them entertaining stories about the Middle West. The third, whom Neill enjoyed the most, was named Knutson and he told great stories about shark-killing in Hawaii, as well as tales about the wild West.⁴¹ None of these individuals were prominent enough educators in America to be identifiable after nearly sixty years.

Almost upon their arrival, Neill's school encountered difficulties with the local Austrian peasants who were very devout Roman Catholics. They disliked non-Catholic foreigners, and the supposedly heathen staff and children of Neill's "free school"--by late 1923, Neill was already using the term--were especially not liked. Soon, the education ministry in Vienna intervened and Neill was ordered to provide religious instruction
for his students, even though none of them were Austrian. Neill refused and, then, removed the school from Austria in 1924. The failure of a bank in Vienna, which contained the school savings, also contributed to his decision to leave.

During his three years on the Continent, from 1921 to 1924, Neill produced two books, both of which have been previously mentioned in this chapter. The first, A Dominie Abroad, which was published in 1923,42 told the story of his involvement with the International School of Hellerau. One year later, A Dominie's Five was published in England by Herbert Jenkins Limited, the same publisher of the previous book. Except for the very brief introduction which described his school in Austria, this book was a retelling of an entertaining story which Neill had told to five of his young students. The story telling was unique in that it included each of the five children as principal characters. Neither book was republished in the United States, nor were there ever any American reviews of them.

Late in 1924, Neill returned to England with a small group of students. He rented a house, called Summerhill, in Lyme Regis, Dorset and adopted the name for his school. Here, he began with "only five pupils, three paying half fees, two paying nothing."43 During the school's vacations, he turned it into a boarding house for people on holiday, so that the school could survive financially. Throughout the next year, 1925, Neill labored to expand the school and he began writing another book. From these very modest origins in 1924, the Summerhill School developed and, within four decades would become world famous.
The American response to Neill and the Summerhill School has been tersely stated by Rich: "Summerhill is one of the most famous progressive schools in the world, yet prior to 1960 the school was little known in the United States."\textsuperscript{44} Reflecting a similar opinion, Ray Hemmings wrote in his Introduction that "in America, a huge tide of enthusiasm for the 'Summerhill idea' swelled apparently out of nothing\textsuperscript{45} after the 1960 publication of \textit{Summerhill}. It is a fact, that from 1916 to 1925, Neill was not very widely known in the United States, including the professional world of education. During that time period, no professional educational journal, including \textit{Progressive Education}, ever took notice of his work, and his earliest books were reviewed mainly by newspapers. With the exception of Angelo Patri, famous progressive educators were unaware of Neill even though there were American visitors to his \textit{International School} in the early 1920's. Yet, as this chapter has shown, it would be a mistake to assume that Neill was completely unknown in the United States prior to 1960, for the earliest American response to his work can be dated as far back as 1916 with that first American review of \textit{A Dominie's Log} in the \textit{Boston Transcript}.\textsuperscript{46}
CHAPTER 3--Footnotes


3This short period of unemployment caused Neill some concern and he was worried that he might have to return to Scotland where the only possible employment for him would be teaching. See A. S. Neill's, "Neill! Neill! Orange Peel!" (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 132.

4Ibid., p. 89.


7Hemmings, op. cit., p. 11.


9A. S. Neill, "From the Notebook of a Scottish Schoolmaster," McBride's, April, 1916, p. 139.

10Ibid., p. 141.

11Ibid., p. 133.


14Ibid.

15Ibid.
Harold H. Hart was the American publisher of several of A. S. Neill's books, including his most significant work entitled *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. As will be discussed later in this work, Hart was a very important figure in the American Summerhill movement during the 1960's.

A. S. Neill, *The Dominie Books of A. S. Neill*, comp. Harold H. Hart (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 569-575. Incidentally, the National Union Catalogue (pre 1956) has no record of a book by John Dewey entitled *Schools of To-Day*. It may be possible that Neill was thinking of Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow*, which was published in 1915, and that he was referring to it by a mistaken title. Such an error would lead one to believe that in 1916 Neill had only a superficial awareness of Dewey's writings.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Hemmings, op. cit., p. 18.


Ibid.


31 Ibid., p. 168.

32 Hemmings, op. cit., p. 43.


37 Incidentally, at about the same time that he was appealing for money for athletic equipment, Neill wrote to Henry Ford and suggested that the donation of two motor vehicles would permit him to create an international school on wheels which could travel throughout Europe. The vehicles were never forthcoming.


40 Hemmings, op. cit., p. 58.


42 In the bibliography of Children's Freedom, Ray Hemmings listed 1922 as the publication date of A Dominie Abroad. However, from the title page of that work by the same publisher, the date of 1923 was taken.


45 Hemmings, op. cit., p. xi. Italics added.
CHAPTER 4

THE AMERICAN RECEPTION: 1926-1962

During the mid 1920's when A. S. Neill was firmly establishing the Summerhill School at Lyme Regis on the south­ern coast of England, he published a work entitled The Problem Child—a title which was indicative of what was happening in his school in 1926. In his autobiography, Neill claimed that the school at that time attracted "too many problem children, misfits that other schools did not want."1 Seemingly, this caused the new school some difficulties. However, Ray Hemmings has argued that Neill was actually seeking problem children, supporting this claim by quoting a notice in The New Era, dated October, 1924, which advertised Neill's new school. In part, it read, "He [Neill] is specializing in problem children and says that he wants boys and girls that other schools find troublesome, lazy, dull, anti-social."2 Hemmings' argument is further supported by Neill's admission, in the Introduction to The Problem Child, that he was no longer interested in education and that he had taken up child psychology. Hemmings has also suggested that Neill's decision to accept problem children may have been reinforced by financial necessity, for in 1924 the school only enrolled five students, not all of them paying full tuition, and two years later the enrollment had only increased

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to ten students. One of the ten children, the daughter of the now deceased Homer Lane, was the offspring of an American, but it is unlikely that any of the other pupils were American.³

Unlike the five earlier "Dominie" books, which were characterized by a questioning and searching tone, The Problem Child was more assertive or authoritative, as befitted one who was beginning to be recognized as a notable figure for his work with children. It was not so much a book about schools and education, but rather was a treatise on child psychology in which the psychological causes that underlie the behavior of problem children were examined. Both the theories of Freud and Adler were used when discussing such causes. As for the uses of child psychology, Neill concluded that it should only be used to cure the child of unhappiness and not as a means to induce one to study harder or to like certain school subjects. Furthermore, he felt that only children who were having serious mental problems should be psychoanalyzed. Near the end of the book was a chapter, entitled "A Free School," in which Neill described his experiences in running the International School in Austria and the subsequent move to England. In England, Neill found a much more tolerant attitude toward his school amongst the local population than he had experienced in Austria. One of the most important chapters of the book, dealing with Neill's philosophy of freedom, was especially helpful to his readers because of the following concrete example which it provided. If a student wishes to throw stones at others, then that is not freedom and
the forces of community pressure will stop him from doing it. However, if a student wishes not to attend any classes, then the school community has no right to force him, for this involves a matter which is of concern only to the individual student.

As previously noted, the Summerhill School in the mid 1920's was financially pressed, so that Neill and his wife were forced to capitalize on their coastal location by turning the school into a resort boardinghouse during vacations. As another means of raising money, Neill wrote The Problem Child, which proved to be a success in attracting fee-paying students. Prior to the book's appearance in England in 1926, the Summerhill School had slowly grown to a total of ten students, which was an increase of only five students over the number which had been enrolled when it was founded two years earlier at Lyme Regis. Within one year after the publication of the book, the school had grown to twenty seven students. During the next few years the rapid growth continued, so that by 1934 there were approximately seventy students. The success of the book and the rising enrollment allowed Neill to seek a larger facility for the school and in 1927 he moved it to a large, brick house situated on eleven acres near the east coast at Leiston in Suffolk. To this day, the school has remained at this location.

Obviously, The Problem Child was widely read in England, with five editions having been produced between 1926 and 1936. In Appendix I of Children's Freedom, one can find the results of a questionnaire which Ray Hemmings circulated among the
Heads of 102 progressive schools in Britain. This was an attempt to assess how widely Neill's work was known and how much influence it had on these Heads. One of Hemming's questions asked the respondents "which, if any of Neill's books they had read." Not surprisingly, more had read *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*, than any of his other works. However, of the sixteen earlier books which Neill published before he wrote *Summerhill*, *The Problem Child* was the most widely read, with the exception of *That Dreadful School* (1936). Nearly one third of the 78 Heads, who responded to Hemmings' questionnaire, had read *The Problem Child* and this was only four fewer Heads than had read *That Dreadful School*.

In January of 1927, Robert M. McBride and Company published *The Problem Child* in this country. The extent of the response to this book in the United States paralleled its reception in England. If the number of book reviews a book receives can be used as a criterion to judge the extent of its reception, then *The Problem Child* received the greatest amount of attention in the U. S. of any of Neill's earlier books—and this includes *That Dreadful School*. Not until the 1960 publication of *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* were there to be more book reviews of any single work by Neill. In total, ten American publications took notice of *The Problem Child*.6

One month after the book appeared in the U. S., the *New York Times* (February 20, 1927) published the first review of it. The overall tone was negative and the reviewer suggested
that some "up-to-date psychological investigators [would] shake their heads questioningly"\(^7\) over Neill's book. The review began by lamenting the increased attention being given by psychologists and psychiatrists to the study of abnormal, incorrigible, and naughty children, which was obviously the subject of this book. Neill began the book by admitting that he knew little about the forces which motivated the behavior of problem children and the reviewer was pleasantly attracted to this honest admission. However, it was quickly, and perhaps disappointedly, noted that, "As Mr. Neill gets further into his subject he becomes more and more cocksure that Freudian psychology offers the key"\(^8\) for understanding problem children. This was followed by what seems to be a snide description of Neill's career:

"Mr. Neill was formerly a school teacher but gave up teaching to specialize in child psychology, especially of the abnormal kind, and started a school of his own for problem children. He is an Englishman, and at present his school is located in England, but at different times it has been at several places on the Continent."\(^9\)

Although involving only technicalities, the reviewer was inaccurate on two counts. Neill was not an Englishman and his school in Europe had been located in only two places, and then the move from Germany to Austria was due to political and economic factors beyond Neill's control. Surprisingly, and somewhat confusing in light of the rest of the review, the conclusion ended on a positive note. It was suggested that psychologists and psychiatrists would find the book valuable, because Neill provided so many case examples describing the behavior of individual problem children.
Later, in the spring of 1927, two short book notices appeared. In the Wisconsin Library Bulletin, it was concluded that the book was an interesting account of an unusual educational experiment, but that it was "perhaps not of practical use."\(^\text{10}\) The notice in the Saturday Review of Literature (April 9, 1927) was both short and scathing. This reviewer felt that Neill's viewpoint on children had been warped by his long association with so-called problem children. Continuing in the same vein, he concluded that, "His pedagogical method is based on about five percent pure science and ninety-five percent pure guess... nor does the five percent science warrant placing this book upon the shelves of a parent's library nor on that of child-study clubs."\(^\text{11}\)

Also in April of 1927, there appeared another negative review of The Problem Child in the Springfield Republican, a newspaper published in Springfield, Massachusetts. The simple fact that the book was reviewed at all in this paper is unusually interesting. Unlike the larger Boston Transcript or the New York Times, which printed reviews of several of Neill's books, The Problem Child was the only work of A. S. Neill ever to have been reviewed by the Springfield Republican. Yet, the title of the review, "A Dominie's Views," suggests that the anonymous reviewer may have been familiar with the earlier Dominie books by Neill. In general, the newspapers of smaller American cities never reviewed any of Neill's earlier books and this particular review represents an isolated exception to the
rule. This reviewer began by commending Neill on his successful work in child psychology with problem children, but then spent the remainder of the review on a sharp critique of Neill's treatment of religion. It was argued that Neill's idea of God was obtained from the ultra-conservative theology prevalent in his youth. In reacting against this conservative religious background, Neill had "thought himself into a somewhat confused liberalism." Unfortunately, in the eyes of the reviewer, this confused liberalism constituted "the basis of his [Neill's] thought concerning the abnormality of children." In summary, the book was found to be challenging and valuable, and yet the reviewer rather unkindly concluded that "the author could rewrite it and make it more helpful in solving the difficult and often baffling problems in rearing children."

Perhaps the most positive review of The Problem Child appeared in the June 1, 1927 issue of The Nation. Entitled "The Free Child" and written by Rebecca Hourwich, who felt that the book had conviction, the bulk of the review was an accurate and sympathetic summary. Her restatement of the main facts was prefaced by the following complimentary remark:

"For the author's creed is merely to seek happiness, his attitude generous and tolerant, his book a delight because its essential wisdom is cloaked in the humility of one who has traveled long enough on the path of knowledge to realize that the goal is never completely known."

During the summer of 1927, two more notices appeared. In Booklist, a publication of the American Library Association, there was almost a duplicate of an earlier notice which had been
printed in the March issue of the Wisconsin Library Bulletin. Again, Neill's book was found to be interesting, but not of practical value. The second notice was a short piece, positive in tone, in the Journal of Home Economics. In one brief paragraph, this reviewer concisely located for the reader the essential kernel of Neill's thought, which was the subject of individual happiness. All societal problems, including crime and war, were due to unhappiness, which in turn was caused by the denial of freedom to individuals. Neill's ideas were labeled provocative, stimulating, and interesting. Although this notice was very brief, it was significant, because it marked the first time that an American periodical, which was even remotely related to education, had reviewed one of Neill's books. By now, it should be abundantly clear that the major educational journals in the U. S. were not taking notice of Neill's writing during the 1920's.

Late in 1927, the last review of The Problem Child appeared in the December 15 issue of The Survey. Written by Halle Schaffner, this sympathetic and rather lengthy review compared Neill's methods with those of his contemporary progressive educators and psychologists. The techniques and methods of modern, thus progressive, teachers were found to be lacking depth, for they only superficially dealt with surface behavior problems, while the theories and practices of standard child psychologists were dismissed as glib. On the other
hand, Neill was complimented for his humane approach to problem children, which enabled him to analyze the deep causes of disorders.

Altogether, the various American reviews of *The Problem Child* reveal a mixed response. They range from the extremely negative notice in the *Saturday Review of Literature* to the most laudatory one in *The Nation*. However, a majority of them were either negative or neutral toward this book.

During the next two decades, from the late 1920's to the late 1940's, the American awareness of Neill's work disappeared, despite the fact that the previous decade (1916-1927) had evinced a growing American response to his writings. From 1932 to 1945, Neill published six books and although most of them were not republished by American publishers, they were sold in this country and were available in major libraries. Yet not a single one of them was ever reviewed, not even *The Problem Teacher* which was republished in the United States nor *That Dreadful School* which in England enjoyed a wide response. In addition, there were no articles by Neill in American periodicals, nor any about him and his school. The only written evidence that anyone anywhere in North America in the Thirties was following Neill's work was a single article in a Canadian magazine entitled *The B. C. Teacher*. Dated 1933, this piece was by a Vancouver secondary educator who had visited Neill at Summerhill. After providing an impartial
description of Neill's school, he concluded by "wondering if A. S. Neill were a madman or a genius."16

Obviously, one must ask why there was no American response to Neill's work for nearly twenty years following a decade when there had been a considerable awareness of him? It surely was not because Neill had become inactive in that period, for he wrote a great deal and continued to head a school that witnessed a sustained healthy period of growth. Two explanations might serve to answer the above question. First, during the Thirties many Americans became absorbed by the problems of the Great Depression and later in the early Forties by World War II. In such a social setting, the earlier interest in educational experimentation may have become lost, not to mention the disruption in communication and travel between England and the United States due to the war. Secondly, within educational circles the Thirties witnessed a shift in the thinking of Progressive educators, in which child centered schooling was replaced by a newer concern for an education that would help cure the problems of American society. This change in direction was reflected very well in George Counts' *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?*, published in 1932. Not surprising, in neither the published writings of any of the leading American progressive educators, nor in any of the writings about such persons, can there be found an indication that any of them was interested in Neill, his ideas, or his
school. Specifically, a search of Professor Counts' considerable correspondence and his notes reveals absolutely nothing pertaining to Neill.

After World War II, the late 1940's witnessed a rebirth of American interest in A. S. Neill's work. In the March 25, 1946 issue of *Newsweek*, an article appeared under the intriguing title of "Doing as They Please," in which both Neill's school and an offshoot school, named Kingsmuir and operated by former Summerhill staff member Lucy Francis, were described. In the physical description of Summerhill, it was noted that it was still located in North Wales, but it did not mention that it had been located there throughout the war only because of the fear of a German invasion of East Anglia, the school's permanent locale. Nor was there any mention made of Neill's personal unhappiness (compounded by the death of his first wife) at being temporarily forced to work in North Wales. During the war period, the school had quickly grown to 100 children, however, some of the parents had chosen it only because it provided a relatively safe haven for their children and not because they agreed with Neill's philosophy. Most of the *Newsweek* article focused on his concept of freedom and its ramifications in terms of academic studies and the children's social behavior. In the conclusion, mention was made of various Summerhill alumni who had recently been successful, including military veterans, writers, and honor
graduates from British universities. It was suggested that
these graduates proved that Neill's educational system worked,
yet the article's final concluding sentence noted that in most
orthodox educational circles, Neill was "regarded as the enfant
Terrible of the schoolroom."\textsuperscript{17}

In 1947, Neill made his first visit to the United
States, primarily because of an invitation from his old friend
Wilhelm Reich. As noted in Chapter Two of this work, Reich
had been Neill's psychotherapist and had also had some impact
on the development of his thinking. Since 1938, when Reich
had first moved to the United States, he and Neill maintained
contact by frequent correspondence. Neill's close, personal
relationship with Reich was unique in that he was one of the
few genuine friends that Reich had. In a letter to Reich in
the 1950's, Neill described their relationship as follows:

"I was a friend who loved you, who recognised your
genius..., but I never was a 'Reichian' who accepted all
you said and did."\textsuperscript{18}

It was his desire not to become a disciple of Reich's that
prevented Neill from accepting Reich's invitation in the late
Forties to move the Summerhill School to a location in the
United States near Reich's scientific research institute.
However, their friendship was undamaged by Neill's refusal
and, indeed, at that time was reinforced by a shared interest
in infant rearing, since both men were fathers of small chil-
dren. Indirectly, it was this friendship which led to America
being reintroduced to Neill in the late Forties.
During the 1947 summer trip, Neill divided his time between a lecture tour and some weeks spent in Maine at Reich's summer home and research institute. His lecture tour began with a seminar for teachers and social workers at the Hamilton School in Sheffield, Massachusetts, which was a private school operated by former students of Reich. Then after visiting with Reich in Maine, Neill traveled to New York City with him, where he continued lecturing for about two weeks at such places as the New School for Social Research and the Bank Street College of Education, and possibly a teachers college in New Jersey. News of Neill's lecture tour was reported in *Time* magazine (August 25, 1947). Most of the article was an objective summary of Neill's theories. Only when it was noted that Summerhill staff members often tolerate verbal abuse because it supposedly helps the children lose their inhibitions, did the author seem to lose his objectivity and reveal a negative or skeptical attitude.

In the summer of 1948, Neill returned to the United States with his wife and infant daughter and spent most of his time with Reich and his family in Maine. During that summer he participated in a scientific conference, which Reich had organized, and conducted another small lecture tour, but unfortunately there are no clear details about his second round of speaking engagements.
During the summer of 1948, the New York Times Magazine published an article by Neill entitled "Love-Discipline, Yes--Hate-Discipline, No," in which Neill made brief reference to the fact that he had recently been staying with his good friend, Dr. Wilhelm Reich. As the title of the article would suggest, it was a description of Neill's theories about discipline, especially of younger children, in which Neill discussed a need for a balance between the rights of a child and those of an adult. Not surprisingly Neill based his theories on Reich's concept of self-regulation, which stated that infants should not be fed by a timetable or rigidly potty-trained. In short, the functions of the body should be determined by the child's own natural needs. Much of this also sounded like Dr. Benjamin Spock's writing of the 1940's and, indeed, Neill made mention in this article of having read Spock's Baby and Child Care.20

One year after Neill's second visit to the United States, the Hermitage Press of New York City published a new book by him entitled The Problem Family. Unlike most of Neill's earlier books, it focused exclusively on the family and did not even discuss education or schools, including Summerhill. The introduction to this work was written by Professor Goodwin Watson of Teachers College, Columbia University. He had first met Neill in 1947, when he visited Summerhill with a group of American educators on a European tour of new experimental schools, and he maintained an interest in
Summerhillian education for the remainder of his life. The Problem Family became the first book of Neill's to be reviewed in the United States in over twenty years.

The first review was a short notice by Anne Whitmore of the New York Public Library in the Library Journal. She found the book to be stimulating, compelling reading and likened it to "a child's Bill of Rights" because of its progressive views on children's freedom and rights. She recommended the work "for liberal libraries." Shortly after this review appeared, another very brief notice was printed in School and Society. Later, a slightly longer review by a professor of sociology at Harvard University appeared in the Saturday Review. In a condemning tone, this reviewer recognized in the book "certain statements of principles which indicate acceptable, verifiable judgments," but still felt that it was "the family philosophy of either a very poor theorist or a bewildered faddist" and even labeled Neill's theories as "bizarre, to say the least." Like the previous review, the fourth and final review of The Problem Family was quite negative. Published in the July 9, 1949 issue of the Nation, it argued that Neill's theories, if put into practice, would be "very difficult on the modern parent who is already overwhelmed by a host of other insecurities--political, marital, and economic." This reviewer felt that it was unreasonable for Neill to expect parents to be able to give love
and tenderness to their children all the time. He even advocated the need for discipline and suggested that Neill's oversimplified thinking represented "a full swing of the pendulum in the direction of permissiveness." All four reviews of *The Problem Family* were relatively brief and in the two that had some length negative comments dominated.

In 1950--after having had his most recent book reviewed in this country and having received exposure in major American newsmagazines--Neill planned a third trip to the United States which again would have included a lecture tour. However, in that year he was denied a visa by the U. S. Consulate in London. It seems that somewhere in Neill's voluminous writings, he had mentioned his sympathy with communistic ideas and although Ilse Reich correctly noted that Neill was never a member of the Communist Party, she has suggested that it was because of his communistic sympathies that he was denied entry into the United States. A year later, Neill was again refused a visa. In an unsuccessful attempt to verify why Neill was twice refused a visa, this author wrote to the American Embassy in England and received the following reply:

"We checked our records and were unable to locate any record of the denial of a visa to A. S. Neill in 1950 or 1951. Most visa records from that date have been destroyed. Since visa records are considered confidential it is doubtful that we would have been able to assist you if we had been able to find a file."28

Years later Neill had no difficulty obtaining a visa and one suspects that the refusal in the early 1950's was due to the
prevailing climate of McCarthyism. Nevertheless, he did not visit the United States during the remainder of the 1950's.

In 1953, Neill published in England *The Free Child*, a treatise on early childhood and the only book he was to produce in the decade of the Fifties. It was not republished in the United States, nor did it receive any American reviews even though the work was sold in this country. Overall, the lack of interest in this book by any American publisher or reviewers was indicative of a widespread, declining interest in Neill and his Summerhill School throughout the 1950's. Unlike the late Forties, there was no coverage of him in major newspapers or magazines and within the Fifties only one American periodical, entitled *Drama*, published an article by him. Likewise, it appears that interest within England about Summerhill was also waning. As a result by the end of the 1950's, Neill's enrollment had dwindled to twenty-five pupils and he was seriously pondering whether the school could remain open.29

Why did the interest in Neill in this country decline so dramatically in the 1950's after such a flurry of interest in the immediate post World War II years? Surely one explanation lies in the fact that Neill did not visit the United States in that decade, nor hardly even published any new writings. However, a major reason for the declining interest is that the Fifties were dominated by a pervasive
If one views all the years from 1916 to 1959 as a prelude to the explosion of interest in Neill that followed in the 1960's, one sees a forty-three year period in which a cycle of waxing and waning interest was twice repeated. The earliest years, from 1916 to 1926, witnessed a great deal of interest especially in Neill's writings, but this was followed by two decades when there seemingly was no response in this country to his work. After World War II, a brief period of extensive interest was followed by a decade of indifference in which it appears that Neill's work was once again forgotten. However, the cycle was to repeat itself one more time during the 1960's and 1970's.

Late in 1960, a small New York City publisher began to promote a new volume by Neill, entitled *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. Destined to become Neill's most widely known book, it was a compilation of writings from four of his earlier volumes combined with some new material including an updated description of the Summerhill School.

As early as January of 1961, the first major review of it appeared. Written by Paul Woodring, then Education Editor of the *Saturday Review*, it began with an accurate summary of the philosophy behind the Summerhill School as presented by its headmaster. Upon summarizing Neill's book, Woodring
continued his critique by suggesting that "each reader must decide for himself just how much of this is profound truth and how much is sentimental nonsense." As for himself, he felt that there were several shortcomings within Neill's theories, including the following:

"For one thing, we question the wisdom of taking children from their parents at the age of six and placing them in a boarding school, and many of the unique features of Neill's school would be totally inappropriate in a day school from which children return to their homes in the middle of the afternoon."

Woodring also questioned whether young children really were better than adults at deciding what they should study or how their time should be used. Furthermore, he doubted whether children actually wanted complete freedom from adult control, and instead argued that children preferred having guidelines for their behavior established for them by adults. Finally, Woodring felt that the school was inadequate in terms of the academic achievements of its students and thus concluded:

"We are sympathetic with the view of one of Neill's admirers who says, 'His is a great experiment, and I believe in experiments.' Still, after reading this report of the forty-year experiment at Summerhill we aren't quite ready to recommend the school as a model for the American public school, or indeed for any school anywhere."

Three months after Woodring's review was printed a brief notice of Summerhill appeared in Booklist, in which the book was recommended for "shockproof parents." Noting Neill's indebtedness to Freud, this reviewer chided him for not having also acknowledged his debt to the "originators of earlier systems of progressive education." Writing in
1961, he was obviously unaware that Neill was himself one of the earliest twentieth century innovators in education and that he had not ever considered himself indebted to any progressive educator.

That same April, another brief notice appeared in a different publication, *The New Yorker*. Basically positive in tone, it concluded that even if the reader disagreed with Neill, he still would have to admit that he had a deep understanding of children and a benign influence on those who had been entrusted to his care.

A month later, *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science* carried a review by Gene Phillips of the School of Education at Boston University. Probably, the single most positive review of *Summerhill* ever published, it began as follows:

"*Summerhill* is a message that comes to us in America as a clarion warning. It is brave; it is warm; it is an attempt to understand the world in which the child lives."36

Phillips felt that the present world contained an abundance of knowledge in which any individual would be forced on his own to decide what was worth knowing, and *Summerhill* was seen by him as the best means by which children could learn to make those decisions. Within the review, several comparisons were made between Neill's *Summerhill* and Dewey's Laboratory School, and as a point of comparison, it was approvingly observed that both schools encouraged affective learning. As his final point,
Phillips argued that Neill had created a "kind of creative morality," stressing love, the goodness of humanity, and the uniqueness of each individual. As an essential ingredient in preserving our democracy, this reviewer felt that Neill's creative morality was both needed and wanted in this nation.

During the summer of 1961, the American Sociological Review published a review of Summerhill that was not as favorable as Phillips'. Written by the famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead, it suggested that the book should be used as "raw material for analysis rather than anything that can be taken at its face value." From an historical perspective, Mead correctly observed that many of Neill's ideas were not particularly new: "This aphoristic and anecdotal account of an early progressive school experiment in England comes out of the past, like a ghost of the 1920's." Assuming that many contemporary parents had already accepted ideas similar to Neill's, she was concerned that his book might be uncritically accepted by "a new class of parents just emerging into a literate interest in pedagogy."

A year after Summerhill had first been marketed, it was still being reviewed. In January of 1962, The Social Studies published a brief critique of it by Richard E. Gross of Stanford University. Gross suggested that most educators would find Neill's practices to be much too permissive and even lacking good sense, and he concluded that "most of us
would steer a more middle path in teaching and in child rearing." Yet, he felt compelled to admit that most other educators had no more proof supporting their opinions than Neill had for his ideas. About the same time that Gross' critique appeared, Arthur Beringause published a review in High Points, a publication of the New York City Public Schools. Liberally sprinkled with quotations from Neill, he concluded that it really did not much matter whether the reader agreed with Neill or not. Sounding much like those Americans who had first reviewed Neill's earliest works nearly a half century earlier, he valued Neill's writing mainly because it was so stimulating and because of its realistic look at children.

Within a year of its publication, Summerhill had been reviewed in at least a half dozen scholarly and professional periodicals and thus had rekindled an American awareness of Neill's work. However, the significance of Summerhill lies not just in the fact that it generated a rebirth of intellectual interest in Neill's ideas. Instead, the real importance of the book is because it served as a catalyst for initiating an actual Summerhill movement in this country through the establishment of the American Summerhill Society. The history of that organization is the subject of the next two chapters.
 CHAPTER 4--Footnotes


3Incidentally, in The Problem Child Neill referred to only one American visitor, a teacher, whereas in those earlier works which described the International School in Europe, he referred to hordes of American and English visitors and even specifically named three of the Americans. See Chapter 3 of this work.

4Neill claimed that there were twenty-seven students in 1927, but Ray Hemmings has stated that thirty-one were enrolled at that time. See Ray Hemmings, Children's Freedom (first edition; New York: Schocken Books, 1973), p. 60.

5Hemmings, op. cit., p. 197.

6This author has procured copies of all the reviews, except for the following two: 1) New York Herald Tribune (Books), July 10, 1927, p. 13; and 2) Literary Review, March 19, 1927, p. 9.


8Ibid.

9Ibid.


13Ibid.

14Ibid.


19 Letter from Ilse Ollendorff Reich to James Green, November 24, 1976, in the Summerhill Society Papers.


22 Ibid.


24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.


27 Ibid.


32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.


35 Ibid.


37 Ibid., p. 244


39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
SUMMERHILL SOCIETY AND ITS EARLY YEARS

In the sense that a "movement" consists of "an organized group of people working toward or favoring a common goal,"¹ then it must be said that prior to 1960, there did not exist a Summerhill movement in the United States. True, from 1916 to 1962 several of Neill's books, as we have seen, had been published and reviewed in this country, and there were various articles either by or about Neill in American periodicals. A few Americans even maintained a personal association with Neill or visited his school in those earlier years; in addition, Neill himself visited the U. S. twice in the late '40's. However, none of this constituted a movement and not even the extensive written response of the early Sixties would have created a movement unless a formal organization had been established.

Only with the creation of the Summerhill Society, can one begin to talk of an actual Summerhill movement in this country, and in this and the succeeding chapter, we chronicle the rise and decline of that organization. As the reader will quickly note, the Society's history was erratic.
Throughout its decade of existence, there frequently was a considerable degree of internal conflict among its leaders. Sometimes this was due to a clash of personalities, but more often it was caused by differences of opinion about the purposes of the Society and how they were to be translated into its operations. Beneath these latter differences, there were sometimes conflicting interpretations over the theories of A. S. Neill, which served as the original stimulus for this organization. As a result of this dissension, the Society's leadership often changed hands, and even its basic objectives were occasionally subject to major revisions. Consequently, although the Society enjoyed some successes, it was to be marked more often by failure. Ultimately, its demise was in part caused by a final, devastating internal clash within the leadership, but in the conclusion of this work other reasons are also suggested to explain why the Society failed to survive beyond the early 1970's.

The idea of the Summerhill Society was first proposed in February, 1961, at a party in New York City given by Harold H. Hart to launch and promote A. S. Neill's new book, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*, published by Hart three months earlier. Dr. Edward P. Gottlieb, at that time principal of Public School No. 65 in Manhattan, has described the party as a festive gathering of prominent
people unexpectedly interrupted by a guest named Dr. Benjamin Fine, Education Editor of the North American Newspaper Alliance and former Education Editor of the New York Times. Asking for quiet and literally standing on a chair, Fine talked about the significance of Neill's book and said that a "society" should be started to promote Neill's ideas. According to Gottlieb, Fine's short speech was enthusiastically received with a rousing ovation. Immediately afterwards, plans were laid for a meeting at which the Summerhill Society would be established.

It would seem that Fine's proposal was a spontaneous act. At least, to most of the party goers, it must have all seemed spontaneous. They were attending a party whose function was to promote Neill's book and not to create some kind of "society." However, Gottlieb has suggested that Hart instigated the whole event. He may even have planned with Fine for the latter to speak "spontaneously" at the party. In fact, in a letter, dated January 4, 1961, to Mr. Richard E. Smith of Redding, California, Hart mentioned his plan to create a Summerhill Society: "A Summerhill Society will be formed--perhaps this month, certainly in February--here in New York."3

Who was Harold Hart and what was his relationship to Neill and the Summerhill School--and, why did he found the Summerhill Society?
Harold Hart was the President of the Hart Publishing Company, which had long specialized in children's books. In a piece of promotional literature advertising *Summerhill*, Hart claimed to have learned of Neill in the mid 1950's when he came across one of Neill's earlier books entitled *The Free Child*, published in 1953. He found this book to be so interesting that sometime around 1956, he visited the Summerhill School in Leiston and met its headmaster. At that time, he became convinced that Neill's methods worked.

There then developed a close relationship between the two men, which was both professionally and personally significant for both of them. During the late 1950's, Hart aided Neill in producing *Summerhill*, and this help was acknowledged by Neill in his dedication of the book to Hart:

"Your patience has amazed me. To sort out thousands of words from four of my earlier books, to edit them and combine them with new material--this has been a formidable task."  

Neill continued by noting that Hart loved and believed in the school and closed by electing him an honorary pupil of Summerhill. Furthermore, on a professional level, their relationship was instrumental to the survival of the Summerhill School. In 1959, just prior to the publication of *Summerhill* in the U. S., their enrollment had dwindled to just twenty-five students, considerably below the usual number of sixty or seventy, and the survival of the school was in question.
A decade later in his autobiography, Neill credited Hart with saving the Summerhill School, for the success of Summerhill aided the school's finances and "brought an invasion of American pupils to the school" which quickly reversed the trend in declining enrollment. On a personal level, according to Dr. Gottlieb, Hart was further committed to the school by having been a parent of two students placed there earlier and he was grateful for what the school had done for his children.

Hart was certainly committed to Summerhill on both an intellectual and emotional level. His motives for starting the Summerhill Society stemmed from his faith in the Summerhill idea of education and an honest desire to encourage the spread of this idea in the U. S. The depth of his commitment might also be gauged by the financial gamble he took in publishing Summerhill. Unlike Neill's earlier books, which had been published in this country only after they had first appeared in Britain, Summerhill was published first in the United States and not until two years later did it appear in England. Hart was not simply re-issuing some book which had already proven its sales record in England, and there was absolutely no guarantee that it would be a success in a country which had largely forgotten Neill. At the time of its publication in 1960, "not a single bookseller in the country was willing to place an advance order for even one copy of
the book,"7 hardly a conspicuous beginning for a book that was to sell over a million copies. To promote it, Hart invested a great amount of money. Full-page ads were purchased in the Sunday edition of The New York Times and in the Saturday Review of Literature. Promotional flyers, professionally printed with form letters by Hart inserted, were circulated and in them Hart offered free examination of the book. Hart would send the book free of charge for a ten day trial reading period. If the book was not found helpful in working or living with children, then the reader could return it and owe nothing. Other promotional bulletins were produced in which there were selections of rave reviews of the book by thirty-six leading intellectuals, writers, educators, social scientists, and doctors. Included among the thirty-six were Bruno Bettelheim, Benjamin Fine, Erich Fromm, Paul Goodman, Henry Miller, Ashley Montagu, Carl Rogers, Goodwin Watson, and Negley Teeters, most of them quite probably solicited by Hart in personal requests.8

Considering the extent of Hart's promotional efforts and the resulting financial gamble involved in publishing the book, it might be assumed that Hart's creation of the Summerhill Society was just another public relations gimmick to sell Summerhill. To assume that Hart possessed only this crass motive in founding it, one would have to discredit Hart's genuine friendship with Neill and his sincere belief
in the Summerhill philosophy. A year after the Summerhill Society was organized, Hart wrote, "My involvement with this Society has become such that I have pledged all profits from the sale of the book to the Society."9 One month later Hart publicly announced the same pledge in the official organ of the Society, The Summerhill Bulletin.

The idea of a "Summerhill society" was born, as has been remarked, at a party held by Hart in February, 1961. This gathering was quickly followed by a general organizational meeting in New York City at the Grosvenor Hotel on March 19. The attendance of more than 140 people was indicative of the extensive interest in the Summerhill idea generated by the publication of Summerhill. At this meeting, a great deal of organizational work was accomplished: a policy statement and a set of by-laws were adopted, and officers were elected. These accomplishments were reported in a press release by Harold Hart, who was adept at utilizing publicity. Enclosed with the press release was the previously described promotional bulletin, which contained those thirty-six appraisals of Summerhill.

The original purposes of the Summerhill Society were clearly set forth at the March 19 meeting in a policy statement or, as it was formally entitled in the professionally printed copies, a "Statement of Policy":


b. To support the Summerhill School in Leiston, England.

c. To cooperate with groups having similar aims.  

Of the three purposes, starting a school received by far the greatest amount of attention by the Society during its first few years of existence. That fact was further evident in the original "Statement of Policy" for, after a brief listing of the three basic purposes, the remainder of the statement--ten points which nearly filled the one-page document--focused on the proposed American Summerhill School, or Summerhill, U.S.A. as it was sometimes called. Among the ten points, it was noted that there would be no compulsory classes or homework and that grade cards would not be issued. The school would be located in the Greater New York area and would enroll both day and boarding students from nursery age through high school. Admission to the school would not be denied to any child because of race, color, creed, or because of the social status or political affiliation of his parents."  

The school would attempt to establish an endowment, which would provide a sound financial basis so that it would not have to compromise its principles by accepting financial assistance. Furthermore, scholarships would then be made available and teachers paid a competitive salary.

The other two purposes of the Society, points b and c, were not nearly as important as the establishment of a school.
There is very little evidence that the Society ever provided any real support, financial or otherwise, to the Summerhill School in Leiston, England. Rather than cooperation between the American Summerhill Society and Neill's Summerhill, there may have been some antagonism between them, especially over the proposed American Summerhill School. In the very first issue of The Summerhill Bulletin, a publication of the American Summerhill Society, an excerpt of a letter, dated March 22, 1961, from A. S. Neill to Harold Hart, was reprinted. Neill wrote, "I don't want to see an American Summerhill tied to my Summerhill. I want no disciples. If I have inspired anyone, OK; but he must move on to his own philosophy as I did." He suggested that they hire a headmaster who would not remain just a follower of his ideas. Neill's sentiments were echoed by the British Summerhill Society. In their publication, entitled Id, they printed a notice denying that there was any connection between them and the American Society. "As to the proposed [American] school, Id was emphatically outraged. 'Both Neill and the British Summerhill Society oppose absolutely this use of the name "Summerhill"... No one has the right to institute another Summerhill. Everyone has the right to draw inspiration from Neill's work and run their own schools under their own names.'"

As for the Society's third purpose--cooperating with groups having similar aims--it was so vague as to almost defy definition. Eventually, it came to mean that the Society
should act as a national clearinghouse for information regarding the Summerhill idea, schools operating on Summerhill principles, and alternative education in general.

Not surprisingly, at the organizational meeting, Harold H. Hart was elected as the first President of the Summerhill Society. Other officers included the previously identified Benjamin Fine, as First Vice-President, and Martin Berger, a member of the New York law firm of Berger and Kramer, as Second Vice-President. Dr. Morris Gall, Professor of Education at Yeshiva University of New York, was elected Secretary, and the Treasurer selected was Marvin Cohen, a Plant Manager for the Instant Coffee Company. In addition, a Board of Directors was elected, composed of four individuals: David M. Massie, Miss Beatrice Ostern, Miss Rita Frankiel, and Dana K. Mooring. All of them, except Mooring, were connected with universities in New York City, while the latter was an editor in the College Division of the McGraw-Hill Book Company. Together, the officers and directors constituted the Executive Committee.

Under Hart's leadership, the Executive Committee created eight additional committees. Legal problems, financial affairs, membership drives, public relations, and the publication of the Bulletin were each the province of a separate committee. Three more committees (Education, Administrative, and Admissions and Scholarships) dealt exclusively
with problems connected with the proposed school. Of the nine committees, Harold Hart was chairman of two of them and Miss Beatrice Ostern, who was soon to become Hart's wife, was head of a third.

By July, 1961, the first issue of *The Summerhill Bulletin* was able to report on the progress of some of the committees. The Finance Committee chairman had already appointed three sub-committees. One was to investigate the possibility of obtaining grants from foundations, another was going to attempt to raise large contributions, and the third was formed to raise small monies by running social affairs such as bazaars, dances, and raffles. Hart participated in the work of the last two sub-committees. Other work in the area of finances was also undertaken, although it is unclear by which committee. Cost reports on bus transportation, school equipment, and the setting up of a commissary were prepared. Meanwhile, the Administrative Committee had also divided itself into three sub-committees in an effort to investigate possible sites for the proposed school. The three sub-units were divided along geographical lines, with one each for New Jersey, Long Island, and Westchester County. Topics of faculty procurement, curriculum, and equipment were discussed by four sub-committees of the Education Committee, which were divided according to the ages of the prospective students, while the entire Committee discussed basic issues
of curriculum and educational philosophy. The "total number of students desirable; age distribution; entrance qualification; screening procedures; fees; and scholarship standards" were all subjects examined in depth by the Admissions and Scholarship Committee. Later, in the fall of 1961, a Forum committee was added to the organization. Its purpose was to arrange public meetings at which the Summerhill idea would be discussed through debates, lectures, and panel discussions. The success of this committee expanded the role of the Society as a clearinghouse of information.

By the autumn of 1961, it became apparent that changes had occurred in the committees, in both structure and personnel. A comparison of reports on the committees, as they appeared in the first issue of The Bulletin and as they were in the October, 1961 issue, reveals these changes. Structurally, the original Research Committee was phased out of existence, while apparently the Admissions and Scholarship Committee was merged with the Education Committee. Within the Finance Committee, the original sub-committee which had been organized to raise small monies via social affairs was expanded into a full committee labeled Ways and Means. In terms of personnel, the chairmen of several of the committees changed. Chairmanship of the Administration Committee switched from Harold Hart to Leo Rhodes, who was an administrator with the Robert Louis Stevenson School and much more
experienced in school administration than Hart. The editorship of *The Summerhill Bulletin*, whose publication was the work of a separate committee, changed from Dana Mooring to Harold Hart. In fact, this change occurred so early in the Society's history, that Mooring was actually editor for only the initial issue of *The Bulletin*. The Education Committee came under the leadership of the former Beatrice Ostern, who by now had become Mrs. Harold Hart. Herbert Nason took the place of Marvin Cohen as head of the Membership Committee, and Rita Frankiel was replaced by Freda Pheffer as chairman of Public Relations. Of the nine original committees, only two, Finance and Legal, were headed by the same chairman as when the Society, with its committees, was first formed eight months earlier. During these changes, a thread of continuity was maintained by Hart's continued presence. After all the changes had occurred, Hart and his wife together still chaired three of the nine committees. Parallel with these committee changes were changes in the officers of the Society. By October of 1961, Morris Gall and Marvin Cohen were no longer able to serve as officers, because the former had accepted a position as Head of Social Studies in the Norwalk, Connecticut public schools and the latter had taken a new job, resulting in a subsequent move to Brooklyn. New in their places were Lester Evens, as Acting Treasurer, and
Rosalind Post, as Executive Secretary, by now a paid part-time position. Voluntary secretarial help had proven to be inadequate in handling the growing amount of clerical work in the Society, which in part involved money deposits, membership applications, *Bulletin* proofreading, Committee reports, Board minutes, and a great amount of correspondence. The original Board of Directors had changed markedly. After the withdrawal of Massie and Mooring, the new Board was expanded to five persons with the election of three new members: Ann Morris, Freda Pheffer, and Leo Rhodes, all of whom had been active in committee work. Throughout 1961, Harold Hart remained as President, and thus a measure of stability in the top leadership of the Society was maintained and progress continued toward the primary goal of establishing a school, despite all of the first year organizational and personnel changes.

During the first six months of the Society's existence, the progress of the committees toward founding a school was matched by a successful effort to increase the Society's membership. By the end of the summer, it had more than doubled in size. The lead article of the second issue of *The Summerhill Bulletin* proudly noted, that, "As a direct result of an all-out drive launched in mid-July, Summerhill Society membership jumped from 134 in June to 350 at the end of September--a rise of more than 160 percent within the
space of two months." There were 302 Regular Members, 30 Sustaining Members, and 18 Patron Members. Geographically, the membership was drawn primarily from the eastern seaboard, yet there was a total of thirty states represented in it. Of the twenty states not represented, it appears that several of them were in the South. Outside of the East Coast, there were clusters of Summerhill supporters on the West Coast and in the Midwest. In California alone, 46 individuals were members. In the second issue of The Bulletin, Mell Carey, a long time resident of Berkeley, issued an invitation for a meeting of Californians in the Bay Area who might be interested in establishing a Summerhill School in California. The same issue of The Bulletin carried a similar notice by Kenneth Barklind, connected with the Child Study Services of St. Cloud State College, Minnesota, who wanted to establish meetings of those people in his state who were interested in the Summerhill idea. Even though the Summerhill Society only had seven members from Minnesota in 1961, that state, particularly the Minneapolis area, became a Midwestern center of interest in Summerhill education.

With the rise in membership came increased revenues in the form of dues, which aided the Society in remaining fiscally sound throughout 1961. An examination of the
the following tabulation,\textsuperscript{17} which lists monthly membership receipts for 1961, reveals both the Society's growth pattern and the flow of its major source of income:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Analysis of Membership Receipts}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l@{}c}
\textbf{1961} & \textbf{Dollars} \\
February & 210.00 \\
March & 405.00 \\
April & 30.00 \\
May & 15.00 \\
June & 10.00 \\
July & 90.00 \\
August & 957.00 \\
September & 440.00 \\
October & 515.00 \\
November & 791.00 \\
December & 291.00 \\
\hline
Total 1961 & \$3,754.00 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The initial enthusiasm for the Society was reflected in the March receipts, which were the highest for any single month during the first six months of its existence. Late spring and early summer were low points in the Society's efforts to recruit members. A massive, late summer recruitment effort was rewarded by the August membership receipts, which were the highest for any single month during 1961. The total membership receipts, $3,754.00 was based upon a grand total of 563 members. Even though it was a non-profit entity, the Summerhill Society still needed to raise such large amounts of money just to cover its considerable expenses. In its first seven months of operation, $832.54 were spent on printing and stationery alone, with an additional $205.46
spent on postage and mailing. Total expenses for 1961 were $3,778.44. A comparison of total expenses and total income, based on membership dues only, revealed a small deficit of $24.44 for 1961. On a cost per member scale, this meant that four cents was lost per member. If the Society had relied solely on membership receipts, it would have ended the first year in the red.

Fortunately, the deficit was avoided by some small contributions and by the success of a highly publicized Cocktail Party,18 held on October 22, 1961. The Mark Twain Room of the Grosvenor Hotel was rented along with an orchestra. Expenses for the room rental, the orchestra--plus printing, postage, and advertising--totaled $564.89. An admission fee of $2.50 per person was charged and drinks were sold. Total receipts, based upon an attendance of 199 people and the sale of drinks, equalled $790.50. In addition, seven new memberships were acquired at the party. The modest profit of $225.61 was more than sufficient in erasing what would have been a small deficit for 1961. Thus, the Society entered its second year of operation, 1962, with a small amount of surplus cash in the bank.

In addition to organizing itself, recruiting members, and doing some minor fund raising, the first year activities of the Society also included planning for incorporation
status and attracting sponsors. The progress of all these activities was publicized in the Society's official publication, The Summerhill Bulletin, the production of which was in itself a major function of the Society during 1961.

In the first issue of the Bulletin, the Society's plans to incorporate were reported. It was noted that when the Society was originally organized, it was established as an unincorporated association, so that progress toward the goal of establishing a school would not be delayed by the time required in obtaining incorporation status. However, at that time, plans were laid for obtaining permission to incorporate and the Executive Committee soon authorized the Legal Committee to proceed in an effort to achieve such legal status. The motivations for this were twofold. First, individual members needed to avoid legal liability for the collective acts of the organization. Secondly, and of greater importance, the Society needed incorporation so that it could achieve tax exempt status from the U. S. Internal Revenue Service. This would have the added benefit of making contributions to the Society, which were absolutely crucial for the establishment of a school, tax deductible for the donor. The Society made plans to submit a proposed Certificate of Incorporation to the Regents of the University of the State of New York, who had the authority for granting incorporation to any organization.
having educational purposes. Anticipating approval, the Society would then apply to the Regents for a separate license needed to operate a school.

The Society's successful efforts in attracting sponsors was also reported in the first Bulletin. Like the early Progressive Education Association, the Summerhill Society felt a need to attract sponsors, who would lend status and respectability to their organization, and thus only prominent educators and other public figures were sought. Potential sponsors were assured that just the use of their name, to be printed on the Society's stationery, was being requested of them. Sponsorship would not involve a donation of their money or time. Beginning in 1961, the Society launched a letter writing campaign to attract sponsors and these efforts were expanded greatly in the following year. The original list of sponsors consisted of the following notables:

Dr. Goodwin Watson, Professor of Education at Columbia University, and Director of the Institute for Group Psychotherapy.

Dr. Harold L. Ellis, eminent psychoanalyst and author.

Irving Caesar, writer of popular music and Broadway and Hollywood musicals.

Dr. Geoffrey F. Osler, psychoanalyst and neurologist, Instructor in Neurology at Columbia University, and Instructor at the New School of Social Research.
Paul Goodman, noted poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright.

A. Alfred Cohen, Superintendent, Warwick State Training School for Boys.

Besides reporting on the actual progress of the Society, the Bulletin in 1961 also published short scholarly articles, reprinted reviews of Summerhill, and included space for letters. The latter category provided Hart the opportunity for exercising his editorial flair for knowing what would interest the readers. The first issue of the Bulletin, under Dana Mooring, rather blandly printed only letters which were generally sympathetic of the Summerhill idea. With the assumption of the editorship by Hart, the second issue published letters that were both fervently pro and con, in which a sense of controversy was stimulated. One man wrote, "I have just finished your wonderful book, Summerhill. I believe the work at Summerhill is the most important taking place anywhere that I know of in the world." Equally positive, another commented, "I was unbelievably moved while reading Summerhill. Sometimes to tears." But, from the other side, one man wrote, "This book is trash; the author is quite obviously off his rocker... I hope you [Hart] lose enough money on this venture to discourage anything more along this line... and I am warning as many people as I can reach about this ridiculous book of rubbish." Likewise, from California came this letter:
"The ideas Mr. Neill has about an open season on sex is [sic] to me distasteful [sic], sinful and definitely not what I would want for my children. We are Christians and live a life as nearly as we can by the Bible. Therefore this book is something I don't even want in our home." 24

At about the same time that the Society was publicizing itself via its own Bulletin, it was also beginning to gain wider exposure in the media. On July 16, 1961, Camera Three, a CBS television program, produced a show, entitled "The Chance to Grow," in which thirty minutes were devoted to a story on the Summerhill School in Leiston, England. A participant in that program was the noted psychoanalyst and neurologist, Dr. Geoffrey F. Osier, previously listed as a sponsor of the Summerhill Society. This national broadcast aroused a considerable interest in Summerhill education, as evidenced by the hundreds of letters sent by viewers from throughout the country. The Bulletin noted that, "With very few exceptions, those writing in expressed thanks for the opportunity of being introduced to Neill's methods--and many wished to become participants in The Summerhill Society." 25 Perhaps the rapid rise in memberships during August of 1961 was in part due to this television show. Approximately two months later, on September 12, another representative of the Society appeared on television. This time Harold Hart, its President, served as a panelist on a show, entitled At Your Beck and Call, which was a production of Channel 13 of
New York. Betty Furness was the moderator and during the show answers were given to the many questions posed about Summerhill. A month after the broadcast of this show, the First Vice-President of the Society, Dr. Benjamin Fine, was invited to speak by the Alliance of Unitarian Women at the First Unitarian Church in Pittsburgh. The Society continued to send forth speakers as a means of publicizing its efforts and the Summerhill philosophy. For example, in the same month that Fine spoke in Pittsburgh, Harold Hart spoke before the Single Parents Society in Philadelphia.

By any measure, the Summerhill Society was a success during its first year of operation in 1961. Fiscally sound, it had enjoyed a significant rise in membership and had obtained prominent people as sponsors. The attention of the media had been gained and the Society was successfully promoting itself via its own Bulletin. Most importantly, progress was made toward its primary goal of establishing a Summerhill School in the New York City area.

However, 1961 also witnessed the first troubling signs of serious dissension within the Society, possibly hidden beneath what may have been only a facade of success as publicized in The Summerhill Bulletin. Questions and disagreements arose over the style in which the Society was operating, but more importantly the leadership of Hart seems to have become a divisive issue to some of the other leaders,
for Hart was at the center of each conflict that occurred. During the summer and autumn of 1961, several resignations of key leaders took place. The first incident of such difficulty revolved around the relationship between Miss Rita Frankiel and Harold Hart.

In 1961, Rita Frankiel was a Ph.D. candidate in Clinical Psychology at Columbia University. She was a charter member of the Society and served on the Executive Committee in her capacity as a member of the Board of Directors. She chaired the Committee for Public Relations and had been a contributor to The Summerhill Bulletin.

As chairman of Public Relations, her job was to recruit sponsors for the Society and at a Board of Directors meeting, led by Hart on June 27, 1961, her performance in that job was seriously criticized. Promptly, she offered her formal resignation from the Board of Directors of the Summerhill Society in a letter to Harold Hart, dated the very next day. She wrote, "This resignation is at your request, based, according to your words at the Board meeting of 27 June 1961, on my alleged unwillingness to abide by the actions of the organization." In fact, she did have reservations about using the Society's original Statement of Policy in recruiting new sponsors. In their recruitment efforts, the normal procedure was to write a personalized form letter to the
prospective sponsor and enclose the Statement of Policy. Frankiel had chosen to replace the Policy Statement with a "general description of the ideas of the [proposed] school."27 In her resignation letter of June 28, she quoted at length some passages from that "general description," since she thought that this was an important issue in the Board's and Hart's, displeasure with her. She claimed that those passages were actually based on a draft of a form letter for sponsors, which Hart had suggested to her on May 16, 1961. Toward the end of her letter, Frankiel centered on what she felt was the key issue between them and wrote that what Hart found most objectionable "was that a committee chairman should [have] taken it upon himself to make a decision about the course of action a committee should take."28

Harold Hart replied to Miss Frankiel in a letter dated also on June 28. He suggested that she was "laboring under a severe misapprehension as to what was meant"29 at the previous Board meeting and that he had had "no intention--no thought at any time of asking you to resign from the Executive Committee."30 Incidentally, it should be clarified that the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee had become nearly synonymous. Hart continued by noting that he had merely meant to theoretically point out that if she did not agree with the Statement of Policy, duly adopted at previous meetings, then she would not be able to actively promote the
Society's program "through asking public figures to support such a program." Since that was the mandated function of the Public Relations Committee, its chairman had to support the present Policy Statement. He went on to suggest that if the present Statement of Policy was unacceptable to her, then it could be changed at a later date, by the due processes established by the constitution of the Summerhill Society.

Hart closed by asking Miss Frankiel to reconsider her resignation, since he felt that she had something of value to add to the Society. At this point, it was not clear whether Hart wanted Frankiel to remain on the Board of Directors as well as Chairman of Public Relations, or if he wanted her to remain only as a Board member. However, later in the summer, he apparently sent another letter requesting that she return whatever public relations materials she had.

In a letter, dated September 12, 1961, Rita Frankiel replied to Hart. Having been on vacation, she had had some time to think over the situation. She began by explaining that she had not yet sent the public relations materials, since she thought the issue of her resignation from the Public Relations Committee was still an open one, awaiting her final decision. Once again, she reiterated her charge that Hart's concern over her lack of accord with the Policy Statement was not the real point of contention between them, but merely "a RED HERRING." Finalizing her decision, she resigned as Chairman of the Public Relations Committee and promised to
forward the pertinent materials to Hart. Still, she left open the matter of her continued membership on the Board and suggested that the Board itself would have to decide that question, and not she and Hart through an exchange of correspondence. Interestingly, she closed on a cordial note: "Hoping that the misunderstanding can be ironed out when we meet."33

During the next two months, the situation between them must have deteriorated. On November 2, Rita Frankiel sent a final letter to Hart. Most of that letter has been reproduced here, because of its significance in raising important questions about the governing of the Society and particularly Hart's leadership. She wrote:

"I find that I can no longer go along with you and the rest of the board. The issues of funds and "Corporate Images" seems to have pushed the real ideals and goals out the window.

You were always, I felt, very practical and pragmatic in your approach to problems, and although we did not always agree, we were at least each convinced of the other's good faith. This no longer exists.

The society has become a monster, and as such will require huge amounts of money to keep it going. I have always questioned the need for such an extended organization, for the huge amounts of money you felt to be needed for a school.

... I must say that the events of last night's Board meeting, both the substance and really undemocratic spirit, suggest to me that the SUMMERHILL Society is a luxury I can no longer afford.

I will continue as a member, but I hereby resign from the Executive Committee."34
In fact, after this resignation, there is no written evidence to prove that she was ever again active in the affairs of the Society.

It might be concluded that the conflict between Hart and Frankiel was simply the product of a personality clash. However, other evidence would tend to discount that. The next day after Frankiel's resignation of November 2, Hart received another letter of resignation from another Board member. Her name was Ann Morris and less is known about her than of Rita Frankiel. She was elected to the Board just that summer to fill a vacancy and had served on a sub-committee of the Education Committee. Overall, she seems to have been less active in the Society than was Frankiel. In her letter, she noted her concern over what she felt was the Society's unprofessional and questionable means for achieving its main goal, the establishment of a Summerhill School. Echoing sentiments similar to Frankiel's, she wrote:

"After giving the matter considerable thought over an extended period of time I can reach only one conclusion. Namely, that the purposes and goals of A. S. Neal [sic] and of the original Summerhill Society are no longer being met by the existing organization... I am firmly convinced that Neal [sic] did not see the Summerhill idea evolving into a business enterprise. And since I have little wish to become an Executive in such a 'Corporation', I feel my services would have little validity."

Ann Morris closed her letter by narrowing the focus of her criticisms to Hart himself:
"If Neill's ideals are to be truly respected, then the architects of this plan must in themselves, set an example by their cooperative effort and democratic procedure. The Board, as it now exists, is a prop for the support of one man's idea. I'm sorry--but I don't believe it to be that of A. S. Neill."36

Nothing else can be concluded, except that she was referring to Hart.

The resignations of these two women in 1961 raised some serious questions about the fledgling Society and its key figure, Harold Hart. Had the Summerhill Society become the very antithesis of A. S. Neill's Summerhill School? Was it a business enterprise developing a corporate image? Had it become an extended, bureaucratic organization? Did it function in an undemocratic manner? Central to all these questions was Hart's role in the Society. Was his leadership too authoritarian or should he be viewed as simply a strong leader attempting to lead an organization of disparate elements?

It is not possible to answer fully all of these questions. However, Hart's style of leadership can be further examined. In the case of Rita Frankiel, Hart seems to have allowed her only a limited amount of autonomy in her job as Chairman of Public Relations. Prior to their disagreements, he wrote her a letter in which he clearly appears to be telling her how to do the job of attracting sponsors. He enclosed a list of prospective sponsors that she was advised to contact as well as another list of names which he felt would be useless to contact. He also enclosed a sample form
letter which he thought she might find useful in drafting her own letters to prospective sponsors. Furthermore, he strongly urged her to send the sponsor letters to his office, so that he could attach them to copies of *Summerhill*. He argued that the best way to attract sponsors was to send a copy of the book along with the letter requesting their sponsorship.

Whether justified or not is unknown, but at one point he publicly criticised her "unwarranted delay in getting out letters to prospective sponsors," explaining that such a delay was damaging to everyone's efforts. When Professor Bruno Bettelheim seemed to have misunderstood Miss Frankiel's letter requesting his sponsorship, Hart took it upon himself to rewrite Bettelheim and sent a copy of that letter to her. It seems clear why Miss Frankiel thought Hart to be undemocratic.

But, the question remains--was Hart's leadership style so authoritarian that it discouraged legitimate dissent or discussion within the *Summerhill* Society about its goals or the methods of obtaining them? There is some evidence which suggests that this may have been true. Early in December of 1961, Hart had received a letter from Herbert Cogan (who later was to become an officer of the Society), in which the latter raised some questions about whether the proposed school should enroll boarding or day students. Hart responded by noting that this question had already been thoroughly discussed at the Executive Committee level and that, "At this stage, our concern is not--and cannot be--further examination of policy
or aims."38 Along the same vein, he continued:

"Speaking to the point and without meaning in the slightest to be rude or short, neither I nor any member of the Board can--at this very critical juncture in the life of the Society--engage in further discussion as to what the school should be or what aims it should pursue. We are bound to stand on what has already been decided, and must bend full energies to the raising of funds, without which the day-to-day life of the Summerhill movement cannot go on."39

In a letter to Gerald Weinberg dated December 4, 1961, the same day that he had responded to Cogan, Hart repeated almost word for word his point that extensive debate about the proposed school must cease, so that attention could be focused on the necessary task of fund raising. During that same December, Hart also received a letter from a New York City man in which a proposed letter for getting sponsors was enclosed. Hart's reply is very interesting, especially in light of the Hart versus Frankiel conflict which had just come to a close. Discouraging any discussion about the topic, Hart wrote back to him that, "Many approaches towards getting sponsors have been tried; only one has worked. We must therefore hew to the line, and depend on the one approach which has proved successful."40

If it seems that Hart was indeed autocratic, then in fairness to him, it must also be remembered that the members of the Summerhill Society were a free thinking group of individuals not always inclined toward consensus. Furthermore, some members were always more willing to debate policy rather than do the mundane, daily work necessary for the
establishment of a school. Strong leadership may have been absolutely essential if the Society was to ever realize its main goal.

As to some of the other questions--had the Society become an extended, bureaucratic organization? There can be no doubt that the Society was a highly organized hierarchy, ranging from its sub-committees to the committees, which in turn were under the Executive Committee. It was so highly departmentalized, that there was even some bureaucratic fumbling, such as lost correspondence. For example, in a letter dated September 20, 1961, Claude Samton volunteered his services as an architect in designing a school for the Society. As a Visiting Professor of Design at the school of architecture of Renssalaer Polytechnic Institute, he wanted to assign his fifth year students the task of designing the proposed school under his guidance. Nearly four months passed before a definite response was made to the offer. In a letter, dated January 18, 1962, Hart explained the delay by noting that Samton's letter had been "turned over to the head of the Administrative Committee, and then once again to the head of the Public Relations Committee, and somehow got kicked around until it was buried some place in the file."41 Clouding this particular situation was the fact that Hart had actually written an earlier reply dated December 15, 1961. Had he forgotten his earlier reply or was it not ever sent? By the end of 1961, Hart was pleading for a paid administrative
staff to handle in part the Society's growing correspondence. Such a paid staff would have surely swelled the operating budget beyond the nearly four thousand dollars, which had been needed in 1961 with primarily a voluntary staff. For those people totally immersed in the Summerhill philosophy, nothing in this complicated structure could have seemed like Neill's weekly self-government meetings which governed the Summerhill School.

Finally, was the Society, under Hart's leadership, attempting to project a corporate image? There is no concrete evidence available which would accurately answer this question. If Hart seemed to some people to project such an image of the Society, it may have been because his dreams for an American Summerhill School were more grand than theirs. In his reply to architect Claude Samton, Hart envisioned a school housed in a modern edifice, designed for a maximum of two hundred and fifty students, and located on a minimum of four acres. Besides classrooms, "there would also be ample laboratories, a gymnasium in which folk dancing could be held, a quiet music room, a dark room for photography, a stage for plays by the student body, and a large room for general meetings." In addition, offices would be provided for the headmaster and other administrative directors, while outside a carport would be built to accommodate school buses. Hart, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, projected that $250,000 would be a realistic sum needed to establish the school, even if
a new plant was not built. Obviously, Hart's vision of the projected Summerhill School was not the same as held by those members who were willing to start a small free school, operating out of some storefront on a shoestring budget. In fact, the facilities Hart envisioned would have been far more elaborate than the actual facilities at Summerhill in Leiston.

No matter how critical some members of the Society were toward Hart in 1961, the importance of his role in the American Summerhill movement should always be noted. He was the publisher of Neill's *Summerhill*, the founder of the Summerhill Society, and the guiding force in its early efforts to establish a school. In light of these accomplishments, Dr. George von Hilsheimer, who was another leader in the Society and later a founder of a Summerhill type school, has concluded that in his opinion "the whole free school movement would have been years delayed, perhaps never occurred at all if Harold [Hart] hadn't had his dream."43

In spite of all the internal rumblings which occurred within the Society in 1961, it survived and entered 1962 with its primary objective of establishing a school still very much intact. The first half of its second year witnessed one of the Society's greatest achievements, yet also produced a crisis of major proportions.

The impressive achievement was a spectacular benefit show, which occurred one Sunday evening on May 13, 1962. The show was planned at least as early as the beginning of that
year. In the minutes of an executive board meeting, dated January 4, 1962, it was inconspicuously reported that President Hart had announced that Margot Moser, the lead actress in "My Fair Lady," had volunteered to work on a benefit performance with name performers. Hart was to investigate the possibility and report back to the committee. The idea of the show had originated with Miss Moser. After having read Neill's Summerhill, she had become so enthusiastic about it that she was determined to do something which would help make the American Summerhill School become a reality. Thus, she became the co-producer of the benefit show, which was entitled, "An Evening of Unusual Entertainment," and was instrumental in arranging for a cast of star performers. Her enthusiasm for Summerhill was communicated to her fellow entertainers and, in fact, she had insisted that each participant in the program read Summerhill. Those who performed were so dedicated to the Summerhill ideal that they donated their time and talents without charge and some eventually became sponsors of the Society. Likewise, the use of the Alvin Theater, a Broadway facility, was donated by its owners and furthermore Leonard Bernstein donated the royalties and rental for a performance of his "Overture to Candide." Moser's efforts on behalf of the Society continued for some time after the May 13 performance. She continued to circulate copies of Summerhill among her friends and personally obtained several more prominent
sponsors for the Society. For example, she was responsible for getting Al Capp, the cartoonist, to consent to becoming a sponsor.

As entertainment, the Summerhill benefit show was a tremendous success. A perusal of the souvenir program reveals a show of nearly unmatched diversity and excellence, cast with stars of international fame. Classical music was played by pianist Rosina Lhevinne, accompanied by the world famous Juilliard String Quartet, while jazz was performed by the Woody Herman Band. Scenes from "Purlie Victorious" were done by Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, plus there were scenes from the then current production of "My Fair Lady," starring Margot Moser and possibly Julie Andrews. It is not clear whether the latter actually performed at the benefit, for her name was not included in the souvenir program. Yet, in The Summerhill Bulletin,44 she was named as one of the performers scheduled to appear. Readings from Shakespeare were rendered by William Squire and Douglas Campbell, who has since become head of the Shaw Festival in Canada. One of the emcees during the evening was Orson Bean. Appropriately closing the program was a reading of selections from A. S. Neill's Summerhill. The program notes themselves concluded with a statement by Harold Hart in which he briefly summarized the ideas which would mark the proposed American Summerhill School. The actual fact that this great collection of stars appeared on one stage is simply amazing, but even more so is the fact
that they all enthusiastically endorsed the Summerhill ideal--otherwise, they would not have performed.

Unfortunately, the benefit show was not nearly as successful financially as it was as a piece of entertainment. It was hoped that it would net $15,000, after all expenses were paid. However, the actual profit made, according to a Profit and Loss Statement sheet, was $911.56 and this figure rose slightly to $932.06 after later adjustments. Why the large discrepancy between the expected and the actual profits? An examination of the expenses itemized on the Profit and Loss Statement sheet reveals a partial answer. Expenses were high, totaling $5,112.87, but could it not be assumed that most of them were anticipated when they projected a $15,000 profit? The real reason for the small margin of profit lies in the fact that many of the tickets, which ranged in price from $10 to $25, were actually sold for considerably less. The story behind the benefit show's failure to realize its expected profit was interwoven with the Society's first major crisis--the resignation of Harold Hart as its President.

Dr. Edward Gottlieb has described the sequence of events which led to this critical situation. Gottlieb had been associated with the Society since its inception, but had not participated actively as either a board member or as an officer, even though he had been nominated for those positions. He had declined, in part because of his heavy commitments elsewhere, which included the principalship of a
New York public school, chairmanship of the War Resisters League, and activity within the local teacher union movement. In addition, he was philosophically for the de-schooling of society and has stated that at that time he "was for the abolition of all schools." Thus, philosophically it did not make sense for him to actively participate in a Society whose main objective was the establishment of a school.

Early in 1962, Hart invited Gottlieb to a dinner party, at which he finally persuaded Gottlieb to become a member of the Executive Committee. A few weeks prior to the Summerhill benefit program of May 13, Gottlieb attended his first executive board meeting held at Harold Hart's home. Attendance at such a meeting was open to the entire Board of Directors, the officers of the Society, and any guests who might have been invited. Thus, anywhere from ten to fifteen people could theoretically have been expected to attend. Anticipating such a number, Gottlieb was very much surprised to find practically no one at this crucial meeting, in which important work had to be done for the forthcoming benefit show. Besides himself, there were only Harold Hart, Al and Kate Bronstein, and possibly one other person in attendance. The Bronsteins had only been active in the Society since January of 1962 and had entered into its affairs at that time by Hart's invitation.

At this executive meeting, a terrible fight developed between Harold Hart and Al and Kate Bronstein over the fact that a large number of tickets had not yet been sold. The
Bronsteins were in charge of ticket arrangements and Harold Hart felt they had been derelict in their responsibility for selling them. On the other hand, the Bronsteins were critical of Hart. Because he had just spent two weeks in England visiting Neill, they felt that he had absented himself at a very inopportune time when crucial planning for the benefit show had to be implemented. At this point, Hart's major concern was not the loss of revenue due to unsold tickets, but rather the huge embarrassment that would ensue for the Society and for the star performers if the theater were to be half empty. Gottlieb alleviated the problem by offering to distribute the tickets himself. He promised that the theater would be full even if it meant that they would not make much money. To accomplish this, he sold the remaining $10 seats for $6, and even sold some of the $25 seats for one dollar to some of the poor parents of his New York City public school. The actual result was a full house, but, as previously noted, a much smaller profit than was expected.

That night of the argument over the tickets, Harold Hart actually resigned as President of the Summerhill Society, according to Gottlieb. Unfortunately, there is no letter of resignation among the Summerhill Society papers, so there is no written verification of the exact date of Hart's resignation. However, it is known that Al Bronstein officially succeeded Hart as President during August of 1962, which would have been several months after the benefit performance of May 13.
Possibly, Hart remained as a lame duck President until at least the first week of June, for a letter of resignation by Kate Bronstein resulting from their differences was dated June 5, 1962, and was addressed to Hart. In her short note, she broadly stated her reason for resigning as Chairman of the Membership Committee by noting: "It is impossible for me to work in an atmosphere that is so alien to the basic philosophy of Summerhill."47

Without a copy of Hart's resignation letter, his reasons for resigning may never be completely known. In The Summerhill Bulletin (October 1962), it was simply stated that he had resigned for personal reasons. However, several reasons (beyond his dissatisfaction with the Bronsteins) suggest themselves, based upon Gottlieb's observations and several other pieces of Hart's official correspondence. Gottlieb has reported that during the argument with the Bronsteins, Hart complained that the business of the Summerhill Society was beginning to swamp his publishing house office, which was being used free of charge as the Society's headquarters, and that no one else was taking any responsibility for the tremendous amount of daily work that needed to be done. Possibly, Hart's participation in almost every facet of the Society's affairs was due not just to his deep commitment to it, but also because no one else would tackle all the difficult tasks. This may have been especially true of the preliminary work for the benefit show. Another observer and member of
the Society at that time, Dr. George von Hilsheimer, has noted that it was an "all chiefs and no Indians organization from the very start." 48 Apparently, large numbers of people filled with enthusiasm for Summerhill would attend the general meetings, but not very many would commit themselves for any long period of time to the detailed work of the committees. As was seen, not even all of the Executive Committee members attended their meetings. Perhaps Hart simply got tired of undertaking so much of the work practically by himself.

Hart's correspondence with two different Treasurers of the Society seems to illustrate this point and at the same time implies another reason why Hart may have quit. Apparently, Hart had pledged his own personal credit as a financial backup for the Summerhill Society and its delay or inability in paying certain bills was causing Hart some difficulty. As early as August of 1961, Hart was writing to the Treasurer, then Marvin Cohen, urging him to pay a particular printer who had telephoned Hart requesting his check. By November of that year, he was forced to write to the new Treasurer, Lester Evens, and requested that prompt payment be made on certain trade bills, so that his personal credit with those companies would not be jeopardized. Finally, in March of 1962, Hart wrote the following plea to the Society's Treasurer:

"Please, please, please pay the Summerhill bills. I have pledged my credit with these firms, and I don't want to be embarrassed. If you don't have money to pay, let me know and I'll pay, but please don't hold up the bills . . . Pay the suppliers first. Please pay them today." 49
Not only did the Society owe money to various suppliers, for example stationery retailers, but it also was in debt to Hart. In a letter dated March 22, 1962, Hart urged the Treasurer to pay whatever it owed the Hart Publishing Company, if it had the money. Of course, these last two letters to Treasurer Lester Evens were written fairly close to the time at which Hart decided to resign.

Hart's resignation was final. Despite Gottlieb's efforts to persuade him to reconsider, Hart never again participated in any of the Society's affairs. He did not even attend the benefit show, which he had spent so much time and energy planning. The only contact he retained with the Society was a business agreement to sell them copies of *Summerhill* at a discount price.

As could be expected, Hart's resignation had a major impact on the Society and nearly brought it to a collapse. Suddenly, the Society was without secretarial help, a headquarters, or any office equipment, all of which had been provided by the Hart Publishing Company. This, in turn, foreboded an economic crisis. In June of 1962, approximately the time of Hart's resignation, the Society prepared a projected monthly budget for 1963, which took account of the lost office space and equipment. A deficit of $68.00 per month was predicted, which proved to be approximately the same amount as the expected expenditures required for office rent and the purchase of office equipment. More importantly,
because Hart had been President, editor of The Bulletin, and chairman of several committees, his unexpected resignation produced a major power vacuum, so that during the summer of 1962, the Society was nearly leaderless and it was this fact which almost caused its demise at that time.

Declining membership receipts compounded the Society's difficulties in the second half of 1962 (see following chart).

Analysis of Membership Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>430.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>180.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,590.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>702.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>613.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>347.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>211.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>260.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1962</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,613.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After a highpoint in March, membership receipts dwindled each successive month, with the exception of September, until a low was hit in November. In part, this followed a pattern which was typical of the Society throughout its history. Membership receipts were always relatively low in the summer, as were the general activities of the Society. However, there exists some evidence that at this time the Society was even having some difficulty retaining its charter members from 1961 to 1962. Since it has already been established that the
Society in its first year and a half had a fairly rapid turnover of leaders, it should not be too surprising to find the same for the membership at large.

Statistically, the year 1961 had been concluded with a total membership of 563, yet by March 8, 1962 there were only 244 members. A breakdown of the paid membership, as of that date, revealed the number of renewals in each of the three categories. Out of a total of 204 regular members, only 41 were renewed memberships from 1961. The remaining 163 regular members represented new memberships for 1962. Likewise, there was a small percentage of the 1962 sustaining and patron members who had also been members in 1961. In the case of sustaining members, only 7 out of 27 were renewals and for the patron category only one single membership, out of a 1962 total of thirteen, was a renewal from 1961. Thus, out of the 1961 total of 563 members, only 49 had renewed their membership by March of 1962. Of course, more members may have renewed their membership later in the year. However, in light of the previously cited declining membership receipts for the second half of 1962, it is unlikely that this happened to any great degree. Only in December of 1962, did the membership receipts begin an upward trend which was to continue into 1963, but none of those could be considered renewals for 1962 memberships. Incidentally, almost exactly half of the 1962 paid memberships, as of March 8, 1962, were from the New York City area.
During these difficult times directly after Hart's resignation, Dr. Edward Gottlieb was the man most responsible for keeping the Society alive. Because he thought the ideals of the Society were too valuable to let it die, he moved into the power vacuum and asserted leadership.

Initially, Gottlieb had become directly involved in the Society by assuming responsibility for the distribution of the benefit show tickets. After Hart's resignation, Gottlieb inherited the Society by default. Immediately, he held several meetings at his public school, where others also expressed a desire for continuing the Society and keeping its main objective of starting a Summerhill school intact. The first immediate problem facing the Society was a search for new office space. Gottlieb, who was also the national chairman of the War Resisters League—a pacifist organization, devised an arrangement by which the League would sublet part of its office space at 5 Beekman Street to the Society. This was done and by September of 1962, the new Summerhill office was operational. Gottlieb then hired a secretary, using part of the $2,000 surplus cash the Society had; rather than relying on voluntary help to do the office work, which had earlier proven inefficient. Her name was Betsy McKelvey and during the autumn of 1962, she was able to efficiently answer the huge backlog of correspondence which had developed over the summer. In fact, while she worked for the Society, its correspondence
was handled as effectively as at any time during its eleven year history.

By October, 1962, new leaders had officially established themselves in the Society. Alvin Bronstein, an attorney, had earlier assumed the Presidency in August. Edward Gottlieb, who had done so much to save the Society, technically served under him as the First Vice President. However, Gottlieb, instead of Bronstein, was probably the focal point of leadership even though the latter was President. It was Gottlieb who daily supervised the activities at the 5 Beekman Street office and he was also responsible for organizing several highly successful Forums in 1962 and 1963. They attracted large audiences and aided the Society in once again increasing its membership early in 1963. Furthermore, Gottlieb was co-chairman of the very important Faculty Committee, which was responsible for selecting a headmaster for the proposed school. Other new officers included: Fred Haber as Second Vice President, George Eliot as Treasurer, and Laura Sternkopf as Secretary. The new Board included Leo Rhodes, Herbert Cogan, James Dick, Helen Hafner, and Joan Hardee. Among the new board members and officers, Leo Rhodes was the only individual who had worked for any length of time under Hart's leadership. Both Gottlieb and Bronstein, as previously noted, had become active just about the time Hart quit. Thus,
by autumn of 1962, none of the original officers or board members, who had founded the Society just twenty-one months earlier, were still serving.

After Hart's resignation, much of the Society's energies in the second half of 1962 were expended toward saving and re-organizing itself. Still, some progress toward the establishment of a school continued, especially along two fronts: the acquisition of prominent sponsors and the search for faculty and a headmaster for the proposed school.

Both during and after Hart's presidency, a major priority of the Society was obtaining sponsors who would lend status to the Society. These efforts had begun early in 1961, but were intensified in 1962. At the very least, scores of letters were sent that year to prospective sponsors and copies of them are among the Summerhill Society Papers. While Hart was still President, he often personally wrote the letters, in which he carefully pointed out that their sponsorship was being solicited for the Society and not the American Summerhill School since it did not yet exist. However, he always added that their sponsorship of the Society would help make the proposed school become a reality. After Hart's resignation, Alvin Bronstein and Fred Haber assumed most of the responsibility for contacting prospective sponsors. Throughout 1962, letters were sent to prominent educators, psychologists, professors, doctors, and members of the legal profession; plus famous writers, artists, and entertainers. For example,
George Counts, William Kilpatrick, Mrs. John Dewey, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Langston Hughes were all contacted. By the end of May, 1962, the Society was listing on its official stationery twenty-seven people as sponsors, including such notables as Orson Bean, Al Capp, Paul Goodman, and Dr. Goodwin Watson. Thus, the original list of five sponsors had been greatly expanded over the course of one year:

**Summerhill Society Sponsors (May, 1962)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daisy Bates</td>
<td>President, Arkansas Chapter, N.A.A.C.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orson Bean</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Caesar</td>
<td>Song Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Capp</td>
<td>Cartoonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Alfred Cohen</td>
<td>Superintendent, Warwick School for Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Cooke</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bess V. Cunningham, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Professor of Education, University of Toledo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold L. Ellis, M.D.</td>
<td>Harlem Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Goodman</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Holder</td>
<td>Painter, Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold A. Hutschnecker, M.D.</td>
<td>Psychiatrist and Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Kelman, M.D.</td>
<td>Dean, American Institute for Psychoanalysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Keutzer, M.D.</td>
<td>New York Medical Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Kratter</td>
<td>Philanthropist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosina Lhevinne</td>
<td>Pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joost A.M. Meerloo, M.D.</td>
<td>Psychiatrist, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Mostel</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey F. Osler, M.D.</td>
<td>Psychiatrist, Neurologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirsch L. Silverman</td>
<td>Professor of Education, Yeshiva University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max H. Sklar</td>
<td>Philanthropist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Stapleton</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Thoms, M.D.</td>
<td>Professor Emeritus, Yale University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laszlo Varga</td>
<td>Cellist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen Verdon</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwin Watson, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Professor of Education, Columbia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Wdowinski, M.D.</td>
<td>Lecturer, New School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril W. Woolcock</td>
<td>Professor of Education, Hunter College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By October, 1962, top priority was being given by the new Board of Directors to the selection of a headmaster for the proposed school, which tentatively was scheduled to open in September, 1963. The Faculty Committee, led by Edward Gottlieb and Helen Hafner, formed a Consultative Board for the Selection of a Headmaster, whose purpose was to nominate and screen possible candidates. The composition of this Board included prominent psychologists and educators. For example, both Carl Rogers and Lawrence Cremin were asked to participate, but neither could do so because of previous commitments, yet they were sympathetic to the creation of a Summerhill school. Of those who agreed to participate on the Consultative Board, the two most prominent individuals were Theodore Brameld and Bruno Bettelheim and the former was actually brought to New York City for an advisory meeting with the Faculty Committee on November 27, 1962. Brameld suggested that the Committee not appoint a single headmaster, since that would connote a form of paternalistic, authoritarian leadership not in keeping with the Summerhill philosophy. Instead, he suggested that they select a nuclear group of teachers out of which eventually a headmaster would emerge. William Dell, who served on the Faculty Committee and was the co-editor (with his wife) of The Summerhill Bulletin during the latter half of 1962, supported Brameld's proposal. However, most of the Faculty Committee did not accept Brameld's proposal and it was not implemented. Immediately following Brameld's visit, a four hour follow-up
meeting of the Faculty Committee was held on December 1, 1962. The minutes of that meeting are fascinating, for they reflect a committee which was torn and even made ineffective by dis­sension among its members. Attending were John Wires, Bill Dell, George von Hilsheimer, Robin Rae, Jerry Silverman, Ceil Brooks, Fred Haber, and Helen Hafner. At the center of their discussion was George von Hilsheimer, a Society member who had applied for the headmaster position. Von Hilsheimer urged the Committee to proceed with its function of selecting a head­master, however several others "thought George was pushing too fast."50 They were not yet ready to select a headmaster. In fact, the committee members did not even agree on the procedure they should follow in choosing a head, nor were they even clear as to whether they had a mandate from the Society's Board of Directors for proceeding with the screening process. After four hours of crucial discussion, nothing was decided except that they should go back to the Board of Directors seeking clarification on such a mandate.

Besides the Consultative Board and those follow-up meetings related to it, the Faculty Committee also organized in 1962 several different meetings with other selected members of the Summerhill Society, in which input was gathered about the necessary criteria for selecting a headmaster. Four separate meetings were held during the third week of November for Society members who were teachers, prospective parents, psychologists and social workers, and sponsors.
By the end of 1962, eleven headmaster candidates had been recommended by the Faculty Committee and they included psychologists, education professors, and public school administrators. However, seven of them declined to be considered for the position. Of the remaining four candidates, George von Hilsheimer had already engendered opposition from the Faculty Committee. The other three valid candidates do not seem to have been very active in the Society's affairs and were not seriously considered. Consequently, 1962 ended without the Summerhill Society appointing a headmaster for its proposed school, which was scheduled to open in September of 1963--only eight months away.

In addition to finding a headmaster, the Faculty Committee was also responsible for recruiting teachers. Want ads for teachers were placed in at least two national publications, The New Republic and The Saturday Review, as well as in several New York area newspapers. As early as February of 1962, The Summerhill Bulletin was reporting that the Society was already receiving teacher applications from throughout the nation. By the end of that year, the Society had a list of 105 staff applicants, however there was some duplication of names on their list. Geographically, they represented twenty-two states, from coast to coast, and included all regions of the country except the Great Plains and the Southeast outside of Florida. Most prominent among the applicants was John Holt, who during the 1960's wrote several influential books dealing
with educational reform as well as two articles for the Summerhill Bulletin. To process the applicants, a Faculty Screening Committee created two application forms, one for general kinds of data, such as academic background, and another related to the kind of school that was being planned. Tentative plans were developed for scheduling appointments with the applicants. Thus, even though selecting a headmaster had become encumbered with difficulties, the proposed Summerhill school had no problem attracting teachers and preparing the means for selecting them. Likewise, there was no difficulty in recruiting students. By spring of 1963, the Society had received over 80 student applications, which theoretically if most of them had been acceptable, would then have guaranteed that the proposed school would have had a sufficient enrollment to operate that next autumn.

Summarizing the Society's second year of existence, 1962, reveals a mixture of successes and failures. An obvious success, as a piece of public relations was the Summerhill benefit show. Unfortunately, it did not raise the funds which had been expected of it and its planning was a factor in the Society's first major crisis: the resignation of its founder and first President, Harold Hart. On the other hand, the Society weathered this crisis, along with lesser crises related to the selection of a headmaster and declining membership. New leadership was found with men like Ed Gottlieb and Al Bronstein and planning progressed for the opening of a
Summerhill school, and also the Society continued to attract prominent sponsors whose very names lent strong support to what the Society was doing.

The first seven months of 1963 witnessed a tremendous amount of activity, perhaps more than at any other time during the Society's history, as it worked toward the scheduled September opening of its own school. Planning for the school involved numerous committee meetings, searches and negotiations for a possible school site, as well as the implementation of an extensive fund raising campaign. In addition, the Society continued to promote the establishment of its own school by spreading the Summerhill idea in the New York City area through public forums. These were well attended by as many as three or four hundred people. Dr. Gottlieb has described one particular forum in which an auditorium was filled beyond seating capacity and several hundred more people in the lobby had to be promised that a repeat performance of the forum would be held. Perhaps the most successful forum that year was the one in February, held at the Carnegie Endowment International Center, in which the featured speaker was Paul Goodman. The popularity of the forums was matched by widespread interest in the Society itself. By spring of 1963, Betsy McKelvey, the Society's part-time secretary, was reporting that she was receiving an average of fifty contacts per week, either in the form of telephone calls, letters, or personal visits. As a result, the Society's membership rose
to slightly over 700, which was probably the highest figure ever achieved during its entire history.\textsuperscript{54} In March alone, membership receipts were $1,295.00.\textsuperscript{55}

However, in spite of the positive and progressive nature of all of the aforementioned activities, the Society again experienced a significant amount of internal strife in the spring of 1963. The membership and its leaders were unanimous in their objective of starting a Summerhill school, but they often disagreed as to how this could best be done. Consequently, resignations from five important Society leaders, including once again the position of President, occurred early in 1963. Although the reasons for some of the resignations were unclear, others who quit openly stated why they had done so. Their stated reasons illustrate that the Society at this time was divided by personality clashes, aggravated by power struggles, and by differing visions of the proposed school.

Sally Dell, who had taken over as editor of \textit{The Summerhill Bulletin} after Hart's resignation, was the first one to resign. In a letter dated February 12, 1963, she wrote to Fred Haber, then a Vice President of the Society, explaining her reasons for resigning. She began by noting that her interest in the Summerhill Society was gradually and steadily declining and added that her resignation as editor of \textit{The Bulletin} would probably be accompanied by her inactivity in
the Society as a whole. Besides personal reasons, she stated that her resignation was prompted by significant theoretical differences between her and other Society members. Primarily, she felt that some individuals were avoiding important educational issues, "especially regarding freedom and its timing for a child and for a whole group of children at a school." However, it was not these philosophical differences which separated her from the Society, but rather her feeling that there existed no tolerance of her divergent views: "I would say that Bill's [her husband] and my ideas have been slighted to too great a degree... I think that there has been an effort to close issues and close mouths--ours for two--when some powerful people have wanted to protect their own ideas on issues." Who were these powerful people? Specifically, she named Fred Haber, the recipient of her resignation letter. Unfortunately, the Summerhill Society Papers do not contain a reply from Haber to Dell, thus only Dell's point of view remains for the record.

Two months after Sally Dell's resignation, the President of the Society, Alvin Bronstein, reluctantly accepted Leo Rhodes' resignation on April 10. This was especially costly to the Society, for Rhodes was chairman of the Board of Directors, and had provided them with considerable expertise in educational administration which most of the rest of the Board did not possess. His resignation was supposedly not due to any dissatisfaction with the operations of the
Society, but rather stemmed from increased pressures on him, due to the growth of his own school, as reported by him.

Within a month of Rhodes' resignation, the Society was rocked by the immediate resignation of Alvin Bronstein on May 17, 1963. Thus, within the space of one year, the Society had twice witnessed the resignation of its top executive officer. In a very short letter to Laura Sternkopf, the Secretary of the Society, Bronstein tersely gave his reasons for resigning: "I find that I can no longer work with the group and I believe that I have nothing further to contribute to their efforts."\(^{58}\) No other explanation was offered. A special emergency Board meeting was called for May 23 at the home of Herbert Cogan, one of the three Vice Presidents of the organization. There is no written record among the Society's papers to indicate what transpired at that meeting, but it is known that by later that summer Cogan had become the new President.

The situation worsened when Bronstein's resignation quickly triggered two other resignations--that of the Executive Secretary, Laura Sternkopf, and the Office Secretary, Betsy McKelvey. In her letter to Vice President Fred Haber, Ms. Sternkopf expressed her concern that the Board of Directors were unable "to adopt and act upon clear-cut policies."\(^{59}\) She specifically cited the Board's indecision over a prospective site for the school suggested by Al Bronstein and its failure to choose a headmaster. In light of the
Society's internal difficulties, it is interesting to note that Sternkopf felt that the Board had grown too large (fourteen members) to be able to reach any unanimity of action and that she thought it was unlikely that she could help rectify that situation. Although it is by no means certain, the reasons offered by Sternkopf for her resignation may have also been a reflection of why Bronstein quit the Society. The other resignation by Betsy McKelvey occurred the same day, May 28, as Sternkopf's and was extremely costly to the Society. As a paid secretary, McKelvey's efficiency in handling general correspondence and membership registrations had re-established the Society as an effective national clearinghouse of information on Summerhill and other educational alternatives. With her departure, the Society's clearinghouse efforts were once again temporarily impaired. In her letter to Fred Haber, the connection between McKelvey's resignation and that of Al Bronstein's on May 17 was quite evident when she stated her reasons for leaving: "I have been most upset by recent events--especially Al's resignation--and thus have been forced to examine closely my own feelings about what we're doing here." She continued by stating that even though she was not a policy maker she felt that it was necessary for her to be able to accept the Board's policies, since she was responsible for communicating them to others via telephone conversations and letters. This she no longer thought she was able to do, "because I simply am not in agreement with
the basic structural set-up of The Society and I think that that set-up will not lead to a school which I could firmly support." It seems that McKelvey's criticism of the Society was twofold. First, she felt that the Society had become overly concerned with creating a national organization with a large membership, and secondly she thought that it had become too highly structured. On both accounts, the Society's primary objective of creating a Summerhill school was being thwarted. There is evidence to suggest that the Society had indeed become structurally complex—at least on paper. In mid March of 1963, Ed Gottlieb had prepared the following organizational chart, in which five officers and their separate responsibilities were arranged beneath a President.

**Functional Organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>[Bronstein]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Pres.</td>
<td>[Haber]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Pres.</td>
<td>[Gottlieb]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-Pres.</td>
<td>[Cogan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>[Unknown]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>[Sternkopf]</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>Literature</td>
<td>Building</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Bulletin</td>
<td>Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
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<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Raising</td>
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In brackets are the names of the individuals who held those positions at the time Gottlieb devised this chart.
Some of the resignations were stated to be due to a lack of co-operation within the Board of Directors, and such dissension also carried over into the planning sessions for the proposed school. One such meeting took place on April 10 and the Summerhill Society Papers contain an interesting eye-witness description of it by Jean Forest, which she entitled "Impressions of an Innocent Bystander." A relative newcomer to the Society, she and her husband did not know many of the other participants at that meeting, including even prominent leaders such as Ed Gottlieb. This, along with her title, would suggest that this may have been the first Summerhill Society meeting that they had ever attended. Something of the storminess of that meeting was conveyed in her description. Finances and the selection of a site were the main topics discussed. Questions regarding when the Society would achieve its tax-exemption status produced "a great deal of quibbling," but even more arguments were aired over the selection of a site and Mrs. Forest pointedly noted that only one individual was "making any kind of 'loving' comments." Later, two men entered into a long heated discussion over selecting a rural versus an urban site for the school, finally resulting in a third party yelling at one of the men: "'For Christ's sake, would you let somebody else say something!'" Immediately afterwards, the entire group heard a detailed report which was unrelated to any of the preceding discussion. This led a middle-aged lady to pipe up "in a disgruntled
voice that she certainly was confused by the goings-on." Then, Mrs. Forest noted that the entire meeting became sidetracked by a discussion over whether too much democracy within such a meeting was possibly counter productive. A skeptic might note that Mrs. Forest's negative impressions of this Summerhill meeting were simply the reflections of one woman regarding one meeting. However, there is other evidence which supports the conclusion that these planning sessions for the school throughout the remainder of spring and summer of 1963 were often riddled with dissension. In a letter to George von Hilsheimer, dated August 3, 1963, Marty Licker, a fellow member of the Society, apologized to George and wrote: "I'm sorry that tempers fly so at our meetings." Later that same month, Licker received a letter from another Society member who expressed shock over "the personal emasculation that took place" at our last meeting.

At the same time that the Society was experiencing such a considerable degree of internal dissension, it also was encountering serious difficulties in its efforts to start a school. In the first seven months of 1963, their efforts were concentrated on fund raising and locating a site for the proposed school. A Building Fund was established, utilizing bonds and cash contributions, and a Site Committee was formed. But in both of these developmental areas, they were doomed to failure--foreshadowing the larger failure of the Society to not open its school that year.
Prior to 1963, the Society had begun fund raising efforts in February of 1962 by organizing a Grants and Foundation Committee, under the chairmanship of Alvin Bronstein, to investigate the possibility of obtaining grants from foundations for the long range support of a Summerhill school. Later that year, this same committee contacted a professional fund raising firm in the field of education and plans were devised for mailing a packaged brochure to sixty foundations in the New York area "with the purpose of securing financial aid for the actual establishment of the school." Plans were also discussed for establishing a bonds and contributions campaign, even though the Society did not at that time have the legal authority to raise funds since it was not yet incorporated under a state charter. On October 26, 1962, the Society was granted a charter by the New York State Board of Regents, incorporating its members, under the Education Law. This charter provided for the Society to raise funds, acquire property and other capital equipment needed for a proposed school; and paved the way for them to acquire a second charter which would grant them the authority to operate a school.

Receipt of the Charter assured the Society that it would quickly obtain tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Consequently, a serious drive to establish a Summerhill Building Fund to finance the purchase of land, buildings, and equipment was launched on November 28, 1962 at a meeting of the general membership. The tremendous enthusiasm
of those attending was evident in the fact that the Board of Directors spontaneously pledged to contribute over $2,000 toward the Building Fund and this was immediately followed by both open and anonymous pledges of an additional $10,000, to be contributed over the next three years, by the general membership. After this general meeting, the Finance Committee discussed options for raising further money. Under Herb Cogan, this committee had apparently replaced the Grants and Foundation Committee earlier chaired by Alvin Bronstein. Two possibilities were proposed. Ed Gottlieb, a Vice President of the Society, suggested that the Society should sell non-interest bearing bonds. He had had experience doing this with a teachers organization which had wanted to raise money for purchasing a union building. Such bonds were to be repayable after a certain number of years, but Gottlieb had discovered from his earlier experiences that some people found they no longer needed their capital when it came time for the bonds to mature and thus simply let the union keep the money.69 Other members favored raising money through a campaign for cash contributions and contribution pledges. The committee finally decided to create a development program that would incorporate Gottlieb's suggestion as well as those of the others, by allowing a prospective donor to choose from among the following four options:

1. To make an outright cash contribution or pledge to contribute a specified amount.
2. To pledge over a three year period a specified amount.

3. To purchase non-interest bearing Summerhill Building Bonds offered in multiples of $100 and fully redeemable on demand at the end of five years.

4. To agree to sell a specified number of Summerhill Building Bonds.

Furthermore, the Finance Committee publicly stipulated that all money was to be placed in an escrow account, not to be used for the operating expenses of the Society, and that April 30, 1963 would be the deadline by which time a total of $25,000 had to be pledged, including cash contributions, or otherwise none of the pledges would be redeemed and all funds would be returned. Optimistically, it was projected that if an amount beyond $25,000 was raised by April 30, then the surplus might be used for the Summerhill School Endowment Fund. Since $12,000 had been pledged on just a single night on the previous November 28, their optimism must have seemed justified since only $13,000 more needed to be raised within roughly a four month period. Thus, it does not seem too premature that the Finance Committee by the first week of January, 1963 had already scheduled sending a letter in the first week of May to all Society members and donors victoriously announcing that the $25,000 had been raised, and requesting that the pledges be converted to cash and sent to the Society.

That same letter was also meant to announce the launching of a new drive for a more substantial Building Fund of $175,000. Herb Cogan, Chairman of the Finance Committee, assumed that
once the Society raised $25,000 through its own membership and small donors, that this larger amount of money could be obtained from wealthy individuals and foundations.

During the spring of 1963, letters were sent to members and other prospective donors encouraging them to give. Throughout the life of the fund raising campaign, some individuals did contribute generously as can be seen from the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTING OPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alvin and Kate Bronstein</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hartley</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orson Bean</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Eliot</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Gottlieb</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Hafner</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margot Moser</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Sternkopf</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Cogan</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin Brooks</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Gottlieb</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Three Year Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin and Kate Bronstein</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Three Year Pledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Gottlieb</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>Building Bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marty Licker</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>Building Bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Paladino</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Building Bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen Shih</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Building Bonds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the four options presented, more donors chose single pledges or building bonds, rather than commit themselves to three year pledges, and selling building bonds was the option exercised least of all.

Despite the generosity of these and other donors, evidence that the fund raising campaign was in some trouble became apparent in the first week of February, when the Society sent a second letter to its members reminding them that the deadline of April 30 was approaching with the $25,000 goal as yet unobtained. By mid February, the Building Fund totaled only $10,000, of which $1,000 was actual cash. Apparently, some of those initial pledges, totaling $12,000, made at the November 28, 1962 general meeting, never materialized. On February 25, the Society began a telephone campaign to solicit funds. Within a week slightly more than 500 members and other prospective donors had been called throughout the greater New York area, resulting in only about 100 new pledges.

On March 2, the Finance Committee held a meeting to discuss the gravity of the situation and issued a Special Report detailing their conclusions. It was estimated that the telephone campaign would net another $5,000 in pledges, which would mean that the total Building Fund of $15,000 would still be $10,000 short of its goal. As for actual cash contributions, the telephone campaign had produced nothing. Thus, it was admitted that this time consuming, costly, direct, and very personal approach to raising money had been
a failure. Seen as an ultimate effort to raise funds through numerous small donors, rather than from wealthy donors or foundations, the report concluded that the failure of the telephone campaign represented an even greater failure: "the promotion of the cause of a Summerhill School in the New York area within the year [1963]."70

But rather than wallow in despair, the Finance Committee made several constructive suggestions, the most important of which was that the Society should cease functioning on so many different levels. Early in 1963, the Society was successfully expanding its membership, serving as a national clearinghouse of Summerhill information, while at the same time trying to build a local Summerhill School. Paraphrasing Board Member Robin Rae's comment, the Special Report pointedly stated, "let's not be so kicked off about this idea of a national society that we fail to establish even a community school."71 The Report suggested that the Society quit soliciting among the potentially small donors within its general membership and that instead it should concentrate on identifying potentially large donors, especially among those people who were liberals and who had already expressed an interest in the Society. For example, pockets of wealthy suburbanites in Scarsdale, Great Neck, and Greenwich had been identified from the earlier telephone campaign, and it was suggested that these communities should be visited by speakers and local fund raising activities developed. The report concluded that
all of the Society's efforts, other than fund raising, should be focused on the development of the school: the selection of faculty and a headmaster, the choice of a site, and a clearer, more precise definition of the proposed curriculum. Otherwise large donations would not be forthcoming.

Perhaps as a result of the Finance Committee's Special Report, the Site Committee, organized as early as February, became very active during the summer of 1963, and they actually located a potential campus for the proposed school. Ultimately, their failure to conclude arrangements on this chosen site proved to be the single most important factor leading to the Society's failure to establish its own school.

In May of 1963, the chairmanship of the Site Committee had been transferred to the Society's architect, Paul Silver, who had earlier offered his architectural services at a 15% discount regardless of whether a new building was constructed or an old one remodeled. During the first week of May, a recommendation from the Site Committee regarding a location in suburban Mt. Kisco was passed by the Board of Directors. Edward Gottlieb and Robin Rae, as members of both the Faculty Committee and the Curriculum Committee, were authorized as representatives of the Society and its Board of Directors to purchase this site. Despite the Board's action, there apparently was not unanimous support regarding their decision. A separate Urban Site Committee continued to examine possible sites, preferably near a park, in the Brooklyn Heights-Lower
Manhattan area, where the greatest number of 5-8 year old applicants for the proposed school resided at quite some distance from Mt. Kisco. Perhaps it was this lack of concerted action over a site which McKelvey, the office secretary, was alluding to in her resignation letter of May 28. In an editorial in the May issue of The Summerhill Bulletin, she praised the Board for acting on the Mt. Kisco site, but then she went on to note:

"Do we now have the courage to implement all this into a Summerhill School? Do we now have the personal energy to move, to create, to build? These questions can only be answered by the support of all Society members as well as concerted action by the Board and our committees."72

In that same issue of the Bulletin, the site itself was described by Silver. Located in Mt. Kisco, a residential suburb in Westchester County and easily accessible to Manhattan and the northern suburbs of New York City, the property contained nine and one half acres of land, much of which was hilly but with sufficient flat land for playing fields. The property was adjacent to a large public wild life preserve and close to a public thirty-five acre lake. Within the vicinity were new sub-developments of expensive homes. On the property was a large two story, twelve bedroom house in good condition. As for zoning regulations, Silver prematurely anticipated no difficulties:

"We are proceeding on the assumption that we will be able to obtain necessary zoning variances and building occupancy permits, but any contract to buy the property will be, of course, contingent on obtaining such variances"
and permits. Therefore, there is no fear of being unable to use the premises after we have purchased it."73

In a letter to Mrs. Wen Shih,74 one of the largest contributors to the Building Fund, Dr. Edward Gottlieb provided more information about purchasing the house. The present owner, he reported, was being foreclosed on his mortgage. Gottlieb had been authorized by the Site Committee to bid up to forty-five thousand dollars for it, however, the mortgage was for just under thirty thousand dollars and thus he expected to be able to purchase it for less than the allotted figure. To purchase the property, ten percent of the selling price was required. Gottlieb was confident that the Society would have that capital, because the deadline for the Building Fund had been extended beyond April 30 and, as of June 25, there was $2,500 cash in the bank, and considerably more outstanding in pledges. He felt sure that whatever else was needed to meet the ten percent figure could quickly be raised among certain devoted members of the Society.

Thus, the summer of 1963 was a period of great excitement and hope. The tremendous efforts of two and one half years toward creating a school were about to bear fruit. Money had been raised, a site located, and, even by 1962 faculty and students were being successfully recruited. Victory was at hand. The scheduled opening of the American Summerhill School, based on Neill's own school in England, in September of 1963 seemed assured.
Then, disaster struck. Gerald Wapner, a member of the Society now serving as its legal consultant, had to report in the October issue of the Bulletin that the Society was unable to purchase the Mt. Kisco property. The owner was quite willing to sell the property, but the Society needed to arrange temporary financing with the present mortgagee until a permanent loan could be arranged—and this the mortgagee, a corporation, refused to do. Being a large, local corporation with considerable property holdings in the area, and with numerous local business and personal relationships, it advised the Society that a school usage of the property was not desirable and suggested that they seek another site more suitable for a school. Wapner then learned that the approval of the local Zoning Board would be needed to occupy the property as a school. In conversations with several local attorneys, Wapner learned the real reason for the opposition to the school and reported it as follows:

"A number of the local landed gentry had already made a prior determination, according to several sources, that progressive schooling in general was an arm of the International Communist movement, and therefore, it was felt that this particular area did not offer a great deal of hope for the establishment of our school." 75

Wapner felt that a legal battle might be successfully waged, but that it would be costly and time consuming. Thus, the Board had no choice but to seek another site.
In fact, no other site was ever seriously sought. The Society's hopes for opening a school in September were crushed and, in a larger sense, the Society's primary objective of establishing a Summerhill School was forever lost. Never again in the remaining eight years of its existence would the official policy of the Society ever include the creation of its own school. The Society's defeat at Mt. Kisco in July of 1963 ended a major era in its history.
CHAPTER 5--Footnotes


2 Interview with Dr. Edward P. Gottlieb, Summerhill Society member, November 11, 1977.


6 Interview with Dr. Edward P. Gottlieb, Summerhill Society member, November 11, 1977.


8 Letter from Negley K. Teeters, Chairman, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Temple University, August 15, 1960, SSP.

9 Letter from Harold H. Hart, President, Summerhill Society, March 21, 1962, SSP.


11 Ibid.


16Unfortunately, the Summerhill Society Papers do not contain a complete list of the total membership for 1961 or for any of the early years. Partial listings do exist, SSP.

17“Consolidation Financial Statements,” February 1961 to June 1962, Summerhill Society, SSP.


26Letter from Rita V. Frankiel, Member of the Board of Directors, Summerhill Society, June 28, 1961, SSP.

27Ibid.

28Ibid.

29Letter from Harold H. Hart, President, Summerhill Society, June 28, 1961, SSP.

30Ibid.

31Ibid.
Minutes of the Follow-Up Meeting of the Meeting with Professor Theodore Brameld, December 1, 1962, Summerhill Society, SSP.


Letter from Joseph Paladino, President, Summerhill Society, October 1, 1964, SSP.

Interview with Dr. Edward P. Gottlieb, Summerhill Society member, November 11, 1977.


"Analysis of Membership Receipts," February, 1961 to April, 1963, Summerhill Society, SSP.

Letter from Sally Dell, Editor of The Summerhill Bulletin, February 12, 1963, SSP.

Ibid.

Letter from Alvin J. Bronstein, President, The Summerhill Society, May 17, 1963, SSP.

Letter from Laura Sternkopf, Executive Secretary, The Summerhill Society, May 28, 1963, SSP.

Letter from Betsy McKelvey, Office Secretary, The Summerhill Society, May 28, 1963, SSP.

Ibid.

Jean Forest, "Impressions of an Innocent Bystander," April, 1963, SSP.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Letter from Marty Licker, Summerhill Society member, August 3, 1963, SSP.

Letter from George Eliot, Treasurer of The Summerhill Society, August 16, 1963, SSP.

69Interview with Dr. Edward P. Gottlieb, Vice President of the Summerhill Society, November 11, 1977.


71Ibid., p. 2.


74Letter from Edward Gottlieb, Vice President of the Summerhill Society, June 25, 1963, SSP.

CHAPTER 6

THE LATER YEARS
OF THE SUMMERHILL SOCIETY

Without the focal point of its primary objective, establishing a school, to spur it to action, the Society entered a period of crisis and confusion by August of 1963. During the next three years, serious questions about purpose and policy implementation tore at the Society and nearly destroyed it. Not until 1967 did the Society enter a relatively stable period in which it enjoyed its greatest successes as a clearinghouse for Summerhillian and other alternative forms of education. Ironically, this calm, successful period in the Society's history was shattered by a sudden, unexpected crisis, which contributed to its ultimate demise in 1971.

However, in the autumn of 1963, the immediate problem facing them was to decide what to do with the pledges from the Building Funds and more specifically the actual cash contributions. With no hopes of starting a school, the funds obviously could not be kept for their original purpose. After what must have been lengthy deliberations, a form letter dated December 3, 1963 was sent to the forty contributors who
had donated money, totaling $4,000, to the Summerhill Building Fund. Acknowledging their inability to raise the required $25,000 and thus open a Summerhill school, the Society optimistically noted that its efforts had indirectly aided other individuals in starting Summerhill inspired schools. Therefore, the Society offered the building fund contributors the opportunity to choose one of the three following alternatives:

1. Allow our Society to use your money to further the Summerhill ideas in America.

2. Stipulate the specific Summerhill-type school you'd like us to send your money to on your behalf.

3. Return your money.1

The Summerhill Society Papers do not contain a complete record of which options were chosen by the forty contributors. It is known that all three options were exercised and that at least one large contributor, Mrs. Wen Shih, was refunded her $1,000, yet it is impossible to ascertain which option was chosen the most.

However, the refunding of contributions was a minor problem compared with the major crisis facing the Society. Now that a school was no longer going to be created then what would be the purpose of the Society? What function or functions would it serve? These serious questions were the subject of discussion at Board meetings throughout the fall of 1963 and conflicting answers served to split the Board.
Battle lines were delineated in Stanley Whitehead's editorial in the October, 1963 issue of the Bulletin. Whitehead was a newly elected member of the Board and had just accepted responsibility for editing the Bulletin, which had been without a formal Bulletin Committee or Chairman throughout the busy spring and summer months. In his editorial, Whitehead noted that a majority of the present Board, led by George von Hilsheimer, wanted "to invite the 'establishment' of any school (whether already established in fact or not) which declares its adherence to Summerhill principles and to the statement of policy of the Summerhill Society." Unfortunately, the word "establishment" was not very well defined and it is difficult to understand just exactly what was meant by it. It seems that it may have actually connoted some sort of recognition by the Society with implications of some kind of support. On the other hand, a minority of the Board (which included Herb Cogan as President, Ed Gottlieb as Vice President and Stanley Whitehead) wanted to refrain from "establishing" any schools brought into existence by individual efforts outside of the Society's direct control. In a "President's Report," Cogan addressed this problem and further clarified the minority viewpoint on this issue. He argued that the Society's primary objective should be to build itself "into an informed foundation for the broadcast, examination, and encouragement of Summerhill-related concepts
and schools" using the Bulletin as a two-way communication instrument in this clearinghouse function.

The debate between these two Board factions would have been merely academic if it had not been for the fact that at least three individuals were already operating Summerhill schools in New York State by the late fall of 1963. That autumn, Society Board member Goerge von Hilsheimer had moved his Summerlane School to upstate Sullivan County, while at the same time Herb Snitzer was opening the Lewis-Wadhams School in the Adirondacks. Closer to New York City, Bob Barker, a former teacher at the Summerhill School in England, had been operating his own school (named the Barker School, later to become the Collaberg School) at Stony Point for two years. Thus, the outcome of the Board's debate over the "establishment" of schools as its primary function would have had real meaning for these particular schools and the Society itself.

On November 1, 1963 at a general membership meeting, the conflict between these two Board factions was resolved when a new Board of Directors was elected by the membership at large. Conspicuously absent from the new board were the names of Ed Gottlieb, Herb Cogan, and Stanley Whitehead. The new Board then met and elected, as President, Marty Licker. The previous minority opinion of not "establishing" or supporting any schools was quickly laid aside and in a one page Bulletin issued in November 1963, the new Board of Directors avowed their position of supporting any Summerhill inspired
schools which adhered to the principles outlined in the Society's Statement of Policy. The Society's role as a clearinghouse was to be maintained, but not receive priority as former President Cogan had wished. Thus, 1963 ended with the Society under new leadership espousing a new direction for its efforts.

Throughout 1964, sheer survival became the main issue for the Summerhill Society. Near the beginning of that year, the Society had an estimated 450 members, which was already 250 less than its highest figure of 700 which had been obtained only eight months earlier in the spring of 1963. In the March 1964 Bulletin, it was admitted that an "appeal for renewal of memberships has elicited a rather disappointing response so far." That same issue of the Bulletin begged for volunteers to help do secretarial work. By November, member Peter Anderheggen was noting in the Bulletin that:

"Membership has dwindled dangerously. The blush of compulsive enthusiasm and energy has become an exhausted flush. And finally the Society no longer has concrete aims, the achievement of which would be the concrete and steel signifying The Summerhill Society School." In fact, Anderheggen had quickly focused on the core of the Society's difficulties. Having lost in mid 1963 its primary objective of starting a school, the Society was still reeling over a year later from a lack of a unified purpose, and apathy had developed. The objectives of the Society, adopted in November 1963 in a new Statement of Policy, were somewhat abstract in comparison to the original primary goal.
Objective number one--to function as a clearinghouse--was not going to attract a large, devoted membership, and besides Anderheggen argued that the Society with its dwindling resources and membership could not effectively perform this function. As for the second new objective--"to promote the development of, sponsor, obtain financial assistance for and acquire property and resources for the establishment of schools for boys and girls of nursery, primary and secondary grades"--Anderheggen felt that it was so abstract and poorly defined that it would never attract the old enthusiasm that the Society's original purpose had engendered. Apparently, the Board of Directors did not pay heed to Anderheggen's concerns and throughout 1964 these two objectives remained official policy. Whatever the reasons were for the decline of interest in the Society, the facts were clear. By the end of 1964, membership had dropped to just under 200--a loss of just over 500 members from the Society's highest figure. Loss of membership was also accompanied by the leadership loss of at least three key figures. Both Ed Gottlieb, who had been responsible for saving the Society at the time of Hart's resignation and who had devoted so much effort in 1963 to the Society's aborted attempt to create its own school, and Orson Bean, who in the spring of 1964 began to actively plan for the September opening of his own Summerhill school named the Fifteenth Street School, became inactive in the Society's affairs during 1964. Furthermore, the loss of Stanley Whitehead as editor of
the **Bulletin** left the Society without its major publication for nearly a year. Only two issues of the **Bulletin** appeared in 1964 and it was not until November of that year that the first issue was published. To the remaining members at large, it might have seemed for a time as if the **Bulletin** had permanently ceased publication.

In spite of its struggle for survival in 1964, the Society was able to provide support to several Summerhill schools which had been recently established by various individuals, often Society members, working outside the Society. Under the presidential leadership of first Marty Licker and then Joseph Paladino, the Society provided both public relations and money to these schools. Both 1964 issues of the **Bulletin** carried lengthy articles about Snitzer's Lewis-Wadhams School, von Hilsheimer's Summerlane, the First Street School (started by new Board member Mabel Chrystie and author George Dennison), and the Collaberg School. Perhaps of greater value, the Society was able to channel a total of at least $14,000 to four separate schools, of which $13,000 was donated by Robert Hartley of Miami Beach, Florida and specifically earmarked for Summerlane. The remaining $1,000 involved two $250 checks sent to the Barker School and the Minnesota Summerhill Community School for scholarships, and a $500 check from Irving Chutick to be given to the Lewis-Wadhams School. By autumn of 1964, the director of Lewis-Wadhams was writing to the Society requesting funds. In a letter to Joseph Paladino,
the current President, Herb Snitzer noted the expansion of his school's program and stated his desire "to be placed on the society's list as a school qualified to receive financial aid from the Summerhill Society."7

Perhaps money, in the form of cash contributions, was the primary factor which led to the greatest single controversy afflicting the Society in 1965. Theoretically, the conflicting points revolved around the following issues. If the Society was going to provide financial support to those Summerhill schools requesting it, then was it not necessary to determine just which schools were truly Summerhillian and which were not? In other words, should the Society become some sort of accrediting agency and, if the answer was affirmative, what criteria would be used to judge whether a school requesting financial support was in fact a Summerhill school. Fortunately for the historian, much of the debate on these issues was carried in open letters in the pages of the Bulletin. The key participants were George Rostky, George von Hilsheimer, Peter Anderheggen, and Bill Chase.

Rostky began the debate with an article in the February Bulletin entitled "What Is a Summerhill-Type School?" He noted that the Board's eighteen months old policy of supporting any school which claimed to be Summerhillian had come back to haunt them. Those that argued that schools had nothing to gain from affiliating with the Society were corrected by Rostky who noted that they could and often do gain
free publicity, mailing lists, volunteer manpower, and even cash. Then, he specifically illustrated his point by mentioning two schools which in his opinion were not Summerhillian: Collaberg and First Street School. He noted that Collaberg's director, Leo Koch, had admitted that various means of coercion were used to get students to attend class and Rostky concluded, "If that's Summerhillian, I'll eat my hat." Likewise, he noted that at a Society forum a spokesman for the First Street School had admitted that his school was not a Summerhill-type school. Yet, the Society supported both of these schools primarily with free publicity. Rostky concluded that such actions made the Society "look like damn fools." He advocated that the Board be empowered to make judgments about accrediting schools and that the Society be permitted to dis-affiliate itself from schools that did not meet the Society's requirements for a Summerhillian school.

In the very next issue of the Bulletin, von Hilsheimer replied to Rostky's suggestions and, in a less than diplomatic introductory sentence, wrote that, "Either George Rostky is a specious, argumentative idiot, or he is simply ignorant." In discussing the issue of accreditation, von Hilsheimer wrote, "I do not want to be a member of a board of inquiry--a board of excommunication, if you will. If a man, or a school, want to affirm substantial agreement with a very prosy, but fortunately objective statement of policy, then let them define it as they will and let us not break off fellowship with them."
He then agreed with Rostky that Leo Koch's Collaberg School was not very much like the Summerhill School, but then suggested that Koch should not be judged by Rostky, himself, or any centralized board of directors. Unlike Rostky, von Hilsheimer was not worried about non-Summerhillian schools misusing Society support, since he felt that such support was rather minimal. This is somewhat ironical in light of the fact that his Summerlane had been the recipient of $13,000 channeled through the Society.

That same March issue of the Bulletin contained a reply to von Hilsheimer's reply to Rostky. Its author, Peter Anderheggan, sided with Rostky and was appalled by von Hilsheimer's reply, which he characterized as condescending. Like Rostky, Anderheggen felt that it was irresponsible of the Society to use other peoples donations to support schools that were clearly not Summerhillian. Unlike von Hilsheimer, he felt that some kind of judgmental, centralized group would have to be established and criteria defined for judging whether or not a school was Summerhillian, if the Society was to continue supporting such schools.

On March 19, 1965 at the annual General Meeting of the Society, both Rostky's and von Hilsheimer's letters were read and then discussed at great length with a variety of opinions aired. During the discussion, Leo Koch explained that compulsory classes had been instituted at Collaberg, since the policy of non-compulsory attendance was not working.
However, he felt that this did not mean that Collaberg was now unSummerhillian. At this point in the discussion, member Marc Goldring moved that the Collaberg School continue to be recognized and supported by the Society and thus listed on its information sheet about Summerhill schools. As reported in the Bulletin, "The motion was seconded by Bill Chase, but was defeated by a vote of 16-13."12 After this action, it was then "proposed that the Board of Directors be empowered to include or refuse to include schools on its information sheet on the basis of information directly gathered about the schools."13 This motion was passed by the membership. In effect, the Society had moved toward becoming an accrediting agency and von Hilsheimer's point of view had been rejected.

However, this action by the Society at a general membership meeting did not end the issue. In a letter to the Society dated March 30, 1965, George von Hilsheimer stated that he had been elected to the Board on a platform which rejected the idea that the Society should accredit schools before supporting them. He expressed his intention of presenting a resolution to the membership asking them to rescind their previous decision of March 19. If it was not rescinded, then he threatened to resign from the Board. There is no evidence that he fulfilled his threat, yet the accrediting policy of the Society remained unchanged.

Meanwhile a battle of words continued in the "Letters to the Editor" section of the Bulletin. Clearly visible was
a growing antagonism between von Hilsheimer and certain others. In the April issue of the Bulletin, von Hilsheimer wrote in these terms:

"I think Peter Anderheggen is one of those sweet, incompetent, warm people who has a great need for nurturing... I think the difference between us is that the Summerhill Society is grand camp for Anderheggen and Rostky, and it is my daily meat, drink and redemption."14

Nor was this just merely a personality clash between von Hilsheimer and both Rostky and Anderheggen. In a letter to Marc Goldring, Herb Snitzer of the Lewis-Wadhams School agreed to participate on a panel at a Summerhill Forum "just so long as I do not share a platform with Geo. von H."15

However, none of these personality clashes helped clarify the March 19, 1965 decision to accredit schools, for the question still remained as to just what criteria would be used to evaluate schools. On April 13, the Board of Directors established the criteria by which schools would be evaluated. Harkening back to the original Statement of Policy (dated March 19, 1961), they resolved that the basic objective criterion of a Summerhillian "free" school would be as follows:

"The school, insofar as possible, is run by the entire school community. The school community consists of all children and adults at the school. Each member of the school community has an equal voice and a single vote."16

After several months of wrangling, the Society had finally agreed to evaluate with well defined criteria and accredit those Summerhill schools which were receiving support and recognition from it.
As controversial as the debate over accreditation had been among the top leadership of the Society, it did not seem to have made much of an impression on the general membership residing throughout the country or even in New York City, and in fact, throughout 1965 widespread apathy seemed to plague the Society. An example of this apathy is contained in an exchange of correspondence between the supporters of the Minnesota Summerhill Community School and Marc Goldring, Vice President of the Society. Having received a request from Minnesota for the Society's mailing list for fund raising purposes, Goldring noted that he had "written at least five letters to Cortland Smith [director of the Minnesota school] about the Minnesota School" and that having never received any answer, he felt obliged to refuse their request for the mailing list unless they were willing to develop some lines of communication between them. Possibly, the general lack of interest at this time in the Society's activities among those outside the New York City area was unavoidable, for the Society was attempting to be a national organization while at the same time most of its tangible efforts (like forums, teacher workshops, the support of local New York area Summerhill schools) and its governance were centered in New York City.

Widespread lack of interest became so critical early in 1966 that the survival of the Society was the main subject of discussion at a Board meeting on February 25, 1966.
Minutes of that meeting record that, "A motion was made and seconded that the Summerhill Society be dissolved." In the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that more than half of the 1965 members had not renewed their membership after receiving three reminders and that repeated appeals for volunteer help in the office had not been successful. On the other hand, it was argued that it was "essential that a clearinghouse for information about Neill's work and the schools listed by the Society continue to exist." A substitute motion was then made and seconded that the possible dissolution of the Society be made the subject of discussion at the next general membership meeting scheduled for March 18, 1966. The second motion carried unanimously. However, the minutes of that general meeting, as reported in the April, 1966 issue of the Bulletin, make no mention of it ever having been discussed. If apathy did not kill the Society that spring, it did affect the publication of the Bulletin. Editor Bill Chase begged for literary contributions in the January issue and noted that the Bulletin would have to become a bi-monthly publication since there was no longer enough volunteer manpower to print and distribute it each month. By the next issue of the Bulletin (April, 1966), Chase was offering his resignation as editor, largely because he had grown weary of all the petty squabbles which he felt had characterized the Society for the last two years and which he claimed had cost
the Society the participation of several very good people, including Gerald Wapner, Peter Anderheggen, and Marc Goldring.

During 1966, only one major controversy stirred the Society and it involved the old issue of starting a school, long thought to have been buried back in 1963. In an open letter to the members of the Summerhill Society, dated March 10, Board member Nancy Higgins noted that it was her understanding that she had been authorized by the Board to bring area teachers together for discussions about Summerhill ideas. This she had done and the subsequent meetings had "revolved around a discussion of the advisability of establishing a school."20 After these meetings, she prepared a stencil inviting the entire membership to meet with those teachers who had been involved in the discussions. She then noted that her work had engendered opposition and stated that, "my work has been consistently obstructed by Marc Goldring and Bill Chase, who have refused to run necessary stencils, and in a letter of February 18, said that I ought to drop my work with the teachers."21 On February 25, a Board meeting was held and a motion was passed by a large majority "to enjoin Nancy Higgins from using Society resources for the purpose of bringing together interested teachers for the purpose of organizing a school co-operatively."22 At the later General Membership Meeting of March 18, heated discussion took place, described by Marty Licker with this analogy: "Like boxers in a ring we sparred and warmed up."23 During the
meeting, six different motions were made and several close votes taken on this one particular issue. In the final analysis, Nancy Higgins was not permitted to continue her work.

In that same spring, new officers and a new Board were elected. As usual the Bulletin printed their names, but unlike ever before they also published a brief biographical sketch of each one. The new President, Marty Licker, who had also been President from November 1963 to May 1964, was a science teacher at New York's P.S. 176. The past President, Joe Paladino, who had been retained as a Board member, was a guidance counselor at P.S. 307 in Brooklyn. The new Vice President was Al Brooks, an electrical engineer with two children attending the Collaberg School. Of the ten Board members, five worked for the New York City public school system.

By the end of 1966, survival was still the key problem facing the Society. Having been forced to vacate their office at 5 Beekman Street because their lessor, the War Resisters League, had moved its offices, a small dedicated group continued to operate from the basement of Al Brook's home, who summed up the situation this way:

"Some say that the Society serves no purpose and should be disbanded. I intend to keep working until the membership orders me to stop. We refer prospective students to schools, bring kindred spirits together, occasionally publish a good bulletin and sponsor a stimulating forum."

During the next three years of the Society's existence, from 1967 to 1969, it functioned with the greatest efficiency
and with the least amount of strife of any time during its entire eleven year history. Two basic factors account for that fact. First, there was a surprising continuity of leadership during that time and secondly, by 1967 and for the first time in nearly four years, the Society had once again achieved a commonality of purpose by clearly defining its objectives. Consequently, damaging internal dissension was held to a minimum during those years.

Throughout 1967 and 1968, three of the most powerful positions in the Society (President, Editor, and Secretary) were held continuously by the same three persons. Elected as President at the March general membership meeting, Al Brooks held that office for the next two years, which was to be the longest period of time ever that one person served as President of the Society. Three years after leaving the office, he returned as President for what would prove to be the final year of the Society. After the Presidency, perhaps the next most powerful office in the Society, in light of the fact of its role as an informational clearinghouse, was that of the Editor of the Bulletin, who automatically served also as a member of the Board of Directors. From 1967 to the beginning of 1971, Phyliss Tower (who, like several others in the Society at that time, was also involved in running her own Summerhillian alternative school, Freegarden) capably held that position and improved the Bulletin, both in quality and in the regularity of its publication. The Secretary was the
third most powerful position in the Society, because this individual was responsible for handling the Society's considerable correspondence with people throughout the nation and in that capacity was often a spokesman enunciating its purposes and activities. Often the Society had been plagued with a rapid turnover rate in this office, but from March 1967 until early in 1969 this position was held by Ester Rosenstark, who then left it only because she was moving away from the New York area. In addition to these three key individuals, one other person, named Jim Hoffman, should be noted for his activity in the Society at this time. He first became a Board member in April 1968, then was elected Vice President in spring of 1969, and finally was elected President in 1970. In this last capacity, he was to play a crucial role in the Society's final year of full operations. Besides all four of the above named leaders, much of the Society's work from 1967 to 1969 was done by a relatively small core of people who also served on the Board.

The second major factor, which explains the Society's vitality during 1967 to 1969, was its new found unity of purpose. By spring of 1967, earlier disputes about starting schools or accrediting previously established schools had subsided and the Society successfully focused on its clear objective of serving as a clearinghouse for Summerhillian education. The Bulletin was published regularly and usually printed the minutes of the General membership meetings, as well as those
of the Board of Directors, and thus kept the nationwide general membership informed about the internal workings of the Society in New York. In the Bulletin's pages, descriptions were provided of the various Summerhill schools operating throughout the nation and in one special feature, details about hiring practices and salaries were noted. On a more regular basis, news from these schools was reported, such as the news item which covered the loss by fire of an academic building on Collaberg's campus. Also, job vacancies were often listed. Besides reporting school news, the Society acted like any other clearinghouse by putting its nationwide members in touch with each other in specific geographical regions, and by answering parents' inquiries from throughout the country about available Summerhill schools. In the June 1968 Bulletin, a useful, descriptive list of twenty-seven Summerhill oriented schools and summer camps was printed and in the next year (October, 1969), Jim Hoffman and Phyliss Tower published a very complete, twenty-seven page bibliography of the entire free school movement, which became so popular that the demand for it led to the Society in 1970 to sell copies of it. As a part of its efforts to inform its members about the wider free school movement, the Bulletin also published news about other alternative school organizations and publications. In the August 1969 issue, mention was made of the creation of the New Schools Exchange, a West Coast clearinghouse for alternative education. Other issues of the
Bulletin had taken notice of other radical school periodicals, such as This Magazine is About Schools, perhaps the premier Canadian alternative education journal, and Id, a publication of the British Summerhill Society. Furthermore, the Society's clearinghouse function was also met by reprinting in the Bulletin published articles by such notables as Paul Goodman and A. S. Neill. On the local New York scene, the Society conducted several successful forums and workshops, highlighted by a January 1967 forum in which the featured speaker was George Dennison, author of The Lives of Children, and by two short workshops (summers of 1967 and 1968) held at suburban Rockland Community College. By the end of 1969, the Society's renewed fortunes as a successful clearinghouse were being reflected by an increase in membership. As early as June 1967, the membership had doubled from its low point in the mid 1960's, to three hundred, and continued to rise throughout the remainder of the Sixties.  

From 1967 to 1969, the Society's successes and its unity of purpose were accompanied by a remarkable lack of internal discord. To be sure, critical and challenging letters continued to appear in the Bulletin, but they produced no conflict. In April 1967, new Board member Victor Goldman in an open letter re-issued the old, disturbing challenge: "What do you want the Summerhill Society to be?" 26 One and one half years later, Al Brooks, as President, wrote a
critical letter asking why a Society dedicated to love and democracy should be run by a small core of people. He asked:

"But where is the Summerhill in our Society? Are we not perpetuating, the sickness of society at large by maintaining a structured organization instead of a community of concerned and loving individuals?"

Goldman's letter elicited no response and Brooks' serious questions were met by a host of letters, occupying half of the February 1969 Bulletin, sympathetic and supportive of his concerns. Gone were the days when verbal battles, such as those between George von Hilsheimer and Peter Anderheggen, were waged openly in Bulletin pages. Not even the 1968 opening of an autonomous West Coast chapter could produce any strife within the Society. On the contrary, the leaders in New York publicized the creation of the Summerhill Society of California by noting the January 18 date of its first organizational meeting and thereafter cooperation was developed between the two groups. The Bulletin, still put together in New York, continued to report news of the California organization and the Society's own promotional literature began to print two office addresses—one in New York City and the other in Los Angeles. During this time, a friendly correspondence was maintained between Phyliss Tower, editor of the Bulletin, and Phyliss Fleishman, director of Play Mountain Place and the Modern Play School (one of the older free schools in California) and one of the guiding spirits of the California Summerhill Society. Ms. Tower and the New York
society even considered sharing publication responsibilities with the Californians by having them publish a newsletter during the off months when the Bulletin was not produced. Two years after the Californians organized, a Summerhill Society of Pennsylvania, based in Philadelphia was established in 1970, but unfortunately not much is known about this group. One can easily imagine that in earlier days, the creation of any potentially rival organization along geographical lines would have sent shock waves of conflict throughout the Society.

Finally, controversial rifts were avoided during these years partly because the working members of the Society, its officers and Board members, were also rather close friends. Phyliss Tower has noted that the Society during this time was quite a tightly knit social outfit as well as a functioning professional organization: "we had been used to treating meetings as friendly occasions, cracking jokes was in order, and laughing, and a big bottle of wine." Meetings often became congenial social gatherings as can also be seen from the pages of the Bulletin. In the February 1968 issue, an announcement about the forthcoming annual General Membership meeting in March stated that there would "be discussion, refreshments and socializing, and we also hope to have slides from Dick Douglass' trip to Summerhill last summer and a taped interview that Phyliss Fleishman had recently with Neill." This hardly compared with the stormy General Membership meeting which had been held only two years earlier in 1966.
Within a year and a half the Society was even holding purely social gatherings outside of any business meeting framework as evidenced by a widely attended all day picnic held on July 20, 1969 at High Tor Park in Rockland County, New York.

Thus, as the Sixties ended and the Society entered the Seventies and its tenth year of operation, there was both purpose and cohesion within the organization—and a feeling of confidence in its future as a successful clearinghouse. Nothing in the recent events of the past three successful years could have forewarned its members of the impending crisis, a divisive split in late 1970, which would shatter the very existence of the Summerhill Society.

During the early months of 1970, the success of the Society as a clearinghouse resulted in large amounts of unfinished paper work, primarily unanswered correspondence. This problem was heightened by the Society's loss of its capable Secretary, Ester Rosenstark, who had moved to Washington, D.C. late in 1969. Her vacancy had never really been filled and on February 7, 1970, an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors was held and George Cohen was elected Executive Secretary and given the temporary responsibility of re-organizing the office correspondence and processing memberships. Using part-time paid help, he updated their correspondence by answering 250 letters with a two-week period. At the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting, on February 22, it was recommended that a part-time Executive Secretary should be
hired permanently. That night a decision, which would prove to be fateful, was made. A motion was passed unanimously to elect Ann Hunter as Executive Secretary beginning March 1. She was to be paid $80 per week and was given the responsibility of coordinating all of the office activities. Soon after she was hired, she invited, with the approval of the Society, one of her friends, Ann Green, to share both the duties and salary of this position. Within a year, Ann Green and some of her associates were challenging the Board of Directors for actual control of the Society, thus resulting in a split in the organization that proved fatal to its survival in 1971.

However, at first, the inclusion of these new people serving in a secretarial capacity was very much welcomed. It was hoped that the cost of their help would be offset by an expected increase in membership dues which could result because of the increased efficiency in handling correspondence and processing applications. However, within two months after hiring Ann Hunter, it was clear that the Society was experiencing some financial difficulties. In the minutes of a Society business meeting, dated April 26, 1970, it was noted that the first topic of discussion "was the financial crisis" presently facing them. It was reported that the Society had recently been spending $150 per week, while its
income was only averaging half that amount. At that meeting, the recently elected new President, Jim Hoffman, loaned the Society $385.00 for operating expenses. Despite these financial difficulties, it was still agreed that, "Some of the clerical work must be done on a paid basis." By May 31, the Society owed $120 for rental fees on the Summerhill film, but its overall fiscal crisis had been eased somewhat by a financially successful May forum. Nevertheless, in a newsletter to its members dated June 26, 1970, Executive Secretary Ann Hunter concluded on a dismal note:

"A SAD ANNOUNCEMENT: We have to charge money for our publications because we are broke. If your friends want to send for our literature, please quote them the following prices:

- bibliography 50¢
- school list 50¢
- current Bulletin 50¢
- back issue of the Bulletin 25¢"

That same summer, Board member Hugh Erwin was authorized to publish an appeal for money. Noting that the Society was planning a number of new, exciting projects (such as a Summerhill public school pilot project in Manhattan), Erwin also observed that the excitement over these new projects was unfortunately being matched by despair over a financial crisis. Expenditures were still double the Society's income and thus operating expenses were not being met. Concluding on an apocalyptic note, Erwin summarized as follows:

"What we are talking about now is the survival of the Society. If this Society is to still exist in October,
we must have your help right now. Please send what you can in the enclosed envelope."33

Late in the summer of 1970, Ann Hunter became inactive in the Society's affairs because of personal difficulties. At that time, Ann Green replaced her with another friend, Mike Weinstein, and the two of them together served as the Executive Secretary. During the months of September and October, there seems to have been no question about the efficiency with which these two operated the Society's office on a day to day basis doing much of the routine work. Membership rose during this period, resulting in an increased cash inflow. Unfortunately there is no hard data in the present collection of Summerhill Society Papers detailing the exact number of new members or giving an accurate financial picture of the Society during these autumn months. Thus, it is not quite clear whether the efforts of Ann Green and Mike Weinstein were or were not cost effective. Later, this became a small point of contention within the Society, which was indicative of a much larger dispute that was developing. By late October, serious differences between the Executive Secretaries (Ann Green and Mike Weinstein) and the Board of Directors, led by Jim Hoffman as President, surfaced into an open conflict. That month Green and Weinstein, in their joint capacity as Executive Secretary, called a Special Membership meeting in which nothing less than an attempted revolt within the Society took place--resulting in a permanent split that significantly contributed to its final demise.
The minutes of that Special meeting on October 25, as recorded by Jackie Perez, (who had joined Green and Weinstein in their work sometime in the autumn) indicate that the two factions initially argued over a proposal to create a Summerhill Society summer camp to be financed by a benefit concert. This proposal was defeated by a 5-4 Board vote, but since the vote was so close it was agreed to table the proposal and keep it open for later consideration. At issue was the old dispute as to just what the purpose of the Society should be. On the one hand, Jim Hoffman, Phyliss Tower, and a majority of the Board wished to stress its role as a clearinghouse, whereas on the other side Ann Green, Jackie Perez, and Mike Weinstein wanted the establishment of a Summerhill school and/or summer camp to become the first priority. Possibly, the failure during late summer of the proposed Summerhill public school pilot project in Manhattan had forced into open contention the question of establishing their own school. However, this dispute was only a prelude to a power struggle which revealed the real point of contention between these two factions--namely who was to control the Society. After sparring over the proposal to create a Summerhill camp, the real issue surfaced when a proposal was made and seconded to dissolve the present Board. This action did not surprise Jim Hoffman since Ann Green had privately informed him prior to the meeting that her supporters were hoping to elect a new Board. Apparently, there was little personal animosity between the
leaders of the two factions, Green and Hoffman, for she also expressed her wish that he be included on the New Board. After the proposal was seconded, a long, angry debate raged in which a substitute motion was introduced and seconded to impeach both executive secretaries, presumably Ann Green and Mike Weinstein. After more discussion, the substitute motion was then called to a vote and defeated. Then, the original proposal to dissolve the present Board was acted upon and overwhelmingly approved by a 37-11 majority vote and thus the Board of Directors was dissolved. At this time, according to Jackie Perez's minutes, "James Hoffman stepped down as chairman"34 of the Board. Then Ann Green was elected as temporary chairman and a motion was made and passed to elect a new Board of Directors. This was then done and amongst the new Board members were Ann Green, Jackie Perez, and Mike Weinstein, but not Jim Hoffman nor any of his close supporters such as Phyliss Tower or Hugh Erwin. Protests over the proceedings were noted in the minutes:

"Personal statement made by Capthorne MacDonald--'I consider this meeting and procedure illegal.'

Personal statement made by Hugh Erwin--'I resent this packing and power play going on tonight.'"35

Nevertheless, the new Board of Directors quickly met and elected new officers. Elected to the Presidency was Ann Green. Jackie Perez became sole Executive Secretary and Mike Weinstein was elected Vice President. The revolt seemed complete.
Shortly after the October 25 Special Meeting, Ann Green and her supporters issued a Press Release, signing it "The Summerhill Collective" and in it they attempted to justify the revolt they claimed to have effected. Noting the recent history of the Society, they argued that because of their daily hard work the income of the Society had been quadrupled, correspondence was up to date, and activities were increasing. Yet, they felt that their efforts were unappreciated by Jim Hoffman and the former Board of Directors and that they were being offered very little voice in formulating the Society's policies. To them, it seemed:

"incompatible in our eyes for an organization supposedly committed to self-determination for children to employ at low wages, to do menial work with very little say in what went on. We could not accept being subject to the veto of people totally uninvolved in the day-to-day realities of the Society while we continued to be totally involved physically and emotionally."36

Apparently, the "veto" being mentioned was in reference to the former Board defeat of their proposal to start a Summerhill camp. Sometime close to the issuance of their press release, they also reiterated their explanation of the revolt in an open letter to the members of the Society and in a notice in an underground publication entitled RAT. In the latter, they argued that:

"In the past, 90% of the work was done by the workers, yet, was subject to the veto of the board who showed up once a month (if that often) for meetings. We find it typical liberal bullshit to on the one hand stand for self-determination for children and on the other hand make decisions about the day to day realities of other people's lives."37
Actually, in all three instances, what Ann Green and her supporters were describing as a successful revolt could more appropriately be labeled a secession—or "the Split" as it came to be widely referred amongst the members and friends of the Society. In reality, Jim Hoffman and his Board of Directors never stepped down and they continued to operate as if they were the legal representatives of the Society. Thus, for the remainder of 1970, two groups were functioning simultaneously, with each one claiming to be the legitimate Summerhill Society.

Four days after the October 25 Split, Jim Hoffman and the Board of Directors circulated a one page newsletter, in which in one brief paragraph they mentioned that Ann Green and Mike Weinstein were no longer with the Society, since their wish to start a Summerhill school was at variance with the Board's official policy. Cordially enough, they were wished good luck and nothing was mentioned about the Split which had occurred at the October 25 meeting. By mid November Hoffman and the Board felt compelled to take a harder stance against Green and her supporters by countering the criticisms they had made in their recent press release and open letter. Dated November 11, 1970, they published a detailed four page response which began as follows:

"By now you may have received a mailing from Ann Green and Mike Weinstein. We think you may need some more background material than their letter provides. From our point of view, that mailing is unadulterated bullshit."38
Noting that the distinction Green and Weinstein had made between "workers" and the "Board" was an artificial one, the Board pointed out that what Green and Weinstein (and later Perez) were being paid to do, Board members had been doing voluntarily for years without complaint. Then, the Board provided a history of recent events in the Society as they related to the present difficulties. Acknowledging that Green and her firends had worked very hard for the Society, they nevertheless noted that their labor was proving not to be cost effective and consequently the Society was sinking deeper and deeper into debt, such that by October $700 was owed. They argued that this financial situation was not in keeping with their debt free record of the previous few years and, as previously noted, this point was disputed by Green and Weinstein. According to the Board, it was during these financially hard times that Green and Weinstein had proposed a benefit concert, not to erase the Society's debt, but to finance the new venture of establishing a school. After the Board's rejection of this proposal, Green reportedly notified Phyliss Tower that they were still going to proceed planning for both the benefit concert and the school. When Tower challenged Green about why they even needed the Society's backing for this venture, Green "replied that they needed the [Society's] name for fundraising."39 Most importantly, the Board challenged the legitimacy of the October 25 meeting which had resulted from the friction between these two groups. Stating that "the whole
proceeding was invalid, for humane, sensible and also legal reasons,"40 they specifically pointed out that the entire membership had not even been notified of the meeting and that it was packed by people who were not even members of the Society and who had been "promised a $10 membership in return for the right vote."41 In short, non-members were allowed to vote, discussion was stifled, and the democratic by-laws for removing a Board were not followed by Ann Green's supporters.

During the remainder of 1970 and the first few weeks of 1971, the power struggle between these two groups intensified. Immediately after the October 25 meeting, the triumvirate of Green, Weinstein, and Perez hereafter also referred to as Group I) found themselves locked out of the Society's offices by Jim Hoffman and the Board of Directors (hereafter also referred to as Group II). In part, this was in retaliation, since Group I had confiscated the Society's checkbook, corporate seal, and mailing list. As early as November 1, Hoffman and the Board met to discuss the split. In addition to acknowledging that Group I had taken the checkbook and corporate seal, it was agreed that Group I further represented a threat to the Society since they were obtaining its mail and using its official name as their own. At that meeting Group I and II met for about one hour and afterwards it was decided by Group II not to negotiate with Group I at that time. Then, Hoffman and the Board passed a motion recommending that their lawyer, Phyliss Ganglin, "send a letter to Ann Green to get
back the checkbook, inform them of the legal ramifications of tampering with the mail or using the Summerhill Society's name illegally." Such a letter, dated November 6, 1970, was actually sent to Ann Green.

By now, the seriousness of the split was widely apparent to the other members outside of the New York area and even by some not connected with the Society. For example, in a letter to Phyliss Tower, Gladys Falken of the Summerhill Society of California wrote, "I got a letter from the New Schools Exchange Bulletin (301 E. Canon Perdido-Santa Barbara 93103) and they said 'what about the explosion of the Summerhill Society in New York?'...Good luck in straightening out the mess."43

On November 15, the Board (Group II) met for a second time to specifically discuss the split and among some members emotions ran high, such that one individual favored intimidating and beating up the other Group. Still, cooler heads prevailed, including that of Jim Hoffman who stated that "he could not convey any negative feelings toward them"44 in reference to Ann Green and Mike Weinstein. The minutes of that meeting indicate that the Society's rather small bank funds were no longer an immediate problem, since they had been temporarily frozen by the bank until proper ownership could be ascertained. The main concern of Group II seems to have been the use of the Summerhill Society name by Ann Green and
Group I and their continuing efforts to claim the Society's mail. It was then decided that the services of an attorney would still be needed.

By mid December, both Groups were still in contention over the mail. In a lengthy letter to the New York City Postmaster, dated December 17, Jim Hoffman detailed the recent history of the Society and argued that he and his Board were the true, legal representatives of the Society and not Ann Green and her supporters. In his conclusion, he noted that "it would be a tragedy if The Summerhill Society would be forced to cease to exist just because three people [Green, Weinstein, and Perez], using New Left rhetoric and fascist, undemocratic tactics, illegally take possession of mail that is not their own." As further support of his claims to legitimacy, Hoffman included at least seven notarized letters from individuals stating that he was indeed the legal President of the Summerhill Society. Nevertheless, problems with the mail continued through January of 1971 and adversely affected the Society's finances since much of its income at that time of year depended on membership renewals which involved the mails. By this time, the Society was over $1,000 in debt. Finally, the question over the mail was resolved by a legal agreement, dated February 2, 1971, between the two Groups and signed by Hoffman and Green. Essentially, this
document required Ann Green and Group I to relinquish:

"any right to solicit, claim or intercept any communications, correspondence, packages, parcels, letters, telegrams or other items of like import addressed to 339 Lafayette St., 5 Beekman St., 9 Bank St., or any other address, post office box, or similar designations which Group II may hereafter utilize in connection with the activities of the Summerhill Society, Inc."47

In return, Hoffman and Group II permitted Group I to continue to receive Society mail addressed specifically to the two addresses (137 A West 14th Street and 530 Sixth Avenue) which they were publicizing. Larger questions, such as the use of the Summerhill Society name, were not resolved by the February 2 legal agreement and thus major points of contention still remained between the two rival Groups.

Although the earliest attempts at negotiations had broken down, by December of 1970 negotiations had begun again between the two Groups to resolve these main points of contention, and they were to continue until mid February of 1971 when a final resolution of their differences was agreed upon by both sides. Minutes from a Board meeting, dated December 20, 1970, reveal that money and the use of the Society's name had become the two major points in dispute:

"The other side [Group I] wants $550 from us. They say this is back salary and back expenses. They would then give us back the name, stop fussing around with the mail, give us back the bank account."48

In addition, Group I offered to pay $80 in expenses which they had incurred, but in return they wanted Group II to promise to inform them in advance if they were going to be
brought to court by them. Throughout the negotiations, Hoffman's main concern was "that Group II (our group) be protected from and separated from Group I (their group) once and for all." These early negotiations led to a final resolution of terms contained in a legal document dated February 9, 1971, in which the two parties were defined as Group I, represented by Ann Green, Mike Weinstein, and Jackie Perez, and Group II, represented by James Hoffman, Hugh Erwin, and George Cohen. As a six page, ten point document, it was based upon three premises. First, that the two rival Groups were "in disagreement as to the function and operational methods of The Summerhill Society, Inc." and secondly, that they were in contention with respect to representing its membership. Furthermore, it was assumed that both Groups wanted "to reach a fair and amicable settlement." Of the ten legal points, Point One was probably the most important and in it Group I relinquished the following:

"any claim, right or interest in or to the use of the name the Summerhill Society, said name or any name that includes both the words 'Summerhill' and 'Society' as part of its makeup, that being the exclusive property of The Summerhill Society, Inc., a membership corporation of the State of New York. Group I does similarly relinquish any claim, right or interest with respect to the representation, in any capacity whatsoever, of the members of The Summerhill Society, Inc...."

In Point Two, Group II agreed to pay $269.67 to Group I for expenses the latter incurred while serving the Society, yet at the same time, Group I agreed to waive its right for reimbursement of absolutely "any other such expenditures
without regard to nature or date." The regarding other past debts, Group II also agreed to pay all such Society debts that had been accrued prior to October 24, 1970—the date of the eve of the Split. In return, Group I agreed "to surrender and deliver to Group II all checkbooks, paid or unpaid bills and corporate seals relating to the business of The Summerhill Society, Inc. prior to October 24, 1970." In Point 6, the previously signed postal agreement was reiterated. Responding to Hoffman and the Board's desire that the two Groups be permanently separated, Point 7 called upon the individuals comprising Group I to resign their offices and memberships in the Summerhill Society and in reciprocity Point 8 released Group I from any legal responsibility resulting from their actions while representing the Society. The final point of this legal document declared that the agreement would serve to "govern all subsequent relations between the parties" and that resolutions of any future problems between the two Groups would first be attempted by negotiations rather than court action.

With the signing of this legal document of separation, rivalry over control of the Society ceased and, in effect, it became two separate organizations. Group I, composed of Ann Green, Mike Weinstein, and Jackie Perez, became known as the Summerhill Collective and was the smaller of the two organizations. In fact, in an appeal for money in one of their publications, they defined themselves "as a collective of three" and there is no further evidence to indicate whether
or not the Summerhill Collective ever had any more active, working members at all. Whatever happened to all of their supporters, who had helped in the October attempt to dispose of Jim Hoffman and the Board of Directors, is unknown. During the remainder of 1971, the Collective published at least two bulletins, which they entitled simply the *Summerhill Bulletin*, and conducted one workshop for teachers. Unfortunately, not much is known about the scope and range of the Collective's activities, but it does seem certain that it ceased to function some time during 1972. In the 1973 edition of the Encyclopedia of Associations, the Collective was listed, using 1972 data, as an organization of reportedly 1000 members with Mike Weinstein as President. Then, in the next edition of that same index, it was noted that the Collective's address had become unknown suggesting that it had become defunct.

Meanwhile, Jim Hoffman and the Board of Directors (and apparently most of the Society's members) continued to operate throughout 1971 under the name of The Summerhill Society. Unlike their old designation, the Society's new name included a slight revision by capitalizing the "t" in "The"—indicative of the recent challenge to the Society and thus its concern about preserving its name and integrity. Like the Collective, The Summerhill Society continued publishing a bulletin, which they now entitled *The Summerhill Society Bulletin*, so as to distinguish it from the Collective's *Bulletin*. Throughout the remainder of 1971, The Summerhill Society attempted to
continue the various activities which had always been a part of it during the last few years. However, the struggle between the two rival Groups apparently caused irreparable damage, because The Summerhill Society itself, with Group II as its nucleus, was unable to ever recover and attain the successes it had known from 1967 to 1970. Financial problems continued to plague the Society, but equally crucial to its survival was the loss of two key people during the summer of 1971 with the departure of Jim Hoffman (President) and Phyliss Tower (Editor). With Hoffman's withdrawal, Al Brooks, a former President of the Society, once again assumed the top leadership position and unsuccessfully attempted to revive the Society with a new Board of Directors headquartered in New Jersey.58 In December of 1971, the inevitable took place and Al Brooks sent a final notice to the entire membership announcing that the Society was financially bankrupt and legally dead.

Conclusion

As fascinating as the descriptive history of the Summerhill Society has been, one is still left attempting to explain why such an active organization, with such dedicated supporters and good intentions became defunct after existing for only a decade. The obvious answer would be to point to the Society's repeated history of internal dissension, culminating in the final, devastating conflict late in 1970.
However, this answer is not entirely sufficient, for in the past the Society had always been able to weather its internal crises and renew itself. Why was it, that in 1971 it was impossible to revive it with new, dynamic leadership and thus, why did the Summerhill movement seem to meet its final end in that year? It seems apparent that there were external factors at work, including some that were a part of the larger changes taking place in American society and beyond the control of the Society. In response to a questionnaire from this author, Phyliss Tower, the last Editor of The Summerhill Society Bulletin, has suggested two possible explanations. First, she noted that at about the time of the Society's death the Open Classroom movement coming out of England was capturing the imagination of many Americans, particularly educators:

"I think in the New York City public schools, the teachers who had some sympathy for the suffering of children threw themselves into Open Classroom, and 'Summerhillian' ideas began to lose force."59

This may have been particularly damaging, when one considers that throughout the early and mid 1960's, many New York City teachers were active in the Society. Similarly, many liberal parents, who might otherwise have been eager supporters of the Summerhill movement, were able in the early 1970's to choose among other educational alternatives, including not only the open classrooms of various public schools, but other private alternative schools which were not "Summerhillian."

Likewise, a renewed interest in the methods of
Maria Montessori at that time may have also siphoned off some support for the Summerhill movement. Secondly, Phyliss Tower has suggested that the movement may also have been hurt by a challenge from the radicalism of the New Left:

"Another thing that worked against [Summerhillian] ideas of wholeness was an idea, or association I saw growing up that 'Summerhill' was 'middle-class.' (Anathemia [sic] of course to radical /60's/ Marxist thinking). Fighting the good fight meant improving the financial lot of ghetto minorities, the 'lower class.' This meant a rigid educational (intellectual) training." 60

Obviously, the latter had nothing to do with Summerhill concepts of education. Quite probably, the potentially younger leadership, which might have developed in the Society during the early 1970's, was instead more involved with political and social questions relating to the Viet Nam War and racism. Most certainly, the Group involving Ann Green, Mike Weinstein, and Jackie Perez, which split the Society in 1970 and later formed the Summerhill Collective, were considerably more radical than most of the other previous participants in the Society.

Ironically, at the same time that the Summerhill movement was being hurt from the New Left and suffering from competition with other liberal educational alternatives, its final demise was being assured by a budding conservative movement in this country, which in the early 1970's was only just becoming apparent to a few individuals. Within educational circles, this conservatism was to be expressed in terms of "accountability" and "back to basics." Ultimately,
the rise of this mood throughout the remainder of the 1970's would result in a younger generation more conservative and much less interested in educational experimentation—thus robbing the Summerhill movement of any opportunity to obtain new faces in that decade and therefore sealing its fate. At the same time that younger leaders were not materializing, the older leaders of the 1960's were losing their drive or as Phyliss Tower has put it:

"Now I think it [the Society] died inevitably, when 60's-type energy was subsiding."  

Furthermore, the death of the American Summerhill movement was in part a result of the fact that by the early 1970's the novelty of A. S. Neill's had exhausted itself. Consequently, when a Chicago based free lance writer wrote in June of 1971 to Jim Hoffman, who was still the President of the Society at that time, about an article he had written about A. S. Neill and the Summerhill School, he lamented over the fact that his piece had been rejected by *Ladies Home Journal, Psychology Today, Redbook, Playboy, Esquire, and The New York Times Magazine*. Elaborating on the reasons for rejection, he concluded that "they felt that Neill was old hat."  

Finally, it should not be overlooked that the American Summerhill movement died almost at the same time as Neill's own death in the autumn of 1973. There would be no more new writings from his pen to stimulate a movement in the manner in which the publication of *Summerhill* had done.
After the death of the Summerhill Society in 1971, the New Schools Exchange replaced it as the most prominent national clearinghouse of alternative education, and when it too ceased its publishing work in the late 1970's, it in turn was replaced by the National Coalition of Alternative and Community Schools currently led by Dr. Patricia Montgomery of Ann Arbor. Thus, there is still an alternative education movement, which includes some remnants of the old Summerhill movement, but still, it must be concluded that The Summerhill Society, and thus that particular movement, died in the first two years of the 1970's.

Twenty years ago, Lawrence Cremin noted in his conclusion to The Transformation of the School, that the Progressive Education Association was dead and that progressivism in education was in serious trouble. Writing as he was near the close of a very conservative decade in American history, Cremin prophesied that the progressive education movement would someday be revived when "a larger resurgence of reform in American life and thought" took place. Years later, he correctly observed that the alternative school movement of the 1960's was indeed that reawakening and that the Summerhill movement was one part of it. Likewise, even as we now travel through yet another conservative period, it may be speculated that in some future time, when liberal thought is once again in ascension, a renewed interest in A. S. Neill's writings
and Summerhillian education will occur. Perhaps what appears to be a dead movement is only one that is temporarily asleep.
CHAPTER 6: Footnotes


6. Ibid.

7. Letter from Herb Snitzer, Director, Lewis-Wadham School, September 15, 1964, SSP.


9. Ibid.


11. Ibid., p. 2.


13. Ibid.

15 Letter from Herb Snitzer, Director, Lewis-Wadham School, undated (1965?), SSP.


17 Letter from Marc Goldring, Vice President of the Summerhill Society, May 5, 1965, SSP.

18 "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors." February 25, 1966, SSP.

19 Ibid.

20 Letter from Nancy Higgins, Member of the Board of Directors of the Summerhill Society, March 10, 1966, SSP.

21 Ibid.


23 Letter from Marty Licker, Member of the Summerhill Society, March 21, 1966, SSP.


30 Minutes of a Business Meeting, April 26, 1970, Summerhill Society, SSP.

31 Ibid.

Open letter from Hugh Erwin, Summerhill Society Board Member, summer, 1970, SSP.

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Ibid.


Ibid., p. 2.

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Letter from Gladys Falken, member of the Summerhill Society of California, November 10, 1970, SSP.

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Letter from James Hoffman, President of The Summerhill Society, December 17, 1970, SSP.


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Letter from James Hoffman, President of the Summerhill Society, January 19, 1971, SSP.

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Ibid.

Ibid., p. 2.

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