

RECORD OF A FRIENDSHIP

The Correspondence Between

Wilhelm Reich and

A. S. Neill

1936-1957

Edited, and with an Introduction, by

BEVERLEY R. PLACZEK



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Introduction

Wilhelm Reich and A. S. Neill first met in Norway in 1936; they remained friends for over twenty years, until Reich's death in 1957. Though they were separated for most of those years, first by the war and later by the travel restrictions of the McCarthy era, a steady exchange of letters, back and forth across the ocean, kept their friendship alive. These letters stand as the record of a friendship between two remarkable men.

Neill was a Scotsman, a schoolmaster and child psychologist known for his radical views on child education. Reich was an Austrian, an iconoclastic psychoanalyst who had been blackballed by his Freudian colleagues for his unorthodox theories about society and sexuality. When they met, Neill was fifty-three, Reich thirty-nine. Reich, an exile from Nazi Germany, had been living and working in Oslo for two years; Neill had been invited to lecture at Oslo University. On the boat coming over, he had by coincidence been reading Reich's *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (*The Mass Psychology of Fascism*; there was as yet no English translation) and after his lecture learned with delight that its author had been in his audience. He telephoned and was invited to dinner. "We talked far into the night," Neill recalls. That was the beginning.

What held this friendship together for so long? The two men came from opposite ends of Europe and from vastly different social backgrounds. They were half a generation apart in age. And yet these two could talk to each other as to no one else. Reich: "Please write more often, since you are one of the very few to whom I can talk"; and Neill: "Forgive my grumble, but you are the only one to whom I can write." On the face of it, it was a most unlikely friendship. Opposites are said to attract, and certainly two more different men can scarcely be imagined: Reich, the Central European intellectual, highly educated, enormously gifted, and of driving energy, who moved, thought, and worked always in high gear; Neill, the Scot, intelligent to be sure, even wise, but no

intellectual, canny, humorous, patient, and pragmatic. To Reich, who was unstinting in his love for humanity in general, individual people always mattered less than his work. To Neill, people—children and the adults they would become—were the very stuff of his life. Reich, like a magnet, attracted disciples and sycophants, but none could long keep pace with his single-minded intensity or follow his leaping shifts to ever new areas of exploration; time after time, he found himself standing alone at the center of a swathe he himself had carved. Neill had neither disciples nor sycophants, nor did his central concerns ever vary, but some two hundred and fifty people—pupils, past pupils, parents, and friends—shared in celebrating his seventieth birthday, and those who had been children at Summerhill entrusted their own children to him. Reich liked skiing and hiking, and he also played the piano, but his greatest joy was in his work; he could not stand what he called “Gesellschaftskonsversation” (small talk). Neill took pleasure in everyday things, jokes, good talk—preferably over a glass of whiskey—gardening and puttering in his workshop. Golf was his great treat. He understood children intuitively because all his life he himself retained something of the child.

Not only were they unlike in taste and temperament; their origins, too, were utterly dissimilar: rooted Scots-Presbyterian versus uprooted Austrian-Jewish. Wilhelm Reich was the brilliant son of a well-to-do landowner. Born in 1897, he grew up on the family estate in the Bukovina, a province on the easternmost confines of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, a region where German-speaking Jews were a tiny minority. The father, assimilated and non-religious, was determined to have his son brought up within the German culture: the boy was forbidden to play with either the local Ukrainian-speaking peasant children or the Yiddish-speaking children of the poorer Jews; private tutors were imported until he was old enough to be sent away to the German-speaking Gymnasium. Reich lost his adored mother by suicide when he was thirteen. Four years later he had to leave school to care for his sick father, and upon his father's death, the seventeen-year-old boy took over the management of the property. It was 1914, and with the outbreak of World War I the Bukovina became contested territory. By 1916 young Reich, forced to flee before the advancing Russians, had become an officer in the Austrian army. When, in 1918, Austria and Germany were defeated, the Bukovina passed to Romania; with it went all that remained of the life Reich had known. Alone and impoverished, he arrived in Vienna intending to study law, but soon found that

medicine was his real vocation. Throughout his years as a student, he endured cold and even hunger, but he learned quickly, and managed to scrape a meager living as a tutor to less talented classmates. He discovered Freud and the new science of psychoanalysis, married a fellow student with whom in due course he had two daughters, and by the age of twenty-five was himself a practicing physician and psychoanalyst, devoting much time to work in the free mental-health clinics he had helped to establish in the poorer sections of the city. It was here that he came to know at first hand the crippling psychological effects on working-class people of the sexual hypocrisies and suppressions under which they lived. The theories on sexuality and society that grew out of this experience made him increasingly suspect to his psychoanalytic colleagues. In 1927 he joined the Communist Party. Three years later he moved to Berlin, where he hoped to find support for the social reforms he felt were necessary to achieve sexual—and hence mental—health for the workers. At first he was welcomed. Under the aegis of the powerful Berlin Communists, he consolidated and expanded the various Sexual Politics groups into a unified movement that soon counted more than forty thousand members. As time went on, however, the party organizers, embarrassed by a success that undercut their authority, became more and more antagonistic. Then, early in 1933, the Nazis came to power, the German Communist Party was outlawed, and Reich himself was once again forced to flee.

He returned to Vienna. By now he had moved a long way from the mainstream of Freudian psychoanalytic thinking, a divergence that together with other, personal, factors led to divorce from his orthodox Freudian wife and, ultimately, brought about his expulsion from the International Psycho-Analytical Association. Isolated both professionally and personally, he found the situation in Vienna untenable and accepted an invitation to move to Denmark. Within a year, in Copenhagen, he had created a circle of students, was busy with numerous patients, and had generated a Danish movement for sexual politics. When the authorities refused to renew his residency permit, he moved on, first to Sweden, and thence to Norway. Here again, with undiminished courage, he assembled a group to share his work. He made his living by teaching and practicing vegeto-therapy, a treatment of neuroses that combined verbal character analysis with a direct physical attack on the nodes of muscular tension in which, he held, neuroses are expressed and preserved. Leaving active sexual politics to others, he now devoted all his free time and energy to research in biophysics.

In contrast, how straightforward Neill's life appears! Nearly fourteen years older than Reich, he was born in 1883, the middle child of a large family that was barely emerging from the working class; his grandfather and his many uncles on his father's side had all spent their lives as miners, "in the pits." His father was a teacher, the stern dominie of a two-room village school in the north of Scotland; his indefatigable mother, herself also originally a schoolteacher, saw to it that her children spoke proper English—the local dialect was broad Scots—and that in "kirk" they sat through the interminable hell-fire sermons freshly scrubbed and stiffly starched. No one in the family expected much of "Allie"; he tripped over his own feet, forgot his errands, and preferred larking with the village boys to the Latin that his father, implacably ambitious for his numerous children, insisted they learn. Secondary school, it was decided, would be wasted on him; so, when he was seventeen, having failed at a couple of rather menial jobs, young Neill was taken on as an apprentice teacher in his father's school. After four years, he progressed to various minor paid teaching positions. Finally, when he was twenty-four, he passed the entrance examinations to Edinburgh University. Having acquired a very honorable degree in English, he set off for London to work in a small publishing firm. When war broke out in 1914, a severe phlebitis prevented him from enlisting. Instead, he went back to Scotland to become the master of a small school. Here he first began to question accepted educational practices and the wisdom of authority. (His charming *Dominie* books—*A Dominie's Log*, 1915; *A Dominie Dismissed*, 1916; *A Dominie in Doubt*, 1920; followed by *A Dominie Abroad*, 1922, and *A Dominie's Five*, 1924—grew out of the experiences of those years.) Though he was recruited into the artillery in 1917, he never saw action. After his discharge, he taught for a while in a "progressive" school, but even there his views proved too radical and he soon left. During this period he came to know Homer Lane, an American social reformer whose remarkable success with delinquent children Neill had long admired, and who had recently set up as a psychoanalyst in London. Asserting that all teachers should be analyzed, Lane offered to take Neill on—free. Neill accepted. The analysis as such was unsuccessful ("It did not touch my emotions and I wonder if I got anything from it"), but the contact with Lane helped to clarify and reinforce Neill's own developing ideas about freedom for children. By good fortune, he soon found a forum for these ideas in *The New Era*, the journal of the pioneering New Education Fellowship, of which he became co-editor. In this capacity, he also began traveling to Europe

to report on advances in European education. On one of these trips he met and became friends with a German architect, Dr. Otto Neustätter, and his Australian-born wife, a woman some years older than Neill.

For Neill the year 1921 was the watershed. He gave up his job with *The New Era* and, with the Neustätters and two other friends, opened a school near Dresden which was to offer its pupils that freedom and “creative self-expression” in which the founders all believed. For three years, in spite of the growing disapproval of the authorities, the school managed to maintain a foothold, first in Germany and later in Austria. In the course of those years Dr. Neustätter and his wife were divorced and Neill and she were married.

Tired of constant battles with bigoted officials and hostile villagers, in 1924 Neill and his wife brought their five British pupils back to England and settled them in a rented house in Dorset named Summerhill. When a year later they moved their growing school to a large rambling red brick building in Suffolk, they took the name with them. And so it became the Summerhill School. It was here that, except for the four years of wartime evacuation to the safety of Wales, Neill was to spend the rest of his long active life.

In the winter of 1937–38, almost two years after that first talk “far into the night,” Neill traveled to Oslo for a few weeks of study and therapy with Reich. In the long vacation of the following summer he went again, and during the Easter holidays of 1939 was able to make a final trip before Reich left Norway for the United States. All through the war they wrote to each other. And when at last peace came, Neill journeyed from Summerhill in Suffolk to spend ten days with Reich at his new summer place, Orgonon, in Maine. They found that the old friendship was still very much alive. Two days after Neill’s arrival, Reich records in his diary: “Several hours of talk with Neill. He is still the same as ever. I could joke with him and be *simple*.” A year later Neill returned, this time bringing his young second wife and their small daughter. He stayed for over a month and, when it was over, wrote to Reich: “Hated to leave you”; and Reich, noting that “when you left there was quite a gap at Orgonon,” consoled himself and Neill with the promise that “we shall have it again.” But in this he was wrong. Two years later Neill’s application for a visa was refused without explanation. The McCarthy era had begun. When the ban was finally lifted and Neill could once more enter the United States, Reich had been dead for over twelve years.

For all their differences—of origin, of education, of age, of tempera-

ment—Reich and Neill were alike in one way: both were dedicated men. Reich, dominated by a passion to discover the single underlying principle from which all biophysical phenomena could be derived, spent his every spare dollar and every spare hour on research—finally, in 1950, giving up a lucrative practice to immerse himself wholly in his orgonomic work. Neill lived his whole life as a poor man, constantly plagued by financial worry, fighting cagily and stubbornly to keep his school afloat so that “a few hundred children be allowed to grow freely.” Their dedication was based on an assumption which they shared, an almost religious faith in the redemptive power of unconstricted, natural development, in what Reich saw as “the inherent decency and honesty of the life process if it is not disturbed.” Human beings, they believed, had for millennia been distorted by social conditioning—“structuring” or “armoring,” as they called it. To such “anti-life character molding” they attributed all human failings, all human woes. Their trust in the necessary and certain triumph of “unarmored” man was the lode star that made present disappointments bearable and justified every sacrifice.

In this sense, Neill’s work was important to Reich. By entrusting real children with real freedom, both social and sexual, in “that dreadful school,” Neill was bringing into actuality tenets in which both believed. “The only hope,” Reich wrote, “is, I firmly believe, establishment of rationality in children and adolescents,” and demanded: “Why should I go into child biology if there are such marvellous child educators as A. S. Neill . . . ?” Also, he appreciated the childlike quality in Neill, noting about Neill’s *Problem Family* in his diary: “A very good book written by a child 64 years old; honest, playful; frank; full of love for children.”

Neill held Reich to be a genius whose work was bringing humanity closer to the goal of self-understanding and freedom: “Reich, you are one of the great men of our time; I say it as a simple fact without any meaning of flattery or worship.” Neill’s sense of Reich’s greatness was a central fact in his relation to him, even when Reich went beyond what Neill himself could accept or understand. “I never understood your orgone work really; too old, too set, too conditioned,” he wrote in 1956, and on reading the account of UFO’s in Reich’s journal, *CORE*: “If I had never heard of Reich and had read *CORE* for the first time, I would have concluded that the author was either *meschugge* [crazy] or the greatest discoverer in centuries. Since I know you aren’t *meschugge* I have to accept the alternative.”

Neill’s belief in Reich had been laid down in the Norway years; work

with Reich, as his patient and student, had given him a whole new sense of confidence; it had also, incidentally, freed him from the fierce headaches that had plagued him much of his life. Furthermore, and more important in the long run, Reich's teachings on sex-economy had provided Neill with a firm theoretical underpinning for ideas he had arrived at pragmatically and been practicing at Summerhill for years. The continued contact with Reich gave him a sense of sharing in a whole world of intellectual excitement and discovery; he writes of "the inspiration you have given me for years," and shortly after his visa had been refused: "For two years I had looked forward to great talks with you in Maine, and when that anticipation was shattered, I had no one to talk to, no one who could give me anything new." And Neill was also, very simply, extremely fond of Reich: "How could I ever come back to the States if there was no dear warm friend Reich to greet me?" In Norway, and again on his visits to the States, he had come to know at first hand Reich's enormous warmth and charm—something Reich's letters often fail to convey. (Thirty years later, when I asked her about Reich, Mrs. Neill's face lit up. She had met him only during that one summer visit in 1948 and yet she still remembers with affection his friendly welcome, his directness, and how "easy" it was to be with him.) It is to this warm and "easy" man that Neill wrote, and of whom he never lost sight, in spite of Reich's frequent scoldings, his diatribes, and the general mistrust that darkened his final years. But for all Neill's loving admiration and his self-deprecatory view of himself as Reich's "good John the Baptist," Neill, absorbed as he was in his own work, never got caught in Reich's orbit; he knew that there were two sides to their relationship, that he gave as well as received. He was distressed by the refusal of the visa not just for himself but because "I know you need me in some way . . . and we are separated by a futile suspicion."

Did Reich indeed need Neill? The continuing flow of letters is in itself an answer: Reich could so easily have let it lapse, unless for him, too, it was important. Far from doing so, he tells Neill that "it is always a great thing to have a letter from you," and adjures him over and over to "keep writing please." He depended on Neill's unswerving friendship, writing at one point: "I hope you don't mind that I am pouring out my heart to you." Also, that Neill was preaching Reichian doctrine to audiences three thousand miles away gave Reich a sense of enlarged reach and impact. Though he often scolded Neill: "I am cross that you don't follow my advice . . ." or "Why can't you see, Neill . . . ?" or "It is of the utmost importance that you revise your basic attitude . . ."

he respected Neill's independence of mind and his honesty: "I know no one in Europe who could listen better and understand better what is at stake at the present time in the development of our work," and wrote appreciatively of Neill's "unique position, being in the orgone fold but at the same time independent."

During the 1950's, as the pressures on Reich increased, he became mistrustful even of Neill, but it is a measure of his real affection that, as late as 1956, the year before his death, he wrote to Neill: "It would be splendid if you came to the U.S.A. this summer. You could stay at my summer house as my guest. Though things have greatly changed since 1950, and much new has happened, I am certain we would get along." But the ban still stood; Neill could not come.

Even had he been able to accept Reich's invitation, it is doubtful whether, for all Neill's steady good sense and even-tempered realism, he could have influenced the course of events that finally destroyed his friend. Reich's passionate intransigence made him unable to accept advice and left him perilously exposed to his enemies.

For a number of years after his move to the States, things had gone well with Reich: he had remarried, had established the Orgone Institute and the semi-independent Orgone Institute Press, which put out a journal and published his books; he had acquired a beautiful tract of land in Maine, intended as the future center of orgonomic research and teaching; his practice flourished and he had attracted a considerable following of student-physicians and supporters. Then, in 1947, the hostility which, time and again throughout his life, his theories had aroused came to the surface in America. An article by a freelance reporter, Mildred Edie Brady, entitled "The Strange Case of Wilhelm Reich," appeared in a respected periodical, *The New Republic*. Widely quoted and repeated, this clever mixture of half truths, snide distortions, and suggestive misrepresentations came to be accepted as fact by all those who found Reich's views on the primacy of orgasmic fulfillment objectionable. Some righteous citizens alerted the Federal Food and Drug Administration to the possibility of fraud in the claims which, the article alleged, Reich had made for the orgone accumulator. From then on, for ten years, the FDA pursued its investigation of Reich with relentless zeal. Finally, in 1954, having failed to uncover the vice ring for which the Orgone Institute was purportedly a front, the agency succeeded in persuading the attorney general of the federal court in Maine to issue a complaint against Reich and the Wilhelm Reich Foundation, as a first step to banning the sale or rental of accumulators.

Reich, arguing that no jurist was competent to judge matters of science, refused to appear in court to challenge the complaint; thus, the terms of the injunction obtained by the FDA were extremely broad: accumulators on hand were to be destroyed and, on the grounds that the literature of the Orgone Institute Press constituted "false labeling" of these devices, its publications were also ordered destroyed. Having procured the injunction, the FDA, temporarily, left Reich in peace.

Some months later, however, an event occurred that was to be decisive for the outcome of the agency's dogged resolve to get Reich. During the winter of 1954–55 Reich spent some time in Arizona on a research project. A young associate, Michael Silvert, was left in New York to deal with routine administrative matters. In Reich's absence, and without his knowledge, Silvert had some books and accumulator parts sent from Maine to New York. The questing agents of the FDA got wind of this shipment and, asserting that it constituted "interstate commerce" and hence violated the terms of the injunction, demanded that Reich be indicted for contempt of court. In the spring of 1956, hearings were held—and this time Reich did appear to present his views. However, in the trial that followed, a jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to two years in prison. The sentence was postponed pending appeal. In the interim, the FDA saw to the destruction ordered in the injunction. The few accumulators and the relatively small number of Orgone Institute journals on the shelves at Orgonon were duly burned under the supervision of FDA agents, after which a much larger operation of the same sort took place in New York. Huge quantities of journals, pamphlets, and books were removed from the Foundation's warehouse, loaded onto a truck, and carted off to the incinerators of the City Sanitation Department, where they were burned.

By the following spring, it was clear that Reich's year-long effort to have the verdict of the Maine court overturned had failed. On March 11, 1957, in Portland, Maine, after a last desperate effort to have the sentence reduced or suspended, he was led out of the courthouse in handcuffs to begin serving his prison term. Less than eight months later, on November 3, 1957, in the federal prison in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, he died of heart failure. "I came to think in all earnest," he had once written to Neill, "that almost all heart diseases are originally heartbreak diseases."

Reich kept all Neill's letters, and copies of his own. With rare exceptions, Neill typed all his letters, but he never made carbons and frequently repeats some piece of news or asks "Did I tell you . . . ?" this

or that. Usually, Reich noted the point he intended to take up—or, it may be, his reactions to what Neill had written—directly on the letters themselves: passages are underscored, vivid exclamation marks dot the page, and here and there, particularly in later years, a large “NO” or “LIARS,” “SCOUNDRELS,” or the like, will be scrawled in the margin, the very vigor of the marking suggesting a shout.

In all, there are close to five hundred letters. Spread over the twenty years of their friendship, this would average a letter from each man every month. But that, of course, is not how it was. There are few letters until 1938, when Neill went to Oslo to study with Reich. By then both men knew that war was coming, and there is much discussion about the protection of Reich’s microscope slides and the possibility of his moving to England. In 1939, Reich emigrated to America. And here some crucial letters are missing, the first he wrote from the States. We know they did exist, because in September of that year Neill writes: “It was good to get your letter saying you had arrived”; and again, in October, “I got your long letter”; and finally, on January 5, 1940, “I got your two letters by the same post.” How fascinating it would have been to read those first impressions! Though through the war the mails must have been uncertain, the flow continues with seldom a pause of more than a few weeks. Plans for Neill’s visits of 1947 and 1948 fill the letters of those years; then, in 1950, when his expectation of joining Reich was thwarted by the ban, more letters went back and forth than in any other year: more than one a week! (It is quite startling, incidentally, how quickly a letter could get from Rangeley in Maine to Leiston in Suffolk: some letters are answered a mere three days after they were sent.) From 1950 on, as the realization grew in Neill’s mind that he would probably never see Reich again, the number of letters diminished. In 1955 we find only one letter of Reich’s, though from Neill’s responses, it is clear he wrote more often.

Despite the enormous differences in background and outlook between the two men, despite separation and the pressures of a censorious society and their own sharply defined personalities, the letters they wrote to each other through the years glow with their affection and the enrichment each brought to the life of the other. Each was intensely interested in the other’s thoughts about the things that seemed important to them both. Discussions of how the world should be run recur: Reich believed that the world of the future would be governed by what he called “work democracy”; although Neill agreed with the ideal, he doubted its practicability. Surprisingly, they seldom comment on actual

events except in personal terms—even the end of the war is mentioned only as it allows Neill to return from Wales to his beloved Suffolk. In the 1940's, both men became fathers and thereafter exchanged constant bulletins on the progress of their children: Reich's son, Peter, born in 1944, and Neill's daughter, Zoë, born two years later.

The tone and content of each man's letters are as different as the men themselves. Neill's are variously humorous, speculative, penetratingly realistic, and deeply depressed—often all these simultaneously. He fills them with everyday things, concrete activities, news of friends. He talks of his unceasing efforts to make Reich's work known in England, always responds at length to the publications Reich sends him, and faithfully passes on any comments he may have gleaned. When the school is evacuated to Wales during the war, he writes about the narrowness, the overcrowding, the cold, and the damp. He frequently asks Reich's advice about psychology, how he might best use what he has learned on behalf of individual children. In later years he confides his worries—over the nuclear threat, the school's financial situation, and his daughter Zoë's future: "Well, Reich, bless you, I think of you often especially when I am in trouble and want to talk to someone who will listen." And always he wants to hear of Reich's doings, plying him with questions about his work and his life. In contrast, Reich's letters seem curiously impersonal. He speaks, always in general terms, of the many people who believe in him, of the growing success and acceptance of his ideas—"My social and academic standing in the U.S. is very strong"; and "Our literature here still sells like warm bread"—and of his current theories and interests. Frequently he inveighs against the scoundrels who deride him or, worse still, who distort his meaning and ride to wealth on his efforts. As the years went by, he moved further and further to the right politically: the hand of Moscow was behind every disappointment, every harassment, behind even the FDA and McCarthy. Occasionally, his proud optimism is shot through by a premonition of his coming tragedy: writing to Neill as early as 1946 that "there is only one thing I still fear. That is, some crooked frameup, some abysmal *Gemeinheit* [meanness] which may hit me in the back and destroy my work"; and elsewhere, comparing himself to a "fiery horse racing over meadows enjoying a sunny morning in the spring," describes how "a small stick of 20 inches brings the horse to a fall. It breaks its neck."

Sometimes there were arguments, as when Neill demurred at Reich's attempts to justify the United States' refusal of travel visas—"of late you have appeared to me pretty close to the Americans who are witch

hunting”—or took exception to Reich’s growing tendency to attach the label of “red fascist” to any person or action of which he disapproved. But these disputes were always ultimately set aside, as when, after an increasingly discordant exchange, Neill writes that “all this dispute between us never gets us anywhere. It just tires us and saddens us”; or when Reich affectionately suggests that “two glasses of good whiskey soda would suffice to clear up our disagreement.” Only once, in the autumn of 1956, did Reich allow suspicion to blind him to Neill’s stubborn loyalty. During the preceding summer Reich’s son, Peter, had stayed for a while at Summerhill. Some of his talks with Neill, when later reported to Reich, led the latter to believe that finally Neill, too, had failed him. Reich expressed his feelings of betrayal to a mutual friend. This was more than even Neill could bear: “So our long friendship has come to an end because you consider me unreliable”—ending his letter: “Goodbye, Reich, and bless you.” But the friendship did not end. Reich disregarded the reproach and the farewell, only telling Neill not to “worry,” and a few weeks later begging him to “be patient, please, if I keep silent or do not reply promptly. I am extremely busy.” And Neill responded, damning “this 3000 miles separation,” and then, writing of his concern at the turn events were taking: “Reich I love you. I cannot bear to think of your being punished by an insane prison sentence. You couldn’t do it and you know it.”

How right Neill was: though Reich had committed no crime, a few months later he died of the punishment.

Sixteen years later, just before his own death in September 1973, Neill summed up his feelings in his autobiography: “A great man had died in vile captivity. I think that Reich will not come into his own as a genius until at least three generations from now. I was most lucky to know him and learn from him, and love him.”

We too are fortunate that now, with the publication of this eloquent record of their friendship, we can come to know these two extraordinary men in their full humanity.

BEVERLEY R. PLACZEK

New York
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EDITOR'S NOTE

All the letters published here are taken from Reich's file. Very few of Neill's letters appear to be missing, but the file contained only carbon copies of Reich's letters, and many are missing. A remark of Neill's may explain this: "Now that Ilse has gone, you seem to have to write by hand"; when that was the case, Reich would, of course, have made no carbon. Neill signed all his letters just plain "Neill." None of Reich's carbon copies are signed, but Mrs. Neill tells me that "Reich signed his letters in a variety of ways: sometimes just WR or Wilh. Reich and sometimes just REICH or W. Reich."

As far as possible, Reich and Neill have been left to speak each in his own voice. At the start, Reich's English was uncertain, but I have altered it only where the sense was unclear; and in translating the few letters he still wrote in German, I have tried to maintain their flavor. Though Reich never lost his accent, he was always highly articulate, and his command of the written language improved steadily. Neill talked directly into his typewriter: he used slang when it suited him and dotted his letters with German words and phrases; his abbreviations are idiosyncratic, his punctuation and capitalization irregular, and, of course, his spelling is British. All this has been left unchanged.

In preparing so large a body of letters for publication, some abridgment was essential. If some letters appear abrupt, it is for this reason. I have deleted repetitions, redundancies, and passing allusions to people who play no part in the story. I have also somewhat reduced Neill's descriptions of his health problems: Reich, as well as being his friend, had also been his doctor. On the other hand, I have retained every sentence that might shed light on any aspect of the life, the thought, or the personality of either man, even such as perhaps in themselves seem unimportant or trivial.

The people mentioned in the letters, unless identified in the text, are identified in footnotes, as are events, current and important at the time, that may not be clear from the context.

I am most grateful to Mrs. Ilse Ollendorff Reich for generously allowing me to include a long, important letter she wrote to Neill in 1952, which contains a description of an event not covered elsewhere.

My very warm thanks go to Miss Mary Higgins for her unfailing help in elucidating obscure points and tirelessly searching out relevant material.

B.R.P.