THE FREE SCHOOL MOVEMENT

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CHAPTER I

THE FREE SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The decade of the sixties emerged as a time of great change. This change has taken many shapes and has begun to deeply affect many of our institutions. One of the most visible examples of change during the sixties was that of scientific progress. Space flights have become an everyday occurrence. Heart transplants have become commonplace. Computers are the order of the day, reaching into most industries and organizations.

Another example of change manifests itself in the unrest that has beset our society during the sixties. Minorities increased their militancy. Popular slogans filled the air; cries of Black Power, Red Power, Brown Power, Women's Liberation, and Gay Liberation have led to organizations seeking to free these groups from what they believe to be a repressive society. The unrest of the sixties climaxed with the riots in Watts, Detroit, Cleveland, and Newark. Student unrest manifested itself in incidents ranging from the occupation of buildings to the death of students at Kent State.

Change in the sixties was reflected in the politics of the decade. The "New Frontier" gave way to the "Great Society". The Peace Corps, VISTA, federal aid to education, Medicare, urban renewal, poverty programs, integration, bussing, and equal opportunity all became household phrases.

Concern for the environment was also a dramatic change seen during the sixties. Air pollution, water pollution, insecticides, pesticides, noise pollution, and ecology all became popular topics for speeches, books, and television specials.

All the various aspects of the youth culture emphasized the changes taking place during the sixties. Beatniks became hippies which in turn became undefinable. "Group rock", the Beatles, the generation gap, the drug culture, and the sexual revolution all became associated with the youth of America.

In the midst of this ferment, the schools did not remain untouched. Nearly every area of the curriculum had its brush with change. The educational vocabulary of the sixties was spiced with the word "new". Thus, this generation of children have been treated to the "new math", "new English", "new science", and the "new social studies". Paralleling this development have been innovations in teaching, including team teaching, differentiated staffing, teacher aids, and the use of para-professionals. New technology in the classroom has taken the shape of multi-media approaches, multipurpose classrooms with flexible dividers, and individually prescribed instruction. Demands from minority groups have led to the introduction of minority studies and multi-ethnic textbooks. Political changes in the public school system during the sixties can be seen by the trend toward consolidated schools, federal aid to education, integration and the bussing of students.

Possibly the greatest change in the educational system in the United States took place outside the public school system. During the last five years of the sixties hundreds of new schools sprang up across the country. These schools were called by various names: free

schools, experimental schools, open schools, storefront schools, community schools, and non-schools. "The free school movement" became the most common phrase associated with these new schools. A common element that seems to run through all of these schools was the belief that the public schools were failing. While there were many reforms and changes in public education during the decade of the sixties, many parents believed that the public school system as an institution was a repressive place for children. These parents were bolstered by the publication of several books during the sixties that subjected the schools to a constant stream of devastating criticism. The new critics of education provide an extensive list of names: George Dennison, Nat Hentoff, James Herndon, John Holt, Evan Illich, Herbert Kohl, Jonathon Kozol, George Leonard, Charles Silberman, Paul Goodman, and Edgar Friedenberg. Many of the parents, teachers, and writers who are active in the free school movement have taken the position that the changes of the sixties have not really changed the schools. These parents and teachers feel that even the newest, most advanced and innovative schools in our society continue their historic role of screening individuals, selecting the fit and rejecting the unfit. They feel that authority, discipline, competition, pass and fail, prescribed curricula, and state requirements, all continue to be hallmarks of our system. They see the so-called revolution in education emphasizing the "new math", the "new science", and the "new social studies", and self-directed and discovery learning as being superficial. New curriculums, technology, the influence of mass media, and the "knowledge explosion" have all scarcely begun to modify the long established classroom practices and attitudes of teachers and most parents alike. They believe that nation-wide,

schools have absorbed these new innovations without significant institutional changes. Students, for the most part, continue to look upon the school as an obstacle course, something that must be run through in order to obtain a license for a job or entrance into some college.

Many teachers like Fred L. Staab and Robin B. Staab, who produce The Teacher Paper,[1] and James Herndon, author of The Way It Spozed To Be[2] and How To Survive in Your Native Land,[3] recognize some of the inadequacies of our educational system, but continue to remain within the public school setting working for change. Many dissatisfied students, such as the Montgomery County Student Alliance, have presented their school board with recommendations for change and continue to work within the system.

No doubt many well-meaning parents, teachers, and students who were dissatisfied with public education tried to remain in the public school system and change it into what they feel would be a more humane education. In trying to change the system they found many obstacles--teachers who refused to change, school boards who believed that they were doing the best job possible with existing funds, administrators who found it easier to remain the way they were rather than change, and an apathetic public. Some of the dissatisfied parents, teachers, and students continued to remain inside the public school system and fight for change. Others, feeling that changing public education was a hopeless enterprise, began to develop their own schools. In some areas, students simply dropped out of the public school system and formed their own school. In other areas, teachers gave up trying to "fight" the system, and started their own schools. Parents, also, have started their own schools outside the public school system. The variety of

these schools seems limitless. No two schools seem to be exactly alike. They range from inner-city black to suburban and rural white. Bonnie Barrett Stretch describes some of these schools as being pastoral escapes from the grit of modern conflict. Others are deliberate experiments, in integrated multicultural, multilingual education.[4] These new schools are located everywhere--in city storefronts, old barns, former barracks, abandoned church buildings, and parents' homes. Most of these schools developed spontaneously and independently of each other. During the early 1960's there were only a few of these schools, but their numbers increased steadily. By 1968, a series of exchanges of information had taken place which served the purpose of informing the schools of the large numbers of similar schools that were in existence across the United States. Through communication with each other, and through a few articles and books published in the popular press, has grown a sense of community that has come to be popularly called the free school movement.

Most free schools are structured on the Leicestershire method. This is a system where older children have some responsibility to aid in the teaching of the younger children. Inside the buildings or storefronts are usually large meeting rooms and some smaller rooms for seminars, discussions, and tutorials. Rooms are organized by activity centers--a math corner, a reading corner, and live animal corner. Children are free to move from one thing to another as their interest shifts, and children of all ages frequently work and play together. For older kids, the method is largely tutorial, one to five students working with a teacher. There are frequent trips to police stations, hospitals, local businesses, farms, ranches, or anywhere of interest.

Some free school students travel extensively, taking trips that last for several days. A bus or some type of van seems to be the most valued possession of any free school. For the purpose of this paper, free schools are those schools that have formed as a revolt against what supporters of the free schools call the authoritarianism that structures many classrooms, the stress on grades and discipline at the expense of learning, and the suppression of natural curiosity and instincts of the young. Many parents and teachers are starting free schools to escape the boredom, fear and grievous lack of learning that they feel too often accompanies public schools. Free schools claim to allow a new kind of education that, they argue, will create independent, courageous people able to face and deal with the shifting complexities of the modern world.

Free schools are based largely on the principle of Summerhill,[5] by A. S. Neill, the main idea being to make the school fit the child, instead of making the child fit the school. Neill's concept of the child is that the child is innately wise and realistic, and if left to himself, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing. At Summerhill, lessons are optional; children can go to them or stay away as they wish. The aim of education is the same as the aim of life, that is to work joyfully and to find happiness. Happiness, according to Neill, means being interested in life, or responding to life not just with one's brain but with one's whole personality.

Briefly then, a free school, as described in the literature of the free school movement, is one that has the following characteristics: They have broken away from the public school system to form their own school; their size remains relatively small, containing somewhere

between fifteen and sixty students; there is a relative lack of authority and structure from the teachers or administration; children are relatively free to choose between the various activities available; no skills such as reading or math are explored until the children express an interest or ask for them; and, the schools are largely activity and experience centered, with a large amount of time being spent in the community interacting with other adults. The common thread that holds free school writers together and seems to run through the free school movement is as follows:

> Let every child be the planner, director, and assessor of his own education, allow and encourage him to decide what is to be learned, when he is to learn it, how he is to learn it, and how well he is learning it. Schools should be a resource area for free and independent learning and growth that emerges from indulging that curiosity to ask questions and then proceeding to find answers.[6]

The Free School Movement in the United States

What people are calling the free school movement started in the United States in the early 1960's. There was a slight growth of the free schools during the middle years of that decade. During the years from 1968 to present there has been a noticeable proliferation of the number of free schools. From 1969 through 1971 there was a flurry of activity which included the formation of regional clearinghouses, free school networks, the development of newsletters and magazines on the free school movement, a few books and pamphlets, and a series of regional and national conferences that have helped to spread the word about free schools and introduced the term free school movement.

A Brief History

There have been several "progressive" or experimental schools around the United States for many years. Examples are Presidio Hill School in San Francisco, started in 1918, and Peninsula School in Menlo Park, California, which opened its doors in 1925. These schools were few and scattered, the majority being in California and New England. There is no record of exchanges of newsletters, information, meetings, or discussions of philosophies or directions. Some of these schools that are still in existence have listed themselves with some of the free school exchanges and attend conferences on free schools. Because of their small numbers, their lack of communication, their lack of direction or the development of a common consciousness, they are not considered in this work as being part of the free school movement.

The Summerhill Experience

When Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing[7] was announced in 1960, not a single bookseller in the country was willing to place an advance order for even one copy of the book. A. S. Neill was practically unknown in the United States. Some ten years later Neill's book Summerhill is required reading in at least 600 university courses. During 1969 the sale of the book exceeded 200,000 copies.[8] Interest in Summerhill has become world-wide and there have been several translations, including French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, and others. Since the publication of Summerhill, Neill has received hundreds of letters from all over the world from parents and children. Most of these came from the United States. Largely, their questions revert to the fundamentals of freedom in the home. To answer these

questions and to clarify some points, a second book was published--Freedom--Not License.[9]

Certainly, Neill's ideas have stirred up an enormous amount of controversy. His educational theories have been championed by some of the country's leading thinkers and utterly derided by scholars and specialists of equal eminence. In some classes where Summerhill is used as a text, the book is used to show how wrong permissive education can be. On the other hand, some hold Summerhill to be the new panacea of educational pedagogy. This polarity of thought has lead to the publication of a third book, Summerhill: For or Against,[10] a collection of readings by fifteen authors ranging from Max Rafferty to Paul Goodman.

Besides these three books, there have been many articles published in the popular press by visitors to Summerhill, explaining Neill's concepts on education to American readers. These articles have appeared in periodicals ranging from Look, Holiday, Saturday Review, New York Times Book Review, New Republic, to Pageant Magazine, Redbook, Liberation, Psychology Today, and Anarchy.[11]

To further explain the Summerhill concept, three pictorial descriptions have been published. Herb Snitzer, a former teacher at Summerhill, has published Living at Summerhill,[12] with many photographs of Summerhill and its students. Neill & Summerhill: A Man and His Work,[13] another pictorial study, was produced by John Walmsley. It contains pictures plus comments by Neill, students, staff members, and ex-teachers. Richard Bull has published Summerhill U S A,[14] a pictorial description of Summerhill-type schools in the United States.

Interest in furthering Summerhill-type education led to the formation of the Summerhill Society in New York City in 1961. For the next few years educators, psychologists, parents, and other people interested in Neill's concepts devoted much time and energy discussing issues, making contributions, and trying to "spread the word". Schools were opened by individuals who had made a personal commitment to the ideals of Summerhill. One of the major functions of the Summerhill Society is to support and encourage the growth of these schools and other schools like them. The Society has compiled a list of 127 Summerhill-type schools. It should be pointed out that the Society does not investigate, judge or endorse any particular school.

A. S. Neill's Summerhill seems to be the catalyst that helped start the movement in the United States. Although the book did not sell well in its early years during the 1960's, the word about non-coercive education was slowly spread by other areas of the popular press. Magazines widely read by a cross section of the population printed articles dealing with Summerhill or Summerhill-type schools in the United States. Look magazine carried an article in 1963 about the school in England "run by students".[15] The article must have been some shock to many Americans who at that time were criticizing their own public schools for being too lenient, for being behind the Russians in math and science, and for not being able to "teach Johnnie how to read".

A couple of articles appeared describing Lewis-Wadhams School in upstate New York, a school founded by people who believed in the Summerhill concepts. This is a co-educational boarding school supporting itself by tuition. Like Summerhill, students operate on the principle of self-government--children make their own rules and are judged

by their peers if they break them. One article by Newsweek in 1964 reported that there were half-a-dozen schools based on Summerhillian principles that had been founded in recent years.[16] Almost a year later Holiday published an article on the same school that was much longer, had more depth and was much more comprehensive.[17] The article uses an example of a student-run general meeting over the issue of the right of students to keep weapons (machetes), to explain the concept of self-government, communications, and the role of the headmaster.

The Fifteenth Street School, started in New York City in 1964 by actor Orson Bean, is described in an article by George Leonard in Look magazine.[18] The school is described as resembling the permissive Summerhill School in England; children do as they please. The school offers solid academic subjects presented so that most children want to take them. The educational director is described as a person who does all he can to create a school where children are truly free to learn. The rest of the article is a justification of why the school operates as it does, and draws upon the writings of Benjamin Bloom, John Goodlad, and Rosslyn and J. Richard Suchman.

Because of the interest in Summerhill and the articles on free education, Tolstoy on Education[19] was published in 1967. The book is a collection of Tolstoy's essays on pedagogy, originally published in the 1860's, and is a reissue of Leo Wiener's 1900 translation. One section of the book is devoted to Tolstoy's own school, Yasvaya Polyana, a school much like A. S. Neill's Summerhill. Tolstoy suggests that the true aim of education is to cultivate and enrich an individual's best self. Tolstoy allowed his pupils to come and go as they pleased and insisted that teachers, too, should be free to teach whatever and at

whatever length they wished.

Time magazine carried an article on Pacific High School, ten miles south of Palo Alto, California.[20] This private school operates from a tuition that averages $900 per student scaled to the family income. Students choose their own hours, classes, and teachers and even sit on the board of trustees. At the end of a course, they get gentle advisory evaluations rather than grades, and are encouraged to tell their teachers precisely what they think of them. The loosely structured curriculum centers around month-long seminars on subjects that are selected as much by the students as by the staff. Examples of course offerings are Zen Buddhism, sex and psychology, parapsychology and Vietnam, desert ecology, and comparative religion.

Paul Goodman advocated a form of free schools in an article in Saturday Review.[21] Goodman's proposal for a form of free schools would be financed by public funds, but controlled by parents. The free environment would be limited to groups of twenty-eight children with four grown-ups, a licensed teacher, a housewife, a college senior, and a teen-age school dropout. Goodman uses the examples of the First Street School to show that these types of schools are cheaper than public schools, and A. S. Neill to show that attendance need not be compulsory.

Dennison's First Street School received a large amount of publicity after the publication of his book in 1969.[22] The Saturday Review describes the school as the prototype of Paul Goodman's "mini-schools"--twenty-three students, three teachers, and thoroughly grounded in the thought of those who are now being called "romantic" educators: Neill, Tolstoy, Dewey, Goodman, Holt, Kohl, Kozol, and Rogers.[23] The students

were black, white, and Puerto Rican in equal proportions. All were poor and about half came to school with severe learning and behavior problems. This school, according to Dennison, was not a place, but basically a series of relationships between children and adults and between other children. The book is a philosophical treatise which quotes Dewey, Tolstoy, and Neill in arguing for education based on human nature and the nature of experience.

More publicity on Summerhill was forthcoming in America's popular press. Psychology Today published an article by A. S. Neill[24] on the success of his book Summerhill, and the resulting large amount of mail he received from the United States. Neill tries to answer why he has received such a large amount of mail from the United States, and not England, where he states that some of the schools are just as repressive. Most of his mail has been from younger people asking, "Can I come to Summerhill? I hate my school."

Psychology Today published another article, this time by E. Berstein,[25] a former student at Summerhill. Receiving the names of fifty former Summerhill students, Berstein traveled around interviewing them to determine the students' views of the successes or failures of Summerhill education. The article is one of mixed reactions: Ten students said that they had greatly benefited, and seven felt that Summerhill had been harmful. Some complained of the lack of protection against bullies, of the de-emphasis on academic subjects, and the lack of good teachers. Berstein concludes that aggressive people seemed to benefit the most, while the school seemed to have a negative effect on the more withdrawn, quiet ones. A list of occupations of former Summerhillians is given, from which no generalizations may be drawn except

that the occupations cover the complete spectrum of job opportunities. It is reported that ten of the fifty former students had passed university entrance examinations.

By 1969 Summerhill was well known throughout most of the world. One of Neill's greatest problems was the number of visitors or "pilgrims" who wanted to see the famous free school. The New Republic published the account of such a visit by Mary Keohane.[26] The article, apart from the pure descriptive portions, is largely critical of the Summerhill concept. To Keohane it is not always clear what the children are free for. She describes the common-room furniture as being torn, pulled apart, and ravaged but as Neill insists, it is of no importance. She also reports that the library is locked, the art room is locked, the workshop is locked, and children lock their own rooms.

The month following Keohane's article, the New Republic published a series of correspondence that they had received reacting to her article.[27] Josie Crystal reported that Keohane appeared to typify the droves of curiosity seekers who had visited Summerhill in recent years. Crystal reports the shock of discovering that people come to Summerhill as one might go to see a freak show. Crystal, also a visitor at Summerhill, reports that by their questions people reveal that they do not have the slightest sense of what A. S. Neill means by freedom. This series of correspondence is important because it sheds new light on changes at Summerhill. In recent years Neill has been much more selective in whom he admits since he has had so many applicants. He is becoming too old to take the disturbed youngsters he once admitted. Most of the youngsters are now Americans. Neill no longer holds "private lessons", therapy sessions with children who request them.

Herb Snitzer, director of Lewis-Wadhams and a former teacher at Summerhill, also responded to Keohane's article. He states that no evaluation of Summerhill is valid because very few children have sustained ten years living at Summerhill. He is also critical of Berstein's evaluation of Summerhill graduates. He states that the evaluation of how the "graduates" finally end up doing has little to do with why Summerhill exists. He does not consider it fair to say someone is a graduate of Summerhill simply because he or she spent their last two years of school there.[28]

George Leonard provides us with his dream for a "free learner" with a glimpse into the future in his book Education and Ecstasy.[29] He describes life in the Kennedy School of Santa Fe, New Mexico on "Visiting Day, 2001 A. D." Leonard's description of education involves a rejection of the Protestant ethics. He would replace education's insistence on delayed gratification, order rigidity and work whose sole object is success, with a system that encourages fantasy, meditation, immediate sensual and intellectual reward, close physical contact and direct encounter. The child is to be a "free learner" who enters numerous electronic learning environments to absorb programmed instruction, engage in role playing, analyze his own dreams, and participate in aesthetic physical activities which do not depend upon competition. There is no coercion of any kind. Leonard also gives an account of the Fifteenth Street School conceived by actor Orson Bean. Leonard describes the school as being the best free-learning school he has visited. The importance of Education and Ecstasy is that it was widely read in the United States.

Other Free Schools Appear

Other examples of free schools cropping up in the United States started to appear. Liberation describes a group of teachers, a lawyer, and a small group of students who began meeting to discuss ideas for an experimental high school in the Washington, D. C. area.[30] They wanted to break down the distinctions between teachers and students. To do this they hoped to live communally in a co-op house. In this framework of easy, natural association, they hoped to break down normal barriers and share in making decisions about the school. They found a house and started their school with seven students and five teachers. They now have twenty full-time students and ten other part-time students who remain active in the public school.

Newsweek carried a story about Trout Fishing in America, a free school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which teaches "survival of all sorts." Trout Fishing was started by five graduate students and is described by Newsweek as an "amalgam of progressive-education experiments from Summerhill to the free-school movement."[31]

Ronald and Beatrice Gross produced an impressive testimony of what is wrong with our schools in Radical School Reform.[32] The last third of the book deals with descriptions of radical reforms which are attempting to overcome some of the criticisms of the public schools. Two of these reforms deal with two free schools: The New School and Fernwood. Anne Long describes the New School as progressive. There was lots of freedom but there were regularly scheduled classes, and attendance was compulsory. Arguments over structure led to a split, leaving three teachers and twenty-seven students and the start of a free school. Anne Long states that people should be informed of what happens in a

free school or when they try it and everything does not go smoothly, they will rush back to the security of the old ways, with a genuine feeling that they did try it and it does not work. She also points out that in studying free school results, a distinction must be made between children who have spent their entire school lives in a free school and those children who have been admitted after four or five years of public schooling.

Fernwood, described by Elizabeth Drews, is a free school which tries to translate into educational practice some of the humanistic psychologists' new theories about self-actualization. The school was started by a small grant obtained from the Northwest Regional Educational Research Laboratory.

An article in Think magazine describes how two Milwaukee high school students developed the Milwaukee Independent School.[33] The students got parents to help organize it, rounded up 150 professionals and practical experts in many skills and disciplines who volunteered as "teachers", and a University of Wisconsin professor of education to coordinate it. The school opened with thirty-nine students who earned $300 tuition by working part-time, matched by $300 from their parents. No student is barred for failure to pay tuition. Think also reported that there were 700 free schools in September, 1970.

Free Schools Taken Seriously

Donald Robinson reported that over 700 free independent schools had been founded during the past three years.[34] He stated that many teachers, parents, and students are seeking alternatives to the stultifying climate of so many public schools. Robinson reported that two or

three new "alternative" schools are born every day, and one dies or gives up its freedom. While this is a short article, it contains a variety of information that had not before been printed by the popular press. Before this time, most articles and books had been of the descriptive type, explaining the Summerhill concept, describing a visit to Summerhill, or describing a Summerhill-type of school in the United States. This is the first article that does not look at the growth of the free schools as a curiosity-seeker would, but rather views it seriously, not as a passing fad, but as a growing movement. For the first time, the New Schools Exchange is described as the only central resource and clearinghouse for all the people involved in "alternatives in education." In existence less than a year, the Exchange publishes a directory of experimental schools, acts as a placement bureau for teachers, and publishes a newsletter. In less than a year their subscription list had grown to 2,000. The directory issued by the New Schools Exchange lists several hundred innovative schools in twenty-eight states. This was the first attempt to compile information on all the schools around the nation, and the results, the number of schools, and the number of scattered locations surprised everybody. Robinson also reports on the Teacher Drop-Out Center, Amherst, Massachusetts. The Center, operated by two graduate students, also produces a directory of free and experimental schools. They serve as a clearinghouse to bring innovative teachers and free schools together. They report receiving eight to ten letters per day from teachers wanting to move to freer schools. Robinson concludes by hypothesizing,

> The entire movement may prove ephemeral. But even if a few alternative schools survive the movement will have made its contribution to reform, much as third parties in our

> political history have forced the established parties to adopt social reforms.[35]

Three months after Robinson's article was published, Saturday Review published "The Rise of the 'Free School'", by Bonnie Barrett Stretch.[36] This was the first major, in-depth examination of the free school movement. Stretch describes the growth of the free school movement as follows:

> Through a continuous exchange of school brochures and newsletters, and through various conferences, the founders of these schools have developed a degree of self-awareness, a sense of community that has come to be called 'the new schools movement.'[37]

Her article explains what free schools are, their philosophy, and their problems. She gives a few brief examples of some different types of free schools, and resources to look at for further information.

A different type of alternative school growth is reported in The Alternative: Communal Life in New America.[38] This book deals largely with communal living, but one section is devoted to free schools in communes. Child-rearing in almost all of the new communes is reported to be a completely shared experience, which seems to work well both for adults and for the kids. In communes, each child has a wide range of adult influences to draw from. Children are passed around, in a sense, among all the men and women so that there grows an intimacy between kids and adults; all members become teachers. Examples of a couple of schools are given. Heartshire School in San Francisco is described as a hip learning environment created by young parents desperately eager to spare their own kids the stultifying regimen of straight-style education. Their idea is a community school in which all parents get involved. The school is described as being completely unstructured, as

having no hierarchy, and having concern with liberating the kids' imaginations.

Richard Bull's Summerhill U S A contains pictures of Summerhill-type schools in the United States and short interviews with the directors concerning philosophy, classes and alternatives, self-government, feelings of staff, parents, and living in freedom.[39] The schools reported are located in Los Angeles, New York, Santa Fe, Minnesota, and Albuquerque. It is an interesting book to read because it shows the wide range of free schools and a wide range of definitions of what a free school is.

Windsor Mountain School, as described by Saturday Review, is reported to be a coeducational boarding school for 250 high school students.[40] The school has no dress code, no rules about leaving campus to go into town, no censorship, no restrictions on student political activity, no differential treatment of students and adults. A student court has sole power to suspend or expel. The school believes that students have rights, that they grow to be responsible, self-directing individuals through the exercise of freedom. Located in Lenox, Massachusetts, tuition and board range from $3,600 to $4,200 per year. The article also describes four other free "progressive" schools in New England.

Information about free schools and descriptions of the free school movement climaxed in 1970 with the publication of Rasberry Exercises: How To Start Your Own School (and make a book) by Salli Rasberry and Robert Greenway.[41] The two authors put the book together themselves. They assembled the materials, edited it all, learned graphics and lay-out, then set up their own company to publish it. Five thousand copies

were printed; in three months most of the first printing was sold out. Despite offers from large printing houses, they steadfastly kept it within the family, took orders and shipped books. They are now in their fourth printing. Two new ventures are now underway. A Rasberry II, in which they want to clarify the technical and psychological problems of starting new schools, and share many more examples of what people actually do together in free schools, is the first new venture. The second venture is on babies: ways of having, nurturing, and "raising" babies that are "within the loving ways of the changes"; what readings, sources, experiences have helped people in the free school movement the most.

The heart of Rasberry Exercises is an attempt to liberate young children through new schools. They describe free schools as offering, at best, an open space in which to be real (and therefore free). They describe free schools as all being rooted in the simple fact that breaking free of the state's school and enforced rituals enables us to feel better and face more completely who we are and how we have to live. The book is the first to appear that goes into the mechanics of starting a school. It presents an alternative model to the dominant culture, by which other schools may pattern themselves. Details are given on incorporating, tax laws, state laws, building codes, health laws, records, and transportation problems. Examples are given on problems people may encounter while starting schools. Several different types of free schools are described. There is a detailed appendix on communities, "far out" public schools, resources, people, and an explanation of how to put a book together. There are readings throughout the book covering issues that might arise in a free school. The

book is dedicated to the millions of children still in prison in the United States, and to the handful of adults trying to spring them. It asks the question, "How long has it been since you taught in a culture that you believe in?"

Since Rasberry Exercises and Stretch's article on the rise of the free schools, few articles have appeared in the popular press. They would be almost copies of what has already been printed. Life did publish one article about a group of dissatisfied mothers in Decatur, Illinois who started their own free schools.[42] Every once in a while there are reports on free school conferences in the popular press. The book High School by Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman published in 1971 reports that hundreds of free schools have sprouted up throughout the United States, with a particular concentration in California and the Northeast.[43] One of these schools, Lower East Side Action Project (LEAP School), a type of storefront school, is reported in depth. The Alternatives Foundations published Modern Man in Search of Utopia in 1971 with one section devoted to the growth of free schools.[44] Several descriptions of existing free schools are given.

The Extent of the Growth of the Free School Movement

The majority of the publications concerning the free school movement have been largely descriptive. The question could be raised, exactly what is the extent of the free school movement?

Trying to describe the extent of the free school movement is a difficult task. Estimates of the number of free schools vary from 700 to 1,800. The 1971 edition of The Modern Utopian, Modern Man in Search

of Utopia lists 254 free schools, but reports that their list is not complete.[45] The Teacher Drop-Out Center lists 1,000 free, community, innovative, and alternative schools. However, their list does not differentiate between free schools and innovative public schools. The Summerhill Society lists 127 Summerhill-type schools in the United States. The New Schools Exchange lists 511 new innovative schools, but these range from pre-school day-care centers to free universities. Apparently, there is no list available which gives an accurate account of the free school movement. Compounding the problem of trying to arrive at the number of free schools in the United States is the fact that some free schools do not list themselves with exchanges or clearinghouses. Most free schools operating outside the public school system do not meet state requirements of one type or another. Many do not meet city health and safety requirements. Therefore, listing of a school may bring it unwanted publicity, and hence, officials of the state department of education, city health inspectors, fire inspectors, or truant officers. Many legal free schools have been beset by curiosity seekers, spurred on by the recent publicity that the free school movement has received. Large numbers of visitors to the classrooms of free schools have tended to disrupt classes and make demands upon teachers' time. To combat what they feel is harrassment by public officials and to stop curiosity seekers, many free schools choose to remain underground. The Alternative Foundations claim that there are around 600 communes in the United States. At least some of these communes have their own schools but for similar reasons, choose not to publicize their existence.

Another difficulty in examining the extent of the free school movement by an examination of the free school lists is the relatively short life span of the free schools. The New Schools Exchange estimates that the average life span of the free schools is eighteen months. Poor financial backing of the free schools sometimes means that the existing free schools often change address, making free school lists out-of-date almost as fast as they are printed.

To receive an accurate accounting of the extent of the free school movement in the United States, a more accurate indicator might be to examine the regional associations. Most free schools developed spontaneously and independently of each other across the country. However, they tended to develop in clusters, concentrating in geographic areas. By 1968, a series of associations, clearinghouses, or exchanges developed in various areas across the country. Most of these area associations have described themselves as being non-profit corporations that exist to further non-authoritarian education in the schools of the region. Member schools retain complete autonomy and individuality. Most of the associations serve to create a loose coalition among the members and develop services to protect the interests of its member schools. A continuing dialogue is encouraged among member schools. They discuss common problems. Often there is an attempt to encourage student and teacher exchanges among schools. All the associations publish a newsletter trying to inform the schools of their common interests.

The following is a list of some of the more active regional free school clearinghouses and the number of member schools:

1. Rio Grande Educational Association, Bernalillo, New Mexico. They have twelve member schools in New Mexico, seven in Arizona, and ten in Colorado.

2. The Educational Exploration Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. They list twelve free schools in the Twin City area, but also serve other schools in the midwest.

3. San Francisco Education Switchboard, San Francisco, California. They list seventy-seven schools in the San Francisco area.

4. Berkeley Switchboard, Berkeley, California. They list twenty-eight free schools in the Berkeley area and seven public schools with an alternative classroom. They claim their activities now influence 1,500 students in open classrooms.

5. The New Schools Movement, Seattle, Washington. One of the most active associations, they list fourteen preschools and elementary schools, eleven secondary and colleges, and ten free schools outside Seattle but in Washington.

6. Washington Area Free School Clearinghouse, Washington, D. C. They list eight free day-care centers and pre-schools, seven elementary schools, one high school, and ten public schools with alternative classrooms.

From an examination of the free school lists and an examination of the area associations, one could conclude that the majority of the free schools are located in the Northeast, along the Pacific coast states, and a few in the Great Lakes area. Areas with few or scattered free schools are the South, the plains states, and the northwestern states.

The extent of the free school movement can also be seen in the number of publications now available for people in the free school

movement. To help spread the word on the free school movement, these regional clearinghouses have produced a few pamphlets or book length publications. One of these, Educational Explorer: A Look At New Learning Spaces, was produced by the Minneapolis Education Exploration Center.[46] The purpose of the publication is to bring together information on alternative schools to give a better understanding of the alternative school movement. It covers how to start a free school, and gives several examples of free schools in the Minneapolis area. Like Rasberry Exercises, but much less comprehensive, it contains readings, lists of resources, poems, and letters written by students.

The Free Learner is a survey of experimental schools in the San Francisco Bay area and includes descriptions of 20 private free schools, two experimental programs in public schools, and a graft explaining how long they have been in existence, tuition, and the number of students at each school. The pamphlet also tries to explain the philosophy and practice of free schools and how they work.[47]

The Center for Law and Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts, printed the manual, Alternative Schools: A Practical Manual.[48] The manual is a practical guide based upon legal requirements and school experiences of Massachusetts. Their advice on federal funding may find application in any part of the country. It is intended to help get alternative schools off the ground and keep them out of trouble with state and local authorities. It reports that existing alternative schools have had few legal problems so far. Major problems so far are economic, not legal. The manual contains sketches of some alternative schools in the Boston area. Information contained in the manual includes state regulations of alternative schools, certification,

economics, incorporation, and taxation.

Besides these pamphlets and books which have been distributed nationally, there has been a series of newsletters, magazines, and quarterly periodicals which give an indication of the extent of the free school movement. The largest and fastest growing of these is the New Schools Exchange.[49] They have been publishing their Newsletter of articles and information three times monthly since 1968. The format of the Newsletter has changed recently, now being produced once a month; the original editor Harvey Haber has left, and Peter Marin is now editor. The New Schools Exchange rose out of the now historical first Conference on Alternatives in Education, for people involved in small, new innovative schools. That was in California in 1968, and there were a couple of hundred people there. The people at the Conference talked continuously about the need to communicate, to exchange ideas, so the New Schools Exchange Newsletter was begun.

The Free School Press, located on Saturna Island, British Columbia, Canada, began in June of 1970.[50] Acting as a clearinghouse, they publish occasional collections of material having to do with education, children, growth, the free school movement, and anything they think that people in the free school movement may be interested in. The collections of material are sent in an envelope, not in regular magazine form, but just a collection of loose materials and articles.

The Center for Educational Reform was founded in 1968 to stimulate radical educational change throughout the United States. Working out of the National Student Association office in Washington, D. C., the Center became a clearinghouse for information about radical projects and alternatives. Their publication also serves as a resource center

for services and other resources that are available to the educational community. Their monthly publication is the Edcentric.[51]

The Teacher Drop-Out Center sends out a newsletter listing free, community, innovative and alternative schools and educational organizations lists. Their newsletter contains descriptions of some of the schools, a list of job openings, and acts as a clearinghouse of information, and as a specialized placement service for teachers finding it difficult to function in traditional schools. So far, they have helped hundreds of people to get in touch with and find positions in schools. They report that there are more teachers dissatisfied out there than they realized.

Kommunications on Alternatives (sic) developed from the Konference on Alternatives held on Fordham University's campus.[52] The newsletter states that they will serve as an Open Forum for all individuals interested or active in all elements of alternative education. They hope to serve as an active channel for free schools. One of their stated aims is to work with many local subcollectives of other clearinghouses, communities, and individual schools. They want to serve as an information center, an exchange and a forum so that they can begin to work collectively with one another to solve their problems, set their goals and develop their future. In their first two issues they have served as a forum publishing articles addressed to specific issues by George Dennison, Jonathan Kozol, John Holt, and Neil Postman.

The Summerhill Society organized in 1961 in New York City and has been publishing a newsletter quarterly ever since. The Summerhill Society Bulletin contains news of the Society, the schools, and relevant developments in education and psychology.[53] Since 1966 they have

sponsored an annual workshop on education open to members and educators. They also publish a Summerhill Society School List, a bibliography, and an occasional position paper. In the fall of 1970 there was a split in the New York group; a splinter group now publishes a Summerhill Bulletin.[54] The splinter group also sponsors a seminar-workshop, publishes examples of free schools, gives advice on how to start a school, and acts as a critic of education and some free schools.

The extent of the free school movement can be seen in other areas of the mass media. There have been several films made available which have been shown across the country. Among these are the following films: Summerhill, Sometimes I Even Like Me, The Fayerweather Street School, The Sudbury Valley School, and Everdale Place. Some radio and television networks now devote air time to regularly scheduled programs on alternatives in education. Most of these programs are concentrated in the northeast and on the west coast.

A Brief Historical Development of the Free School Movement

During the past few years several issues have risen which have caused some confusion concerning the definition of free schools. With the recent development of newsletters, clearinghouses, and conferences on free schools, the resulting communications have shown the people in the free school movement that several issues may divide their ranks. Some of these issues can be expressed in the following questions: (1) Does a free school have structure? If so, how much structure? (2) Is there an emphasis on certain skills, such as reading, writing, and math? (3) What is the purpose of education--for later life, or for the

present lives of children? (4) What are the roles of the various participants of the free schools; what is the role of parents, of teachers, of students, of the community? (5) Who controls the schools--students, parents, teachers, or the community? (6) How are discipline problems to be handled? (7) Should deviant students be removed? (8) How should the use of drugs be handled? (9) How should issues revolving around sex be handled? (10) Should free schools remain outside the public school system or work toward some type of relationship with them? (11) How should free schools be financed--by tuition, foundation grants, public funds, the voucher plan? (12) Should free schools enter into political activity with other movement groups? (13) Should free schools work toward state charter and health regulations or remain "underground"?

In examining the free school movement it may be helpful to research the historical roots of their development to determine why these issues are now developing.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

Many of the free schools claim that the roots of their development lie in the educational theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau held that the traditional concepts concerning the nature of children and their education were wrong. Traditional educational theory held that a child's education should be governed by adult interests and activities; in fact, the child was a little adult. Rousseau saw the child as being completely different than an adult; children were individuals. Thus, education should not be based on adult interests, but should be determined by the spontaneous interests, activities,

instincts, and development of the child. Education should furnish the child with the proper environment for growth, based upon an understanding of the nature of children and their environment. Rousseau saw education as the preservation of man's natural goodness, thus insuring his most complete development. The child must be protected during this development from the evils of society until he is able to protect himself. Examples of this type of education are developed in Rousseau's book, Emile[55], published in 1768. Since we cannot predict the future, Rousseau advocated avoiding specialization, and cultivating the child's natural endowments. Education, then, is to fit the child's natural endowments and is in terms of the child's present needs. If left to develop naturally and free from the evils of society, he will be able to meet his future needs adequately.

Rousseau developed a complete theory of social development. In this theory he saw man in an original state of nature as being an animal; his aim was to avoid pain and death and to satisfy physical wants. All men were equal and free at this stage and motivated by the impulse for self-preservation. It is reason that makes man differ from animals. Man develops speech, family life, and simple arts. Man is independent and his virtues are greater than his vices. Rousseau sees man's imagination bring him new desires and he creates civilization. The evils of society are created when man's primitive self-love gives way to ambition. In Rousseau's view, reason and ambition lead to inequality and destroy the primitive state of nature. Rousseau opposed the traditional doctrine of original sin. He saw everything good as it comes from nature; vice begins only when man enters into human relations. Man's relations create self-centered interests which conflict with those of

other individuals. All institutions in the society--the school, home, religion, commerce, and social environment--give children artificial desires that result in conflicts and evils. To realize the desires of men, those of food, clothing, shelter, a mate, and security, men use each other, thus developing a social inequality leading to degeneracy and evil in society as well as the individual.

Rousseau's educational theories were based upon his theory of the stages of development:

> 1. Infancy (from birth to five). This stage is concerned with growth of the body, motor activities, and the beginnings of sense perception and feeling. Here one should follow the methods of nature. The child's individuality must be respected. He must be freed from restraint, but his body must be hardened by nature's methods. The adult must permit the child to become self dependent. During this period the child's education consists of free and unhampered expressions of his natural activities in relation to his physical environment. The child must be permitted to act naturally and to experience directly the results of his actions.
> 2. Childhood (from five to twelve). Education must be negative--'do nothing and allow nothing to be done'. Let the child develop as his inner nature demands and protect him from outer interference. The child cannot reason. Thus, experience is his only teacher. He learns through necessity directed by his natural development. The curriculum at this level should consist of natural activities. The child will pick up reading incidentally; he will learn his mother tongue naturally; he will develop his organs, senses, and powers.
> 3. The Age of Reason (from twelve to fifteen). At this age reason emerges. The child's strength has outrun his needs and reason emerges as a 'check to strength'. We must not try to educate the child through reason; we must not use authority in place of the child's mental efforts, but help him to make his reason the authority; and we must not make the mistake of thinking that reason is the driving power of life. The motivating factors at this level are the desire to learn (curiosity) and the usefulness of knowledge (utility). Rousseau was not concerned so much with learning material as with the acquiring of a correct method of thought, a desire for knowledge, and clear and accurate ideas. Nothing is to be learned from the authority of others but rather through experience, direct observation and discovery. The child should make all his own materials for study.

> 4. Social Stage (from fifteen to twenty). Here sex emerges and with it the social urge. This is the period when perception of human relations, appreciation of beauty, the sense of moral and social life, religion, and the higher virtues awaken in the child. Sex demands a companion; the human relations become dominant. Here the youth studies psychology, sociology, ethics in concrete life situations. Natural religion emerges.[56]

Other influences on the free schools that were developed by Rousseau are as follows:

> 1. Intellectual knowledge is only properly grasped when the mind has worked with it;
> 2. Interest in intellectual knowledge is only properly grasped when the mind has worked with it;
> 3. Handicrafts--as opposed to branches of science, can be used to foster intellectual activity;
> 4. Physical exercise, games, and handicrafts give a sense-training, which in turn rests on intellectual work;
> 5. Manual activities create a habit of thinking about the world's work which the pure scholar lacks.
> 6. In hand-work children will be more interested if they are allowed to aim at results from the first, pure technique being introduced gradually as the children see the need for it.[57]

While many free schools lay claim to the ideas of Rousseau, it would seem that his philosophy fits some of the schools better than others. Rousseau often prayed for deliverance from the fatal arts and sciences of our forefathers and called for a return to ignorance, innocence, and poverty which alone could make us happy. The way to happiness was to rescue man from the oppressive institutions of the society--the state, religion, marriage, family life, the schools, and the economic system. Those free schools today that most clearly follow Rousseau seem to be those schools patterned on the Summerhill concept and those schools found on the communes. To A. S. Neill and to those following his philosophy here in the United States, the aim of education is the same as the aim in life, to work joyfully and to find happiness.[58] Happiness, according to Neill, means being interested in

life, or responding to life not just with one's brain, but with one's whole personality. Throughout Neill's many writings, one finds references to the repressive institutions found in society--the state, religion, family life, and the schools. The way to freedom, according to Neill, is to remove the child from these repressive institutions, a point of view that Rousseau also takes. Jerry Friedberg, director of Lorillard Children's School became dissatisfied with his free school and with other adults, and formed an intentional community. He states,

> One of our goals is a different way of raising children--being with, teaching, leaving alone, learning from, and sharing a life-way, exploring naturally and organically, as we live together and deal with our daily life needs and impulses.[59]

The commune-type free schools are trying to closely follow Rousseau's beliefs. Friedberg continues to state that,

> Beyond schools, then, there lie other alternatives worth our exploring. The one I am most interested in is fairly new (and old in some ways) to me and my culture; small scale, self-selecting, organic communities in which children and adults live, work, play, experiment, hassle, learn and grow together.[60]

Joseph Lancaster and Robert Owen

Many of the free schools operating today use concepts employed by Joseph Lancaster and Robert Owen in the late 1790's and early 1800's. Lancaster utilized a method called "vertical" or "family grouping", a system of assigning children of all age groups to a single room and having the older students help the younger students. Lancaster invited children of miners, factory workers and even paupers to his school as did Robert Owen. Owen believed that teachers should take an attitude of kindness toward their pupils, and education should be a source of pleasure and amusement. His other ideas--that learning should be

enjoyable, that competition should be eliminated, and that children should be allowed to develop naturally--have evolved into the concept used today in some of the British Infant Schools. Recently, the ideas of the British Infant Schools have been adopted by many of the free schools. The issues now being raised in the free school movement involving structure or amount of structure seem to evolve around the type of methods employed. The school using the concepts of the British Infant Schools utilize "the integrated day" concept. The integrated day is best described as a school day which offers a great smorgasboard of creative, intellectual, artistic, and physical activities. Each student integrates the school's offerings into his own interests and energies according to his own abilities and drives.[61] The issue of structure is, then, who decides which activities will be provided for the students, how large a variety of these activities are provided, and what happens if the child does not want to utilize any of these activities. If these activities center around the traditional skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, then the free schools would actually differ only slightly from a public school. On the other hand, if the students have a real choice of activities, or are able to determine which activities would be offered, or if they are free to do none of the activities offered, then the school takes on an entirely different atmosphere. It becomes more than an alternative to the public school system. It would seem that this type of school is more interested in the present development of the child, than in the future success of the child.

Another issue raised by the historical roots of the free school movement developed by Owen and Lancaster is the issue of who shall

attend free schools and how they are to be financed. Owen and Lancaster were revolutionary for their time in that they emphasized that education should also be for the lower social class. Fred Newman asks the question in the Summerhill Bulletin, "why they are called free schools when they are essentially run for and by middle-class white liberals".[62] Constance Woulf in her pamphlet The Free Learner provides information that shows the wide variety of differences found in tuition charged in some free schools.[63] The Bay School charges $1,500 in fees per year, the Finegold Ranch School $215 per month, McKinney School $1,000 per year, and the Urban School $1,800 per year. Other schools charge very little, nothing, or amounts scaled to what parents can pay. The Shire School charges no tuition--parents contribute what they can, either in time or money. In the New Community School, parents pay what they can afford, with many of them paying little or nothing.[64] The differences in the ways in which free schools are financed tends to lead one to believe that there are vast differences in the philosophies of some free schools.

Leo Tolstoy

Much of the criticism that has been leveled at the public schools in the United States today by the new "romantic writers" was also leveled at Russian and European schools one hundred years ago by Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy criticized education during his era as functioning automatically, apparently unaware of its true aims and purposes, and bound by tradition. He felt that the student, who should be the chief concern of the educator, was the neglected factor in educational thinking. This type of system guaranteed educational failure, authoritarian

discipline, student dependency, distaste for learning, narrow-mindedness in education, and a view of the student resembling some kind of product. His dismay at the educational system of the time led him to the founding in 1861 of an experimental school for peasant children on his estate, Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy's description of his school resembled many of the free schools now in existence. Most bibliographies produced by the various free school clearinghouses include Tolstoy on Education. In The Lives of Children, the story of George Dennison's free school, a whole chapter is devoted to the school at Yasnaya Polyana.[65] Dennison claims that the roots of the First Street School lay partially in Tolstoy's educational philosophy.

Tolstoy often expressed thoughts and described practices very similar to those of A. S. Neill. He emphasized the importance of the individual free human spirit, directed by interest, emotion, and desire. Tolstoy did not see education as having an end which lies beyond the process itself; education should have no ultimate aim. Although it has become a cliché today, Tolstoy saw education as a process. He saw education as essentially a process of freeing the individual for creative improvisation through understanding. Tolstoy saw pupils as young human beings with anxieties, fears, needs, and with unlimited intellectual curiosity and imagination. Like Rousseau, he saw children as basically good, naturally curious, eager to grow, and mischievous in their desire to be free. Like Neill, he felt that all aspects of education were directed toward freeing the pupil, both during the teaching interval and after class was over.

Yasnaya Polyana also contained elements of the philosophy later attributed to John Dewey. Tolstoy stressed the experimental nature of

education, its tendency toward social equality and the persisting need to reexamine the past so as to escape the hand of authority. He also had a strong belief in the importance of bringing the school into active relations with the life of the times. Tolstoy felt that there was no need to prepare the student for a specific vocation, or train or dictate a limited role for the student.

> Rather than create a curriculum that reflects an unreal culture fabricated on the prejudices or artificial conceptions of abstract theorists, the teacher must take cognizance of the real world, of the vital surrounding culture, and prepare the student to grow and flourish within it.[66]

Tolstoy's argument is that conventional education fails to do this, and that it fails because it has lost sight of the relationship between schooling and life. Many of the people in the free school movement make the same argument today when they argue against compulsory attendance laws and education for the purpose of the state. They claim that compulsory education and education for the purpose of the state act to isolate the student from real life.

John Dewey

The first book length account of a free school in the United States was George Dennison's The Lives of Children.[67] In describing the philosophy of his school, Dennison analyzes the types of education advocated by Tolstoy, A. S. Neill, and John Dewey. Dennison's conclusion is "We were Summerhillian and Tolstoyan, but more deeply than either of these, we were Deweyan".[68] In reviewing reading lists and bibliographies, outside of A. S. Neill, John Dewey is the most-mentioned author by the advocates of the alternative type of schools. Dewey's most-mentioned works in the free school movement are Experience and

Education[69], The School and Society[70], Democracy and Education[71], and How We Think[72].

In the area of educational philosophy, Dewey believed that the school was primarily a social institution. Education therefore was a social process, the school being merely that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the society. The school should represent life, life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, and on the playground. It is interesting to note that Dewey set down these ideas in a pamphlet, "My Pedagogic Creed",[73] published in 1896.

Dewey defined education as "the process of the reconstruction or reconstitution of experience, giving it a more socialized value through the medium of increased individual efficiency".[74] Everyone's own experience is changing from moment to moment, and from day to day. New situations are always confronting a person; and with each change in conditions or in environment, his activities must change to fit the new situation. New problems demand solution, choices must be made, and readjustments attempted. These changes in activities bring about an increasing diversification and enrichment of experience. Experience is revised, reorganized, and reconstructed. This growing, changing, or revising of experience is what Dewey understood by education. None of the past educators, except Rousseau, were more insistent than Dewey upon direct experience. It was not so much the content of a lesson that he valued as it was the concrete and meaningful situations. Inasmuch as learning comes indirectly in response to action, the situations which arouse activities furnish the natural condition for the growth of

knowledge. Relying upon Dewey's beliefs in experiences and real problems, the prize possession of most alternative schools has become Volkswagen busses--a means to get children out of the environment of a school and into the real world to work with real world problems.

Not only did Dewey demand that concrete situations be furnished the student in order to call forth his activity, but he insisted that all learning come to the student as a by-product of his actions, and never as something to be learned directly or for its own sake. Need or necessity was seen by Dewey as being the mother of all invention, and of all knowledge or new experience. All true effort springs from a deep, native interest in the task. Dewey asserted that, where such genuine interest is absent, it is necessary to arouse it.[75]

This is another issue developing between some of the schools in the free school movement. This is another side to the question of structure--should the schools try to interest the students in some topics, or let the students' interests determine the direction of the lesson, or is there to be a lesson at all? Most of the schools would agree with Dewey when he made the point that in order to be sound and moral all learning must arise from the normal experience of the child. Only those objects and ideas which are of genuine interest to the student and necessary in his life, should solicit attention. Following this line, the free schools believe that they should not begin with the three R's, but with the activities that the child has seen in his immediate environment. These activities make the most natural appeals to his interest.

Dewey's concept of the continuous reconstruction of experience emphasizes the principle that education is not a preparation for life

at some future time; rather, it is the process of actual living, here and now. Dewey believed that the child lives in the present, and cares nothing for the future. There was therefore no practical reason to require him to do things today for the sake of what he will be years from now. While on the surface, most free schools claim that they are interested in the present lives of the children as opposed to what the child will be in the future, many of the free schools advertise or claim that many of their students are able to continue their education in college. One of the first questions asked by some parents sending their children to free schools has been "can my child get into college if he attends a free school?" For some of the free schools, one could ask the question of parents and teachers, "are they really interested in the present lives of children if they continue to claim that so many of their students continue on to attend college?" This issue is related to the issue of trying to receive state accreditation. If they meet state requirements for public schools, then the students will have little trouble in being accepted to many of the colleges in the United States. However, if they do compromise to meet state requirements, there is the danger that they will become very much like the present public schools to which they are supposed to be offering an alternative. This issue has then become one of the points of contention between some of the advocates of free schools.

A. S. Neill

Summerhill, the free school founded by A. S. Neill in the year 1921, is located about one hundred miles from London and is still in operation today. It is a co-educational boarding school with children

usually ranging from ages five through sixteen with a total number of around forty to sixty children. They have always had a number of students from foreign countries, but in the past five years, the majority of the students have been coming from the United States. Summerhill is now more widely known in the United States than it is in England. Summerhill was developed by Neill and his wife with the idea of making the school fit the child, instead of making the child fit the school. Neill's view of the child is that the child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, the child will develop as far as he is capable of developing. To implement his philosophy, lessons are optional. Students may go to them or they may stay away from them, even for years if they want to. Classes are regularly scheduled, but only for the teachers; if no students show up, there is no class. There are no class examinations unless they are for fun. Those students wishing to continue their education at a university may ask for examinations.[76]

At Summerhill, Neill tries to operate on the basis of equality. There is no atmosphere of authoritarianism from the headmaster or the staff. The school is governed by a General School Meeting, the vote of a child of six counts as much as the vote of Neill. Operating on this basis Neill says that there is an absence of fear at Summerhill which is easily seen. Free children do not fear the staff, headmaster, or visitors.

To Neill, the aim of education is the same as the aim of life--to work joyfully and to find happiness. Happiness, according to Neill, means being interested in life, or responding to life not just with one's brain but with one's whole personality.

In education, Neill feels that intellectual development is not enough. Education must be both intellectual and emotional. He feels that the separation between intellect and feeling has led modern man to a near schizoid state of mind in which he has become almost incapable of experiencing anything except in thought.

Neill feels that discipline dogmatically enforced, and punishment, create fear, and fear creates hostility. This hostility may paralyze authenticity of feeling and thwart sound psychic development. Self-regulation is an important concept at Summerhill. Self-regulation means behavior that springs from the self, not from outside compulsion. The molded child has no self; he is only a replica of his parents. Self-regulation is intangible, no one can teach it. Neill sees self-regulated children as being less aggressive, more tolerable, with looser bodies and free spirits.

A very important principle emphasized by Neill is that of freedom.[77] A teacher must not use force against a student, nor has a student the right to use force against a teacher. A child may not intrude upon an adult just because he is a child. Freedom is seen as a give and take situation, freedom for parents as well as freedom for the child. Freedom does not mean that the child can do everything he wants to do, nor have everything he wants to have. According to Neill, freedom, over-extended, turns into license. License is defined as interfering with another's freedom. At Summerhill a child is free to go to lessons or stay away from lessons because that is his own affair, but he is not free to play a trumpet when others want to study or sleep.

The Summerhill concept of education has been the model for the free school movement in the United States. Virtually all of the free

school regional clearinghouses and the bibliographies produced by members of the free school movement contain references to Summerhill and lists of Neill's other works. Conferences on free schools usually have discussion sessions exploring Summerhill concepts. There are three different Summerhill societies in the United States, each one slightly different in their approach to Summerhill concepts. As mentioned earlier, there are three books that are pictorial descriptions of Summerhill or Summerhill-type schools, plus several articles and films that have been produced.[78]

During the past few years, when issues concerning free schools have risen, reference is usually made to A. S. Neill and his writings by one faction or the other, or possibly by both. Issues concerning structure, skills, the purpose of education, the roles of the participants, control of the schools, and discipline problems are usually the major problems that must be resolved by people starting a free school. In starting a free school, details such as incorporation, health requirements, and state education requirements can be worked out, if it is the desire of the school to work them out. The real problems facing a free school are problems of economics and the issues raised above. Many times, the failure of a free school, or a split in a free school, are caused by inability to resolve the issues of structure and the purpose of education.

A Redefinition of Free Schools

There is some evidence in the literature of the free school movement as presented in this chapter, that there is no consensus in a criteria which would clearly identify a free school. What does exist

in the literature of the free schools tends to lead one to believe that the types of schools being described can be placed into two separate classifications--alternative schools and counter-culture schools.

Alternative schools could be defined as those schools that have been formed by parents, students, or teachers (or any combination of those groups), to escape the authoritarianism, coercion, boredom, fear, discipline, and grades that they believe have become the trademark of public school instruction. These alternative schools claim to allow a new kind of education that will create independent, courageous people able to face and deal with the shifting complexities of the modern world. Basically, these schools were formed to overcome the devastating criticism of the so-called "romantic writers"--John Holt, George Dennison, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, James Herndon, and Nat Hentoff.

There is another group of schools that have recently developed and are being called free schools. In this work, these will be referred to as counter-culture schools. The advocates of this type of school see the educational problem as much greater than just a problem of a repressive system which stresses grades and discipline at the expense of learning, natural curiosity, and instincts. The advocates of counter-culture schools view the United States as a closed society, and the public schools are only one institution among many repressive institutions. To them a free school or a good education in a closed society is a logical contradiction. Many counter-culturists have a broad view of schooling; when they speak of free schools, they are referring to an open community, decisions being made by everyone--students, parents, and staff alike. They are talking about a different way of raising children and sharing a way of life; in other words, education for

existence in a culture that does not presently exist today.

Chapter Two will be an examination of the alternative type school--its development, philosophy, psychology, and its possibilities for growth. Chapter Three will be an examination of the counter-culture type of free school--its development, philosophy, psychology, and an examination into its possibilities for growth.

Summary

During the past few years, free schools by the hundreds have sprung up across the United States. Most of these schools developed spontaneously and independently of each other, usually created by parents, students, or teachers dissatisfied with the public school system. During the early 1960's there were only a few of these free schools but their numbers steadily increased. By 1968, a series of exchanges of information had taken place which served the purpose of informing the free schools of the large numbers of similar schools that were in existence across the United States. Through communication with each other, and through a few articles and books published in the popular press, has grown a sense of community that has come to be popularly called "the free school movement".

A search into the roots of the free school movement shows that many of the free schools claim their development lies in the educational theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau stated that education should not be based on adult interest, but should be determined by the spontaneous interest, activities, instincts, and development of the child. Joseph Lancaster developed a school utilizing vertical or family grouping, used extensively by free schools today. Robert Owen

and Leo Tolstoy both developed schools based upon the interest of children which were basically non-authoritarian. John Dewey's philosophy is quoted by many of the people in the free school movement. They claim that his directives were really never followed by the "progressive school movement". A. S. Neill and his book Summerhill could be considered the starting point of the free school movement in the United States, even though there were a few scattered "free school types" already in existence. After the publication of Summerhill, and through a series of articles in the popular press, Summerhill concepts were widely distributed throughout the United States.

Outside of the popular press, there has grown a series of clearinghouses, exchanges, magazines, and conferences which have provided a channel of communication for those in the free school movement. Through this means of communication, many issues have been identified. People in the movement are now addressing themselves to these issues.

What exists in the literature of the free school movement leads one to believe that what really exists is a collection of sub-movements, or independent schools, each with their own separate philosophy or sense of direction. These independent schools can be broadly placed into two separate classifications--alternative schools and counter-culture schools.

Alternative schools are defined as those formed outside the public school system by parents, students, and teachers dissatisfied with the public school system. Counter-culture schools see the problem as much larger than a repressive public school system; they are critical of all the institutions that make up the dominant culture. They claim that

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CHAPTER II

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

The alternative schools were developed by people who believe that the curriculum reforms in public education during the 1960's failed to change education as an institution. They believe that the promises of changing curriculums, new technology in the classroom, and new knowledge of the learning process have scarcely begun to modify long-established classroom practices and attitudes. These people believe that the reforms of the 1960's have failed to remove the authoritarianism, coercion, boredom, fear, discipline, isolation, and the emphasis upon grades that they believe have become the trademarks of public school instruction. The new alternative schools claim that they allow a new kind of education that will create independent, courageous people to face and deal with the shifting complexities of the modern world.

After reviewing the literature of the free school movement, and after reading descriptions of alternative-type free schools, questions concerning the possibility of their growth and development could be raised. Since this type of free school is little more than an alternative type of education, varying only in degrees from public schools, this chapter will be an attempt to show that the alternative type of free school has little chance of survival. Since no common consciousness has developed among the schools in the alternative group, an attempt will be made to show that the alternative schools will die out,

possibly being absorbed by the public school systems which will respond to the criticisms recently being leveled at them.

The Development of the Alternative School Movement

During the past ten years public education has been subjected to a constant stream of devastating criticism. At various times in the history of education similar attacks have been made. The nature of these criticisms has tended to focus on different aspects of public education. Teaching strategies and methods have constantly been criticized and then remodeled. Curriculums have been criticized, rewritten, and then again criticized. The nature of the learner has suffered the same fate of being defined, criticized, and then redefined. Other areas of public education which have been scrupulously examined in recent years include new curriculum projects--the "new math", the "new English", the "new science", and the "new social studies". Indeed, it seems as if every aspect of public education is being closely examined. Criticism of scheduling has led to "floating schedules" or "modular" scheduling. Disputes of over-worked teachers and lack of financing have led to team teaching, differentiated staffing, teacher aides, and para-professionals, all four of which are now coming under criticism. Serious attacks on I.Q. testing has led to the development of "culture-free" I.Q. tests. The recently discovered "disadvantaged student" has led to programmed texts, a proliferation of books on the disadvantaged, many films, college courses on how to teach the disadvantaged, and finally college professors trained in the area of the disadvantaged student. Criticisms of "egg-carton" shaped physical plants have led to new

architecturally styled buildings which include multipurpose classrooms, flexible dividers, and decorator colors. Criticism of boring classrooms has led to an emphasis on the multi-media approach with films, slides, T.V., and overhead projectors. The list of criticisms and recent reforms could continue indefinitely.

To overcome this variety of criticism, several writers presented suggestions for comprehensive plans to improve the public schools. William Glasser, in his book Schools Without Failure, advocates specific ideas on reaching what he calls negatively oriented children, including no punishment (but discipline), no excuses, positive involvement, and individual responsibility. Reality therapy is used by the class and led by the teacher as a counseling group which daily spends time developing the social responsibility necessary to solve behavioral and educational problems within the class so that outside help is rarely needed.[1]

Mario Fantini and Gerald Weinstein have suggested a plan to try to make urban schools work. They contend that while most schools have devotedly divorced themselves from direct confrontation with social reality, the urban school stands out as most absurd in its emulation of the way reality is reflected in suburban schools. They visualize a three-tiered school to put the school in line with social realities. Tier I is comprised of objectives related to basic skills--learning to learn skills. It should be highly automated, individually paced, self-instruction, and material-centered. Tier II tries to allow for the development of individual creativity and exploration of interests. This could include writing a play, learning Swahili, producing a movie or any area of vocational development. Tier III would mainly be

involved with power, identity, and connectedness and would allow for a greater emphasis on the affective aspects of education. It could be thought of as group inquiry into the issues and problems of social actions which are personally related to the students.[2]

In Reach, Touch, and Teach, Terry Borton offers a model for a process curriculum focusing on the learner's concerns. He attempts to turn them on as he attempts touching them as individual human beings, and teaching them to cope with their basic concerns in some organized fashion that should serve as a model for coping with basic concerns throughout life. He sees the identification of tasks of a process approach as the primary condition for the "new" curriculum.[3]

Caleb Gattegno proposes to subordinate teaching to learning which would build on the functionings of children. Functionings in this sense would parallel the life adjustment and needs curriculum of the Dewey and Montessori schools. Schooling would concern itself with helping the pupil to become "a member of humanity". The teacher would have the role of increasing the student's "experience and to acquire the means and criteria to interpret experience". In doing this the teacher helps the individual "to become a person who knows himself and others as persons".[4]

With the idea of turning students into "crap detectors", Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner suggest as an alternative a new education based on an approach the teaching profession calls the "inductive method". Stating that the "knowledge explosion" demands that students learn how to use their minds, Postman and Weingartner draw extensively on the writings of Marshall McLuhan, Jerome Bruner, I. A. Richards, Alfred Korzybski, and Norbert Wiener preparing specific and practical

steps that can be taken to bring meaning to the classroom so students can learn how to learn. The "new education" they advocate is a strategy for survival and growth. Only people who can think for themselves can keep the democratic heritage alive.[5]

George Leonard's prescription for education is based on the assumption that a "free learner" who enters numerous electronic learning environments to absorb programmed instructions, engage in role playing, analyze his own dreams, and participate in aesthetic physical activities which do not depend upon competition. There is no coercion of any kind.[6]

The parents, teachers, and writers advocating free schools have taken the position that even if these reforms did take place, they would leave the public school system a repressive place for children. "Meeting the needs of the individual" has too long been standard language for public school officials. In the view of free school advocates, even the newest, most advanced and innovative schools in our society continue their historic role of screening individuals, selecting the fit, and rejecting the unfit. Our public schools continue to tell many young people that they have needs which, for various reasons, schools cannot meet. Authority, discipline, competition, pass and fail, prescribed curricula, state requirements, all continue to be hallmarks of our system. To the free school advocates, this is all evidence of the dramatic and persistent contradiction between our practices and our ideas. They see so-called revolution in education emphasizing the "new math", the "new science", and the "new social studies", and self-directed and discovery learning as being largely superficial. New curriculums, technology, the influence of mass media, and the

"knowledge explosion" have all scarcely begun to modify long-established classroom practices and attitudes of teachers and most parents alike. Nation-wide, schools have absorbed these new "innovations" without significant institutional changes. Students, for the most part, continue to look upon the school as an obstacle course, something that must be run through in order to obtain a license for a job or entrance into some college. The advocates of free schools have decided that piecemeal approaches to change are not sufficient. A preoccupation with technology, with changing curriculums, with new modern school architecture and with instructional equipment do not necessarily improve the quality of education, indeed, in many instances, it may even forestall serious confrontation of the basic problems.

In recent years a new wave of writers have started criticizing the public school system, but not on the basis of questioning the various aspects of improving the quality of education. These new critics are no longer questioning out-dated curriculums or ineffective teaching methods, the concerns of the fifties and early sixties. These new critics are revolting against the school as a social institution.

Jonathan Kozol is an example of this type of writer, seriously questioning the nature of public education as an institution. Kozol charges, as clearly as possible, that the Boston School Committee and the system they run are spiritually and psychologically destroying the hearts and minds of Negro children in the Boston Public Schools.[7] Kozol has now formed his own free school in the Boston area.

Paul Goodman also questions the concept of public schools as an institution. For elementary education he has suggested a series of "mini-schools", radically decentralized. By mini-schools he means

twenty-eight children and four teachers, one licensed and salaried, the other three to be drawn from graduate students, housewives, and high-school graduates. These schools would be largely administered by their own staff and parents with considerable input from the children. These mini-schools would occupy two, three, or four rooms in existing school buildings, church basements, settlement houses otherwise empty during school hours, and store-fronts. The setting would be essentially indifferent since a major part of activity occurs outside the school place.[8] For secondary schools Goodman advocates incidental education, taking part in the on-going activities of society. Most high schools should be eliminated, with other types of communities of youth taking over their social functions. The chief task of educators would be to see to it that the activities of society provide incidental education, if necessary inventing new useful activities offering new educational opportunities.[9]

John Holt, publishing in several places, has concluded that school is a bad place for children. Holt believes that almost every child, on the first day he sets foot in a school building, is smarter, more curious, less afraid of what he doesn't know, better at finding and figuring things out, more confident, resourceful, persistent, and independent than he will ever be again in his schooling.[10] The only justification for schools, Holt believes, is that they are doing things which help children. When they are not helping children there is no reason to compel a child to attend them. The titles of the chapters of his book The Understanding School suggests how Holt feels about our public schools: "Schools are Bad Places for Kids", "The Fourth R: The Rat Race", "The Tyranny of Testing", "Making Children Hate Reading", and

"Children in Prison".[11]

George Dennison also questions the public school as an institution. He views public education as a horrendous, life-destroying mess. In describing his own First Street School he stated that the proper concern of a primary school is not education in a narrow sense, and still less, preparation for later life, but it is the present lives of the children. Dennison advocates abolishing the conventional routines of a school, the military discipline, the schedules, the punishments and rewards, and the standardization. In his school, what arises is neither a vacuum nor chaos, but a new order, based on relationships between adults and children.

> There is no such thing as learning except in the continuum of experience. But this continuum cannot survive in the classroom unless there is reality of encounter between the adults and the children. The teachers must be themselves, and not play roles. They must teach the children, and not teach subjects.[12]

In summarizing the type of freedom exercised by the First Street School Dennison states that there was a respect for experience, an absence of compulsion and a faith in the inherent sociability of children. He proposes these as the environmental model for an entire system of small schools, very similar to those discussed by Goodman.

For A. S. Neill, Summerhill was a reaction against not only an authoritarian school system, but a reaction against authoritarian parents and an authoritarian society. Summerhill was likewise a reaction against social engineering. Neill has rebelled against the trend toward 1984, against obedience, authoritarian rules, organizational role-playing, and the destruction brought by competition and grading. Certainly Neill is a critic of present-day public school systems. He emphasizes that the kind of person we develop is a mass-man. Neill

does not try to educate children to fit well into the existing order, but tries to rear children who will become happy human beings. Neill then is talking about a totally different type of life style; he has made a decision between full human development and full market-place success.[13]

Ivan Illich has been one of the most outspoken critics of the public school system. His proposal is to completely de-school society. Illich sees the public attitude toward schools already changing. He says that the proud dependence on school is gone. Many teachers and pupils, taxpayers and employers, economists and policemen now prefer not to depend any longer on schools. What prevents this frustration from shaping new institutions is a lack of alternatives. They cannot visualize either a de-schooled society or educational institutions in a society which dis-establishes schools. Illich proposes that we do away with schools and depend upon self-motivated learning instead of employing teachers to bribe or compel the student to find time and the will to learn. He proposes that we find new links to the world instead of continuing to funnel all educational programs through the teacher. Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum, or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma. Illich uses the word "network" to designate specific ways to provide access to each of four sets of resources which could contain all the materials, information, and people necessary for real learning. These networks would enable the student to gain access to any educational resource which may help him to define and achieve his own goals.

1) Reference Services to Educational Objects--which facilitate access to things or processes used for formal learning. These can be stored and used in libraries,

showrooms, museums, theaters, factories, airports, or farms, and made available to students at any time.

2) Skill Exchanges--which permit persons to list their skills and serve as models for others who want to learn these skills.

3) Peer Matching--a communication network which permits persons to describe the learning activity in which they wish to engage in the hope of finding a partner for inquiry.

4) Reference Services to Educators-at-large--who can be listed along with conditions of access to their services.[14]

Edgar Friedenberg agrees with Illich in that the public school institution has as its major function to recruit personnel for an industrial bureaucracy and maintain the existing state of order. He sees a high school diploma as a certificate of legitimacy, not of competence.[15] The real harm being done by the public schools is in the kind of tutelage and status that the high school assigns students. This status affects their lives and subsequent development far more crucially than the content and quality of formal instruction. Schools affect society by altering individuals, their values, their sense of personal worth, and their patterns of anxiety. In doing this, the schools endorse and support the values and patterns of behavior of certain segments of the population, providing their members with the credentials needed for the next stage of their journey. While it is doing this the schools also install in others a sense of inferiority and warn the rest of society against them as troublemakers and untrustworthy.[16] To replace this, Friedenberg favors no compulsory education laws, a plan similar to Illich's or Goodman's mini-schools.

In summary, the alternative school movement started as a result of the failure of the public school to change as an institution. Promises of changing curriculums, new technology in the classroom, and new

knowledge of the learning process have scarcely begun to modify long-established classroom practices and attitudes. The free school movement is a revolt against the implicit assumption that learning must be imposed on children by adults, that learning is not something one does by and for oneself, but something designed by a teacher.

> Schools operating on this assumption tend to hold children in a prolonged state of dependency, to keep them from discovering their own capacities for learning, and to encourage a sense of impotence and a lack of worth.[17]

The alternative school movement was born as a search for alternatives to this kind of institution.

Examples of Alternative Type Schools

An example of an alternative type of school could be given by looking at the development of the New School of Decatur, Illinois. The New School idea was started when a few parents read John Holt's How Children Fail. Feeling that the book made sense, Carol Whitcomb wrote Holt a letter and received a reply. Whitcomb reports that the reply was long and thoughtful,

> . . . in which he encouraged me to think maybe I really could do something other than work my way up to the presidency of the P.T.A. in three years, by which time it might be too late. The idea of action was new to us all. We were brought up to be polite and uncontroversial, and not to rock the boat.[18]

The Decatur mothers tried to work within the public school system. They drew up plans for a Spontaneous Learning Center that they hoped would be adopted. School administrators were cooperative at first but later gave the mothers little reason for encouragement. For those mothers in Decatur, it became easier to form their own school than to try to change the public school system.

Ideas were exchanged by other dissatisfied mothers in the community. For one mother, Nancy Roucher, conversion came during a 1968 trip to Manhattan, where she visited the Children's Community Workshop School, a project then meeting in three dingy storefronts. Nancy reports that:

> . . . under the worst conditions possible there was this terrific excitement about learning. It was bitterly cold, but the atmosphere was alive and warm. It was my first look at what a school could be, and I decided I'd have to help start one like it for my kids. Anita Moses, who organized that school, seemed a fantastic woman.[19]

With the help of other concerned mothers in the Decatur area, the New School was formed, outside the public school system. They now have 22 students aged five to nine. They operate on a total budget of $15,000 a year with one full-time and one half-time teacher. Books and equipment were donated. Tuition is $300 a year for children whose mothers help teach and $450 otherwise. Half the children are on scholarships.

At the New School, students are not divided into grades, have no assigned seats or tasks. Students have a great deal of freedom in deciding what they want to do. They do have a concentrated private 15 or 20 minutes each day with teachers who keep diaries of each session. The teachers feel that these private appointments do more good than five and one-half hours of collective teaching. Play is encouraged at the New School; the mothers and teachers believe that kids learn by playing, in fact, that you cannot keep a child from learning.

Twelvegates

Another example of an alternative type school is Twelvegates Community School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Twelvegates is located in

a beautiful old red brick house in a residential area of the town. Starting in March, 1971 the founders state that they appreciate the value of a child-centered, non-graded, approach to education. From the literature available about the needs of children for a supportive, non-coercive environment in which to learn, Twelvegates advertises that they draw upon George Dennison, John Holt, Herbert Kohl, J. Krishnamurti, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and others. Their brochure states,

> If one philosophical position need be defined, it would be firmly rooted in the importance of the now. We hope to draw our informal and formal curriculum out of the continuum of daily relationships. We will seek to fulfill basic human needs in our program. Likewise, as specific skills are required, we will use every possible resource to help the child develop these skills. We also strongly feel that a child need not be bored or restless because the adults feel that it is improper to interfere; there is a place for adult inspired activities, adult encouragement into new fields and adult wiles to further a child's stretching his mind and his abilities.[20]

Twelvegates tries to keep their enrollment open to any persons wishing to have their children participate in their program, regardless of financial status. They suggest monthly pledges of fifty dollars. During the first months of existence, the school tried to provide experiences designed to help the students work together, which included many field trips. During 1973 they hope to establish centers for learning based upon the British Infant System. Their highly qualified staff consists of twelve people, nine of which have college degrees.

Santa Fe Community School

Santa Fe Community School is located south of Santa Fe, New Mexico on 12 acres of land. The main building contains several classrooms, a greenhouse, and rooms for shops and crafts. The school is an independent accredited school with a staff and volunteers that vary daily from

8 to 15. It is financed by a tuition of fifty dollars per month for pre-school children and ninety dollars per month for ages six and up, with a discount for additional siblings. Their brochure describes the school as follows:

> The Santa Fe Community School views curriculum as an individualized program of meaningful academic experiences in a non-restrictive physical and social environment, for the purpose of attaining adaptive, adjustive, and intellectual goals, depending upon the needs of the individual.[21]

The core curriculum includes language arts, science, ecology, social studies, mathematics, art, and music. They utilize books and activities that deal with the attitudes and histories of Indian, Spanish, and Anglo peoples, especially as they relate to the Southwest. Supplementing the basic curriculum are activities such as woodworking, crafts, nature study, athletics, theater, astronomy, recycling, building, gardening, mechanics, home economics, and many others.

Their philosophy is to look to the self-directed individual as the ultimate goal in the process of education. To do this they try to provide the children with a learning environment free from pressure or fear, yet intellectually exciting in its content. They believe that learning is an inclusive process and that it occurs in many different activities, places, and forms. The staff reports that in an atmosphere of love and openness they try to provide situations that encourage the child's natural inquisitiveness.

The essential qualification for their teachers is their ability to communicate with independent, inquisitive, critical minds. As teachers, they see their role as one of enriching the environment of the students, and acting as guide in the students' exploration of the world. To do this the Santa Fe Community School uses the community-

as-classroom concept. They try to utilize the existing facilities and personnel of the community, rather than artificially re-creating the community environment in a classroom setting. Of their list of fourteen teachers, ten have college degrees.

Santa Fe Community School received conditional accreditation through 1971 for their K-6 program. They are presently working to extend this accreditation to have a complete K-12 program.[21]

The City School

Michael Walsh describes The City School of Minneapolis, Minnesota as follows:

> The City School is an association of children and adults who meet for the purposes of learning, maintaining their freedom of conscience, and integrating their lives. We are formally incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt, religious and educational corporation administered by a board of trustees. The trustees work in the school, and together with other staff members, participate in all decision-making that affects the school. Decisions are made unanimously. Although not all actions require the support of all staff members, all actions require the approval of all the staff.[22]

The school started with five children and two staff members in the basement of a Presbyterian Church in 1968. They later grew to 22 students and six adults and outgrew the church facilities. Because they had received requests to keep older children, they formally became an accredited school in Minnesota.

The City School has a policy of voluntary attendance and report that the children seldom want to go home. Their curriculum includes spending a lot of time outdoors exploring parks, streets, buildings, junk yards, and construction sites in and around Minneapolis. They also go on distant overnight and extended camping trips. They are now

planning a winter trip to Mexico.

Presently they are being supported by University Community Properties which allows the school to use the second floor of their building. Physically, they have seven rooms, connected by halls, which includes an art room, a Montessori room, a reading room, a nap room, and a kitchen. The staff are in each room, and each child chooses in what room he will be working.

Michael Walsh reports that the school has changed since its opening in 1968. He reports:

> I observe that it has changed in keeping with the changes in staff, and in keeping with the development of the staff that have stayed with the school. We are now much less a 'free school' and much more an 'experimental school'. We are now much less an association of 'organic' activity, and much more an association of planned activity. Our schedules used to be erratic; now they are more rhythmic. We plan and evaluate more than before.[23]

Shire School

Shire School, a free school in San Francisco, was launched in the summer of 1967. Those starting Shire School reported that they were fed up with the public school system because their kids had no choice of what to learn, no freedom, and were graded on the work. At first, the school was held in four different houses. Parents and volunteer teachers painted and fixed up a warehouse to use as a school but it was closed three days later by a building inspector. After meeting in a park for a month they moved to seven different places before settling in a hotel. The subjects taught include biology, ecology, physical science, astrology, drama, poetry, art, reading, math and history. There are field trips almost daily. Janice Taylor, a student at Shire, reports:

> In English, math, etc., we choose to learn what we want, instead of being forced to learn it <u>their</u> way and do it their way. We learn at our own speed, instead of doing this, this day, and that, that day, AND there are NO report cards. We don't get graded on what we do at school. We are told where we need help and are helped. Teachers won't explain something once and say if you don't get it once, 'that's too bad, ask your friends'.[24]

Philosophy of the Alternative Schools

It has been previously stated in this paper that no two free schools seem exactly alike. However, one of the common elements that identified an alternative free school is its philosophy. Those schools classified as alternative schools follow closely the philosophy of John Dewey, George Dennison, John Holt, and the British primary school system.

John Dewey

John Dewey's position on education has been outlined in Chapter One.[25] This section will contain only a summary of his pedagogic creed followed by two examples of alternative schools which claim roots in John Dewey's philosophy of education.

"My Pedagogic Creed", published in 1896 by Dewey, outlined his fundamental beliefs concerning education. These beliefs are as follows:

> <u>I believe that</u> all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization. The most formal and technical education in the world cannot safely depart from this general process. It can only organize it or differentiate it in some particular direction.

> I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.
>
> I believe that the social life of the child is the basis of concentration, or correlation, in all his training or growth. The social life gives the unconscious unity and the background of all his efforts and of all his attainments.
>
> I believe that the question of method is ultimately reducible to the question of the order of development of the child's powers and interests. The law for presenting and treating material is the law implicit within the child's own nature.
>
> I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. All reforms which rest simply upon the enactment of law, or the threatening of certain penalties, or upon changes in mechanical or outward arrangements, are transitory and futile. Education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.[26]

Caroline Pratt founded the City and Country School in 1914, modeled on John Dewey's philosophy of education. The school still exists today. She later published in 1948 a semi-autobiographical account of the growth of her educational ideas and the growth of her school. In 1970 her book, I Learn From Children[27], was reissued, mainly because of the interest in the publications of the new romantic critics of education. Her book presents a down-to-earth account of an attempt to put John Dewey's writings into action. Pratt's play school impressed both Evelyn and John Dewey who later included descriptions of the activites occurring in the school in their book Schools of To-Morrow.[28]

Pratt's City and Country School was formed outside the public school system, financed by donations from parents and foundations. She

had complete freedom to fashion the type of educational experiences she thought best. Pratt's school was staffed with people from many walks of life. She believed that real learning depends upon first-hand discovery that comes from experiences. The activities offered either met the constant needs of children or they were discarded. She felt that it was essential for children to learn to know themselves and each other and to feel part of their community. Her philosophy was that when given a chance children grow wonderfully self-reliant and proud of their increasing skills and accomplishments. She believed that children developed self-respect, understanding of others and their own standards of excellence. Young children also learned best by continuous experimentation, not from excessive display of the results of their handiwork.

The school conducted by Miss Pratt in New York City organized all the work around the play activities of little children. Quoting from Miss Pratt, her plan is:

> To offer an opportunity to the child to pick up the thread of life in his own community, and to express what he gets in an individual way. The experiment concerns itself with getting subject-matter first hand, and it is assumed that the child has much information to begin with, that he is adding to it day by day, that it is possible to direct his attention so that he may get his information in a more related way; and with applying such information to individual schemes of play with related toys and blocks as well as expressing himself through such general means as drawing, dramatization, and spoken language.[29]

At this alternative school children had an opportunity to assume real responsibility in the curriculum. The eight-year-olds ran a postal service, the nines ran a store, the elevens ran a print shop. The entire social studies program used these jobs as a starting point, and music, science, dramatics, and art were often woven in as well. The

twelve-year-olds helped the four-year-olds make books, make up plays, and design and construct toys for the younger children. The main point emphasized in the book I Learn From Children is that the whole school is structured around real life experiences; children were left alone as much as possible. The play impulse in children was recognized as a work impulse. Childhood's work was learning, and it was in their play that the child would work at his job. The toys were designed so that they could be used by the children to portray familiar activities such as barn, house, or streets. The real life activities were used so that children would naturally develop an interest in reading and arithmetic; they were not pushed into these subject areas isolated from the activities of the school or the community.

John Dewey's concept of the continuous reconstruction of experience emphasizes the principle that education is not a preparation for life at some future time; rather, it is the process of actual living, here and now. Dewey believed that the child lives in the present, and cares nothing for the future. There was therefore no practical reason to require him to do things today for the sake of what he will be years from now. Dewey saw the child acting only in the living present, setting up approximate aims and readjusting his experiences as he goes along. The process of education is identical with the process of living. The continuous enrichment of experience by readjusting to the complexities of the environment constitutes, therefore, the heart of education. It was this principle of education for the present lives of children that formed the philosophy found in the First Street School described by George Dennison in The Lives of Children.[30]

George Dennison

George Dennison describes the First Street School as consisting of twenty-three black, white, and Puerto Rican children in almost equal proportions, all from low-income families in New York's Lower East Side. About half were on welfare and half had come from the public schools with severe learning and behavior problems. In describing his school Dennison lists the following points:

> 1) That the proper concern of a primary school is not education in a narrow sense, and still less preparation for later life, but the present lives of the children--a point made repeatedly by John Dewey, and very poorly understood by many of his followers.
>
> 2) That when the conventional routines of a school are abolished (the military discipline, the schedules, the punishments and rewards, the standardization), what arises is neither a vacuum nor chaos, but rather a new order, based first on relationships between adults and children, and children and their peers, but based ultimately on such truths of the human condition as these: that the mind does not function separately from the emotions, but thought partakes of feeling and feeling of thought; that there is no such thing as knowledge per se, knowledge in a vacuum, but rather all knowledge is possessed and must be expressed by individuals; that the human voices preserved in books belong to the real features of the world, and that children are so powerfully attracted to this world that the very motion of their curiosity comes through to us as a form of love; that an active moral life cannot be evolved except where people are free to express their feelings and act upon the insights of conscience.
>
> 3) That running a primary school--provided it be small --is an extremely simple thing.[31]

Dennison believes that John Dewey's philosophy and his directives were never followed by the public schools, and that "progressive education" was not a fair test of Dewey's philosophical thought. Dennison[32] states that the distinction between initiating and doing lies at the heart of John Dewey's thoughts on education. The term "learn by doing" for many years has been little more than a catchphrase in the hands of

public schools. Dennison believes that Dewey's strength lies in his profound understanding of the whole forms of experience; the unity, in growth, of self, world, and mind. It was because of Dewey's perception of his unity that he insisted that school be based in the community and not in the Board of Education. It is the interpretation of the concept community that is causing many of the issues between the counter-culture and alternative schools, and it is the issue of the community that has fostered the birth of many of the new storefront types of alternative schools.

Dennison[33] also charges that Dewey was not describing method but technique, and that technique must vary according to the needs of the times and the needs of individuals. The teacher cannot merely instruct, for in the whole of life there is no occasion within which mere information, divorced from use and the meanings of experience, appears as a motive sufficient in itself. The task of the educator is to provide experience, but in order to do this he must first interact with his students, not as a teacher, but as a person. One essential element of that experience is continuity. Dewey did not mean merely the continuity of curriculum, but the continuity of lives within which the school itself is but one of many functions. The so-called "methods", or as Dennison states, "techniques", are mere potentialities, and each application, each solution, is unique. Because each situation is unique, education must be <u>lived</u>--it cannot be <u>administered</u>. Holding true to these beliefs, Dennison proposes the types of relationships established at his First Street School and the kinds of freedom enjoyed by teachers, children, and parents--the respect for experience, the absence of compulsion, the faith in the inherent sociability of

children. His school and his writings have become aspiration models for many alternative types of schools.

John Holt

In recent years John Holt has become one of the most widely read educational theorists (if not the most widely read) in the United States. All of his books have been widely read, especially by parents. He has also published widely in scholarly journals, the popular press, and the emerging press of the free school movement. His books are mentioned in most of the bibliographies of the free school clearinghouses. He has been especially popular among the parents, teachers, and students of the alternative type of schools (see the example of the New School of Decatur, Illinois, page 63). His first three books, How Children Fail,[34] How Children Learn,[35] and The Underachieving School,[36] have served as guides and practical manuals to many of the teachers and parents working in alternative types of schools.

John Holt's philosophy of education is a combination of the basic curiosity and goodness of children as explained by Rousseau, and the emphasis on experiences and real life situations as expressed by Dewey. Holt's clearest statement on his philosophy of education can be found in How Children Learn:

> The child is curious. He wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, do what he can see other people doing. He is open, receptive, and perceptive. He does not shut himself off from the strange, confused, complicated world around him. He observes it closely and sharply, tries to take it all in. He is experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him, but tastes it, touches it, hefts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold. He is not afraid of making mistakes. And he is patient. He can

> tolerate an extraordinary amount of uncertainty, confusion, ignorance, and suspense. He does not have to have instant meaning in any new situation. He is willing and able to wait for meaning to come to him--even if it comes very slowly, which it usually does.[37]

Many parents of children from age one to age six would agree with Holt on these points. However, the majority of secondary school teachers, college professors, and the parents of teenagers would violently argue that this is not an apt description of today's teenaged student. If the parents, professors, and teachers are correct, what happens to children between the ages of six and thirteen?

Holt answers that question in what is probably the most bitter attack that has been made on public education. His indictment is that our public schools are places that prevent learning. Holt believes that children start school as curious, patient, determined, energetic, skillful learners, but we teach them the wrong things. First, we teach them that learning is separate from living. Secondly, we teach them that they cannot be trusted to learn and that they are no good at learning. According to Holt, many students learn that they are worthless, untrustworthy, and fit only to take other people's orders. Many students also learn to dodge, bluff, fake, cheat, and be lazy. Holt feels that before he comes to school a child would work for hours on end, on his own, with no thought of reward, at the business of making sense of the world and gaining competence in it. After a few years in school the student learns that in real life you do not do anything unless you are bribed, bullied, or conned into doing it, that nothing is worth doing for its own sake, or that if it is, you cannot do it in school.[38]

Holt does not believe that the schools are hopeless, or that they cannot do a good job. But to do a good job he believes that public school teachers, administrators, and parents will have to have a change in attitude toward children. He states that:

> What is essential is to realize that children learn independently, not in bunches; that they learn out of interest and curiosity, not to please or appease the adults in power; and that they ought to be in control of their own learning, deciding for themselves what they want to learn and how they want to learn it.[39]

What Holt urges is that a child be free to explore and make sense of his culture in his own way. He would trust the child to direct his own learning. He sees our time on earth as a struggle to make sense out of life; the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. What we want to know, we want to know for a reason. When we want to know something, there is a gap in our understanding; when we fill this gap we feel pleasure, satisfaction, and relief. Holt believes that when we learn in this manner, we learn both rapidly and permanently. When learning in this manner, a child does not need to be told many times, drilled or tested.

Holt feels that the human mind is a mystery. Therefore, we can never be sure what the children are learning, or even if they are learning anything. His suggestion is that what we need to do, and all we need to do, is bring as much of the world as we can into the school and the classroom. We need to give as much help and guidance as they need and ask for, listen respectfully when they feel like talking, and then get out of the way. Holt feels that we can then trust them, and their education will take care of itself.

Viewing education in this manner, Holt sees public schools as being only a resource, but not the only resource, from which children

can carry on the business of their own education. Holt sees schools as places where people can go to find out the things they want to know and to develop skills that they are interested in. He believes that the child who is educating himself should be free, like an adult, to decide when and how much and in what degree he can make use of the resources that a school can offer him.

This philosophy explained by Holt, and the examples given in his many writings, have become the hallmarks of the alternative type schools. Compulsory attendance is not enforced. Resource areas are provided in the alternative schools. The students are free to decide in which areas they would like to work, if indeed they wish to work in any area. Teachers try to stay out of the children's way, acting only as resources to meet the students' needs. This is probably the fundamental difference between a public school and an alternative school. No prescribed curriculum is forced onto the children. In alternative schools, the children decide when, and if, and in what degree they want to study, read, or acquire a particular skill.

The British Infant School

The writings of Dewey, Dennison, and Holt have provided the theoretical foundations of the alternative schools, but it has been the British Infant Schools that have provided the actual working model for alternative schools to emulate. The approach used by some of the British Infant Schools has at various times been called the "Leicestershire Method", the "integrated day", the "integrated curriculum", the "free day", the "open classroom", and "informal education". The approach used by some of the British Infant Schools, as suggested by the

above terms, discards the familiar elementary classroom setup and the traditional roles of the teacher and student. These schools are characterized by being far more free, highly individualized, and as offering more child-centered learning experiences than the traditional classroom. This approach, most commonly called the "open classroom", has been developing and spreading throughout the British school system since World War II. It has only been in the past five years that the concept of the open classroom has been introduced in the United States. Joseph Featherstone[40] called attention to the British Infant Schools in a series of three articles in the New Republic in 1967, becoming the first critic of American education practices to champion the British primary system as a model for reform. Since that time, the British Infant System has become widely publicized in the United States and many educators and parents have become extremely interested in its philosophy and practice. Some alternative schools, already outside the public school system, and searching for some alternative model, have readily adopted the practices and philosophies of the British Infant Schools.

The most detailed study of the British Primary School system was published in 1967.[41] A Parliamentary Commission, the so-called Plowden Committee, called attention to the new open classroom concept as being practiced by some British schools and urged its adoption by all English primary schools.

The philosophical foundations upon which the open classroom concept rests is described by the Plowden Committee. One can easily see the influence of Rousseau and Dewey in the following report by the Plowden Committee:

> Play is the central activity in all nursery schools and in many infant schools. This sometimes leads to accusations that children are wasting their time in school: they should be 'working'. But this distinction between work and play is false, possibly throughout life, certainly in the primary school. Its essence lies in past notions of what is done in school hours (work) and what is done out of school (play). We know now that play--in the sense of 'messing about' either with material objects or with other children, and of creating fantasies--is vital to children's learning and therefore vital in school. Adults who criticize teachers for allowing children to play are unaware that play is the principal means of learning in early childhood. It is the way through which children reconcile their inner lives with external reality. In play, children gradually develop concepts of causal relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgments, to analyze and synthesize, to imagine and to formulate. Children become absorbed in their play and the satisfaction of bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion fixes habits of concentration which can be transferred to other learning.
>
> From infancy, children investigate the material world. Their interest is not wholly scientific but arises from a desire to control or use the things about them. Pleasure in 'being a cause' seems to permeate children's earliest contact with materials. To destroy and construct involves learning the properties of things and in this way children can build up concepts of weight, height, size, volume and texture.[42]

The Froebel Foundation has also been active in England in trying to spread the adoption of the open classroom concepts to a greater number of schools. Their statement of philosophy also shows concern for encouraging the child's natural play instinct:

> The freedom we ask for each child is freedom to develop his natural powers at his own rate, to his fullest capacity. This means development as an individual, but also as a member of a community, for man is a social being and one of his prime needs is to be accepted by his society. A child comes to school, as a rule, very much of an individual and this we want to preserve, but his individuality can only be fully realized in relation to other people. During the time when he is playing and working freely with others he is learning far more about how to live with others than he could when the greatest educational crime was to speak to another child, and the next greatest to help another with his work! But the classroom community is too big for social living to develop unaided, and the teacher is needed all the time to help, by

> example as well as precept, in the necessary training. Orderly habits must be learned, courtesy and consideration for others developed, not as ends in themselves but because they contribute to fuller living. Such training is continuous, but it is positive and progressive because it leads toward self-control and responsibility in a way which the negative regime of 'sit still, keep quiet, do as you are told' could never achieve.[43]

American visitors to England have studied the English primary system and have described how some schools try to implement the open classroom philosophy. Ronald and Beatrice Gross[44] report that these schools have four operating principles:

1) The room itself is decentralized. The open classroom is an open, flexible space divided into functional areas, rather than one fixed, homogeneous unit.

2) The children are free for much of the time to explore the room, individually or in groups, and to choose their own activities.

3) The environment is rich in learning resources, including plenty of concrete materials, as well as books and other media.

4) The teacher and her aids work most of the time with individual children or two or three, hardly ever presenting the same material to the class as a whole.

In explaining the philosophy of the open classroom, the Gross team reports that the English teachers start with the assumption that the children want to learn and will learn in their fashion. These teachers believe that learning is rooted in firsthand experience so that teaching becomes the encouragement and enhancement of each child's own thrust toward mastery and understanding. They also believe that respect for and trust in the child are perhaps the most basic principles underlying the open classroom.

Vincent R. Rogers,[45] also a visitor to England, was very much impressed with the open classroom concept. He describes what he found

to be the characteristics of the open classrooms found in the British Infant schools:

1) Education is not preparation for life; education is life. The new primary schools are committed to the notion that children should live more fully and more richly now, rather than at some ill-defined time in the distant future.

2) English teachers and headmasters conceive of the curriculum as a series of starting or jumping-off places. An idea, a question, an observation, acts as a starting place for a whole range of studies and activities. The curriculum emerges in this fashion through the mutual interest and explorations of children and their teachers, working together occasionally in large groups, small groups, or as individuals.

3) There is an eagerness of teachers to cut across disciplinary lines in their handling of any study that may evolve in their classrooms.

4) The English teacher is concerned with learning as opposed to teaching. Rarely will one find a teacher standing in front of the room teaching a lesson.

5) The English teacher accepts the significance of process over product in the education of the child. There seems little doubt that English teachers are greatly concerned with how a child learns, the kinds of questions he asks, and the ways in which he goes about resolving them. Over the long haul, English teachers believe these learning 'strategies' will prove to be infinitely more valuable than the subject matter.

Rogers also states that the model that he describes fits only about 25 percent of England's primary schools. He reports that another 40 percent can be described as quite traditional, while another third or so are in various stages of transition.

The Institute for Development of Educational Activities, a non-profit corporation engaged in educational improvement, conducted an international seminar which made an indepth study of the new open classrooms in English schools. In their report they include a summary of their observations made during their visits to the various schools.

They list the following characteristics which they believe makes the English schools unique:

1) Family or vertical grouping. This type of nongraded grouping spans three years, group five-, six-, and seven-year-olds together. The word 'family' is used to describe the process because the classroom is deliberately calculated to resemble a family. Older children help with the teaching of younger children, and the classroom is designed as an extension of the home and family.

2) The integrated day. The integrated day is best described as a school day which offers a great smorgasbord of creative, intellectual, artistic, and physical activities. Each student integrates the school's offerings into his own interests and energies according to his own abilities and drives. Thus the classroom becomes a workshop with students working individually and in small groups.

3) Parental cooperation and communication. The concepts of family grouping and the integrated day require close association between parent and school. Since the plan is an extension of the child's home or family, parental cooperation is imperative. By continued bi-monthly meetings and semiannual conferences, the child's progress as a 'person' both at home and school becomes integrated into the evolvement of the child as a single total individual.

4) The amount and variety of materials in evidence is much greater than found in the conventional American classroom, and yet the material is all so inexpensive. Wide use is made of primitive materials such as water and sand. Most of this material is ingenious, inexpensive, and homemade.[46]

Psychology of the Alternative Schools

As stated earlier in this work, no two free schools seem exactly alike. In the previous section, one of the common elements that identifies an alternative free school was shown to be its philosophy. This section will be an attempt to show that the common psychology used to implement that philosophy is found in the work of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner.

Jean Piaget

In explaining why some British Primary Schools are moving in the direction of the open-classroom concept, the Plowden report states that there has been a new interest in the psychology of learning. The report concludes that the school of learning theory which is now dominant in Great Britain is associated with the names of Baldwin, Isaacs, Luria, Bruner, and in particular Jean Piaget.[47] They further conclude that this school is interested in discovering the ground plan of the growth of intellectual powers and the order in which they are acquired. John Blackie, former Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, states that the theory of learning which has received the most general acceptance in England is that propounded by Jean Piaget.[48]

Jean Piaget has spent over forty years researching the development of children's mental processes. His research findings have greatly influenced classroom practices in England, and in the past few years are being introduced in the United States. Perhaps Piaget's greatest contributions to education are being demonstrated in the open classrooms in England in that the child is the principal agent in his own education and mental development. Piaget believes that mental development occurs through an enormously complex and continuous process of interaction between the child and his environment. Piaget describes this interaction as learning composed of two processes, assimilation and accommodation. In The Psychology of Intelligence Piaget defines this process:

> Taking the term in its broadest sense, 'assimilation' may be used to describe the action of the organism on surrounding objects, in so far as this action depends on previous behavior involving the same or similar objects. In fact every relation between a living being and its

> environment has this particular characteristic: the former instead of submitting passively to the latter, modifies it by imposing on it a certain structure of its own. It is in this way that, physiologically, the organism absorbs substances and changes them into something compatible with its own substance. Mental assimilation is thus the incorporation of objects into patterns of behavior, these patterns being none other than the whole gamut of actions capable of active repetition.
>
> Conversely, the environment acts on the organism and following the practice of biologists, we can describe this converse action by the term 'accommodation', it being understood that the individual never suffers the impact of surrounding stimuli as such, but they simply modify the assimilatory cycle by accommodating him to themselves. Psychologically, we again find the same process in the sense that the pressure of circumstances always leads, not to a passive submission to them, but to a simple modification of the action affecting them. This being so, we can then define adaptation as an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation, which amounts to the same as equilibrium of interaction between subject and object.[49]

According to Piaget, each child needs to forge, through direct experience, through any learning experience. It is a waste of time to tell a child things that the child cannot experience through his senses. The child must be able to try things out to see what happens. He must be able to manipulate objects and symbols, ask questions and seek their answers. The child is continually forming mental images or structures within his mind corresponding to his experience of the world outside. The child then goes through a process of modifying these structures as a result of new experiences. Only after a great deal of these experiences is the child ready to move on to abstract conceptualizations. To Piaget, traditional teaching techniques, lectures, teacher's talking, textbooks, large group instruction, and grades are ineffectual and maybe even damaging. Using these methods, children may be denied a chance to grow intellectually.

Piaget also emphasizes the importance of play in the assimilation and accommodation process. In his observation of children, Piaget believes that play is much more than the release of surplus energy. It is something undertaken with great seriousness and concentration. In playing with material children discover the nature of the materials and begin to form concepts of weight, height, texture, and softness. They also discover the possibilities and limitations of their own powers. Play activity essential to intellectual development also includes social collaboration, group effort, and communication among children.

Another major contribution is Piaget's proposal that intelligence develops in a sequence of stages that is related to age. Each state sees the elaboration of new mental abilities which set the limits and determine the character of what can be learned during that period. Piaget divides intellectual development into five stages:

1) Sensory-motor stage (usually 0-2 years of age). Piaget believes that this stage is concerned with the evaluation of those abilities necessary to construct and reconstruct objects. The beginnings of thought spring from a capacity for distinguishing significant objects, and consequently relies both on the invention of symbols and on the discovery of signs. Since verbal signs are hard to master the child will require symbols, hence symbolic play or imaginative play, which to Piaget is the assimilation of reality to the subject's own interest.[50]

2) Preoperational stage (usually 2-7 years of age). This stage bears witness to the elaboration of the symbolic function, those abilities which have to do with representing things; the gradual acquisition of language, indications of dreams, advent of symbolic play, and attempts at drawing. Naming objects is dominated by an egocentric

attitude which causes dolls and toys to be treated as live things.

3) Intuitive thought stage (usually 4-7 years of age). Piaget sees this stage as a gradual coordination of representative relations and thus a growing conceptualization, which leads the child from the symbolic or pre-conceptual phase to the beginnings of the operation. Piaget believes that in this stage the child remains pre-logical, a form of incomplete operation with semi-symbolic forms of thought, or intuitive reasoning. The child controls judgments solely by means of intuitive "regulations", he is too involved with present action to be able to relate two factors (the classic experiment of pouring equal amounts of water or beads into two jars of unequal sizes).[51]

4) Concrete operation stage (usually 7-11 years of age). In this stage the child acquires internalized actions that permit the child to do "in his head" what before he would have to accomplish through real actions. Concrete operations enable the child to think about things. Children can also deal with relations among classes of things. The child is no longer tied to particular states of objects, and is able to coordinate separate viewpoints. Concepts of space and time are developed during this stage. At the end of this stage children are adept at doing thought problems.

5) Formal operations stage (usually 12-15 years of age). This stage permits adolescents to think about their thoughts, to construct ideals and reason realistically about the future. Piaget describes this stage as consisting of operating on operations, or classing, serializing, enumerating, measuring, and placing and displacing. Formal operations also enable young people to reason about contrary-to-fact propositions. No new mental systems emerge after formal

operations. After adolescence, mental growth takes the form of a gradual increase in wisdom.

In applying Piaget's concepts to the classroom, the alternative schools in the United States use play as the central activity for the younger children. The schools usually consist of one room equipped with tables for various kinds of activities. In alternative schools located in old houses, each room serves as a different activity area. There is a great amount and variety of material found in these rooms. Wide use is made of cheap or free materials such as water and sand. Many of the materials are made by the teachers or students. Two of the most popular resources of many alternative schools have been the Big Rock Candy Mountain[52] and the Whole Earth Catalogue.[53] These two catalogues are full of suggestions for alternative materials for use in new schools.

Jerome Bruner

Just as Jean Piaget has been instrumental in helping to form the direction of education in England, Jerome Bruner has been influential in the shaping of American education. The Encyclopedia of Educational Research acknowledges that Bruner has been the dominant figure in the movement to examine and organize the disciplines to facilitate learning. Bruner, more than any other person, dominated the field in these areas and his work provided the starting point of most serious discussions concerning the structure of knowledge.[54]

Bruner's theories of learning are compatible with some alternative schools. Bruner believes that children have differing tendencies to explore alternatives. Also, curiosity provokes exploration, therefore,

it is important that situations not be so routine as to stifle curiosity. Nor should they be so ambiguous and uncertain that anxiety and confusion are generated. Bruner believes that encouraging exploration of alternatives is done better with a teacher than done alone.

In The Process of Education, Bruner develops four themes: the role of structure, readiness for learning, the nature of intuition, and the desire to learn.

Bruner's purpose for studying the structure of knowledge has been to present subject matter more effectively. If the learner grasps the structure of a subject, he understands it in a way that permits many other things to be related to it meaningfully. To learn structure is to learn how things are related. Bruner used structure of a discipline to mean the interrelated ensemble of principles in a field of inquiry. The learner is to gain an understanding of the fundamental structure of whatever subject is being learned. Bruner believes that the curriculum should be built around the great issues, principles, and values that a society deems worthy. Bruner states that four claims can be made for studying the structure of knowledge:

1) Understanding fundamentals makes a subject more comprehensible.

2) Understanding fundamentals makes it easier to remember. What learning general or fundamental principles does is to ensure that memory loss will not mean total loss, that what remains will permit us to reconstruct the details when needed.

3) Aids 'transfer of training'. To understand the fundamental principles is to have learned not only a specific thing but also a model for understanding other things like it that one may encounter.

4) To narrow the gap between 'advanced' knowledge and 'elementary' knowledge. An emphasis on structure and principles in teaching allows one to constantly

> reexamine material taught in elementary and secondary schools.[55]

Bruner's second theme is that of readiness for learning. He states that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development.[56] Starting with simple concepts, Bruner feels children can use them in progressively more complex forms. A curriculum as it develops should revisit these basic ideas repeatedly. By doing this the child builds upon the basic ideas until he has grasped the full meanings that go with them. A type of "spiral curriculum" is then developed, with each concept leading to a more complex concept development.

The third theme developed by Bruner involves the nature of intuition. He defines intuition as the intellectual technique of arriving at plausible but tentative formulations without going through the analytic steps by which such formulations would be found to be valid or invalid conclusions. Bruner encourages students to make shrewd guesses or a courageous leap to a tentative conclusion. Bruner sees the value of intuitive thinking as lying in its heuristic nature. A heuristic procedure is in essence a nonrigorous method of achieving solutions of problems.

Bruner's fourth theme relates to the desire to learn and how it may be stimulated. The principal recommendation given is that of increasing the inherent interest of materials taught, giving the student a sense of discovery, translating what we have to say into thought forms appropriate to the child. Bruner believes that this amounts to developing in the child an interest in what he is learning, and with it an appropriate set of attitudes and values about intellectual activity generally.[57]

The Future of the Alternative Schools

This chapter started with a statement concerning the development of the alternative type of free schools. The reasons given for the growth and development of this type of school centered around the failure of the public school system to change as an institution. Many parents and teachers view the new technology, the changing curriculums, the new modern school architecture, and the new instructional equipment as only piecemeal approaches to real change. A new wave of critics of education have been criticizing education as an institution. Many dissatisfied parents, teachers, and students tried to work within the public school system in an effort to affect change. In trying to change the system they found many obstacles--teachers who refused to change, school boards who believed that they were doing the best job possible with existing funds, administrators who found it easier to remain the way they were, rather than change, and an apathetic public. Others, feeling that changing public education was a hopeless enterprise, began to develop their own schools. Examples were given in this chapter trying to demonstrate this type of school, outside the public school system, and identified as alternative schools. These schools were formed in an attempt to provide what their supporters believe to be a better form of education. Their philosophical base is found in the writings of John Dewey, John Holt, and George Dennison. The model that many of these schools have tried to emulate is that of the British Primary Schools, following the psychology of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner.

Also stated in the introduction to this chapter was the belief that since alternative types of schools are little more than an

alternative type of education, varying only in degrees from public schools, they have little chance for survival. This last section will be an attempt to show why alternative schools have little chance of survival.

While professional education journals and the popular press have been full of criticisms of education in recent years, there has also been a proliferation of possible alternatives to overcome these criticisms. The most popular of these alternatives has been that of the British Infant School. Alongside the Child,[58] Schools Where Children Learn,[59] Schools Are for Children,[60] and Teaching in the British Primary School,[61] are all book length accounts of the British Primary Schools that have been published in other areas of the popular press. Newspapers and national television have run features on this new form of education. Colleges of education have started incorporating concepts from the British system into existing college courses. Many school systems are now studying the British system as a possible change model. Other systems have already attempted to implement some of the concepts used in the British system. Lillian Weber, who is now the Open Classroom expert for the New York City school system, and who was virtually alone in the schools in England in 1965 reports that she could hardly elbow her way past the study teams from twenty American cities when she returned in 1969.[62] In New York City Weber reports that there are thirty-seven open classrooms, with many requests for helping others to introduce the theories in more schools.

Charles E. Silberman[63] reports that informal education can work in the United States and is already in use in schools as diverse as those of New York's Harlem and in the small cities and towns of North Dakota.

He also reports open classrooms in Philadelphia; Tucson; Washington, D. C.; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Paterson, New Jersey; San Antonio, Texas; and Johnson County, North Carolina.

On the national level, the Educational Development Center, a non-profit curriculum development and advisory team in Newton, Massachusetts, sponsors workshops, provides advisory and consultant services, and develops materials under grants from the Ford Foundation and the federal government's Follow Through program. During the 1969-70 school year nine school districts requested and received advisory services on a regular basis. In these schools the Educational Development Center reports that there are altogether more than 80 classrooms where teachers are striving to work toward more open forms of education for their children.[64]

There has also been a proliferation of information concerning the New School of Behavioral Studies in Education at the University of North Dakota. The North Dakota State Department of Education has adopted a far-reaching program to convert formal elementary classrooms into informal ones, based upon many of the concepts of the British Primary System; family grouping, learning centers, and the integrated day. At the center of this program is a new program of teacher education and re-education developed by the University of North Dakota's New School of Behavioral Studies in Education. The New School is having an impact on elementary education throughout North Dakota. So far seventy of the state's 650 elementary schools have been affected, and some 235 teachers have returned to the classroom.[65] During the 1970-71 school year 34 of the state's 375 school districts were participating in the program, and 10 per cent of the 74,000 elementary

children in North Dakota are attending informal classrooms.[66] Probably just as important as North Dakota's experiment has been the publicity that the program has received. Articles have appeared from such widespread sources as the Wall Street Journal to the Reader's Digest. Visitors have poured into the state by the hundreds.

The alternative schools themselves are helping to spread the word about alternative forms of education. There are six regional associations of alternative free schools which are active in trying to promote the sharing of information on the free school movement. All six of these regional associations publish newsletters, hold conferences, and provide workshops for teachers and parents, both inside and outside the public school system. Three of these centers--Minnesota, Berkeley, and Seattle--are active in trying to influence the public school to adopt the open classroom concepts.

The Berkeley Switchboard, the New Schools Network, is a group of teachers and parents working in alternative schools, both inside and outside the Berkeley system. They list twenty-eight free schools in the Berkeley area, and seven public schools that have an alternative classroom within them. Active in the Berkeley Network is Herbert Kohl; his book The Open Classroom[67] is an explanation of how an open classroom can work in a public school.

The Education Exploration Center is a clearinghouse, resource-information center, serving primarily the Twin Cities, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Midwest. Their newsletter now reaches over 2,000 people interested in free schools. They have speakers, films, a general resource bureau, hold workshops and conferences, and try to work with the "educational establishment" to try to establish

alternative schools within the public school system. The South-East Alternatives (SEA) area of the Minneapolis Public School District is starting an experimental program offering educational options within the public school setting. SEA is trying to demonstrate that public schools can successfully offer significant choices. The four options provided in the SEA are:

1) The Contemporary School which incorporates promising practices but does not deviate greatly from the present teacher-directed, structured curriculum and school organization by grade level.

2) The Continuous Progress Primary School and the Continuous Progress Intermediate School in which each child advances at his own pace without regard to grade level.

3) The Open School where there is a flexible curriculum, schedule, and age grouping and where affective learning is emphasized.

4) The Free School (K-12) will have the curriculum that those who teach and learn wish to develop and experience.

The Seattle New Schools Movement started in 1970 when several parents got together to put on a benefit to send three teachers to the Santa Barbara conference on alternatives in education sponsored by the New Schools Exchange. They now have monthly meetings, a newsletter, fourteen preschool and elementary schools, eleven secondary schools in Seattle, and ten free schools outside the Seattle area. They recently presented the Seattle School Board with a proposal for a public alternative school (400 students K-12) and are now trying to marshal public support for their plan.

Some public schools are changing without outside pressure from alternative school groups. In the past five years there has been a

tremendous increase in the popular press and on national television in educational changes in various areas of the country. The "Parkway Plan" or the "school without walls" has received publicity in almost every educational journal and in many areas of the popular press. Similar schools which provide flexible scheduling, student participation in decision making and curriculum planning, and a more relaxed, freer atmosphere include the following: Murray Road, Newton, Massachusetts; John Adams High School, Portland, Oregon; Harlem Prep, New York City; Other Ways, Berkeley, California; and LEAP, New York City. The significance of these new programs is that they are dispersed throughout the United States, providing a change model, areas of discussion, or places for visitation which are within easy reach of most people.

The future of the alternative type of free school in the United States does seem quite dim. What does exist seems to be a collection of sub-movements or independent schools developing in various parts of the country. The philosophy and psychology that they advocate are slowly being adopted by some public schools in various parts of the country. In those areas of the country where free schools have been more active, the public schools are showing some indications of change, at least in some classrooms. In the past, in some school districts, it was actually easier for parents and teachers to form their own schools outside the public school system than it was to try to affect change inside the system. However, in the past five years there has been a tremendous amount of information available in the popular press in the area of open or informal education. The British Primary School system has been widely advertised in the United States. Colleges of education have started some programs to train teachers in the area of informal

education. Some school systems are beginning to try open classrooms within the public school system. Indications are that these trends will continue, thereby co-opting the alternative school movement. If the public schools continue to adopt the concepts of the open classroom, the alternative free schools will lose their parental support, the parents will no longer have reasons to withdraw from the public school systems. The alternative school movement, if it ever were a movement, will cease to exist, becoming little more than another educational fad.

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CHAPTER III

COUNTER CULTURE SCHOOLS

Counter culture schools are another group of schools that have recently developed and are being called free schools. The advocates of the counter culture schools see the educational problems of today as much greater than just a problem of a repressive system which stresses grades and discipline at the expense of learning, natural curiosity, and instincts. The advocates of counter culture schools view the United States as a closed society, and the public schools are only one institution among many repressive institutions. To them a free school or a good education in a closed society is a logical contradiction. Many counter culturists have a broad view of schooling; when they speak of free schools, they are referring to an open community, decisions being made by everyone--students, parents, and staff alike. They are talking about a different way of raising children and sharing a way of life, in other words, education for existence in a culture that does not presently exist.

Those favoring the alternative school see public schools as a repressive system that does not accomplish much in the way of educating children. This is natural, they contend, for the society is repressive and dehumanizing. The distinguishing feature that separates alternative schools and counter culture schools is that those who favor alternative schools dream of mastering and humanizing the dominant culture

while the counter culture advocates want to escape from it or rebuild it from the ground up. This chapter will be an examination of the counter culture type of school, the societal view of those who advocate such schools, and how they believe that public schools are a reflection of that society. In addition, the psychology and philosophy used to implement the counter culturist's beliefs will be summarized and finally some speculation on the possibility of their growth and development.

The Counter Culture View of Society

The second half of the twentieth century has brought affluence to many Americans, an affluence that was probably undreamed of even by the most optimistic in our society. Many of the counter culturists, however, believe that the price we pay for this affluence is much too high. They believe that the present level of affluence was bought and paid for at the expense of increasing industrialization, bureaucracy, advanced technology, accelerating change, alienation, depersonalization, meaninglessness in life, and repression. Many of the counter culturists believe that the concept of freedom has become a myth in our society. They believe that we may have freedom to choose a job, but no opportunity to alter the conditions of work or the occupational channeling that they feel we are forced into. We may have freedom to select among major brands of goods, but no opportunity to determine either the product or quality of production which those producers will supply. The counter culturists also believe that there is a myth of democracy; we may have freedom to elect legislators who will concern themselves with correcting these inequalities, but no opportunity to adjust the structure of elections or the legislative process so that

there is any real chance for corrective legislation. The result of what the counter culturists believe to be uncontrolled technology and the corresponding decline of democracy and freedom is that we seem to have lost control over our system, a system which, at an accelerating pace, is carrying us toward destruction.

Many experts in the fields of economics, political science, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and psychology have been studying our society and the effects of industrialization. The conclusions of many of these studies forecast doom for our society, or at least, the individual in our society. Many see the future of America lying in the direction of those described by George Orwell,[1] Ayn Rand,[2] and Aldous Huxley,[3] where the world is composed of totalitarian megastates and all behavior on the part of individuals is subject to external manipulation and over-all control by the state. The following sections will be an attempt to summarize some of the more popular critics of the nature and direction of our society. They are by no means an attempt to examine all of the literature critical of American society. The following sections are presented as being representative of that literature.

The Present Condition of American Society

The most visible evidence that something has gone astray in our society has been summarized by Charles Reich.[4] Reich states that the following list is much more than just a collection of problems, but elements of larger issues concerning the structure of our society itself.

1) Disorder, corruption, hypocrisy, war. Lawlessness is most often associated with crime and riots, but there is lawlessness and corruption in all the major

institutions of our society--matched by an indifference to responsibility and consequences, and a pervasive hypocrisy that refuses to acknowledge the facts that are everywhere visible.

2) Poverty, distorted priorities, and law-making by private power. America presents a picture of drastic poverty amid affluence, and extremity of contrast unknown in other industrial nations. Likewise there is a superabundance of some goods, services, and activities such as defense manufacture, while other needs, such as education and medical care, are at a starvation level for many.
3) Uncontrolled technology and the destruction of environment. Organization and bureaucracy, which are applications of technology to social institutions, increasingly dictate how we shall live our lives, with the logic of organization taking precedence over any other values.
4) Decline of democracy and liberty; powerlessness. The nation has gradually become a rigid managerial hierarchy, with a small elite and a great mass of the disenfranchised. Most governmental power has shifted from Congress to administrative agencies, and corporate power is free to ignore both stockholders and consumers.
5) The artificiality of work and culture. For most Americans, work is mindless, exhausting, boring, servile, and hateful, something to be endured while 'life' is confined to 'time off'.
6) Absence of community. America is one vast, terrifying anti-community. The great organizations to which most people give their working day, and the apartments and suburbs to which they return at night, are equally places of loneliness and alienation.
7) Loss of self. Of all the forms of impoverishment, that can be seen or felt in America, loss of self, or death in life, is surely the most devastating. Beginning with school, if not before, an individual is systematically stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his heritage, his dreams, and his personal uniqueness, in order to style him into a productive unit for a mass, technological society.[5]

Reich feels that the existence of a universal feeling of powerlessness has caused the current American crisis. He feels that we live in a society that no one created and that no one wants. According to Reich, this sense of powerlessness was created by a discrepancy between the realities of our society and our beliefs about them. In Reich's words:

> We no longer understand the system under which we live, hence the structure has become obsolete and we have become powerless, in turn, the system has been permitted to assume unchallenged power to dominate our lives, and now rumbles along, unguided and therefore indifferent to human needs.[6]

Alvin Toffler[7] points out that the mass neurosis, irrationality, and free-floating violence that is already apparent in contemporary life are merely a foretaste of what may lie ahead. He describes the "culture shock" phenomenon as accounting for much of the bewilderment, frustration, and disorientation that plagues Americans in their dealings with other societies. This "culture shock", he believes, causes a breakdown in communication, a misreading of reality, and an inability to cope. Yet "culture shock" is relatively mild in comparison with what Toffler calls a more serious malady, "future shock". Toffler explores the acceleration of rapid changes on individuals and society, the result being the break-up of our society into many competing subcultures. His major thesis is that too much change in too short a time is already responsible for widespread stress and disorientation, and that unless the rate and direction of change are controlled, psychic and physical illness on a massive scale is inevitable. Future shock, then, is a condition of confusion and dislocation much like that induced by trauma, and Toffler believes that it is already here as the result of the accelerated rate of change in almost every area of life.

William Whyte believes that the outstanding phenomenon of modern life is the growth of the "organization". A mass movement toward collectivization can be seen in education, the church, research foundations, medicine, and all parts of our society. As a result of this movement Whyte feels that there is a rapidly increasing number who give their allegience as employees to their institutions. Whyte sees our

society as one of "social engineering" with emphasis on planned manipulation of the individual into the group role. "Groupthink" is becoming a national philosophy. Whyte believes that a condition of rationalized conformity exists where group values are not only expedient, but right and good. He sees social man as a creature of his environment, guided by whims and prejudice of the group.

Whyte's central theme is that traditional ideology--the individualist gospel which preaches salvation through hard work, thrift, and competition--is no longer congruent with the facts of organization life and has indeed been replaced in the organizational world by what Whyte calls the Social Ethic. The Social Ethic is a body of thought which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual.

Whyte describes our society as one in which there is a notion that scientific methods of measuring, testing, and conditioning should be applied to all human concerns. He believes that there is a universal belief that the group rather than the individual should be the source of creativity, and a belief that belongingness, irrespective of what one belongs to, is man's ultimate need. The counter culturists, then, can point to visible evidence to show that something is wrong with our society; the war, poverty, pollution, powerlessness, racism, and the loss of identity. These problems could be the result of accelerating change in our society, and a technology that has been allowed to advance at its own pace, uncontrolled by man. Some of these problems are also the results of the trend toward "organizations". The result of the mass movement toward collectivization is seen by the counter culturists as leading to a society where the individual is manipulated

into a group role by "social engineers".

Our Society, Technology, and the Totalitarian State

Many of the counter culturists believe that the result of technology, of bigness, complexity, and standardization has been a movement toward a totalitarian state. However, many people in this society are not aware of their loss of freedom because of the promises of progress that technology makes.

In examining our society Theodore Roszak[9] argues that modern industrial society is ugly, repressive, destructive and subversive of much that is truly human. To Roszak, the evils in our society are economic exploitation, political domination, and depersonalization which results from institutional bureaucratization. He describes American society today as a technocracy, a social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration. Roszak explains the needs of an industrialized society as a demand for efficiency, for social security, for large-scale co-ordination of men and resources, for even higher levels of affluence, and for more impressive manifestations of collective human power. The technocracy works to knit together this industrial society.

Roszak explains that this technocracy demands the central control by experts who deal with large-scale public necessities and assume authoritative influence over even the most seemingly personal aspects of life: sexual behavior, child-rearing, mental health, recreation, and education. In the technocracy, everything aspires to become purely technical, the subject of professional attention. Within such a society, the citizens, confronted by bewildering bigness and complexity,

find it necessary to defer all matters to those who know better, the experts. The technocracy then becomes a society in which those who govern justify themselves by appeal to technical experts who, in turn, justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge. Beyond the authority of science, Roszak believes that there is no appeal.

Jacques Ellul[10] examines the impact of the technical view of life on politics, economics, and the totality of relationships in our culture. Ellul is not against machine technology, but the standardization of procedures and behavior in order to develop the one best method for achievement of any result. Autonomous technology, or "technique" as Ellul defines it, imposes routine and rigidity on every activity it touches. It erodes moral values, and it leads, in time, to a complete dehumanization. Ellul believes that the danger is that all this occurs not by design but by drift--by the very nature of technique itself. By this process, Ellul sees man's natural state being destroyed by a materialistic, consumer-dominated economy and by Cold War. Dictatorship inevitably comes to be seen as the political form best suited for the application of technique and the most efficient utilization of resources. Because of this Ellul predicts a universal concentration camp may be in prospect for all societies without exception.

Everett Reimer[11] believes that the greatest problem with a technological society lies in the open-ended nature of the promise of progress. He points out that the standard of living in India can rise only if the standard of living in the United States also rises. Raising world consumption standards to United States levels would multiply the combustion of fossil fuels by fifty times, the use of iron a hundred times, and the use of other metals over two hundred times.[12] Such

projections, Reimer states, lead to results as absurd as the premises from which they start. He believes that there can be no open-ended progress, yet this is what modern institutes promise. This is the promise of science and technology, unrestrained by reason. Reimer believes that the discoveries and inventions of the past have merely permitted the earth to support more people than nature could provide for and have, thus, brought us into our present condition. Future discoveries and inventions can only sharpen this predicament, at higher population levels, unless effective population control is introduced.

Our Society and Consumption
For Consumption's Sake

Another group of critics suggest that consumption and production are the major evils in this society. They point out that advanced technology has made possible the overproduction of goods. Manufacture, therefore, must create a demand for their goods which they do by deliberately playing upon the subconscious mind. The results to this society of the emphasis on production and consumption are many and varied.

John Kenneth Galbraith[13] believes that our current economic ideas were fashioned for a world very different from our own. Today, he sees a humorless preoccupation with goods and an increasingly frantic effort to manufacture wants as rapidly as products, and an over-investment in "things" and an under-investment in people. Galbraith argues that the United States does not need more production or more affluence, but rather more "public" goods, such as cleaner air, streets, and water, instead of more quickly obsolescent "private goods". Unless the money and energy now devoted to the private production of unnecessary goods can be diverted to the increase and improvement of public services, we

may in due course expect our economy to choke on useless production. Galbraith explains our economic prosperity is attained by producing as frantically as possible and then desperately creating a demand for the products. He sees three problems that are the result of our production mindedness. The first is inflation which we solve by high unemployment. The second is an over-emphasis on installment credit so that we can finance our ever-growing demand for production. The third is a social imbalance, the extraordinary starvation of public services at all levels of government to feed the insatiable hunger for more and more private consumption.

Based on studies of advertising, Jules Henry[14] concludes that many elements of American culture tend to brutally destroy human values, rather than to preserve them. Underlying what he calls "technological drivenness", Henry finds a fundamental transformation of the traditional relation between culture and human needs. Like Galbraith, Henry sees the continual manufacture of new needs in order to sustain the culture. Hence, the crucial role played by advertising in the maintenance of our culture. Producing more than we can consume, we are urged toward the orgies of consumption required to keep our industrial plant running and the population employed. These heroic feats of consumption, however, require the destruction of traditional Protestant "impulse-controls" and the values of restraint. With the pressure of manufactured wants, and with no ceiling on the accumulation of property, we are offered as compensation for our drivenness an even higher standard of living. Connected with this manufacture of wants, Henry believes that the worker gives up an essential part of himself to take a job to survive. Because the worker feels no attachment to his job because it

is dull, routine, and unimaginative, he must find alternative ways to fulfill his self-esteem. This is the real meaning of America's obsession with material goods and standard of living. The drive for material possessions thus takes the place of satisfying work. Thus in Henry's work, culture is against man in the sense that the otherwise efficient social organization of affluence starves us emotionally. Our institutions not only celebrate but support the drive of achievement, accumulation, profit, competition, and mobility.

Some critics believe that the end result of our society's drive for technological progress has led to overproduction. Since our society cannot consume all that we produce, one method of disposing of the surplus goods has been to sell them to underdeveloped countries, or the Third World. Ivan Illich[15] believes that once the Third World has become a mass market for the goods, products, and processes which are designed by the rich for themselves, the discrepancy between demand for these Western products and the supply will increase indefinitely. Illich uses highway building as an example of the end result of our technical assistance to underdeveloped countries. Illich points out that the midwestern farmer can become convinced of his need for a four-axle vehicle which can go seventy miles per hour on the highway, has an electric windshield wiper and upholstered seats. This vehicle can be turned in for a new one within a year or two. However, most of the world's farmers do not need such speed, nor have they ever met with such comfort, nor are they interested in obsolescence. They need low-priced transportation, in a world where time is not money, where manual wipers suffice, and where a piece of heavy equipment should outlast a generation. Illich states that such a mechanical donkey, that is

needed by millions of farmers, requires entirely different engineering and design than one produced for the United States market. This vehicle is not in production. The result is that highway building creates a demand for cars and trucks that the people of underdeveloped countries cannot afford and cannot use. According to Illich they even do great harm; each car which Brazil puts on the road denies fifty people good transportation by bus.

Continuing this theme of consumption for consumption's sake, Vance Packard[16] has attempted to show the use and misuse of socio-psychological research in advertising and public relations. His conclusion is that Big Brother, Big Business, and Big Government are manipulating your daily life. Puppet-like you do as you are told and you do not even know that you are being manipulated. He attempts to show that Madison Avenue uses motivational research to use our psyches, our hidden anxieties, aspirations, frustrations, and aggressions to find ways for them to relieve themselves. In other words, advertising plays on our subconscious deliberately for profit. To accelerate consumption beyond reason, Packard demonstrates how advertisers try to stimulate brand loyalties among mass-produced products and services which are virtually identical. To do this advertisers must teach irrational responses to symbols, to make each consumer react unthinkingly, like Pavlovian dogs.

Packard also charges that many companies intentionally make products that will wear out or break down in a given period of time.[17] His central theme is that our economy requires the creation of an ever more populous nation of consumers. Persuasion and status seeking are seen as symptoms of the national disease of waste. Packard feels that

forcing consumership to match production has become a national goal, surpassing in its urgency health, education, and public welfare.

The result of hidden persuasion and waste making, Packard believes, is that America has been forged into a nation where the acquisition of material possessions was doing for anxiety-ridden adults what thumb-sucking does for insecure children. Competition in products and prices is giving way to competition in advertising. A growing percentage of the consumer's dollar pays for ads, not goods. Quality and durability diminish, while costs climb.

This emphasis on production, consumption, and the possession of material goods has produced what Packard believes to be a nation of status seekers.[18] Packard sees a rigid class system where millions of Americans strive to rise while others accept their status with meekness or resignation.

At the top of this vast system of production and consumption Charles Reich[19] sees the American Corporate State. Reich describes the corporate state as a single vast corporation, with every person as an involuntary member and employee.

> It consists primarily of large industrial organizations, plus nonprofit institutions such as foundations and the education system, all related to the whole as divisions to a business corporation. Government is only a part of the state, but government coordinates it and provides a variety of needed services. The Corporate State is a complete reversal of the original American ideal and plan. The State, and not the market or the people or any abstract economic laws, determines what shall be produced, and what shall be consumed, and how it shall be allocated.[20]

The horror of the Corporate State according to Reich is that it is subject neither to democratic controls, constitutional limits, or legal regulations. He believes the Corporate State is motivated primarily by the demands of technology. As for the organizations inside the

Corporate State, their imperative is to grow. The essence of the Corporate State, according to Reich, is that it is relentlessly single-minded, it has only one value, the value of technology--organization--efficiency--growth--progress.

Our Society and Its Effects on the Individual

Starting with the premise that our society is characterized by powerlessness, submission to authority, and isolation, Erich Fromm[21] attempts to explain how these concepts are caused by our modern society. In trying to answer the question of why the Nazi Fascist movement of the 1930's found it so easy to win adherents, Fromm points out that the man who submits willingly to an authoritarian regime relieves himself of the anxieties and responsibilities of individual autonomy. Fromm explains that modern man, free from medieval ties, is not free to build a meaningful life based on reason and love, and therefore sought new security in submission to a leader, a race, or a nation state. The powerlessness of the individual, in the face of mass unemployment or the threat of war is reinforced by the psychological sense of isolation of atomized individuals in a machine and urban civilization. Such isolation is seen by Fromm as becoming eventually unbearable. Isolation which has the quality of desolation is the motive behind the apparently senseless rush to submit to authoritarian direction which relieves the individual of the necessity and the responsibility for choice. Fromm believes that as man becomes more independent, self-reliant and critical he becomes more isolated, alone and afraid. Hence, man becomes more susceptible to the lures of any custom and any belief, however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others.

The rejection by free men of their freedom in favor of voluntary slavery has created today's totalitarian state.

In continuing his examination of the effects of our society on the individual, Fromm believes that there are certain unchanging human needs which a society may frustrate without ceasing to function and that the whole society may then be called "insane".[22] He strongly suggests this of our society by showing that despite having the highest standard of living ever known, we have also the highest homicide rate, the highest number of alcoholics, and one of the highest suicide rates in the Western world. The reason for this according to Fromm is that contemporary capitalist society denies its citizens any opportunity for personal relations, while leaving them political liberty and showering them with material benefits. This denies people both a genuine sense of belonging and a genuine sense of individuality. Fromm believes that people have no sense of belonging because neither as producers nor managers nor distributors are they more than cogs in a machine.

The result of being merely a cog in a machine, Fromm sees a growing sense of hopelessness throughout the world. Fromm believes that along with the process of mechanizing society, and men feeling as though they were parts of that machine, men become passive, unalive, and they possess little feeling. According to Fromm we are entering the second Industrial Revolution, which is characterized by the fact that not only living energy, but human thought is being replaced by the thinking of machines.[23]

Fromm continues, stating that if our technological society, by unwittingly permitting the pervasive development of mechanistic categories of thought, risks the loss of human essence. The human

experiences of tenderness, compassion, empathy, responsibility, identity, integrity, and hope cannot develop using mechanistic categories of thought according to Fromm.

Defining social character as the more or less permanent, socially, and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfactions, David Riesman[24] finds three types of characters corresponding to three phases of population change. A society of high growth potential develops in its typical members a social character whose conformity is insured by their tendency to follow tradition. Riesman termed them tradition-directed people and the society in which they live a society dependent on tradition-direction. The second type of society was the society of transitional population growth. This type of society develops in its members a social character whose conformity is insured by their tendency to acquire early in life an internalized set of goals. Riesman labeled this group inner-directed people and the society in which they lived a society dependent on inner-direction.

Finally, the third society, which Riesman suggests we are moving in the direction toward, is the society of incipient population decline. This society develops in its typical members a social character whose conformity is insured by their tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others. This group is called by Riesman other-directed people and the society in which they live one dependent on other-direction. Riesman describes the other-directed person as becoming the typical character of the "new" middle class--the bureaucrat and the salaried employee in business. Riesman points out that the decline in the numbers in the proportion of the working

population engaged in production and extraction--agriculture, heavy industry, heavy transportation--and an increase in the numbers and the proportion engaged in white-collar work and the service trades plays a substantial role in developing other-directed people. These developments lead, for large numbers of people, to changes in paths to success and to the requirement of more socialized behavior both for success and for material and personal adaptation. Connected with such changes are changed in the family and in child-rearing practices. There is a relaxation of older patterns of discipline. Under these new patterns the peer-group becomes much more important to the child, while the parents make him feel guilty, not so much about violation of inner standards as about failure to be popular or otherwise to manage his relations with these other children. The pressures of school and the peer-group relations are reinforced and continued by the mass media: movies, radio, comics, and popular culture media generally. Under these conditions types of character emerge that Riesman calls other directed:

> What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual--either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media. This source is of course 'internalized' in the sense that dependence on it for guidance in life is implanted early. The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with that guidance; it is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life.[25]

Riesman believes that this keeping in touch with others permits a close behavioral conformity, not through drill in behavior itself, but rather through an exceptional sensitivity to the actions and wishes of others. Riesman feels that all people want and need to be liked by some of the people some of the time, but it is only the modern other-

directed types who make this their chief source of direction and chief area of sensitivity.

Charles Reich[26] agrees with Reisman in that the individual is compelled to accept the judgment of his peers on many issues, and to believe that social acceptability should be a major personal goal. However, Reich believes that the "lost self" goes beyond peer group pressure and lies in the roots of the Corporate State. Reich believes that the process by which man is deprived of his self begins with his institutionalized training in public school for a place in the machinery of the State. The object of this training is to become a function, to judge yourself in terms of other functions, and to abandon any aspect of self that has no utility for either production or consumption in the Corporate State. Reich sees the training for the role of consumer is just as important as the training for a job. Hence, early in life, the child learns to play a role, to dress, talk, behave, and enjoy things in a certain way, and at the same time to judge others by their success in playing roles. According to Reich, then, the student is trained to submerge his personality in a series of organizations, teams, groups, and classroom situations.

In analyzing our society, A. S. Neill[27] combines the concept of the other-directed person and the loss of self and arrives at the conclusion that crowd psychology is at the roots of much of our problems today. Neill explains that crowd psychology is the root of national hatred everywhere. A neighboring country insults your flag and many thousands of young men die for the honor and glory of their fatherland. Examples of national hatreds can be seen daily: Greek--Turkey, Israel--Arab, Rhodesian White--Rhodesian Black. Neill continues that

crowd psychology is not only the nationalism crowd, our football games are full of irrational, partisan hate and violence. He believes that gang warfare in the large cities is the result of crowd psychology. Political slogans like "All the way with L. B. J." show the iniquity of the crowd; Neill feels that it makes crowd members sheep who can feel the most elementary emotions without having the intellectual capacity to connect such emotions with reason. Today, Neill sees our society educating the head, but leaving the emotions to the crowd-compellers: the press, the radio, the television, the churches, the commercial exploiters. Neill sees the danger in crowd psychology as being underdeveloped emotion, perverted emotion, and infantile emotion. Crowd emotions are not touched by news of starvation in India or Pakistan. Crowd emotions are not touched or shocked by our inhuman treatment of criminals in prison, or by the lives of millions who are forced to live in slums.

The Public Schools as a Reflection of Our Society

Just as the counter culturists view this as a managed society, they also view public schools as prime instruments in socializing the student into his role in the managed society. Counter culturists view the traditional public school firmly rooted in a hierarchical authoritarian model, in which students have virtually no control over decisions effecting their destiny. Within this authoritarian structure, counter culturists see fear and competition as being the prime motivating devices. Counter culturists see expressions of authority everywhere: there are endless rules and regulations which demand order and conformity; grades are used to induce attendance and attentiveness;

teachers are powerless before administrators and students are powerless before both; parents are treated as intruders.

Charles Reich[28] makes the point that the youngster who gets A's is well on his way to being suitable material for the Corporate State. Reich states that public schools are intensely concerned with training students to stop thinking and start obeying; public school then becomes "obedience schools", helping to fit students into the Corporate State. The student is taught to accept authority without question, to respect authority simply because of its position, to obey not merely in the area of school regulations but in the area of facts and ideas as well. Hence, indoctrination is seen by Reich and the counter culturists as playing an important role in public schools. This indoctrination can take obvious forms such as showing the advantages of Democracy and capitalism over Communism and socialism. However, subtle forms of indoctrination also take place in that schools try to force-feed a whole set of values and attitudes about the "American way of life".

So complete is the process of training students to fit into a role, Jerry Farber[29] has labeled them "nigger". In a popular essay that has been reprinted 500 times, Farber points out that public schools do not make much sense unless you understand that students are "niggers". Examples cited by Farber are that students have separate but unequal dining facilities, students are politically disenfranchised, when they rebel they are either ignored or put off with trivial concessions, faculty members must be addressed as "Sir" or "Mr.", students are always wrong in any dispute, and when a teacher says "jump" students jump. So completely successful is this slave-master approach to education, states Farber, that students forget algebra and literature,

but they can successfully follow orders. Students do not expect orders to make sense, things are to be done because teachers say that they are to be done.

The result of this teaching of obedience, rote learning, external rewards, and motivation through fear, according to the counter culturist, is a tendency to alienate man from himself. They also believe that man alienated from himself is susceptible to external controls and manipulation and thus develops into mechanical, dehumanized men. These men, alienated from themselves and others, easily controlled by external forces, are thus subject to the whims of the faceless bureaucracy of technology and the totalitarian state.

A very real danger, according to John Hurst,[30] is that education is becoming technologized at an accelerating pace, and as this occurs private industry is moving into the educational business at an alarming rate. Hurst believes that public education is in danger of being swallowed by the Corporate State for the ends of a managed society and private profit.

Hurst[31] also states that the major thrust in education is toward the increasing application of "behaviorism", the theoretical base for human behavior in a technocratic state. He also points out that research funded by the federal government, state governments, and other sources in the universities, the schools, the National Laboratories (research units set up around the country by the U. S. Office of Education), and increasingly in industry, is directed toward behavioristic research. Hurst believes that the ultimate end of the behavioristic research is the manipulation of the student as an object. Hurst points out that since the federal government finances the overwhelming

majority of research and experimental programs it exerts a very direct and significant control over all education in America. Thus, the federal government is encouraging the rapid expansion of the use of programmed instruction, teaching machines, performance contracting, and the use of drugs as "behavioristic" tools to reach "behavioral objectives" through "behavioral modification".

Hurst[32] sees education becoming simply another element in an enlarging web of an interconnected control network, increasingly divorced from the control of the people. Education for profit by private industry no longer means providing paper, books, and chalk. It now involves thousands of packaged, predigested, programmed learning units using expensive electronic hardware, performance contracting, and the building and development of massive educational complexes.

Performance contracting is one of the most recent inroads by private industry in education, and according to Hurst, perhaps the most frightening. Performance contracting is a system by which the teaching of sections of a school curriculum (as in Texarkana) or teaching an entire school (as in Gary) is subcontracted to a profit making corporation. The corporation's fee is contingent on student success in learning reading, math, or whatever the contract calls for. Performance contracting began as a pilot project with a grant from the Federal Government Office of Education and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The first experiment in 1969-70 was somewhat embarrassing, Dorsett Educational Systems earned its profit simply by teaching school children in Texarkana the answers to tests they would be given. In spite of this type of failure, the system was applied in at least 20 school districts across the country in 1970-71.[33]

Other examples of industrial encroachments into education can be seen by the "job corps" camps which are all contracted to private industry. The Job Corps was described as offering dropouts a new environment where hopes could be lifted and skills developed free from the shackles of oppressive surroundings. In spite of glowing reports from the industries, every independent assessment of these camps gives a dismal picture, often of scandalous proportions.[34] Perhaps the worst of these centers was "Camp Parks" in California which was contracted to Litton industries. Camp Parks is described by Jack Scott and William Goodman[35] as a repressive militaristic school which included armed guards at the gates and doctored reports and statistics to make the program appear to be doing what it was not. According to Scott and Goodman, the Job Corp's greatest success seemed to be in providing recruits for the Army.

The counter culturists believe that the most obvious way that the Corporate State is asserting itself in the public schools has been the practice of ability grouping, tracking, or streaming. Tracking is now identified by the counter culturists as the chief means of controlling manpower "in the National Interest". Such control is basically undemocratic in character according to advocates of a counter culture. Moreover, in their view the system is hypocritical. Individuals are encouraged to believe that opportunities for social advancement are unlimited and that it is necessary to encourage young people to achieve and get ahead. However, in reality, opportunities are limited, not everyone can become a scientist, manager, engineer, or a doctor. Therefore, we must have a system which can help to control the flow of manpower into the economy. Tracking is seen by the counter culturists as ensuring

that the American work force is not overeducated. Tracking also helps to ensure that less prestigious occupations, like sanitation work, are supplied with manpower. An even further thrust in this direction is now being encouraged by the United States Office of Education with "Career Education". The Office of Education is now developing 15 clusters-of-work categories, or curricular systems. One cluster, for example, is the health sciences, ranging all the way from the hospital orderly up to and including a highly specialized surgeon. According to Sidney Marland,[36] the United States Commissioner of Education, the concept is that the student should be ready when he leaves school and not necessarily graduating, either to enter postsecondary education or to go directly into the world of work with pride, satisfaction and competence. According to this theory, the student could leave school at age 15 to become a service-station attendant, and a year later he may want to go back to school and study about transmissions, and become a transmission specialist for his community. In career education, the school system is constant, and students spin off from it and spin back onto it according to Marland.

In summary then, the counter culturists deviate from some critics of public education today. To some recent critics of education, public schools are not doing a very good job in educating children. However, counter culturists believe that public schools are horrifyingly successful. Viewing our society as one of increasing industrialization, bureaucracy, alienation, depersonalization, and meaninglessness in life, then surely the public schools are doing a good job in turning out students who accept their role in this society. If the industrial society demands efficiency, security, and large-scale co-ordination of

men and resources to produce higher levels of affluence people need to be trained, not educated, to fit into a role. If this is the purpose of our public schools as a social institution, then the counter culturists conclude, that it is extremely successful. Therefore, attempts at changing or reforming public education are futile, and maybe even absurd. The only way counter culturists believe that reform is possible is to escape from the dominant culture or rebuild it from the ground up, hence, the development of counter culture type of schools.

Counter Culture Schools: A Model

As explained previously, the British Infant School seems to have been the model for the alternative type of free school. The model for the counter culture type of free school is best explained by Rasberry Exercises[37] by Salli Rasberry and Robert Greenway. So popular has Rasberry Exercises been that they are now in their fourth edition in less than two years with a Rasberry Exercise II in the process of being printed.

Rasberry and Greenway explain that it is a revolutionary act to be involved in the type of school that freed individuals from the dominant society. Establishing an alternative system for learning is an explicit reflection of a set of beliefs. Rasberry and Greenway feel that it is a delusion to say alternative schooling on one hand and accept the dominant culture on the other. The authors explain that some people pick and choose what to use in starting a curriculum for a school outside the public school system. Rasberry and Greenway feel that this approach does not help children and equate it with repairing with band aids what is inherently a system with a terminal disease. They examine

the possibility of change within the existing systems of education but feel that attempts at improvement seem only to further constrain the free growth of children, "in the innovative public school, the children get to develop their own alienation freely and individualistically!"[38] The two authors urge those working for change to "do it" and free themselves from the worrisome hassling, emanating from lives splintered between cultures. They ask the penetrating question, "How long has it been since you taught a culture you believed . . . since you felt education simply to be sharing what you most deeply enjoy with those whom you love?"[39]

The heart of the Rasberry and Greenway model for counter culture schools is a process of rejecting what they believe to be the dominant culture and accepting new ideas leading toward a free-learning environment. For example, they view public schools as based on knowledge, authority, and structure; moving away from these concepts, they urge adopting freedom, sharing, and creativity in their place. Rasberry Exercises views sharing as being at the heart of the new culture, moving away from competition which they believe was at the heart of the old culture. By using teaching-as-sharing as the basis of a curriculum, the authors believe you can avoid learning-as-transmitting-content problems. By using teaching-as-sharing, new types of skills are used or developed; watching, hearing, testing, integrating, but not memorizing abstractions that is at the heart of the old culture.

Figures 1 and 2 show attempts by Rasberry and Greenway which try to trace changes between the new ways and what is happening in some free schools.[40]

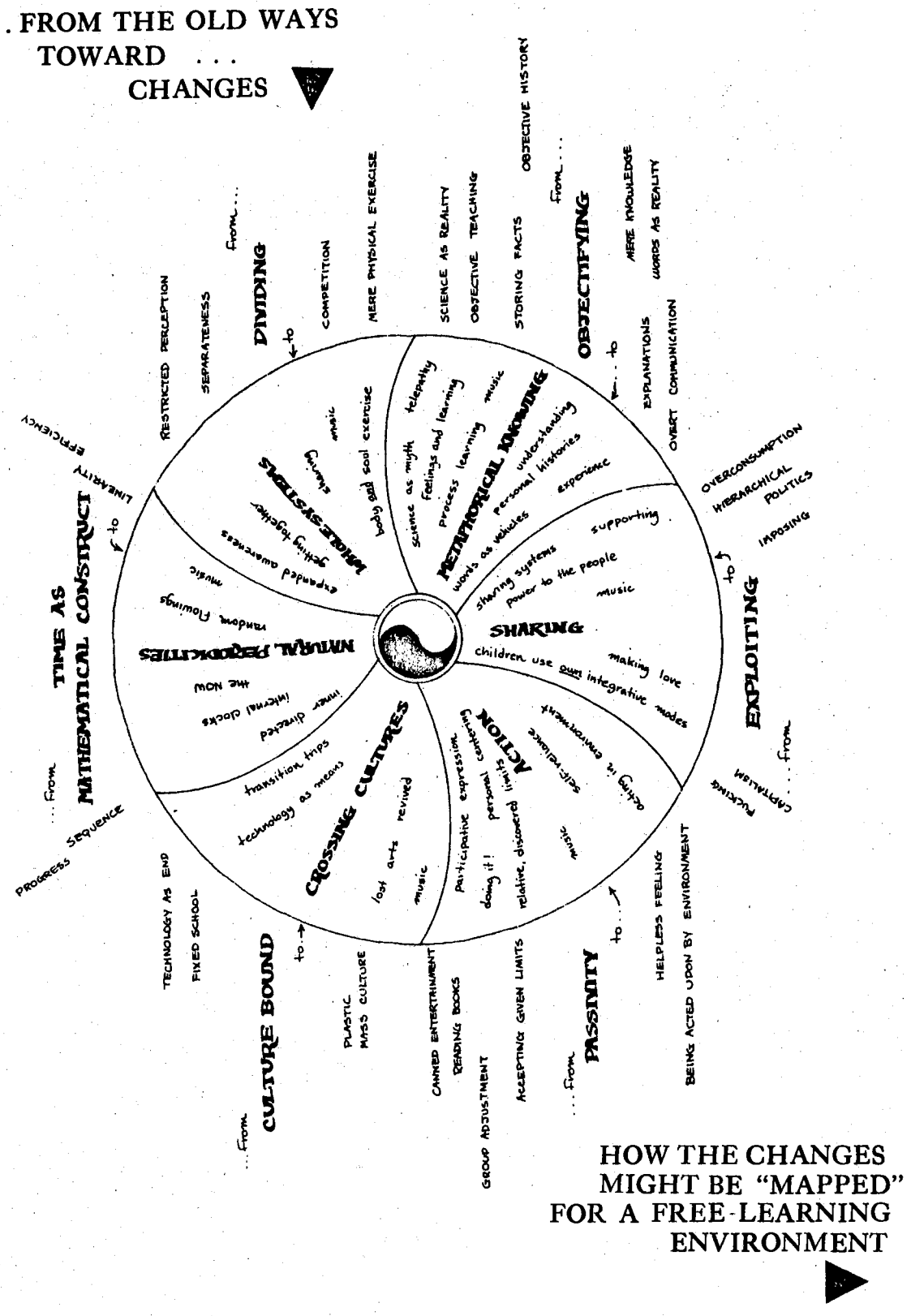

Figure 1. How the Changes Might Be "Mapped" for a Free-Learning Environment

CHANGES

"The best way to fight evil is to make energetic progress in the good."
...I Ching

ROUTES TOWARD A BETTER CULTURE	IDEAS FOR TEACHING & LEARNING *Examples of bringing Changes into Free Schools ....*	RESOURCES
NATURAL PERIODICITIES ...and random flowings *music* THE NOW internal clocks inner direction grooving with spaces • curves	Share cycles -- menstrual, hearts, tides, brains, waves • Make school banners for different lunar phases (or tides, or seasons) • Plot some loving family member's menstrual periods • Study cosmic rays in cloud chamber • PLANT RASPBERRIES • Make domes Personal histories • Go on trips without any plans • Meditation • Build a building - inFlatables - soFt environments MultiMedia trips waking and sleeping habits Wander Growing seasons The Acid Test • Make your own soFt clock	All natural things apparently have rhythms pulses periodicities Center for Short Lived Phenomena Edmund Scientific Company Thumbs Beckminster Fuller's writing & books The Golden Bough Loren Eiseley Zenoworks Favallones Ant Farm Resources -- partnerships
WHOLE SYSTEMS Gestalts Ecology *music* expanded perception GETTING IT TOGETHER holistic systems of exercise sharing modes feeling the whole more than the part	make a Zen garden • Learn to say what you want make a pond and be with it For years teach the Whole Earth Catalogue • Bathe together learn how to simulate systems via computers Experiment with Foodsharing systems Make a school sauna • Long distance running BEGIN A SKILLS EXCHANGE group as metaphor for the mind Dig into a cubic yard of soil and see the balance Tai chi • Karate • Zen disciplines • Trading Posts	Whole Earth Catalogue John Tenes -- ponds Zen gardening Big Rock Candy Mountain catalogue Food conspiracies River Tai chi
CROSSING CULTURES Transitions communities as schools TRIPS *music* technology as a vehicle back to Lost Arts floating but close New Arts	Talk to your parents -- or join the Peace Corps (convince them to send the whole school to Marrakesh) Calligraphy • sewing • spinning • weaving • printing Technology dominated by Art -- welding APPRENTICE TO PERSON MOST ADEPT AT SKILLS YOU WANT • Bicycle to, say, Peru Have someone bandage your eyes For a day, and discover who helps -- and what sight has to do with the culture • The World's Music	Peace Corps Hermann Hesse Vocations For Social Change Whole Earth Catalogue Appendix Rasberry Greenways' Exercises
METAPHORICAL KNOWING metaphorical thinking Process learning -- skills personally validated EXPERIENCE Science as myth words as personal histories telepathy Humanistic prophecy *music*	Explore the metaphorical roots you like -- "making the Familiar Strange" • invent words • play with analogies THE PYRAMIDS! Rituals • spiritual trips Cider presses, butter churns, ice cream machines Doing instead of talking • Family trees Relativity and Quantum mechanics Pythagoras and harmonics • the affective Realism Visit local history-makers • send messages Indian myths • poems frequently collected Notice why breakages occur Write science Fiction	Synectics Appendix Craig -- Appendix Dawn of Magic Kpelle Culture Ant Farm Terry Borton Esalen George Brown
ACTION + DOING PARTICIPATIVE EXPRESSIVENESS Doing it! personal centering self reliance Acting with environments relative, discovered limits *music*	Psychodrama • whole school a marching band or a guerrilla theater (tour Los Angeles, then Europe) MUSIC - MUSIC GROUPS • Ethnic Foods Days of just touching-in-silence Have festivals to gather information Routes to Enlightenment • Yoga Mock trials (cultural and natural law) Invent ways to earn bread: harvest seaweed, open fruit stand, invent a healthful taffee, etc.) Don't block autonomy Invent space • learn skills • Fit spaces to moods, needs Backpack without carrying food	Parnassus Sense Relaxation Big Rock Candy Mountain Ant Farm Mountain Grove Al Linga Outward Bound Meiklejohn, Civil Liberties Vocations for Social Change Riverun Favallones
SHARING + SUPPORTIVE Let children use own integrative modes socialism MAKING LOVE sharing systems *music!* Power to the People	"Time" -- each person's place and unique periodicity (breaking bread, communing instead of gulping and chattering) Every major act -- From Birth to Death -- as RITUAL Children's games and play Learn how to know and express what you want Be responsible for yourself • don't project needs Boycott that which damages our lives	Lao Tzu Ishi Martin Buber Piaget Iona and Peter Opie

Figure 2. Ideas for Teaching and Learning

Counter Culture Schools: Some Examples

The two most obvious examples of the counter culturists putting their theories into practice are the recent growth of communes and counter culture schools. The last three years have seen drastic changes in the commune movement. A few years ago there were only a few scattered communes in the United States. These usually were urban groups, crash pads, intellectual utopians, or conservative Christian communes. Today, over two thousand communes exist and this figure does not include the several thousand urban co-ops and collectives that have recently become extremely popular.[41] An accurate account of communes is difficult to make, some are mobile, changing locations often. Most communes do not seek publicity, others try to remain completely anonymous. Dick Fairfield[42] reports that publicity is the death of a community, if a commune lasts two years they will have dozens of visitors a week, often coming in crowds. The innundation of communes by visitors has become the most serious problem for some communes. Most communes, especially rural agricultural communes, exist on a subsistence level. Turning away visitors goes against some of the members' basic philosophy of trust and sharing. However, the mass of publicity in the popular press and television specials on communal living has created more visitors and tourists than present communes could possibly accommodate. Some visitors are merely curiosity seekers, others simply want a place to stay until returning to their ordinary world, some are college students between semesters looking for new experiences, still others are run-aways, lured to communes by rumors of drugs and free sex.

A classification of communes would be an oversimplification of what actually exists. However, communes may be broadly placed under

five headings: religious, primarily rural and agricultural; service, which provide a total work-recreational environment for disadvantaged individuals (Synanon for drug addicts); political, a wide range but particularly the new left type of political commune; scientific, based on information and approaches from the behavioral sciences; and miscellaneous, which includes any type of commune not described above.[43]

Regardless of the classification, the common element in the commune movement is the rejection of the dominant culture and a movement toward creating a new culture. Some of these communes have their own schools, thus tying the commune movement and the counter culture type of free school together.

Beyond Free Schools: Community

Jerry Friedberg[44] provides an example of how a free school was a stepping-stone toward a community. Friedberg was director of Lorillard Children's School, a free school in New York, for over a year. However, Friedberg and a few others came to believe that no matter how "free" a school is, it cannot be as natural, spontaneous, organic, and life-integrative as they would like their lives to be. Friedberg and several others left Lorrillard Children's School to found an intentional community hoping that it would provide a better alternative for them.

Lorrillard began with staff control with consultation with parents, rather than with parent or joint control. The staff changed and grew by a unique process of self-selection. Anyone who wanted to join the school was invited to come for an open-ended stay, depending on how things worked. There were no forms and no screening process, except

contact with students and staff. If things worked, the new people could stay as long as they wished; Friedberg reports that they never had to say no to take a vote. In this way, the staff, which began as a group that had grown together organically over considerable time, continued to grow at a gradual pace.

Friedberg reports that unfortunately, the school enrollment did not grow or go through a similar process. People came to Lorillard because the public schools were felt to be terrible and their free school provided an alternative. The parents were an extremely heterogeneous group who disagreed among themselves and with the staff on many basic issues. One major source of trouble was that the freedom encountered in the school conflicted with some highly disciplined home lives. Some parents pressed for more discipline, prohibition of children's cursing, and greater emphasis upon academics.

The Lorillard school gradually shifted to a joint parent-staff control which produced more frustration. Friedberg states that two things turned the staff off most: constant tugging and pulling by people who were psychologically and physically in different places, and the institutionalization of Lorillard as a school. The staff found it increasingly difficult to continue working in the school. Some of the staff decided that they wanted a place for people, adults and children, where each had freedom to be or not to be with others, where children could relate to adult activities, and where contact and learning would be natural, sporadic, and not worried about.

Friedberg relates that the greatest success of Lorillard school was that it gave some of the staff the opportunity to try communal finances, consensus decision-making, organic self-selection, encounter

and vulnerability. With this background several of the staff at Lorillard recently began an international community 110 miles from New York City. One of the goals of their commune is a different way of raising children--being with, teaching, leaving alone, learning from, and sharing a life-way, exploration naturally and organically, as they live together and deal with their daily needs and impulses.

According to Friedberg, the children receive more attention from more adults more genuinely than children commonly do. The children are continually in relation to the adult world, they learn to be more independent, to develop their own world, and at the same time relate to the adult world. The adults are reported as never worrying about "are the kids learning enough". They report that the kids are involved in adult activities and hence learning a lot in the process. The children are also a part of the experiment with a new way of life. They often sit in on the business and encounter sessions. They see adults struggle with their feelings, and deal with their differences. There are experiments with self-regulation in things like bedtime, food, dress and language. The curriculum of the commune school (they do not consider it a school themselves) could be considered to be made up of the following elements: Gestalt encounter, communal decision-making and responsibility, play, music, dancing, quiet times, massage, meditation, bread-baking, organic gardening, household repair, meal preparation, milking, automotive mechanics, nutrition, communal child-rearing, multiple relationships, nonpossessiveness, ecology, community relations, and economics.

Friedberg concludes by saying that alternative schools are only a step, and that such schools are a poor substitute for a rich family and

community life, for both children and staff. Beyond free schools then, lie other alternatives worth exploring.

Hearthshire School

William Hedgepeth[45] reports that child-rearing in almost all of the new communes is a completely shared experience. In the communes each child has a wide range of adult influences to draw from. The children are reported to be passed around, in a sense, among all men and women so that there grows an intimacy between all of the kids and all of their elders, but primary allegience seems to remain with their actual mothers and fathers. Because of the strong belief in natural childbirth, babies are often born completely out of the reach of official sources, hence, no marriage licenses, no birth certificates, no Social Security number, and no way of being classified or kept track of by the Corporate State. Hopefully, then, the child becomes completely insulated from the impersonal mechanisms of society, including the Draft.

Hearthshire School, in San Francisco, is described as an extension of the home, the home being a commune for over half of the children.[46] No tuition is charged; most parents contribute time rather than money. Others pay enough to meet rent and other expenses. The school tries to stress education through interaction and spontaneity; there are no daily schedules of classes. Most of the parents who send their children to Hearthshire are interested less in academics and more in arts, crafts, music, politics, and such practical skills as cooking, sewing, and first-aid.

The thirty children, ages five to twelve, are encouraged to seek out their own interests and then pursue them with the aid and encouragement of the teachers. There is reportedly no hierarchy, between teachers and students, teachers are just those who are not kids.

Saturna Island Free School

Saturna Island provides a different type of counter culture school. It is not made up of children from a commune, but rather, students coming together from all types of family background and forming their own community. Located on Saturna Island, British Columbia, Canada, the school is composed of a house, three cabins, and two barns. The school is run as a boarding school with weekly staff meetings with the students. All decisions are made by the whole group, students and staff having equal votes. There are no classes, no classrooms, no teachers as such, no exams, and practically no rules. The major emphasis is learning how to live with each other and learning how to learn. There are eighteen students and seven staff members, two with public school teaching experience and five with degrees. Most of the students live in the house, but two girls sleep in a woodshed because they prefer the outdoor life. The tuition is $1,250 per year which discriminates against children from poor families but according to the staff it is the only way that the school can exist.

They have only one rule which is no drugs; violation of that rule means expulsion which they have done in the past. The staff is opposed to the rule but unless they have the rule, it could place the whole school in jeopardy. There are no rules about sexual relations between the students. The staff tries to make sure that the students are

well-informed, but feel that they have no business interfering in personal matters like their sex life.

The staff's definition of learning is interaction with individuals, and interaction with the environment, and that education is a kind of finding out, exploring. They start with the assumption that it is part of human nature to find out as much as possible about the environment you live in, and to move toward better ways of people living together and communication with each other. Saturna Island Free School is an attempt to provide an environment that makes that environment possible.[47]

Pacific High School

Pacific High School, ten miles south of Palo Alto, California, operates on land donated by parents. The boarding school places emphasis on freedom, student participation, and classes that are entirely voluntary. There are no exams and no grades. The average class meets two hours a week; the only class meeting daily is yoga. Geodesic dome building is a favored activity; ten such domes have been built. A few are designed as dorms, and others are for activities or classes. Students and staff work together to construct the wooden buildings. All of the housework, except cooking, is handled by students. Constance Woulf[48] reports that the homogeneity of the group and the physical isolation of Pacific High School combine to create a little world of its own.

The school is presently a kind of commune; students and staff live in the domes they have built together. They have an open admission policy and take kids on a first come, first serve basis.

Seventeen Pacific High students and two staff members traveled in Mexico as a part of the curriculum at their school. They divided the money available by the number of students and gave them the option of traveling in any direction. They later met in Mexico City for the return trip home. One of the staff members reported that there had been no trouble, much excitement, and everyone's experience of Mexico was different.[49]

Michael Kaye[50] reports that perhaps fifty kids have left Pacific High since they have become a community. From those with whom Kaye has kept in touch, he reports that no consistent pattern has emerged. Pacific High graduates have been involved in everything from serious academic scholarship to heroin. He also reports that many students go to Pacific High disoriented and confused, but many of the same kids leave the community having gained strength, confidence, and direction. Kaye also states the following in describing their school:

> Although our graduates have access to higher education and jobs, it is not our purpose to prepare them for entry into the dominant culture. We are an institution born of, and linked to the counter culture. Ideals for everyone in the community are frankly utopian and we are proud of it. Given the state of civilization at this time, the other alternative is unthinkable.[51]

The Philosophy of the Counter Culture

Schools: Existentialism

Abraham Kaplan[52] describes the recent spread of existentialism by stating that in Europe, and to some extent in America, and quite markedly in Asia, existentialism has aroused the interest not merely of the beatniks in the various cultures, but also of the professional philosophers and the serious students of ideas. Kaplan explains that part of

the reason for the widespread interest in existentialism is directly traceable to certain characteristics of the contemporary cultural situation. "Existentialism owes its popularity not just to the shortcomings of other philosophies, but to failures in politics, economics, and social organizations in general."[53] Kaplan continues:

> Existentialism comes before us with the avowed purposes of describing and evaluating the situation in which man finds himself, and from which he looks out upon society, nature, and--if there be one--God. It aims at describing and evaluating what it calls 'the human condition'.[54]

Hence existentialism is compatible with the counter culture type of free school, and is probably the only philosophy to which they could adhere.

Most writers refer to Soren Kierkegaard as the instigator of Existentialism. Historically, however, others have raised existential questions before Kierkegaard; those being Socrates, St. Augustine, Pascal, and Nietzsche. Many other writers and poets in the past have expressed the concepts fundamental to existentialism; those include Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Rilke, Goethe, Alexander Pope, and many others.[55] Kierkegaard, however, is considered by most to form the intellectual basis for the modern development of existentialism. Kierkegaard asked the individual to break away from this society in order to save his existence as a person.

Friedrich Nietzsche also added to the existential fight against the dangers of the technical society and against its depersonalization. Nietzsche saw technical society as destroying the creative power of life. Man becomes, according to Nietzsche, a cog in the all-embracing machine of production and consumption.[56]

Twentieth century existentialism has been an attempt to break the power of technology by isolating the individual from the embracing structure of technical civilization. It tries to save the person by asking him to create himself without norms, laws and principles, without anybody else or anything else. The most popular existentialist is probably Jean Paul Sartre, who has gained such popularity in recent years on both sides of the Atlantic that people have begun to think of him and existentialism almost as synonymous.[57] Sartre's novels have dealt with the theme of the necessity for man to know himself. His novels have been described as presenting a pessimistic view of man which offers almost no hope for society and little for the individual.

Classical philosophy has traditionally centered its attention on the question of essence; philosophers have felt that the main business of philosophy is to answer the question, "What is reality?" This central question is usually answered through study of other companion questions of essence: What is man? What is God? What is the Universe? What is knowledge, truth, beauty, good, evil?

Existentialism is a departure from this tradition, relegating question of essence to subordinate status. The Existentialists claim that the question, "What Is Man?" must wait upon an answer to the problem of explaining what it means to say that man <u>is</u>. "How can we search for essence before we have even explained the <u>existence</u> of the thing we seek the essence of?"[58] Kaplan[59] explains this position by stating that for all questions in regard to anything in the universe, with one exception, namely man, <u>its essence precedes its existence</u>. "First, a man <u>is</u>; and <u>what</u> he is is settled in the course of his existence."[60] Thus, the human being, in his every action, defines his own essence.

Because man's existence precedes his essence, no definition of man is possible; this is, then, the central core of the existentialist's conception of human nature. As Sartre formulates it then, "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."[61] To conceive of man as the existent which determines its own essence is then to recognize that the most fundamental attribute of the human being is his capacity for choice. Kaplan sees then that the humanity of man does not consist in the virtue of his choices, but in their genuineness, in the fact that he has made choices. It is the decision, then, that makes existence real. The man that makes no decisions has no existence. An important point to the existentialist is that he must decide; the choice he makes must be genuinely his or he is not making them. Thus, man and freedom are the same thing. Whatever a man may be, he is free to be something else if he chooses; but he is not free to choose to give up his freedom.

From this interpretation of man then, man is the determiner of his own nature and the definer of his own values. Since he is the determiner of his own future, existential man feels the terrible burden of responsibility thrust on him by the withdrawal of all other supports. So, as many writers describe, far from being carefree and irresponsible, existential man is continually in the presence of doubt and anguish as to what he should do, for he knows that when he chooses, he chooses for Man. His life and conduct become his definitions of Man.[62]

Hence it becomes the irrevocable fact for the counter culturists that men do not have to follow environment's way. There is nothing in man that inevitably drives him to accept one behavior pattern over another. However much the sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists turn him into a cultural product, man can still oppose his

culture. Man can choose which way he will take, a factor that has played a significant role in the development of communes and counter culture type schools.

Existentialism and Education

While the great existentialists of today like Sartre, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, and Gabriel Marcel have had little to say directly about education and educational problems, there is no lack of interpretive analyses among philosophers of education and other students of existentialism. George F. Kneller, Van Cleve Morris, Philip Phenix, Paul Roubiczek, Leroy Troutner, Maxine Green and others have expressed themselves clearly on the present need for an existential approach in education.

Van Cleve Morris[63] explains that the existential school will be a place where man's non-rational (his aesthetic moral, and emotional self) will be much more in evidence than his scientific, rational, self. Existentialists will be more interested in developing the affective side of man, his capacity to love, to appreciate, to respond emotionally to the world about him. What this means is that the school must direct its attention to the release of the human self, to the involvement of the child in personal decision and moral judgment to a far greater degree than he knows at present. Existentialists are not so much concerned about gathering factual evidence, they are more concerned with what man does with the evidence. The student must make choices; he is not compelled to select any one answer, he can select any. But it must be his selection, and he alone is responsible for it. He may of course choose in a way in which the majority chooses, but the

company of a majority does not make his choice right. The student is then condemned to live in constant anguish and doubt as to whether his choice was the right one. Thus the teacher must bring the student to realize the implications of his decision, and the student must not be shielded from the consequences of his choices. The student must stand alone; he cannot blame his weaknesses or mistakes on his environment, his family, on bad advice, or on human nature. Therefore the student must recognize the inevitability of periods of frustration and loneliness. He must also cultivate self-reliance as a key character trait.

George Kneller[64] points out that the existential student must look within himself for an understanding of the good, the true, and the beautiful. The cherished values of a teacher should never be forced on students, lest these very values become a code or a pattern of conduct calling for uncritical acceptance. Therefore, an existentialist would advocate a study of the world's religions as an academic matter, of comparative religion particularly. The humanities would have a central place in the curriculum to study the human impact they exert in revealing man's inherent guilt, sin, suffering, tragedy, death, hate, and love. Kneller believes that the idea of art and play become valuable means of self-expression and necessary activities for children to fill their quiet moments with the personal judgments he must make concerning his own life. The field of art is particularly favored by the existentialists as a means of allowing the individual to look at his world and to say with his hands what he sees, without prior compliance with so-called artistic laws of form, balance, and line.

Kneller also believes that there can be no prescribed curriculum since for the existentialists the truth is infinite. Existentialists

do believe in the integrity of subject matter; limits may even be set on the extent to which, at a certain point in human development, certain material is appropriate. However, far more existential is the student's relationship to the material studied. The student studying some content still retains his freedom to observe, inquire, explore, seek personal release, or even stop studying if he chooses.

The Psychology of the Counter Culture Schools

A new "Third Force Psychology" started making inroads during the 1950's and became an important field of study during the 1960's. The Third Force Psychology, or humanistic psychology, does not easily compare with the other two established "forces" of psychology. The first force, experimental psychologists, have a strategy at the base of their work which requires that they only look at certain phenomena, usually observed and measurable behavior. The second force, the Freudians, is open to all research strategies, but is built on the metaphysical assumptions that man is a fallen creature, imperfectable, doomed to animal-like aggression and modes of fulfillment. The third force differs with the behaviorists by accepting a wider range of love, hate, and intangible aspirations. They differ with the Freudians in believing that man is inherently good or at least neutral, that he is perfectable, God-like, growing, and that his chief purpose in life is not to react to stimuli, not to adjust to a bad situation, but to grow and to create the necessary utopias in which we can all grow to our full potential.[65]

There was no one founder of the new humanistic approach to psychology, but there were many who contributed to its growth: Abraham

Maslow, Rollo May, Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, and many others. The new Third Force Psychology is described by the humanists as a psychology that would:

> --not reduce Man to an objective entity
> --not categorize man as an aspect of something else
> --accept Man as good or at least neutral rather than intrinsically evil
> --explore the good things, the healthy things, the growth process in man rather than his sickness
> --take Man in his totality, and in evolutional perspective.[66]

Abraham Maslow

Maslow[67] described the Third Force Psychology as a transition. Growth, or self-actualization, is a process, not an end:

> It is for a people growing out of a destructive culture, a culture built on what hindsight now shows us are pathogenic, anti-survival principles. It is a vision groping for higher and higher spiritual syntheses, moving towards individual and then cultural enlightenment.[68]

Thus, humanistic psychology and self-actualization have been popular with the counter culture movement.

Rasberry Exercises describes the following as the essence ideas that Maslow was dealing with:

> --evil comes from above rather than from below (from the culture rather than from the intrinsic nature of man)
> --people can change through an act of will--from the domination of basic needs toward the fulfillment of spiritual and aesthetic needs
> --every crime against our own real human nature makes us despise ourselves
> --ungratified needs breed illness, distortion, a blocking of our true, human potential
> --people seek, not homeostasis, but movement towards actualization, movement from basic needs to growth needs to full gratification (a new and higher need emerges when the lower needs fulfills itself by being sufficiently gratified).[69]

Maslow's central concept is that children with unfulfilled basic needs will not grow into their human potential, though they may gain

skills related to getting what they need. Schools must therefore peel away the inhibitions and constraints preventing the child's own unique self to emerge. The important thing is that the choice must really be free and if the chooser is not too sick or frightened to choose, he will choose wisely, in a healthy and growthward direction. According to Maslow, as the child grows, he becomes capable of a perception and insight based on "being-love"--on fulfillment rather than need. Thus the child is able to integrate and synthesize with abstraction, less judging, less interfering and intrusion. The child can then find his own pace of growth, and learn to protect his uniqueness while growing. He will then fear knowledge less and less, and develop courage for making necessary jumps into "higher" orders of being and knowing.

Maslow states that it is important to recognize that human needs are organized into a "hierarchy of relative prepotency". Maslow's hierarchy, beginning with the lowest level, includes five classifications of needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. Only when the needs at one level have been at least partially satisfied does the individual normally seek to satisfy those at the next level.[70] As Maslow states:

> One main implication of this phrasing is that gratification becomes as important a concept as deprivation in motivation theory, for it releases the organism from the domination of a relatively more physiological need, permitting thereby the emergence of other more social goals. The physiological needs, along with their partial goals, when chronically gratified cease to exist only in a potential fashion in the sense that they may emerge again to dominate the organism if they are thwarted. But a want that is satisfied is no longer a want. The organism is dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs. If hunger is satisfied, it becomes unimportant in the current dynamics of the individual.[71]

Self-actualizing people are then defined by Maslow as those people who seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing. Their philosophy seems to follow Nietzsche's exhortation, "Become what thou art!" Self-actualizing people are those who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable. This definition implies, according to Maslow, that gratification, past or present, of the basic emotional needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect, and self-respect has not been thwarted. The results of Maslow's research showed that self-actualizing people felt safe and unanxious, accepted, loved and loving, respect-worthy, and respected, and that they had worked out their philosophical, religious, or axiological bearings.

Carl Rogers

When asked to suppose that he had a magic wand by which he could produce just one change and only one change in our education system and what would that change be, Carl Rogers gave the following answer: "I would change the goal of the education system from teaching, which I see as a vastly overrated function, to the facilitation of learning . . ."[72] Rogers explains that one of the most effective means yet discovered for facilitating constructive learning, growth, and change in individuals or in the organizations they compose, is the intensive group experience. This process is known by a variety of names: encounter group, T-group, sensitivity training, and task-oriented group. Rogers, who has been instrumental in developing the process, explains that the intensive group or workshop or encounter group usually consists of ten or fifteen persons and a facilitator or leader. It is

usually unstructured, providing a climate of maximum freedom for personal expression, exploration of feelings, and interpersonal communication. Rogers says that the emphasis is on the interactions among the group members in an atmosphere which encourages each to drop his defenses and facades and thus enables him to relate directly and openly to other members of the group which is described as the "basic encounter". According to this theory, individuals come to know themselves and each other more fully than is possible in the usual social or working relationships. There develops a climate of openness, of risk taking and honesty, and this climate generates trust which enables the person to recognize and change self-defeating attitudes, to test out and adopt more innovative and constructive behaviors, and subsequently to relate more adequately and effectively to others in the everyday life situation.[73]

Rogers believes that if the facilitation of learning was adopted as the aim of education, the basic reliance of the teachers would be upon the tendency toward fulfillment, toward actualization, in his students. The teacher would be basing his work on the hypothesis that students who are in real contact with life problems wish to learn, want to grow, seek to discover, endeavor to master, desire to create. The teacher would then attempt to develop a quality of climate in the classroom and a quality of personal relationship with his students which would permit these natural tendencies to come to fruition.

Rogers believes that there are certain attitudinal sets in the facilitator of learning which increase the likelihood that significant learning will take place. One of these attitudes is <u>realness</u>, which is described by Rogers as being the most basic and essential attitude.

When the facilitator is a real person, being what he really is and entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade, he is likely to be effective.

Another attitude necessary to promote significant learning is acceptance, a prizing of the student, a prizing of his feelings and his opinions. When the facilitator values the individual learner as having worth and when this prizing extends to every facet of this individual, then Rogers believes that the likelihood that significant learning will take place is greatly increased.

Another attitude which further establishes a climate for learning is empathic understanding. Rogers believes that when the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of how the process of education and learning appears to the student, then again the likelihood of personally meaningful learning is increased.

Rogers believes that there are two types of learning, cognitive and experiential. Cognitive learning is primarily the fixing of certain associations, learning numbers, the multiplication table, or French. Rogers feels that only very imperceptibly do any of these types of learning change the student. According to Rogers, cognitive learning is usually part of a task set before the student, is often painfully acquired, and is often quickly forgotten.[74]

Experiential learning or significant learning is drawing from the outside and making that which is drawn in a real part of the learner. The distinguishing factor in experiential learning is that it has a quality of personal involvement. The whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects is involved in the learning event. Experiential

learning is seen by Rogers as self-initiated. If the stimulus for learning comes from outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. Experiential learning is pervasive, it makes a difference in the behavior, in attitudes, and perhaps even the personality. Using experiential learning, the learner is the evaluator of what he has accomplished. Rogers believes that when using experiential learning, its essence is meaning. The element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience.

The Future of the Counter Culture Schools

At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, it was hypothesized that the alternative type of free school would die out, being absorbed by the public schools. What the public school system does or does not do will probably have little impact on the growth or development of counter culture schools. The counter culturists view public education as only one repressive social institution among the many repressive institutions that make up our society. Therefore, public schools will not influence the growth and development of the counter culture schools. Since counter culturists view public schools as only a reflection of our society, their belief is that only by changing society will the public schools become humane places to send their children. Therefore, what public schools do, or become, or how they change in the immediate future is of little interest to the counter culturists.

The nature and direction of this society is, of course, another issue. The types of problems that the counter culturists feel are the result of a technological society, and as described earlier in this chapter, have little chance of being resolved in the near future.

Since the problems of industrialization, bureaucracy, technology, accelerating change, alienation, depersonalization, and repression, as viewed by the counter culturists, cannot be overcome in the near future, there is a great possibility that the counter culture type of free school will remain in existence for several years to come. Today, their numbers are few and no attempt will be made in this work to determine the exact number of counter culture schools that are in existence. One could, however, hypothesize that their numbers will continue to grow.

As evidence for the possibility of continued growth of counter culture schools one could point to the growth of the communal movement in the United States. Over two thousand communes have arisen in the past few years. This figure does not include the several thousand urban co-ops and collectives that have also arisen in the past few years. As long as the communal movement continues to grow, counter culture schools are assured of a corresponding growth.

Besides the communal growth, there have been more than one hundred "growth centers" that have sprung up recently across the nation. Growth centers provide a variety of group experiences and examine alternative types of life styles.

Encounter groups have also shown a significant rise in popularity in the past few years. It has been estimated that at least twenty million Americans have been exposed to the encounter group movement in one form or another.[75] One sign of the rising popularity of encounter groups is the rapid accumulation of literature in the popular press on the movement. Articles on sensitivity training or encounter groups have appeared not only in newspapers and magazines of general

readership, but also in journals addressed to specialized readers: educators, businessmen, church groups, law enforcement officials, psychologists and many others.

Carl Rogers[76] reports that the growth of the encounter group movement is significant because it has grown up entirely outside the "establishment". Many universities still look upon encounter groups with scorn. Until the past two years, foundations and government agencies have been unwilling to fund programs of research in the area of encounter groups. Rogers also states that one factor that makes the rapidity of the spread of encounter groups even more remarkable is its complete and unorganized spontaneity. No group or organization has been pushing the development of encounter groups, and there has been no financing of the spread of encounter groups.[77] Rogers states that in spite of adverse pressures (the political Right Wing is certain that it is a Communist Plot), the movement has blossomed and grown until it has permeated every part of the country.

The result of the commune movement, the development of growth centers, the publicity of alternative life styles, and the recent interest and spread of encounter groups, is that the counter culture schools will continue to have a base of interested parents and students to draw from. It would appear that since no institution in our society, including the public schools, can co-opt the counter culture schools movement, they will continue to grow and expand in the near future.

FOOTNOTES

[1]George Orwell, 1984 (New York, 1949).

[2]Ayn Rand, Anthem (New York, 1946).

[3]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (New York, 1946).

[4]Charles Reich, The Greening of America (New York, 1970).

[5]Ibid., pp. 4-8.

[6]Ibid., p. 13.

[7]Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York, 1970).

[8]William Whyte, The Organization Man (New York, 1956).

[9]Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture (New York, 1968).

[10]Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, tr., John Wilkinson (New York, 1964).

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[12]Ibid., p. 0/4.

[13]John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (Boston, 1958).

[14]Jules Henry, Culture Against Man (New York, 1963).

[15]Ivan Illich, Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution (New York, 1970).

[16]Vance Packard, The Hidden Persuaders (New York, 1958).

[17]Vance Packard, The Waste Makers (New York, 1960).

[18]Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (New York, 1959).

[19]Reich, The Greening of America.

[20]Ibid., p. 93.

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CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISSUES IN THE FREE SCHOOL MOVEMENT

As explained in the first chapter of this work, many people are calling the development of free schools a movement. However, most of these schools developed spontaneously and independently of each other, and since there has been no national organization of free schools emerge, and because free schools tend to have at least two different philosophical and psychological bases, one could seriously question whether or not there is indeed a free school movement at all. Since there has been no common consciousness developed among the advocates of free schools, it seems safe to say that there is no such thing as a free school movement.

The two different types of free schools, alternative and counter culture, have developed different approaches to education as shown in Chapters Two and Three. These differences in philosophy and psychology, and activities which take place in the classroom, have led to differences of opinions between the two types of schools. In the literature of the free school movement, and at conferences sponsored by free school advocates, issues have developed over such concepts as freedom, finance, structure, the purpose of education, the roles of the various participants, the use of drugs, political activity, the handling of discipline problems, and the relationship of free schools with public

schools. The development of these issues may be further explained by examining Figure 3, page 158.

The Possible Development of a Free School Movement

The first step in the development of a free school movement has been the spontaneous and independent growth of free schools, scattered from the northeast, to the mid-west, to the Pacific coast. From the development of these free schools followed a series of free school clearinghouses and conferences. Most of these clearinghouses or free school associations describe themselves as being non-profit corporations that exist to further non-authoritarian education in the schools of their region. All of these clearinghouses serve as a loose coalition among the members and develop services to protect the interests of its member schools. All of the free school clearinghouses publish a newsletter trying to inform the member schools of their common interests.

There has also developed a series of conferences which have aided in the development of the free school movement. These conferences were provided for various reasons: to develop interests in the free school movement, to inform participants of alternative forms of education, to teach skills necessary in teaching in free schools, and to share experiences which may aid in the development of free schools.

From these clearinghouses and conferences, there has developed a series of communications: newsletters, magazines, journals, films, radio, and television programs that have aided in the development of free schools. However, there has also developed in the literature of the free school movement, a series of issues, or disputes over various

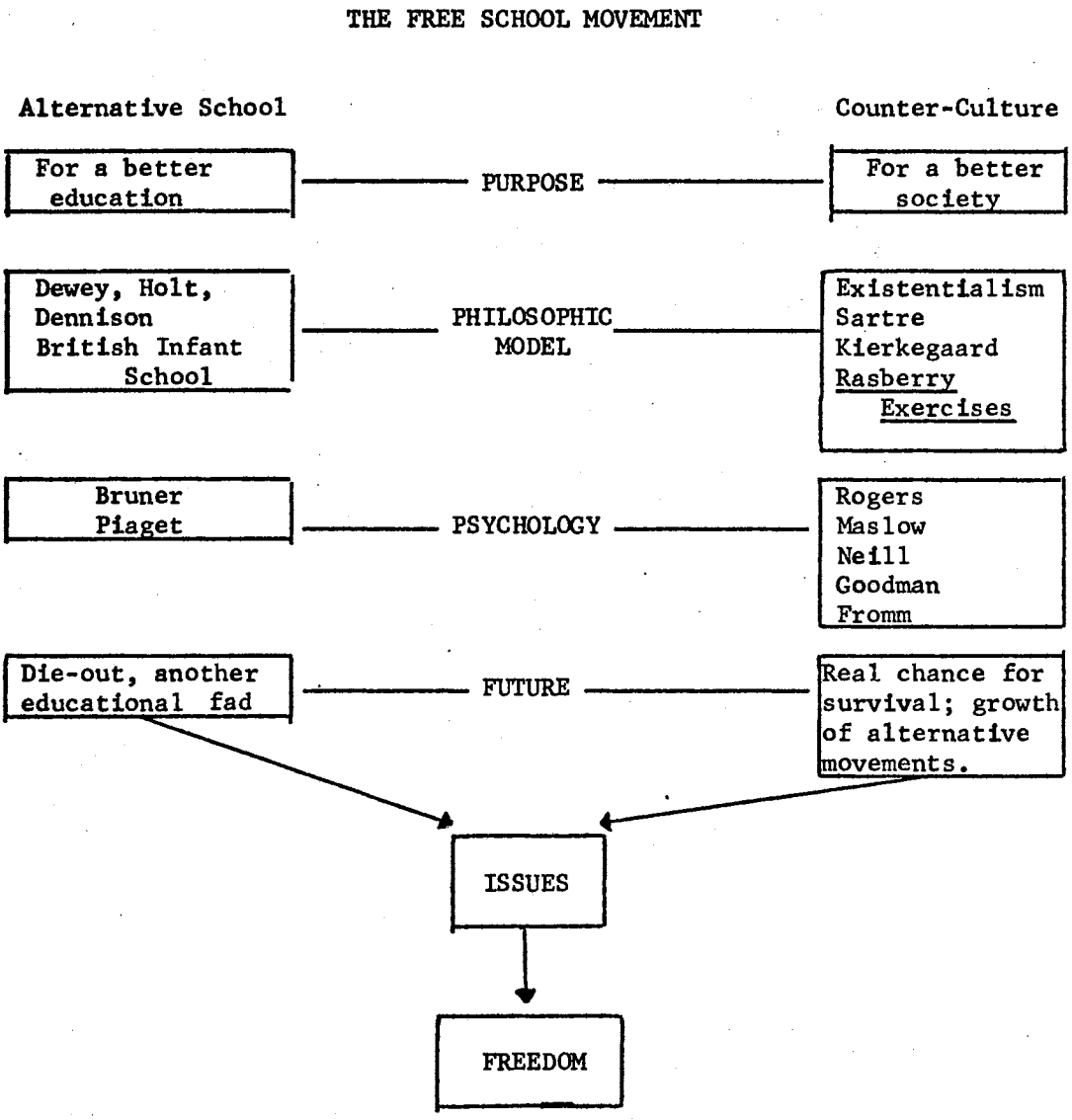

Figure 3. The Free School Movement

concepts of the free school movement. These issues lie at the very heart of the philosophical and psychological basis of the various free schools. If the free schools can resolve these issues, they may develop a common consciousness, thereby becoming a major movement and influencing the direction of education in America. The following chart may further explain this point:

I. Isolated development of free schools

↓

II. The development of free school clearinghouses

↓

III. Development of newsletters, journals and conferences on free schools

↓

IV. Development of issues concerning free schools

↓

V. The examination of issues
(This constitutes the present state of development of the free schools)

↓

VI. Resolution of the issues, the development of a common consciousness.

↓

VII. Growth and development of free schools as a movement

The following sections will be an attempt to examine the present state of the free school development and an examination of issues confronting the free schools. An attempt will be made to show that the way in which the various free schools perceive these issues determines if they have a philosophical background corresponding to either

alternative schools or counter culture schools. An attempt will also be made to show that these issues have not risen because they are important problems facing the various schools, but that they have risen as issues in the literature of the free schools because of the different philosophical and psychological bases of two different types of schools: counter culture schools and alternative schools.

The Issue of Freedom

In the literature of the free school movement, school after school describes how free it is, how fun, how relevant. However, little has been said until recently, about what freedom is in a free school. During the early development of free schools in this country many parents and teachers equated freedom from public schools as meaning freedom for children. Many early attempts at free schools referred to freedom as physical freedom and tended to identify other broad and sometimes vague philosophical dimensions of freedom. Examples of this type of attitude can be seen in the following descriptions of free schools which have appeared in the New Schools Exchange:

> Sacramento Free School--The philosophy of the Sacramento Free School is that love and freedom are integral parts of education, as they are of life. Allowing children to be happy emotionally and psychologically and to develop their full potentials as human beings are more important to us than forcing them to learn to read or write and do homework. Happy children will become happy adults, and happy adults do not make war, commit anti-social acts or destroy other living things.[1]

> Clonlara School--A child here does virtually as he chooses. He plays alone; he plays with others; he builds with blocks, he manipulates peg sets; he paints; he bakes a cake; he goes on trips, he laughs; he ponders, in short, he does whatever his own resources guide him in doing at whatever time he wills. No time limit is set for him. No judgments are made upon his choices other than those he

makes himself. He 'structures' his own time and decides for himself where his interests lie.[2]

Shire School--Our goals: To help the child understand his environment and how it influences him. To help him feel confident in his ability to influence his environment. To help him learn to use the tools which are useful in understanding and in influencing his environment. To help the child feel reverence for life, this life, now. To help the child feel strong and important and whole in the world. To help him accept now, even though it's not all pleasant. To be open and receptive to the beautiful and spend time exulting in it. To be open and receptive to the ugly and spend time fighting it. To help the child discover what has lasting value to him, whether it conforms to our values or not. To protect and nurture the uniqueness of each child, for that is his value to the world.[3]

Sudbury Valley School--The Sudbury Valley School is a new school for a new era, but its underlying assumptions are as old as recorded philosophy: that good character is born out of responsibility and trust; that excellence is born out of personal commitment; that self-discipline is born out of freedom; that creativity is born out of leisure; and that the good life is all of these, embedded in an atmosphere of patience and good faith. The Sudbury Valley School exists for the new realities, just as other schools exist for the old realities. Where others have to entice or force students to remold their wide-ranging interests into one of the few available patterns, we are able to eliminate coercion and seduction from the learning process, and allow freedom to every student to pursue each interest whatever it may be.[4]

The Valley Cooperative School--We hope to combine the advantages of the one-room schoolhouse with the advanced technology now available to educators. We feel that in a warm, relaxed atmosphere, with a minimum of pressure, children will direct their own learning as they need to explore and understand their environment. Our teachers will be people who can sense each child's strengths; they will help the children follow through on finding answers to their own question.[5]

The Independent School of Buffalo--The school aims to provide a free environment for children to develop their interests and social and emotional selves at their own pace and in their own manner.[6]

Orange County Free School--Children enrolled will have the opportunity to discover their personal needs, wants, and potentials in an atmosphere of love and freedom by participating in various activities. We will provide arts, crafts, dancing, drama and numerous field trips, as well as any other growth experience which the children may desire.[7]

This type of loose definition of freedom, "a free environment to grow in", and "an opportunity to discover their personal needs", has been severely criticized by many in the free school movement. Tom O'Connell[8] states that freedom, when considered as a process of becoming free, often involves doing things that a given person may not want to do at all. He points out that the instant gratification premises upon which many students operate are both unrealistic and dangerous. Unrealistic because society does not operate that way and dangerous because it can lead to a brand of self-indulgence that is essentially non-free. O'Connell believes that kids can become slaves to their own inability to face unpleasantness or to do work.

James Harding[9] criticizes free schools for equating freedom with whatever people want to do, with no methodology to allow people to experiment with approaches and evaluate them openly. According to Harding, free schools lessen the chances of developing perspectives and situations where a free education can occur. In letting the kids do what they please, and being supportive passively, rather than in a challenging way, one could say that something quite different than education is allowed to go on.

The Chicago Teachers Center[10] is also critical of what they describe as free schools that advocate complete freedom, where what counts is to "do your own thing", where the pursuit of pupil whims and individualistic behavior is encouraged under the guise of freedom. The Chicago Teachers Center believes that the substitution of laissez-faire individualism for competitive individualism is no progress.

Martin Engel[11] who has visited many free schools, reports that he has become impatient with the prevailing mood about the casualness and

easiness of freedom. He states that he has seen too many bored, confused, defensive kids who can spout the rhetoric of the "permissive" school, but who lack self-confidence, the motivation, the initiative, the commitment and the self-directed drives that get them through the rigor of a genuine learning experience and the struggle of creating their own identity.

Rasberry Exercises[12] also describes the dangers of complete freedom or lack of direction of some free schools. They report that what many free schools mean by freedom is the casting of the child from one culture into another, mostly alone. They also report that children know what they want and it is usually least of all to be alone. The authors report that children are usually far more comfortable with authoritarians, even those only able to care for them via nagging, than with libertarians who say "freedom" but mean abandonment.

These examples of descriptions of free schools and the recent criticisms of unguided freedom serve here merely to show that free schools had originally developed as a reaction to the authoritarianism and discipline of the public schools. However, because of these recent criticisms, and because of the growth, evolution, and maturity of some of the free schools, more complex definitions of freedom are emerging. Also influencing the new definitions of freedom have been the free school conferences and the newsletters and periodicals published by people in the free school movement.

The Alternative School Definition of Freedom

Just as the writings of John Dewey have provided the philosophical base for many advocates of alternative schools, his writings concerning

freedom have also attracted much attention. Dewey[13] stated that the only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence. Dewey believed that the external side of freedom--freedom of movement or freedom of physical activity--is only a means, not an end. Everything depends upon what is done with the added liberty. According to Dewey natural impulses and desires constitute the starting point in educational activity. However, Dewey felt that there was no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they first showed themselves. This remaking involved inhibition of impulse and this inhibition should be through the individual's own reflection and judgment. To Dewey, the old phrase "stop and think" was sound psychology. For thinking is stoppage of the immediate manifestation of impulse until that impulse has been brought into connection with other possible tendencies to action so that a more comprehensive and coherent plan of activity is formed. Thinking, according to Dewey, is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory. Therefore, the ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control. But Dewey stated that the mere removal of external control is no guarantee for the production of self-control. Impulses and desires that are not ordered by intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances, hence the danger of unguided freedom. A person whose conduct is controlled by order of the intelligence has at most only the illusion of freedom, according to Dewey, and he is directed by forces over which he has no command.

George Dennison[14] tried to put into practice his concepts of freedom in the First Street School. Dennison stated that the question of

freedom was not one of authority, though it is usually argued in that form. When adults give up authority, the freedom of children is not necessarily increased. Dennison explained that his concern for freedom was a concern for fulfillment, of activities deemed important, and of persons who are unique. "To give freedom means to stand out of the way of the formative powers possessed by others."[15]

In describing the freedom at the First Street School, Dennison explained that they made much of freedom of choice and freedom of movement. To obtain external freedom, or physical freedom, they abolished tests, grades, lesson plans, superiors, bureaucracy, homework, and the category of truant. In short, all things that Dennison believed constituted an external order. In doing this he hoped to lay bare the deeper motivations and powers which contribute to what he called internal order: a structuring of activities based upon the child's innate desire to learn, the needs of children, the natural authority of adults, and the deep attachment and interest which adults inevitably feel toward the lives of children.

The British Infant System tries to make use of what they call "ordered freedom" or "guided freedom".[16] Advocates of the British system feel that children cannot function except within a certain structure. If you give them too much responsibility or if you give them too much freedom, then the whole thing breaks down. Defenders of the British system advocate a discipline that is not imposed by the teacher, but rather a discipline which is imposed by the interest of the child. They also believe that there are some boring tasks that adults and children must do. For children, sooner or later they will have to learn their multiplication tables, boring though it is, and

they have to stick it out and master them because it is a nuisance not knowing the tables. The knowing of these multiplication tables gives a student much greater choice in the activities that he chooses to perform and hence greater freedom. British teachers often have the attitude that "we are here to teach, not just let children discover".[17] The British Infant System tries to emphasize that the teacher must know clearly what she is trying to do and how and why. It is not enough to create a rich environment, the teacher must know when, and how, to intervene if she is to achieve the main objective--helping children learn how to think, to form judgments, to discriminate.

Teachers and administrators in the British Infant System try to avoid confusing sentiment <u>for</u> children with sentimentality <u>about</u> them. "Happiness has got to derive from achievement and success, not just having a good time."[18] Most advocates of the British Infant System, in short, reject the romantic notion that children should simply be turned loose to do their own thing, that as soon as one introduces adult priorities and adult notions of what is worth learning, one destroys the fidelity of the child. "What the child wants and how much he wants is largely determined by his environment, and the school and the teacher must play a vital role in this choice."[19]

Jonathan Kozol shares the attitude that the teaching of certain content and "the basic skills" is extremely important. Kozol has been involved in organizing free schools in Boston, New York, and Chicago. He describes one free school where he has worked which is not intimidated by its own strong purchase upon time and history and does not feel the need to make excuses for its own hard emphasis on strength and power.[20] This school, according to Kozol, is one in which the fear of

domination and the fear of excellence are not confused. To Kozol the school is the ideal model of a "highly conscious" Free School in the physical context of an urban struggle, existing both outside the legal framework of the public schools and also outside the framework of the white men's counter culture. Kozol believes that this school has a real sense of stability and of sustained commitment in regard to both the present lives and to the future aspirations of the children in the school. This is a commitment which does not allow for sudden abdications, unannounced departures, or television appearances. Kozol expresses his desire the preplanned and well-prepared lessons in describing this free school:

> They do not have an eighteen-member 'Governing Board'. They do not have T-groups every Wednesday or Encounter Sessions on the weekend. They do not have beautiful girls from Vassar and dilettante poets from the other side of town coming over to 'do marvelous things' and gather cocktail-party ammunition at the price of their own children. They do not grow organic tomatoes, drop acid or say 'like', 'man', 'you know', 'resource person' every fifteen syllables. They do not 'get it all together', tell it 'like it is' or tell each other 'where it's at'. They DO teach reading to children who are illiterate and they have a remarkably good record of success. They do teach calculus and plane geometry to kids who want a chance someday to be an architect or engineer and not a janitor or garbage man or train conductor. They do, in certain situations, get extraordinarily mad about bad spelling. They will beat the shit out of any older kid who tries to get a younger kid involved with the hard drugs. They do NOT believe that everyone has the right to do 'his own thing'. They do not believe that shooting heroin--or hooking someone else on heroin--is something anyone ought to be allowed to do. They are not afraid to give their kids direct instructions, straightforward criticism or precise and sometimes bitter admonitions.
>
> There is this: an entire semester of hard work, or writing, reading, research and the like--preplanned and well-prepared and by no pretense either 'undirected' or 'spontaneous' or 'accidental'--in the explication and examination of a set of old and evil regulation U. S. history textbooks, stolen or borrowed from a nearby public school . . . a strong and rich and long-sustained experience

> in the make-up and in the structure and substructure of political indoctrination and in the manufacture of a uniform body of apparent preferences and wishes in a nation's consciousness.[21]

Another example of the emphasis upon subject matter in an alternative school is Harlem Prep. Harlem Preparatory School opened in 1967 as an independent nonsectarian school, outside the public school system, and supported by private donations. They offer traditional subjects: mathematics, algebra, calculus, writing skills, comparative literature, biology, and many more. The freedom that exists in Harlem Prep is described as a sense of "elbow room". They have an openness which permits students to observe learning activities of other areas as well as their own, and allows them to choose which one they take part in. Students are free to visit other classes whenever they choose. This open structure is reported to also stimulate the teachers; they realize that students are free to sit in on other classes which serves as a reminder that they must prepare meaningful material that is adapted to the needs of their students.[22]

In summary, the alternative type of free school definition of freedom involves the freedom of intellectual development. Freedom is not merely adults giving up authority, or schools run by children. In alternative schools, there is a structuring of activities based upon the child's innate desire to learn. The freedom found in an alternative school is a freedom derived from the interests of the children, and structured into some type of learning activity by the adults in the school. The intellectual abilities and skills developed in this type of free atmosphere opens paths for greater intellectual development.

The Counter Culture School
Definition of Freedom

Everyone who writes about counter culture schools must address himself to a definition of freedom. Therefore, there is a great deal of repetition in descriptions of the freedom that exists in counter culture schools. The following section will rely solely upon the definitions of freedom by A. S. Neill and Paul Goodman as being representative of the counter culture view of freedom. Following these broad definitions of freedom in counter culture schools will be an attempt to give specific examples of how freedom works in counter culture schools and alternative schools. These examples will be the status of adults, the teaching of values, and self-government.

Conversations on freedom often turn to A. S. Neill and his definition of freedom. Neill has often contended that parents who have read his books feel guilty about the strict way they have treated their child, and then tell their children that from now on he is free. The result is usually a spoiled brat, for the parents, according to Neill, have scant notion of what freedom is.[23] Neill states that parents do not realize that freedom is a give and take--freedom for parents as well as freedom for the child. To Neill, freedom does not mean that the child can do everything he wants to do, nor have everything he wants to have. Stated simply, freedom, over-extended, turns into license. Neill defines license as interfering with another's freedom. An example, at Summerhill, a child is free to go to lessons or stay away from lessons because that is his own affair, but he is not free to play a trumpet when others want to study or sleep. It is this distinction between freedom and license that many parents cannot grasp. Neill

describes a disciplined home as one where the children have no rights. In the spoiled home, they have all the rights. To Neill, the proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. In a school this principle means that respect for the individual must be mutual. A teacher does not use force against a child, nor has a child the right to use force against a teacher. Neill explains that a child may not intrude upon an adult just because he is a child, nor may a child use pressure in the many ways in which a child can.

Neill believes that the aim of education, in fact the aim of life, is to work joyfully and to find happiness. Happiness, according to Neill, means being interested in life, or responding to life, not just with one's brain but with one's whole personality. Therefore, Neill has little use for traditional subject matter, feeling that it does much more harm than good.[24] Neill's disdain with content or traditional subject matter can be seen in the following quotes:

> I ask what earthly good can come out of discussions about French or ancient history or what not when these subjects don't matter a jot compared to the larger question of life's natural fulfillment--of man's inner happiness.
>
> How much of our education is real doing, real self-expression?
>
> Parents are slow in realizing how unimportant the learning side of school is. Children, like adults, learn what they want to learn.
>
> Books are the least important apparatus in a school.
>
> Most of the school work that adolescents do is simply a waste of time, of energy, of patience. It robs youth of its rights to play and play and play; it puts old heads on young shoulders.
>
> It is time that we were challenging the school's notion of work. It is taken for granted that every child should learn mathematics, history, geography, some science, a little art, and certainly literature. It is time we realize that

> the average young child is not much interested in any of these subjects.
>
> Learning is important--but not to everyone.[25]
>
> Years ago, in college, I got a grade of 95% in history. If anyone asked me about some of the simplest facts in British history, I wouldn't be able to answer the questions. Why? Because I never was interested in British history. What good did all that study do me?
>
> Most subjects in school are a pure waste of youth's valuable time.
>
> How many of my readers--the high school graduates--can right now do a square root or solve a quadratic equation?[26]

Paul Goodman agrees with Neill concerning the uselessness of subject matter. Goodman believes that up to age twelve there is no point to formal subjects or a prearranged curriculum.[27] According to Goodman, with guidance, whatever a child experiences is educational. For this type of freedom, Goodman feels teachers for this age are those who like children, pay attention to them, answer their questions, enjoy taking them around the city and helping them explore, try out, and who sing songs with them and teach them games. Goodman states that any benevolent grown-up--literate or illiterate--has plenty to teach an eight-year-old; therefore, the only profitable training for teachers is a group therapy and, perhaps, a course in child development. The reason for this freedom as described by Goodman, is to delay the socialization of children, to give their wildness a chance to express itself.

As for high schools, Goodman believes that older adolescents should not be in schools at all. Goodman states that a good high school is best regarded as a half-way house for recuperation, reserving the children from the insane homes and cities in which they have already been socialized and deranged.[28] In Goodman's opinion, the only

justification for high schools are as places where adolescents can find themselves and grow further by coping with the jobs, sex, and chances of the real world. Therefore, it would be useless to feed them curricular imitations. Goodman would abolish high schools, substituting apprenticeships and other alternatives. Students would have an extreme amount of freedom, the school money normally given for the operation of traditional schools would go directly into the pockets of the students. This freedom would give the very few who have authentic scholarly interests their own libraries, teachers, and academies. It would also give youth the freedom to develop organic communities where adolescents could cluster together in their own houses, for their fun and games and loud music, without bothering sober adults. Goodman sees no reason for adults to set up or direct such communities or to be there at all unless invited. The freedom of money would also give youth opportunities to travel, possibly to other youth communities in different parts of the country.

Goodman points out that a sign of the confusion of modern times is that we all pay too much attention to children, either by depriving them of rights and freedom or trying to give them rights and freedom. Goodman suggests, as a program for the coming decade, that the best thing adults could do for children and adolescents would be to renovate our own institutions and give the young a livable world to grow up in.[29]

Freedom and the Status of Adults

In the section above, it was pointed out that Goodman feels that adults stand in the way of the freedom of high school children. It is

difficult for Goodman to talk about freedom for children without bringing in adults; there should be caring adults for primary aged children to enhance freedom, but no adults for older children unless they ask for them.

A. S. Neill allows absolutely no interference by adults in his school. Neill believes that the problems with the children who go to Summerhill are parental, always parental. To Neill, children are ruined by the complexes of their parents. Neill feels that the aggressiveness and hate of so many children comes from a plethora of repressions: parents demanding obedience, duty, manners, quietness. He also feels that most schools confirm and reinforce the guilt that has been implanted at home. The purpose of conditioning children is simply to extend the parent's personality onto the children, according to Neill; it is the idea of molding people into your own image. This parental influence, or what Neill calls an "anti-life" attitude, is the reason that Summerhill is a boarding school. So free is Summerhill from adult influence that Neill claims that the students there do not know what his religion is, or what his attitude toward drugs is, or what his politics are, they don't know nor would they care to know.[30]

Alternative school advocates, on the other hand, feel that adults are extremely important in free schools. George Dennison[31] states that children need adults much more than some free school advocates seem to realize. They <u>do not</u> need those aspects of adults that are childlike, but precisely those aspects that are mature, adult, different. If kids rebel, curse you out, Dennison feels that it is all right, for kids need this conflict, this type of distance and difference. For this type of conflict to take place, Dennison feels that the adult must be

a real person and not a dogmatic friend of children. Dennison also believes that one of the big needs of children is simply for a protective ambience which only adults can supply. Given this ambience, a child has freedom to venture, to feel and express and act upon many kinds of emotions without worrying too much about the consequences. This emotional venturing is indispensable in the growth of robust selfhood. According to Dennison:

> When the adults refuse some of the boring duties of adulthood, and insist that the children make their own decisions about everything, and tell the children 'go ahead, we're going to learn from you'--the stakes are suddenly too high for the kids, there are too many consequences and that wide field of emotional venturing is reduced to a narrow track of 'what's safe'.[32]

John Holt agrees with Dennison, pleading for free school teachers (or any other teacher), to be real people. Holt also agrees that children need adults.[33] To demonstrate this point, Holt uses the example of a child deliberately trying to "bug" an adult. Holt states that a teacher should be aware of the difference between a kind of spontaneous child behavior and what he calls "testing" behavior. Holt gives the following example to demonstrate this point:

> If a kid is doing something simply to get some sort of reaction from me, or if I think he is, I instantly point this out, and this almost instantly changes the situation. I have found that if children are doing this they usually admit to it, often with a surprised pleasure, and that we can then go on from there to talk about what they really want or need. In the case of these boys in the classroom, I think I would have said to them, 'Hey, quit banging that stuff around, it gets on my nerves, and there's no point in it.' If a kid persisted, I would have asked something like, 'Are you doing this just to get some kind of reaction out of me?' Or if I was sure, I would have said something to that effect. But there is something very wrong about the scene in which the kid is doing something that he knows the adult doesn't like, and doing it because he knows the adult doesn't like it, and because he knows for some reason that the adult has decided to let it go on.

> This gives the child a kind of power over the adult which he really doesn't like to have. Mind you, I am not saying that children 'like to be told what to do'--a tired, dreary and utterly false cliche of teachers and adults in general. When they are living their authentic lives they like to do this with as little interference as possible, but when for some reason or other they are in the business of trying to manipulate adults, trying to get and use power over them, this is a game they don't like to win at.[34]

Peter Marin goes a little beyond Holt and Dennison in explaining the role of adults.[35] He believes that children need more than a safe, protective environment. According to Marin, somebody must step past the children, maybe moving beyond the limits "into the absolute landscape of fear and potential these children inhabit . . . I mean: we cannot follow the children any longer, we have to step ahead of them. Somebody has to mark the trail."[36]

Freedom and the Issues of Values

Paula Cohen[37] presents the argument that a school performs two functions: education and socialization. The former develops basic skills necessary for self-education and presents content area information. The latter teaches the value system and way of life of the community served by the school. Cohen reports that the structuralism that is so objectionable in public schools appears to be rigid educational goals but in reality it is rigid socialization and institutionalization. Consequently, relates Cohen, we have values expressed in such things as dress codes, inflexible curricular requirements, four-letter grading systems and the like, serving no educational purpose but rather regulating the social behavior of students. Cohen believes that freedom from these structured practices merely yields socialization of new values, not necessarily new education. Ideally, the schools should

be in the business of training students in basic investigative tools and then letting them loose to arrive at their own value systems, according to Cohen. Instead she reports, free schools move from one form of value-laden propagandizing to another with more emphasis on the propaganda than on learning processes and techniques.

Others share Cohen's beliefs; the New School Exchange Newsletter[38] reports that some free schools lay the burden for carrying out social reform on the child, who is supposed to grow into the new man within a utopian reality enclave called school. The difference between the traditional and some new schools is mainly one of the degree and style in which "school" is different from the "everyday world".

Martin Engel[39] continues this position stating that free schools too often are as rigid, conformist and authoritarian about their vision of freedom, as the public schools are about theirs. Engel relates, "In the free schools there is too much paranoia about the Establishment. Paranoid responses to the 'squares' and 'pigs' leads to the institutionalization of pseudo-freedom which is group imposed".[40] Engel continues by stating that some free schools have become a political weapon of "liberation" in which the individual child is expendable. Engel believes that the free school message is more humane and palatable, but their propagandizing still fails the needs of the individual youngster and worst of all, according to Engel, some free schools preach love but they also encourage hatred of parents, straight schools, the straight world, and the Establishment.

Counter culture schools do not try to hide the fact that they are trying to examine a new set of values. Rasberry Exercises is very explicit in this point. They present a model of the value system they

believe in, based on sharing, as opposed to the dominant culture value system based on competition.[41]

The alternative schools, on the other hand, attempt to teach basic skills so that the child can decide for himself whether to make it in the dominant culture or not. The examples given previously, especially the examples of Harlem Prep and those by Jonathan Kozol, emphasize content and acquiring basic skills within a framework of choice and alternatives. Once these skills are acquired, each student has the freedom to analyze the dominant society and either choose to become a part of it, attempt to change it using the skills that he has acquired, or attempt to rebuild it from the ground up.

Free Schools and Self-Government

Summerhill is described by A. S. Neill as being a self-governing school, democratic in form.[42] Everything connected with social or group life, including punishment for social offenses, is settled by vote at the Saturday night General School Meeting. Each member of the teaching staff and each child, regardless of his age, has one vote. Neill's vote carries the same weight as that of a seven-year-old. The function of Summerhill self-government is not only to make laws but to discuss social features of the community as well. All academic discussions are avoided at the general meetings; Neill explains that children are eminently practical and theory bores them. An example of a social issue at a general meeting is a case of stealing. There is never any punishment for stealing, but there is always separation. The worst that happens is that the offender is docked all of his pocket money until the debt is paid.

The General School Meeting at Summerhill is usually run by a chairman who is elected for one meeting only. At the end of the meeting he appoints a successor. Anyone who has a grievance, a change, or a suggestion, or a new law to prepare brings it up. Neill reports that the verdict or the new law is accepted by the majority of the students. However, if the verdict is unacceptable, the defendant may appeal, in which case the chairman will bring up the matter once again at the end of a meeting. Neill reports that the sense of justice that children have never ceases to amaze him. Often, the boy who has just been sentenced is elected chairman for the next meeting. Neill also reports that punishments are nearly always fines, pocket money for a week or miss a movie. Neill disagrees with the often-heard objection to children acting as judges because they punish too harshly. Neill believes that they are very lenient and can recall on no occasion where there has been a harsh sentence at Summerhill. Invariably the punishment has some relation to the crime. Neill reports that the children at the meetings never seek advice from an adult.

In relating self-government to freedom, Neill believes that the school that has no self-government should not be called a progressive school. "You cannot have freedom unless children feel completely free to govern their own social life. When there is a boss, there is no real freedom."[43]

Many free schools have followed A. S. Neill's concept of self-government. Alternative schools, however, have been reluctant to give complete control of the school to a general meeting. These schools described by Dennison, Kozol, and others do allow some student participation in some of the decisions, but not to the extreme as allowed at

Summerhill. In the alternative schools, decision making resides in the hands of the staff.

Paul Goodman[44] has recently taken issue with the concept of self-government in free schools. He believes that when A. S. Neill says that kids are encouraged to "govern" themselves, one man one vote, in their court and parliament, he is taking the social contract and political democracy much too seriously; he is imposing adult ideas. According to Goodman, this is not the form in which kids spontaneously choose up sides in a game, settle their disputes, and change the rules. "Kids are far too shrewd to be democratic. They have more respect for strength, skill, and experience at the same time as they protect one another from being stepped on, humiliated, or left out."[45]

Federal, State, and Local Laws: The Free Schools and Political Action

In starting a free school, Rasberry Exercises[46] suggests that two different types of coordinators are needed. One is the school coordinator, someone who can knit together the needs and resources of people within the school without diminishing the educational activities. The other is the "dealer-with-bureaucracies," coordinator, someone who can handle details involving federal, state, and local law officials. Rasberry Exercises also states that most free schools do not seem to be hung up on the details; however, they advocate facing the realities, quickly. They state that the power that bureaucracies have stems from the fact that laws governing schooling are so stringent that their most conservative public schools cannot meet them. But these laws are there, and can be used as weapons of repression if needed.

The Center for Law and Education[47] reports that the experience of existing alternative schools with state and local authorities has been sympathetic or neutral and they have not sought to harass schools with petty, bureaucratic requirements. The Center believes that there are two reasons for this state of affairs. First, public school systems are already grossly underfinanced, and school committees are not particularly unhappy when they have fewer children to teach. Second, alternative schools tend to draw students who do not benefit from public school methods, especially discipline problems.

Federal laws seem to be the easiest for free schools to fulfill. Most free schools find it advantageous to incorporate, which is done by the state. This limits the liability of the individuals involved in the school, and more importantly, incorporation enables the school to qualify for federal tax exemption by the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit agency. This non-profit status reduces taxes, allows free schools to receive donations without taxing, and allows other benefits on insurance and buying surplus material. In addition to the non-profit status, if free schools collect any money or pay any salaries there is a series of forms that have to be filled out: employer identification numbers, employee exemptions, quarterly tax return for the corporation, withholding tax forms, and forms telling the employee how much he earned during the year. On top of these forms there are some optional taxes that a school could be involved with: unemployment and disability insurance.

State laws present a real stumbling block for most free schools. Vague phrases in some school codes such as "private schools must provide an equivalent education", give states great leeway in dealing with

free schools. Rasberry Exercises canvassed all fifty state departments of education asking for their laws with regard to private schools, tutors, accreditation, and compulsory school attendance. The following represents some of their findings:

> Some of the laws are almost totally incomprehensive to our non-legal minds (perhaps to anyone's mind!).
>
> Laws of some states seem filled with contradictions, ambiguities, etc.
>
> Most of the laws seem to intrude into the basic freedoms of even the most patriotic citizens.
>
> Laws in some states seem so stringent (even vindictive) that we wonder how any non-public school could exist, let alone "free" schools.
>
> Which leads us to the slightly paranoid conclusion that many free schools must exist because of loopholes--loopholes that might be plugged if pointed out.
>
> A few states have no laws affecting private schools.
>
> A few states require only teacher certification of some kind.
>
> A few states have extremely stringent laws, requiring, for example, the posting of performance bonds of up to $10,000, proof of meeting the same standards as public schools. Since we know of many very free schools in these states some of them very above ground, we wonder how they do it.[48]

Some of the state laws that free schools must deal with are teacher certification, compulsory attendance laws, attendance records, required courses, accreditation, granting diplomas, medical forms, liability insurance, and admissibility back to public schools. State building code regulations seem to be the most restrictive of all the state requirements in opening a free school. "Standards" for school buildings usually come down from the state level and are "recommended" to the local district. Private schools in most states are then subject to whichever of the state recommendations the local authorities wish to enforce.

Local officials are usually the source of greatest harassment for free schools. Trouble can come from many sources. Zoning regulations

usually prohibit schools in many areas of the city. Electrical and fire standards can usually be used against any free school. Health laws are also a particularly sore spot for free schools; there must be so many toilets, water should be tested, no pets, first aid kits handy, and no food preparation.

Some free schools choose to remain underground in order to escape this mountain of federal, state, and local laws. Others have spoken out, urging a united front, and urging free schools to become political, to fight what they believe to be repressive laws. Still others argue that developing a political consciousness would be the end of the free school movement.

Free Schools and Political Action

Barry Wood[49] is representative of a group critical of free schools operating in a political vacuum. Wood points out that not only has there been a lack of awareness that free schools are radical, there has also been a disdain of any attempt to even mildly suggest a linkage of the free school movement into the greater movement to humanize America. Wood believes that the free schools movement, whether they know it or not, has been radical since its inception. According to Wood, in the repressive society of America, movements are seldom suppressed until they pose some threat to the smooth working of the system. In that sense, Wood believes that free schools have made it, since they have been harassed. What free schools have not generally recognized up to now, says Wood, is that by calling for basic changes in the nature of schooling, free schools have challenged not just the school system, but the larger system of which the schools are only a part. By seeking

their own schools or by seeking changes in the public schools, the free schools are challenging the very sight of the public schools and the society to force a false value system on the kids. In doing this, Wood feels that free schools must start to see themselves for what they are. They are tampering with one of the basic institutional forces in this country. As the ideas of the free schools proliferate and their numbers increase, they become more of a threat, first to the system of education, and then to America itself. According to Wood, as they become a threat they invite repression. This threat of repression in itself should force free schools to become political. As Wood puts it:

> The time when our free schools or our experimental college can be our political cop-out is approaching an end. No longer can free schoolers say 'politics is not my bag'. It is your bag by definition! Too often free schools have been analogous to communal land trips in the country. In point of fact, there can be no escape. It has always been a myth to assume that a free school in the country could be an island of growth and joy in an ocean of repression. We can't escape. We can't escape the reality of Amerika 1970. We can't escape the reality of Angela Davis and Bobby Seale being ripped off, or that the war in Asia is being intensified, or that MacDonald's hamburgers will follow us into the hills. It's impossible to be self-actualized in a repressive society.[50]

Barry Wood then points out that repression becomes the watchword of our society and we would do great damage to youth if we were to hide them for as long as possible from the bitter realities of America. Wood advocates the use of free schools to teach revolutionary education. He believes that knowledge of the trial of Bobby Seale becomes as important as almost anything else students could learn. The free school movement must therefore see itself as part of a larger revolutionary movement.

Larry Cole[51] takes a more moderate line. However, he also believes that if the free school movement is not political it will die.

To Cole, political awareness means simply understanding the prevailing power dynamic and how you can exist in terms of that dynamic. Political action means taking some sort of stand on positions about the existing political system to change it in some way. Cole thinks that the movement for educational change must commit itself to political awareness in a most special sense and must also commit itself to political action. Cole agrees with Wood in that changing public education as proposed by the new schools will mean a change in not only schools, but the society as well and this will be bitterly resisted.

Cole criticizes people in the free schools for being exclusive, snobbish, and narrow in their view of people outside the free schools. He states that they are not loving and accepting people as superficial images would have others believe. Cole states that people in the free school movement must get past this narrowness into very broad based coalitions--political coalitions with anyone who believes in educational freedom. Cole believes that if education is free, and offers a broad selection of styles from which children and parents can choose, there will be little chance for anybody's doctrine to be dominant. Becoming a political force, then, means working toward shared conclusions, and if that shared conclusion is really freedom (including the freedom to go to military, parochial, prep, and public schools), then free schools have to give up the safety of victimization and elitism and work on forming workable coalitions to achieve that freedom.

Free Schools and Political Action--Against

George Dennison is rather blunt in his stand on political action and the free school movement. He states, "God save the free schools

movement from becoming politicized. God save it from becoming a 'Movement'."[52] It is Dennison's belief that there is no such thing as a free school ideology, and that free schools are nothing but the implementation of already existing ideas about the nature of human nature. Also, he believes that nothing has been added by anyone at work in the present movement, and intellectually, the movement is as boring a phenomenon as one could ask for. Dennison is against political action because the movement does not deal with class phenomena, but with the nature of growth. Since free schools deal with growth and the present lives of children, Dennison feels that it would be hard to imagine a free schools advocate calling for more centralization. To politicize the free school movement would be going backwards, to become rigid, to lose function and gain nothing but rhetoric. In Dennison's words:

> Don't act as if you really love each other just because you want to and say you do. Don't call for solidarity except when there is an important issue, because solidarity in the absence of an issue is nothing but party-line conformity. Be various and flexible. Live in the world, not in a handful of issues. Confederate, but don't form a 'Movement'.[53]

Dennison also feels that by becoming political, people in the movement want free schools to mean too many things, to fill too many needs. It is this desire to become too many things that breaks everything down into factionalism, and according to Dennison, destroys schools, communes, and political parties.

Free Schools and Political Action, The Middle Ground

Several people in the free school movement take a middle position, believing that free schools are part of the society, and are therefore political by nature. This position would reject any united front or

free school ideology, but would recognize that independently, free schools are political.

John Holt[54] is one of those showing that position. Holt does not believe that any movement for educational reform that addresses itself exclusively or even primarily to the problems or needs of children can progress very far. Holt does believe that it is a fundamental and fatal mistake to define education or learning as schooling, as a process altogether separate from the rest of life, going on in a special place, involving two special groups of people called students and teachers. Since free schools are active in seeking ways to get tax support and public funding, free schools must be political in some areas. Holt feels that schools supported by the state can be free and open. Many children, parents, and teachers in public schools are suffering, according to Holt, and this is justification enough for some political action.

What Holt fears concerning political action is that many people in the free school movement are dreaming and yearning for the day in which every school now existing will be replaced by a free school. To Holt, this is neither possible nor desirable, and if the movement makes it its purpose to attain universal free schools, the free school movement will before long destroy itself.

Holt also does not think that we can treat as separate the quality of education in society and the quality of life in general. As Holt expresses it:

> It am saying that truly good education in a bad society is a contradiction in terms. In short, in a society that is absurd, unworkable, wasteful, destructive, secretive, coercive, monopolistic, and generally anti-human, we could never have good education, no matter what kind of schools the

> powers that he might permit, because it is not the educators of the schools but the whole society and the quality of life in it that really educate. That means that whatever we do to improve the quality of life, for anyone, and in whatever part of his life, to that degree improves education.[55]

To Holt then, the best education and perhaps the only education for social change is action to bring about that change. To implement this belief, according to Holt, the only way to prepare the young to work for a better world is to invite them, right now, to join us in working for it. "We cannot say, 'we will concentrate <u>our</u> efforts on making nice schools for you, and after you get out <u>you</u> can tackle the tough job of remaking the world'."[56] What Holt is saying is that society <u>is</u> the school; and that men learn best and most from what is closest to the center of their lives; that men being above all else looking, asking, thinking, choosing and acting animals, what men need above all else is a society in which they are to the greatest possible degree free and encouraged to look, ask, think, choose, and act. To Holt, the making of this society is both the chief social or political <u>and</u> educational task of the free school movement.

Jonathan Kozol[57] shares some of Holt's and Dennison's beliefs on free schools and the political movement. Kozol shares the belief that there should not be a free school ideology. However, in the long run, there is a great deal in the way of need, survival, love and brotherhood, that binds people in the free school movement. This binding is not in the form of a "party-line" identification, and not a non-critical comradeship, but a binding of respect and mutual support. He also agrees with Dennison in that it would be pernicious to "politicize" the free school movement in the sense of trying to attain a uniform "line" or a political "position". He also agrees that a united

front would be going backwards and would mean losing the sense of honesty and truth they speak about so often. However, this is where Dennison and Kozol part on the political issue. Kozol states that most of the people in the free school movement come with the experience of having struggled for a long while against the racist and oppressive institutions of the cities. He feels that it is necessary for free school workers to use this experience to struggle with the real life problems that students bring to the classroom. As Kozol so eloquently puts it:

> It seems to me perfectly legitimate and right for those whose real life struggle involves intense and inescapable pain in the form of youngsters who are hungry, children who are congenitally malnourished, infants who are victims of lead-paint poison in slum-apartments of New York and Boston and Chicago, that those adults and children who are in the midst of this dismay, and feel it deeply, have the perfect right, indeed I would say the mandate, to invite this kind of consciousness to infuse their school, their aspirations, temperament and yearnings. In this sense, then, which is not that of a set of Marxist slogans or of any other kind of party-dogma, but that of a true, non-euphoric, non-hallucinatory perception of the reality in front of us, in this sense such Free Schools will unquestionably have a consciousness of political urgency, of the need for radical changes, actions, visible differences, outside the school. Children, parents and teachers alike will feel it, will bring it with them into the daily experience of the classroom, and ought not to try to hide it or suppress it or contain it out of reverential awe of Leicestershire, of Summerhill, or of the Whole Earth Catalogue. In the neighborhood of Boston where I live, black and Puerto Rican children have between three and ten times the chance of being born dead as white children born to the affluent people in the surrounding suburbs. The infant-mortality rate, as the direct result of institutional racism in the medical profession, reaches at times the level of the Biblical Plague, whereby every tenth child would be born dead. Free Schools within this context, if they are in real touch with the lives of children, are by definition: political, urgent, struggling, highly conscious, and at moments rage filled.[58]

Because of the multitude of problems that exist in the major cities today, Kozol feels that free schools cannot fail, and because

of these daily problems, a high level of political consciousness (not one which is manipulated from the outside) will grow because of the necessity of free school workers to cope with these problems. The political action that Kozol is against would be a kind of hardening of the free school lines to try to force others to share their consciousness, or to try to force others to accept a single direction of some sort.

The Issue of Political Consciousness

Because of the spontaneous and independent growth of the various free schools and their isolation from each other, the free schools have operated in a political vacuum. Recently, at regional clearinghouses, free school conferences, and in the literature of the free school movement, the issue of political consciousness has developed. Should free schools develop a political consciousness? Should the free schools unite with other political organizations in the movement towards a more humanized America? Would solidarity or a united front undermine the ethics of the free school movement?

The whole issue of political development and the free schools may prove to be ephemeral. If free schools are to grow and develop they have to conform to local, state, and federal laws. Therefore the issue of political consciousness may be a question of degree only, just how political should free schools become.

Free Schools and the Issue of Finance

The scramble for money is a continuous one that taxes a great deal of energy and time for free school directors and teachers. Money is

universally the biggest hassle and the reason most commonly cited for failure of free schools. Even those schools that do succeed are seriously hampered by the constant struggle for fiscal survival that may often take precedence over education. Internal arguments over fiscal policies, the necessity to ask parents for late tuition payments, and the curtailment of classroom activities for lack of materials has a tendency to cause dissension among staff members and contributes to the short life span of free schools. The necessity of most free schools to charge tuition has raised the question of who attends the new free schools. Some critics charge that the free school movement is strictly a white, upper-middle class movement for they are the only ones who can afford the high tuition rates.[59] Defenders of using tuition to finance free schools state that it is the only way that they can exist. Most free schools state that they try to provide a few free scholarships for minority students, or tuition based upon ability to pay. Others offer free or reduced payments for voluntary help on the part of the mothers for those who cannot afford the payments. Tuition also gives free schools complete independence concerning discipline, regulations, curriculum, salaries, and the hundreds of other decisions that must be made by schools. By collecting tuition they do not have to account for their expenditures to a public school board, a corporation, a foundation, or a federal government office. However, the constant and continuing problem of financing free schools, and the very survival of free schools, has forced people in the free school movement to consider additional sources of revenue: a voucher system, state aid, federal aid, or foundation or corporate aid.

The Present Financing of Free Schools

According to the New Schools Exchange the national average of free schools charging tuition is about $75.00 per child, with varying arrangements for reducing tuition for second and third children.[60] In a survey of twenty free schools in the San Francisco area, Constance Woulf[61] found tuition costs ranging from $215 per month to no tuition. Fourteen of the twenty schools derived at least ninety percent of their funds from tuition. Two of the schools financed themselves by contributions alone, and the other four used some combination of tuition and contributions.

Other free schools are financed by a variety of means. Trout Fishing in America, a free school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, charges $10.00 per month tuition, but has also received a pledge of $50,000 from a local bank. Its backers also sell "Trout Fishing" buttons in Harvard Square.[62]

The Milwaukee Independent School, a free high school developed by students, finances their activities by each student earning a $300 tuition fee by working part-time. The fee is to be matched by $300 from their parents.[63]

Berkeley, California, has two alternative schools, the Black House and La Casa de la Raza, which are financed by the public school system and a federal grant of $42,000 by the U. S. Office of Education. These two schools were an attempt to provide assistance to minority students with special adjustment problems. Described as voluntary, racially exclusive alternative schools, one for Black and one for Chicano children, the two schools are supposed to function as diagnostic and treatment centers for youngsters who experience isolation, powerlessness and

low achievement in integrated schools. These two schools have recently been charged by the U. S. Office of Education with the possible violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Supreme Court desegregation rulings.[64]

A few schools have solved some of their financial problems by developing business enterprises. Orson Beane's school in New York City rents the students out as models. The Freedom House in Minneapolis runs an Auto Co-op. For a fee of $2.50 per month, car owners may have work done when needed. As a result the students learn skills in auto mechanics, welding, and maintenance. They are now planning to do carpentry and redecorating work in homes of poor families. They also receive some funds from private and foundations monies, and charge a token tuition of one dollar per week.[65]

Rasberry Exercises[66] suggests an alternative to meet the problems caused by parents not keeping up with their tuition payments. Their solution would be to collect the year's tuition in advance. For those with funds, require a year's tuition in advance. For those without funds, require that it be borrowed from a local bank using the other money from those who do have it as collateral for those who do not. That would give free schools a solid base from which to run the school or even for borrowing, it could reduce pressure and stop the begging of parents for their payments. However, this method still favors upper class children; how many poor parents can borrow money from a bank? Obviously, new means of financing free schools are needed. The only question is how much freedom and autonomy would free schools have to relinquish when accepting outside funding? Would accepting state or federal money compromise the philosophy of the free schools? Would the

educational voucher proposals offer a reasonable means of financing free schools, thus solving the major problem of free schools and produce a proliferation in the growth of free schools?

Alternative Plans of Financing Free Schools

The federal government does not have very many programs providing aid to non-public schools. This is probably the product of two political facts. One is that the public schools and the teachers' unions and professional organizations have powerful lobbies and an ideology that a public school must be operated by a public authority. The second fact about federal reluctance to aid non-public schools results from the history of private schools, which is that they have been mostly either elitist prep schools or Catholic parochial schools. Because of this, aid to private schools has been viewed as a violation of the separation of church and state commanded by the First Amendment or as aid to people who do not really need it. If the free school movement grows, legal theories may grow to accommodate it, making it possible for free schools to receive federal aid. For now, however, it can be reported that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for free schools to receive federal aid except through grants to public school boards as has been done in Berkeley and Minneapolis. Most federal programs have not only governing laws but administrative regulations and guidelines as well. The task of fitting within these regulations or meeting the conditions of the grant can be burdensome, if not impossible, for free schools if they are to remain free schools.

It is possible to receive some help from the federal government, if free schools are willing to enter into some kind of relationship

with the public school system. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for "educationally deprived" children could be used by free schools (and is in some areas). Eligibility depends upon the showing of significant numbers of children whose families earn less than $2,000 per year or are on Aid to Families With Dependent Children. Because of the church-state problem, private schools can participate only in "services" provided by public schools. That is, no money is actually granted to a private school, but is given to the public school in a Title I target area which then makes services available. The act states that such services are to be "educational services and arrangements, dual enrollments, mobile education services, . . ." This has been known to include remedial teachers, students as teachers, psychological testing and counseling, and special equipment. Such equipment must be owned by the public schools and loaned to the private schools. Teachers must be on the public payroll. The structure of the law's administration makes the local school authorities responsible for preparing an application for Title I funds. Every community which has a Title I program is required by federal guidelines to have an advisory board elected locally. If free schools desire additional funds, they may be forced into becoming political, despite some wishes to remain otherwise.

There are some provisions in Title II for private schools to improve their libraries. The money does not depend upon the income of the families of the students, but it does vary with the tax base of the area. Library grants come in two types, the regular library improvement program and the special purpose grant. The regular grants depend in their amount on the number of students in the private school and the

present condition of the library. To receive these grants, free schools must show that they are a publicly certified school, are willing to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and are not interested in receiving books of a religious nature.

Title III provides for innovative and experimental educational programs. Provision for participation of non-public schools is indicated but so far, free schools have not received any substantial assistance from this program.

There is a possibility of free schools participating in federal programs providing lunch, breakfast, milk, surplus commodities, and kitchen equipment. These programs are administered by the state which again means specific guidelines which few free schools could meet.

Both the Teacher Corps and Volunteers in Service to America have been utilized by some free schools, particularly schools in the inner city area. Both of these programs have uncertain futures, but might be a source of teachers or subsistence salaries for those teachers already in free schools.[67]

Cooperation in Funding Free Schools

An example of alternative schools trying to cooperate with public schools and receive federal funding is the Experimental Schools Program in Berkeley, California which received a 3.6 million dollar grant from the U. S. Office of Education. The 1971 school year opened with 16 alternative schools funded under the Experimental School Program grant, and administered by the Berkeley Unified School District. Ten of the alternative schools had been in operation the previous year, most of them supported by foundation money. The other six were new schools.

Some of the schools--Odyssey, Other Ways, and Agora--had been initiated in previous years at the grass roots level by teachers and students operating on a shoestring budget. Although this experimental program has been operating less than a year, heated criticism has been leveled at the Berkeley administration by both advocates of alternative schools, and supporters of the more conservative approach to teaching methods.

The New Schools Network[68] charges the Berkeley administration with failure to involve teachers, students, and parents in the planning and control of the alternative schools. They state that any attempt at community participation was thwarted or resisted by the administration. The Network also charges that some of the new alternatives seem to bear out Herbert Kohl's "can of paint" theory. Meaning, that if there is a slight modification in outward appearance, this is all some educational "experts" feel is necessary to transform a traditional school into an alternative one.

The New School Network is also critical of the evaluation involved in the grant. They state that when the Berkeley school board submitted its first draft of the Experimental School Program, Washington deleted most of the budget items earmarked for in-house evaluation and turned over the major job of evaluating Berkeley's alternative schools to an outside, impartial agency. The evaluation contract was awarded to the Human Interaction Research Institute, the amount was $800,000 over a 30-month period. In an interview conducted by the Network, it was found that no criteria had been agreed upon for the evaluation even though the contract had been awarded several months previous to the interview, and the alternative schools had been in operation for six weeks.

Herbert Kohl,[69] a teacher at Other Ways alternative school and author of several articles and books on open education, believes that the federal grant to Berkeley did not support new schools but created a new bureaucracy to ensure that real alternatives would not upset the system. He also charges that those alternatives that might create trouble, like Casa de la Raza, have been assigned to substandard buildings. Kohl continues by stating:

> From the notion of autonomous schools responsive to teachers, parents, and students we now have arrived at a situation where there's an additional bureaucracy consisting of a Director, 2 Assistant Directors, a Media Team, an 8-man Evaluation Team, a Public Relations Office, secretaries, etc. In addition, we're saddled with a $800,000 external evaluation team. Ironically, this team is now located where Other Ways and Odyssey once operated on a shoestring budget and I would guess that the costs of remodeling this team's new offices amount to more than the entire operating budget of Other Ways during its occupancy of the building.[70]

Kohl describes the Berkeley system as a recentralization of power rather than a decentralization. He also charges that there is an arbitrary or prejudicial distribution of funds to alternative schools which has made for bitterness and demoralization on the part of the staffs of the alternative schools. He also charges that those alternative schools that had done most of the struggling and were the poorest, remained the poorest. Alternative schools mandated by the administration were staffed by people who had no concept of alternatives, they just knew that alternatives meant federal money. Kohl also states that the alternative movement needs to start all over again in Berkeley. He feels that they are left with the same problem that they began with: "How can parents get the power over resources available for the education of their kids so that viable alternatives would be possible?"[71]

A brighter example of cooperation between free schools and public school systems in financing is the South-East Alternatives in Minneapolis. Supported primarily by federal funds, South-East Alternatives started this fall as an experimental program offering educational options within the public school setting. The area involved comprises a population of 30,000, and tries to demonstrate that public schools can successfully offer significant choices. There are four choices offered by South-East Alternatives: a structured curriculum and school organization by grade level; a continuous progress school where each child advances at his own pace without grade levels; an open school with a flexible curriculum, schedule, and age grouping; and a free school where the curriculum is developed by teachers and students and is based on experiences. The first three schools are elementary schools, and the free school is a kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade free school.

This program has thus far been free from criticisms. The Minneapolis Tribune[72] reports that rather than satisfying open-school advocates, these alternatives served to whet an appetite for more alternative schools, and they have become models for discussion by interested people in the suburbs surrounding Minneapolis.

In St. Paul, The Open School, which has youngsters from five through eighteen years of age, was begun this fall after a highly organized campaign by members of Alternatives Incorporated, a citizens' and parents' group. Financial support for the St. Paul Open School comes primarily from the Hill Foundation and the federal government with some funding from the school system itself.

Free Schools and the Educational Voucher Plans

Some advocates of free schools hold that the voucher plan of financing education would be the answer to all their problems. The San Francisco Exchange and the New School Movement of Seattle are both working with their local public school boards urging proposals for federally financed voucher "trials" be conducted in their areas.

The proponents of the voucher plan or the market approach believe that by giving students and their families a choice of schools, and by requiring schools to compete for students, massive increases in educational effectiveness and output would result. They believe that if schools had to compete for students, they would likely be much more responsive to the particular needs of their clientele. That is, the private schools, in order to achieve goals of profit (or in the case of nonprofit ones, full enrollment), must provide what appears to be good schooling in order to attract students. One of the spokesmen for this movement, economist Milton Friedman,[73] would separate the financing which would be public, from the management and operation of schools, which would be private:

> Government could require a minimum level of education which they could finance by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specified maximum sum per child per year if spent on 'approved' educational services. Parents would be free to spend their sum and any additional sum on purchasing educational service from an 'approved' institution of their own choice. The educational services could be rendered by private enterprises operated for profit, or by nonprofit institutions of various kinds.[74]

The hoped for results would be that:

> . . . Parents could express their views about school directly, by withdrawing their children from one school and sending them to another to a much greater extent than is now possible.[75]

Friedman's scheme is based upon the premise that:

> Here as in other fields, competitive private enterprise is likely to be far more efficient in meeting consumer demands than either nationalized (publicly run) enterprises or enterprises run to serve other purposes.[76]

In summary then, with the adoption of Friedman's plan, the government would provide families with a voucher for each school-aged child, which would guarantee a maximum specified sum of money which could be paid as tuition to any "approved" school. Non-public schools would compete among themselves, and perhaps with public schools, for students by offering a variety of educational choices. The problem for free schools would be the definition of what an "approved" school is. If such a plan were adopted, could the free schools meet minimum qualifications and still operate within their philosophical framework, thus remaining free schools?

Currently, such a proposal is being considered by the San Francisco Unified School District. The Office of Economic Opportunity proposal, developed by Christopher Jencks of the Center for the Study of Public Policy at Harvard has certain distinct features:

1) It requires that no school participating in the demonstration may charge any money in excess of the basic voucher, which would equal the per capita amount currently being spent by the SFUSD. This would equalize spending on education for all persons within the demonstration area.
2) Church schools would be required to keep separate accounts to prevent the spending of tax moneys on religious education.
3) The percentage of minority children enrolled must equal the percentage of minority children who applied.
4) All participating schools would be required to furnish explanatory material to the families in the area of the demonstration to enable them to make an informed choice of schools for their children.
5) In addition, the OEO would pay transportation costs for children and certain other costs accruing to the demonstration, perhaps even getting into the area of 'reparations' to teachers who might lose their jobs as a result of the new supply-demand orientation.

6) The demonstration would be managed by an Education Voucher Agency, hopefully an elected board of community people.[77]

The question that is most fearsome to free school advocates, the question of quality control and evaluation, is left open in the OEO proposal. There are no quality restrictions set. The most important aspect of the voucher idea is that it represents a change over of power from the public school establishment into the hands of the families and, ostensibly, the children themselves. The OEO proposal would encompass only elementary school children, about 15,000 children of varying economic and ethnic backgrounds in San Francisco. The significance of the possibility of a trial voucher plan in San Francisco is that there are already seventy-seven free schools in the Bay area. If economic problems are the chief reasons for the failure of free schools, the voucher plan could have a significant impact if adopted in the San Francisco area. Would hundreds of more free schools develop in the trial area? Perhaps no free schools would develop; there is the possibility that all those parents and children who want free schools are already involved in free education. If numerous free schools did develop as a result of the voucher plan in the trial area, what effect would this have on public education? Would the public schools change, and try to adopt some of the concepts of the free school movement?

The Financial Future of Free Schools

Regardless of those proposals now in the planning stage (San Francisco), or those actually in existence (Minneapolis and Berkeley), the future of the financing of free schools is certainly bleak. Those schools currently receiving funds, four in Minneapolis and sixteen in

Berkeley, are certainly insignificant considering that there are over forty-six million children in public schools, and that there are around 2,000 free schools. It appears that no major voucher plan proposals or massive influxes of public funds seem to be in the offering for school children (public or private) in the near future. Free school advocates seem to be doomed to a future of continuing to scramble for funds from any source available.

Maybe there are two rays of hope. One is that free schools do not seem to lack for teachers. The Teacher Drop-Out Center reports that several teachers apply for every job available in free schools. Considering the extremely low pay that these teachers receive (ranging from room and board to minimum salaries), this is an indication that free schools can continue to operate on their current low budgets. The New School Exchange Newsletter also contains listings of many more teachers interested in free schools than positions seeking teachers.

The current financial strangle that public schools find themselves in may also be encouraging to the free schools. Current proposals for aiding public schools range from a federal sales tax to a value-added tax. It could be possible that some of this new money (if any proposal is adopted) could find its way into the free schools. One reason why free schools have met little resistance so far from public school officials may be that they help relieve the overcrowded classrooms found in today's public schools. Because of the overcrowded conditions in public schools, and the recent "rebellion" of the tax payers in turning down school bond elections, it would seem that public schools would aid free schools, thus helping to relieve pressure on public schools. The recent California, Alabama, and Texas court cases declaring the local

property tax as a means of financing public education unconstitutional may indicate a complete revision of the traditional means of financing education. If this is so, the free schools have nothing to lose, financial conditions in the overwhelming majority of free schools could not be much worse. Any realignment of financing education should be of advantage to the free schools. The financial problems found in private and parochial schools could also add to the problem. If the six million students in private and parochial schools were forced to attend public schools because of their financial difficulties, there would certainly be a crisis in public education. If some means of federal aid is the result of the current financial crisis in financing education, some provisions would have to be made for those in private and parochial schools. If provisions are made for those schools, it is possible that free schools may also qualify for new monies.

The Future of the Free School Movement

As described earlier in this chapter, what people are popularly calling the free school movement is not actually a movement. The isolated development of the free schools is going through a series of steps that could lead to the possible development of a free school movement. So far, in the development of a free school movement, free schools have gone through the following steps: isolated development of free schools; the development of free school clearinghouses; the development of newsletters, journals, and conferences on free schools; the development of issues concerning free schools; and the examination of these issues. This chapter was an attempt to show that in the examination of issues developing in the free school movement there has been no

development of a common consciousness. Since the free schools have not developed a common consciousness they could not be considered a movement. Therefore, free schools have had little impact on the public schools of the United States. Since they have not resolved the issues that split the free schools, there is little likelihood that they can join in any national or state organization of confederation in an attempt to influence public opinion. Isolated free schools have little or no possibility of changing such deep-rooted concepts of public education as compulsory education, the grading system, the departmentalization of knowledge, and the reliance upon structure and authority that the free school advocates believe are so destructive of human nature.

On the issue of freedom, criticism has been leveled by people both inside and outside of the free school movement at the vague philosophical definitions of freedom that have tended to dominate free schools. The issue of freedom has largely been settled by two different definitions of freedom emerging from the two different types of free schools, alternative and counter culture. The alternative schools are equating freedom with freedom for intellectual development. Counter culture schools are saying that freedom means freedom for personal growth and development, outside the confines of a repressive society. Because of the polarization of definitions of the vital concept of freedom in the free schools, a united front or a common consciousness is not likely to develop and thus no free school movement.

On the issue of a political consciousness, counter culture and alternative schools are in accord. So far they have operated in a political vacuum, the primary reason being their isolated and autonomous development, and their relatively small sizes. However, just to

survive, free schools are forced into some type of political awareness just to conform with state, local and federal laws. Therefore, the issue of political consciousness may be a question of degree only, a question of just how political should a free school become. Because of the multitude of problems faced by daily survival in a free school, neither alternative nor counter culture schools have the opportunity to develop a political consciousness or to be active in political activity.

On the issue of finance, free schools are also in accord. Stated simply, they need money to survive and exist as socially integrated schools. The practice of collecting tuition as a means of financing education does discriminate against lower socio-economic groups, the very groups that free school advocates believe to be the most harmed by public schools. The only question that the free schools must resolve is how much state or federal control can they tolerate and still retain their philosophic base. Some counter culture schools believe that by accepting state or federal money they become instruments of the "state" and thereby they become public schools. However, this is a small and insignificant number of schools. Since free schools have not developed into a movement, and they have not developed state or national organizations, they have little chance of influencing public schools to share in the distribution of public funds of education.

Because of the lack of a common consciousness in the areas of freedom, financing, and political activity, there is little incentive for the free schools to present a united front. Because of their relatively small sizes, and the magnitude and multitude of daily problems faced by free schools, they have no opportunity to really become active

in developing state or national organizations to work toward changing the educational practices of their areas. Because of their lack of time, money, influence or power, they have little opportunity or means to advertise their existence. Since they spend most of the year struggling for the funds necessary for daily existence and trying to conform to state and local laws, they have little time or energy left to work toward the broader goals involved in developing a common consciousness or in developing a broad based organization to further free school development.

The future of alternative and counter culture schools is indeed bleak. The problems of day by day existence must take precedence over any other activity. Since the problems of daily survival are so great, there is little possibility that the number of free schools will grow substantially, or that they will become a movement, or that they will influence the nature or direction of the "educational establishment" in the United States.

FOOTNOTES

[1]"Sacramento Free School," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 15, August 24, 1969, p. 4.

[2]"Clonlara School," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 19, September 23, 1969, p. 4.

[3]"The Shire School," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 18, September 15, 1969, p. 2.

[4]"The Sudbury Valley School," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 20, September 30, 1969, p. 2.

[5]"The Valley Cooperative School," The New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 21, October 9, 1969, p. 1.

[6]"The Independent School of Buffalo," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 25, November 8, 1969, p. 3.

[7]"Orange County Free School," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 40, p. 3.

[8]Tom O'Connell, Education Exploration Center, January, 1972, p. 6.

[9]James Harding, "Freedom From For Freedom To: Ideas for People in 'Free Schools'," Free School Press, Issue No. 1, June, 1970, pp. 1-8.

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[24]A. S. Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing (New York, 1960), pp. 24-29.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Neill, Freedom--Not License!, pp. 45-61.

[27]Rasberry and Greenway, p. 58.

[28]Paul Adams, et al., Children's Rights (New York, 1971), pp. 1-8.

[29]Ibid., p. 8.

[30]Ibid., pp. 136-137.

[31]George Dennison, "Two Letters," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 40, p. 2.

[32]Ibid.

[33]John Holt, "A Letter," This Magazine Is About Schools, Spring, 1970, pp. 102-104.

[34]Ibid., pp. 103-104.

[35]Rasberry and Greenway, p. 59.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Paula Cohen, "Are Alternative Schools Really an Alternative?" New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 36, p. 4.

[38]"On Concern for the Young," New Schools Exchange Newsletter, Issue No. 59, p. 3.

[39]Ibid., p. 10.

[40]Ibid.

[41]See Chapter III for the Rasberry Exercise model for a new culture.

[42]A. S. Neill, Summerhill, p. 45.

[43]Ibid., p. 52.

[44]Paul Adams, pp. 2-3.

[45]Ibid., p. 3.

[46]Rasberry and Greenway, p. 27.

[47]Stephen Arons, et al., Alternative Schools: A Practical Manual (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970), p. 24.

[48]Rasberry and Greenway, p. 29.

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[56]Ibid.

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[66]Rasberry and Greenway, p. 32.

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CHAPTER V

THE LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND QUESTIONS RAISED BY THIS PROJECT

After reading everything available in the literature of the free school[1] movement, including all books, pamphlets, newsletters, and periodicals, and after corresponding with several clearinghouses and visiting a few free schools, what is astounding to this researcher is that any free schools exist at all. The magnitude of the problems that face free schools, especially during its initial starting period, is simply overwhelming. Trying to talk other parents into starting a free school with you, arguing over finances or seeking sources of money, trying to read and interpret state and local laws, arguing over structure or non-structure, finding acceptable free school teachers, and finding an acceptable building are all taxing upon the original organizers. The daily struggles to meet and resolve the numerous crises that arise would drain the enthusiasm and vitality from many people. It is also amazing that in spite of poor financing, a lack of adequate facilities, extremely under-paid teachers, and accepting any student who applies, free schools survive. Also there is the fact that many free schools contain a large number of disturbed children, refugees from the public school system. Maybe that is why free schools have not been harassed very much by the public school system, they siphon off some of the socially deviant children. The literature concerning the free

schools is full of heart rending stories by Holt, Dennison, Neill, Kozol and many others, describing the abused children who have now found themselves in free schools. Yet despite these overwhelming odds, free schools do exist, and several have provided a free atmosphere for a number of years. Also astounding is the fact that people interested in starting free schools are aware that these conditions exist. They are aware of the trouble with state, local, and federal laws, the trouble involved in financing free schools, and the daily struggle for existence. Yet, while many free schools cease to exist every year, new ones are continually starting.

The Limitations of This Study

Probably the greatest limitation of this study is that what people are calling the free school movement has happened rapidly and is in a state of great flux. There are a few "progressive" boarding schools left over from the twenties that people are calling free schools, and a few Summerhill type of boarding schools that have been in existence since the early 1960's. However, the bulk of the free schools in existence now have developed in the past five years and are probably still in the development stage. This recent development has limited this study to being descriptive in nature. Because it is descriptive in nature, and the research has run well over one year, some of the early materials that were collected are already obsolete. Since this research effort was started probably over one hundred free schools have died out, and probably that many have been born. Some of the opinions of this researcher may have been based upon some of the information obtained from those schools no longer in existence. Two of the main

sources of information in this effort, The Summerhill Bulletin and The Free School Press, have recently gone out of existence. The Summerhill Bulletin and the Summerhill Society were in existence twelve years and were the early leaders in advocating free schools. Many other journals used in this study are now late in arriving and it is possible that they will also fold. It could be that subscription rates are falling off, an indication that the free school development has "peaked".

This study was also limited by studying only regularly attended free schools, first grade through twelfth grade. Maybe the study should have included the 500 free universities with over 300,000 participants, community day-care centers, nursery schools, after-school "liberation schools", drug hotlines and "sanctuaries", and teacher centers, which may all be part of a broad educational and cultural development to humanize or change the dominant culture. The free schools may be only a small part of this broader movement.

The classification scheme in this project should be looked upon simply as a convenient way of organizing the material so that some continuity may emerge out of the wide diversity that exists in the free schools. It was not intended to be adhered to rigidly. Some schools do change their philosophy. Others would disclaim any philosophy at all. Others which are actually alternative schools (as they have been defined in this work) would rebel at not being placed in the counter culture group. In writing to selected individuals associated with free schools, one source was not relied upon. For instance, in the example of Hearthshire free school, three references were used: The Free Learner, The Alternatives, and a personal letter from the director. In the example of Pacific High School, The New Schools Exchange

Newsletter, Time, and The Free Learner were used to cross-check the information that was reported. But even by using multiple sources, a descriptive analysis of these free schools limits this study. Much of the literature of the free schools is biased. Free schools (like public schools) are inclined to focus on the positive, happy side of their experiences, without also sharing their doubts, their unhappy experiences, their misgivings, and their failures.

Other schools used in describing the classification scheme were actually visited by this researcher. Santa Fe Community School and Twelvegates School were visited, but this may also be a limitation, since only one day was spent at each school talking to teachers and observing the activities. Another limitation may be the small number of free schools actually visited. Five free schools were visited: Spring School (five visits) and Spring High School (Boulder, Colorado), Corrales Community School (Corrales, New Mexico), Santa Fe Community School (Santa Fe, New Mexico), and Twelvegates School (Albuquerque, New Mexico). Visiting five free schools, all in a western setting should also be looked upon as a limitation. These five schools do not face the multiple problems faced by a free school in a large inner city. Lack of time and money and the lack of free schools in this geographic area were severe limitations.

The biases of the researcher should also be seen as a limitation in this study. At the outset the author was firmly convinced that free schools should exist. From researching all the literature available and from visiting a few free schools the writer became more convinced that it is in the best interest of a democratic society, not only to allow free schools to exist, but to actually encourage their

development. This bias may have influenced the development of the classification scheme or the selection of which authors to quote and which ones to leave out.

Another limitation of this study was that some of the regional clearinghouses which were contacted did not respond. With their shortage of time, money, and paid staffs, such lack of response is understandable. Also, some of the material which was read would refer to various articles in underground presses which would have been pertinent to this research effort. However, these scattered underground presses are difficult to work with; some would not answer letters of inquiry, some have gone out of existence, some have changed addresses several times, and some did not keep back issues which could be purchased.

Few answers were received from free schools where letters of inquiry were sent. They obviously do not have the time to answer such inquires. Those few who did answer provided valuable information to this research paper.

Another limitation is that most free schools do not want publicity. Publicity means hundreds of letters to answer and many visitors who take the time and effort of the teachers away from the students. Publicity may also mean that unwanted public officials (particularly health and fire inspectors and truant officers) become aware of the existence of free schools. Therefore, no accurate account of the actual number of free schools is possible.

A major limitation is that there is no way to evaluate free schools and no attempt has been made in this work to try to define an evaluation method. Our conventional means of evaluation have been developed for conventional schools. The word evaluation is even

repulsive to most of those in free schools, probably none of them would allow any standard means of evaluation anyway. Probably, the only way to even attempt to evaluate free schools would involve observation. Do free school children actually learn to read? Are free schools actually free and open? Is there any attempt to indoctrinate free school children? How do free school children feel about free schools? Are free school children happy, spontaneous, creative, sharing, and open? If they are all of these things, is it a result of the free school or a result of a free home environment?

The Implications of This Study

There are many implications for colleges of education in an examination of free schools. First of all free schools could provide excellent research possibilities. They could provide an opportunity to try new methods outside the bureaucratic constraints of public schools. Free schools are extremely flexible and therefore could and should be places for new methods and activities to be attempted. Free schools are flexible enough so that if these experiments or new methods do not work, they can be easily discarded.

Free schools also provide an excellent opportunity for providing student teachers a different type of experience. Several universities including the University of California at Berkeley, University of Minnesota, and the University of Colorado, allow their student teachers to do their practice teaching in free schools. Students can benefit by having an option of choosing between the types of experiences that they feel that they need to decide what type of environment they would like to experience after graduation. Every student teacher should be

recognized as being different, with different needs to fulfill. There is no reason why student teachers should all be required to teach in public schools. In those areas with many free schools, student teachers should be allowed to teach in public schools and free schools if they so desire. Or, there is the possibility that a student teacher could practice teach in a completely free, unstructured school, and in a rather structured free school for the sake of comparison.

The benefits for the college, besides that of student teaching, are in pre-student teaching observation. Foundations courses, educational psychology courses, and observation courses would be greatly enhanced by the opportunity of comparing the theory of free school education with the actual practice. It is one thing to read Summerhill and discuss it in abstract terms and to actually observe a Summerhill type of school and then compare theory and practice.

The implications for a student teaching program which involves free schools are many. Voluntary help in free schools is usually welcomed. Free schools also concentrate on small group work, or one-to-one teaching ratios where student teachers could greatly help. Also, small groups visiting various places in the community are constantly in need of adult supervision, something that student teachers could provide. Free schools can also always use unpaid teachers.

Since we know little about how children learn, and colleges of education have great difficulty in defining what learning actually is, colleges of education should accept the fact that many different students learn in many different ways. Perhaps this is the major implication of any study or description of free schools. Apparently children do learn to read in free schools. This could be the result of good

teachers interested in children. It could be the result of large numbers of interested parents doing volunteer help, and the small teacher-student ratio. It could be the individual help provided to each student when he needs it, or the lack of pressure and the pleasant environment found in most free schools. Regardless of why, by all accounts in the literature of free schools, children learn to read in free schools. Colleges of education should certainly investigate this phenomenon. Part of the present criticisms of public education revolves around the fact that many schools are failing to teach children to read, especially the children of minority groups. The most commonly used measuring device to tell how good a school is or how far a social group is "behind", is reading scores. Present suggestions to overcome this failure in learning to read include individually prescribed instruction, self-paced instruction, programmed material, performance contracting, reading machines, multi-ethnic textbooks, accountability, remedial reading programs and specialists, and multi-media approaches. All of these suggestions imply "do more of what is already being done, but do it better". They all also suggest a more structured approach to education. This researcher cannot help but believe that this type of approach is doomed to failure for many children. If many children can learn to read in free schools, what is it that allows this phenomenon to occur? And free schools seem to be able to teach children to read without all of the above mentioned materials, "gimmicks", or specialists (and the implied costs of such new programs). This is a question that colleges of education should be exploring.

One cannot keep from noticing the constant referrals to students' rights in the free school literature. If there is any one issue that

you could refer to where all free schools jointly agree, it would be that students' rights are constantly violated by public schools. Examples of how the public schools violate students' rights are many and varied: suspensions; transfer; temporary exclusion from class; the placing of disciplinary marks on your record; suspension from extracurricular activities or athletic teams; the withholding of a diploma or changing of a grade; a request that you sign a statement promising not to repeat a particular action; the threat of a poor recommendation for college admission; no right to a hearing; being barred from distributing literature, leaflets, and newspapers; dress codes; hair cuts; no right to speak to school officials when charged with an offense; lockers being searched by police or school officials without student's consent; no right to draft counseling in public schools; no right to appeal decisions of a principal; and no right of freedom of speech are a few examples of how students' rights are being violated daily. The implication for colleges of education may be that they need to seriously research, study, examine, and document the status of students' rights. Certainly, in education courses all over the United States, sections of time should be set aside for prospective teachers to study students' rights. This researcher feels that it is a national disgrace that a few isolated free schools are the leaders in doing something about the constant violation of students' rights. Many teachers, authors of books on education, and parents cry long and loud about unjust practices in today's public schools, but the free schools seem to be the only ones taking a stand, vigorously fighting for students, and practicing what they preach.

Implications of Free Schools to the State Department of Education

A study of free schools or a study of the recent criticisms of public schools shows that a growing number of people are advocating the abolishment of compulsory attendance laws. A large proportion of the troubles faced by free schools revolves around the compulsory attendance laws. To meet the compulsory attendance requirements, many free schools are forced to conform to standards which are inconsistent with their philosophies. If free schools can teach children the basic skills of reading and writing, it would seem logical that it would be in the best interests of the state, the local community, and the children involved to make easy access to these free schools possible.

Possibly the brightest spot in the development of free schools has been the involvement of parents and the interest of adults in helping in the activities of free schools. Most free schools have the philosophy that every person has some skill or resource that they could contribute at some time. Free schools utilize people in the community with special skills to a much greater degree than any public schools. Parents are also drawn into the activities of free schools to a much greater degree than in the public schools. Parents in free schools are much more active in the actual instruction or aiding of instruction than the typical concept one has of teacher aides in public schools. By contrast teacher aides in public schools are paid employees, often on minimum wages, although one can only speculate on the difference in quality in paid and voluntary help, it would seem logical that those who are motivated to offer free services might prove to be of greater assistance. Most parents' involvement in public schools is left to

PTA meetings, making cookies for homeroom parties, or being in "booster" clubs, usually to buy band uniforms. Parents of children in public schools, as a result, know very little about the on-going activities in public schools (perhaps this is not so much a lack of interest of parents as the unwillingness of the educational establishment to ask for help). On the other hand, parents of students in free schools are usually active in some area of the education of their children. Many of them are actually involved in the teaching process in some way. Perhaps there should be a re-examination of the state certification laws. If untrained teachers and parents can teach children to read and write, and if there are many people in the community with skills to offer school children, then state certification laws may be doing more harm than good.

The Implications of Free Schools to the Public Schools System

Probably the two biggest problems faced by public schools today are the problems of finance and race relations. Maybe, an examination of free schools could aid public schools in the search for solutions to these two problems.

In the area of race relations, free schools have been largely successful according to the literature available in this area. There are large numbers of all white or all Black free schools, but there is some evidence to indicate that some free schools are deliberate attempts at multi-ethnic education. There has been no criticism of these types of schools anywhere in the literature of the free schools. There are glowing accounts, however, of successful attempts in deliberately

integrating free schools. This success could be explained in several ways. Obviously, free schools do not face the same types of pressures that public schools do. Maybe racial problems are related to the size of the school--all free schools are extremely small. A better explanation is probably that children are in free schools because they want to be there and teachers in free schools are there because they believe in the concepts of free education. This generalization does not hold for children in public schools nor does it hold for the teachers in public schools. But free schools also do other things that probably encourage good race relations. There is a large amount of inner-group relations. Most activities in free schools encourage cooperation between students. There is a large amount of individual attention. There is ample opportunity to relieve frustrations and anxieties in free schools. Controversial topics such as race and prejudice are openly and freely discussed. Public schools might greatly benefit from observation of these types of activities.

The second problem, that of finance, also provides public schools ample opportunity to observe successful practices in free schools. Free schools have operated on a shoe string, yet they have managed to scrape together enough free, inexpensive, or scrap materials to provide many learning experiences in their schools. The literature of the free schools is full of examples of how-to-do-it type of activities. Probably the most popular magazines in free schools are the Whole Earth Catalogue and the Big Rock Candy Mountain. Both provide examples of "how to make it yourself", or "how to get it cheap". Free schools leave no stone unturned in visiting army surplus stores, local junk yards, used furniture stores, scrap piles and any other place where

they feel that they could scrounge supplies. Public schools could certainly benefit from their example. It would be interesting to compare the per pupil expenditure of a representative sample of free schools and the national per pupil expenditure average in public schools. If research demonstrated that costs are significantly less in free schools several interesting questions are posed. The old "dollars equals quality" cliche is open to question. The need for expensive equipment and materials is open to question. The economics of size, an argument of the old reorganization era, is cast in doubt.

Free schools should also be studied as possible examples of the implementation of Paul Goodman's concept of "mini-schools". If many of the problems of public schools are caused by bureaucracy, size, and centralization, then a series of mini-schools could help those problems. By mini-schools Goodman means around twenty-eight children and four teachers, one licensed and salaried, the other three to be drawn from graduate students, housewives, and high-school graduates. These schools would be largely administered by their own staff and parents with input from the children, much like the free schools today. Building costs could be tremendously cut, as would administrative costs. There would be four adults working with twenty-eight children, a much better ratio than now provided by public schools. Whether or not this concept could be successful might be determined by studying those free schools now in existence. If public schools in one area decided that the mini-school concept were feasible, free schools could provide a reservoir of experienced teachers that public schools could utilize either as teachers in public mini-schools or as teachers to aid in the training of public school teachers in free school concepts.

Regardless of whether or not a mini-school concept is adopted, public schools and free schools should have ample reason to cooperate with each other. Free schools have much to offer to public schools in the way of examples, training grounds for prospective teachers, laboratories for experiments, or as a relief valve for some children who have trouble adjusting to public schools. Free schools could provide inservice workshops for public school teachers. In some areas of the country (San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and New York City) public school teachers are attending free school conferences, not because of their belief in the free school concepts or their desire to teach in free schools, but rather to learn from some successful practices used by free school teachers. In-service workshops could be offered in all areas where free schools are located so that public school teachers could learn from free school teachers and by the same token, free school teachers could benefit from examples of successful public school teachers. As mentioned previously, free schools could be training grounds for prospective teachers, not only student teachers, but others working toward certification or working toward becoming teacher aides. Free schools, because of their flexibility, could provide opportunities for part-time students to work for half pay, thus helping the free schools and helping students working their way through college. A housewife or a high school student who believes that they are interested in a career in teaching, could work a period of time or for a year in a free school to see if they are really interested or to see if they have the special qualifications.

As explained previously, free schools could be laboratories for experiments in education, not just for colleges of education, but for

public schools as well. Right now, public schools spend less than one percent of their budget on research in education. If lack of facilities, lack of money, or lack of flexibility is the reason for little research in public schools, these can largely be overcome by using willing free schools for experiments (however, I suspect that the reason for lack of research in public schools lies elsewhere than in lack of money, facilities, or flexibility).

If free schools and public schools cooperated, and knew a great deal about each other, free schools could act as a relief valve for public schools. By most accounts, free schools have been successful with disturbed children or with children who do not function well in the environment of a public school. If both free schools and public schools had an open admission policy, they could trade students freely. For example, when public schools have children who do not function in their atmosphere, discipline, expulsion, or parental conferences seem to do little good. In some cases, discipline only compounds the problem. If the parents and students are willing, why not transfer them to a free school? It is possible that a change in atmosphere, teacher, or peer mates would solve the problem. Public schools could pay for this service, thus helping both public schools and the free schools at the same time (it could also be a problem, public schools could use free schools as a dumping ground to get rid of undesirable students). Free schools could also utilize public schools for special student desires. If the free school philosophy is correct that students become self-directed and should be left free to pursue their own interests, public schools could be of great benefit. If there were an open admission policy, a free school student (or group of students) could attend

public schools to acquire special skills that they desire that are not possible to acquire in free schools. Also, special classes offered by public schools, but not offered by free schools, could also be utilized. In this way, it would be possible for free schools and public schools to freely utilize the special skills offered by the various schools.

There are many other ways that public schools could be of benefit to free schools. There could be a common use of public school facilities, especially gymnasiums, shops, sport facilities, audio-visual equipment, art supplies, auditorium, libraries, and cafeteria (free lunch program). To accomplish this type of sharing, it would be necessary for free school advocates to communicate freely with public school officials. It would also be necessary for public school administrators to be aware of the nature and philosophy of the free schools, which would mean visits to free schools. One cannot help but speculate on how many public school officials, administrators of school board members, have been in free schools (yet they seem so quick to criticize them). From this research into the free schools of the United States, one could conclude that if public schools and free schools are really interested in children, they should have much more in common than both sides seem to realize.

Questions Raised by This Study

Probably, a central question to the whole issue of free schools is what type of students the various free schools produce? Is he or she any different than a public school graduate? Do the different types of free schools produce different types of students? Some free schools have been around long enough to provide enough students for a research

study to see what happens to free school graduates. Are they more creative? Do they go on to college? Do they attend free universities? Do they seek regular jobs in the dominant society? Can they leave the free confines of their free school and function normally in a structured, 8:00 to 5:00 job? Do they go into the creative arts? Are they more active politically? Do they take an active part in trying to humanize the dominant culture or change it from the ground up? Is it possible to educate a student in a school concentrating upon relationships and self-actualization and then have him succeed in a skill oriented, specialized, and highly competitive society?

In the literature of the free schools, there is some evidence that at least some free school graduates do go on to college. In fact some free schools do advertise that a certain percentage of their students do go on to college (Windsor Mountain School, 90-100 percent of the graduates go on to college; Murray Roads, 80 percent go on to college; Harlem Prep, all 35 graduates accepted by colleges; Shasta, three of three graduates go on to college; New Directions, five of five go on to college, etc.). What types of schools does a free school graduate attend? Do they attend regular universities, state colleges, or more liberal colleges (Antioch, Bennington, Reed, Goddard)? How well do free school graduates perform in a college setting? Can they compete with students from regular public schools? Do they stay in colleges and graduate or become drop-outs? It would seem that the emphasis on how many free school graduates go on to college would be inconsistent with the counter culture philosophy. Alternative schools could accept the concept of college education, but the type of structure that is found in the classes of the majority of the college campuses would not

be acceptable. Therefore, if alternative school graduates attend regular colleges, they are not very sincere when they speak of their belief in a free education. Perhaps free education is for elementary schools, letting children learn how to learn in a free and pleasant atmosphere. Perhaps high school education should be a little more structured for the alternative schools. Then it may be possible for alternative school graduates to accept the structure of most colleges. On the other hand, if the graduates of counter culture schools and alternative schools attend traditionally liberal colleges, free universities, or the newer universities "without walls", they may be very serious about their philosophy of education.

It has been generally accepted that we raise children the way that we were raised. If this is true, does education in a free school and in a nonauthoritarian manner, produce people who would raise their children differently? If parents who graduate from free schools want their children educated in a similar manner, it would seem that there will be a growing pool of students for free schools to draw from, thereby insuring their survival.

One central question that should be looked into is exactly what is a free school graduate? Does attending a free school for your last year make you a free school graduate? Does attending a free school for the first eight grades and then attending a public high school make you a free school graduate? Possibly a study of any of the questions mentioned can never be done for failure to agree upon a definition of a free school graduate. Pacific High School has been around for some time and they have had over sixty graduates. A follow-up on these

graduates could possibly give the researcher some insights on free school graduates.

Another question that could be raised is how do children fare when they attend a free school in the elementary grades and then have to attend a public school? There are many more free elementary schools than free high schools, so this problem does face many students. If students of free schools during their early years have a difficult time adjusting to the structure or size of many public schools and thus become drop-outs, are the free schools doing the students a disservice?

Another question that could be raised is why have the free schools tended to develop in clusters in scattered geographic locations? To date, the majority of the free schools have developed in clusters in the following regions: New York City--Boston, Los Angeles--San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Boulder--Denver, Santa Fe--Albuquerque. There are other geographic areas with no free schools or with only one or two widely scattered: the deep south, Mid-Atlantic states, mid-western states, and the south central states. Why the regional development? Do free schools developed in one area spur the growth of many more free schools in that area? Do free schools develop in areas that tend to have the most repressive school systems? Do free schools tend to develop in areas with the widest heterogeneous populations? Could it be that the development of free schools has been too recent, and that their numbers are too small to have developed any trends yet?

The Mortality Rate of Free Schools

Throughout the literature of free schools there are reports of an extremely high mortality rate. This mortality rate is usually passed

off as being due to financial reasons. It is possible that the reasons lie much deeper than just financial reasons. An in-depth study of the high mortality rate of free schools could help stabilize those schools now in existence or aid others in their decision of whether or not to start a free school.

The high mortality rate could be that the teachers in free schools and many of the parents who send their children to free schools have different philosophical bases. Could it be that the free school staffs are usually a homogeneous group while the parents are usually a heterogeneous group? The free school staff may also be much more willing to allow children room for growth, exploration, experimentation, and inner-group relationships while the parents may want their children to learn to read, write, and do arithmetic. Exactly why do parents send their children to free schools, are they really in accord with the philosophies of the free schools, or do they just feel that the public schools are a miserable failure? Are free schools a place of last resort for many parents? If this holds true, it might explain the high mortality rate of free schools. Free schools could be started by willing teachers, who for various reasons do not believe in public schools. These free school teachers have a definite philosophical and psychological basis for their educational practices. However, it could be that they do not have enough children to make a successful school. Therefore, they are forced to recruit other children. Could it be that the parents of these recruited children believe that public schools are harmful places, and that they must do something, so they try the free schools?

And what of the teachers in free schools? How many of those teaching in free schools have been certified by the state? Are they realistic in seeking their goals of freedom? Are they trying to arrive by one giant step at a kind of education that it has taken many small steps over many years to achieve in other areas where it has been more successful (British Infant School and Summerhill)? Do teachers in free schools fully understand the principles on which it is based? Have they gone through the necessary process of preparation and have they developed the supportive methods to foster free education (A. S. Neill and George Dennison were trained psychologists)? Are free school teachers just shouting popular slogans: "Children must not learn just facts, but must learn how to learn." Yet, just what do children learn in order to learn? "Children must have freedom to grow"; but how much freedom and how do you give freedom to children? "The classroom looks like chaos but really it isn't"; are the free school teachers too blinded by hope and jargon to see their problems and failures?

If free school teachers do not have the background and skills necessary to foster free education, then why do they start free schools? Do teachers turn to free schools in a more or less desperate effort to do something meaningful and to solve their own problems? If this is true, they could be using the children to create for themselves a better image of a better world. It would also seem that in free schools, the real alternative is for the teacher. Many teachers have been constrained by the public school system from teaching how they want or what they want. Could it be that teachers are starting free schools to escape bureaucratic constraints? If this is true, then free school teachers are satisfying their own needs for a free environment,

and maybe not a child's need for a free environment. If free school teachers as adults are looking for new life styles, new freedom, less structure, are their needs compatible with those of their children? Is the high mortality rate the result of teachers looking for a new life style, not finding it, and then "moving on"? Of those free schools that fail, how many fail because the teachers quit after a year or so?

There is one major over-all question that this study has raised that may tie all of the above questions together. Do free schools become more structured the longer they exist? For example, free schools could start out with intentions of providing an environment with maximum freedom. Teachers would be there as facilitators of education, helping children only when asked. The school drifts along, no one is happy over the new found freedom, not the parents, teachers, nor the children. A little structure is introduced, people feel a little more comfortable, there is a little more order and direction. Is this structure contagious? Once structure is introduced is more and more structure necessary? Could it be that most free schools start out as the counter culture models, then gradually evolve into alternative school models? There is limited evidence of this at Pacific High, which started out with a great deal of freedom and completely unstructured, nine years later, and six directors later, they now have rigid class schedules, sounding much like a public school. Could it be that A. S. Neill is right when he talks about how long it takes a child from a repressive family and a repressive school to accept a free environment and rid himself of his anxieties? According to Neill, the more repressive the environment, the longer it takes children to become

self-directed in a free environment. Maybe that is what is happening in the free schools of the United States. It is possible that our public schools are so rigid and repressive that children placed in free schools must go through a period of adjustment, freeing themselves of the anxieties and frustrations suffered for many years.

Free Schools and Progressive Education

Another question raised by this research effort is that it is possible that free schools are an example of a continuing cycle of progressive education. Various examples of progressive education have appeared throughout history, promising new forms of education based upon the nature of the child. Each new prophet of progressive education has spawned various disciplines, but historically, their numbers have faded and their promises of new waves of reform have fallen on deaf ears. Are free schools yet another fad of progressive education? Under what circumstances does child centered progressive education wax and wane in popularity? It could be that progressive education ideas become popular as a reaction to repressive situations, when there is the least hope for change. Do free schools "pop" up in the most repressive of societies? There is some evidence that this happens. Tolstoy's school developed in repressive Imperial Russia during the 1860's, where hope for change for millions of peasants was severely limited. Robert Owens' school was born in the middle of a rigid class structure in industrializing England. A. S. Neill's Summerhill was a reaction against Victorian England and the upper class social roles which children were supposed to assume. In each of these examples there were some genuine efforts at social and political reform. Is it

possible that "free" schools were reflective of this broader movement? It could be that free schools in the United States were born out of the devastating criticism of public school education. In some areas, conditions were so bad (New York City) that some parents and teachers were willing to try anything in a desperate attempt to improve the condition of education. Any justification, any rationalization could be used to theorize why a new educational form was being used. It could be that free schools and the free school philosophies were convenient tools to meet this purpose. Maybe George Dennison is right in that there is no such thing as a free school ideology. There has just been the implementation of previously existing ideas in the development of free schools.

Free Schools and Great Men

Do free schools succeed because of a few scattered, brilliant individuals who are able to sustain the interests of parents, children, and fellow teachers? We are not all A. S. Neills, nor do we have the special kinds of training that a George Dennison has had. Nor do we have the creative ability of a Herbert Kohl, nor the deep compassion and feeling for children of a Jonathan Kozol. And certainly, we do not have the intellectual capacities of a Rousseau or a Tolstoy. It could be that these men are all brilliant and dynamic individuals who could have succeeded at anything they chose to do, and indeed, all of them have been successful in other fields. Maybe we should leave free schools to those few successful people who have the special personalities, skills, abilities, and patience to work with children in a free environment. Maybe the number of these types of individuals is

extremely small. If that is true, then the implication is that free schools must face a future of remaining relatively few in number.

Concluding Remarks

A major conclusion of this research effort may be that the hypothesis that public schools are instruments of the state to perpetuate the dominant culture or the corporate state is false. What the development of free schools demonstrates is that the public schools can perpetuate a dominant culture <u>if</u> the <u>people</u> of that community allow the public school to do it. Free schools, or different types of schools with a specific philosophy of changing the culture can be developed in every community, if the people wish and if there is enough support, a great manifestation of democracy if there ever was one. How many times have the parents of a community stopped educational reforms? When teachers are removed from the classroom is it because they went beyond the wishes of the parents? If so, free school teachers have seldom criticized the people of the community, they blame principals, administrators, school boards, or the corporate state, but never the people.

Free Schools and Social Class

Another conclusion of this study (or question for further study) is that free schools are closely tied to social class. In-depth research may reveal that the classification scheme developed in this work should not be related to different philosophies (or only indirectly related to different philosophies) but to social class. Stated simply, rich kids like free schools but poor kids have little in common with free school education. It could be that counter culture schools and

certainly Summerhill types of boarding schools are exclusively upper class recluses. In researching free schools, no reference was found indicating Blacks from Harlem, children of unemployed coal miners in West Virginia, or Chicanos from New Mexico participate in counter culture free schools. Counter culture schools are not the paths to success for the lower socio-economic groups. Counter culture schools do not prepare children to become doctors, lawyers, or engineers (although counter culture schools would argue that they do). Perhaps this is why counter culture schools have not appealed to the poor. It is possible that the poor still think in terms of the "American Dream". They are people who are so concerned with becoming part of the system they have little time for contemplation, self-actualizing, or reforming the system. They want to become a part of the system. They may be more concerned with a home in the suburbs, a color television, security for their children, and schools in which their children can learn skills and abilities which allow them to compete in the job market than anything else.

Those alternative schools that do attract the children of the poor may be those that are the most structured and those that promise to be stepping stones to higher education (a Harlem Prep). Even here however, free schools discriminate against the lower class by charging tuition.

It would be interesting to compare the curriculums of several alternative schools with those of counter culture schools. What this work has found is that the counter culture curriculums revolve around music, dancing, writing, poems, painting, acting, cooking, building, organic farming, milking goats, yoga, and religions of the world. The

curriculum of an alternative school usually emphasizes reading, writing, math problems, and science. If parents of poor children feel that public schools are failing miserably and there is no hope for reforming public schools, the alternative schools would be much more compatible with their hopes and needs. Free schools in inner city areas that attract children of the poor, may then be refuges from the racism, prejudice, and bitterness that is found in many ghetto schools, a place of last resort.

The issue of social class may explain why there are not more free schools. Why are there only a few free schools, if our public system is so repressive, why are there not thousands of free schools? It could be that the poor in our society cannot afford to take a chance on the future of their young. Middle-class whites can always attend free schools and then easily slip back into the mainstream of the dominant culture if they choose. Even for the middle class, there may be little reason to patronize free schools. For the great bulk of the middle and upper class in this society, the public schools may be doing a good job in educating their youth. Many educators would agree, that for the middle class public schools continue their historic process of selecting and screening. Those who pass through the screen are predominantly middle class.

Free Schools and the Danger to Public Schools

One conclusion that could be reached from this study is that it is possible, if free schools continue to grow, that free schools may siphon off the best and most creative public school teachers. If the salaries of free school teachers were to increase and become comparable

with those of public schools, would there be a mass exodus to free schools? The danger to public schools is that those now working for change in the public schools might suddenly depart, leaving those schools in the hands of the mediocre, the believers in the status quo, and the incompetent. It would seem that real educational reform could better be accomplished by remaining inside the system. The idea of a school-within-a-school may be much more practical because of better financing and because of the fact that teachers' energies may not be drained by struggles for funds, facilities, and meeting state requirements. A school-within-a-school may also be much more practical from the standpoint of visibility, the other students in the school would certainly know what is going on. Free schools are often isolated from the other children of the community and then, other children have no chance to know or learn that there is a different way.

The Free Schools and the Federal Government

One conclusion of this research effort is that there needs to be a way in which free schools can obtain federal grants to education, other than through some relationship with public schools. If free schools are to attract the children of the poor, a federal grant to some free schools may be necessary to get rid of the tuition requirements. These federal grants should also be relatively free from controls so that free schools can retain their autonomous status. The U. S. Office of Education has a small grants department for proposals under $10,000. For reasons previously mentioned, it would be in the best interest of the local school districts, the parents of school children, and the

free schools if these types of grants were made available for free school development.

An example could be taken from Denmark where public education is flexible in the use of alternative types of public schools, many of them organized and controlled by parents. The Danish system has established standards of education, but have also provided freedom for parents with special religious, ethnic, economic, or pedagogic interests to oversee and direct the education of their children with minimal interference by the government. Parents have the right to arrange for the schooling or tutorial instruction of their children, which includes the right to organize, staff, and supervise the schools their children attend. The government provides considerable financial and organizational assistance to these private schools. Despite the liberal financing and government cooperation in the formation of alternative schools, only a relatively small number of children attend these schools.[2] It could be that if small grants were available in the United States, only a very few more free schools would develop. It is possible that all those who wish, are already in free schools.

Free Schools in a Democratic Society

Free schools should have an opportunity to exist alongside regular schools. Surely a democratic society can allow different types of education. Why should one school, one system, one methodology, have a legalized monopoly on education? If democracy means anything, it should apply to students. They should have some choices regarding their own future. They should be able to choose their own peer mates, their own schools, their own teachers, and above all, it should be

their choice of how to learn what we want them to learn or what they want to learn.

Since we cannot define learning, we should accept the fact that there are many different students and those students learn in many different ways. Therefore, free schools should exist along with public schools, and we should encourage their existence. Let every program rest on its own merits, but let students have a choice in deciding what those merits are.

For free schools to be a real alternative, there should be many different types of free schools to meet the specific needs of many different people. For example, there could be free schools in one area built around specific themes; free schools concentrating on arts and crafts; free schools built around nature and farming. The possibilities are infinite. All people of the community should be informed of these schools and what they provide. Public schools should be flexible enough to allow their students to spend a day, an hour, or a semester in these schools, and then transfer back to the public schools. In this manner, students would have greater choice in shaping their own educational needs. The more free schools in this type of system, the greater the possibility of reaching the majority of the students. The dropout rate might be greatly reduced, thus benefiting the whole society. The problem with both the public schools and the free schools today is that they try to be all things for all people. Let each school concentrate upon that area where they can do the best job. It would then be the task of teachers and administrators to inform students of the alternatives available and to facilitate their acquisitions of these alternatives.

Conclusion

The development of free schools may have nothing at all to do with social class, psychology, philosophy, or politics. Free schools may merely be an indicator of the times in which we live. We live in a time of racism, fear, complexity, and rapid change. We seem to be stumbling aimlessly into the future, with no national goals, and no national ethos. The confusion that exists today in our public school systems and in the development of free schools may be a manifestation of our aimless meandering toward a dominant culture or toward no culture at all. Perhaps, the free schools are examples of the new society, a society that can allow a multitude of sub-cultures to exist and flourish in a dominant culture. Or perhaps the free schools are an example of the beginning of the disappearance of a dominant culture in our society.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The term free schools, as used in this chapter, refers to both alternative and counter culture schools.

[2]Estelle Fuchs, "The Free Schools of Denmark," Saturday Review, August 16, 1969, pp. 44-46+.

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Education Exploration Center, 3104 16th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Education Switchboard, At One, 1380 Howard Street, San Francisco, California.

Free School Clearing House, 1609 19th Street, Washington, D. C.

Free School Press, Box 22, Saturna Island, British Columbia, Canada.

New Schools Exchange Newsletter, 301 E. Canon Perdido, Santa Barbara, California.

The New School Movement, Earth Station 7, 402 15th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington.

New Schools Network, 3039 Deakin Street, Berkeley, California.

Rio Grande Educational Association, Bernalillo, New Mexico.

The Summerhill Society, 339 Lafayette Street, New York City.

The Summerhill Collective, 137a W. 14th Street, New York City.

Periodicals Which Publish Information Regularly About Free Schools

Big Rock Candy Mountain, Portola Institute, 1115 Merrill Street, Menlo Park, California.

Edcentric, Center For Educational Reform, 2115 S. Street N. W., Washington, D. C.

KOA (Kommunications on Alternatives), c/o Arrakis, R. F. D. #1, Jeffersonville, New York.

Outside The Net, Post Office Box 184, Lansing, Michigan.

Teacher Drop-Out Center, Box 521, Amherst, Massachusetts.

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