



French Crime Wave

THE "NEW WAVE" having long ago receded, the French film industry now appears to be occupying itself devotedly with variations on the theme of crime. There are three examples on hand this week, all destined for the art cinemas, and each in its way providing its share of interest and entertainment. *Cloportes* has to do with a bungled safe-cracking venture and its aftermath of betrayal and revenge. *Enough Rope* is a kind of cat-and-mouse affair, in which the crime is secondary to the twists involved in its solution. *The Sucker*, on the other hand, fails to take its crime and criminals seriously, but makes up for this with a blend of farce, tourism, and fine comic performing by two French favorites, Bourvil, and Louis De Funes. As can be seen, none of these are thrillers in the usual sense, nor do they deal with the solution of a mystery. But they are all a cut above average, if only because they endeavor to get out of the ordinary ruts.

The word "cloportes" in the French-English dictionary translates to wood lice, but since the screen first fills with what look suspiciously like roaches it is perfectly clear that the director, Pierre Granier-Deferre, intends us to associate his characters with those unsavory infestations. Having made his moral point, he is then free to concentrate on his criminal milieu, in which no moral distinctions exist and it is all a matter of whom you can trust and whom you can't; no one, in other words, except possibly a chap who specializes in collecting—without payment—post-impressionist paintings, and who is played with stolid believability by the rugged Lino Ventura. Alphonse is his name in the film, and his greed runs away with him when he hears about a safe-cracking venture that would bring him a considerable return if he will rent a blowtorch. When he is caught, and betrayed, he spends five years in jail mulling over with gloomy enthusiasm the revenge he will take after his release—which is when the film picks up steam.

A man now dedicated to doing away with his former associates, he finds himself, through his interest in art, a partner in a high-toned art gallery, as well as the bedmate of Irina Demick, the beautiful saleslady in the art emporium. This gives the film a chance to satirize today's art world, while bringing practically every member of the cast to some unlooked-for fate. Not exactly morally enlightening, any of this, but the acting

by Mr. Ventura, by Charles Aznavour, by the wonderful Pierre Brasseur, and the charming Miss Demick, makes the picture flavorful when those cloportes aren't crawling about.

The characters of *Enough Rope*, which is based on Patricia Highsmith's novel, *The Blunderer*, are not quite so bug-like except for Gert Frobe, who, as a second-hand bookdealer, and wife-murderer, is back to being his most unpleasant self since *Goldfinger*. The director, Claude Autant-Lara, picks his deliberate way through a series of psychological, but not always believable subtleties. Maurice Ronet, made miserable by his neurotic, suicidal wife, identifies with the book-dealer, guesses at the nature of his crime, and soon leads a nosy police inspector to similar conclusions—after Ronet's wife has thrown herself from a cliff. Gears are shifted about half way through the film, and then it becomes a story about how the inspector sets Ronet off against Frobe, and, through his nasty brain-washing methods, precipitates another crime. The point is made strongly enough, but it struck me as more tricky than valid. Robert Hossein, as the inspector, is synthetic; Maurice Ronet is better; and Gert Frobe is almost too gruesomely real.

THE *Sucker*, directed by Gerard Oury, is pure extravaganza, with certain elements that are not unfamiliar and others that are delightfully inventive. Bourvil, a nice, simple bourgeois fellow, is the butt of a scheme to drive the most expensive Cadillac in the world through Italy and France. The car is expensive because its bumpers are filled with solid gold, its fenders are filled with heroin, and its battery is charged with rare gems.

The mastermind of the plot is the above-mentioned Louis De Funes. Bourvil thinks he is having himself a splendid, all-expenses-paid holiday in Italy and France—quite unaware that he is being followed by De Funes and his gang, who, in turn, are being followed by a rival gang. The friendly Bourvil almost marries a Rome manicurist, picks up a buxom German "naturist," and, when he discovers that he is being made a sucker, manages to turn the tables. That, unfortunately, is when the picture begins to lose its zest, but by that time it has also provided more than its quota of fun. And, for my part, the French can continue their crime wave for awhile longer.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.

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Eyewitness in China

Continued from page 21

does not confer the status of an atomic power on any nation. That calls for a stockpile not only of atom bombs but of all kinds of other nuclear weapons. In addition, it is necessary to have the means of delivering them to a potential enemy—suitable carriers, specially designed planes, and missiles.

Considering the industrial installations I saw in China, I question whether the nation will be ready for several years, or even decades, to produce suitable carriers and an arsenal of atomic weapons. Its only large planes are jet fighters. All the civilian planes are of Soviet or English origin. None of them are jets. The Russians have delivered two-engine Ilyushin 14's and four-engine turboprop Ilyushin 18's. China also bought a series of four-engine turboprop Vickers Viscounts from the British. At the time of my visit, English engineers were arriving in Peking to restore some of these planes to working condition.

This suggests that the Chinese do not yet have the technical ability necessary to maintain such complex apparatus. But it would be a mistake to count on that. The Chinese have already forged ahead in other areas to an amazing degree. We must take into consideration the possibility that some day they will be able to produce atomic carriers. Obviously, the government would willingly sacrifice a great deal to achieve this; the construction of the atom bomb proves it.

The atomic explosion not only strengthened the Communist regime within China but made certain that its Asian neighbors, and even the Africans and South Americans, would admire or fear the Chinese even more than before. Both fear and admiration have the same result—respect. Increased respect for China automatically weakens the position of the West in Asia, as well as in the other developing areas of the world. Naturally, it also weakens the position of the Soviet Union, assuming that the Moscow-Peking conflict will continue.

VI. Impressions

SHANGHAI really is something special among Chinese cities. No other has as many European and American traits, no other emanates such an international aura as does Shanghai to this day, even though its population no longer has much contact with the rest of the world. Naturally, ships still tie up in Shanghai's harbor: from Korea, Albania, now and then one from the West. But most ships with freight from Europe unload at the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. On the Huang-po there are more junks than ocean liners these days. And yet thousands of people throng the quays every evening, just to get a breath of fresh air. They lean against the railings and look out over the water that once kept them in hourly touch with the rest of the world.

SOME OF THE NEW HOUSING PROJECTS soon came into view. Although they had just been built, they looked as if they had been standing there fifty years or more. Exposure to weather and smoke had aged the brick façades. Most of the buildings were four to five stories high and spaced about 100 to 150 feet apart. "Social greenery" was not much in evidence, although efforts were being made to supply it. In Anshan thousands of trees had been planted between the buildings, and they seemed to be doing well. "Not everything can be done at once," my interpreter hastened to explain. "The expansion of industry comes first. The workers have had to make do with temporary accommodations. Now we have built the projects, and in time we'll be able to beautify them."

HERE AND THERE, I saw peasants and other civilians at rifle practice. Every Chinese citizen belongs to the people's militia . . . The peasant has to build his house himself and pay for the construction materials himself. In cases of severe need, the commune will help out with a contribution or by granting credit. But in the communes I visited I saw hardly any new houses. The rural population lives, now as formerly, in old peasant dwellings.

BECAUSE I HAD READ SO MUCH about the dirtiness of the old China, not only the streets but also many of the people, I was struck particularly by the cleanliness of Peking. During the next few days, I would be awakened at five in the morning by the noise of many scratching whiskbrooms, and if I glanced out of my hotel-room window, I could see numerous columns of broom-wielding women, sweeping the street in unison.

IN ONE RESPECT there is complete conformity between China, the Soviet Union, and other Communist countries: the press. In a Communist country nothing is more monotonous than a newsstand, and the Chinese newsstands are perhaps the most monotonous of the lot.

Naturally, I wondered whether Chinese readers had an opportunity to see foreign newspapers. In the hotels and some waiting rooms I had found the official organs of the New Zealand, Australian, North Vietnamese, North Korean, and, above all, the Albanian Communist parties. But there were no non-Communist newspapers from abroad, nor even the Communist papers from the European "brother nations." Neither *Pravda* nor *Izvestia* can be bought in China nowadays.

TELEVISION, THE MOST EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA medium, has not yet been developed very highly in China. Although the larger cities have their own television stations, few programs are transmitted. For example, in Shanghai a television program is shown on alternate days, and it lasts from two to three hours. Transmissions are more frequent in Peking, but they are confined to news reports, scenes of political rallies, scenes from receptions given by party and government officials (usually a few days after the event), and movies. At present the individual stations are not linked into a network, so there is no way to broadcast an event over a nationwide hookup.

Another fact that limits the effectiveness of television is that there are very few sets. Those that exist are located mostly in the palaces of culture and party offices.

PRESENT-DAY CITIES IN Africa, South America, the rest of Asia, and the countries of East Europe undoubtedly have their share of rundown neighborhoods and their slums, but they also have modern sections that are pleasing to our eyes and meet our standards of housing. These are lacking in China. Here I found myself in a milieu that we know only through descriptions of the early period of European industrialism, without being really able to imagine such a way of life.

THE WORKMEN'S HOUSING PROJECTS skirting the plants made a desolate impression on me. For the most part they consisted of low one-story huts, the walls made of mud with corrugated tin roofs arching over them. "Those are left over from the time of the Japanese occupation," my interpreter told me. "We are in the process of replacing all these with new housing projects."

NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD BUT IN JAPAN had I ever seen such carefully tended fields. The smallest speck of ground is utilized, the terraced fields climb up to the top of

"People are clothed neatly but poorly. Streets are clean."

the steepest mountains. Many of the highest terraces are no larger than a few square yards. These fields are practically free of weeds. The shoots stand like soldiers in rank and file. Among them, here and there, small groups of peasants are endlessly busy cultivating. Now and then a water buffalo passes, pulling a plow.

Suddenly, I was amazed to see plows pulled not by animals, but by five or six girls. Exposed to the full force of the subtropical sun, they hauled the plows on long ropes. Old peasants steered them and guided the girls by calling out directions.

THE PEOPLE ARE CLOTHED NEATLY BUT POORLY. Although all sorts of fabrics are offered in many colors and patterns, only a few are inexpensive, and these are the plain solid-colored fabrics in very little variety. The high prices, which few can afford to pay, thus make their contribution to a certain uniformity of appearance, not only of the populace but also of their utensils and the furnishing of their homes.

I CANNOT RID MYSELF OF THE FEELING that Communism probably elicits a stronger response from the women of China than from the men, perhaps because, for the first time in several thousand years of sociological development, it has actually granted women full equality of rights and has transferred to them responsibilities that, until eighteen years ago, were in the exclusive domain of men. And so they try doubly and triply hard to justify the trust placed in them.

WITH REGARD TO THE CARE OF THE AGED, no fixed age for retirement is set by the government. In theory, men between the ages of fifty-five and sixty and women between fifty and fifty-five years of age can be pensioned off, depending on the state of health in each case—if they have been workers or employees!

This relatively low retirement age may well be ascribed to the incredibly huge manpower reserve, which exerts pressure on the Chinese labor market. Whereas in theory no one in China is permitted to remain without work, it is undoubtedly not easy for the state to provide adequate work for everyone. Pension payments amount to between 50 and 70 per cent of the wages earned and depend on the length of service in the plant.

TO EAT IN A RESTAURANT is quite expensive in terms of a Chinese income. It costs from 3 to 10 yuan, which, on an average monthly income of 60 yuan (approximately \$24), is quite a large sum. So it is safe to assume that all the guests in a restaurant belong to the higher income group.

CHINESE PURITANISM IS ESPECIALLY STRIKING to a visitor from the West. Not one poster shows the face of a pretty girl. In Shanghai I saw a poster advertising ladies' hosiery. It pictured a few flowers. Women's dresses are advertised with flowers and samples of cloth. In the movies, girls are shown as one actually sees them on the street: in shapeless trousers, white blouses, and pigtailed or simple pageboy bobs. All sex appeal is carefully avoided.

Although monogamy was legally enforced under Chiang Kai-shek, wealthy Chinese could and did own concubines until 1949, and the practice was overlooked. But since most of the wealthy Chinese who remained in China lost the greater part of their fortunes, or were forced to buy government bonds, which amounted to almost the same thing, they found it almost impossible to support the concubines and their children. In any case, polygamy is illegal and severely punished in today's China.

After the Communist takeover, prostitutes—there were hundreds of thousands of them, especially in the seaports—were put into reform schools. Most of these girls could neither read nor write. They were taught these essentials and also



—Eastfoto.

Part of crowd of 900,000 people in rally at Tientsin.

required to work. Some of the girls are said to have relapsed after their release from these centers. They were sent to camps for "re-education through work."

IT WAS MY LAST EVENING in China. We mingled once more in the teeming Chinese street life. We squeezed in among hundreds of people on the narrow sidewalks, crossed streets in a zigzag course, dodged bicycles and tricycle rickshas, stuck our noses in dozens of minute shops. Small groups of people were standing everywhere, discussing and gesticulating just as if it were still possible to haggle over prices in present-day China.

We strolled along the banks of the Pearl River. Darkness had fallen. On the sampans the people had already lit their fires. Hundreds of lights were reflected in the water. People sat packed close together, talking, on the high walls of the quai. Thousands of cicadas were chirping in the trees above us. Over it all was a clear, star-sprinkled tropical sky. At this moment it was easy to forget that I was in a Communist country, in a state that is making the rest of the world uneasy, a state whose ideology and military preparedness are felt as a threat.

Miners doing calisthenics, a custom throughout China.

—Wang Chi-shan (Eastfoto).





The loneliness of a little girl

Her name is Patricia Bright Eagle, a forgotten child with a proud tradition. Patricia's home is made of mud and sticks; her food consists mainly of fried bread and corn.

Like other six-year-old children, Patricia started school this year. It was a frightening experience for her. Able to speak but a few words of English, Patricia suddenly found herself in a world where she became self-conscious and ashamed of her clothes, of her name, of her appearance... of herself. She stays apart, bewildered and lonely.

Patricia will soon learn to speak English, but there are some things school cannot give her, things that the other children have. She needs new shoes, decent clothes, money for school activities and school supplies—and for an occasional luxury such as a bracelet or a small toy. She needs the help of someone who cares... someone to give her the confidence and assurance she needs so desperately to participate in voluntary school and community services.

If not you...who?

You—or your club or office group—can give these things to Patricia or another needy Indian child through SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION. Your contribution of just \$12.50 a month will provide a child with funds to buy suitable clothing, books and a cash allowance for school activities.

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Writers' Workshops

Continued from page 45

Staff: Elizabeth Yates, Roland Wolseley, Wayne C. Lee, Edward Futweiler, Lou B. Noll. Visiting lecturers: Kyle Haselden, Dorothy Haas, Jack Stokes, Sue Nichols. Workshops in article writing, writing curriculum, fiction, poetry. Tuition: \$20. Room and board: varies with type of accommodation (range, \$6.50 to \$12 per day). Last year's enrollment: 150. For brochure: Mrs. Margaret S. Ward, Program Director, American Baptist Board of Education and Publication, Valley Forge, Pa. 19481.

One- to Four-Day Conferences

ARKANSAS WRITERS' CONFERENCE will meet June 3-5 at the Albert Pike Hotel, Little Rock, Ark. Founded 1945. Director: Anna Nash Yarbrough. Religious poetry workshop, newspaper poetry workshop, magazines-books, celebrity banquet, fiction, features, modern poetry, traditional poetry, and awards dinner. Registration: \$3. Last year's enrollment: 200. For bulletin: Send self-addressed, stamped envelope to Anna Nash Yarbrough, 510 East Street, Benton, Ark.

TWELFTH ANNUAL WRITERS' WEEK IN PASADENA, under auspices of Pasadena City College, will meet May 9-12 at Pasadena City College and Holliston Ave. Methodist Church, Pasadena, Calif. Founded 1954. Director: Dean L. H. Smith. Staff: Mrs. Helen H. Jones. Tuition: Free. Last year's attendance: 500. For brochure: L. Herman Smith, Dean of Educational Services, Pasadena City College, 1570 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, Calif.

EIGHTH ANNUAL LONG BEACH WRITERS' CONFERENCE, under auspices of Long Beach City College, will meet May 5-7 at Lafayette Hotel, Long Beach, Calif. Founded 1959. Director: Eva T. Logan. Staff: William E. Keeley, Dean of Special

Services. Visiting lecturers: Ed Ainsworth, Jane Ardmore, John Champion, Thomas Freebairn-Smith, Karl Kasberg, John McGreavy, Don Marshall, George Robeson, Hal D. Stewart, Larry Schwab, Ora Pate Stewart, Eugene Vale, Brad Williams. Workshops on book-length fiction and non-



fiction, poetry, drama, technical writing, feature writing, children's books, articles and short stories, television and motion pictures. Prizes. Tuition: \$1.50. Accommodations available at Hotel Lafayette and other Long Beach hotels. Last year's attendance: 700. For brochure: Long Beach Writers' Conference, Long Beach City College, 1794 Cedar Avenue, Long Beach, Calif. 90813.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS WRITERS' CONFERENCE, under auspices of Kansas University School of Journalism and University Extension, will meet June 28-July 1 at Lawrence. Founded 1948. Director: Frances Grinstead. Staff: Herbert Brean (nonfiction book and mystery novel), Helen Rowe Henze (poetry), Holly Wilson (juvenile writing), Lucille Kohler (short story), Fred Kiewit (feature writing), Jay Milner (book-length fiction), Helen Hostetter (writing on family life). Stated amount of manuscript criticism permitted under the tuition fee. No manuscripts required and no college credit given. Tuition: \$35. Room and board: \$3.50 per person double, \$5 single. Last year's enrollment: 55. For brochure: Frances Grinstead, Writers' Conference, School of Journalism, Lawrence, Kan.

STATE OF MAINE WRITERS' CONFERENCE, under auspices of Ocean Park Association,

Leonardo da Vinci (a legend)

By R. P. Dickey

MILAN (at Santa Maria della Grazie's):
For the Last Supper in the refectory

Leonardo sought a model for Him.
The choir-boy from the cathedral, very
Suggestive of grace, firm of face and limb,
Clear of line and color—yes, he would do.
Lime, water, umber, ultramarine blue.

Rome (another time, another painting):

For the face of Judas, he scoured the belly
Of the alleys and found one, vice-lined. Swore
His sinner: "I'm Pietro Bandinelli—"
He strained his breath. "I've sat for you before—"
As nervous as at his vocation, theft.
The artist smiled. "Turn a bit to your left."

will meet August 23-26 at Porter Memorial Hall, Ocean Park. Founded 1941. Co-directors: Loring Williams and Adelbert M. Jakeman. Staff: Rev. Sheldon Christian, William E. Harris. Visiting lecturers: Gladys Hasty Carroll, William M. Clark. Prizes for prose and poetry. Tuition: \$5. Room and board: nominal. Last year's enrollment: 75. For brochure: Adelbert M. Jakeman, State of Maine Writers' Conference, Ocean Park, Me.

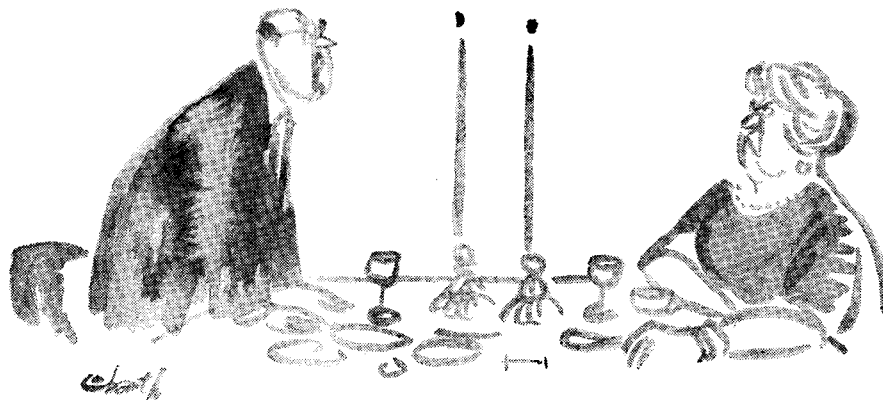
CRAFTSMANSHIP OF CREATIVE WRITING, under auspices of Detroit Women Writers and Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University, will meet October 15 at Oakland University, Rochester, Mich. Founded 1962. Director: Priscilla Jackson. Workshops in poetry, short story, articles, juveniles, drama, markets. Visiting lecturers: Joyce Oates, Sheila Pritchard, Thomas Fitzsimmons. Tuition: \$10. Room and board: \$8 to \$12 per night at motels. For information: Conference Department, Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University, Rochester, Mich. 48063.

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL EASTERN NEW MEXICO WRITERS WORKSHOP, under auspices of Eastern New Mexico University, will meet June 29-July 2 at Portales, N.M. Founded 1951. Director: Dr. E. Debs Smith. Staff: Helen Reagan Smith and ENMU professors. Emphasis on writing of fiction. \$50 in awards. Tuition: \$12. Room and board: \$5 per day. Last year's enrollment: 80. For brochure: Dr. E. Debs Smith, Department of English, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, N.M.

IONA COLLEGE WRITERS' CONFERENCE, under auspices of Iona College, will meet April 30 and May 7 at Iona College, New Rochelle, N.Y. Founded 1964. Director: Patrick S. Collins. Staff: Richard Tobin (articles), Margaret Widdemer (novel), Harry Neal (nonfiction books), Stewart Beach (short story), Henry Klinger (mystery writing). Visiting panelists: Babette Rosmond, Marjorie Vetter, Barbara Blake-more, Neal Gilkyson Stuart, William Car-rington Guy, Paul Lapolla, Virginia Kendall, M. Elsa Russell, Riley Hughes, Ray Robinson. Award luncheon on Apr. 30 for presentation of Columba Prize in Literature to Helen MacInnes. Tuition: \$12. Last year's enrollment: 275. For brochure: Writers' Conference, Iona College, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801.

WORKSHOP ON CREATIVE POETRY AND SACRED ART, under auspices of Lakeside, Ohio, Assembly, will meet July 25-27 at Lakeside. Founded 1965. Director: Cecil D. Smith. Staff: Ralph W. Seager and Mildred W. Smith (poetry counselors), Marie Shawan (art criticism). Tuition: \$5. Last year's enrollment: 9. For brochure: Professor Cecil D. Smith, 810 S. Gilbert St., Ada, Ohio 45810.

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL SHORT COURSE ON PROFESSIONAL WRITING, under auspices of Oklahoma University, will meet June 8-10 at Kellogg Center, Oklahoma University, Norman. Founded 1938. Director: Foster-Harris. Staff: Dwight Swain, Helen Reagan Smith. Visiting lecturers: Marc Jaffe, Paul



"I've taped every argument we've had for twelve years, and Holt, Rinehart & Winston is publishing it."

Reynolds, Ken McCormick, Bill Scott. Oklahoma University Writing Award. Tuition: \$18. Room and board: \$3-\$8 for room, cafeteria meals. Last year's enrollment: 350. For brochure: Director of Short Course on Professional Writing, Oklahoma University, Norman, Okla.

PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE, under auspices of Delaware Valley writers' clubs, will meet June 1-3 at Hotel Bellevue Stratford, Philadelphia. Founded 1949. Director: Hobart F. Berolzheimer. Staff: John W. Alexander, Doris T. Patterson, Claude Koch, Howard A. Wiley, Lewis P. Nachod, Daniel L. Rodden, Michael Hoffman, Edward D. Futweiler, Barbara Bates, Lester Del Rey, Jean C. Soule, Richard Bozorth, Edgar Williams, Pauline Bloom, C. Hall Thompson. Manuscript contest open to conferees; cash awards and book prizes; \$17 scholarships open to writers' clubs. Tuition: \$42. Room and board: single room \$10, double \$15. Last year's enrollment: 160. For brochure: Jean C. Soule, Registrar, Drawer U. Springfield, Pa. 19064.

SEVENTH PINEYWOODS WRITERS CONFERENCE, under auspices of Department of English, Stephen F. Austin State College, will meet July 6-8 on campus of Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Tex. (midway between Dallas and Houston). Founded 1960. Director: Dr. Walter Kidd. Staff: Allen Tate (poetry and literary criticism), Dr. Francis Abernethy (folklore),

Charlotte Baker (juvenile fiction and non-fiction), Dr. James V. Baker (research), Sue Abbott Boyd (editing and poetry), Garland Roark (novel and biography). Membership fee: \$10 for those entering manuscripts in prize contest; \$15 for auditors. For information: stamped, self-addressed envelope to Dr. Walter Kidd, Pineywoods Writers Conference, Box 6157, Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas 75961.

LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS' SUMMER INSTITUTE will meet July 7-8 at University of Vermont, Burlington. Founded c. 1930. Director: Ronald Rood. Staff: Betty Douglas. Visiting lecturers: John M. Allen, Helen Pfatteicher, Andrew and Edith Nuquist, and others. Tuition: \$2. Room and board: available at local hotels and motels. Last year's attendance: 80. For information: Ronald Rood, President, League of Vermont Writers, Mountain Meadows, Lincoln, Vt. 05467.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST WRITERS CONFERENCE, under auspices of Board of Trustees, Pacific Lutheran University, will meet July 28-31 at the campus of Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash. Director: W. Gordon Mauermann. Workshops in poetry, non-fiction, short story, novel, juveniles, plays, TV. Five prize contests. Tuition: \$5 basic fee including membership dues. Last year's attendance: 500. For information: Laura de Veuve, Secretary, Pacific Northwest Writers Conference, 5009 Tok-A-Lou Ave., N.E., Tacoma, Wash. 98422.

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The Councils Take Counsel

**A new turn in the road
for community assistance to the arts**

By EMILY COLEMAN

IS THE SO-CALLED cultural explosion in the United States a reality—or just a set of misleading statistics? At the moment, there is ample evidence that it is both. But whether this awakening of public interest in the arts booms into vigorous, creative prosperity, or busts in a proliferation of culture centers inhabited by culture-vultures—but no culture—rests largely in the courage and wisdom of comparative newcomers to the field: arts councils operating at the community, state, and national levels.

While the concept of public patronage for the arts is not new in the United States—in 1780 John Adams incorporated into the Massachusetts constitution the admonition that it should be “the duty of the legislature and magistrates” to encourage art and letters as well as agriculture and the sciences—its practical implementation on any scale began only after World War II. Amid growing community programs for concerts, museum shows, and theater productions, interested civic leaders banded together to improve liaison between local cultural establishments, eliminate conflicts in scheduled events, and publish material promoting the joint interests of the artistic community. By 1950, there were eight such community arts councils; ten years later, there were fifty. Only New York then had a state council. By last year, however, there were 250 community and forty state arts councils, plus territorial ones in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

As the councils grew in number, so

did their functions and programs. Fund raising was undertaken, along with the building and managing of culture centers and production of festivals and other special events involving one or more of a community's art institutions. Along with expansion came the desire to organize nationally, first on an informal basis and, then, in 1960, formally, as Community Arts Councils, Inc.,—now Arts Councils of America (ACA).

CONCOMITANT with the urge to organize came the need to convene and confer. “Take at any instant a census of the great talents of the world,” Jacques Barzun has written, “and you will find a large portion preparing, attending, or recovering from a conference.” The ACA has been no exception. Its twelfth annual conference will be held May 19-21 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

In tone and atmosphere this year's meeting is certain to be different from last year's, which was held in Washington at a time when the future of the arts in the United States had never looked so hopeful. Simultaneous with the ACA conference, the White House had staged a festival of the arts unparalleled in size and scope. Congress, heretofore hostile to if not contemptuous of the arts, had passed legislation creating an advisory National Council on the Arts, and then was well on its way to establishing a National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities which would have money to subsidize for art's sake and not employment's, as had been the case under the WPA.

Equally heartening had been the

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Rockefeller Panel Report on the performing arts, issued a few weeks before the conference, and more in evidence in delegates' hands than the usual visitor's guide to Washington. The report, the most comprehensive of its kind ever undertaken, affirmed and added substance to the ACA's own objectives. Besides pointing out the need for “service and information organizations,” it noted that “the basic resources, human and material, for the full development of the arts do exist in the United States. The problem is to mobilize them and use them effectively for the pleasure of many.”

Given these auguries, it would have been strange indeed if the more than 900 delegates had reacted with anything less than euphoria. Vindication, after years of frustration, is often satisfaction enough.

But this year reality must be faced. “Last year there were a lot of theories and a lot of talk in the air,” recalls W. Howard Adams, ACA's persuasive associate director. “Now we are really coming to grips with problems.” A Missourian who was a founder of his own state's arts council (the second in the nation), Adams compares this year's conference with last year's by a homely analogy to his experience in Missouri. “The difference,” he says, “is like the day before we got the money, and the day after we got the money.”

The theme of this year's meeting is “The Arts: Planning for Change.” “We