

American accents. They were howling for the professor's blood.

"Incredible," commented the professor, "that the mind should be so perverse as to make me decide that Missouri was only a river!" The two contestants have been invited to return to the program this week for another chance, but the professor, who lectures on English and military history at Sandhurst, will be absent. He decided to resign the job—"Not quite my line," he explained.

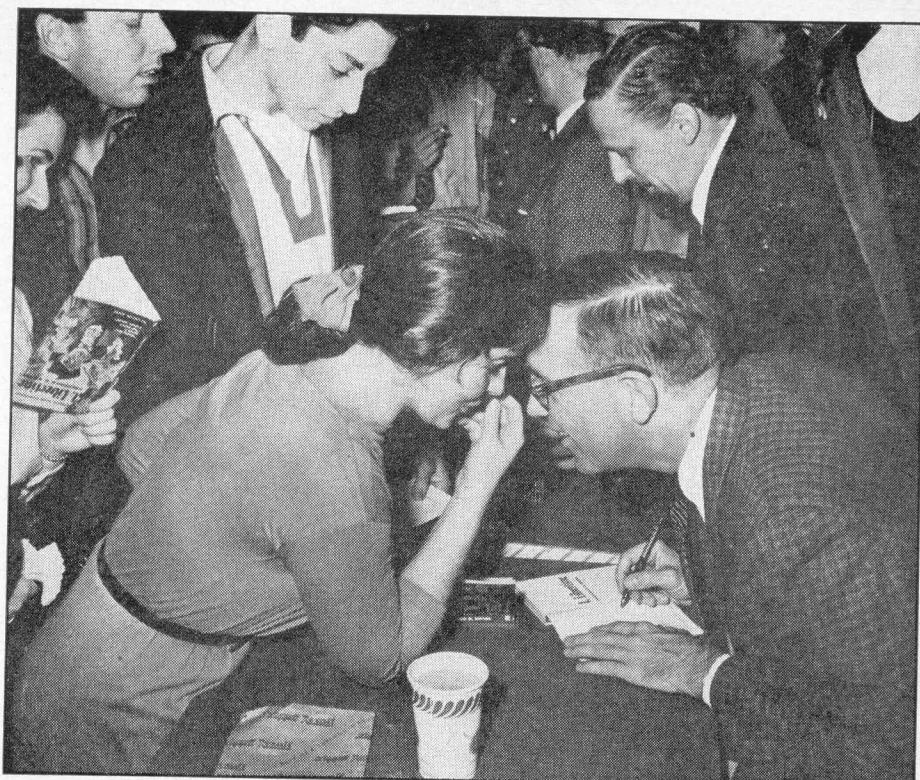
## The Night is Different

"Night people are aware of the real world. They wonder vaguely or specifically about where it's going. People who live in the day are interested in things; people who live at night deal with ideas... It all evolves around a concept of happiness. Day people love red tape, switchboards, lists, offices, the routine of a busy active life. Night people aren't eggheads, but they wouldn't mind spending a year in Maine doing nothing."

These are the words of Jean Shepherd, 33, self-styled messiah of the night people and a member of one of the country's weirdest and most unpredictable brotherhoods, the midnight-to-dawn disk jockeys. As proprietor of the 1-to-5:30 a.m. stretch on New York's WOR he has, in the past six months, built up an impressive following among the bosses and patrons of all-night lunch counters, filling-station attendants, night-blooming intellectuals, and insomniacs of all ages and stations of life.\* His formula for small-hours entertainment: A few vintage-jazz records and streams of stream-of-consciousness talk. "My style has been described as a cross between Baudelaire and Marcel Proust," says Shepherd. "It is the sort of thing that someone might bring out after being on the analyst's couch for a couple of years."

**Isms:** Shepherd will meander on a program, from childhood reminiscences to adult satire and apocalyptic prophecy. Typical Shepherd vagaries include elaborate attacks on "turnpikism"—the growing U.S. trend to center one's life

\*Shepherd fans include humorist James Thurber; playwrights Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse; Steve Allen, and J.D. Salinger.



Newsweek—Tony Rollo

Night people at a book party: Shepherd signs, as a fan whispers

among the motels and hot-dog stands along the nation's superhighways;\* denunciations of "creeping meat-ballism" ("best exemplified by three-tone streamlined automobiles with needle-point plastic upholstery").

One night, Shepherd launched an "Operation Downfall," a parody of all-night telethons. He solicited contributions from his listeners to sponsor one of their number in a life of feckless dissipation, and collected \$100,000 in pledges before a good friend persuaded him that no one could properly debauch himself for anything less than ten times that amount these days.

Shepherd's greatest fraudulent success has been the pushing of a non-existent book entitled "I, Libertine," written by an imaginary author named Frederick R. Ewing. Three months ago as a punishment for such "list lovers" among the day people as booksellers

and publishers, Shepherd urged his listeners to request the volume at their bookstore. Inquiries were promptly recorded in 26 states and three foreign countries. In a short time Shepherd fans reported back with the news that they had heard cocktail-party people claiming to have read it.

Ballantine Books finally persuaded Shepherd, working with science-fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon, to make the fictitious fiction real. Last week, 180,000 advanced copies of the resulting novel of low high-life in eighteenth-century England were beginning to swamp drug-store counters from coast to coast.

**Transition:** But "night person" Shepherd was out of a job. WOR brass decided that their offbeat performer was "uncommercial." A last-ditch attempt to prove his drawing power by asking listeners to go out and buy bars of Sweetheart soap (a firm which hadn't paid for the plug) got Shepherd yanked off the air two days in advance.

By last week end, two national networks were purportedly angling for his services and he was being rumored as a possible M.C. on the Monday- and Tuesday-evening segments of NBC-TV's "Tonight." Shepherd fans were threatening his replacement—an ex-carnival barker and auctioneer from Parsippany, N.J., named "Long John" Nebel—with sudden death on the turnpike. WOR, understandably, was trying to get him back. As a lure, station executives had lined up Shepherd's first full-fledged sponsor: Sweetheart soap.

\*For a fuller report on this trend, see page 71.

## Periscoping TV-Radio®

Two of TV's most promising offerings of next season, ABC's versions of "Faust" and "Coq d'Or," to be staged by Rudolf Bing and a Metropolitan Opera cast, may have to be postponed indefinitely because of lack of sponsor interest... Radio's top experimenter, the CBS Radio Workshop, has scheduled dramatic documentaries on "The Stock Market," "The Oedipus Complex," and Gertrude Stein... British film producers are expected to sign a contract allowing BBC-TV to screen their full-length movies fresh from the film studios.