

groups and cults that had sprung up, or had been drawn to Amsterdam.

Two large buildings were made available for the clubs, full-time staffs were hired, and the city and national governments agreed to provide about 32 percent of the operating costs, with the rest coming from annual membership fees of about 30 cents each and from a 60-cent charge made when live music is presented, which is usually just on weekends. Membership is not required for admission, except when special performances are offered; nevertheless, one club says over 20,000 have joined up this year, and now, with the tourist season at its height, new members are coming in at a rate of about 1000 a week. Money is a problem, but not the main one. The greater difficulty is that, while clubs have gained repute and popularity as drug centers, there is still a good deal of uncertainty about the durability of the permissive attitude that the government now takes. A psychologist at the University of Amsterdam who is conducting an extensive study of the situation observes, "The government realizes that, if it closed the clubs, it would have 10,000 angry kids out on the streets immediately. On the other hand, the government is quite embarrassed by the international publicity the clubs attract. So, the tactic it follows is not to discuss the matter publicly, to let it go on and make believe that it isn't there. But at the moment it is a delicate balance."

For those who operate the clubs, the situation is particularly frustrating, since the city provides a level of support that allows drug usage to flourish but is unresponsive to requests that the clubs be allowed to provide social services and hostels for many of the bedraggled young people who wander in. Eckart Dissen, the 26-year-old manager of Fantasio, said, "We'd like to expand our facilities and services, but there's no chance that we can do that this summer." The manager of Paradiso said he has stopped talking to visiting journalists. "All they want to discuss is drugs," he said. "No one seems to notice that other things go on here, too."

Staff members acknowledge that earlier this year "hard" drugs began to appear on the premises and the police became aggressive. "We had four arrests," Dissen said, "involving cases that the police couldn't ignore. Then we adopted a policy of keeping it out. We just make people leave if we think they're selling or using 'hard' stuff." As

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **NERVE GAS:** The Pentagon acknowledged last week that the United States is storing nerve gas and other chemical munitions on Okinawa, a Pacific island under the residual sovereignty of Japan. The Pentagon's disclosure, reportedly the first public admission that the United States has stored lethal chemical weapons abroad, resulted from a press revelation that a GB nerve gas accident had injured about two dozen persons at a U.S. military site on Okinawa. The publicity caused a furor in Japan and ultimately led the Pentagon to promise that all toxic chemical agents would be removed from the island as soon as possible. The Pentagon also stated categorically that there are no U.S. biological weapons stored anywhere abroad, and the State Department announced that there are no lethal chemical weapons stored in Japan. In another nerve gas issue, the Pentagon announced plans to dump 2000 tons of obsolete GB gas in a sealed lake at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Colorado and to burn an additional 4000 tons of mustard gas at the arsenal, both in accordance with recommendations of a National Academy of Sciences panel.

● **STARFISH STUDY IN TROPICAL PACIFIC:** The Interior Department and other government agencies are sponsoring a study aimed at halting coral destruction in the South Pacific. For some unknown reason, the "Crown of Thorns" starfish is multiplying in large numbers and killing extensive amounts of coral along island coastal areas in the tropical Pacific. Experts fear that the destruction of the coral may lead to an elimination of food supply sources for native populations, and may eventually destroy the islands, long buffered from waves by the coral reefs. Scientists will assess the extent of the starfish distribution, cause of their sudden rapid propagation, and possible means of controlling the starfish population. The Interior Department has let a \$225,000 contract to the Westinghouse Ocean Research Laboratory of San Diego to conduct the major study. The office of Naval Research will supply transportation; the University of Hawaii, under a \$25,000 National Science Foundation grant, will gather survey data; and the Smithsonian Institution will provide scientific expertise.

● **STEAM CAR CONTRACT ANNOUNCED:** The National Air Pollution Control Administration has awarded the first federal contracts for development of an external combustion system for the consumer automobile. The Thermo Electron Corporation received a \$174,173 contract to design a steam car system, and the Marquardt Corporation was awarded a \$96,683 contract to study ways of minimizing steam engine pollutants. Earlier federal pollution control efforts had focused on setting automobile emission standards, but several agencies and congressional committees are examining possible alternatives to the internal combustion engine. In February, the Department of Transportation awarded a \$309,780 contract for a prototype steam-powered bus.

● **NOBEL SYMPOSIUM:** Thirty to forty leading intellectuals from nations throughout the world will meet in Stockholm, Sweden, this fall to formulate a "reappraisal of human aims and values, at a time when new-found powers create immense dangers and opportunities for mankind." The Nobel Foundation, which is sponsoring the symposium, hopes that the participants will arrive at a collective declaration on this subject. American scientists scheduled to participate include three Nobel laureates—Joshua Lederburg, Linus Pauling, Glenn T. Seaborg—anthropologist Margaret Mead, and geochemist Harrison Brown.

● **PRO-ABM BOOK PUBLISHED:** A group of defense analysts from the Hudson Institute has published a collection of policy studies supporting anti-ballistic missile development. Entitled *Why ABM?: Policy Issues in the Missile Defense Controversy*, the privately financed book was edited by Hudson staffers Johan J. Holst and William Schneider, Jr., and includes essays by Herman Kahn, the Institute's director, Donald G. Brennan, a national security specialist, and five other authors. In a press conference, editors cited a need "to raise the level of discussion" and the "highly unbalanced nature of the public debate on ABM." Several essays offer rebuttals of the earlier, anti-ABM Chayes-Wiesner report (see *Science*, 16 May 1969). The book is available at \$6.95 from the Pergamon Press.