

LIFE

FISHERMAN

AUGUST 16, 1948 **20** CENTS
YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$6.00



ANN CONVERSE, MEMBER OF OLD BOSTON FAMILY WHO WORKS AS CAPE COD WAITRESS, EXPRESSES ACTIVATIONIST JOY WHILE FRIEND BEATS OILCAN TOM-TOM

"ACTIVATE OR DETERIORATE!" CRIES NEW CULT

"Do you want a 'real' experience to talk about when you get home from your vacation? Come and get yourself Activationized." This invitation was distributed around the famous Cape Cod art colony at Provincetown, Mass. this summer to signal the beginning of a brand-new cult. "Activationism" is the creation of Milton Hood Ward, composer and press agent who, having watched Indian and Haitian dancers whooping up their tribal rites, figured that inhibited Americans would feel better if they did the same thing. In a few lectures Activationist Ward counseled his followers, who included house-

wives, waitresses, fishermen and would-be artists, to uncork their emotions all over the place. "Activate or Deteriorate" was his motto. Although Activationist practices varied widely, they generally started with group calisthenics and chanting and went on through progressive frenzies to extemporaneous dancing and ad lib yelling. At Provincetown, where crazy summertime goings-on are quite in order, not many Activationists took their cult seriously. Ward, however, thinks he may have started something big, plans to introduce Activationism to New York this fall in an art gallery, a nightclub and Carnegie Hall.



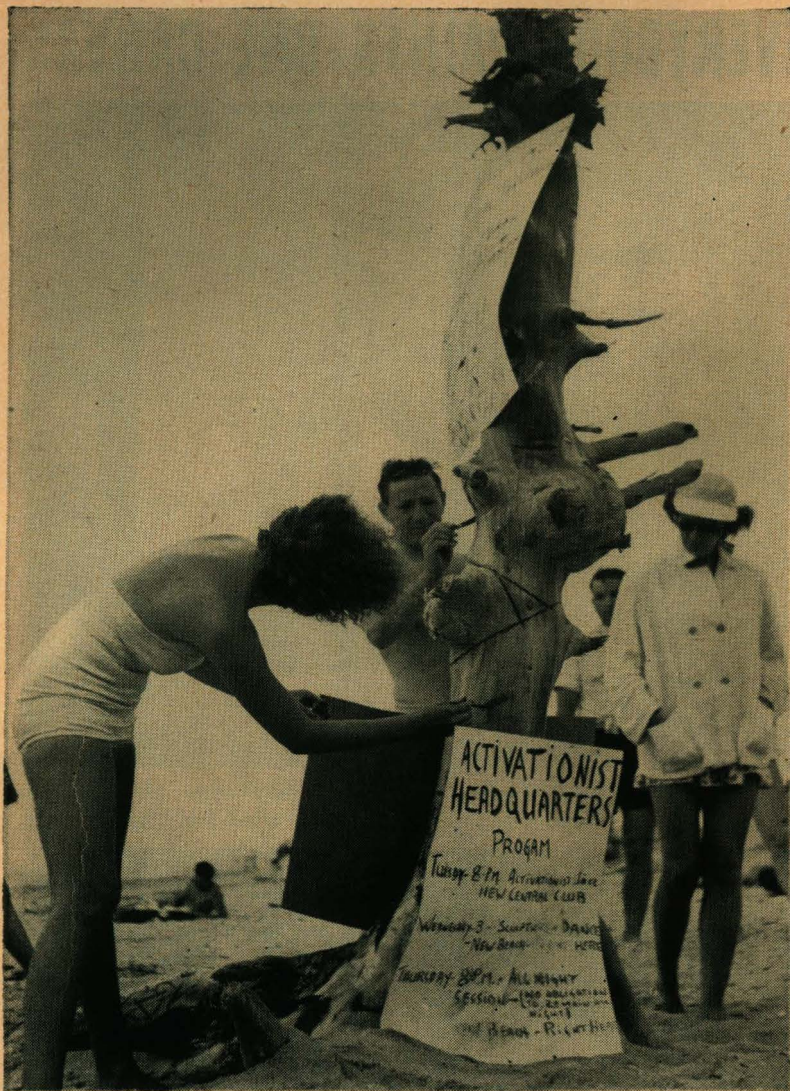
ACTIVATIONISM OUTDOORS takes the form of sprint across a Provincetown beach which ends with everybody falling to knees and looking agonized. Ward (*second from left*

above) instructs his disciples to build up "a feeling of mental pain" during the run, explode in "peak of spiritual torment" at end. Children invariably follow but feel no pain.



ACTIVATIONISM INDOORS is practiced at the New Central nightclub in Provincetown. Ward (*right*) leads his followers to dance floor and to jazz band accompaniment goes

into contortions, shadow boxing and Holy Roller stunts to express, as he puts it, "complete freedom from all known patterns." Surprised bystanders who join in usually enjoy it.

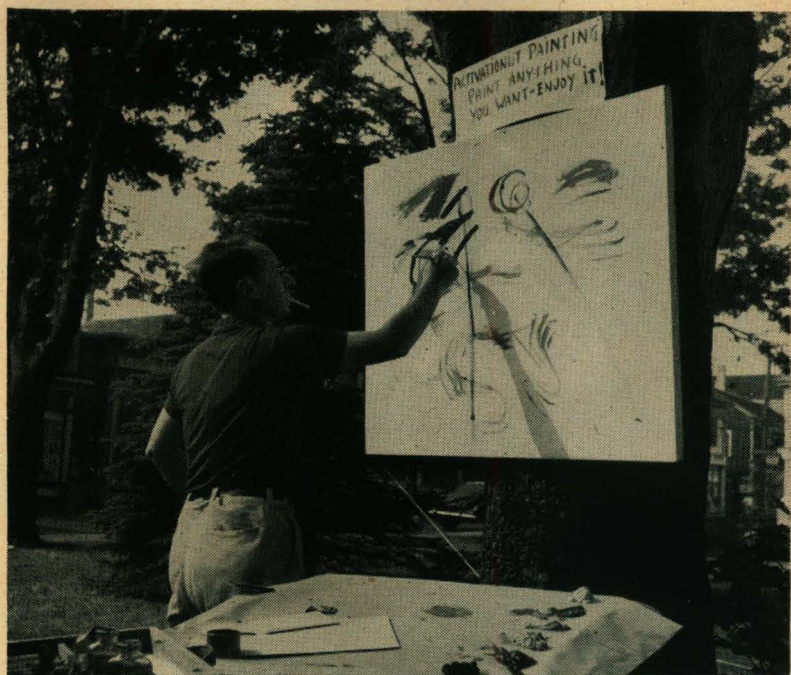


HEADQUARTERS for cult is this driftwood tree hung with signs. One says in Activationist grammar, "Artist! Rid yourselves of mental constipation."



CULT GREETING is a loud-whooping, open-armed collision. These Activationists, happy to see each other, are traveling salesmen for bronzed baby shoes.

EVERYBODY PAINTS ONE CANVAS



ACTIVATIONIST ART begins by nailing a canvas to a tree, inviting everybody who passes by to paint on it. Here a Cape Cod artist daubs fancy zigzags.



TWO AT A TIME, eager artists add to the community painting. While the man puts doodles on the face, a woman brightens one corner with a sunflower.



FINISHING TOUCHES are made by 73-year-old Isaiah Lewis, retired railroad man, who drew in a fat horse with a pencil and later filled it out with oils.