

Publishing: Chinese Weekend in Iowa

By HERBERT MITTGANG

IN the middle of next month, Chinese writers from China, from Taiwan and from the United States will meet for a weekend of literary discussions at the University of Iowa in Iowa City in an unusual, privately arranged gathering. The organizers are Paul Engle and his Chinese-born wife, the novelist Hualing Nieh, founders of the international writing program at Iowa's School of Letters. To mark the occasion, the Engles are calling Sept. 15-16 a "Chinese Weekend."

And how do they hope to show the United States to the Chinese writers?

"We plan a boatripe on the Mississippi," Mr. Engle said. "Mark Twain's river entertaining the Marxist Chinese and the anti-Marxist Chinese. Food, bar, music and dancing — in addition to literary discussions between visits to Iowa's farm country. It will be an event unprecedented in the history of the United States and China's literary relations."

The event came about when Mrs. Engle met a delegation from China in Paris last April. It included Pa Chin, a novelist. They talked at great length about writing and the international program. Invitations were extended. One side result is that Mrs. Engle will have chapters from her novel "Two

Women of China" published in Peking and Shanghai — the first Chinese writer living in this country to be so recognized in many years.

The two Peking writers are Xiaoqian (Hsiao Chien, in the 'old spelling), a translator and consultant to the People's Literary Press, who worked with Edgar Snow on "Living China," which contains one of his stories, and Bi Shuowang (Pi So-wan), poet and translator of Mao Zedung's poetry, who is in charge of the Committee for Foreign Liaison for the Chinese Writers in Peking.

The writer from Taiwan is Wang To, who was born on the island, is a descendant of five generations of fishermen, and whose fiction deals with workers, peasants and fishermen exposed to the elements.

The international writing program will live up to its name in another way. Next month, two Hebrew writers from Israel and an Arabic writer from Jerusalem and another from Egypt will also be present. At the same time, there will be writers at the program from Colombia, India, Ireland, Hungary, Poland and Pakistan.

"The mainland Chinese will meet the East Europeans and find out how very different their Socialisms are from rigid Marxism," Mr. Engle said. "The black South Africans will, for the first time, live as equals in the world of the international writing program. Twice a

week, there will be clashes of ideologies, of race, of opposed views on censorship during our seminars. Basically, we will be talking and living literature."

Mr. Engle, a native Iowan, is a poet, novelist and librettist. He has just signed with Houghton Mifflin to write his memoirs — chapters are running in *American Heritage* magazine — and the Boston publisher will also bring out a new book of his poems. Mrs. Engle has several novels in the works, to be published in English and Chinese, plus a study, "Literature of the Hundred Flowers," from the Columbia University Press. They practice what they preach and teach literature at the international writing program.

Something of a literary find for Henry James scholars is due next October, thanks to the detective work of Leon Edel, the James biographer, Bloomsbury chronicler and Edmund Wilson editor.

As a result of his research, a facsimile edition of "The Europeans" will be coming out from Howard Fertig Inc. Mr. Fertig was caught by the James fever when he was studying at New York University under none other than the Henry James Professor of English, Leon Edel. Mr. Edel tracked down parts of the original handwritten novel in four different private and university collections, fitted the parts together and is providing an introduction for the facsimile.

Mr. Edel, who lives in Honolulu and has been Citizens Professor of English at the University of Hawaii, was in New York recently to talk about his latest work, "Bloomsbury: A House of Lions," published by J.B. Lippincott. "In Bloomsbury, there were nine characters in search of an author," he said. "I decided to be their author."

Of all the Bloomsberries, as Professor Edel refers to them, he seemed to give the highest literary marks to Virginia Woolf — "the great lady of our time." The most influential of all, he said, was John Maynard Keynes, whose economic theories still affect governments.

How did the prolific Mr. Edel organize his time? "I write my own books in



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the morning, take a swim and edit the Wilson journals in the afternoon." As an old journalist for PM and other publications, he laughed, "I know how to meet deadlines."

The current issue of *Horizon* magazine celebrates the careers of several literary and artistic personages, including Edward Steichen, the photographer; his brother-in-law, Carl Sandburg, the Lincoln biographer and poet, and Al Hirschfeld, the theatrical caricaturist.

Mr. Hirschfeld, who would have done the drawings of "The Black Crook" musical cast had he been alive in the 19th century, has had his work published in *The New York Times* for more than a half-century. In November, Dodd, Mead will bring out "Hirschfeld on Hirschfeld," a collection of more than 200 of his drawings.

Brooks Atkinson, former drama critic of *The Times*, once described his caricatures as "character sketches," and many in the book first appeared in these pages.