

## ...I-House (Continued from p. 7)

through the work of Zoya Zeman, now a social worker at UCLA. Zeman, who then worked through student activities and the Student Y, arranged several international functions, Hall said. She started international bazaars and talked with foreign student advisers about an international living experience.

Her proposal was taken through housing channels and the final plan emerged in May 1971, Hall said. After approval by the NU Board of Regents that summer, I-House opened in the fall.

"Opinions among foreign students vary about I-House's effectiveness. While some enjoy the let's-get-to-know-each-other functions, other students feel the activities are burdensome.

"You're kind of obligated to attend these things," one Mexican student said. "If you don't go some think 'I wonder why they're not participating? It must be culture shock!'"

### Lacking spontaneity

"I think the American imagines that foreign students have all these problems," a Colombian freshman said. "They think, 'These people are foreign. They're strangers.'"

"A lot of the problem with I-House is that it's not spontaneous. 'They don't let you get to know each other naturally. It's forced.'"

Especially irritating, the women said, were the functions at the first of year where the students "paired off."

"I'm not exaggerating, it was like you take you and you take you," one girl said, "into groups to chit-chat with each other."

"Really, how do you start a conversation?" the Mexican student asked. "One, two, three, talk?"

What I-House really lacks, the Columbian student said, is an international spirit.

"They need someone with a worldly knowledge to organize these activities. Right now people who aren't Nebraskans are organizing things that a Nebraskan does. What this place needs is an international spirit."

### Extra knowledge

A student's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with I-House depends upon how actively he is involved, according to several students. The Columbian student said she really shouldn't criticize the House, since she wasn't working to

change her complaints.

But a Pakistani student, who has attended almost every function, said he was satisfied with I-House. "I couldn't have made nearly as many friends as I have if I'd lived somewhere like Cather," he said.

"Here you communicate with people from different backgrounds and cultures than your own. This is kind of the extra knowledge you get from your education."

A Vietnamese student said I-House has helped him break his language barrier.

"When I came here in August I had a hard time speaking English," he said. "But especially now, living here, I have to speak English."

### Ethnocentricity shows

To some foreign students, the lifted lamp beside the golden door has dimmed. Many of their complaints were aimed not against I-House, but the American system.

"Many Americans have the feeling that America is the end of the world," the Pakistani said. "They think there is no other way of life that compares to theirs. I don't know how many times I've been asked, 'Do you have TV?' 'Do you have cars?' They must think we still go around on camels.

"It's true that America is on the top of the world in the amount of accumulated knowledge, and on the top technologically. But few Americans as people are on the top. Believe me, I didn't know Americans were so ignorant. They don't even know what goes on in other states, let alone the world."

The Columbian student criticized biased American sentiments also. "People must think we still live in the jungle and none of us are civilized. People wonder, 'Why is your skin so light?' 'Where's your donkey and big hat.'"

And, behind this culture potpourri, is Jay Hall, working to maintain I-House detente and to rekindle excitement. Although he is taking human relations courses he said his main interest now is I-House.

"If I'd ever see one person in the hall who'd come up to me and say—'I've really learned a lot about being here, about other countries, about other people, real life stuff - then for me, all the work's been worthwhile.'"



Franz Fletcher

**Prejudice is apparent, blacks say**



Oladipo Olokun

By Nancy Stohs

For a foreign student in America, there are enough adjustments to make: strange food, a different language, new friends. But what if you're not only foreign, but black?

Ant not just black, but black in a predominantly white city like Lincoln, on a campus where white students outnumber black students 100 to 1?

There are 90 such foreign students at UNL. They came from 13 African countries, the Bahamas and Jamaica. Five black, foreign students, who were interviewed, say prejudice is apparent and they've felt it.

Usually it's subtle, they said, like standing at the counter in a store and feeling the white salesclerk stare at you. It's as if she's saying, "How can you possibly afford to shop here?" said Judith Sadler, sophomore in business administration from Jamaica.

She said she's detected the same kind of prejudice on campus. Her professors, for example, will "raise their eyebrows" in surprise when they learn how high her grade point average is.

### "Matter of effort"

If direct job or housing discrimination goes on, none of them have experienced it personally, they said.

Oladipo Olokun, Nigerian civil engineering major and president of the African Student Association, said he believes much of it is a matter of effort. If an African student applies for a job, he said, he'll probably have as good a chance as anyone to get it.

Olokun says he will return to Nigeria after graduation.

But for the native American black, that avenue isn't open.

Sadler, who said she has some good friends among them, sympathized with their case and said she understands why they stick together.

"They've had to live with prejudice all their lives," she said. "They've developed a cynical outlook. They're weary over it. We're weary, too, but we're still receptive to whites."

### Sex discrimination

"We grew up under free conditions—they grew up in ghetto life," Olokun said. "We went to school not knowing racial problems, and we have a sense of belonging."

UNL student Franz Fletcher, who moved to Lincoln from Jamaica 10 years ago with his parents, said his pet peeve has always been sex discrimination, as in dating.

"When I think of black and white, it's the same difference to me as blonde and brunette," he said. "Most white guys don't think that way, even the most liberal ones."

He said in Jamaica there's a lot of racial mixture among black, white and Indian, and society there is split along class, not racial lines.

### Education first

Even if blacks and whites do date, they won't find black entertainment clubs in Lincoln, according to Sadler.

"You hear white kids complain about nothing to do," she said. "There aren't any real black clubs here, and no place plays the kind of music we like. . . . There are hundreds of black American groups, but no one tries to bring them in."

Finally, looking for solutions to America's race problems, both Sadler and Bruno Ekaiden, Nigerian graduate sociology student, placed education first.

Ekaiden recalled the first week in his Lincoln apartment, when a girl across the hall suddenly grew afraid when she saw him.

"She said it was the first time she shared a building with a black person," he said. "It's not that she hates us or anything, she just didn't know what a black person was."

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