1953

International Social Whirl

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International Social Whirl

At the annual International Dinner Dhirajjol Bangoria and Doris Stange help a guest to her first taste of such dishes as Philippine chicken which have been prepared for the affair by the students themselves.

"Si, Sl," "Mais oui" and "Ja" blend with midwestern accents as students from other lands "mix it up" in the social whirl at Iowa State.

Focal point of activity is the Memorial Union. Here many students take advantage of the cafeteria at mealtime. Or they pause in the Commons for coffee and a chat during Union Lab. In the middle of a group you're likely to find their popular student advisor, Millard R. Kratochvil, better known as "Spike."

Especially slanted to the interests of Iowa Staters from other countries is Cosmopolitan Club, which meets at the Union, too. Membership is open to students of every country, including the U.S. A speaker and musical numbers by those in the group are usually on the agenda. Following the program, North Americans stand by enviously as their South American neighbors show how the rhumba, tango and samba really should be done. Francisco Diaz, from Guatemala, presided at the Cosmopolitan Club meetings during the 1952-53 school year.

International Night

Annually co-operating with Social Bureau, Cosmopolitan Club stages International Night, a variety show. Painting sets, planning publicity and hunting for props for this, another Union event, develops better understanding between students from the U.S. and other countries.

These Iowa Staters write skits and perfect song or dance numbers for tryouts preceding the performance. Since almost every country in the world is represented, this results in a varied program. The 1953 International Night program included a presentation of Indian love lore and song, a Latin American dance number, an Austrian folk singer, a Philippine hat dance, a skit kidding professors of many countries and a Britisher and an American as duo-entees.

International House is second only to the Union as a gathering place. Only a small number of men live there, but those who live all over Ames drift in and out for a bit of socializing. Half hidden by trees, the gray-stone house on Lincoln Way has become a landmark for Iowa State students. The women live in Isabel Bevere, a former home management house converted into a home for women.

Church groups are another top-ranking part of the students' social life. Inspiration to study in the U.S. often came from American pastors and teachers working among their people. Still others were sent here by churches. In every church youth group Iowa Staters from other countries take an active part in the work. They willingly give their time to speak to church groups, as well as classes and club meetings, about their homelands.

At least once a year there's an International Buffet at a campus church. The menu often includes crepe Suzettes, chow mein, tacos and lefse, though the diners aren't expected to eat and like all the dishes. Several guests come in native costume.

Going to the movies is to be included in the students' social life. Since American films are distributed around the world, some of the students know as many Hollywood stars by name as Americans do. These avid fans attend movies often in Ames and never miss the Foreign Film Theatre sponsored by the Department of English and Speech.

No matter what his nationality, everyone makes friends among his classmates. Language is no barrier because all speak English, having studied the language as long as their new American friends.

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Although each student has a story all his own, the basic elements are the same in many instances. A promising young student is picked from all the others; he is the fortunate one to be sent abroad to study. He comes to Iowa State for technical know-how to pass on to his countrymen. Most such students miss their homelands very much and are anxious to return home and use the knowledge they have gained to help their country solve its problems, whether they be about irrigation or malnutrition.

Social activities at the M.U., churches and elsewhere help the student from another country fill the weekend hours when his American classmates are at home with their families or dating. The students don't date much, due probably to attachments at home, different courtship practices or lack of countrymen to date. Some date and a few marry Americans, of course. Most students from outside the U.S. love this country, but the thought of home nags them to work hard so that they can return to their own family and friends.

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