

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

My first appointment of the day was Maxine Cheshire, this morning at eleven, who wanted to do a story on the second floor. She had not been along with a group of newspaper women, who had been here to tea when I first moved in. She'd been in Maine at that time, and because she is a real authority - a long-time lover of the White House, its furniture, its history - she wanted to come up and have a look at it.

The ease and naturalness, I normally feel, in dealing with Maxine and practically any other newspaper woman, was somewhat beclouded by my conversation beforehand with Jim Ketchum, the curator, who said they had had a lot of trouble with Maxine while they were - during the refurbishing of the White House. Such things, or so he said, as going to Mr. Scalamandre, who doesn't speak very good English, and representing herself as being or represent working for the White House, and wanting to see a sample of the fabric that was to be used in the Blue Room, which had, up to that time, had been kept a secret because it was actually white. And it caused a little bit of a flare-up. And then going around and attempt to elicit the amount spent on the certain furnishings by donors who preferred to keep it quiet.

So that I didn't really feel easy around her, but we went from room to room and chatted. I did not take her in the President's room or in my little sitting room, office, which is at present mostly a storage room for paintings, suitcases, and numerous papers; in fact, the only loveliness in here at present, is the view outside, as one looks toward the Washington monument and

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 2

frequently sees a ballet of seagulls in front of it. Or perhaps, some mornings, that giant magnolia, heavy laden with snow. Or looking out the other window, I see right down onto Lyndon's office and if I stand up, it is into the lovely rose garden.

It was fun to hear Maxine talk, because she knew so much more than I do, and quite a bit more than "the historians" of the White House do, about the furnishings. For instance, the family dining room, she pointed out to me that the mantle was one of the few made shortly after the war of 1812; that what I thought to be the medallion of George Washington on the left hand side, was really a medallion of the Naval hero in the battle of Lake Erie, who said, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." The one on the right hand side, neither one of us, together with Mr. Ketchum, can identify. He looks like an Italian scholar - maybe Dante!

The rest of the day was work on mail, plans with Luci about how she's going to get her clothes for the Apple Blossom Festival, down the Shenandoah. I think I'm going to ask Wendy to take over that program for me, perhaps to take her to New York, to look around here, or to find her about the four necessary outfits it will require - to show off her real beauty and to give her that sense of self-assurance that is somehow necessary if your going to be a good queen of anything.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 3

And then at 4 o'clock came the really important part of the day. It was the second big slug of mental fodder that I have had this week. The first being Helen Gahagan Douglas.

Florence Mahoney called and asked if she could bring over a Dr. and Mrs. Bronwenbrunner, of Cornell University, who had been to Russia for quite a number of weeks and months, on an exchange scholarship, studying Russian education, and who had brought back some very wonderful slides.

So I invited Mrs. McGeorge Bundy, and Jane Wirtz, and Mrs. Bell of AID; was sorry for Mrs. Celebreeze of HEW couldn't come, she's got some sick children; and Marge McNamara, whom I would have liked very much to have come, was still in California.

We met at 4 o'clock, in the Oval Room, had tea and sandwiches and then we lowered the curtains and started looking at the slides. They show a type of Russian school, begun in 1956 by Krushev. At present, there was a long waiting for each school, and they comprise only a small group of the Russian school-age children, although by 1970 they hope to have a third of them in such schools, and by the year 2000, all of them in.

There are two types, the prolonged day school and the actual boarding school. The latter takes a baby when it is one year old, or they may even take them at two months, except that mothers are permitted to come and continue nursing them, until they are one year old. And then, from the

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 4

time they are one year old, they belong to the school from then on. Parents can come and do all the visiting they want, as a matter of fact, because both parents work, the visits are likely to be only on weekends and perhaps only every other weekend. So the child really grows up in the school. Physically they are beautiful, the buildings, the grounds, the interior of the classrooms, and not much, they tell me, in Russian life is beautiful, or colorful, or gay; therefore, these schools are the top of the top and much sought after by parents for their children. And consider that there are so many working mothers in Russia, so it is understandable, the extra desirability.

These slides we saw, showed a beautiful building, very modern and airy, a man ~~and~~ made lake with a green lawn sloping down to it, trees planted all along the avenue -(Incidentally planted by the children themselves) Nearly everything was done by the children, I believe it must be conceded that they had a better material setting, better educational facilities, better clothes and food than Russian children in any schools. They were organized into groups and then into larger groups, and there was competition between group and group, in fact it seemed to me any individualism whatever, was frowned upon.

Dr. Bronfenbrenner said that in the nursery age group, if you saw a teacher running, it would be because she saw some little girl or boy wandering off by himself, and you weren't supposed to do that, you always stay as a member of a group, to develop your personality.

Two things bothered me about this - two things seemed to go against

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 5

human nature. One, the complete and absolute lack of any God or any spiritual value. Everything was The State, The State.

Second, the lack of any family life. Can it be that mankind can get used to that, can like that? If it's necessary for the mothers to work, it looks like they would strive to have the children at home with them just as much as they could, at nights, on weekends. But the ~~mores~~ ^{mores} of this new society seem to be that the father goes wherever his job sends him; the mother goes wherever her job sends her; and the children go to such a school [^] that is those that can get in. And the accent [/] is definitely, speedily, upon more of such of them.

The olympic games tend to show us that the Russians certainly are turning out some top athletes, and it appears that the ^{terrific} seriousness with which they go after this education, they are going to turn out some well educated people, but are they robots, and if they are robots, will they be somewhere down the road - something like in RUR Rossom's universal robots, where two of them rebell. I wonder if we are seeing a weapon forged that's even more powerful than the atomic bomb.

At any rate, it was an interesting concept and an interesting thing to see.

Florence Mahoney, is a sort of a conduit for a lot of interesting ideas to be passed out in Washington, on all sorts of things from medical research to the influence of Russian education ^{on} ~~and~~ what's going to happen in America.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 6

Ch
fax
Oh, yes, I almost forgot two, ^{the people} what may be not so important things that I didn't think or like about this type of schooling. Dr. Bronfenbrenner said, "They were very silent and you seldom heard them laugh." And second, that one of the greatest heroes, whose portrait you saw on all the classroom walls, was a little boy, ^{who} who had turned in his mother and father to the state, because they had been keeping back some grain, ⁱⁿ in a time of grain shortage. What happened to his mother and father, ^{at} at the hands of the State, I cannot exactly describe, but the grandfather of this little monster or saint, whichever you might call him, killed the little boy, and he thereupon became a martyr, and someone to be revered in a society that puts the State above all else.

Suddenly I got an S.O.S. from Lyndon's office to come ^{to} rushing out to the Rose Garden, ^{and} and meet the Mexican Interparliamentary Delegation, which I did post haste, and there, ^{naturally} naturally, the first person in sight ^{was} was the ubiquitous Justo Sierra and Christina. I shook hands with everybody and said a few words in very bad Spanish, and then came on back home in time to see Luci who has just begun her tutoring in Spanish with Senora Lopez McGuire, my old friend. I do believe I'm about to get Luci's problem solved as far as her Spanish is concerned, by having this extra tutoring.

Rather late in the day, ^I I began to wish I could jar loose Lyndon from his office, so I went over there, determined to be very pleasant, ^{if} if I couldn't get him to come home, and found him talking to ~~Mary Ann Means~~ ^{Bern Whittington - ca}. I had a drink with them, asked her to dinner, we picked up ~~Jerry Whitaker~~ ^{Jerry Whitaker}, we stopped off by the pool, we found suits for both of them, the most luscious

Ch up
Gennie

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 6, 1964

Page 7

looking white one for ~~Mary Ann~~ ^{Marianne}; called up ~~Mary Ann's~~ ^{Marianne's} date and asked him to join us, which he did presently. He's a TWA man who's been stationed abroad for so long. And the five of us had a good swim.

Lyndon was astonished that Jerry Whitaker couldn't swim and, in his very forthright way, he said, "What's the matter, couldn't you go in any public pools?" And she, I must say, with very creditable poise, said, "That is right, so I never learned to swim."

Presently, we all went upstairs. Lyndon and I, and Jerry, and ~~Mary Ann~~ ^{Marianne} and her date, and had dinner, and Lyndon rushed off, very much against my wishes, to put in an appearance at the Mexican Inter-parliamentary Dinner. It's simply that I wish he would spare himself the unnecessary effort and save that effort for top-notch, priority things, and for, hopefully, a longer life with me and Luci and Lynda.

So I had exercises and got to bed at a fairly reasonable hour.