

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 1

This was a day divided between memories of Nehru, lunch with Shah of Iran and his beautiful empress and dinner with the John Steinbecks. A full wonderful day.

But it began first with the reading about Lynda's and Luci's activities yesterday, with the Young Citizens for Johnson.

Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana and his lovely wife, Marvella, were the sparkplugs in a standing room rally in the Senate caucas room yesterday, for the formation of Young Citizens for Johnson. Labor, sports, politics and art were all represented by young people with famous names, so the New York Times said.

Beautiful Charlotte Ford, the daughter of Henry Ford II, across the table from her (nice counterpoint this was) John Reuther, son of labor leader, Victor Reuther; and Bobby Mitchell of the Redskins football; pianist Peter Duchin; Mayor Robert Wagner's son, Bob, Jr. Luci and Lynda were on hand to show their appreciation for the group's formation.

I was delighted at what the Times said about Luci. "This is tremendous!" chortled Luci Baines Johnson, "Schools out, there's so much excitement." Then she did just what any other teenager would do in a crowd of young celebrities, Senators, Representatives and statesmen - she bounced up and down with a wide grin.

I was impressed and pleased that Charlotte Ford said, "I'll do anything they want me to do. Type, pass out cards, anything." Also, she said that she had made up her mind to vote for Lyndon before her father, long time

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 2

Republican, announced that he favored him.

The setting for the memorial service for Nehru was fittingly solemn and grand, in the National Cathedral. Lyndon and I went in with Dean and Virginia Rusk; and Mrs. ^{B.K.} ~~Bela~~ Nehru; the boys choir filed in and behind them, handsome ^{B.K.} ~~Bela~~ Nehru, his face a stern mask; Ellsworth Bunker, once our Ambassador to India; and Dean ^{re} ~~Sayer~~.

Assembled were a great number of the Diplomatic Corp, including Lord and Lady Harlech; Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin; and the Dean of the Corps., Sevilla-Sacasa.

And the court and the Cabinet was well represented.

Though I did not feel close to him, when I met him in life, I was keenly aware that in death, he left a tenser world. He had literally carried India on his shoulders for several decades. One profile of him, called him the ^M magnificent ^P pretender.

Ellsworth Bunker said that he had given the world so much in thought, word and deed, that we are all much richer for him. He also said that bits of poetry he liked, were written down in shorthand on a pad on his desk. Among them, Robert Frost's - "The woods are lovely dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep."

The most moving thing to me, was the complete sorrow on the face of Mrs. ^{B.K.} ~~Bela~~ Nehru, herself not an Indian at all, Hungarian, but a converted to their religion and to their life, and a very close friend of Nehru's.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 3

For me, the major event of the day, ^{was} the luncheon for the Shah of Iran. Handsome, intense, grey templed, his name appears often on lists of the most attractive men in the world. And his beautiful Empress ^{Diba} Farah ~~Deba~~, serene, sloe-eyed, statuesque.

I greeted them on the north portico and we went upstairs, together with the Ambassador of Iran and Mrs. Ferugi, and Mr. Alam, who was Prime Minister when last I saw him, and now is Chancellor of part of the University; and Dean and Virginia Rusk; and Angie and Robin Duke,

Lyndon was late, but this has been a rough week for him. They had brought us a beautiful Persian rug and when I inquired from what Province it came and the story behind the design, the Shah promised to send the information to me.

We had matching cowboy outfits for their four year old son, who was a toddler when I had seen him in Tehran, and to whom we had brought a cowboy outfit at that time, and for their new year old daughter.

The luncheon had originally been designed as a stag luncheon and when the Empress had decided to come only a few days earlier, we simply invited the wives of the men, ^{already} on the list, which totalled 124.

From the court, ^{there} was Justice and Mrs. Stewart[†]. From the Hill, Mary Ellen Monroney and Mike and the Ralph Yarboroughs; the Cy Vances; the Carl Rowens; our old friend Ben Cohen; the Bob Komers, and I was glad to get the chance to tell him ^{how} lucid and compact and helpful ^{his}

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 4

memoranda and recommendations were being, for Lyndon; and Oscar Chapman and Ann; the Tex Goldsmiths, who had spent several years in Iran; and Dr. and Mrs. James Halstead, she is Anna Roosevelt Halstead, daughter of FDR, and Dr. Halstead had worked for a charity in Iran for several years. The President of the Ford Foundation, Mr. Henry Healed; Dave Lilienthal, he didn't bring his wife, he had designed the network of dams which will, when completed, outstrip the TVA; and the Leonard Marks, who the director of Iran America Society, and who had spent some time in Iran, lecturing at a University, and outlining a way they can make TV a part of their battle against illiteracy; and ~~Jeffery~~ ^{Gerry} and Helene Segal; and, of course, our old friends the John Walkers, because it is at the National Gallery of Art where the magnificent Iranian exhibit is taking place. I was so sorry that the Paul Mellons regretted - I don't want to ever lose an opportunity to express my appreciation to Mrs. Mellon.

I had the Shah on my right, and Mr. Al'am on my left, and it was a fascinating luncheon from my standpoint. I hoped that Lyndon enjoyed the Empress, and she's certainly beautiful enough, ~~as much~~. The Shah's eyes light up and he gets lyric when he talks about the dams and the irrigation. I asked him how they were progressing and he said that three dams were already built and a fourth is being built. His aim is one dam per year. I laughed that was and told him exactly the aim my husband during his twelve years in the Senate. The marvelously rich irrigated land, the result of these dams, is used to produce alfalfa and wheat mostly, but they've recently begun an

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 5

experiment in raising sugar cane which is proving remarkably successful.

As we looked at the nuts in our nut dish, he asked me if I liked pistachios. And I said I adored them, and I had never eaten such good pistachios as in his country. There, they opened easily to the touch; here, I break all my fingernails trying to get into them. He smiled and said, "When they're nearly open like that, we call them 'laughing pistachios'."

I was very pleased with the luncheon that Rene turned out. There were eggs Florentine, broiled lobster (always a favorite with me), lattice potatoes, and puree favorite. And for dessert, strawberries Farah, which seemed to please the Empress.

I asked the Shah for his signature, on my luncheon card. It was M. R. ^{Pahlavi} ~~Polady~~. I think I'll keep this up at every State dinner. Sometime it will make an interesting display, if we ever have a library.

I reminisced joyfully about my stay in the marble Palace and about the model of the city ^{of} Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes; and told him how eagerly I looked forward to seeing the exhibit at the National Gallery.

There were just the Strolling Violins for entertainment and then the toasts, and the luncheon ended early.

At 3 o'clock, I was back upstairs working with Ashton and Liz, before the event that meant the most to me in the day, that is, dinner with the Steinbecks.

I can talk to two people much better than I can 250.

They arrived before dark and I took them down into the Rose Garden

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 6

for a stroll, and then back upstairs - and, in an effort to show them what a psychological draining job this was for Lyndon, I picked up and read the last letter on my stack. A woman was answering a letter from Lyndon, in which he expressed sorrow at the death of her son in Viet-Nam. Her answer was simple, dignified and acceptant of the fact - no bitterness, which, in a way, made it all the more painful from the vantage point we see it.

And then Lyndon came in and I never saw him more articulate and more interesting. "Troubles are coming, not in single file, but in battalions. The Turks are going to invade Cyprus; the coal industry is angry, wants the government to quit imports of Venezuelan oil."

John Steinbeck was a delightful conversationalist. He talked about his trip to Russia. One telling little incident, revealed their antipathy for Chinese. He said he and Elaine were having dinner with Arata, the daughter of Kruschev, and her husband in their apartment. They had no servants and when they were removing the dishes afterwards, Elaine offered to help take them into the kitchen, and she remarked to Arata, "This is the most beautiful china." Arata got very excited and said, "It is not china!" Elaine said, "Of course I know. I recognize it as Meissen from Germany, but in our country we call all fine dinnerware china, it's just an over-all word." Apparently it's a word they don't like to hear.

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Steinbeck said that it's blind that we do not have relations with one quarter of the people of the earth, meaning Red China. Lyndon answered,

THE WHITE HOUSE

Friday, June 5, 1964

WASHINGTON

Page 7

mildly enough, that they ought not to be able to shoot their way in to the UN and to recognition by us.

Steinbeck made a very interesting suggestion. He said it would be a good idea to invite to this country, ~~ycung~~ Russian writers who object to the way their government is running. Then it would be up to their government to either permit them or not permit them, and if they did come, ~~he~~ he hoped in their visit, ~~we~~ we would give them every opportunity to see us as we were, our best and our worst.

He also told a delightful story about when he was a war correspondent in Norway, and he became interested in helping with their underground, Danish ships were bringing out Norwegians and the Germans were trying to catch them doing it, and in the process used dogs to enter the ships and search out human beings that might be hidden in inaccessible portions of the ship. He, Steinbeck, suggested sprinkling cocaine powder all along the gangplank, the dogs just got happy going up, and they couldn't smell a thing from then on.

They brought us a unique and remarkable gift, one that I shall give up with pain, but I shall give it up because it is inscribed, "Given to the White House Library in the time of Lyndon Johnson, John Steinbeck." It is a bound copy of the Atlantic Monthly, dated 1862, that has the first published Battle Hymn of the Republic - you know, containing the lines Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, They are trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. It was significant to him because it contains the title of what is probably his most famous book. This he

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 8

didn't know and I didn't tell him. But long, long ago, when Lyndon and I went to see the movie Grapes of Wrath, ~~and~~ it affected him deeply, anchoring him emotionally to the liberal program of FDR, and having a carry-over all these years.

I was glad Lyndon hadn't been here when the Steinbeck's first came because I had gotten a chance to say my words, and they were all about Winter of Our Discontent which I had loved, except that I didn't see how a man so ~~inately~~ ^{innately} good, could fall apart like that at the last.

John said he just wanted to write a book about morality and about the effects of our present morass of success being spelled out in money and advancements, and what it had on character. Actually, I think, at the last, the man put himself back together, with a few ineradicable blots on his escutcheon.

We had a really delightful evening and a chance to thank him for the best piece of writing that's ever been done about Lyndon and which will probably be incorporated in a brochure for the Democratic Committee for distribution at the convention. It is true, it is beautiful, and I am very proud of it.

He asked, "What can we do for you?" And I was quick to say, "You can keep on giving us ideas, clothed in good words. Help of the same high calibre of this piece of writing."

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 5, 1964

Page 9

Then when they started to leave, Lyndon said "Where are you staying?" And they said, "Right across the park at the Hay-Adams, so we won't take a taxi, we'll just walk." And Lyndon said, "Well, we'll go with you." So out the front door we strode, and down the walk, and along Pennsylvania Avenue to the left, not recognized for quite a little while, and then recognized to the astonishment of the few passers-by. We crossed the street with them and said goodbye.

And I mark this as one of the best evenings I've had in the White House.

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