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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, August 2, 1966

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It was a day that had caused Bess and me to flinch when we first heard about it -- a State Dinner planned for the week of the wedding? Yes. President Shazar of Israel and Mrs. Shazar... Let's just say it was a challenge, and it turned out quite happily, as exhausted as everybody must have been at the end of the day.

Isabelle Shelton's description: "The White House was a madhouse yesterday", was actually pretty accurate.

The last of the bridesmaids, Beth Jenkins, arrived and I hurried to find her in the lovely blue Toile bedroom to give her a hug. The young man she is going to marry, Peter ^{Alandt} ~~Alent~~, had come up too to plan their day.

Then I stopped by the solarium which has suddenly turned into an office with Susan Ray as head of the brigade, -- ~~The~~ bridesmaids -- as many of the 12 as she can gather, are attacking the flood of letters, nearly a thousand a week that Luci has been receiving. They are opening them, reading them, stapling them and sorting them into four different piles for later answering. They keep on finding some that are so dear, so delightful, they think they ought to have a special answer. So I gave Susan another chore. I told her there was plenty of the blue stationery with Luci's name on top which will not much longer be her name and the White House on the envelope which will no longer be her address, and I would just love for her to answer as many as she could at Luci's request.

It was Warrie Lynn's birthday, and so I wrapped a package of the bridge cards that Lyndon gives and wished that sweetest of our friends a

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happy day. She is at Lynda's side every minute. She is conscious of the special meaning of this week for Lynda. She is a good friend.

And down in the kitchen, Ferdinand and two assistants were ¹¹pulling taffy ~~sort of~~ ^{also to} speak, making the sugar concoction that will turn into the roses to decorate Luci's 7-layer wedding cake.

Meanwhile, a delivery truck rolled up bearing a huge piano for Mr. Serkin to play that night. And in it came through the halls -- he always brings his own instrument. Later, I understand, he had a quiet practice period on the stage. Maybe he was the only quiet man in the house. We were directing tours of Mrs. Nugent's friends and family through because there won't be much chance later in the week to do so.

And in the Library in the afternoon, Luci and Pat were giving a filmed interview to three television networks with Nancy Dickerson asking the questions for NBC. My heart went out to her. She had just received word some hours before that ~~her~~ ^{her} daddy had died, and she was leaving right after the interview. I remembered ^{?Dollie's} Dollie's statement: "Shock carries its own anesthesia", and Nancy is a professional.

And Bess, the always calm, was taking Mrs. Nugent out to the Shrine to decide how it would be best for her to manage the long walk. She is an amputee. She never mentions it -- one scarcely notices it. But it does limit her ability to negotiate those vast steps and long ^aisles.

So it was a busy day.

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Sometime in the morning, I went down to see Willie Day in her lair and saw the most wonderful gift from the Engelharts -- a Winslow Homer drawing of the "Apple Picker" -- small, charming. I do not know the medium, but touched somehow with a little color. A perfect jewel.

And most amazingly, there was a very old figure of the Virgin and Child from Abe and Carol! I found later that it had been made by Austrian nuns almost a century ago, with the tiniest detail perfect.

Embroidered garments, tiny beads, the most exquisite expressions.

An antique cake basket from Van Cliburn; an Onderdock drawing from Nancy Negley.

I stopped by the corridor outside the theatre to see the display of White House brides that Jim Ketchum has just finished. From Maria Monroe through the niece of President Woodrow Wilson who had married Isaac Stuart McElroy and who had sent us the cake box and the broach that she wore at the wedding. It was a delightful ~~and~~ display, but it kept on saying to me, "Save, save -- remember to leave to the White House, to the Johnson Library, to the Smithsonian if it wants it, and very especially to Luci and to us, interesting things from this wedding." There was so little really. A picture of eight brides, one invitation, an autographed place card from Woodrow Wilson done in pencil.

I stopped by ~~xxxxx~~ the kitchen to see what I could find for lunch. Zephyr said they had fed 19 -- there wasn't a bit of cold beef left. So I settled for bacon and eggs again.

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I phoned Laure^ance Rockefeller to thank him for his wonderful offer of the visit to the Grand Tetons or the Virgin Islands and for all the help on getting the children off on their honeymoon. He left it open-end -- that invitation -- and how much I hope I can take it up some other ~~time~~ time.

Then the very nicest moment of the day came. Lyndon called and said, "Could you find Luci and Pat and bring them over to the office or find me wherever I am. I need some cheering up. And I want to give them their wedding present."

I rounded them up, we went. He was in his office. He bought a  Government Bond which would mature in 7 years, and on the envelope there was a very sweet message. He had written it. "To our children who bring us so much joy and strength." That is the way I remember it. ^{If} One can be sure of anything in this world, it is that those two will have need of something special 7 years from now -- the just perfect desk to put in the bay window of a house they may be building, or an antique chest to lend character to their ~~living~~ living room, or maybe a vacation. I was strangely gratified that Luci herself had told me days before that that was what she would like most to have was a Government Bond. And the reason why, is that she remembered that when we first married we had started buying one each month and had kept it up for years and years. It sows seeds. You never know whether it's ^{ch} right fertile ground and ^{will} bear fruit. It's always a pleasant surprise when they do.

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Jean Louis came over about 6:30, and from then on it was a round of hair-combing and dressing for the State Dinner. I wore my most elegant dress -- the printed chiffon. And at 20 minutes of 8:00 I was madly phoning Lyndon's office to get him over to get dressed so we could meet the President on the front Portico at 10 minutes of 8:00. He is the swiftest dresser in all the world. He could have done it if he hadn't gotten hung up on the telephone but we were down just a few minutes late -- exactly at the moment the big black limousine, fluttering the flags of the United States and the Star of David drove up and out stepped the elderly, affable, big-domed, President Shazar and his equally elderly, soft spoken, but I believe strong minded wife, Rachael Shazar.

We took them up to the Yellow Room with their Ambassador and Mrs. Harman, the three members of their party, the Vice President and Muriel, Dean and Virginia, Dorothy Goldberg -- ~~her~~ Ambassador is out of the country -- and the Fortas' and our Ambassador Mr. Barbour, already waited for us.

It was drinks and conversation and exchange of gifts. And here I find myself inept at being able to move people like images on a chess board -- particularly when they are 77 years old and probably a bit deaf. There is an aggressiveness, cloaked in velvet, that I wish I could cultivate.

I was really enjoying hearing Mrs. Shazar talk in her very quiet voice about the speech she had made to a luncheon group about education of the very young in ~~Israel~~ Israel. Actually, about making Israel into a Nation -- with

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considerable accent on beautification. But my relaxed enjoyment couldn't be wholehearted because I must move them over toward the desk and show them our ~~greatest~~ gifts -- the set of the works of Thomas Jefferson in a special bookcase, Art books for Mrs. Shazar, a picture of Lyndon in a silver frame, a little silver box from me. I am not yet satisfied with our gifts. Although President Shazar was quick to say he knew the works of Thomas Jefferson, they had been translated into his language.

And then we saw theirs -- modern silver candle sticks for Luci and Pat. Gold, silver and bronze medallions which commemorated the visit of Pope Paul VI to Israel, and very wonderful medallions that told the history of their Nation -- one side the ancient Israel, the Biblical inscription; on the other side the modern Israel, the implements of agricultural and industry. Then there was a great Bible all in Hebrew -- ponderous, handsome, an item for the Library.

I was a bit thrown when the military entered and removed the colors, because that is always the signal for us to line up and follow them downstairs for the official picture. Not so. Jimmy Symington shook his head at me, and I realized that because of their age, we would not be marching down those slick marble stairs. We would instead be going down in the elevator with them a few minutes later. And we did, crossing the hall to assume our usual pose at the foot of the Grand staircase for the battery of photographers.

Then to "Hail to the Chief" -- it never fails to strike that high note of excitement in your heart -- we marched into the East Room to what was

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undoubtedly the longest, slowest receiving line for any State Dinner I can remember.

190 guests, many of whom wanted to ^{say} ~~see~~ a great deal beside Shalom. They ["] had been to Israel, they had ^{this or} ~~visited~~ that tie with Israel.

Because the stage was already occupying one-third of the room, the guests were rather crowded in a double line in the remaining two-thirds that lacked a bit of elegance and ~~precise~~ precision I love to keep in these affairs.

From the Cabinet, there were Joe and Trudy Fowler, and Lee and Stu Udall with the most marvelous tans from their vacation. And every Senator with any Jewish blood. Senator Javits whose wife had just written that Washington is a provincial town. Senator and Mrs. Ribicoff. And ^{Maurine} ~~Margaret~~ Neuberger with her husband Dr. Philip Soloman -- it may be her last time here for a State dinner. And among others, Senator Hickenlooper without Verna, and Senator and Mrs. Karl Mundt. I observed that the Robert Kennedys declined. Mrs. Kennedy is away.

There were two Governors: Richard Hughes of New Jersey and his wonderful ebullient wife. And the Nelson Rockefellers -- a more attractive group of brothers I never saw. Happy had on one of ^{the most} ~~those~~ striking dresses of the evening, white and red printed chiffon.

And an enormous group of House members, including I believe all of the Jews.

And Averell and Marie Harriman, who amusingly described the difficulties of anybody introducing him and the Ambassador from Israel at the same time --

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Mr. Avraham Harman and Mr. Averell Harriman.

And Dorothy and Leonard Marks.

And from the staff: Walt Rostow, and Marvin -- very seldom do he and his pretty Marian accept anything. And the Milt Semers. And the Bob Flemings -- I am glad to see him sometime that is not a stressful occasion.

If one really wants to know how much of a melting pot this country is, a State Dinner is an interesting way. There are always ethnic groups. And there are always organizations representing the interests of these groups. And one comes to realize how ^{multitudinous} ~~many~~ are those organizations -- the American Jewish Committee, the Synagogue Council of America, the Development Corporation for Israel (that was Abe ^{Feinberg} ~~Feinberg~~), United Israel Appeal, and the United Jewish Appeal.

From ~~business~~ labor there was that bouncing pixie, David Dubinsky. He whispered to me that he thought everything was going fine. And Jacob Potofsky, whom last I had seen standing at the foot of the Statue of Liberty almost with tears in his eyes on the day of the signing of the bill. And Alex Rose who paused in the line to get ^{Ch Tape}.....

The press was quite happily represented. Mr. Guggenheim of "Newsday", and the Ralph Harris of "Reuters", the Lee Hills of the "Knight Newspapers", Louise Hutchinson of the "Chicago Tribune". And two of my favorite companions, Nan Robertson of the "New York Times" and Bonnie Angelo.

Among publishers, the Samuel Newhouse's -- she in the most resplendent dress and jewels. And the James Wechsler's of the New York Post.

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There were old friends. The Arthur Krims and the Ed Weiskes.

One of my favorite moments was with Dr. and Mrs. Louis Eilers -- he is the Executive Vice President of Eastman Kodak Company and I have been yearning to get them interested in the whole beautification program. They have, through a sort of a side door, ^{by} helping sponsor the Conference of Young People. And he was more excited than I was about the possibilities of it.

From the Art world there were the Robert Merrills. I am sure these old walls expected to resound to his voice. He has sung for us so often, but ~~tonight~~ tonight he was a guest. And Mrs. Isaac Stern without her husband who had a concert. And the Dore Scharys.

I am getting a little concerned that our invitations to those in the world of arts and letters bring a higher proportion of regrets, although I know that a night for them may mean a \$10,000 ~~concert~~ concert -- an appearance, the breaking of which would be a real scar to their career. But I shall try to send our invitations earlier and perhaps more carefully.

At last the interminable line was over, and I took the President and we went into the Blue Room to sit with the Ambassador on my left and ^{? very believe it or not} Peter Warburg and Abe Fortas and Dorothy Schiff and David Ginsburg and Abe Feinberg and Ogden Reid and Virginia Rusk. Bess always chooses such a delightful table for me. And it was good conversation. The President is talkative -- almost ^{garulose} ~~garulous~~. We discussed the birth of a country that is made up of people from 100 nations, bound together ~~only~~ by Judaism. He hangs his whole hope of

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making unity out of them on education. Especially on education beginning in early youth. So does his wife. He told me an interesting thing too that at the end of the war he had gone to survey the concentration camps in Germany.

Ambassador Harman is to me one of the most interesting and capable looking Ambassadors here. Somehow the subject of unemployment insurance came up, and he said they had none in Israel -- he was against it. If unemployment ever cropped up in their economy they used instead public works. For instance they could do an unlimited amount of reforestation. And I asked him how they ever found trees that would grow on those rocky, barren hills. He said it took a lot of research -- a certain type of pine had been discovered that would grow. And then he said rather ^{urgely} ~~they~~ they would never be good commercial timber but they dropped a lot of needles and so they would replenish the top soil -- what a long lead time he is thinking of! And besides, they would relieve the arid landscape to the eye.

The moment when the singing violins come in is always the highpoint of a dinner to me. It is a thrill to all the guests. And tonight they played one that I noticed the President began to beat time to and smiled -- a favorite of his.

For the first time, I thought our menu was rather sparse. Summer garden soup and fillet of sole -- no red meat. The desert ~~named~~ ^{ch tape} gracefully after the President's wife "La Sae Rachel".

I asked the President to autograph my menu, and he wrote at the bottom, "Mazel Tov". Both he and the Ambassador signed their names in Hebrew.

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When we dine in two rooms, we have had trouble before with the loud-speaker in hearing the toast of the President from the State Dining Room. I had taken all the precautions I could to be sure it's in good order, alert us to its beginning by an aide knocking on a glass or something. So tonight it went better. And then ~~the~~ ^{Shazar} President responded at very considerable length and charmingly. Then we went out into the Hall for coffee. And I took Mrs. Shazar, who is a bit old for standing, into the sofa in the Green Room while Mathilde Krim delighted the President and her by telling them about her years at the Weisman Institute in Israel.

Arthur had ~~sat~~ next to Mrs. Nugent at dinner -- a happy choice of Bess's. One can always depend upon him.

The entertainment was Rudolf Serkin at his piano. I introduced him briefly -- "A man who in the proud tradition of his religion is a scholar, a worker, and a supreme artist." And he did a very short program of Bach, Mendelssohn and Brahms.

I wish you could have seen the rapt expression on Abe Fortas's face. It was as though Lancelot had found the Holy Grail.

Though drama is my first love and musicals with gay choreography perhaps my second, I felt very proud of his wonderful program. And when Luci congratulated him afterwards, she said something like "It's as though you poured your soul out through your music." And he beamed at her.

I realized the President and Mrs. Shazar could never climb those narrow steps safely for our pictures with the artist. So I held out my hand

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to him and he descended and we managed them ^{picture} not so skillfully as other guests began to cluster around to thank him.

For a President ~~is~~ who is nearly 80, an early bedtime makes good sense. So we escorted them to the North Portico about 11:30 and Lyndon lingered only about 1/2 an hour afterward. And a little past 12:00 I too was upstairs to hear that Lynda Bird who had taken Warrie Lynn to celebrate her birthday by eating dinner with all the military aides in the mess had adjourned to the Treaty Room with a birthday cake.

It had been an interesting evening. I felt I have gotten more insight into the birth of this country.

Both Mrs. Shazar and her husband have been builders of the Israeli nation for 50 years. She settled by the Sea of Galilee in one of the first ^(Kibbutz) ~~chebbitum~~ ~~in 1912~~ working in the fields and cooking and laundering and later editing a monthly labor magazine for women. And she still works at education for the very young and at beautification.

My main feeling at the end of the day was satisfaction that the staff had done so well, and that Luci and Pat had mingled with the guests so gracefully all evening. In fact, Betty Beale had said that "romance had overshadowed the political world last night. The guests at President and Mrs. Johnson's dinner for Israeli ~~President~~ President and Mrs. Shazar were more interested in greeting or getting a good look at Luci and Pat than they were in meeting the figure of State. And they were fascinated when Lynda, looking slender and beautiful in pale yellow, dimpled with obvious pleasure when asked if George Hamilton was coming to the wedding."