

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, February 14, 1967

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Valentine's Day. I awoke feeling more relaxed than I had in ages. To sleep well is the greatest luxury for either of us today. It was a rather quiet day. Desk work in the morning. And then at 11:00, coffee in the Queens' Room with Jane Wirtz to show "Project Earning Power" to the press.

Dorothy Goldberg began this project before her, and Jane has carried on with great drive and zest and considerable success. Between them they have enlisted to aid such eminent industrial designers as Raymond Loy and his company and Adele Simpson to give their time and creativity to designing articles that the handicapped can make at home in "sheltered workshops", so called, and are good enough to be sold competitively in big stores across the country -- something that people will buy because they want them, not for sympathy.

There were about 25 members of her committee present -- ~~members of her committee~~, designers who were helping them, Labor Department staff, and Jane and Bill, who arrived with a Valentine present for me -- bless him -- he has the ^{light} gay ~~gay~~ touch -- a thoroughly delightful man.

^{There was} With a lace tablecloth on the table in the East Hall and the big silver coffee urn, a good selection of sweet rolls (and I was ravenous) and a good contingent of the press.

It is funny what an ambivalent attitude one gets toward the press.

A big group is good if it is a project you want to push, something for

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culture or charity, or a part of your husband's Governmental program that you want the public to know about. And a big group of them is bad if you are doing something quite personal and just for fun, or it is a business that you are not ready to talk about yet.

We went into the Queens' Room using the same setup of chairs that we had kept there for the Congressional Receptions.

I welcomed them and then Jane took over, and we had a report from her three current Task Forces by the spokesmen William Riser and Charles Newman and Donald McFarland. Over and over I get the message that you should become full of your subject and then just let it fly with enthusiasm, if you want to hold ~~the~~ the interest of your audience. To read a paper, no matter how good, does not grip your audience, excite their interest, like the conversational tone does.

Alas in this day when more and more people do things that require them standing up and telling about it, we are becoming slipshod. I read nearly all the time now rather than learn as much about my subject as I can and then just get up and talk.

Then we went into the Treaty Room where the articles they designed and that the handicapped had made were on display on Andrew Johnson's Cabinet table. There were trivets and desk clocks and placemats made of laminated wallpaper and delicate candelabra and bed jackets. The best, a set of wooden bookends I thought. And a desk clock in a footed wooden base. There were a good many pictures.

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I was very impressed ^{by} Jane's real ^{imm}ersion in the program -- no "token help" here. And by the willingness of big names who work at it for free.

I went from one to the other of the designers expressing my thanks and that of the President.

It was a moderately successful hour. But I had the frustrated feeling that we could have gotten more out of it. Questions and answers, a couple of personal stories of what it had meant to somebody with no right hand or confined to a wheelchair, to be able to once again make a living.

In the afternoon I had a long, uninterrupted stay at my desk, went down briefly to welcome the John Wildenthalls who used to work for Lyndon and were having a tour of the White House. We talked about Cotulla and office personnel in his days. I chatted with our house guests -- to welcome them, the Bobbitts who are in New York for KTBC and flew down for the dinner, and the Bill Hagertys, down from Drexel -- one of the most attractive couples I know in the field of education.

Jean Louis came at 7:00 and gave me a very lovely up hair-do, and I ventured to put on my white satin dress with the sparkly top by Winston which I had worn to the Gala in January of '65. I am almost bowing these days to the fashion dictate of a new dress for every great occasion.

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And then downstairs to the North Portico to greet the Emperor -- frail, smiling, his bearded face looked so familiar across four decades, dressed in a western dinner jacket. We took him upstairs to the yellow Oval Room where Hubert and the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren in a pretty valentine red, and the Katzenbachs -- he's standing in for the Secretary of State, and our Ambassador Edward Korry.

He spoke so nicely about my letters thanking him for his annual Christmas calendar sent from Ethiopia.

And of course the Symingtons. Six members of the Emperor's party, including his grandson Iskinder Desta who is the Deputy Commander of the Imperial Navy, and the Ethiopian Ambassador and Mrs. Tashoma.

It was a rather long visit upstairs because Lyndon and the Emperor and Nick and Justice Warren and the interpreter took their seats in the corner of the room and began to talk. Lyndon shook his head every time I looked in his direction to get us moving toward the gift table.

This time there was one gift I took especial pleasure in presenting -- a set of ~~surgeal~~ ^{surgical} instruments for his favorite hospital -- according to our inquiry one that they particularly needed and would use. And an amusing gift, a dictating machine about the size of the palm of your hand. We are told that he likes gadgets.

When Lyndon fell into step with the Emperor behind the flags, I followed with the Vice President. And then Lynda came close behind us

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so that at the bottom of the steps there was a nice picture of the four of us.

When the stage is up, the Great East Room shrinks so. A dinner for 140 is really a much more handsomely set than the two dining-room dinner for 190.

Actually, strangely enough, this wasn't supposed to be a State visit. But since it was following only by five days Hassan's visit which was a State visit, we felt it desirable to give it the dignity also of a State dinner.

The Senate was represented ^{by} Ralph and Opal Yarborough and the Hruskas of Nebraska. Vicky is one of my favorite Senate wives.

And there were four members of the House.

The Mennen Williams were there. He was head of the African desk for several years, and they both look so happy and healthy. And the James Robinsons of Operations Crossroads. And the Warren Robbins who is the Director of the Museum of African Art.

There was a sizeable contingent from the Press including Margaret Mayer whom we have known for more than 20 years. And my friends from Westinghouse who worked on the Art book, the Don McGannons. And he said, "When are we going to have another project?" And Sissy Morrissey of LIFE, and the Drew Pearsons.

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And there were old friends -- Earle Clements. I was sad to see that age was embracing Sarah. And the Claude Wild, Jr. Besides the Bobbitts, another set of ~~kinsfolk~~ kinsfolks, Diana and Donald. At the last minute there had been room to add several and I always ~~feel~~ like adding ~~them~~ ~~Diana~~.

In entertainment, there was Eddie Arnold who had played for us so many times at the Ranch, and had not yet been to the White House. And the Benny Goodmans. And Mrs. Philip Barry, the artist who had done my picture, of the Womens National Democratic Club -- very lovely and pleased to be there.

Lynda Bird's good friends, the John Flemings of New York -- old book collectors who promised to come down any time and look at my books from the brick house to see if there is anything more than sentimental value.

Bill Baxter was there, saying he loved the Peace Corps more every day.

And astronauts Charles Conrad and Gordon Cooper.

And Jacob Potofsky from labor, who with the possible exception of the Emperor himself, was the most photogenic person present.

We were in the State Dining Room by 9:00, at the long table, which unhappily takes so many of the real brass that we don't have the very pleasant arrangement of the host or the hostess of Cabinet or Senate rank for each of the little round tables.

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I was seated between the Emperor and a gentleman whose real job I never knew. He was called Governor-General of Shoa, Ras Mesfin ^{3 Chang} Sileshi. And nothing in the course of the evening enlightened me any more.

The Emperor had little bird-like hands, smaller even than Luci's, cafe au lait colored, his black beard is sprinkled with gray, and his eyes are merry -- even twinkly -- a delightful counterpoint to the assured dignity, the real presence, that he is so well entitled to have as the world's longest ruling Chief of State.

I found him easy to talk to. And he did eat. I always like a guest ^{who} ~~that~~ eats. We managed English rather well. I talked very slowly. Dear Willie Day had sent me a note in the afternoon to remind me that the Emperor had given Luci a golden bracelet and necklace and earrings and a native dress of Ethiopia for her wedding present. So I took pleasure in thanking him again for that. And I remembered the entrancing descriptions of his land ⁱⁿ ~~Allen~~ Moorhead's, "The Blue Nile". So geography and weather were good for a few exchanges.

And meanwhile Margy McNamara on his other side was chattering away in French -- she's a very good guest.

Lyndon brought history up to date in his toast, and recited some of Haile Selassie's own words from 1936. He tried to rally the League of Nations to the defense of Ethiopia against Mussolini's hordes, that the ^{travail?} ~~trail~~ of Ethiopia was in ~~its~~ truth the turning point on the road to aggression and war. Its lesson has been etched in our memory and has spurred us in

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building a world where solemn commitments to resist oppression are not mere scraps of paper.

The Emperor gave his rejoinder in his native Amharic. He wound up by thanking the President for the technical know-how and human resources given his country by the United States. The Peace Corps has been very big there.

Then we went into the Green Room and the Red Room to have coffee and liqueurs. And I had a chance to do some people watching. Rebe^{ba}~~ba~~ apparently was having a good time. She was dressed in the same black and white chiffon that Lynda had worn to the Capote party -- ^a in fact immediately remarked by the press.

The two most striking costumes there were Lydia Katzenbach's white sheath with the cape of white ostrich feathers, and Mrs. Lefrak's yellow gown whose bodice jewel encrusted looked like a big butterfly about to take off.

Emperor

We escorted the ~~Emperor~~ into the East Room for the entertainment which could have been tailored just to my taste. Richard Tucker, called ^{met} the ~~Met~~ second Caruso singing ^{"Celeste Aida"} ~~"Sole a te"~~ and "You Will Never Walk Alone" from Carousal. And Nedda Casei singing ^{"Habanera"} ~~"Habanera"~~ from Carmen, one of ~~my~~ mother's old favorites that was recorded on those huge records we had at the brick house when I was five years old. And ^{"Tonight"} ~~from~~ West Side Story, a varied, enormously popular program, I think one of the best we've had.

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We took the Emperor up on the stage afterwards for pictures, and then very quickly he made his way to the front door urging me not to go outside in the cold. So I didn't. It was only a little past 11:00, and dancing soon started in the main lobby. Tonight, however, I did not dance.

Lyndon went upstairs at 11:25, and I circulated through the Great Hall talking to the Eddie Arnolds and Bill Baxters and Nash Castro until nearly 12:00. And then got word that the Bobbitts and Hagertys had joined me on the second floor for a drink.

Lyndon was already in bed, and there were no butlers on hand. So I fixed night-caps for the five of us, and we had an interesting talk. And I told Bill Hagerty how much we missed him at the University, and what did he have at Drexel that made him like it better than the University? He thought for about 1 second and then said, "Well, I'm boss."

We talked about the youth of today. He thinks that they are different. It is a matter of our affluence. He spoke about his growing-up days. He had to milk 14 cows before he went to school in the morning and thin those roller bakers when he got home. He is an exciting man. His goal is to increase the excellence of what Drexel has to offer in Science and engineering -- not to increase its size.

Ch. Don't miss a word
Rebecca told us that after three years in college, Philip had left at the end of the term to go into VISTA and he was now in a training course in California.

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Lyndon had asked me to bring them in to say goodnight to them. But once in there, we settled into chairs and talked and talked. His mound of night reading was only half plowed through. He asked Bill a lot of questions, and I thought I could see him evaluating the possibility of whether he might fit or might take some Government job in the future. I believe here is a man happily married to the work he is engaged in. And ^{by} ~~for~~ the same token it is his caliber that I would like to see in Government.

It was past 1:00 when they said goodnight. This is the nicest part of our house guests' visits -- night-caps with long talks or that second cup of coffee in the morning, which tomorrow I certainly won't have because I am leaving for New York about 8:30.

And then with Lyndon still working, I read until 2:00.