

WASHINGTON DATELINE

By TRUDE B. FELDMAN

ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

Nixon Snubs Jewish Press

Eighty-five representatives of anglo-Jewish publication--plus Simon Weber, editor of the only Yiddish daily--were invited to the White House.

The occasion was an all-day series of special briefings by members of the Administration on subjects of concern "only to the American" Jewish community. Canadian, South African, European and Middle Eastern representatives were not invited.

The group began their day with a tour of the east side of the White House. They were then escorted to the Indian Treaty Room at the old Executive office Building, where Herbert Klein, Communications Director for The Executive Branch, greeted them. After briefing the invitees on his own duties, Klein introduced William Safire and Leonard Garment, assistants to The President, who talked about Mr. Nixon's "style" and Dr. Ronald Berman, Chairman of National Endowment for the Humanities.

The new Executive Office Building was the scene for a cocktail and luncheon interlude. There, the publishers and editors had the chance to meet and greet each other, as well as to shake hands with presidential assistants Robert Finch and John Ehrlichmann.

Returning to the White House Theatre, the group was briefed on economics, by Dr. Herbert Stein, Chairman, Economic Council; on Soviet Jewry by Richard Davies, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European area; on housing by Stanley Baruch, Director, Office of Housing Agency for International Development (AID); and on the Mideast by Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State, Near Eastern Affairs.

Officials answered questions after each briefing.

Baruch said the largest single housing loan ever made from one country to another has been made by the U.S. to Israel. He added that this loan which is being underwritten by Savings & Loan Banking institutions of the U.S.,

will meet 24% of the total Israeli housing needs for 1972.

"All the loans are made by private U.S. banking institutions, and therefore require no budgetary allocations by the U.S.," he stated.

He also said that the amount available is \$785 million, and of this, \$50 million is available to Israel. "This will provide funds from 7,000 housing units whose maximum selling price will be \$16,000," he said. "The beneficiaries will include immigrants, new families and occupants of sub-standard dwellings. Also Arabs and other minorities in Israel. Over 50% of the loan will be available for Russian immigrants. No housing under these loans will be constructed outside the pre-1967 borders...."

He added that there is a 6-year moratorium on re-payment of the principal.

Mr. Sisco told the group that the U.S. position in regard to the Israel Egypt conflict is that only agreement between those two countries can produce a peaceful settlement of the border situation. He added that the trouble with the Arab-Israel situation has been unresolved for 20 years because negotiations have been attempted through outside parties. He asserted that the U.S. firmly believes that only the two parties concerned can resolve the issue between them.

At the close of the day's briefings at the White House, a reception was given by Max Fisher, president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Among those who stopped by was Maurice Stans, former Secretary of Commerce, who now heads the financial end of the Nixon re-election campaign.

As for comment on the trip here and on the sessions, reaction varied.

One editor reasoned: "Well, at least I got invited to the White House. But I learned nothing that hasn't been said before. I realize it was a political ploy, so they should've been more subtle...."

Another snapped: "What a long for absolutely nothing. They could have sent me those briefings for 8 cents!"

One publisher had praise for Joe Sisco. "He was factual and concise. He knows his job well...."

Yet, another--who remained an extra day,

when the news of King Hussein's proposal broke --complained: "Why couldn't Mr. Sisco have given us that 'scoop' ? If we came so far, why not give us something in advance of the general press? They'd still beat us, because non of us come out until Thursday -- but it would have made us feel we got something NEW and HOT after such a trip...."

One publisher prefaced his remarks thusly in an interview at The Mayflower: "The invitation was a highlight for me in that I am a former refugee of Nazi Germany. To think that one who was so close to the extermination ovens should be privileged to attend anything at the White House is an overwhelming acknowledgement of the values of American democracy...."

"Now, as for the substance of the briefings" he continued. "The speakers appeared to be open and frank. No holes were barred in the Q and A period. I was grateful that the subjects not only covered immediate Jewish concerns, but also causes which as Americans, we share with our fellow citizens. While no information not previously available was disclosed, the briefings provided an insight in the way the Administration views those causes of most concern to American Jews and the future of human rights in the democracy...."

"In conclusion, I must add that I and all my colleagues were sorely disappointed that Mr. Nixon couldn't find one moment to walk a few feet from his office to say 'hello' and acknowledge our presence there...."

And one editor-publisher went so far as to say that Mr. Nixon "snubbed us...."

"I can't help regarding Mr. Nixon's absence as an intentional snub to this nation's editors and publishers of Jewish publications," he stressed. "Our invitations said that 'President Nixon has asked me to invite you...tc..' Well, editors and publishers from all over America convened at the White House. And while we were there, we were told 'The President is too busy to say 'hello'...."

"However, this evening, we noted from a front-page story, that he found time to personally phone a local paper to tell them the giant pandas he brought from China will be housed at the National Zoo here.



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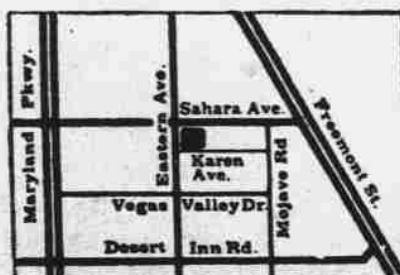
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