

**WASHINGTON DATELINE**

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN

ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

Washington, D.C.

President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford hosted their first State Dinner at the White House the other night -- but they hadn't yet moved into the Executive Mansion. It was also the first State Dinner at the White House in eight months.

The dinner-dance was in honor of Jordan's King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Alia. Hussein was the first head of State to visit Ford since he became President. Ironically, only last March, Vice President and Mrs. Ford gave their first dinner at the State Department, and the guests of honor were King Hussein and Queen Alia. (The first visiting head of State Mr. Ford greeted after being named Vice President was Hussein, also.)

The Fords, avid dancers, invited Howard Devron and his ten-piece orchestra (including son Lawrence on the French Horn)--who had also played at their son's recent wedding reception--to furnish dance music for the 120 dinner guests and the 50 additional persons who came after dinner.

Unlike the Nixon White House--where a noted star was invited to entertain in the East Room after dinner--the Ford event provided the opportunity to mingle, chit-chat and dance. The atmosphere was gay, relaxed and informal.

The Queen danced with the President. The King danced with the First Lady. The President danced with his beaming 17-year-old daughter, Susan, a lovely sight in her green and white polka dot cotton gown, to the musical tribute of "If You Knew Susie Like I Know Susie" (an easy jump tempo.)

When the President and Betty Ford danced, Devron's orchestra struck up "Betty Coed" in honor of the new First Lady; and then played "You've Got To Be A Football Hero,"

for the ex-football star, Gerald Ford.

At another point, the President was alone on the dance floor -- as everyone stood by applauding -- when he danced a shuffle rock ('Big, Bad Leroy Brown') with Cindy Nessen, wife of National Broadcasting Company's Ron Nessen.

Betty Ford, who studied dance with Martha Graham, was strikingly beautiful in a white crepe, long-sleeved gown, trimmed with floating white feathers at the wrists and neck. Queen Alia looked superb in a robin's egg blue chiffon gown.

Earlier, during the ceremonial march to the East Room, Gerald Ford heard 'Ruffles and Flourishes' and 'Hail To The Chief' for the first time in his honor.

Among the guests were Cabinet members; White House aides; Congressmen; State Department officials; businessmen; and the former head of the Committee To Re-Elect The President (CREEP) Clark MacGregor. And unlike the Nixon state dinners, six newsmen were included among the VIP invitees. They were: John Herbers, New York Times; Carroll Kilpatrick, Washington Post; Thomas M. DeFrank, Newsweek; Helen Thomas, UPI; Eric Sevaraid, CBS; and Ron Nessen, NBC.

Also present were Jordan's Prime Minister and Mrs. Zaid Rifai; Jordan's Ambassador and Mrs. Salah; U. S. Ambassador to Jordan, Thomas Pickering; David Rockefeller, Chairman, The Chase Manhattan Bank and his daughter, Eileen; Thornton A. Wilson, Chairman, The Boeing Co., and two of the Fords' children, Susan and Jack.

At the conclusion of the dinner, President Ford and King Hussein exchanged toasts. Ford told the King: "During your tenure, we've had some five national Administrations in the USA, but we've never changed our view concerning yourself and your country, and we're proud of our friendship and association.

"But the changes in recent months seem to have opened the door to progress for peace. The changes seem to have given us hope that there'll be greater improvement as we move ahead.

"In many respects, those changes can be attributed to you because of your courage, the great risks you've taken during your lifetime and your superb understanding of the problems of the Mideast and your desire to work for peace for all peoples."

The President congratulated King Hussein on his "leadership, dedication, wisdom and cooperation...and you have set an example for all to follow and to use as a guidepost for people not only in the Mideast, but elsewhere...."

His Majesty King Hussein expressed for himself and his Government best wishes and every success to the new President. "It's a source of pride to us to have had a very close cooperation between our nations, to have seen in the recent past some basic steps taken for the establishment of a just and durable peace in our part of the world, largely through the efforts of our friends in the United States....the patient effort, the perseverance, the determination that has resulted in the first few steps materializing...."

"We are not only comforted, but confident, that the U.S. will contribute her full share for the achievement of this worthy objective under your wise leadership."

After drinking to the King and the President,

and after a joyous hour of dancing, the Fords walked the Royal couple to their limousine which took them to Blair House.

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