

# WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN

ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

## Pres. Carter Seder

By Trude B. Feldman  
White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- If this past Passover was different from all others because of the Egyptian - Israeli peace treaty, the man who helped make it possible also added much to the spirit of the 8 - day holiday by his presence at a traditional "Seder."

Jimmy Carter -- in an unmarked limousine -- rode with his wife from the White House to the home of Fran and Stuart E. Eizenstat, his 36 - year - old Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy. They arrived at the start of the first "Seder" and remained until the end -- three hours later.

The service is far more than the partaking of unique foods recalling the way in which the ancient Jews left Egypt. It bids every Jew to consider himself as if he personally had experienced slavery and had won the human struggle for freedom. The word, "Seder" means "order" of the service and the Carters participated in the prescribed ceremonies along with other members of the Eizenstat family -- Jay, 8; Brian, 6; Stu's parents, Sylvia and Leo Eizenstat of Atlanta; Fran's sister, Naomi, her husband, Mel Schwartz, and their sons, Seth, 14 and Marvin, 16, of Massachusetts.

They recited passages from the 'Haggadah' which tells the story of the exodus from Egypt. They said the prayers of thanksgiving, praises and rejoicing. They drank the four cups of wine to mark the four stages of redemption referred to in four Biblical expressions. They dipped a sprig of parsley in salt water and ate it -- to symbolize the meager diet and tears of the Israelites under oppression. (The green is also a harbinger of the coming of Springtime.)

They ate the Matzoh (unleavened bread) which represents the "bread of affliction" of the Israelites in Egypt, as well as the flat bread that was baked during their hasty flight. They ate the bitter herbs, a reminder of the bitterness of slavery. And, they ate 'Charoset' -- chopped apples, nuts, mixed with cinnamon and wine -- which suggests the mortar used to make bricks during the time of enslavement by Pharaoh. The "Charoset" also reflects the tempering of bitterness by the sweetness of faith.

They spilled drops of wine from a full cup for each of the Ten Plagues, which were visited on slave masters. This is done, according to Jewish tradition, because the joy of a full cup of wine is diminished by the suffering of even one's enemies.

They watched as the head of the household broke the middle matzoh (of the three before him) and "hid" one half of it for "dessert." They were amused when, at the close of the ceremony, the "piece of matzoh" was "found" by one of the Eizenstat sons and "ransomed" for a token gift.

Since one purpose of the "Seder," is to teach youngsters the epochal happenings of the Exodus,

this "rite" was added to the ceremony to arouse curiosity and keep their interest to the very end. One of the touching scenes at any "Seder" table is when the youngest child asks "The Four Questions," leading questions which introduce the narrative.

"There was a lovely expression on the President's face when he listened to my two sons recite the "Four Questions," Eizenstat told me. "It was the first time for them. And, as I tried to coach them, the President tapped my knee to indicate I should give them the chance to do it on their own."

Another ceremony is the opening of the door for Elijah The Prophet, who symbolizes the hopes for the Messianic age of universal peace, love and brotherhood.

Eight - year - old Jay's "job" was to open the front door for Elijah. But, Jay startled everyone when he first ran around to the back door to ask the President's Secret Service for permission to open the front door.

President Carter was "totally absorbed" in the "Seder" proceedings, focusing his complete attention on every aspect. "He was not, in any way, distracted by outside events," Eizenstat said, adding: "And none of us felt uncomfortable with the President of the United States at the "Seder" table. He put us at ease, and we felt right at home -- where we were."

It was a proud and beaming Stu Eizenstat who told me about his "Seder" guests and why this Passover night was different from all others -- for him and his family.

"I know President and Mrs. Carter for ten years and I've been with them in many places," he began. "Because Passover is a family holiday, Fran and I wanted them to feel like they were a part of our family for one evening."

"But, more importantly, reading the 'Haggadah' would never be the same for us as it had been before the peace treaty (between Egypt and Israel) was signed."

The Eizenstats also wanted the President to participate in the first "Seder" after the treaty, to "re-emphasize the historic nature of what he had helped to accomplish and what that achievement signified after 3,000 years of history."

In the midst of songs, prayers and readings, "Seder" celebrants are encouraged to discuss and elaborate on the meaning of the Exodus and the implications of freedom for our own time.

"What struck me most about the President's participation was his tremendous interest in every facet of the holiday," Eizenstat said. "He was truly able to contribute from his own knowledge to the history of the festival."

As an example, the President mentioned a passage in Isaiah in which Isaiah had prophesied that Israel and Egypt would make a peace pact, which would eventually be the bridge for peace between Israel and all of her neighbors.

Eizenstat also noted that the President has a deep and sensitive interest in, and an understanding of Judaism; an empathy with Jewish history and a recognition of the historical trauma that the Jewish people have gone through.

"Therefore, it was especially meaningful that the President participated in a "Seder" so soon after he had brought about the recent dramatic change in the course of Jewish and Egyptian history," Eizenstat said.

"Imagine, we were reading together about the slavery of the Israelites in ancient Egypt only two weeks after President Carter had united Egypt and Israel on behalf of peace."

Passover of 1979 was, indeed, different from all others -- not only for the Eizenstat Family, but for the First Lady and the 39th President of the United States.

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**Dear President Carter,**

The Zionist Organization of America is mounting a campaign for strengthening the Zionist affiliation of every Jewish Community.

Recently, the Regional President of the ZOA's North Pacific Region, Rabbi Jack Frankel and its Director Chen Shapira, visited Las Vegas in order to plan the District activities.

On January 5, 1979, Mr. Ivan Novick, ZOA's National President, submitted a petition with 100 thousand signatures to President Carter asking the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The Community Members are requested to add their name to this petition as part of the activities in honor of "Yom Yerusalem" (Jerusalem Day) on May 24, 1979.

All interested should send their name to ZOA, 46 Kearny Street, San Francisco, Ca 94108

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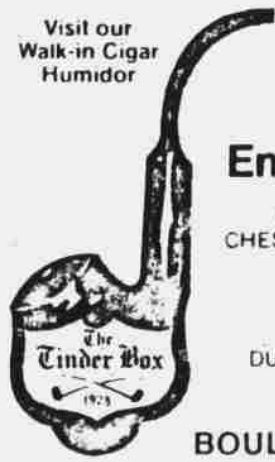
TEL AVIV (WNS)

-- State Comptroller Ernest Nebenzahl has for the first time criticized the operations of the Israeli Army.

In a report on Israel's invasion and occupation of south Lebanon in April, 1978, the Comptroller cited errors in logistics, operational matters and intelligence and serious breaches of discipline. The army said May 9 that it had corrected all of the cited deficiencies and had taken punitive measures against personnel found guilty of improper acts.

The report noted that not all of the 21 men killed in the Lebanese operation died in combat. Some soldiers were killed because they evaded or ignored orders and discipline. The Comptroller cited at least three cases in which Israeli soldiers crossed the front lines unknowingly.

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