September 12, 1962
Dr. John Slawson
Frances Rosenberg
AJC Radio & TV On and Off the Air

During 1961-62, the AJC (Slawson, that is), achieved an exceptional record in reaching countless millions throughout the country.

I.

One of the major accomplishments was the AJC's very effective cooperation with organizations and networks in the area of broadcasting.

1. During the past year, we were able to assemble at the Institute of Human Relations the top network executives and AJC staff specialists to discuss the public relations aspects of the Eichmann trial as they relate to the American scene. At that time, Dr. Slawson emphasized that, in our opinion, the purpose of the trial is to make us confront, however, reluctantly, the meaning of hatred and totalitarianism, our own relations to them and their continued presence in the world today. He cautioned the visitors not to let the magnitude of the crime be clouded by the question of Israel's right to try Eichmann. Israel is not on trial -- Eichmann is.

Dr. Slawson also discussed the dangers inherent in broadcasting all the horror films presented in evidence, or in supplementing film footage of the trial with concentration camp films. Excess violence may produce guilt, paralysis in the viewer or even
breed violence. He urged that care be exercised in the selection of language to describe the crimes.

The broadcasters all expressed the opinion that the session had been very worthwhile and would provide guidelines for their coverage of the trial. The programming of the trial seemed to bear that out.

2. Faced with the prospect of George Lincoln Rockwell's visit to New York, we met with network officials to discuss the problem of giving Rockwell publicity on the air. In the majority of cases, broadcast officials acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and expressed willingness to cooperate.

3. The AJC is widely recognized as the authority on matters relating to Jews and Judaism. We were consulted by the writer of the Hallmark Hall of Fame's Crucifixion TV program, "Give Us Barabbas" and were asked to attend the rehearsal. The on-the-air production (NBC-TV Network) contained nothing that might incite hostility toward Jews—an indication that great progress had been made in the presentation of the crucifixion story on television.

4. We were consulted by a network on an episode in a series of films to be presented on television with which it was concerned. Because of stereotyping and serious problems vis-à-vis Jewish religious traditions, we recommended that the film be eliminated from the series. In spite of a large financial investment, the network followed our advice.

5. THE CATHOLIC HOUR program on anti-Semitism, "The Chosen People", represents another step forward in interfaith relations. We discussed at great length with the National Council of Catholic Men their plans for the projected program. Material and ideas were submitted by AJC staff members for their consideration. The consensus was that this was a most impressive treatment of the problem of anti-Semitism. The
AJC presented its Human Relations Award to the National Council of Catholic Men for outstanding leadership in promoting man's understanding of his fellow man through television and for the notable production of the "Prejudice, U.S.A." series on THE CATHOLIC HOUR.

6. We were able to get very wide radio and television coverage of the Wagner-Lefkowitz press conference on problems of bigotry and fair practices in the mayoralty campaign, held at the Institute. Same coverage was afforded a special conference for radio and television with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy prior to the Annual Meeting.

The visit of the French Catholics to the Institute of Human Relations was reported on the ABC-TV News program the evening of the event.

II.

In the course of the year, AJC chalked up an impressive number of productions, program suggestions and guest appearances "on the air."

1. In the area of AJC productions, extensive planning and preparations resulted in the NBC-TV network dramatic presentation based on Arthur Miller's FOCUS. Superior talent was recruited and one of the stars was a nominee for an Emmy Award for her performance in the play.

2. In observance of Human Rights Day, our sixth annual dramatization, "John Adams, Esquire: For the Defense," dealing with the right of every man to legal defense in a democracy, was presented on the ABC-TV Network.

These human rights programs have been extremely popular and we receive a number of requests from all over the country for prints of the kinescopes for showing to groups organized to deal with these problems. "Down the Road", a recent dramatization on the migrants has
been used by many church groups. It will also be shown at the Annual Meeting of the AJC chapter in Houston, Texas.

3. As suggested by us, Lillian Smith, writer and ardent defender of civil rights, was special guest on the February 11 Dorothy Gordon YOUTH FORUM program (NBC-TV), dealing with "Can Laws Outlaw Prejudice?" It was repeated on May 13.

4. Edwin J. Lukas appeared on the February 25 OPEN MIND program discussing "The President and Civil Rights." The program was repeated on July 22.

5. A "Declaration of Conscience" on the Eichmann trial prepared by clergymen of the three faiths was presented on the "Chat Huntley Reporting" program over the NBC-TV Network.

6. Dr. John Slawson appeared on the WCBS-TV program, "Eichmann and Israel."

7. Dr. Ekkehart Krippendorff, author of Pedagogy and Jewry, textbook for German schools, appeared on Dorothy Gordon's YOUTH FORUM program, "What Lesson From the Eichmann Trial?"


10. Commentary Symposium "Western Values and Total War" was carried on Radio Station WBAI.

11. Tape of Ed Lukas reading statement (of AJC and other national organizations) on Alabama rioting and irresponsible police action in Mississippi was carried on ABC-Radio and the statement was mentioned on stations throughout the day.
12. The MONITOR program interview with Dr. Slawson and Dr. Cordt on the German Educational Mission to the United States was broadcast on NBC-Radio on July 8, 1962.

III.

Religious television workshops have become a regular feature of Radio and Television Division programming. This year, a Major Faiths Institute sponsored by The Roman-Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, The San Francisco Council of Churches, The Northern California-Nevada Council of Churches, The Northern California Board of Rabbis, The American Jewish Committee, San Francisco Chapter and The Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, was held in San Francisco and a bi-faith Television and Radio Institute for the Clergy, sponsored by The American Jewish Committee, The Massachusetts Council of Churches and The Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Boston was held in Boston.

During the coming year we plan a tri-faith institute in Cleveland and a three-day tri-faith shirt-sleeves workshop in California to be sponsored by our Los Angeles and San Francisco chapters.

These workshops have resulted in closer cooperation among the faith groups and help to resolve the problem of communication between the stations and religious leaders of the community, as well as offer increased air time.

IV.

Speaking of People, human relations monthly newsletter, now in its third year, continues to be very popular among broadcasters throughout the country.

V.

1. On the agenda for the coming year was the exciting prospect of a program series to be presented by the new educational television
channel in New York in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee's Institute of Human Relations. The programs would have featured a variety of topics of interest to Americans. The series would have been distributed through the National Educational Television and Radio Center to 65 educational TV stations throughout the country, with an approximate viewing audience of 26 million. Unfortunately, when Secretary Goldberg was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, we were notified that he would not be able to participate in our program series.

2. We are now working on an idea for a series on Society: Old and New. The basic purpose of the program is to compare institutions, behavioral patterns, mores, psychological norms, in primitive and historic societies and cultures with our Western Civilization.

Each program, probably an hour in length, would take some major facet of a primitive society and show how it may operate, or may not, in our modern civilized culture. For example, the panel of sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists -- perhaps four or five people for each program -- might consider the paranoid-war-like, antagonistic traits of the Aztec society. The panel would discuss and explore these traits and then determine whether there are equivalents in our modern society; whether, in fact, some similar forces and factors were at work; whether, for instance, fascism or nazism contained elements similar to the Aztec society.

The basic attempt for each program would be to find what similar and differing elements exist in social behavior that have been transmuted through history and through various cultures. In this way, we can possibly arrive at some understanding of modern social behavior through perceiving its more extreme and basic forms in primitive societies.
We would hope to join with the Museum of Natural History in co-sponsoring the series.

3. We are also embarking on a program to help increase the use of radio and television by our local chapters. We plan to conduct a radio and television clinic for area directors, possibly at our next Executive Board or Annual Meeting. This session would enable the men to discuss their problems vis-a-vis these media and would enable us to make suggestions for more effective use of them. We are continually advising area directors of the opportunities in communities under their jurisdiction.

4. We are planning to organize a committee of specialists to advise us on the selection of literary properties for national radio and television.

5. We are attempting to arrange a meeting with the Director of Communications at Brandeis University to discuss possible cooperation between our organizations in the area of broadcasting. Under consideration is a possible study on the intergroup relations aspects of radio and television.

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The AJC claims no special influence in the U.S. Government but

a. We produced a play on television depicting the plight of migrant workers and it was mentioned in the Congressional Record.

b. We invited a great American poet to participate in a Chanukah program at Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island, and he was later asked to speak at the U.S. Presidential Inauguration.

c. We got a commitment from the Secretary of Labor to appear on an educational TV program series and he received an appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court.