MEMO ON MASS MEDIA
FOR
EVALUATION OF AJC PROGRAM

To us, as to all agencies intending to communicate with the public, use of the Mass Media is essential. In no other way can great numbers of people be reached as expeditiously and at a lower per capita cost. In no other way can AJC's objectives enter as rapidly into the mainstream of popular thought and opinion.

Besides providing vehicles for reaching the general public, the media also carry forward AJC's program among those leadership elements of the population whom we designate as nerve centers and whose work is mainly "face to face." In conveying to their own groups the insights they have gleaned from us, these leaders are greatly aided by the educational tools we produce for the mass media, such as a recorded radio series on civil rights (The People Take the Lead); a TV kinescope on social discrimination (The Trophy); a community-action handbook on human rights (In Your Hands).

Such media material is used by "face to face" groups long after its initial presentation to the public at large. The Trophy, for example, has been shown at Indiana University in connection with a discussion of "Racial Discrimination in College Fraternities and Sororities". The Princess in the Tower has been shown repeatedly in New York public-school classrooms, and will continue to be shown, especially where there are mixed racial groups, to help children understand their relationships with one another. The use of In Your Hands by the Methodist Women alone will bring it to some 10,000 discussion groups across the country.

Probably no informed person believes that the media by themselves can change the attitudes of Christians toward Jews; and certainly no one thinks they can convert an anti-Semite into a philo-Semite. Yet the fact remains that attitudes toward Jews have changed, and it would be reckless to conclude that the media have played no role in this improvement. Whether the airwaves, the screen or the printing press can reduce deep-seated hostilities is debatable, but their potency in impressing images and issues upon the public mind is undisputed. This is why the AJC is in the field and must remain there.

The images we must project are of three kinds -- of the Jew, of Judaism, and of the AJC itself. The issues we must interpret are numerous, embracing the whole gamut of topical affairs, domestic and international, in which the AJC is involved. Fortunately, today, the communications industry is more than ever receptive to subject matter that advances our objectives. The problem is to seize this opportunity.
Experience has proved that, unlike commercial advertisers, we need not saturate the market in order to make our investment in the media worth while. Our influence is not weighed simply by the time and space we are able to command. Small, almost negligible, as our resources in money and manpower have been, our pioneering experiments in the use of modern communications for intergroup education have raised a standard, set an example and attracted a following. Likewise important, we have established ourselves among media people -- who are traditionally inhospitable to overtures from outsiders -- as an agency that is "in the business" and therefore merits an attentive hearing.

Only by staying firmly "in the business" and pressing forward, can we reap the benefits of experience and continue to extend our influence in this fertile and essential field.