REPORT OF THE EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
May 9 - 10, 1959 - Shoreham Hotel - Washington, D. C.

I

Saturday Luncheon Session
The Refugee Problem
Mrs. Philip Heller Sachs (Baltimore), Regional Vice President, presiding

The luncheon featured talks by Mr. Claiborne Pell and Mr. Leonard Sussman. Mr. Pell is
1 Vice President of the International Rescue Committee. He spoke on the "International Refugee Year" which begins in July and is designed to draw world attention to the still unsolved refugee problem.

Mr. Sussman, who is Executive Director of the Council, spoke on "Ten Commandments for Aid
2 to Jewish Refugees". He told about the political abuses of the Rumanian Jewish refugees and described the Council's efforts in the field of refugee relief - a program through which the needs of the refugee are treated as paramount. The Council works in this field through the American Council for Judaism Philanthropic Fund and through the International Rescue Committee, a non-sectarian relief organization.

II

Saturday Afternoon Workshop
An Examination of the Council's Programs in the Fields
of Philanthropy and Religious Activity
Mrs. Kurt Blum, Chairman Philadelphia Chapter A.C.J., presiding

(From l. to r. - Joseph Ben-David, Ex. Dir., A.C.J. Philan. Fund; Rabbi Richard E. Singer, Lakeside Cong. for Reform Judaism; Mrs. Kurt Blum; Peter Hanauer, student at Dartmouth.)

In the workshop, a detailed examination was made of the operations of the Philanthropic Fund. Consideration was given to ways in which local chapters could increase the effectiveness of the Fund by publicizing its humanitarian work among their members. During the past year vital assistance was given to Jewish refugees from Rumania, Egypt and Israel. Also projects were assisted in Jerusalem, Acre, Gaza, as well as in many European cities.

Earlier in the day there was a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Philanthropic Fund at which allocations totaling $25,000 were approved for assistance to refugees through
3 the International Rescue Committee. A resolution calling for increased aid to refugees was adopted. Consideration was also given to an attack on the Philanthropic Fund by those hostile to its work. Mr. Henry S. Moyer, newly elected President
4 of the Fund, reported that a detailed and documented reply to this attack has been prepared and released demonstrating beyond question the validity of the Fund's assertions and the distortion of facts constituting the claims of its critics.

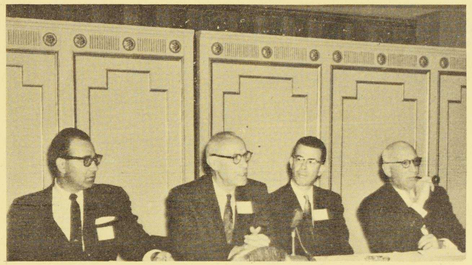
Mr. Bert E. Reuler, Chairman of the Council's National Committee on Religious Development, was present to participate in a discussion of the Council's activities in the field of religious education. It was learned that the Council has published over
5 25 texts and other materials (descriptive catalog available) for use in religious schools, has assisted in the establishment of some 14 new and independent Sunday schools throughout the United States providing religious education for thousands of children,
6 publishes a children's magazine (sample copies available) which is used in this field. (More detailed information on this
7 program available on request.)

(From l. to r. - Mr. Reuler and Clarence L. Coleman Jr., Pres. of A.C.J.)

III

Saturday Night Banquet
The Jew in America - His Rights and Responsibilities
Dr. Max J. Fischer, Chairman Washington Chapter A.C.J., presiding

Highlight of the Conference was a dinner meeting on Saturday night. Proceedings began with a talk by Clarence L. Coleman Jr., President of the Council. Mr. Coleman's talk
8 was entitled, "What is the Council?". Through it he restated the basic principles of the Council based on the distinction between religion and nationality. He reviewed the basic objectives of the Council which he described as providing "alternative programs through which American Jews may meet their legitimate obligations in public affairs, religion and philanthropy in ways compatible with our beliefs rather than in the Jewish nationalist pattern of Zionism".



Panel: Dr. Fischer, Mr. Wright, Rabbi Singer and Mr. Rosenwald

Head table at banquet

The featured event of the Conference was a panel discussion of the rights and responsibilities of Jews. Mr. Edwin Wright, President of the Middle East Institute and Director
9 of Career Studies in the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department, spoke brilliantly about the nature of American society and its historical antecedents. He described American society as one which does not recognize a special legal status for minorities and in which every citizen as an individual has equal rights and responsibilities.

Mr. Wright was followed by Rabbi Richard E. Singer, spiritual leader of the Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism in Highland Park, Illinois. Rabbi Singer examined the
10 religious commitment of American Jews in terms of rights and responsibilities and found that Judaism imposes no barriers to full participation by Jews in the secular life of the United States.

Lessing J. Rosenwald, former President of the Council and now Chairman of the Board, spoke about the rights and responsibilities of individual Jews in relation to the United
11 States Government. He pointed out that there was no such entity as special Jewish rights or responsibilities not shared by fellow American citizens of other faiths. The panel was moderated by Dr. Max J. Fischer and was followed by a spirited question and answer period. (Full texts of the introductory presentations by each of the panelists are available on request.)

Texts of talks given at the Conference and other information relating to the Council's activity programs may be obtained by circling the number of the item desired on the enclosed card and returning it to the Regional office. The numbers in the margins refer to the address described in the paragraph to the right of the number.