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Candid Comments

Our Jewish 'Testing Center'

There was a time when the San Francisco Jewish community had the reputation as the "least Jewish" Jewish community in the country.

In the minds of those who so labelled it, this meant some combination of: no "Jewish neighborhood"; no Kosher restaurants; no Jewish day schools; little yiddishkeit; and little enthusiasm for "world Jewish causes", such as Israel. The latter charge was buttressed by the fact that San Francisco once had one of the most thriving chapters of the American Council for Judaism.

There have been some changes—although reputations always take a long while to catch up with the changes.

There are still no Jewish neighborhoods, in the sense that people always meant that phrase: no Kosher restaurant nor commercial yiddishkeit, such as mark certain neighborhoods in Los Angeles. This is partly a result of the physical fact that Jews are spread out rather thinly throughout the area. But it is also partly the result of the kind of population development that took place here. Jewish population grew slowly over the years; there were no Jewish immigrant explosions, as in Eastern cities and as in Los Angeles. As a community, for better or worse, we are further away in time and space from the 19th century European sub-culture than most other Jewish communities. Thus, San Francisco has always been a "laboratory" in which to see what will happen eventually to a highly integrated Jewish population.



Raab

How does all of this affect "Jewish identity"? No one is yet sure, but on one level it is noteworthy that in very recent years, San Francisco has NOT lagged behind the rest of the country in attention to world Jewry causes. When the overnight call went out for Jews to gather, in June, 1967, at least as high a concentration of Jews showed up in San Francisco, as in any other city in the country. The ongoing program of our Middle East Commission, comprising delegates from all organized Jewish life in San Francisco has since been used as a national model. Indeed, the Israel Fair last year in San Francisco drew at least as high a concentration of local Jews as any similar affair anywhere in the country.

And now, we have an interesting survey that was made of Jewish Welfare Federation allocations for local activity in behalf of Soviet Jewry. Ten cities were surveyed, and the San Francisco Jewish Federation came out on top of the list, with respect to expenditures on a per capita basis. The "Index" in the list below means that for every \$100 allocated for local Soviet Jewry activity by the San Francisco Federation, Boston allocated \$88 on a per capita comparison, Cleveland spent \$52 and so forth.

Rank	City	Index
1	San Francisco	\$100
2	Boston	88
3	Cleveland	52
4	Detroit	48
5	St. Louis	32
6	Philadelphia	28
7	Pittsburgh	24
8	Baltimore	20
9	Los Angeles	16
10	Newark	12

None of this has anything to do with whether there is enough concern or action about Israeli Jewry or Soviet Jewry in **any** American city, including San Francisco. But if there is any relationship between Jewish identity and concern with world Jewry, then the "San Francisco laboratory" gets more interesting all the time.