Uniting For Action

An exciting thing is happening in the Jewish Community of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula.

It is becoming, *in fact,* the Jewish community of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula. It will be *neither* the San Francisco Jewish community with a couple of appendages; *nor* will it be three fragmented Jewish communities. The result will be unique, and a model for metropolitan Jewish communal life.

Raab

But what is new? Jewish life in the Peninsula and Marin has long been thriving around the synagogues—which are, after all, the foundations of any Jewish life. The Welfare Federation has provided an umbrella for fund-raising. The local services of the Federation have begun to extend beyond the boundaries of the central city. The Jewish Community Centers have led the way with institutional and program presences on the Peninsula and in Marin. The Family Service Agency and the Bureau of Jewish Education have also extended their services.

But the most knotty problem, in a way, has been this: how to have the metropolitan Jewish population most effectively act on public affairs which affect the Jews. These public affairs might relate to the Middle East, or Soviet Jewry, or public schools or discrimination or welfare problems touching on the Jewish poor.

It is quite a mixed bag of problems. In the case of most world Jewry problems, or state problems affecting Jews directly, there is the need for highly meshed and unified policies and projects on the metropolitan level. Without that, the impact of the scattering Jewish community would be diffused and defused. Some problems are metropolitan-wide in nature, if for no other reason than that the major mass media are metropolitan-wide in character. And many problems, such as those of the public schools or of specific cases of discrimination are strictly local in character.

A format is now emerging in our metropolis whereby this mix of decisions and action can be handled without either losing the critical impact of a unified Jewish community, or the special character of the local areas; and to do this without the inefficiency and duplication which the Jews can no longer afford. And, of course, the format must also include the participation of all organized elements of the Jewish community in each of these areas.

This format is developing, as usual, because of the initiative of leadership in the local areas. In the South Peninsula, behind such people as Lee Katz, Rabbi Sidney Akselrad and Rabbi Herbert Teitelbaum, a local group was formed to help deal with the Middle East crisis. It is now becoming the South Peninsula Committee of the metropolitan JCRC, comprising delegates from all of the Jewish organizations in the South Peninsula.

This Committee will participate in all the metropolitan decisions and actions. And, after its first regular meeting, it has already begun to act with the force of a local communal group. There was national request that the occasion of Chanukah be taken to draw attention to the tragic plight of Israeli prisoners held by the Syrians. In San Francisco, a candlelight ceremony was held at Beth Sholom for this purpose, with local and TV press attention. Last year, that would have been all. But this year, the unified organizations of the South Peninsula Committee of the JCRC held a candlelight ceremony in Palo Alto which almost a thousand people attended. And just a few days before, the Committee had held an audience with its local press to make its presence known.

Under the leadership of Rabbi Sanford Rosen and Rabbi Gerald Raiskin, the organized elements of the Jewish community in North Peninsula will come together in early January towards the same end: becoming, in the area of public affairs, an active part of the unified metropolitan community, while at the same time establishing a unified local presence. In Marin County, the organizations have already been meeting towards that end.

If we took a long breath, **we might call it the greening of the metropolitan Jewish community of San Francisco, the Peninsula and Marin.**