

neighborhood  
house

## Assault wave hits elders

A sharp increase in robberies and muggings of elderly people in the vicinity of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House was the topic of discussion at a meeting at the Neighborhood House, 953 Deharo St., Friday night, July 17. For several hours about 100 people from all segments of the community discussed what should be done about this crime problem.

According to Lt. Robert McFarland, day watch lieutenant at the Potrero Police Station, the meeting was originally intended to be a gathering of representatives from the Molokans, the Neighborhood House and the police to discuss establishing additional programs for area youth. The intense concern over the recent assaults changed the character of the meeting.

In an open letter to the community the Russian Molokans charged that 16 attacks had been perpetrated against elderly people in recent

weeks. They said they "are now determined to rid the area of these hoodlums causing the trouble."

Al Jarkieh, spokesman for the Molokans, explained the "crime wave" at Friday's meeting, whereupon several individuals, citing incidents, called for more police patrols. "Patrol the bus routes. That's where all these attacks occur," an older man cried.

Lt. McFarland said he would like to do just that, but did not have the manpower. He emphasized the importance of improved relations between youth and the police and cited a number of new programs for this purpose.

Earl Cruser, director of the Neighborhood House, urged people to be fair and open-minded and not to pin blame for the "crime wave" on the Neighborhood House.

Mike Fisher, a program supervisor at the Neighborhood House and chairman of the Africanos, said that the crimes were being committed by a group of approximately 10 youths. "For a couple of months we have been organizing a youth patrol which will help eliminate these attacks and will improve relations between youth and the rest of the community."

He believes this matter should be handled by the Neighborhood House and its staff, not by police officials.

Mike Harrison of the New Society Youth Club claimed that the increase in drug use was largely responsible for the recent attacks. He said putting more police on the street would not get to the root of the problem and urged people to support the Hill drug clinic proposal.

(OVER)





Dr. George Roth

## **Molokans victimized by assaults**

Jim Green, a social worker on the Hill, pointed out that the crime problem was not limited to the Neighborhood House area of the Molokans.

"For some time there has been a high incidence of crime in the housing project. Nobody is safe on the streets," he said. Many concurred.

Cruzer assured the audience that he and his staff would increase their supervision of the Neighborhood House and the surrounding area. He warned however, that the Neighborhood House would be destroyed if it became in the eyes of the youth who use it an "arm of the police department." He added that the Neighborhood House would endeavor to provide legal aid to youths accused of crimes.

A number of speakers expressed satisfaction with the meeting because it brought two very different segments of the community together to discuss a common problem. Elaine Sundahl of the Residents and Homeowners Association said, "It was a good meeting, an awkward but well meant effort to communicate."