

THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE
ERUV COMMITTEE



11.1.4

Mr. J. Steel QC
4 Grays Inn Square
London WC1

13th December 1993

Need and Numbers

I have revised our stance on numbers by having each of the constituent synagogues in the Eruv area provide information and estimates of numbers. We now distinguish between **benefit**, people who will use the eruv to whatever extent, and **support**, those for whom it will not make any practical difference but whose organisations have expressed support.

There has been a huge outcry over the weekend within some of the communities affiliated to the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregation as a result of their letter to the inspector and the report in the Jewish Tribune which you saw. The Honorary Officers of the largest affiliate in the Eruv area, the Hendon Adath Yisrael, where Julia Nussbaum is a member, posted up the enclosed letter on Friday night.

The Synagogue list has been revised as follows:

Benefit list includes:

actual numbers for 4 United Synagogues

100% of membership of those UO affiliates that have confirmed support

80% of those UO affiliates that have disassociated themselves from the UO position.

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Committee

Laurence Begner, Brian Berenblut, Edward Black, Joe Bloomberg, David Cohen, Daniel Drukarz, Alfie Frei, Jeremy Hershkom, Michael Goldblatt, David Marriott, Graham S Morris, Mark Moss, Michael Posen, David Schreiber, Syma Weinberg, Michael Weinstein

Rabbinic Panel

Rabbi Isaac Bernstein (Finchley), Dayan Ivan Binstock (Golders Green), Rabbi Edward Jackson (Hampstead Garden Suburb), Rabbi Alan Kimche (Ner Yisrael), Rabbi Sidney Silberg (Hendon)

Supervisory Authority

Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu, Head of the London Beth Din

United Synagogue Liaison

Ekan Levy (Honorary Officer)

Technical Officer *Alan Parrin B.Sc.*

Support list includes:

Balance of US membership, less 10%, for possible objectors like Michael Max

100% of Reform and New North London, based on their Rabbis' letters.

Family members per household

We have run a detailed analysis of our Ner Yisrael membership and it results in a figure of over 4 people per membership. This is also confirmed by the local United Synagogues. It is consistent with the assumption that orthodox families tend to be bigger. In order to avoid any contention, though, we have taken 3.8 as a working number.

The Kalms 10% factor

You were looking for the answer to the 10% observance statistic and of course it was so obvious we didn't spot it! That number **is an average** over all 40,000 members. In fact the orthodox always tend to congregate together as evidenced by the great number of Jewish schools, bakeries, restaurants, butchers etc in the Eruv area. This is where the orthodox are grouped for very practical reasons. We have checked with some of the outlying communities in NE London, such as Redbridge, where some of them have no observant Jews at all simply because they cannot function in isolation. Contrast this with the Suburb at 20%, Golders Green and Finchley at 25% and Hendon at 50%.

Comments on Barnet numbers

- A US membership OK but excludes all other independents, except Ner Yisrael. We have always stated that the Committee represents the US and independent synagogues in the area
- B Calculates number of children under 5yrs old without accounting for their immediate families - as if the eruv would benefit the small kids and not their siblings or parents.
- C Does not recognise any benefit to other people
- D Uses Kalms Report 10% factor

In the face of evidence already provided, we find the assertion that all this is for 133 people to be somewhat disingenuous.

ProfMoonman's Comments

Eric Moonman, as head of the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies has been through the revised numbers and sent his approval last night.

Media

I enclose for your interest copies from this week's Ham&High, Hendon & Finchley Times and the Jewish Chronicle. Everybody has his own agenda! Reading the Hendon & Finchley Times, I just hope that the next step is not that we will be accused of murder!

The Ham&High, whilst being cautious in their headline, remain consistent in the impartial reportage!

The Inspector is entitled to wonder why there is so much opposition and I believe the case should be made to demonstrate, building on the *Chief Rabbi Clashes with Inspector* point, that the Ham&High have whipped up anxiety that did not previously exist. The 'vigilante' story was the most obvious example (Front page sub-headline - *Alarm in Suburb*) with the support and protection of Lord McGregor.

First & Second Application

I'm sure you will bear in mind that if the Inspector grants only the second application, we cannot build it without Public Works approval. In the event that the Inspector grants both, we would prefer the second as it is cheaper and environmentally more friendly.

Woodland Close Eruv

Alan Perrin lives in the Woodlands and has sent us the attached. From memory, Mr. Miller and at least one other person has inferred or stated that that Eruv has been down for months. This is not true and it never has been so.

Car-Park Test Site

Despite the winds last week, the strongest since the storms of 1987, the Eruv wires that the Inspector saw are 100% intact.

John Marshall MP

I enclose a copy of his recent letter to the Inspector.

Clarification on Precise Siting of Poles Adjacent to Walls

In Dr. Segall's evidence, you will recall that we were challenged on the point that the exact location of the Eruv pole may be over existing under-pavement services and you asked for clarification in the event that the poles had to be moved.

Jewish Law recognises the concept of a distinction between an 'ideal state' and what is possible 'in existing circumstances'. Rabbi Kimche confirms that ideally the posts should be sited within twelve inches of the existing boundary. However in the event that this is simply not practical, the posts can be sited further away, leaving a gap of up to nineteen feet, without invalidating the eruv. In view of the problem of unknown under-pavement services, we would therefore want some flexibility without having to go for new planning regarding each site.

The Plain Man's Guide to the Religious Groupings within the Jewish Community

Graham has prepared the attached notes which we hope clarify matters.

Eric Fibbens

I have had typed up his letter which I faxed to you last weekend and I attach it. It is of course a matter for your judgement and decision but a suggestion would be for the letter to be read to the Inspector as part of the summing up. Eric did ask me what I had done with the letter and I said that I had given it to you and that you would use it as you saw fit. The letter has not been sent under any other name to the Inspector. Heather is planning to be there today.

I enclose a notice of the funeral on Thursday.

I'll have your boxes over and will see you in the Town Hall for the 2pm start.

Best Wishes and Good Luck,

David Schreiber

Enclosures

Revised Synagogue Membership list
Revised Analysis - 2 pages
Barnet numbers
Prof Eric Moonman's approval

Letters from United Synagogue Community Rabbis

Hendon Synagogue	United	Rabbi Silberg
Finchley United Synagogue	United	Rabbi Bernstein
Hampstead Garden Suburb	United	Rabbi Jackson
Golders Green	United	Dayan Binstock

Letter from other communities in the Eruv

Bridge Lane Beth Hamedrash	Affiliated to UO	District Judge Anthony Morris
Garden Suburb Beth Hamedrash	Affiliated to UO	Leo Graham, <i>President</i>
Hendon Adath Yisroel	Affiliated to UO	Andrew Braude, <i>President</i>
Yakar Foundation	Independent	Rabbi Zneimer
Ner Yisrael	Independent	Rabbi Alan Kimche

Press cuttings

Jewish Chronicle - community page & article by Chaim Bermant
Ham&High
Hendon & Finchley Times

Other documents

Letter from John Marshall MP
Letter from Alan Perrin re Woodlands Eruv
A Plain Man's Guide
Funeral details - Eric Fibbens.
Eric Fibbens' letter to Inspector

A PLAIN MAN'S GUIDE TO THE RELIGIOUS GROUPINGS WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN GREATER LONDON

The Jewish religious groupings are broadly divided into Orthodox groups and non-Orthodox groups.

A. ORTHODOX

1. The United Synagogue

This is the largest mainstream Orthodox synagogal body, established by statute in 1870 and having some 40,000 members. Its ecclesiastical authority is the Chief Rabbi who is titular head of the London Beth Din which in practice exercises the judicial functions of the Chief Rabbi and is indeed the court of the Chief Rabbi. Its acting head is Dayan Ch. Ehrentreu who issues rabbinical rulings on behalf of the Beth Din. They are binding on the United Synagogue and other synagogues accepting the authority of the London Beth Din. Examples of the latter within the area of the Eruv are Ner Yisrael, Mahzikei Hadath and some private synagogues.

2. The Federation of Synagogues

The Federation of Synagogues is an Orthodox synagogal body established more than a century ago for the then recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe. Whilst it originally had a more "foreign" tinge than the United Synagogue, these differences have blurred since the members are now the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of the original immigrants. The Federation of Synagogues has its own Beth Din but is linked with the London Beth Din of the United Synagogue on various matters eg Shechita (kosher meat production).

3. The Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations

This is an Orthodox synagogal body set up some seventy years ago to accommodate the needs of Orthodox immigrants. Unlike 1 or 2, the vast majority of its members (probably in excess of 90%) observe strictly the Orthodox rules and traditions and would certainly fall into the category of the 10% observant members of the United Synagogue as defined in the Kalms Report. This body has its own Beth Din and rabbinical authority headed by Rabbi Padwa. Whilst it does not accept the authority of the London Beth Din, it

would not deny its authenticity and validity as an Orthodox Beth Din and it would accept and recognise the decisions of the London Beth Din on many matters including personal status, which is one of the most important areas governed by Jewish law. Many members are in practice happy to accept the rulings of the Beth Din (The Court of the Chief Rabbi) on many issues including the Eruv (see letter from Leo Grahame attached).

4. Sephardi Synagogues

These are synagogues established by the minority of English Jews who come from Mediterranean, Baltic and Middle Eastern countries. They differ from 1, 2 and 3 in rite but not in observance. As in the case of 1, their membership has a mixed composition with some members being more observant than others. No "Kalms Report" has been prepared but it would not be surprising if the percentages were roughly the same. These congregations have their own rabbinical authority but, as in the case of 2, accept the authority of the London Beth Din on many issues such as the production of kosher meat.

B. NON-ORTHODOX GROUPINGS

The religious authenticity of these bodies is not recognised by any of A who regard their brand of Judaism as non-authentic and without Rabbinical sanction. These bodies vary in their adherence to tradition but share a common training college known as the Leo Baeck College, which is housed in the Sternberg Centre.

1. Masorti

This is the most traditional of the non-Orthodox groups using a traditional prayer book but relaxing strict Rabbinical law in some areas. They however accept the need and validity of the Eruv (see letter from Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg attached).

2. Reform

This is probably the largest non-Orthodox group with two large synagogues (Alyth Gardens and Hendon Reform Synagogue within the Eruv). Their congregants are permitted to drive on the Sabbath and would not themselves have need a for an eruv. Their leader within the area of the Eruv,

Rabbi Tony Bayfield, has however declared himself in favour of the Eruv. (See letter attached)

3. Liberal

This is the most radical of the non-Orthodox groups, close to the American Reform movement. Strangely, American Reform Judaism is closer to English Liberal Judaism than to English Reform Judaism. There are no Liberal synagogues within the area of the Eruv but there are probably members of Finchley Progressive Synagogue (Liberal) living within the area of the Eruv and there are Eruv area residents who are members of Liberal synagogues such as the Cathedral Synagogue of the Liberal movement in St. John's Wood. Since Liberal Jews are permitted to travel by car to the synagogue on the Sabbath and festivals, there are no geographical restrictions so far as synagogue membership is concerned. No English Liberal Rabbi has made any pronouncement on the Eruv.