

LETTERS

A step toward disharmony

PETER COMBERTT'S splendid letter last week gives us a timely warning that that most divisive of schemes — the erection of an eruv — is, unfortunately, refusing to lie down, even though it was well and truly killed in the council's decisive final vote of 61pc to 39pc.

It must now be time for the "silent" citizens of Barnet to speak up, write and do anything else that is necessary to defend their interests and beliefs. Whether it be embarrassment, shame or fear, as suggested by last week's letter, it is too late for excuses. It will be no good having regrets after October 27.

The second planning application highlights clearly that the proposed eruv threatens to embrace no less than eight postal districts, thereby affecting us all, over many square miles. This threat will not go away if we ignore it. We need to speak out. The eruv supporters, a minority group, continue to show a complete and callous disregard for their fellow citizens and the need for harmony in the community. Any disagreement or criticism is branded as anti-Semitic, even if voiced by Jewish people.

Ultimately, it must sadden, and even pain, Jews everywhere to see their religion trivialised in the Press, with the general public left with bewilderingly bizarre thoughts of poles and wire that make it possible to evade Orthodox Jewish law. Isn't this a private affair between individual Jews and their religion? Only they, surely, can decide whether to

obey Jewish law or not. Such a matter should never have been paraded in public. By the same token the public domain is no place for discussing nor solving any other individual religious problems, be they Catholic, Hindu or Buddhist.

An interesting insight into how eruvs are viewed abroad was given in last week's issue of "the other local paper". Previous statements from supporters have stated that an eruv would just be a measure of convenience and not create a ghetto or a special Jewish area. The letter is from New York, one of the locations held up, I believe, as a good example of a successful eruv. I quote:

"Rapid assimilation and decaying Jewish identity are other reasons to support the eruv. In response to those who say that an eruv would create a modern-day ghetto, I say that a ghetto would be a symbolic one, not a real one. It would *help create a Jewish atmosphere* without the disadvantages that were a part of ghetto life in the Middle Ages: stagnation and isolation. Jews who live within an eruv can still participate in the affairs of the world around them."

Exactly! And that is precisely why we need to stop this unpopular and divisive scheme. We need to learn to live together in a harmonious, mixed community and the erection of an eruv is a step in the wrong direction.

DEREK COLTMAN,
135 North End Road, NW11.

I hope Parkway rides again

I WAS deeply upset to find that once again the landlords of the Parkway had struck — forcing the cinema to close.

Parkway was, and with luck will soon be again, what going to the movies should be about. From the moment you stepped beyond its doors there was that thrill of excitement — the decor, the staff courtesy, the live, fever music, the entertainment and

magic began even before the film had started to roll.

I know you have had much correspondence in your paper in support of this dear friend, but I just wanted to add my name to this lengthy list. Bring back Parkway.

ELIZABETH SULLIVAN

A blow to the bus queue

HOW can this Conservative Government go on insisting that bus deregulation in London will be a good thing, giving choice to the consumer, etc? Months ago I wrote to the Minister of Transport for London and my MP expressing opposition to it in principle, receiving the usual bland replies from both.

Now I hear that, after Christmas, the No 13 bus will no longer run to and from North Finchley, but will start and end at Golders Green, causing massive inconvenience for those living north of Golders Green.

The queues at the bus stop near that station are already massive, especially in the evenings, so it seems crazy to remove another of the through buses and make the wait even longer.

Most of the people on the 13 in the

morning and evening rush hours are regulars who much prefer that way of travelling to the tube, even though it may take a little longer. Many of them start their journey in north or central Finchley, Temple Fortune, etc. Why make them get off one bus and on to another, which will probably be full because there will be an even greater shortage of buses on through routes into town (there are only two anyway: 13 and 82)?

I noticed that London Buses were doing a survey of travellers last Monday morning on "my" 13, between North Finchley and Aldwych. Very clever. The obvious time to prove under-use anywhere along a route is a day in the middle of August, when office workers, schoolchildren, students, etc, are away

on holiday. During term-time people trying to get on all the buses now passing through Temple Fortune frequently cannot do so because they are already full, so a survey taken in August can only give a false impression and the removal of one route will only make matters worse at most times of year.

All the traveller can do is rage at the arrogance of this Government, which insists on privatising everything that moves, regardless. I challenge the Minister of Transport for London and the Hendon South and Finchley MPs to tell me publicly how curtailing the 13's route is going to improve things for North London bus users.

MARJORIE HARRIS,
48 Erskine Hill, NW11.

Voters demanding miracles

NOW that we have had time to reflect on the message of Christchurch that the political commentators say the Government must heed, I would like to give my personal view as to what that message is.

1. The people want to tackle the rising tide of crime but they do not want to pay more taxes to enlarge the police service, nor do they want to legalise the drugs whose addicts are the main reason for the increase, especially in the nastier types of crime.
2. People want to see rising standards of education, particularly in the lowest third of the school leaver rankings, but they do not want tough imposition of tests because parents of non-achievers and poor teachers fear the exposure of test results.
3. People want to stop the pollution of rivers and beaches but they do not want to pay increased charges to the water authorities who have to pay for tackling pollution.
4. They want better public transport but do not want to give up their cars or use them less.
5. They want improved local services but do not want to pay higher council tax. They want better councillors but they prefer to vote on national issues at local elections.
6. They want all the benefits arising from information technology but do not want the high unemployment resulting from the destruction of jobs by computers replacing people.
7. They want to see more armed forces deployed in trouble spots such as

8. They want bigger pensions but ignore the increasing ratio of pensioners to workers.
9. They want vast increases in NHS spending but do not want to pay increased charges or taxes.
10. They want strong leadership (as given by Margaret Thatcher) but they fear anyone having too much power (as wielded by Margaret Thatcher).

Bosnia but they do not want to pay for an increased defence budget.

To sum up the message of Christchurch — the electorate do not want politicians any more; they want miracle workers!

COUNCILLOR HUNTLY SPENCE,
Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1.

Kingswell protests were discouraged

Local opinion will not be silenced