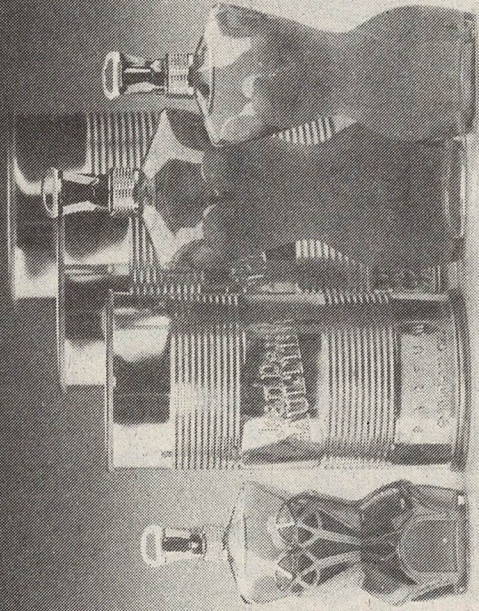


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PROPOSAL IS 'UNNECESSARY PROVOCATION'

Lord Soper attacks 'divisive' eruv plan

LORD Soper said plans for an eruv contained an "element of arrogance", would prove an unnecessary provocation and represented a retrograde step, when he appeared to give evidence at the inquiry.

The 72-year-old former President of the Methodist Conference and resident of Garden Suburb for 40 years also described the proposal as a "piece of impertinence" which should be resisted.

by PAUL FRANCIS

He also said it would lead to the unwitting creation of a ghetto.

Lord Soper said: "I deplore this expression of divisiveness where there should be co-operation. This is the kind of behaviour which has tended to lead to the creation of ghettos. There seems to be no sense in certain Jews adopting behaviour which would lead to their voluntarily creating a ghetto for themselves."

The proposal went against the common religious belief to 'love thy neighbour' because it provoked and advertised religious differences, he added.

"There is an element of arrogance in emphasising your own beliefs in an atmosphere which does not assist the well-being of the community," he said.

He concluded his statement by saying that while understandable, the proposal was "unworthy of the true interests of Christianity and Judaism" and represented the trivialisation of a serious issue.

"I believe this is an unnecessary addition to our troubles rather than an expansion of our ideals," he added.

His remarks were poorly received by some eruv supporters and many privately expressed sadness at his comments.

Lord McGregor, the chairman of the



Lord Soper, who opposes the eruv

Press Complaints Commission and a Garden Suburb resident, compared the eruv with the kind of extremist elements which had given rise to events like the war in Yugoslavia.

"It has come as a great shock that we are living through in miniature some of the experiences which have blossomed in Yugoslavia and other parts of the world," he told the inquiry.

Opponent found dead

A MAN who had been due to attend the eruv inquiry was found dead in his car on Friday after being reported missing the day before.

Peter Comberti, 71, of Reynolds Close, Golders Green, was found near North End Way, Hampstead at about 9.50am.

Police issued an alert on Thursday after Mr Comberti, an opponent of the eruv, contacted his family.