

Harrow accused of bid to buy off race campaign

By Richard Ford
Home Correspondent

THE governors of Harrow School have been accused of trying to blackmail the Commission for Racial Equality into dropping a campaign to force the school to make an apology for past anti-Semitism.

The campaign centres on a reference in a history of the school to a meeting of the governors in 1945, at which they were said to have deplored the number of Jews at the school and recommended a "Jewish quota".

The blackmail accusation follows an offer from a charity, whose trustees are governors of the school, to pay £4,500 to a social programme to promote sport among young people in the North London borough. The John Lyon's charity has said, however, that acceptance of the money would "signify an end" to the Harrow CRE's campaign.

John Rudnick, a Jewish resident of Harrow who accused the charity and the school yesterday of trying to blackmail the CRE, added: "This is bribery. It is a carrot and stick approach by the governors."

It was Mr Rudnick who con-

tacted Prem Pawar, director of the Harrow CRE, who has led the campaign against the school. The John Lyon's charity made the cash offer, amounting to £1,500 a year over three years, after Mr Pawar applied for a grant earlier this year.

David Robins, the charity's director of grant giving, said that by taking the cash the commission signified an acceptance that "the governors explicitly reject racism and anti-Semitism as is demonstrated in the administration of both the schools in the Foundation and this charity, which fully reflect the ethnic and religious diversity of the communities which they serve".

In a letter to Mr Pawar, he also said that if the commission continued with the allegations he would call for a review of its charity status. Mr Robins wrote: "Any continuation of the allegations made in your correspondence or in the media generally will suggest that your organisation is political, not charitable and I will have no option but to refer your correspondence to the Charity Commission for a review of your charitable status."

Gurbux Singh, who quit last

week as head of the CRE, urged the school to issue a public statement. In a letter to Sir Michael Connell, chairman of the governors, he said that, although the references to anti-Semitism took place more than 50 years ago, "I would trust you would agree it is in the interests of all parties concerned that Harrow School distances itself from the past".

Mr Singh added in the letter, dated July 26: "To this effect, I would strongly advise you to consider a public statement dissociating the school's current values and practices from the past. I keenly await your response."

Mr Singh intervened after Lord Janner of Braunstone, former president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, alerted him to references in A History of Harrow School by Christopher Tyerman, an Old Harrovian, about anti-Semitic practices in the school's past. The book, published in 2000, also referred to Harrow's "traditional ingrained racism".

Lord Janner said yesterday: "The school should say that it happened a long time ago. We are sorry it happened."

Mr Pawar is annoyed that despite his pressure, Harrow

By Ruth Gledhill
Religion Correspondent

WORK will begin next week on setting up Britain's first Jewish eruv, a wire boundary around 6½ square miles of North London that will give Orthodox Jews living within it

greater freedom from Sabbath laws.

The project has been given by ten years of quarrels, fights and threats of legal action, which were finally resolved this week.

The eruv will allow Orthodox Jews to push prams and

wheelchairs and to carry keys and prayer books outside the home on the Sabbath, which according to the Fourth Commandment must be a day of rest. It will particularly benefit young mothers and the disabled, who are often unable to attend synagogue or visit fam-

ily or friends because of Sabbath restrictions. Opponents are furious that the 30-foot poles which form part of the 11-mile eruv boundary are now to be erected. Builders are expected to start work next Monday or Tuesday. They threaten to take the

case to the European Court of Human Rights, itself within an eruv in Strasbourg, arguing that the boundary is "spiritually damaging to some residents who are non-eruv believers".

There are hundreds of eruv worldwide, including all towns in Israel and one that sur-

rounds the White House in Washington. A designated boundary, which in North London will consist of poles, fishing wire, roads and the London Underground, an eruv (the Hebrew word means mixture) changes the space within it from "public" to "private".

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Founders Day, 1953: Harrow is being asked to apologise over allegations that it was anti-Semitic in the postwar years

and the governors have failed to respond to him. He admitted that the commission had no power to investigate matters that took place more than 50 years ago. But he added: "The school should actively dissociate itself from the past by saying that at the present

time they are promoting diversity." It should issue a public statement committing itself to a positive policy of encouraging its pupils to understand and respect the nature of the British multicultural society.

Sir Michael Connell, the chairman of the governors and

an Old Harrovian, is on holiday. Barmaby Lenon, the Head Master, was also not available for comment.

A spokeswoman at the Commission for Racial Equality's headquarters in Central London said that no reply had been received to Mr Singh's let-

ter. She said that quotas were "certainly not" operating at the school now, but that the commission wanted the school to emphasise that it was no longer imposing quotas.

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KEYSTONE

Parents of Louise Woodward lose fraud appeal

By Andrew Norfolk

THE parents of Louise Woodward, the British au pair who was convicted of killing a baby in America, acted dishonestly to claim money from their daughter's trust fund, the High Court ruled yesterday.

Three Court of Appeal judges said there was clear evidence that Sue and Gary Woodward used a false invoice for personal gain in making an expenses claim for £9,113. The Woodwards were cleared of forgery and fraud charges two years ago when a judge ruled that there was not enough evidence to convict them.

Though the couple, both aged 46, cannot be tried twice on the same charges, the High Court has now ruled that Judge John Rogers should not have ordered the jury to return not guilty verdicts at their Chester Crown Court trial in July 2000.

More than £270,000 was raised by the public for the Louise Woodward Trust Fund when she was charged in 1997 with the murder of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen, who had been left in her care. She was found guilty at the trial in Boston but the judge later reduced the verdict to involuntary manslaughter.

Miss Woodward, now aged 23, was released after serving 279 days in custody and returned to Britain. In the past academic year she has completed a law degree at South Bank University in London.

Most of the money in the trust fund was spent on legal fees, but Mr and Mrs Woodward received £9,113 to cover rent they claimed to have paid while staying at the house of a Boston lawyer, Elaine Whitfield Sharp. Ms Sharp, however, insisted that the