

29/1/93

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**THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE  
ERUV COMMITTEE**

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**UPDATE AT 29TH JANUARY 1993**

As we have just come through an intense period of media interest and coverage and as I will be away until the 5th February, I felt it might be useful to summarise where the campaign stands and identify certain action items that we will need to pursue.

**MEDIA COVERAGE**

Over the last couple of weeks there has been a focus of interest, largely generated by Ham & High lead stories about vigilante groups and fanned by Councillors Shutz and Davis and a small handful of Humanist fellow travellers - primarily centred on the Childs Hill ward. There is no doubt that these articles have been damaging to the attitude of uncommitted councillors as they find it quite impossible to sort out fact from fiction and are left with the general impression of potential aggravation, heightened by the Holocaust/Ghetto images on BBC SE Newsroom.

The key pieces that have appeared are:-

1. The Ham & High of 15th January 1993, leading to
2. The Guardian of Saturday, 16th January 1993
3. The Independent magazine of 16th January 1993
4. The Ham & High of 22nd January 1993
5. Radio coverage on BBC GLR
6. The Evening Standard of Monday 25th January 1993
7. An item on BBC SE Newsroom on Tuesday 26th January 1993

The Independent article had been researched a number of months ago whereas the Guardian piece by David Sharrock was directly picked up

from the Ham & High. BBC television picked up the story from the Independent and originally only had a negative input from Councillor Shutz. As you can see, each of these pieces feeds on the other which is why we have experienced this wave effect of vigilante/ghetto/Holocaust imagery which I think is now largely played out.

Whereas the BBC were offering a reasonably balanced view of the story, even though we may not have liked the footage, the Ham & High - which is spearheading the opposition and allowing itself to be used as a vehicle on almost a weekly basis - has been driven by the personal agenda of Gerald Isaaman who has been General Manager and Editor for the last twenty-five years. Edward Black and I met him last Thursday evening for over two hours and it was clear that whilst he would not retract the headline and the damage that it had done, he somewhat distanced himself from that extreme position. Our discussion was helpful and he offered to run a balancing piece with a different feature writer and that appeared this morning (copy enclosed). I do hope this marks a turning point in their coverage.

There is still some ongoing media interest but I think this will now go quiet until the meeting on 24th February. Spectrum Radio ran a live discussion arising from Aba Dunner's news review and Radio 4 are planning a feature in their consumer programme "You and Yours" this coming Tuesday, 2nd February. It is essential that we make ourselves available to these programmes and while I am away Edward Black and Laurence Begner will be dealing with them and we will continue to project a reasonable, understanding but firm stance on the various issues and objections.

## THE COUNCILLORS

Alan Perrin, Laurence Begner, Edward Black and I met for a review with Councillor Julian Czarny of Edgware last night. We had a very useful detailed run through of the stances of the twenty councillors and, in summary, the position is that we are reasonably confident of five in favour, six against, and nine abstentions, as we stand today. Of the abstentions, we do not envisage any conversions to a 'no' vote and we see clear potential to convert four to a 'yes'. Obviously we need two to scrape through. Of the four, three are in areas with large Jewish populations, ie Agnes Slocombe of West Hendon, Edward Bunn of Hendon South and Jane Ellison of Mill Hill. Jane voted 'yes' at Public Works but has been a bit shaken by some of the Frank Davis arguments to which she was exposed on the tour last weekend. Laurence Begner is confident of winning her

back and we should certainly be able to convert the other two once we persuade them of the strength of feeling in their immediate areas underlined by the petition. We will be analysing the petition addresses in order to focus their minds on that strength of support in their wards.

## MEETING ON 24TH FEBRUARY

In the run up to the Planning Committee vote, we will clearly focus our efforts on the conversion of those four 'don't know' votes. In order to secure those and to meet the continual opposition pressure of Frank Davis, we do need the very specific support of the Beth Din. Frank Davis has made a stream of halachic claims, all of which question the validity of the eruv. We do not know who is feeding him this information but he is being put forward by a number of councillors, particularly non-Jewish ones, as their in-house expert and in the absence of a clear statement from the Beth Din, they will naturally be influenced by him. It is therefore essential that the Beth Din issues a clear statement that leaves no ambiguity or room for his various claims. We do not have to respond to each matter that he raises, as that would be to give him too much credibility and standing, but we do need a document that can be given to councillors and presented at the meeting which will categorically remove this type of opposition. I suggest that Rabbi Kimche should draft such a document and, once finalised with Dayan Ehrentreu, that this should then be issued solely into our hands at this stage to be used tactically as part of our presentation to councillors.

This will form part of a comprehensive information pack for councillors which we will send out within two weeks of the February meeting. The pack will comprise:

A personalised letter to each councillor, highlighting the key points in general

A briefing on the planning issues involved

A detailed Question & Answer paper on the Eruv

Copies of the letters from George Bush, Tom Bradley and Melbourne

Personalised letter from Jewish Care

