

REPORT from Jeremy Corbyn MP

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The big issue this month has obviously been the bombings in London on July 7th.

Tragically this awful event has taken the lives of at least 12 people in Islington. This has caused shock throughout the community. Additionally, many of the injured were also traveling on the Piccadilly line or the number 30 bus which was attacked, and there is a sense of trauma amongst their families.

After the event I attended an ecumenical gathering at the Town Hall, organized by the Council and together with Emily Thornberry MP, many Councillors, and hundreds of local people, we stood for the two minute silence on the steps of the Town Hall.

I also attended the memorial vigil called by the Mayor in Trafalgar Square one week after the tragedy.

I think it is very important to ensure that the multi cultural nature of London and the essentially good relations between communities are not torn apart in the aftermath of this bomb, and that we ensure good relations, particularly with the Muslim youth and the wider community. I visited the Muslim Welfare House and the mosque since the bombings, and have had discussions with the Imam and the Director.

I also addressed a Stop the War/MAB (Muslim Association of Great Britain)/CND vigil at Friends House two days after the bombing. There are many analyses going on about the reasons for the bombings, and there can be nothing but condemnation for those who planted the bombs. There are however lessons that must be learnt from this and I believe we

must prosecute those who committed this outrage. We must also do our best to protect the people of London and to ensure that we do not resort to draconian anti-terror legislation which will damage relations between the police and the community. We must try to understand that there is a foreign policy dimension to this outrage.

I have addressed this issue in an article I have written for the Morning Star published today, which will be available on my website. In it I have drawn together the issues of the bombing, proposed anti-terror legislation, and the continued occupations of Palestine and Iraq. There is no simplistic answer to this. It does require very serious levels of discussion about the nature of British society, particularly the way in which communities outside London are often ethnically divided; the sense of outrage that many young Muslims feel throughout the Middle East and South Asia; and the policies being conducted by the UK and the US.

June 17th: I attended the Bangladesh Human Rights Conference organized by Lord Avebury (co-vice chair of the All Party Parliamentary – APPG - Human Rights Group) at the School of African and Oriental Studies. I was greatly assisted in my contribution to this conference by our good friend Jilani Choudhury. He has a first rate knowledge of the situation in Bangladesh, as well as of the Bangladeshi community in London. I am very grateful for his support.

June 18th: I attended a VE Day barbeque at Ash Court which was a splendid affair with not

a spam fritter in sight, and lots of reminiscences of the Land Army.

I was a guest speaker at the Woodcraft annual gathering in a huge tent in Loughborough where I was asked to speak about the parliamentary support for Woodcraft in regaining government funding for Woodcraft's national activities. I had a wonderful time and I was given a great reception by the many people present.

June 20th: I spoke at the Dalit solidarity AGM of which I am a trustee, and I've since tabled an EDM (parliamentary motion) on class discrimination. I'll continue working to ensure this issue is raised at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva by Liberation, of which I am Chair.

Also on this day I had a brief meeting with Mrs Rahman, the High Representative of the Iraqi Kurd regional administration at which we discussed issues of Kurdish self-determination in Iraq.

June 21st: City and Islington College held a refugee week event at which I spoke, alongside a Save the Children representative. I also complimented the college on its support for two of its students who are "failed" asylum seekers. Today was also the day of the 2nd reading of the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, and whilst I support the intentions of this bill, I think it is very badly drafted, and since it is almost impossible to define religion, will prove to be unworkable. I therefore declined to support it.

June 22nd: I met representatives of the Foreign Ministry of Venezuela to discuss the situation facing them, and the political attacks mounted on them by the US, as well as the possibilities of greater unity amongst Latin American governments with a serious anti-poverty strategy.

I am Vice Chair of the APPG Latin American Group.

I was also privileged to be a guest speaker along with Melvyn Bragg, Polly Toynbee, and Paul Gambaccini at the Town Hall in honour of Chris Smith (now! Lord Smith of Finsbury).

23rd June: I took questions from Pete Murray's 6th form group on Politics and Principles at City and Islington College. I hope the students enjoyed it as much as I did.

On the same day I was guest speaker and presenter of End of Year awards at Highbury Grove School, together with their excellent head teacher, Truda White.

24th June: I was invited to be a guest speaker at a Natfhe organized meeting on the situation facing non-permanent lecturers in further education. This meeting was held at City and Islington College, but the issue is nation wide. I have promised to keep working with the Union to try to improve the number of permanent teaching posts that are available, in preference to part time and short term contracts.

25th June: I was re-elected chair of Liberation at its AGM, and we held a big debate on reform to the UN and its role.

I attended Mitford's Under Five Fun Day to support their future move to the Hornsey Rd baths site.

I visited the Refugee Therapy Centre for their AGM and I am a patron, keen to thank them for the excellent work they do for refugees.

Also today, I spoke at the final plenary session of CND's Annual Meeting on aspects of nuclear disarmament, following the NPT (Nuclear Non proliferation Treaty) Conference.

27th June: I was guest speaker and presenter of Record of Achievement Awards at Islington Arts and Media School (IAMS). I remain a strong supporter of IAMS and the good work it has managed over the past few years.

28th June: I took part in an LBC (breakfast) program on ID cards and later in the day cast my vote against ID cards. The bill is objectionable for its £16 billion cost, and the intrusive nature of the database, as well as the completely untried and tested technology that is to go with it.

Also on this day I attended an Age Concern Health Living Event at Caxton House.

29th June: I was invited to the launch of the Department for International Development's (DFID) annual report with Hilary Benn at his offices. I applauded much of the work done by DFID and this excellent annual report they have produced.

30th June: I supported local resident Richard Reiser in hosting an event at the House of Commons in which this organisation outlined their proposals for European wide disability strategy in our role as EU presidency.

I attended the planning meeting to decide on the new application by Arsenal for development on the existing Highbury Stadium site of over 700 private flats. There was a large number of people there, though Councillor De Bono was excluded on the grounds that she lives too near to the site! My contribution was in asking for a much higher proportion of Council and Housing Association developments and greater integration, rather than the exclusive gated community that is being proposed.

Subsequent to the Council's unfortunate approval of this application I have written a long letter to the mayor asking him to intervene to refuse, and to choose something far more appropriate to the site and to the community needs of Islington. If this approach is unsuccessful I'll have no hesitation in ensuring the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister calls for a public inquiry.

2nd July: I went to Edinburgh to join in the Make Poverty History demonstration and march and I attended a very interesting meeting on Drop the Debt in which Hilary Benn, Christian Aid, and a Rwandan minister spoke. Later in the day I spoke at a Stop the War (STW) Peace Rally.

4th July: In my role as Chair of the APPG on Angola and leader of the last parliamentary delegation to Angola, I was asked to make a speech at the opening of a 3 day conference on relations with Angola.

Also on this day I attended the Whittington Hospital with (minister) Caroline Flint MP, to launch the new policy of no smoking anywhere

on the Whittington site. Well done to the Whittington.

Later I was interviewed on Al Jazeera news about the G8 summit and the Drop the Debt campaign.

5th July: I was a guest speaker at the Make Poverty History Day organized by 6th Form Centre which was well supported by a lot of very enthusiastic people.

A thank you to Afif Safieh (the Palestinian General Delegate) was made at the APPG Britain Palestine Group, for all his good work over the past decade and more.

I briefly attended a Sinn Fein annual reception which was supported by MPs of all parties, as well as government ministers.

I was very pleased to be invited to the Medical Foundation ' for the launch of my old friend Luis Munoz's book on his growing up in Chile, his imprisonment and torture during the Pinochet years, and his life in Britain.

6th July: I attended the APPG on Bolivia in order to discuss the huge and (I hope) successful campaign against the privatisation of water in Bolivia, and in favour of the mass demonstrations to promote the public ownership of gas reserves and facilities there.

7th July: I intervened in the Defence debate on the case for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This was the day of the London bombings and St Jude's Primary School were on a parliamentary visit. They ended up being stuck in the building for the day. The House authorities responded well and no doubt the children will recall for some time this rather lengthy visit.

8th July: I was a guest speaker at a seminar on Bolivia held at Marxism Today's offices.

I was pleased to support Ashmount School's parents' international event.

I attended the Andover Youth Association Launch of their DVD film, made of youth on the estate, which is very impressive.

I also did another Al Jazeera interview.

9th July: I visited the Muslim Welfare House for their Open Day to show my support for their good works in the community. I was pleased to see a large number of local non-Muslim people there, together with Councillors of all parties. I attended Islington Music Forum at the Mental Health Centre at Highgate.

10th July: I took part in a discussion on BBC 1 with Dave Aaronovitch concerning bombing in London and our foreign policy.

July 10th: I attended another thank you to Afif Safieh, this time organized by the Campaign for Palestine Solidarity (PSC). I also did an evening interview on Al Arabia.

July 11th: I took part in a Muslim TV discussion on the role of the Muslim Community in Britain. I also attended the Greater London Forum for the Elderly Parliamentary group meeting. Regarding the Religious Hatred Bill, a large group of Anglican church representatives and lawyers, who are opposed to the bill came to see me to express their concerns. Later that day I voted for an amendment to the religious hatred bill which will be reintroduced by Lord Lester of Herne Hill (a Lib Dem peer).

12th July: I took part in a Statutory Instrument on the Law of the Sea, which was important and interesting and caused me some concern about the environmental damage where prosecutions are mounted to prevent pollution but no decisions are made for a very long time. Later that day I was guest of honour at City and Islington College's Access to University Awards at Union Chapel. Several hundreds of students and staff were present. The College does a terrific job in providing access to university for those who missed out on such opportunities in the past.

13th July: Today was a very successful PSC/CND lobby of parliament which drew people from all around the country. A considerable amount of work went into organizing this lobby and Mary Brennan, among others, deserves our thanks here. A

summary EDM on the demands made by the lobby can be seen on my website but in essence we called for Israel to comply with international law regarding its weapons, and to lift restrictions upon Mordechai Vanunu. The bombings in London have seen this regional conflict meet with perhaps more press coverage than usual, which can only be a good thing.

15th July: Advice Bureaus continue to be very busy but please make a note that none are held in August.

16th July: I attended the annual Labour Representation Committee Conference and I spoke in the International section of it. I noticed that Islington North was well represented there.

18th July: I visited Bessant Court with Councillor Catherine West, and viewed the poor state of repair and appalling standards of cleanliness maintained in that block and around that area.

18th July: The Liberation Council and fund raising dinner was held today. I voted for the Cross Rail bill and hope the government provides funding and takes on board a number of environmental concerns and construction methods. A lengthy procedure which may take well over a year lies ahead for this hybrid bill (allowing private interests and communities to be directly represented in parliament) I attended the Mildmay Community Partnership meeting at the Factory. Issues surrounding police and housing were raised, as were concerns about Bessant Court.

20th July: I joined the House of Commons cleaners on the picket line. Their wage levels and arrangements here are awful, and their facilities here are also a disgrace. I attended Duncombe School's annual leaver's event where they performed a modern version of Snow White. We presented leavers' certificates and dictionaries to all of the year 6 students.