

REPORT from Jeremy Corbyn MP

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The month has been heavily dominated by the **Terrorism** Bill, much of which I disagree with and there are three main problematic areas. Firstly, the use of the catch-all phrase of “glorifying terrorism”. This clause allows that anyone who legitimately espouses political change in their own country, but is condemned as a terrorist by that government, could end up being prosecuted by British Law. Secondly, the most publicised clause – the proposal that the police could detain a suspect for up to 90 days before bringing the case to court. Thirdly, the bill seeks to criminalise those who demonstrate outside designated nuclear sites.

Eventually the debate in the House of Commons reached its climax and the defeat on the 90 days was achieved. Those of us who opposed 90 days were obliged to vote for 28 days instead and this has now gone to the Lords. This is not a case of anyone being supportive of terrorism, but it is an important declaration of parliament respecting its very significant role in protecting civil liberties and not allowing outrageously long periods of police detention prior to a trial. The bill will come back to the House for further debate.

25th October: Education White Paper

The government has produced an Education White Paper which proposes huge changes for secondary schools. It includes opportunities for foundation status and as it stands, each having their own admissions policy which would lead to chaos, particularly in large urban conurbations. It also includes the reduction if not complete removal of the role of the local education authority. This is all

intensely controversial and I am a committed supporter of local community comprehensive schools, which have actually done very well with the improved government investment in them. The 6 in my constituency have all improved because of this, but I fear for their future under this White Paper. However, I never mind a huge public debate and I look forward to much public discussion on this.

2nd November: Trade Justice Lobby: This was a wonderful affair, with people from all over the country outlining the concerns that so many thousands of people have: that the world trade system discriminates badly against the poorest in the world. Life expectancy in Sub Saharan Africa has fallen to 45 years over the past 2 decades, whilst in Western Europe and North America, life expectancy has gone up to nearly 80 years. Unless the Hong Kong meeting next month ends the policy of food dumping on the poorest countries, allowing them to operate some degree of protection so that their nascent industries can develop (and does not force them to privatise public services) then all of the inequalities that are inbuilt in the world trade system will simply get worse.

I am delighted that the **Trade Justice movement in Islington is holding a very important discussion at St Augustine’s Church, Highbury Quadrant, on 24 November at 8pm and whoever wishes to is welcome to attend.**

Regarding Trident: There is an intense debate about nuclear weapons and I remain a strongly committed anti nuclear person. CND

throughout this isle remains very active against Trident's replacement.

Nuclear weapons are immoral and unnecessary and the longer the West holds on to them, the harder it is for the Non Proliferation Treaty to become a reality under which the non-declared nuclear weapons state, including India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea will give them up. There will be more debates on this in parliament and it is unclear when a decision will be made on the future of Trident. A parliamentary question I asked this year revealed that £1.5 billion has been spent in just five years on AWE Aldermaston, which includes a nuclear bomb making capacity! The costs of Trident are unbelievable, with the entire proposed replacement project costing in the region of £20 billion,

Now, for highlights from my diary:

26th October: Terrorism Bill: The draconian 90 day detention clause in this bill is an insult to human rights and I voted against it, see the introduction to this report.

October 20th: I was delighted to attend a Divali event at Caxton House with my old friend Mr Patel who has served this organisation for some 20 years. It's fair to say that we were entertained in great style!

I visited McMillan nurses to support their program to become a child centre under the government's "Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative" scheme.

I also attended a meeting in parliament with Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, at which he spoke with passion of his commitment to the right of asylum, and in defence of the 1951 Geneva Convention. He also expressed concerns at the behaviour of the wealthy western countries which are constantly restricting and condemning those who seek asylum. He went on to point out that the majority of asylum seekers are actually received by the poorest countries in the world.

I was pleased to notice that Tony McNulty (the Minister) was also present.

21st October: Clare Short presented her bill on the armed forces, which would have ensured parliament's involvement in any decision to go to war, via vote, ie as a matter of right, as opposed to the present system where it is simply down to the Prime Minister and the Royal Prerogative. I strongly support Clare in this bill but unfortunately it failed its procedural hurdle as we were 6 MPs short (of 100) to vote on a "procedural motion that the question be put". Thus the bill is very unlikely to become law!

I visited the Greek Women's Group Arachne at their offices in Seven Sisters Rd to support them in their work and their accommodation needs.

Later that day a Walk-in Advice Bureau lasted some 5 hours!

22nd October: I chaired part of the day's events at a conference entitled "Israel and International Law," and organised by the PSC (Palestine Solidarity Campaign). The day long event was held at the Institute of Education where we listened to, among others, an inspired address by Mr Mustafa Barghouti, the leader of the Palestine National Initiative. I chaired a session with Ronnie Kasrils, the Minister of Water Affairs in South Africa who, when asked if Palestine was anything like apartheid had been in South Africa stated that "it was much much worse" than anything he had seen in South Africa.

23 October: I was a guest on Radio 5 Live weekly news round up program following the publication of Philip Cowley's book on Parliamentary Rebellions.

24th October: I held a meeting with the Dalit Solidarity Campaign of which I am a trustee, and we worked on our strategy to deal with the elimination of class discrimination in India. I have since applied for and been granted an Adjournment Debate in Parliament on this for this coming Tuesday.

25 October: I visited the Women's Therapy Centre to discuss their work and their support for women in the community. I remain wholly supportive of the good works they do.

I attended a meeting of the Bolivia Group of which I'm a member, and we discussed gas exploration in Bolivia. I strongly support the huge public demand for public ownership of the gas resources in Bolivia, though I am suspicious of the presence of a number of Tories including Lord Lamont. This could indicate that the gas and oil companies may be circling in search of a new opportunity to gain control of these massive resources. The election will be held on December 18th and hopefully Eva Morales will win! His work would compliment that of Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez and Argentina's Nestor Kirchner as a growing radical force in South American politics.

I met with the Gate Gourmet workers who were sacked by that company via extraordinary methods, including them being held as prisoners in a canteen whilst their names were read out over a loud speaker! Subsequently their union - the T & G has negotiated the reinstatement of most of them, as well as a new contract with British Airways. The Gate Gourmet methods were condemned at both the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

I was a guest speaker at the Central London Law Centre AGM which has done tremendous work in supporting people, trying to protect their secure tenancies in London against the ravages of private properties, as well as defending the immigration needs of many including the Chinese community in Chinatown. We also had a long discussion about the terrorist legislation currently on the statute books!

26th October: Dr Kassis from Birzeit University in Bethlehem came to plead the case for the Right to Education for Palestinians who, because of the divisions

resulting from Israeli control of the occupied territories are struggling to get an education. I have visited Ramallah which neighbours Bethlehem, and I hope to return there in the near future.

Later in the day I attended a reception for The Rebels (see radio interview earlier).

27th October: An appointments Advice Bureau at Caxton House went predictably.

31st October: I was invited to the opening of the extension and development at Minik Kardes Nursery on Balls Pond Rd and they helpfully displayed photos of me in 1985 attending the opening of the nursery! Some others who were there in 1985 were also there for this re-opening. The location is a lovely one and the children grow up speaking English, Turkish and Kurdish.

I later attended the PLP meeting to discuss Trident replacement (see introduction).

1st November : I was invited to attend and speak at the Iftar meal at North London Central Mosque in Finsbury Park. Barry Norman (Commander of Islington Police) and the Leader of Islington Council also spoke. The mosque has undergone enormous changes and is busy developing projects for women, youth and general advice for its users. It is a very important part of the local community.

I was a guest speaker at the IVAC AGM and strongly support its work. I regret the way the Council has treated it over the last few years, reducing its funding. Nonetheless it remains an important focus for voluntary organisations in London, providing support to all groups in the borough.

2nd November: I visited the Whittington Hospital to meet (the Chair) Narendra Makandji and (Chief Executive), David Sloman to be briefed on the progress of the new building, which I am pleased to say is going well.

I met the Corrie family on their recent trip to parliament. Their daughter (Rachel) died in Rafah trying to defend children from the Israeli Defence Force who were demolishing the house of a Palestinian family. Rachel is a heroine in Palestine, along with the late Tom Hurndall (from Nth London) who also died in similar circumstances.

A large number of local people attended the Trade Justice Lobby of parliament and it was a pleasure to meet them.

The PCS (Public and Commercial Services Union) Parliamentary group held their AGM and as a member I remain concerned about the issue of pensions. I am pleased with the work of the union in ensuring that public sector pension systems remains in tact, despite Tory protests.

3rd November: I did an interview for Sky News concerning the Terrorism Bill. Later that day Natfhe held its annual parliamentary reception, and I was delighted to see Paul Mackney back at work after a period of illness.

I held the first of my public report backs to the community at Mildmay Community Centre. The meeting itself was interesting and the next one is due to be in late January and will focus on health.

4th November : I came to parliament to meet St John's Highbury Vale students who were on a school visit to learn all about the Gunpowder plot. They were lectured by King James and Guy Faulkes (appropriately dressed) about the whole episode in 1605, and their motives. I, dressed just like me, then took a few questions on the life of an MP. Later I was interviewed for the Islam Channel on the Terrorism Bill.

An appointments Advice Session at Mayton St was followed by a meeting at the Imam restaurant to meet a Member of the Somaliland Parliament from Hargezia.

5th November: I was invited to speak at Scottish CND's annual meeting at Friends House in Edinburgh, on the case against Trident being replaced.

I visited many people on Miranda Estate and Hillrise Ward.

In the afternoon I attended a Women's Forum event which was brilliantly organised by Mary Ogbogoh and Ruth Clarke. This gathered together women from all different communities and I spoke about the historic figures in Islington including Constance Markewicz and Annie Bessant. Annie had lived in Cross St and became one of the leaders of the Matchgirl strike in addition to being a campaigner for Women's rights and contraception. She later went on to found the Congress Party of India.

I attended a rally for the Sheik community in Trafalgar Square in memory of those who died in the 1984 massacre in Amritsar and I supported a call for an investigation into the event, and an apology to the living victims.

Today I also did an interview for BBC 24 about the terrorism legislation.

7th November: I did an interview with Alain Vincatassin who is making a film on the Chagos exiles who I've been very supportive of. I continue to support their right of return to the islands and a new court case seeking a judicial review is to be held on 6th December. The end result of this aims to ensure the bar on the Chagos islanders from returning to their homes is lifted.

I attended the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting at which the Terrorist legislation was the main point of discussion and a frenetic debate on the 90 day detention issue ensued.

8th November : I attended a seminar on Central America, organised by Canning House, which was very interesting and described in particular how impoverished Nicaragua has become ever since the Sandinistas were defeated in the 1992

election, and US inspired free market economics seemed to have taken over. Parliamentary CND held a meeting to discuss its strategy on not replacing Trident.

In the evening I attended a briefing with solicitor Gareth Pearce (of miscarriage of justice fame) on the terrorism bill.

Caxton House AGM has had another successful year providing a brilliant range of activities for youth, pensioners, under school age children, and opportunities for a number of ethnic minorities.

9th November: Today was dominated entirely by the Terrorism bill and media interviews for the Politics Show, Al Arabia, ITV news, BBC World and BBC world, which I rounded off with an early morning slot the next day for CNN.

10th November included a Walk-in Advice Session at Mildmay Library followed by a public meeting on the Girdlestone Estate in which discussions on youth, security, crime and caretaking all arose.

11th November: I spent some time answering questions from a group of students from North East Surry College of Technology, following which I attended parliament to vote for the Micro regeneration Bill.

Sotheby Mews Day Centre held their AGM and afterward I met with the uncle of a constituent of mine who happens to be a Nigerian MP: Dr Bayo Oyebade. Bayo is a very nice man and over a cup of coffee in Blackstock Rd he described his constituency to me. It takes 2 and a half hours to drive across and is largely rural community. We discussed agricultural diversity which is a topic that doesn't often arise in Islington North.

12th November: I was invited to the official opening of Highbury Nursery in Aubert Park which is a wonderful achievement for the local community and parents, having secured a lease on the building from the Council. The

Nurseries Initiative and Finsbury Park Partnership helped to fund the redevelopment of the building. It was a great privilege to perform the opening ceremony.

The Eide celebrations at Hanley Crouch Community Centre were then followed by Whittington Park community Centre's AGM.

I did an interview for Sky News on the Anti Terror Bill.

13th November: ITN News - another terrorism discussion, and later a program for Northern Ireland as part of the BBC lunch time Sunday politics show.

I attended the war memorial event at Manor Gardens with Councillor Barbara Sidnell and others from the area.

15th November: I did a phone-in for Radio Jamaica's Breakfast Club; then I attended a meeting of the Unison Group in Parliament, and later; followed by a speech at Mayville Tenants and Residents Association's AGM (the Community Centre) where people raised issues of repairs and caretaking.

16th November: I spoke in the Trade and Development Adjournment Debate in Westminster Hall in which I tried to represent the views of the many constituents who had lobbied me recently.

I attended the launch of the Friends of the Earth report on the World Trade Organisation, and later I spoke to the Natfhe national pay claims strike rally on issues of education, and the need for permanent employment and contracts for all further education lecturers.

Details of Jeremy Corbyn's Advice

Surgeries are available by telephoning 020 7226 5775. If you have a political query of any sort please telephone the parliamentary office on 020 7219 3545.

