

Jeremy Corbyn MP

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The main themes of the last month have been: the American/British occupation of Iraq which continues (not surprisingly) to be problematic; and the Hutton inquiry which is coming to a head currently, and the deteriorating situation in Palestine/Israel. I undertook my annual walkabout in Islington north, one ward at a time, during the week, 11th – 18th August. The weather was beautiful and I renewed many acquaintances and visited many community centres, local businesses and cafes! Many people who love living in Islington do find the stress of overcrowded housing very difficult to bear and are constantly irritated when they see the council strategy of selling off every available asset. The council should be thinking in terms of expanding the affordable rented housing stock. Sadly, the Roger Casement Irish Centre and Ormond Rd Workshops, and Unity Association buildings scandalously denied benefits by the Lib Dem council remain unused and on their way to becoming derelict. What a criminal waste of public resources.

Peace Activities/International:

CONGO: Following the excellent meeting we held at St Mellitus Church in July, I have followed this up with a number of parliamentary questions concerning support viable peace process thee including the disarming of child soldiers. We are planning a further community meeting in the near future, with the assistance of the Zaire refugee group the local community and St Mellitus church congregation.

06/08: London Region CND Tavistock Square: commemoration of Hiroshima Day. This is always a very poignant occasion and I was once again invited to preside over the annual ceremony in Tavistock Square. The speakers included Kate Hudson from CND, Bruce Kent, and it was also attended by a wonderful man, Professor Joseph



Rotblatt (Nobel peace prize winner who having worked on the Manhattan project to develop the first atomic bomb, like Einstein, he dedicated the rest of his life to the cause of peace and was awarded the Nobel peace prize for this. in 1994 has spent

06/09: CND held their national conference in Birmingham and I was re-elected as a Council Member. For your information, other Council members are: Alice Mahon MP, Rae Street, Vijay Mehta, John Horrocks, Pat Sanchez, Sue Davis, Pat Arrowsmith, Carol Turner, Sophie Bolt, Carol Naughton, Paul Hawkes, Monica Frisch, Jenny Clegg, Nicholas Russell. Dr Kate Hudson was elected as Chair, replacing Ms Carol Naughton.

IRAQ

01/08: Stop the War Coalition meeting at Friends House. You will see from this report, the recent speech I made in parliament on the situation in Iraq. I have also been active in speaking at the people's assembly on August 30th, Friends Meeting House and a lively meeting.

03/09: Wood Green Labour Club anti war meeting was attended by about fifty people from all walks of life and all shades of political opinion which provided for lively debate.

In mid August (18/08), I attended a fascinating discussion at the Quaker Conference: Conflict and Beyond in Oxfordshire, where 150 young people quizzed me for 1 and half hours on issues of peace and justice. I wrote a reflected piece about this for Labour Left Briefing.

PRESS activities:

05/08: Newsnight on Dr Kelly
06/08: LBC
24/08: NBC (USA) News
24/08: Sky News Millbank
25/08: Sky News outside the Royal Courts of Justice ...
26/08: Dutch TV, College Green ...
09/09 ITN
11/09: Arab TV
13/09: Sky – Chagos Islanders ...
14/09: BBC London at GLA Building – the Politics Show

I continue to receive requests, and oblige them, regarding speaking at anti-war meetings and demonstrations. So many people remain so disillusioned with our government's route here and I believe that the Hutton Inquiry and the Intelligence and Security Committee's disclosures yesterday have shown up the decision to go to war for what it really was: a disaster based upon twisted priorities.

What you can do: Donate or affiliate to Stop the War. Join Amnesty International or another relevant organisation.

AND Go to the National demonstration:

Saturday 27 September - assemble midday at Hyde Park, march to Trafalgar Square.

SOMALIA

25/08: I attended the Somali Working Party event at Camden Town Hall. This group (is an autonomous group) which sprung from the elections held at the meetings we organised at the Commons. Separate policy areas have the task of organising a conference, perhaps in the new year, and a social. They are going to report back to the

next house of Commons meeting probably to be held at beginning of December.

On 5/09 there was a Somali community concert at York Hall. I was invited to speak at this to a large and enthusiastic group celebrating their community.

CHAGOS ISLANDS

A group of Chagossians are still struggling to exist down at Crawley, with the undying assistance of Allen Vincatassin and the excellent work of their very sympathetic and hard working solicitor, Richard Gifford.

The date for a decision on their court case has now been set for 9 October. It is difficult to predict how this will go but it is based upon: the question of whether the UK Government is responsible in law for the removal of the population, and whether some, or all of the claims brought by Chagossians should be allowed to proceed, or whether these claims, or some of them should be struck out. There is no question of Compensation being awarded at this stage – this will be the subject of further hearings, if the Claims are allowed to proceed.

LATIN AMERICA

11/08: Izac Bigeo interviewed me for the Latin American newspaper: Noticias. This resulted in a two page spread accompanied by the lovely photo on page one of this report. I have been invited to contribute a monthly column to the paper.

17/08: I was awarded a Golden Condor at Burgess Park, the Latin American Carnival held there every year. The award was for my services to the Latin American community and I was very flattered to receive it.

13/09: This was the 30th anniversary of the Chile coup. September 11th is a very poignant day for the Chilean community and I spoke at a community commemoration in Bethnal Green (Praxis) about the coup and the life of the Chilean community since then, and the continual failure of anyone to successfully prosecute General Pinochet,

despite the death of 7000 people, or for that matter, Kissinger for his role in the whole episode.

ISLINGTON:

30/08: Highbury Estate Kick About area opening by Groundwork Islington: I attended this event which provides a new area with play equipment excellently done by Groundwork Islington. I thanked all the different organisations and groups including some trade unions who helped to fund the scheme, and of course, a degree of central government money via regeneration schemes which has also come into this.

06/09: Crouch Hill Centre held their annual "Chill on the Hill", which was quite well attended but because of a lack of financial help for the event, a £3 charge deterred some people from attending. Tragically the Council has still not signed the lease on this very valuable facility, despite agreeing to do so in 1999. I am working with the group to support them and try to get the Council to sign the lease, as it is such an important local centre.

06/09: Celebration of Upper Holloway Baptist Church - this was an unusual celebration. The church has paid off their debts on the construction of the new church and the social housing surrounding it. I was heavily involved with them in the mid 1980s in lobbying the housing corporation to provide funding for the housing element of the construction, and the church kindly invited me to come back to take part in their celebrations, led by the former minister, the Reverend Carol McCarthy.

Our INLP secretary - Tricia Clarke - turned 50 (06/09) and many of us joined her in celebrating at the Whittington Community Centre. For anyone who didn't make the event I am sure Tricia accepts belated congratulations.

08/09: Newington Green Action Group/Crime etc Unitarian Church. I had an excellent discussion meeting attended by 120 people including representatives from the Hackney and Islington police, and two of the local councillors for Mildmay ward. I supported the concept of having a temporary police post in Newington Green and

the development of a community forum which will link people in Hackney and Islington together across their border.

09/09: Highbury Quadrant School - as part of my normal program of trying to visit primary schools I spent a couple of hours with the students and their very enthusiastic head teacher. Central government support has enabled them to buy new computer equipment.

Tragically, despite pressure from me, the government was not able to produce any more money and so 18 education jobs have gone because of this year's under-funding. I have protested very strongly to David Milliband, the School's Minister about this, pointing out that transferring funds from maintenance to revenue accounts is very shortsighted and no head teacher should be faced with such a budgetary dilemma again.

02/08: I attended the Other Side exhibition which was put on by artists who are users of the Isledon Rd day centre. They produced some incredible work which was exhibited at the Candid Arts Trust, 3 Torrens St, EC1 1NQ

08/09: The Roger Sylvester Inquest commenced at last, over 4 years after his death. I was there for the opening day to support his family, many of whom live in Islington. The Inquest heard initial evidence from his mother and aunt, as well as from a number of doctors.

15/09: I visited Headway House, a day centre for people who have suffered serious head injuries either due to road accidents or are victims of crime. They provide an excellent supportive service, including to people in Islington, and sought my support for Social Services and Health Service funding for placements.

Senior Citizens

The National Pensioners Convention held a very well attended mass lobby of parliament and I had tea with some of the Islington North members. I also spoke about some of the issues they are most concerned about at the moment. At the top of the

list remains the restoration of the link to earnings, and other concerns they currently have are listed below.

02/08: SERTUC Pensioners: I spoke to this group about things they are concerned about including pension credits and long term care, a possible RPI figure change & clear indication that the government is looking at change there which might adversely affect the pensioners.

Housing

10/09: I have joined the new parliamentary group on Council Housing, chaired by John Austin MP. In addition to defending the principle of council housing, I have urged an expansion affordable social housing in London and the southeast.

What you can do: Defend Council Housing speakers are sometimes available to speak at ward meetings, following which the branch might consider affiliating to the group. They are not a wealthy organisation and if you so choose, a minimum affiliation fee will keep you well-informed: www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk.

Other events/Parliamentary:

10/09: I gave oral evidence at the Parliamentary Procedure Committee on the subject of Brian Haw (alongside Dr Jenny Tonge of the Liberals, and Sir Nicholas Soames of the Tories). For those of you who don't know about Brian Haw, he is the chap who has been demonstrating opposite parliament for the past two years, specifically against the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. His case revolves around the very real threat to the democratic right to protest. I cited the historical example of the Suffragettes and the monument that is now nearby, to their very worthy cause when once they and their actions were deemed unacceptable by a great many folk at the time. It will be interesting to see the outcome of the investigation into this case.

11/09: I met Dr Shehabi (Bahrain) to discuss the way in which the new constitution is operating, and his concerns over freedom of speech etc. I

have long been involved in the campaign for human rights in Bahrain for a long time.

15/09: Democratic transition in the Shadow of Terror at IRR. Liz Fekete organised this event with Tian Cha from Malaysia, speaking about the way in which the Internal Security Act operates in Malaysia, denying basic justice to many. The continued imprisonment of Anway Ibrahim remains a major concern and I chaired the seminar.

15/09: Inaugural meeting of the relaunch of the Western Sahara campaign which I have been heavily involved in for many years now. David Drew MP, of Stroud is chair and I am an active member. I am concerned that there is a danger of them losing the chance of a referendum which includes, an independence option within it, as agreed by the UN some years ago.

15/09: Alongside John McDonnell MP, Alan Simpson and eight others, I met the Prime Minister in an attempt to get him to intervene and stop the scandal that is the loss of Mail on Rail. I pointed out the loss of jobs, the increase of heavy freight vehicles on the Holloway Road, and the environmental impact of the Royal Mail proposal. Tony Blair agreed to consider our proposal for a Cabinet enquiry into this policy.

Liberation

(The Anti-Imperialist/Anti Racist Organisation of which I am chair): The group met on 09/09 to firm up plans for our 50th anniversary event to be held all day on 22nd May in Conway Hall in 2004.

ASYLUM/IMMIGRATION

Paulin Mbakop was a constituent and a regular participant at St Thomas's church, N4. The Home Office deported him to Cameroon where he was promptly beaten up and later hospitalised. I have protested in his case and demanded the British Embassy in Youande contact him and interview him again with a view to making a fresh asylum claim to enable him to live safely here. I have had numerous contacts with the Home office as has

Reverend Coles. His partner (also a constituent) is desperately worried about his safety.

Environment

04/09: As Chair of LA 21 I attended (along with Wally Burgess) the Sustainability Review Committee at Islington Town Hall. I was wholly supportive of the outcome, which is to recommend the establishment of a public environmental forum for the whole borough and if the council executive agrees this I hope the first meeting will be held before the end of this year. It would be a successor body to LA 21. We need a forum where people can express their environmental concerns and I hope there will be wide participation.

Other events/issues: Local

14/09: Gillespie Festival. Alongside Nick Hornby (well known novelist) who lives in the area I opened the festival, congratulated the organisers, called for support for the case of Paulin Mbakop, an asylum seeker from Cameroon who has been deported and since assaulted. I also called on people to continue their support for the wonderful facility that is Gillespie Park, which is an example of local activity which has improved the community facilities.

What you can do: Join Greenpeace and/or Friends of the Earth and get active.

Doing Work Experience in my office just now is Jason Terry, a young man from North Carolina's Guilford College.

Advice **Surgeries** on Fridays have recommenced and details are available from my constituency office, telephone 020 7226 5775.

12/09: An additional Advice Surgery was held at the Muslim Welfare Centre where they are always highly organised with their interpretation services and the whole surgery is extremely orderly.

I remain most grateful to everyone who assists me at my advice surgeries and occasionally I remember to say this! None of them would run smoothly without these people.

Farewell:

JACK KENNEDY: I attended Jack's funeral and I hope that some kind of memorial event can be held in due course, in the Red Rose. Jack was a larger than life character in the Irish movement and a great campaigner for the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, as well as Trade Union rights & other other just and deserving causes. The latter part of his life was plagued with illness and hospitalisation, and I was pleased that there was a good turnout for his funeral. He was a stalwart of the local Trade Union scene as well as Islington North Labour Party over many years.

29/08: Trevor Campbell Davis has moved on from his post as Chief Executive being in charge at the Whittington Hospital and I wrote to thank him for his work there, and in supporting the local national health service (not to mention his love of arcane railway systems which we share, some of which have sadly fallen into disuse).

