

REPORT from Jeremy Corbyn MP

Parliamentary/House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 3545, fax 2328

Local/213a Blackstock Rd, London, N5 2LL

Tel 020 7226 5775, fax 3775

Email: corbynj@parliament.uk October/November 2003: number 262/263



This report covers October and November as the by-election meant there was no October GC meeting. It was very frustrating to lose a Hillrise by-election again, despite an excellent and hardworking candidate in Janet Burgess, and a big effort from many other dedicated workers in her party / support. For anyone who missed out: The results in Hillrise (pre postal vote) were Lib Dem 795, Lab 595, Green 177, Con 64. I have asked the Council to ensure that the postal results are put on the website!

At the end of this report is, as usual, my parliamentary interventions for the past two months, as well as a selection of articles I have written for local publications.

Peace Activities/International:

Iraq

TOMORROW (20 November) IS THE BIG (we certainly hope) DEMONSTRATION AGAINST GEORGE BUSH'S VISIT, AND I SINCERELY HOPE THAT MANY OF YOU CAN ATTEND. Due to the considerable pressure put upon the Metropolitan police by all and sundry, there has been considerable wrangling over the route the march is to take. The steering committee of Stop the War and myself have had many meetings with the police who are being as helpful as possible. Agreement for our preferred route was reached on Monday night and the march will leave Malet St at 2pm – see over for details.

The last Stop the War demonstration (27/09) consisted of somewhere in the region of 100,000 people – though how accurate such figures are is impossible to say. It seems a long time ago now but with all 'the troubles', it is

still every bit as important that we protest, and these marches continue to prove that many people are still very angry about our policies in the Middle East.

I spoke at many Stop the War events, some of them as fringe meetings in Bournemouth during Conference week:

23/09: Chesterfield Stop the War

24/09: Ilford Meeting: "Redbridge Against the War"

25/09: Ealing Stop the War meeting (Acton Town Hall)

28/09 I went to Rome overnight to address a large rally at the Liberazione Festival peace rally. It was organised by Liberazione newspaper and a number of Left parties there. The main themes of the meeting were: opposition to the war and Iraq and Berlusconi's support for Bush, and also protection of the Italian welfare state and pension system.

The visit coincided with a power cut which was dramatic. Within a few minutes every single source of electricity disappeared and the whole city was plunged into darkness, with trains and cars stranded in mid journey. The traffic took 14 hours to clear so I enjoyed a spectacular display of what happens to a city that relies on electricity that suddenly doesn't have any! Before we get too complacent about this, it almost happened here, and with the low margin of generating capacity that is the norm throughout Europe, it could indeed happen here.

29/09: Joint Labour: Action for Peace/CND fringe meeting (during Conference)

01/10: Stop the War held a Bournemouth meeting after a short march around the city, which was addressed by, among others, Tony Benn and myself.

21/10: I attended a Foreign and Commonwealth Office seminar for Parliamentarians on Middle East Peace Process (Lancaster House) which was extremely informative as is so often the case with their debates. We had an interesting debate spanning a whole range of different opinions.

23/10: I was invited to speak at the Gulf Culture Club as their monthly guest on the Middle East Peace Process, or lack of it. I gave my views on British and American foreign policy in the region.

16/11: I introduced the film: 'Born on The Fourth of July', at the Prince Charles Cinema in the presence of Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, on whose life the film is based. Ron grew up as a patriotic American, proud to join the Marines and fought two tours of duty in Vietnam. He was struck down with a bullet paralysed him from the chest down. Over time his views changed markedly, and at this event he spoke very movingly on his life. Ron has campaigned wonderfully for peace ever since those early days.

18/11: LSE Stop the War: I addressed an open air meeting on the issue surrounding the visit of George Bush in the UK; including the war on Iraq, his opposition to the Kyoto protocol, and his undermining of the UN.

18/11: Myself, George Galloway and Ron Kovic handed in a petition against George Bush's visit to Downing St, with the Stop the War coalition.

PRESS activities:

24/09: Al Jazeera
ARD/German TV (Blackstock Rd)
BBC News 24

25/09: Danish TV

27/09: BBC Breakfast Television
: Sky TV

03/10: Sky News

ITN

07/10: Newsnight

22/10: Al Jazeera TV: George Galloway 'trial'

23/10: Al Jazeera TV

24/10: Al Arabi TV

17/11: Newsnight

18/11: CBC (Canadian TV)

Iranian TV

Al Jazeera

American NBC

18/11: MSMBC Hardball program

19/11 Jeremy Vine Show, BBC

BBC World

Egyptian TV

Algerian Radio

Algerian Radio (different from above)

Spanish Radio

11/11: Stop the War Press Conference (Britannia Street office), prompted by the continued frustration over the route for the march this Thursday.

07/10: Stop the War Coalition steering meeting at Friends House where we put together plans for bush visit.

05/11: I attended a Latin American Seminar on Brazil and radical politics at Middlesex University as a guest which I found interesting, informative and useful.

Note: There have been many meetings with the police relating to tomorrow's march which I haven't bothered to list here.

What you can do: Donate or affiliate to Labour Against the War, Stop the War, or join Amnesty International or another relevant organisation.

Attend: THURSDAY'S/TOMORROW'S national demonstration

Chagos Islands

I met with Richard Gifford (07/10) to discuss the possible outcome of the (then imminent) court decision which is outlined further in my Labour Left Briefing article at the end of this report. In brief, the decision went against the islanders who have been given until February to

make a case for an appeal to the High Court I will of course support the appeal if they decide to go ahead with it. It seems to me monstrous that a group of people who have been thrown off their homeland should have suffered like this. I am working closely with the different groups, as well as their indefatigable solicitor Richard Gifford.

Colombia

22/10: The All Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group (PHRG) had arranged for Robin Kirk (a senior researcher) from Human Rights Watch to brief members on Colombia, and she was most informative. The discussion revolved around possible strategies that might be employed to influence the human rights situation in Colombia. The focus stemmed from the lead taken by the American government in relation to one particular person who was refused a visa (as well as other restrictions) to the USA.

I have been invited by Justice for Colombia to join in a visit there in February. The purpose of the visit will be to meet trade unionists who have suffered grievously from the economic policies of the Uribe government, and the death squad activities and paramilitaries. I will travel with a group of general secretaries and presidents of Unions.

Democratic Republic of Congo

18/10: Congolese Meeting: This was the second meeting for members of the local Congolese community (at St Mellitus Church in Tollington Park). It was well attended and lively, with many of those present expressing concerns about ongoing human rights abuses in the Congo, invasions from neighbouring countries, and the killing of innocent citizens. There were calls for more effective action from the United Nations, and for the establishment of democratic structures and elections. There was great concern about the lack of public awareness of the situation in the Congo, and calls for increased media coverage, especially by the BBC. I agreed to table parliamentary

questions to raise these issues with ministers. We also discussed a possible event in parliament for 2004, to help give the UK Congolese community a voice. A new lobbying group was established, led by Jean Roger Kaseki, who spoke at the July GC .

My Congolese Advice Surgery showed me that community members here are largely isolated and unsupported, and I hear many distressing tales of inadequate housing and overcrowding. As well as this, many asylum applications are viewed unsympathetically by the Home Office, and the government's apparent view that the Congo is now a safe country for returnees needs to be queried and challenged.

Eritrea

20/10: I met a group of Eritreans from the local centre to discuss the continuing conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia which has resulted in the tragic deaths of so many people. I was pleased when the ceasefire was agreed (and the matter referred to a tribunal appointed by the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia and the Organisation for African Unity).

This tribunal has now ruled in a way which both parties feel aggrieved by. That said, I believe that since both parties referred the conflict to the tribunal, both parties should accept the outcome. I have tabled a parliamentary motion accordingly. The possibility of two such small countries in the grip of drought and famine returning to war would be simply disastrous.

Indonesia:

PHRG welcomed Adrien Zoller (via Catherine Scott) - the founder of the International Service for Human Rights, and its director until early 2003. In the main we discussed the work done at the 59th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, as well as how we might encourage the International community to achieve justice for the victims of military human rights abuses, notably in Timor Leste. There had been a relevant EDM in parliament,

and of course, the ad hoc human rights trials in Jakarta which failed.

We also touched upon the complexities of both the decision-making process in the Commission and its Special Procedures.

What you can do, contact: Paul Barber at TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, 25 Plovers Way, Alton Hampshire GU34 2JJ Tel/Fax: 01420 80153
Email: plovers@gn.apc.org

Ireland

Curiously, the election date was announced within three hours of my tabling a parliamentary question asking them to fix a date: November 26th. (See Parl' Interventions)

Palestine

I spoke at a Fringe Meeting for Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) in Bournemouth (30/09) with Richard Burden and others. We emphasised the need for continuing support for Palestinian rights, and I called for an end to arms sales and credit to Israel whilst the illegal occupation in Palestine and the settlements continues.

18/10: The PSC Student Conference invited me to speak. More significant than anything I could have said, was the presence of the Hurndall family. Tom's mother Jocelyn and his sister Sophie were there. His family have campaigned in a truly brilliant way to try to get justice not just for Tom but for all the other victims in the Middle East. His sister Sophie made a very moving contribution at the event. Any support people can give via Palestine Solidarity, to the Hurndall family would be most appreciated.

(Most of you will be aware that Tom was shot in Raffa by Israeli soldiers whilst trying to protect some Palestinian children from both their gunfire and their attempts to demolish the homes. For now, Tom remains in a coma.)

What you can do: Join Palestine Solidarity Campaign www.palestinecampaign.org
T: 020 7700 6192 F: 020 7609 7779
["mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org"](mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org);
Jews for Justice: PO Box 37402, N3 2XG:
jfjusticefp@yahoo.co.uk
CAABU: 020 7832 1310

Western Sahara

I attended the 11th annual Congress of the Polisario and the relevant article will explain more about this.

Immigration and Asylum

See the attached parliamentary interventions.

Events are regularly organised by groups such as Speak Out Against Racism, Defend Asylum Seekers Campaign, Asylum Rights Campaign, and Student Action for Refugees, and supported by UNISON, NUS (National Union of Students), the Afghan Refugees Support Committee, International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, International Federation of Iranian Refugees and many others. For further information contact any of the above, and/or Speak Out Against Racism - Defend Asylum Seekers campaign c/o NAAR, 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS. Tel/Fax: 020 7247 9907 www.naar.org.uk

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS:

19/09: The graduation reception of Education Action International's (previously known as World University Service) 6th Annual Human Rights Advocacy course at County Hall for the Diana Princess Wales Memorial Fund was an excellent event. It always restores my faith in the human race to see refugees shown in a positive light, and making a huge contribution to society.

10/11: I visited Long Island University – a locally based Quaker institute.

17/11: I attended Highbury Fields School (Randy Buckley) to talk to their school parliament's elected cabinet, which was a marvellous occasion. I have invited them to the House of Commons to observe question time and the way parliament works. The school is

doing extremely well and different cabinet members at the school have different areas of responsibility. They are a credit to the school.

16/10: Islington Arts and Media School opened their new building and I had the opportunity to thank the school for its hard work, and indeed the Minister David Miliband, for agreeing my request to dispense with the debt which had hung over the school for so long. Also present was Jill Barton and Richard Reiser.

TRADE

I spoke in the house extensively on this subject and as usual, that speech is enclosed in the parliamentary interventions attached in Parliamentary Interventions.

LIBERATION

On May 22nd 2004, the 50th anniversary of Liberation (The Anti-Imperialist/Anti Racist Organisation) will be celebrated at Conway Hall for an afternoon's events including a book launch (Stan Newens is writing about Liberation's history).

I have regular meetings with Liberation, in my capacity as chair.

HOUSING

I had an adjournment debate in Westminster Hall which is in the Parliamentary Interventions section.

27/09: I spoke at Southwark Tenants conference where they are debating the whole question of major stock transfer. I outlined the problems of housing in inner London. I welcomed the government money into capital improvements in estates, but regret the lack of funding for new build. The way in which the poor of London are treated by the system, in some cases being siphoned out to other areas of the country which are under-occupied, in the process splitting up families and friends, as well as creating potential skill shortages in some areas is appalling.

03/10: Islington Tenants Conference (as per FITA, Union Chapel): I was invited to chair this conference and despite being invited nine weeks before, the Council were either unable or unwilling to send a spokesperson to the conference. Speaking at the conference was Richard Greening, Fiona Monkman (Unison) Darius Sokalov (FITA), and a Government Office for London representative. We discussed the Almos, funding of developments, and particularly the lack of consultation over the Almo ballot, which is now being held.

21/09: Miranda Estate TMO residents held a meeting (Miranda Community Centre) at which I spoke. The issue of the barrier to protect the estate from intruders and criminals is a delicate one and I have been asked to mediate.

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.

HEALTH

As part of a continuing campaign to maintain good relations with our local health facilities, and in an effort to discuss the threat of Foundation Hospitals on 24/09 I visited Moorfields Eye Hospital.

24/09: Later that day I attended the Whittington Hospital Trust Public Meeting where I presented staff awards for services at the hospital, with the top award going to the security staff there. They do a terrific job in protecting the medical and ancillary staff from unreasonable behaviour as well as making the hospital a nice and safe place to visit.

27/10: I attended Michael Abrams retirement event (he had been chief Executive at the Whittington) at the Tollgate Café and thanked him for the good work he had done in promoting and developing the hospital in his time there.

The Health and Social Care Bill: The vote on Foundation Hospitals took place this afternoon and was lost by 17 votes. It remains to be seen what the outcome will be as the night moves on, ie whether or not the Lords will accept this!

SENIOR CITIZENS

25/09: Islington Pensioners Forum held a conference on British and European Pensioners (Friends House) at which I spoke.

18/10: Chris Smith and I attended Islington Pensioners Autumn Bazaar.

20/10: The Greater London Forum for the Elderly was attended by myself and other MPs and representatives.

23/10: GLF: I attended a question and Answer session with John Horam MP in the Jubilee Room on pensions and pension issues. Jack Jones was also present.

OTHER EVENTS: Parliamentary

12/11: I attended the European Social Forum – please refer Articles matching this report.

19/11: A parliamentary PCS (Public and Commercial Services Union) Group was launched today of which I will be a member, with John McDonnell elected as Chair.

29/10: The All Party Human Rights Group held their AGM and as well as electing the officers, discussed current international human rights concerns and the formulation of this year's agenda. I was re-elected as Vice Chair.

I continue to attend ASLEF and RMT parliamentary meetings when I can.

22/10: I attended the London Bus Workers Lobby at the House: the range of their concerns include pay and conditions, recruitment and retention and standards of service amongst operating and engineering staff. Somewhere in the region of 200 bus workers attended the lobby followed by a meeting.

23/10: Abdul Choudhury held his Bangladeshi presentation in the MacMillan Room and Mary Creagh and myself, and a good crowd were present.

The Criminal Justice Bill is pending (most significantly the right to jury trial) with the Lords as this report goes to print. This too will be decided as the evening/tomorrow unfolds.

OTHER EVENTS/ISSUES: Local

22/10: Hillside Clubhouse had their Open Day which I was involved in as was the Mayor.

22/10: I spoke at a meeting 'Tollington Against Privatisation' at the Marta Palluch Alsen Day Centre.

06/10: I popped in to Mike Marqusee's book launch on The Life of Bob Dylan.

I attended two Diwali celebrations:

10/10: Diwali, the Laundry

16/10: Diwali at Caxton House

(23/09) I attended the MAYA Centre AGM (Whittington Park Community Centre).

The Islington North Annual Christmas event is to be held at the Red Rose on 18th December. We hope you are all free to come along and contribute your talents to, among other things, the karaoke event. Thanks in advance to the organisers of this event and to all of you, please see the flier attached.

Other Events:

08/10: One of the Memorials for Edward Said which I attended was held at the New Theatre, LSE and it was packed out with significant individuals including John Pilger, Ghada Karmi and Tariq Ali.

Note: Edward Said was a Palestinian exile whose championing of their cause was extensive and will always be remembered. An academic, he wrote on many political, social and cultural subjects and always managed to see things in a wider context. His death is a huge loss to those fighting for justice in Palestine and the international community.

20/09: I spoke at the Save the Labour Party conference (Union Chapel) which was attended by many who are working to ensure that the policies of the Left are delivered by the Labour Party. This campaign is growing and developing and I would ask you all to keep an eye out for future conferences under this title. I spoke alongside Anne Black (NEC member) and Professor Bernard Crick.

21/09: The South Place Ethical Society held an event at Conway Hall Seminar at which I spoke on the subject of humanism and peace groups.

Unison's Branch meeting (25/09) at the Central Library where I spoke in support of the London Weighting campaign and updated them on the Roger Sylvester Inquest, which has now resulted, as you will be aware, in a verdict of unlawful killing recorded by the jury.

07/10: I joined Unison at a group meeting in parliament to discuss London Weighting

09/10: Mick Rix held a retirement gathering following his sad election defeat which I attended.

16/10: I attended a Postal Workers rally at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square and on the same day joined in a Local Government march and rally at the Imperial War Museum.

Work Experience in my office includes an American Student: Jason Terry Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina. Next week is Jason's last week and I am most grateful for the excellent contribution he has made to the running of my office.

Advice **Surgeries** on Fridays continue as usual (not during the Christmas period), see attached.

Other advice surgeries held (with interpreters) were as follows:

21/09: Bangladeshi (Red Rose)

17/10: Indo-Pakistan (16/18 Hornsey Rd)

24/10: Algerian (Blackstock Road)

14/11: Congolese (St Mellitus Church - (word had got round and the response here was overwhelming)

JEREMY CORBYN

Member of Parliament for Islington North

Advice surgeries (remaining) for November/December 2003

Friday 21st November, 4 – 6 p.m.

Old Fire Station, Mayton Street, London, N.7.

No appointment necessary but please arrive promptly and be prepared to wait.

Friday 28th November, 10 a.m. – 12 noon.

Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, London, N.19.

Appointment only, please ring after 23rd November to book.

Friday 5th December, 4 – 6 p.m.

Old Fire Station, Mayton Street, London, N.7.

Appointment only, please ring after 30th November to book.

Friday 12th December, 10 a.m. – 12 noon.

Mayville Community Centre, Woodville Road, London, N.16.

No appointment necessary but please be prepared to wait.

Friday 19th December, 4 – 6 p.m.

Old Fire Station, Mayton Street, London, N.7.

No appointment necessary but please arrive promptly and be prepared to wait.

If you prefer: You could write to Jeremy with details of your problem:
213A Blackstock Road, London, N5 2LL. Telephone: 020 7226 5775

