

Al Quds parade – London 2022

To Westminster to observe this years Al Quds parade, organised as is their wont, by the Islamic Human Rights Commission. This is an Iranian initiative but when it comes to hatred of Israel on the safety of an English street Muslims seem happy to set aside their sectarian differences for a couple of hours.

They were expected to muster at the Home Office in Marsham Street and then to Downing Street. When I arrived a rally to support Ukraine was in full swing.



And this grave gentleman. I have little time for the flawed ideology of Islam, but Muslims are all God's children and



things one hears about the human rights abuses taking place in China are not on. Not cricket.

There was an area set up in Whitehall with a big screen and a podium ready. I made my way across Parliament Square and Westminster Abbey and into Millbank.

I could see flashing blue lights, more police vehicles and officers setting out the tape.

And then I saw the Israeli flag and the blue Magen David.



What they lacked in numbers this year they made up for in courage and enthusiasm.



h a good distance behind. But there they were, accompanied by the delegation from Neturei Karta and some obvious non-muslims.





Pretty blonde teenage girls in sun tops chanting "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is a little incongruous. I fear a young man with eyes like a gazelle is the impetus. However flags and banners of various left wing groups prominent in previous years were conspicuous by their absence this year.

Portable loudspeakers were being pushed at intervals along the march but I couldn't get to see the two people (a young woman and a man) who were leading the chants. [Ageing juvenile Nazim Ali](#) wasn't on the podium this year. I think his accusations of Jewish responsibility for the fire at Grenfell Towers was a taunt too far even for Al Quds day. The young couple alternating responsibility this year were much less imaginative, and didn't venture beyond the usual selection of rhyming couplets, other than the woman would quietly remind the crowd "remember these people kill babies" and "think of the children".





As they entered Parliament Street the chant changed to "We know what this building is for. Occupation, terror and war" but I don't know which government building they meant. There

are plenty to choose from including parliament itself. The Ministry of Defence is further up Whitehall and the Ukrainians were outside it.



The Cenotaph was protected with heras fencing, and to their credit the marchers treated it with respect.



An elderly man was doing most of the introducing of the speakers. By this time about 2 thirds of the marchers hadn't stayed to hear the speakers.

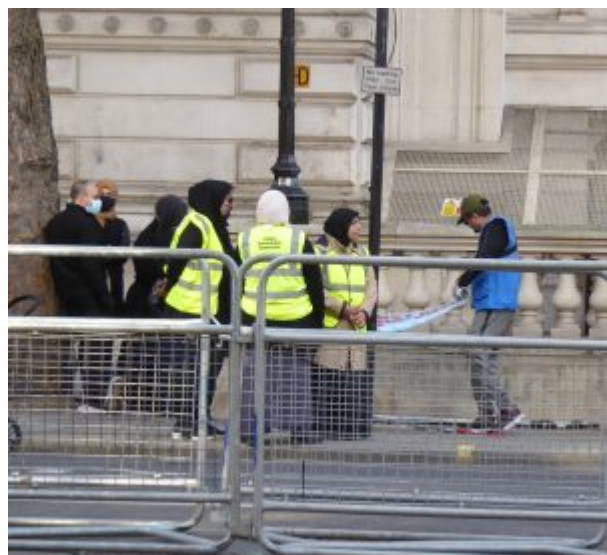
This young man gave a recitation from the Koran. He had a strong melodic voice and for the first few minutes you could

have heard a pin drop.



But after 5 minutes more people at the back were chatting,

rolling up their banners and drifting away. The Ramadan fast must break during still daylight hours as refreshments were being enjoyed.



In the Jewish area several people from the Ukrainian rally joined them; in particular a man wearing a fringed prayer shawl across his shoulders, a Ukrainian flag in one hand and an image of St George in the other. St George is well respected in Ukraine as a Christian martyr and soldier.

The next speaker was a rabbi of Neturei Karta who had come all the way from Manchester. He spoke of his view that Zionism is a new and secular institution and that he did not support a secular state of Israel in the middle east.



Then a professor (whose name I didn't catch) from the Jewish Network for Palestine.



The Jewish rally was over. The Al Quds rally was much depleted. I decided it was time I was elsewhere and I left too.

The good news; Not a Hezbollah or Hamas flag in sight, and much of the anti-semitic rhetoric toned down. Maybe Nazim Ali's narrow escape from prosecution has concentrated their minds. I doubt it will last.

Photographs Esmerelda Weatherwax London April 2022