

Campaign Against Antisemitism – rally in Parliament Square

By Esmerelda Weatherwax

To London. The muster was outside the [Royal Courts of Justice from 12 noon](#), ready to move off at 1pm sharp. Unfortunately I was late, missed the move off, thought I had worked out the route by observing police road blocks and could therefore catch up and was wrong! I was reluctant to ask a policeman in case he thought I was a nogoodnik; when I



did finally ask one, who was removing a redundant road block, he didn't know either. Eventually I found a policeman who had heard that the route was along the Embankment (River Thames bank) and another said I would find them assembling as we spoke in Parliament Square.

I suspect the route was adjusted at the last minute for safety. The anti-Russian demonstration outside Downing Street where Ukrainians, Georgians and Romanians were standing together in solidarity was no trouble. But young men from the

[Syrian demonstration in Trafalgar Square](#) had broken away and were running up and down Whitehall shouting “Free, free, Palestine”.



I reached Parliament Square in time to hear Gideon Falter’s opening words. He praised the magnificent turnout of 32,000 people, and that so many present are not Jewish, he recognises Christian, Sikh and Hindu attendees, and “in the near future, God willing, maybe we will have some Syrians.”

The government has been invited to attend or send a representative but have not replied.



Alert men of Shorim were spotting the approaches to the rally.



I knew that the October Declaration would have a presence.



I moved round the rally site observing, talking to people and then listening to the speakers.



The first speaker was Major Andrew Fox, ex Parachute Regiment (excellent) former special forces, veteran of Bosnia and Afghanistan and currently a lecturer at Sandhurst the officer training academy.



He spoke of his anger at seeing hatred demonstrated on British streets, making particular reference to the mocking of Remembrance Sunday, the projection of hateful statements onto Big Ben, and to see men and women cheering on the Houthis when they fired on British ships in the Gulf, "Yemen, Yemen, make us proud"

He said that as a soldier he knows that one of the biggest mistakes one can make is not to take action early enough and decisively enough. Hate should be dealt with early.

British tolerance must never appease the intolerant.

This march is enough to persuade those who see hate and pretend that it is someone else's responsibility.

We have a choice; as a country we have shown that we can change course, ie abolishing slavery when we previously had thought a benefit in it. Standing almost alone in Europe in 1940. (*I say almost, because Malta gets forgotten. A tiny island but very brave people*) But action requires courage and we must stand against hate before it's too late.

The next speaker was a young Druze woman named Lauren. On 7th October she was a nurse in a Druze village. Her father, a general in the IDF, immediately left to go south to deal with the attack. She reported to a hospital in Haifa to deal with evacuated casualties. She is now a peripatetic ambassador, travelling to visit campuses to talk to students. She said that she has heard that in Britain Jews are starting to worry that they are no longer safe and welcome.

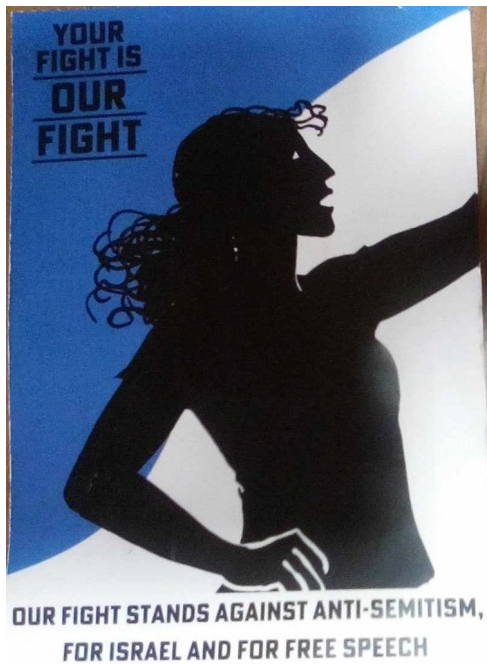


She said that in Israel, the so-called apartheid state, where her Druze people are only 2% of the population she has never once felt unwelcome and she is proud and happy to live in such a multicultural society.

The third speaker was the Revd Haley Ace and her husband who had come straight from church.



She said that hate doesn't stop in the rain and so we have to be here.



The Jews are the canary in the coal mine. We know the Islamic saying, first the Saturday people and then the Sunday people. We are all in this together; this ideology is coming for us all.

The next speaker was Mark Birbeck the founder of Our Fight.

I look home one of their flyers.

He said that this campaign is not just about Jews. He pointed towards the memorial to PC Keith Palmer killed in the terror attack on Westminster Bridge. Towards Parliament generally where Southend MP David Ames, murdered by a terrorist at his surgery, worked. He said that when on British streets he hears the call to 'globalise the Intifada' he thinks globalise? It is here already.



These young persons were handing out information leaflets. It isn't safe for students on some campuses so I have disguised them.





inger. Introduced as Israeli rock sensation Aviv Geffen he played keyboard and sung what sounded to me like a rather nice ballad. Although I have no idea of the words. He then spoke briefly of his shock at seeing an English Jew coming off the flight from Israel last week, and removing his kippah before entering the airport.



Then he sang the Hatikvah.

The final singer was cantor Stephen Leas of the North London synagogue. Accompanied by Avi on keyboard he sang the song from Les Miserables, [Bring Him Home](#). Very moving. He has a wonderful voice. Then he led the rally in the National Anthem.



Gideon Falter said a few closing words to remind us of safety on our way home and the rally was concluded.

This is the report of the [Jewish Chronicle](#) who got there in good time, followed the right route, and saw things I didn't. Although I did see things their reporter didn't.

Photographs E Weatherwax London December 2024