





# SUPPORT THE PRISONERS!

**A**FTER the action four people were released on strict bail conditions. They are not allowed to talk to each other. Messages of support for them can be sent to:  
tom\_w@boardermail.com



One decommissioner is still on remand and could be there until trial:

Elijah Smith, VP 7551, HMP Lewes, Brighton Road, Lewes, BN7 1EA

Letters of support are always appreciated. If you want to support financially postal orders can be made out to HM Prison Service with prisoner number and your name and address or make a donation to the campaign at [www.smashedo.org.uk/donate.htm](http://www.smashedo.org.uk/donate.htm). Please tag donations as 'prisoner support'. Prisoners are often moved at short notice, so check websites below before posting letters.

For more info see [www.smashedo.org.uk](http://www.smashedo.org.uk)  
[decommissioners.wordpress.com](http://decommissioners.wordpress.com)

Dear Smash EDO,  
Sitting in a Swedish prison I hear about your wonderful campaign against EDO. In April I got sentenced to five months in prison for attempting to smash the Swedish military aircraft, the Gripen fighter. I get energized and inspired to hear that similar actions are going on in Great Britain. The weapons industry is strong, but together we are stronger. I hope for a growing movement where we continuously challenge the weapons manufacturers through court case after court case. You peace activists in GB have shown that it is possible to be acquitted for disarmament action. That has not happened in Sweden yet, but just to know that it has happened gives hope that change is possible, indeed likely, if we continue the struggle.  
Peace,  
Martin Smedjeback  
Skenäs Correctional Facility  
June 23, 2009

**Martin Smedjeback is part of the Swedish group Avrusta (Disarm) – a part of the network Ofog (Mischief). Avrusta is a campaign against Sweden's weapon export industry.**

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**Disclaimer:** All opinions expressed in this booklet are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily shared by the decommissioners.



# INTRODUCTION

“If the law and the police can’t do anything about it it’s about time somebody else did”  
– The EDO Decommissioners

**O**N January the 17th 2009 the bombs had already fallen relentlessly on Gaza for three weeks. Massive, passionate demonstrations and pickets had been held in many cities around the country and the world in protest against Israel’s war crimes, but to no avail. A growing sense of helplessness was grabbing hold of the movement as the Palestinian body count stood at 1400 and counting. 300 of the dead were children. This was the night of the “citizen’s decommissioning” of the weapons manufacturer EDO MBM/ITT in Moulsecoomb, Brighton.

Just after midnight Elijah Smith, Tom Woodhead, Robert Nicholls, Ornella Saibene, Robert Alford and Harvey Tadman and broke into EDO’s premises with the aim to, in Elijah Smith’s words, “...smash it up to the best of [their] abilities”. It was an entirely accountable action where each decommissioner had pre-recorded a video in which they stated the reasons for their participation – to help dismantle the war machine from the factory floor (to view their video statements go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfa8R2AxUFg&feature=related> ). Once inside the building, they barricaded themselves in and set to work; Equipment used to make weapon components - including some used in Israeli F16 fighter jets - were trashed whilst computers, filing cabinets and office furnishings were thrown out of the windows. Once they were done they calmly waited for the

police to arrest them. Three bystanders were also arrested on the day and are now implicated in the decommissioners’ court case.

According to EDO £300,000 worth of damage was caused and Detective Chief Inspector Graham Pratt was quoted in the Guardian as saying: “Windows had been smashed and offices turned over in what I would describe as wanton vandalism, but with machinery and equipment so targeted that it could have been done with a view of bringing business to a standstill”. He was of course misguided. Far from being an action of “wanton vandalism”, it was a thought through act of resistance against what could only be described as a massacre going on in Gaza. However, the second part of his statement was rightly observed: the decommissioning prevented the manufacturing side of EDO from working for several weeks, hence slowing down the murderous war machine they are a part of.

Two of the decommissioners have spent the last six months on remand in prison as a consequence of their arrest. At the time of writing Robert Alford has just been granted bail whilst Elijah Smith is still remanded. A ten week court case is scheduled to start in the last week of October 2009.

Since 2002, the government has also claimed that no weapons, military equipment or components that could be deployed aggressively in the Occupied Territories would be licensed for export, and that it no longer takes into account assurances given by the Israeli government that it would not use UK equipment in the Occupied Territories. However, it is not clear what the government counts as aggressive deployment of military equipment, nor what the practical effect on individual licensing decisions has been.

In 2009, following a government investigation into whether UK-supplied equipment was used by the Israeli Defence Forces in the Operation Cast Lead attacks on Gaza, Foreign Secretary David Miliband stated that many licences were for components for incorporation into US-manufactured platforms which were then re-exported to Israel. He said that the UK, recently or in the past, may have supplied components for reconnaissance satellites, and almost certainly supplied components for F16 combat aircraft, Apache attack helicopters and Sa’ar naval vessels, as well as Centurion armoured personnel carriers. The F16 and Apache components were exported via the USA, whilst the Sa’ar components and Centurions were direct exports (the latter were sold in the late 1950s). Since then, five arms export licences have been revoked. Thus far, this seems to be the only action by a foreign government in relation to arms sales to Israel in relation to the Operation. However, 177 UK arms export licences remain in effect, and it is claimed that the revoked licences were for spare parts for guns on the Israeli Navy’s Sa’ar ships, which the Israeli military claims won’t affect its military capability.

Overall, there is a considerable ambiguity in the UK government’s position on arms exports towards Israel, which is made worse by a lack of transparency. On the one hand, the government is politically (and now legally, due to arms control

commitments being adopted at the EU level) committed to considering the human rights implications of arms export licensing decisions. On the other, it is also committed to promoting the interests of UK-based companies and protecting military-industrial relationships with its allies.

So what does all this mean for Brighton residents concerned about the effects of the arms trade on populations abroad? From information gleaned by local activists, it seems that the government may have granted licences for the export of components from EDO MBM to either the USA or Israel, for incorporation into F15 and/or F16 fighter jets. Reluctance on the part of the government and company to release relevant information make it difficult to prove this once and for all. However, from the research done by local activists, the claim that a Brighton-based company is supplying components for use in Israeli military equipment seems reasonable. And Israel is widely acknowledged to be engaged in an illegal occupation and may well have committed war crimes and human rights violations in its operations in the Occupied Territories. Direct action to try to stop the arms trade is often controversial. Some people say that activists should go through parliamentary or official channels to air their grievances. But time and again there have been arms trade scandals in which governments supply military equipment that is used in human rights violations, and existing control regimes are weak. For some people, the time for polite negotiation is over: something must be done, now. Other people see direct action as frightening, violent or even as vandalism. But the use of putting military equipment or military production facilities out of action can be seen as an act of non-violence: it is preventing the use of violence by states against populations abroad.

**Anna Stavrianakis is a Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex**





# ARMING THE OCCUPATION: UK'S ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

Anna Stavrianakis

**I**SRAEL'S attacks on Gaza in December 2008/January 2009 were the latest and most strikingly brutal phase of the Occupation, prompting protests and direct action around the world. In response, a group of activists conducted direct action against the EDO-MBM factory in Brighton, acting to "decommission" the factory in solidarity with the people of Gaza. As Brighton residents, how are we to make sense of the UK's arms relationship with Israel?

Israel imports a large proportion of its military equipment. It was the world's 7th largest arms importer in 2001-5, and over 95% of its imports are from the USA. As well as large amounts of highly sophisticated weaponry, it also receives military aid and training more generally. US-supplied F-15 and F-16 fighter jets (into which components that appear to be manufactured by EDO MBM are incorporated) are significant elements of the Israeli military capability and have been used in military operations in the Occupied Territories as well as in Lebanon in 2006. European states such as Germany, France and the UK are the main suppliers of the remaining few per cent of Israel's military imports. So overall, the UK is a small supplier to Israel, and companies such as EDO MBM are often subsidiaries of bigger, in this case US companies. But the increasing globalisation of the arms industry means that military production is more diffuse, and a country's military capability is facilitated by networks of imports. The UK share of Israel's overall imports may be small, but the components that are exported are often important to the functioning of bigger weapons systems.

In one sense, Israel is just like any other recipient of UK-produced weapons. That is, in order to export military and dual-use equipment, companies must apply to the UK government for an export licence. The government assesses licence applications against a set of criteria that cover the UK's international commitments, human rights, the internal situation in the

recipient country, regional stability, UK national security, the recipient state's attitude to terrorism and international law, the risk of diversion, and sustainable development. For example, the government says that an export licence will not be issued "if there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression". Yet it has a history of licensing components for combat aircraft, small arms, and ammunition to Israel, whose military has a record of human rights violations in the Occupied Territories.

In 2002 however, the government introduced an extra set of guidelines relating to the export of components for military equipment that are then incorporated for onward export. The government now also considers the importance of the UK's defence and security relationship with the incorporating country. This change in the guidelines was introduced specifically in relation to exports to the USA of components, including Head-Up Display Units, for incorporation into F16 military aircraft, for onward export to Israel. The government claimed such a move was necessary because any interruption to the supply of such components would have serious implications for the UK's defence relationship with the USA. However, incorporation is not a new phenomenon in the international arms trade, and the existing guidelines already allowed the government to consider the defence and security interests of other states, so the need for new guidelines is not clear. In addition, the export of Head-Up Display Units directly to Israel would be problematic under the UK government's commitments, in terms of human rights concerns and tension or armed conflict. Whilst the USA has a strict arms control regime on paper, its arms export policy is highly foreign-policy driven, and it refuses to be bound by restrictions on re-export of equipment it imports from other suppliers. So the UK has sacrificed its own, more stringent licensing regime to the foreign policy interests of the USA.

# CHALLENGING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

**C**AMPAIGNERS have been calling for the end of the manufacture of components for weapons of mass destruction for many years. In 2002-3 a grassroots movement grew in Brighton calling for the UK government not to attack Iraq. This culminated in over 5000 people taking over the streets of Brighton on the day war started, workers' walk outs, school students deserting their classes and a mass occupation of the town hall. It was shortly after this that campaigners spotted a press release from EDO MBM technology in Moulsecoomb boasting of a new contract with Raytheon, providing electrical components for the Paveway system of munitions. Human Rights Watch were later to report that the Paveway was the most used guided munition in the aerial bombardment of Iraq in 2003-2004. By 2004 over 100 000 Iraqis had died as a result of the invasion and occupation, this figure rose to a million by 2007.

At the beginning of 2004, while Iraq was under constant assault from US and UK forces, a reporter from The Argus, the local newspaper in Brighton, was given a tour around the EDO MBM factory and was told by EDO MD David Jones that the company was proud to support British troops in Iraq. The first demonstrations against EDO happened in March 2004, on the anniversary of the invasion. In May 2004 the Brighton and Hove Palestine Solidarity Campaign wrote to EDO asking if the factory supplied weapons to Israel. The reply, from David Jones, was that 'it is impossible for any company manufacturing components to categorically state where these components may eventually be used'. This morally bankrupt statement, although surprisingly honest, made a mockery of the UK's system of 'end user' certificates for British made weapons.

Soon after, protesters staged a rooftop occupation and blockade of EDO MBM and began weekly demonstrations that continue until this day. These weekly vigils have been complemented by peace camps, marches, mass demonstrations, direct action, sabotage, roof

occupations, street theatre and petitions calling for the closure of the factory.

In 2005 several hundred people marched from The Level, in Brighton, to Brighton police station to hand in a document listing EDO's complicity in crimes under the International Criminal Court Act 2001 and calling for the arrest of David Jones for complicity in war crimes. Chief Superintendent of police, Kevin Moore, was forced to come out of the station to receive the document on live TV. Sussex police issued a press release two days later claiming that they had investigated the complaint and that they were now closing the case.

In Summer 2005 Brighton and Hove Green Party supported a motion in the council calling EDO MBM's business "grubby and despicable" and affirming that it had no place in a Peace Messenger City (Brighton and Hove was part of the association of United Nations Peace Messenger Cities). There were demonstrations in support of the motion outside the council meeting. However, the Conservatives and Labour party councillors pushed for an amendment to the motion erasing any mention of EDO and simply calling for an affirmation of Brighton and Hove's role as a Peace Messenger City. A few years later Brighton Council gave up the Peace Messenger facade altogether.

In October 2005 activists named in EDO MBM's attempted high court injunction argued that EDO were complicit in war crimes and that they were acting for the 'prevention of crime'. A week long hearing in the High Court heard evidence from civilians who had been the targets of bombings by the Israeli air force. The state intervened in the hearing and a representative of the Attorney General became a party in the case to argue against the defendants.

Campaigners arrested outside the EDO MBM factory have consistently argued in their defence that EDO are complicit in war crimes in Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon. In the summer of 2006

Gaza Strip

This Council shares the distress and outrage felt by many residents over the deaths and injuries caused by the military action in Gaza, and supports the call of several recent local demonstrations for an immediate ceasefire by all involved parties.

This Council also notes with concern evidence which suggests that a Brighton-based company EDO-MBM Technology Ltd (now trading as EDO-ITT) is producing and supplying bomb release mechanisms for the F16 Lockheed Martin jet fighter/bomber.

This Council further notes that the F16 jet fighter/bomber is the mainstay of the Israeli Air Force, which is reported to have 362 operative F16s. At the time of drafting this resolution the Israeli campaign has killed at least 977 Palestinians, more than half of them civilians, many of them women and children. In addition some 4,500 Palestinians have been wounded.

This Council;

- Deplores the production of military components for use by countries involved in violent conflict, and the presence of any such activities within the city
- Implores EDO-ITT to ensure all of its local production facilities are employed in the manufacture of non military/weapon components only.
- Instructs the Chief Executive to communicate our requests direct to EDO-ITT, reporting back progress to Council

Proposed by Cllr

Seconded by Cllr

Dear

*I'm sorry to say this motion will not be allowed onto the agenda. The reason given was that the issue is not directly related to Brighton and has no bearing on the 'well being' of the city.*

*Juststands! Leck*

*We will be press releasing this refusal.*

This is a scanned image of a document never released in the public domain. The document shows an attempt by the Green Party in Brighton to table a motion condemning the activities of EDO at the full council meeting of 29 January 2009. The motion was refused by the city council convenor. The document expresses outrage at the company's supply of bomb release mechanisms to the Israeli military during the attacks on Gaza between 27 December 2008-18 January 2009. The handwriting on the document is that of Green Party councillor Keith Taylor.

I truly believe that if 1% of the people who marched against the war in '03 and had gone into nonviolent resistance in the spirit of King, Berrigan and the EDO 9 and the other 99% had remained in proactive solidarity the governments and corporations would have a tough time waging their wars. It shouldn't be a case of resisters isolated in jail and other dissidents remaining at home feeling disengaged. There has to be a powerful mutual dynamic....We would be a better movement for it.

If we had followed the mass marches of Feb 15th 2003 by following the example of the EDO campaign, focusing on where the rubber hits the road in terms of the war machine in our lives and community we would be a healthier movement for it. Instead 8 years into the invasion of Afghanistan, 6 years into Iraq we for the most part are left with a remnant of resistance. There is probably more serious resistance now coming out of the U.S. military mileux than the civilian peace movements at this stage. Soldiers refusing to deploy, redeploy,

www.couragetoresist.org, military families like Cindy Sheehan and Rose Gentle demanding the government account for its lies and the deaths of their children.

I recall the lack of hope I was experiencing as I prepared to go on yet another march against the bombing of Gaza. I recall then hearing of the act of these good folks at EDO and the effect it had on me. Many thanks to the hope they offered at the risk of their liberty. It's time for the rest of us to respond to this very human act with whatever gifts of solid arity we can muster. I know from my own experiences, of multiple court appearances and two years in jail for nonviolent resistance, that the simplest acts of solidarity will mean a lot to the defendants. Accompanying them to court, spreading the word, writing a letter and most significantly continuing the resistance.

**Ciaron O'Reilly is part of the Ploughshares network.**

**Blog: <http://ciaron.wordpress.com/>**

# THE NIGHT EDO WAS SMASHED

## Ornella Saibene

I did it for my brother, who had to fight a war that wasn't his.

I did it for my sister who has been raped again and again.

I did it for the millions who have been dispossessed, the refugees deprived of their homes,

I did it for the widows and the orphans.

I did it for the tortured in their lonely cells.

I did it for the politicians who have not listened to the voice of the people.

I did it for some kind of justice.

**Ornella is one of the EDO decommissioners**



# IF I HAD A HAMMER...

Ciaran O'Reilly

**F**ROM memory, I think it was the late anarchist folk singer Utah Phillips who said "Mother nature isn't dying, she's being killed. And those killers have names and address!"

Surely one of those names and addresses must be the EDO factory in Brighton. It has been a great gift to the movement for peace and justice that folks chose to go, and continue to go, to EDO Brighton to confront those who have been making a killing from the empire's wars. Our response as a movement should be one of solidarity as our people are in jeopardy before the courts and in jail. As Dan Berrigan reflected when the Catonsville 9 went to that Maryland draft board in 1968 and took files to burn with homemade napalm in the car park.

"Because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course, continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total - but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial."  
Daniel Berrigan

Now the EDO 9 are before the courts in a legal system designed to isolate, demoralise, decontextualise and defeat the resister and the resistance. The only anti-venom is the spirit of the nine and the solidarity the rest of us can muster for them and the ongoing struggle for peace and justice.

It was a wonderful initiative of the decommissioners to respond to the latest phase on the war on Iraq to focus on the war machine in their midst. As that war geared up we had marched and we had demanded no more killing. The government's response was "you can have your protest as long as we can have our war!" Five of us in Ireland, the Pitstop Ploughshares, weren't willing to cut that deal. We moved from protest to nonviolent resistance and made our way to Shannon Airport where the bulk of U.S. troop carriers were being refueled en route to the invasion of Iraq. We took hammers and a mattock and disarmed the U.S. Navy War Plane. We invited the Gardai who stumbled across us

into the action - to resist the mass murder and destruction that was being prepared and has since been visited on the people of Iraq. They declined, cuffed us and took us to Limerick Prison and a three year sojourn through the courts.

One ironic note is that two of the hammers we wielded had been used on a B52 Bomber in New York in THE lead up to Daddy Bush's Gulf War of '91. The B52 was grounded and four of us, the ANZUS Ploughshares, served a year in jail. But there is such respect for private property, if not for human life, that on release the F.B.I. returned our hammers and bolt cutters. We sent one of the hammers to England where Chris Cole wielded it on British Aerospace equipment to be exported to the Indonesian military in the war on the East Timorese. On release from prison Chris handed the same hammer to the "Seeds of Hope Ploughshares", four women who disarmed a British Aerospace Hawk in Lancashire set for export to the Indonesian Air Force. They were acquitted by a Liverpool jury and passed it on to Susan van der Hijden and Fr. Martin Newell who totalled the nuclear convoy vehicle that carries nuclear warheads from Aldermaston to the Faslane Tridents. On their release, the hammer was returned to me and struck again at Shannon. After three long trials and 3 1/2 years and a million Iraqi deaths we were acquitted unanimously by a Dublin jury.

These are stories of resistance. Stories of humble, far from perfect folk acting in solidarity with those humans in the firing line on the edge of empire. These stories offer hope in a time when we are told there is no hope. Such is the story of those friends who now find themselves before the Brighton courts for their very human act at EDO. The audacity to hope and act against empire and corporations that present as untouchable. Acting in compassion to the cries from East Timor, Iraq, Gaza, Afghanistan. Cries of people regarded as expendable by those in the boardrooms of EDO, BAE and calling the shots from government offices.



Israeli F16

three people chained themselves to barrels of concrete outside the gates of EDO MBM in protest at the bombardment of Lebanon by the Israeli army. Over a thousand people died in the month long bombardment of Lebanon, ambulances were targeted and civilian facilities such as schools were not safe. The Israelis made use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), F16s and Hellfire missiles; all weapons that EDO MBM have been linked to. The three activists were charged with aggravated trespass: trespassing with intent to prevent lawful business. The defendants argued that EDO's business was not lawful. The success of the case hinged on whether details of EDO's business would be disclosed to the court. EDO argued that their business was transparent and that information could be obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). However, when freedom of information requests were made to the DTI it was revealed that the company were blocking all such disclosure.

Over the years David Jones and other directors of EDO MBM/ITT have been questioned in court about the company's complicity in war crimes and about whether the company manufactures



Israeli F16 bomb rack being armed

components used by the Israeli army. This scrutiny has led to the resignation of several directors. In 2006 David Jones, long term MD of EDO MBM, resigned after apparently perjuring himself in a court case in November 2005. Before the buyout of EDO Corporation by ITT in December 2007 eight directors had resigned. One, Stephen Northam, had written to campaigners to let them know that he no longer worked for the company.

In January 2009, during the bombing of Gaza, the Green Party forwarded another motion to the council condemning EDO's role in manufacturing components used by the Israelis. On 17th January 2009 the motion was erased from the council meeting's agenda on the basis that the Conservatives did not think the issue was 'relevant' to the public in Brighton and Hove. The same evening the six decommissioners broke into EDO MBM/ITT.



UAV Predator drone

In the five year history of local opposition to EDO MBM/ITT local activists have used a full toolbox of tactics to highlight EDO's complicity in war crimes and have utilised all the 'democratic' processes available to attempt to stop them profiting from the suffering of the people of Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan and Lebanon.



# WHO ARE EDO?

## EDO WEAPONS USED IN IRAQ AND PALESTINE

EDO MBM/ITT are a key partner in the development of Raytheon's Paveway guided bomb programme. The Paveway bomb was the most used air weapon in the 2003 attack on Iraq. 70% of all munitions launched in the initial 'shock and awe' bombing were Paveway bombs. Records show EDO MBM have exported parts to the US company General Dynamics, that make the bomb bodies of the US Paveway bombs on a regular basis at least since 2006. EDO MBM currently manufacture hardbacks and ancillaries for the new generation of UK Paveway IV guided bombs as part of a global assembly line that stretches from the US to Sardinia. Since 2003, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed as a direct result of the military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The guided bombs used in these immoral and illegal acts of aggression were directly and knowingly assisted by EDO MBM's research and development of the Paveway system.

On these facts alone, EDO MBM/ITT are complicit in crimes against humanity and war crimes under international law. Any damage done to their factory by the decommissioners action in January 2009 pales into insignificance when this is taken into account. But EDO MBM's complicity goes further still...

### EDO AND ISRAEL

Since 2004 two managing directors of the company have confirmed the company owns the patents of two essential components used by the Israeli Air Force F16 aircraft called the VER-2.

Open sources and statements by directors of the company prove that the Zero Retention Force Arming Unit and the Ejector Release Unit (ERU) 151 are both used in the VER-2 bomb rack. In 1990, Flight International reported that the Lucas Western 'Zero Retention Force Arming Unit' had 'already been fitted to Tornados, Israeli F-16s, Australian F-111s, USAF F-15Es and USN A-6s and A-7s'. Between 2003 and 2007 EDO MBM advertised on its Brighton website that it was 'actively manufacturing'

the EDO MBM Zero Retention Force Arming Unit.

EDO MBM advertised the VER-2 until 2004 when managing director David Jones hastily removed it because, as he stated under oath 'we were experiencing protests' and 'didn't want to advertise what we particularly do to outside people who were likely to use it against us'.

EDO MBM's website continues to advertise the ERU-151 while directors of the company have denied under oath that it has ever been made, sold, exported by them or by anyone else. However during an investigation buy the Information Commissioner in 2008 the UK Government Department for Business (DBIS) admitted that since 2000 the company had applied for arms trade export licenses to export the ERU-151 but refused to disclose dates, or destinations, claiming this might damage the commercial interests of the firm.

In March 2009 both the UK Government and the Information Commissioner confirmed that these license applications had been approved.

In August 2009 the Head of Export Policy Unit at the UK government Export Control Organization admitted that these licenses had not been found in initial 2007 searches of the license documents under a Freedom of Information Act request, or during a further four week internal review, because the company had described the ERU-151 in its applications in an 'unconventional' way. Despite this the Government claim that this does not prove that directors lied in court about the ERU-151 because it is possible the licenses were never used. The Department of Business claim they do not collect information about when military export licenses are actually used.

Currently EDO MBM has 55 arms export licences in force The company may also be describing the military items to be exported in an 'unconventional' manner so as to escape the scrutiny of arms export controls. The same tactic may be

Through the back of the cupboard into the land of the sodium light queen. All appear as made of stone.

Spray paint to pen the reason, hammers to open the window. The noise changes from clandestine hush to psycho-mechanical wailing frantically to warn to storm troopers. The noise as complete as silence, the smells became exaggerated, sight more focused. Three seconds had passed. He would say later there were no ring leaders on that day. No conspiracy of hard core extremists. It was true. As he looked at the commercial apocalypse at his feet and those around him his hands were shaking, picking fragments of glass from his chest as his mind raced from image to image and to another time, light years past.

The dummy missile going through the window at the second attempt, the bomb proof laptops too tough to break, solvents fizzing on the linoleum, innumerable computers files and folders. Lathe machinery, tools, broken windows, chairs, desks, electrically wired worktops nearly electrocuting Tom at the second barricade. Phone lines ripped from plaster walls. The family photo he'd place safely in a drawer interrupted his train of thought.

His lungs were heaving. So hot but his skin freezing with cooled sweat, his shirt suffocating him. It was suddenly very quiet. He found a stereo and a plug socket. Soon there were three playing simultaneously. Tin-Tin was wearing an engineer's three quarter length white jacket and asking us what kind of missiles we'd like with our burgers. We recommend the Bilder burger.

Ornella was smiling an unreadable smile. The Buddhist and the Bolshevik negotiating the moving of a filing cabinet, the drawer kept falling open. He would remember they were laughing but wasn't sure.

The police were trying to sound hard on the other side of the door by now. Nobody took any notice. He was singing. It sounded to him as if it came from someone else. "If I had a hammer. I'd hammer in the morning. I'd hammer in the evening. All over this land. I'd hammer out danger. I'd hammer out warning..." CS gel looked like silly string. Neon blue and too late. They smoked quickly and he shook hands shyly with everybody. It was a ridiculous gesture but important to him. "Get down on the floor" The testosterone team had finally arrived. Their statements would later say that the decommissioners cowered in the corner. I was there and I saw them. The only individuals showing fear that night were in uniform. They were all calm as if they'd all experienced a collective catharsis.

He smoked, laid among the glass. The policeman took his cigarette and squashed it on the floor with his boot. They needed a polish. The vertical blinds blew in the wind, the windows all gone. The police were cuffing their hands behind their backs. Tin-Tin nodded downwards to the logo on his jacket, "You can't arrest me, I work here!"

**Elijah is one of the EDO decommissioners**



# "WHO AM I? I WORK HERE!"

Elijah Smith

“**H**UMANITARIAN agencies have expressed.....incidents...alleged white phosphorous ...school...UN...holds up his daughter killed by...a thousand dead...and now the weather. “

Before: It had been cold for weeks and he realised it wasn't any more. There was ice on the roof that had been home for a month but he wasn't cold. "Must be time to go" he spoke out loud. He told himself off out loud for talking to himself and passed through the door of the pallet/tarpaulin construction in a vain attempt to get away from himself. The radio faded away.

Frenchay Industrial Estate, Bristol, looked like Legoland; Lifeless plasticity of unoccupied houses and manicured lawns. Boeing's broken windows boarded up off the starboard bow, victim of some unidentified force of nature. He nearly smiled but couldn't be bothered.

His hands numbed, clenching the sugar frosted scaffold of the tripod spanning the flat part of the roof he called Mount Raytheon. Ironic to think the safest place to avoid the authorities was on the roof of the largest missile supplier on planet Earth. He felt an urge to leave, it was itching every fibre, making him press his lips white together.

Searching his pockets clumsily for a small piece of newspaper his fingers felt wooden against his leg. He retrieved the paper but merely held it pointlessly. He could see the image in his mind. When he showed it to others they expressed the horror that he felt from the scraps of paper in his head. He didn't feel so alone when he looked at the picture - it didn't hurt him as much as he felt it should. It was removed from reality, he hadn't seen this, it was paper.

Behind the mutilated child were two men, her father and brother the caption said. Their eyes had no pretence or veil, demand or question; she was gone but they demanded justice. He felt they were watching him to and decided to try

harder. He felt sick and ineffectual against such horror.

He read the newspapers that arrived the night before, pulled up on a rope in an old sports bag with a broken zip. He and the security guard employed to watch him had become acquainted weeks ago when he'd let his colleague into the building, coming down off the roof and using a stick through the letter box to do so. A nearly unbelievable occurrence in the circumstances. The news seemed even less real.

Afterwards: The PA system is right outside his cell door. Sunday morning, he feels as if he is in some crappy cult movie with subtitles. "Whassitallabout?" He said to his cell mate by way of a morning greeting. It wasn't a question, a format for speaking when there's nothing say. They'd shared a cell for weeks, he didn't know his first name and felt it would be wrong to ask now.

"Last call, Kit change! One's two's three's and fou-r's" The screws voice changes when he announced the non-arrival of his imaginary train. He loved that PA system. We took the piss just for the opportunity to laugh. "Bang up five minutes. Five- minutes. What a wrong-un!"

During: As they went into the factory he was looking at their eyes, later he would say he felt like a participant observer. The fence stood guard over the palace, each spear three pronged and lifeless. They paid one finger, the price of admission. He could smell the blood. Centurions of the fence upright, to attention soaked up the sacrifice silently. "What to do?" The eyes asked each other. The digit nearly ripped off held up in the centre, fountain of scarlet green in the orange light. "It's a scratch, let's go". They looked at him, he felt their eyes. It was a necessary lie but he didn't want to see their judgement. Black, dark of night. Uneven ground underfoot. Air so sharp, clear, cold, precious. Shapes across the half light. Noises small threaten to condemn us. Towering trees our silent judges nudge each other knowingly.

widespread throughout the arms industry and the thousands of companies that export military components every year without any of the scrutiny that EDO MBM have been placed under.

On 21 April 2009 Foreign Office minister David Miliband admitted in parliament that UK military components had been used by the Israeli Air Force in its attacks on Gaza. 'British made components for F16s have been exported to the United States where Israel was the ultimate end-user,' he said. The next day another FCO minister Bill Rammell, Deputy Head of the Counter Proliferation Department stated before the Committees On Arms Export Control. 'We believe that there is IDF equipment that was used in Operation Cast Lead, and it almost certainly contained British-supplied components'. In respect of F16s, helicopters and armoured personnel carriers, either on an incorporated or an unincorporated basis, there have been no approvals since Lebanon 2006.' Under a five year Standard Individual Export Licence (SIEL), if the ERU-151 licence was approved in 2002, then EDO MBM could still have been exporting it directly to Israel up to

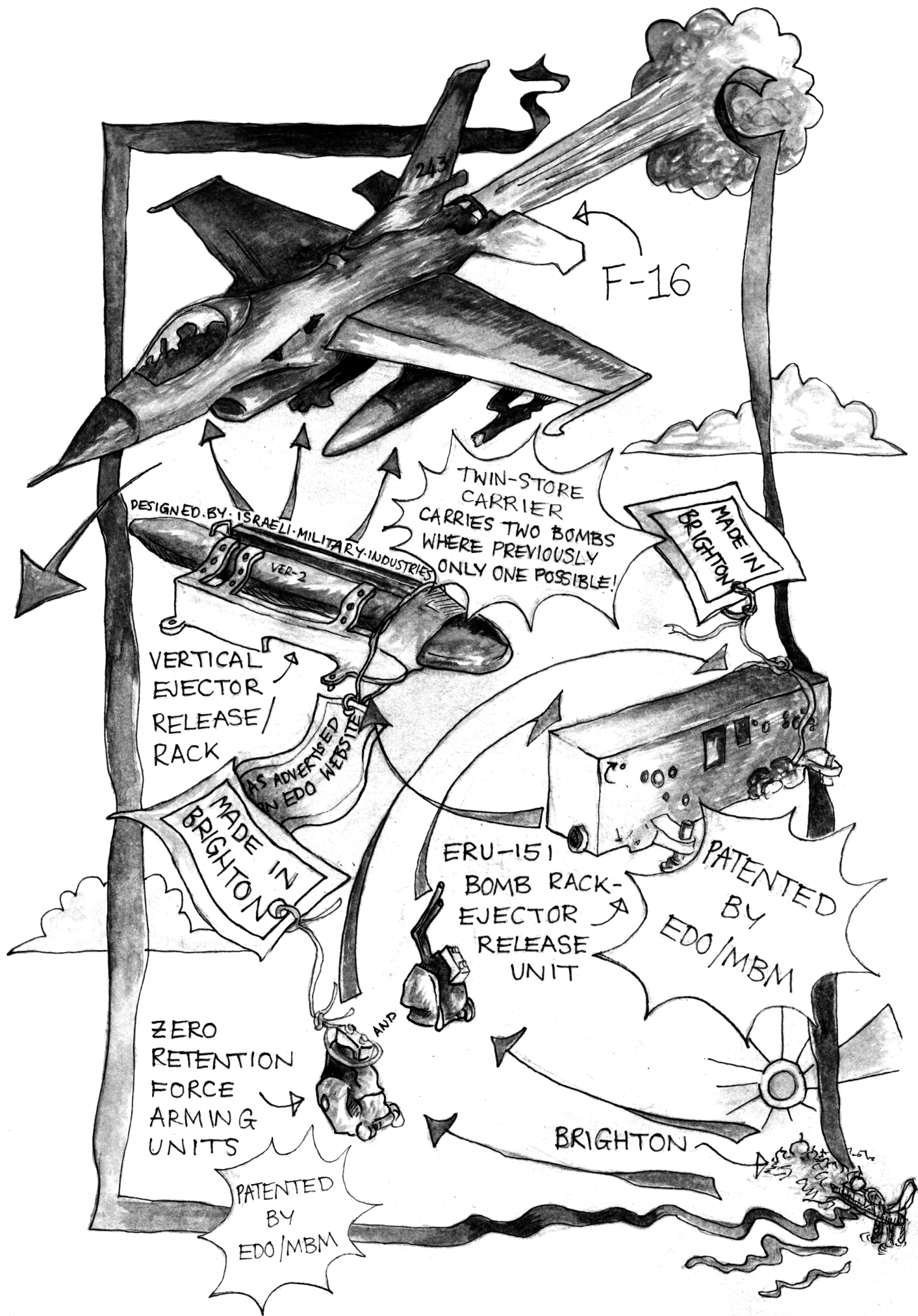
2007. If approved around the time of the Lebanon war of 2006, then EDO MBM could still have been making and exporting it to Israel indirectly, via the USA, France or another country, right up to the time of the decommissioning action. It is very probable that such contracts include the regular provision of spares and replacement parts for the equipment that EDO MBM have owned the sole patent to since 1998.

As of August 2009 the UK government refuses to confirm or deny if they hold any information relating to EDO MBM/ITT's exports to Israel. The Government claim international relations with allied governments could be damaged by any such disclosure, and any disclosure of exports to sensitive destinations could lead to the company being targeted by 'pressure groups' in further acts of direct action. The question arises. If there is nothing to hide, why do the UK government refuse to provide information. All this contingent evidence leads us to just one highly probable conclusion. EDO MBM are arming Israel.

By the Scintilla Research Project



May Day anti-EDO protest in Brighton



all the Trident testing equipment into the Loch. We call all of this damage 'disarmament' and 'nuclear crime prevention'. Our actions led to many hundreds of trials. Every trial is important because each one confronts the state and the legal system where they are most vulnerable - on a major law and order issue. We have won many of our cases and we have found that the more we rely upon ethical and legal arguments and the more 'effective' (capable of actually stopping the illegality - i.e. damaging the weapons themselves) the action is the more likely we are to persuade juries to acquit us. This is why our campaign is causing such political and legal ripples. Traditionally the law has been used against the 'people' rather than the 'state' - predominantly against the poor and disadvantaged. Yet now, the people have turned this around and have openly challenged the whole legal basis, and thus legitimacy, of the Armed Forces - one of the pillars of the State. They are demanding a people-centred law

not a state or corporation-centred law. Trident Ploughshares is based on taking power back and transforming it into processes capable of enhancing fundamental human morality. It aims to empower ordinary citizens to peacefully tear down the machinery of violence and to build up respect for fundamental human rights.

It is thus quite clear why Trident Ploughshares supports the 'decommissioners' of EDO. The principles of their actions are very close to ours. We wish them every success in their court cases, and the strength and hope to continue with their non-violent and peaceful decommissioning of weapons used to perpetuate war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity. We are part of the same struggle.

**Angie Zelter is part of the Trident Ploughshares network.**

For the full story of the Loch Goil action, legal arguments and Trident Ploughshares disarmament actions see Angie Zelter, *Trident on Trial - the case for people's disarmament*, published by Luath, 2001. ISBN 978-1842820049





# TRIDENT PLOUGHSHARES SUPPORT FOR DECOMMISSIONERS

Angie Zelter

**W**E live in a dangerous world where our 'leaders' and political institutions are failing to recognise humanity's interconnectedness and the need for global co-operation to solve the pressing social and environmental crises that threaten the whole web of life on our fragile planet. Many ordinary global citizens understand what is going wrong and even know and practice some of the solutions. Many are working desperately hard to live in sustainable, inclusive and loving ways but are being undermined by the narrow, self-interested, power abusing, profit-oriented schemes of corporations backed up by politicians, militarists and religious fundamentalists.

I believe that people have a right and a responsibility to do all in their power to live in peace and justice and not to be implicated in wrongdoing, injustice or exploitation. We are all responsible for what is done in our names or what we benefit from. In practical terms this means that we in the UK are responsible for the degradation and pollution of our planet, the extinction of species, the poverty, the resource wars, that result from our insatiable greed for the resources from other peoples' lands and seas rather than producing them sustainably for ourselves. Our government indulges in 'free trade' rather than 'fair trade', sells weapons of war that encourage violent conflict around the globe, is more interested in making money than making sure people get fed or educated. There is a tremendously important battle being fought at the moment between those who want to keep the global economic system intact as it is, to shore it up and reform it a little but essentially to keep it going and those of us who want a new economic order that is led by humane, co-operative principles based on socially equitable and environmentally sustainable principles, that sees money as a useful exchange tool and not as a prime directive.

In this ostensibly 'democratic' country of ours that purports to rely upon the rule of law it

is thus up to all of us to do what we can to challenge injustice and unethical behaviour. When this behaviour also breaches major international humanitarian law we even have the law on our side. Trident Ploughshares ([www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org)) base our whole campaign on international law and the basic human right to life. We recognise the legitimacy of law only in so far as it is based on common human morality and international humanitarian law is solidly based on fine ethical principles. We encourage people to come together as 'global citizens' to begin the task of 'dismantling' the UK nuclear weapon system in a completely non-violent, peaceful and accountable manner. We see our work not as criminal damage but as responsible 'peoples' disarmament'. Since the beginning of our disarmament actions at Faslane in Scotland in August 1998 around 2240 people have been arrested which has resulted in 520 trials.

The disarmament actions have ranged from blockades, to fence-cutting, to swimming onto Trident submarines and destroying equipment, to dismantling a research lab, disabling military vehicles, to painting 'War Crime Warnings' on military equipment and handing out leaflets to military base workers urging them to 'Refuse to be a War Criminal'. The majority of these disarmament actions involve people in blockades and fence cutting and have caused minimal damage for maximum court-clogging disruption. However, there have also been at least nine attempts at substantial disarmament damage with three groups managing to complete their actions causing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage and delaying the operation of the Trident related equipment. For instance, breaking into RAF Wittering and damaging one of the nuclear convoy vehicles; making it unfit to transport nuclear warheads up to Faslane; swimming onto HMS Vengeance at Barrow and destroying equipment on the conning tower; taking a boat to 'Maytime' in Loch Goil and throwing

# A PERSPECTIVE ON THE DECOMMISSIONING AS VIEWED FROM GAZA

Ewa Jasiewicz

We're like trees, we have our roots and they allow us to grow, little by little, we grow up and then they cut us down. But, whatever they throw at us, whatever they do to us, we are still here and we will still be here.

– Om Bassim, Jabaliya Camp, January 2009.

## 'Our Home'

**A**T the beginning of this war, when the bombs first started falling intensively, I remember lying on a mattress, late at night, I don't remember where, maybe in Beit Hanoun hospital, maybe in Beit Lahiya. As I slipped into sleep, I could hear explosions, thuds, one after the other, some near, some distant, some to our east, to our west, again and again. In my semi-consciousness I felt they were all going off in my house, in my home, that the bombs were exploding in different rooms, upstairs, downstairs, next door, under me, over me. I didn't feel fear, I felt a closeness, a holding together. Maybe it was a consequence of Gaza being an incarcerated space, a walled camp, so small and close-knit, a prison, but also, a house, a home, with families in every part, every corner, every room, a community of relatives from north to south, every explosion and massacre felt acutely, felt intimately as if it had happened to ones own family, in the home, this home.

The war was felt and heard in every home, it invaded some homes, soldiers occupied and destroyed people's homes, tank shells, burning white phosphorous and bulldozers smashed homes, some people were buried under their homes, some are still entombed in their homes. Where is this home now? 50,000 people are homeless according to the UN. Living in tents, classrooms, crowded rooms in the homes of relatives, under tarpaulin stretched over roofless rooms on family land, still standing. If the



bombing resumes, and the attacks resume, this will still be a home to the people of Gaza, each bomb, and each hit, acutely felt, shuddered and shouldered by each community and family. My friend Om Bassem, mother of nine, living in Jabaliya explained calmly yesterday, 'They besiege us and take away our electricity, ok, we carry it, they take away our gas, our flour, our food, ok, take it, we can take it, they take away our drinking water, take it. And our children, a mother grows her son until adulthood, focusing on nothing but bringing up her children, and then he is taken away, and we take it. We spend our whole lives working, saving, building, our homes for us and our children and our children's



children, and then they destroy it, bomb it to the ground, and we take it. We're like trees, we have our roots and they allow us to grow, little by little, we grow up and then they cut us down. But, whatever they throw at us, whatever they do to us, we are still here and we will still be here, we can take anything they do to us. God is big, God is bigger. And thanks be to God for all of this. We are steadfast'. And she smiles.

### To the Dead Zone

We got the call early Sunday morning. We finally had 'co-ordination' to get into the closed military zones that Israeli forces had been occupying for the past three weeks. These were the 'closed military zones' in which ambulance staff, the Red Cross and UN had been fired upon and rescuers killed trying to enter.

These 'closed areas', these blind spots and dead zones, are Towam, Zaiytoun, Atatra, Ezbit Abed Rubbu, Toffah. These are communities, neighbourhoods, with schools and shops and homes that people would sit out in front of, on plastic chairs drinking tea, fingering prayer beads, staring at the sparkling blue sea, communities with farmland, orange orchards and strawberry fields. All locked down. The medics from the Red Crescent would come back by turns stunned and weary eyed. An old man with a gunshot wound to his head clasping a white flag from Atatra, bodies trampled by tanks – unidentifiable – and the girl, the famous, red, half eaten girl, Shahed Abu Halim, aged one and a half according to paramedics, left to die and half eaten by dogs, her body a beacon of horror for everyone who saw her being brought in to Kamal Odwan hospital in Jabaliya.

So many times, our ambulances skimmed the edges of these dead zones, where families were imprisoned, snipers holding them effectively hostage, the dead lying in the street unclaimed, witnessed daily by neighbours and loved ones. On occasion we managed to grab bodies on the periphery, mangled by missiles shot from surveillance drones. With the Ministry of Health ambulances, we rode to Karama – Dignity – where two men were reportedly found dead by rescue workers having bled to an undignified death from treatable injuries. Unreachable.

These were the areas that civilians had been shot dead trying to exit, some gunned down whilst holding white flags such as Ibtisam Ahmad Kanoon, 40, from Atatra, who lay dying from 11.30am until 2pm the next day until relatives could carry her out. Her husband, son and mother all walking with her – her son Mohammad Bassam Mohammad al Kanoora, 23, injured by shrapnel to the head and Zahiye Mohammad Ahmad al Kanoora, 60, injured in the back.

Like the family of Musbah Ayoub, 64, from Izbet Abed Rubbu, who bled to death from shrapnel injuries to his legs, as relatives frantically called the Red Crescent and Red Cross for three days. Like Wael Yusef Abu Jerahd, 21, from Zeitoun who was hit by tank shell shrapnel as he went to get a drink of water in his home. He lay dying for four hours, his family calling for help and appealing to Israeli occupation soldiers to enable his evacuation. Instead Israeli forces killed two paramedics traveling in a Libyan Red Crescent jeep attempting to get to him, and occupied the family's home, imprisoning the family, 12 people, in a small kitchen along with their dead son, for three days. When the family were finally allowed to leave, they had two members to carry for over a kilometer over broken ground and trashed industrial sites; their son Wael, and his 64-year old mother, who couldn't walk because of her diabetic condition and fresh nervous break-down over the killing of her son and her days and nights by his dead side, as Israeli occupation soldiers shot from her house.

The stories of those who bled to death because Israeli forces would not allow ambulance access to collect them, and the families who had to witness their demise and live with their bodies,

## ACTIVISM AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE – VERY BRIEF NOTES FROM A BEGINNER

The Buddhist precept (training guideline) of non-harm, known as ahimsa within the Gandhian way of life, is seen as enough for a spiritual life by many. Gandhi promoted the principle of ahimsa very successfully by applying it to all spheres of life, particularly to politics. His non-violent resistance movement satyagraha had an immense impact on India, impressed public opinion in Western countries and influenced the leaders of civil rights movements such as Martin Luther King.

Gandhi thought ahimsa precludes not only the act of inflicting a physical injury, but also mental states like evil thoughts and hatred, unkind behavior such as harsh words, dishonesty and lying, all of which he saw as manifestations of violence incompatible with ahimsa.

However the precept of non-harm can be interpreted in an individualistic way so one can just look after the ethics of one's own personal life. This can lead to a tendency for Buddhists to lead a conservative and quietist path.

I travelled to India a couple of years ago and was impressed by the very dynamic style of Buddhism of the Dalits, the oppressed, who followed Dr Ambedkar, an ex-untouchable himself, the first Law Minister of India. There are some Buddhist academics who say Buddha's teachings have been misunderstood, a fundamental aspect of the Dharma (teachings) is to bring about social change.

### So what is nonviolent direct action (NVDA)?

Nonviolence by itself is passive, but alongside direct action it becomes active, preventing violence.

This in turn leads to the dilemma that NVDA can be done with a hurtful and hateful intention. When this happens then the cycle of violence can be perpetuated. I personally don't have a problem with damaging property which is designed to kill people. Our action at EDO was taken at night so nobody would feel threatened or be harmed accidentally by our actions.

I am inspired by the Ploughshares movement which is faith based and takes its inspiration from the Old Testament prophecy to 'beat swords into ploughshares'. The ploughshares follow several principles in their actions which are key to both the effectiveness of the action and the strength of their faith based aspect, notably:

- *Speaking truth to power* – being accountable,

identifying themselves and explaining their reasons for such extreme action.

- *Subverting punishment* – Being willing to accept the consequences of their actions. Trustworthy support is indispensable to actions with serious consequences.

### Militarism

The brutality, bloodshed, hatred and killing caused by warfare between nations is a symptom of a sickness within the hearts of those involved.

Maybe we can't do much about others hearts but there are practical aspects of the arms trade which can be given attention.

- Arms manufacture consumes vast financial and material resources which could be used elsewhere in society.
- Large military corporations use blatantly corrupt practices to acquire business. BAE are good at this!
- Arms are sold to governments who are known to abuse human rights.
- Armed conflict becomes the only method of conflict resolution.
- Arms manufacturers have a vested interest in wars and have links within governments which promote 'Hawkish attitudes in the corridors of power'.
- Wars cause much of the migration and refugee problems worldwide.
- We are all brutalised by the glorification of wars, violence and guns.
- Militarism opposes equality between the sexes because it relies on the degradation of women. Rape is used as a weapon and a military tactic.

In our modern society there are many examples of the state wanting to control space and in reality not being able to do this. This leads to the state lashing out due to its loss of influence. War attempts to destroy open and shared space.

In Colombia social activists describe a term called 'social weaving' which is the act of creating invisible threads between people as part of the repair of social networks and a counter to the fear of state repression.

Social action against war is effective. In Greece, Spain and Italy it has been possible to ward off the militaristic aspirations of the state.

Social space is vital for dialogue which makes conflict resolution possible.

**Bob is one of the EDO Decommisioners**

action is our only route forward – even if it means putting our own freedoms on the line.

Palestine has been the root cause of conflict between the East and the West for some time in many people's mind. Al Qa'ida branched from anger and resentment to the ongoing occupation, without these apartheid conditions towards Arabs in their homelands maybe the war would have never come home to the West. Palestine was part of the British empire until 1948, the Palestinians understandably refused a UN plan to partition their homeland into a Jewish and a Palestinian state, but in 1948 the establishment of the state of Israel was declared. By 1949, the Nakba ("catastrophe") had resulted in the ethnic cleansing of two thirds of the Palestinian population and Israel occupied 78 per cent of Palestine.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip have been under an illegal Israeli military occupation since 1967. Today over 6 million Palestinians live as refugees, hundreds of thousands of whom still live in overcrowded refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian people live in constant fear. Countless lives have been lost to economic sanctions against Hamas, which deny basic health care and human rights. "Each day is a struggle as they try to survive against an ever present aggressive military force" said a humanitarian worker on her arrival home in the U.K from Palestine.

The first foreign sale of the Paveway three series GBU-27 -with components made by EDO MBM, as advertised on their own website- was Israel's acquisition of 500 Paveway bombs equipped with BLU-109 penetrating warheads, authorized in 2004. Delivery of such precision guided weaponry was accelerated from the U.S at the request of Israel in 2006.

Operation Cast Lead, also known as the Gaza Massacre, began on December the 27th 2008. The Israeli Defence Force deliberately targeted individuals in their homes, schools, hospitals as well as U.N compounds. The BBC reported that more than 400,000 people in Gaza were left without running water. The BBC further reported that 4000 homes had been ruined, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless. More than 1400 Palestinians were killed during the Israeli

offensive between December 2008 and January 2009. More than 300 of those were children, which shows how indiscriminately they were bombing the strip, a clear breach of international law.

Following the Nuremberg Trials which followed the Second World War, the Chief Prosecutor Robert K. Jackson declared: "The very essence of the Nuremberg Charter is that individuals have intentional duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual state." At the Tokyo War Crimes trial, it was further declared "Anyone with knowledge of illegal activity and an opportunity to do something about it is a potential criminal under international law unless the person takes affirmative measures to prevent commission of the crimes."

So in the early hours of Saturday 17th January I entered the EDO MBM factory and smashed it to pieces to the best of my ability. I believed our actions were lawful and justified in a world where the profits of corporations seems to be put before the lives of Palestinian children. I only wish I had acted earlier and caused more damage. Under European law, EDO MBM and the UK government could be charged with assisting in the perpetuation of war crimes in the occupied territories.

I chose not to hit and run, as others have done in the past. I wanted to take full responsibility for my actions, as I believe them to be lawful. So I stayed and prayed in my own little atheist way hoping a jury would be able to understand that I was only working towards peace and justice. When an air force or an army attack a nation indiscriminately and kill innocent men, women and –especially- children, it is our duty to stand in the way, in whichever way possible.

#### **Tom is one of the EDO decommissioners**

run the length and breadth of the Gaza Strip. When ambulances could finally enter some areas, they were stoned by desperate and abandoned relatives. It is a war crime, under the Geneva Conventions, to prevent the passage of or target emergency staff who are trying to collect the injured.

#### **The Walking Living**

We made out at the break of dawn, red lights rotating into action, speeding towards Towam, close to Atatrah. Drizzle mixed with a haze of white phosphoric smoke, like a thin grey gauze over our eyes. Above us, surprisingly, and awesomely, soared a rainbow, high, wide and perfect, arching over the grey broken streets of Jabaliya and the freshly bombed Taha mosque with its' insides spilled over the road, the knocked down houses like knocked out teeth, downed power lines, blown out and blackened apartment blocks, grey all around us, but if we looked up, a beautiful technicolour arch.

The first body was that of a young man, face down and crumpled outside the doors of the Noor Al Hooda mosque, his navy jumper singed from shrapnel injuries.

Behind us was a wasteland. Where houses had been, just days earlier, there were jagged edges of crushed walls, mangled with clothes, glass, books, furniture; houses turned into a lumpy sea of lost belongings, bombed and bulldozed into the ground. Amidst all this, was the crumpled body of Miriam Abdul Rahman Shaker Abu Daher, aged 87. It was her arm that we saw first, sticking out of a dusty blanket, trapped under rubble. We managed to hoist her onto a stretcher, paramedics took her away and I was left standing next to a man. 'That was my mother' he said to me. He explained what happened: 'We left three days ago (15th January) with our children and we came back for her, but we couldn't get to her, we called the Red Cross, they couldn't help. They bulldozed everything here, maybe more than 20 houses. We thought we could return, we didn't think they would do all this We couldn't come back for three days so we don't know how she died, maybe she died of the cold? After a few hours we had come back and planes were shooting at us, we were just meters away from our house, but the shooting



was too much. We thought if the soldiers came they wouldn't harm her because she's so old, we thought maybe they would give her food or look after her. We didn't expect them to bulldoze the whole area', explained Awad Abdullah Mustapha Abu Daher, 45 years old. We took four dead into our ambulance. The Red Crescent would take another 32 before the day was over.

A column of people was walking slowly, some with donkey carts, some rumbling over the clod ground on motorbikes. All making their way home, for the first time, to Atatrah. Atatrah, with its new blasted out school, holes big enough to drive through, a crippled mosque, and burnt houses smoked above us, sloped up on a hill, with rolling strawberry fields and palm trees and the beach behind it, such a beautiful place to live, lush and alive and green. Now, according to locals, its almost unidentifiable, residents are disorientated by the missing houses, confused between the lost streets and new 'streets' – tracts bulldozed between houses, gaping holes in half buildings and land churned into sand. I followed the column. Walking behind it was reminiscent of so many funeral processions that have trod the streets of Gaza and Palestine as a whole. A slow column, a long walk, an intergenerational walk, a thousand backs in front of us, for the dead, for the living, for the jailed, a return after eviction, a return after each invasion, The Walk, after being released from every imprisonment in every temporary prison by Israeli soldiers, the Beit Lahiya High School, a neighbour's home, The Walk back all the time and through time, to overcome grief, dispossession, humiliation, a collective walk. I wanted to accompany that walk.

Climbing up the main road, pulverized and impassable by car, a group of 10 men come walking towards us carrying their heavy dead





wrapped in blankets, struggling to find their footing on their descent. We spend the rest of the day searching for the dead, along with everybody else, another collective walk, a collective search, 'Where are the martyrs? Are there martyrs here?' and to everyone, the Arabic Islamic expressions of condolences and goodwill, 'Thanks be to God for your peace', 'God will give', 'God protect you'. We are following the scent of rotting corpses, the scent sometimes of already decayed flesh, or decaying animals – a donkey, a goat, dogs, a horse. One man we bring from Toam, Moayan Abu Hussain, 37, is brought to us by donkey cart, his badly decomposed and bloated body wrapped in two blankets. He fills the white zip up heavy plastic body bag.

The following day, again, in the morning, bodies are being brought out of the ground, from crushed homes, and from tunnels. At the top of Ezbet Abed-Rubbu, early in the morning, we ride to retrieve three bodies, three men, fighters, from the Sobuh family. Locals say they were trapped in their tunnel when collaborators told the Israeli army they were there and the tunnel was collapsed from both ends, starving them of oxygen and entombing them in a slow death. What does resistance mean when sea, air and land are controlled by the occupier? Going underground is literal. The walk now is becoming a crawl. F16s soar low above our heads, and continue to in the intervening days, a reminder of who dominates here. As local men dig up their dead, the stench overwhelming, spitting out death as they work, digging, the men finally surface, to be wrapped immediately in blankets, in front of an audience, the perpetual witnesses here to every crime, every death, every aftermath.

The crowd of perhaps one hundred, strives to pack into the ambulance along with their loved ones, crying, keening, clamoring at the white plastic bags. A boy of maybe 8, with a face etched older with trauma, shouts in a voice of a man, 'Hasby Allah wa Naeme al Wakee!' – 'God will judge them!' But who will judge the Israeli occupation forces and their leaders, political and military, who have perpetrated war crime after war crime here in Gaza? It has to be us. We need to take up our consciences and humanity and translate judgment into action.

Yesterday was a fast-forward blur of destruction, mass pain, broken bodies, lifeless beings, terror on the streets, in homes, in mosques, in ambulances, in hospitals. Yesterday, people were being physically dismembered and today remain so, many still recovering on intensive care units in France, Egypt, Israel. The same states that stayed silent and complicit in this massacre, now take the broken into their bellies and return them patched up, back into a killing zone, a prison where the guards can shoot back in, plough back in and break them all over again at any given moment.

### Torture and Relief

Under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, people were tortured underneath hospitals, burnt, fractured, torn up, and then taken upstairs to be repaired, in the full knowledge, that one they were whole again, skin growing back together again, the same awaited them, they would be taken back down, to be tortured again, the healing a mocking, a thwarted, negated process in itself because of the looming knowledge that it was only to be followed by a repetition of the breaking. This type of collective torture is being practiced here and the complicit



# WHY I SMASHED EDO AND WHY I WAITED TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR MY ACTION

Thomas Woodhead

**O**N the 15th of February 2003, before the invasion of Iraq, I marched with over a million people in London. I remember thinking to myself rather naively that we've won; Britain could never go to war with Iraq after the biggest demonstration in Britain's history. But we only struggled with "half a heart, half a life and half a will", as Daniel Beriganed observed, "The waging of war of course continues, because the waging of peace by our cowardice is partial".

Some politicians made us believe that Iraqis wanted us to come and free them but on the day a million marched in London so did another million in Baghdad - we were clearly being lied to. The war happened and life went on as usual – for me anyway – but it was torn apart for many others. History will look back very badly on the British and American governments for going to war illegally in Iraq 'in our name'.

Under the UN Charter, there are only two circumstances in which the use of force is permissible: in collective or individual self-defense against an actual or imminent armed attack and when the Security Council has directed or authorized use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. Neither of these circumstances existed at the start of 2003 and in their absence the British and U.S. use of force against Iraq was unlawful. The war seriously undermined the UN's status as an international peace keeping body. Which brings me to the conclusion that EDO MBM were complicit to war crimes in at least Iraq.

The death toll of people murdered since the invasion in 2003 is around 1,000,000 which equals around nine Hiroshimas and all for what exactly? Everyone knows that Britain and America are the ones with weapons of mass destruction. In fact America, with British backing, used chemical weapons heavily in Fallujah. Fallujah, contrary to the popular belief,

was actually a stronghold of opposition to Saddam Hussein until the Americans invaded.

Brighton's weapons manufacturers EDO MBM work jointly with Raytheon Systems on the Paveway Laser Guided Bomb which was responsible for much of the shock and awe bombardment in Iraq. The so called coalition also put to use one of the scariest inventions of modern warfare: the drones, known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. In these operations military planes drop bombs whilst the operator sits miles away with a remote control. EDO makes both the 'Sabre' and BRU-71/A MQ-9 Reaper light weight bomb racks for these aircraft. EDO MBM were also the key sponsor of 4th annual Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle Conference that was held in London during October 2004.

The GBU-27 is part of the Paveway series of bombs, used in the first Gulf War. It was the weapon used on February 13, 1991, which hit the Amiriyah bunker which resulted in the deaths of more than 400 Iraqi civilians, predominantly women and children. Fragments of a bomb were also found in a Baghdad market place during the second Gulf War. The markings on the bombs gave a Raytheon serial number and were highly likely to have contained components made in the EDO factory on Home Farm Road, Brighton.

Maybe if we'd had the chance to have a vote more than every four years we could have stopped Britain's involvement in the Iraq catastrophe, but we don't have such a level of democracy in this country. If even a tenth of those who marched in London had acted like the brave Fairford five and disabled the fighter jets on British soil it would have become very difficult for our government to have waged such a murderous crusade. If we are really serious about making peace then non-violent direct



Direct action, strike action, popular occupations, tactics used by Palestinians in the first intifada, and smashed by Israeli counter-tactics of siege, intensified occupation and massive military onslaught, all legitimized by our international governments. The counter-onslaught shows no signs of abatement.

We need to redraw our own battle lines and go further, to do the 'enough' we want to do and be the 'enough' we want to be. Our consciences and history demands this. It's not enough and it will be too late for a new history, authored by others, to judge us, we have to make our own. It is not God that will judge us, it will be our brothers and sisters here in Palestine and in our international community, the widows, the orphans, the childless parents, the living left behind after the dead.

We can't afford yesterday to repeat itself. We cannot wait until tomorrow happens to us. Between yesterday and tomorrow is today and we need to build our intifada today. Our

intifada of solidarity needs to grow beyond demonstrations, and to put Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) politics into practice through direct action. The BDS campaign was initiated and called for by over 135 Palestinian grassroots organizations in 2005, a call that needs to be amplified and spread internationally, targeting the corporations and institutions enabling Israel to keep violating international law and destroying peoples lives. Through direct action, popular disarmament of Israel, and a real grassroots democracy movement, we can collectively come into our 'enough'. We can affect that which hasn't happened yet, we can change what happens tomorrow. This is our intifada, this is our today.

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are those who allow it to happen, and that do not create the conditions to stop this cycle of devastation. People keep being recycled through this trauma, generation after generation, through fresh weapons, new chemicals, new prisons and new ways of the international community maintaining silence, complicity and support for Israeli occupation.

Families are familiar now with the trawling delegations and caseworkers, notebooks in hand, I include myself in this walk, the walk of the hundreds of journalists, human rights workers, Red Crescent, Red Cross, United Nations workers, asking the same questions, noting the same details, preparing families for temporary shelters, giving out plastic sheeting for broken windows and replacement doors, blankets, emergency food packages, tents, cooking stoves, everyone expects them and expects us; the same donor agencies and charities, rolling up their sleeves to issue fresh appeals and re-build the same community centers, police stations, hospitals, that were rebuilt after the last annihilation; a rewind and fast-forwarded cycle of destruction and reconstruction, yesterday and tomorrow being blurred together into a circle of a collectively expected return to ruins and a slow rebuilding, again and again. It is no wonder that 'human rights' workers and the notes and testimonies frantically taken down with shock and condolence, time after time, year after year are met with replies of 'Its all empty, write it down but what will it change? It's all empty'. There is no post-traumatic stress disorder here because there is no real 'post' to the traumatic stress. Traumatic events keep on happening again and again, relief un-processed, grief unprocessed, as people watch and wait and brace themselves for the next attack.

### Pieces

People are left with snippets, fragments, of their loved ones, literally and in memory. Nuggets of film shot on mobile phones pass through multiple hands, of the last of their loved ones, wrapped in white sheets, with hands and tears pouring over them, screaming and screaming, to be shown and shared with fresh tears in real time, again. Like the five from the Abu Sultan, Abbas and Soosa families, demolished



by a tank shell shot into their home as they were drinking morning tea on their doorstep in Shaimaa, Beit Lahiya. Paramedics could not reach them for half an hour as they lay bleeding in pieces outside their home. Asma Abu Sultan, 22, watched her father, brother and uncle bleed to death, 'It was 10.30am and we were drinking tea together in our home when we heard this gigantic bang, I saw my uncle at the door, injured, we went inside, I saw they had no chests, no hand, one was still breathing, I said 'get up my brother' I was telling him please, get up, please don't die, he started to bear witness to God, then he said your father has died. He was draining of life, the blood draining from his face, but he was still alive, and then we couldn't get an ambulance because they kept getting bombed, we kept asking everyone to help us, after half an hour he died from shrapnel wounds to the heart'.

One afternoon, in the yesterdays of this war, we were called out to respond to a car bombing in Gaza City. We arrived on the scene, in bright light, to Palestine square, close to the Ahly al Arabi Hospital. Two injured had already been taken away. The car was a mangled sliced heap. Somehow there was no burning. We picked up a large, headless, man, still bleeding. Nobody wanted to touch him, they were terrified of him. Before we left the scene, someone put a small plastic ID card in my hand, Arabic script and his head, his face, bearded, in his late 30s, taken alive, he looked strong. I couldn't let go of it, as the ambulance bounced along the broken streets, he behind us, handless, legs torn open, on a rickety stretcher, I held it in both hands, and couldn't let go of it, keeping it in my hand wrapped round one end of the stretcher, pressed together, trying to keep it together somehow, close to his body.



A few nights ago, I sat by candlelight with my friend and his 9-year-old son Abed, in Beit Lahiya. I had bought him stickers depicting the human body, the brain, illustrated piece by piece, the human intestinal system, muscular network, the insides of the human eye, the heart, its valves and arteries. Abed fingered them, spread out over the kitchen table in the candlelight, these pieces, pieces I'd seen outside bodies, spilled onto the streets of Gaza. Here they were in his hands, on the table in front of us, in one dimensional colour. He began to sing, 'We're steadfast, steadfast we remain, during this siege, and we remain steadfast'. He sang the words over and over again, fingering the stickers flickering in the candlelight until he sang himself into drowsiness. 'Get up and go to sleep', his father said and we kissed him and he left.

Everyone is trying to pick up the pieces of their invaded lives here, yesterday's attacks and the severing of families from one another, will take years to reconnect, and rebuild, bring together again.

Yesterday can happen again. People expect a tomorrow when Israel will escalate its attacks and go further, casting more lead. Some believe this was a rehearsal for a deeper war, a litmus test that Israel won, because in 21 days of attacks, the international community kept shining a green light for Israel to continue to bomb and kill without restraint. The endgame being a pacified, acquiescent Gaza, with a weak Palestinian Authority, under the control of Israel or, if unrealized, an evicted Gaza, realized through provocations from Israel, extra judicial killings and surprise incursions, eventually responded to with rocket fire from the resistance and then a massive attack and push southward

of the population into the Sinai and an Egyptian protectorate, new camps, and a new redrawing of a map already redrawn so many times through exile and empire.

Yesterday can happen again, a tomorrow that people here have been struggling for over sixty years, still dim, still distant, still carried but harder to imagine in the midst of the grief endured under siege here. The difference we can make is to seize today. The difference between yesterday and the horror, and dispossession and shock all here are still reeling from, and the tomorrow that could bring more of the same, reproducing, re-cycling, the same terrorization and cutting down of people as they pray, walk, sit, stand, heal, fight, the difference between yesterday and tomorrow is our today.

### Today

I told many people, friends, taxi drivers, doctors, policemen, about the peoples' strike on EDO-MBM Technologies in Brighton, UK this month. EDO manufactures the bomb release mechanism for F16s. Activists filmed themselves explaining to camera that they were decommissioning the facility in protest at the company's complicity in the war on the Palestinian people, and specifically the killing of the people of Gaza. Over a quarter of a million pounds worth of damage was caused as activists threw computers out of windows and smashed equipment. They had taken their resistance out of the powerful but symbolic realm of the streets and into the offices of those responsible for arming Israel, physically immobilising their business. Three remain on remand in prison [*at time of writing*].

When I recounted this action to people, I saw an expression come over their faces that I hadn't encountered before when talking about international solidarity. It was a kind of respect, a dawning smile, a sense of surprised pride, a tiny move towards a leveling between the blood sacrifices and living hell of so many here, and sacrifices made by people on comparative comfort zones on the other side of the world - for them. What would the parents of the children blown up by F16s here do if they could? What would we do if our children were being cut down by war planes and we knew

where these weapons were being manufactured and we could confront these arms dealers and stop them arming those responsible for killing our children? Would we not stop them, would we not make the move from the streets to the factories, offices and facilities where these deaths, tomorrow's deaths are in the making, and disarm them, save lives at the physical root of the production of the means of killing? Save lives there so that exhausted and besieged doctors here do not have to try to, under appalling conditions and against all odds; enforce international law outside ourselves, because no one else will do it for us. People here are expecting solidarity activism to go further, and needing it to go much much further.

A friend here, a well-respected intellectual and activist, run ragged through the war participating in interview after interview, writing piece after piece, pieces of resistance writing, expressed his sense of failure last night, that he didn't do enough. That the resistance was dying for all of us, sacrificing for all of us, paying the ultimate price, and what was he doing? Sitting in his comfort zone, his writing a relief, for himself, to himself, making him feel better and stronger but where were his words going? What was the relationship between the words he was writing and speaking and stopping the death, stopping the invading occupation forces? Look at the completeness of Che Guevara, a doctor, a writer, a fighter, a complete man, and what was he, a writer, an academic, activist, but unable to pick up a gun or a body? Crucially, what was 'enough' and when have we done 'enough'?

### Our Lines and 'Enough'

'Enough' is relative, and 'enough' is subjective and incredibly personal, but, a tentative attempt to unpick the crushing pressure of guilt - guilt on all our backs, all over the world, of an impotence and a sense of failure to influence, and a struggle build the means and the movements, to influence change - I think a tentative definition of enough could be, to transgress, to cross our own lines of possibility.

Our own lines of what we believe we can and cannot do have been authored by others and adopted by ourselves. Lines drawn by authorities, re-inscribed with violence and drawn



thick with the threat of detention, imprisonment, the denial of everything that makes life worth living; contact with loved ones, freedom of movement, a natural stimulation of our senses through interaction with our natural environment, our sense of identity, all radically curtailed and undermined through incarceration. And death, the final line, the full stop imposed by absolute power onto the living bodies of those daring to resist, armed or unarmed, lives slammed shut by surveillance plane missiles zapped them into the ground. F16s exploding houses full of people. Ended. All ended. A line drawn under their lives. But where are our lines? 'Enough' will be an ever extending horizon, the edge always ahead of us, but we will never get close to where we need to be as a critical mass to effect change unless we cross our own lines of fear.

'Enough' is when you know you can do more, and you know you can take a step forward into a space of activism that you have never entered before and you do it. 'Enough' is when you know, you have pushed yourself, when you took risks and made sacrifices that you knew would be painful, knew could weigh heavy, could change your life forever, but you did it. When you knew the potential consequences of your actions but you confronted your fears and took the step forward, stepping over your own line. From stepping out into the streets for the first time to demonstrate, to picking up a chair and barricading yourself into your university, to telling the world you're going to decommission an arms factory or war plane or settlement produce facility and doing it, we need to cross our own lines of fear, hesitation, and apprehension. We can push our movements forward, person by person, group by group, party by party, network by network, by crossing our lines and making sacrifices, small compared to the intensive blood letting, loss and devastation here.