The ExCel Centre in London Docklands looks like so many other post industrial buildings, an anonymous grey warehouse at the end of the train line, yields little indication of its contents, role and purpose. Today, the armament companies, countries with dubious records regarding human rights, their contractors, and all sponsored by the British Government were busy setting up their stalls. Tanks, missiles, laser powered drones, military uniform and instruments of torture, all tried and tested on the civilians of Yemen, Iraq, Palestine and Syria were up for sale. Eighteen of us had travelled down to stand in witness alongside Quakers drawn from far and wide but also Buddhists, Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans, Muslims, Jews and others of no particular faith. We stood in the road and blocked the lorries, we crossed the zebra crossing, we sang, we prayed, we chanted, our banners festooned the railings, the children drew pictures, we chalked our slogans on the road and we even had time for a picnic lunch. We were one together, united in opposition to the machinery and brutality of war and we affirmed our individual and collective belief in the supremacy of peace and justice for all.

The second Meeting for Worship of the day started. We sat, at least eight hundred of us continuing to blockade the road. Silence. You could almost hear a pin drop except for the overhead noise of the planes and the crackle of the Police radio. Stillness. Some gave testimony – war could not be justified. Then and midway through, the booming voice of the Police Super, disperse or face arrest, you’re obstructing the road.  Nobody moved. We continued in worship, some of us held hands. The meeting ended, the Police moved close, move to the side of the road or you’ll be arrested, the Super shouted. Some of us moved, some of us remained seated, some of us sung, some of us just held others hands even tighter than before. We tried to explain why we were here, our witness, our testimony but the Police Officer simply replied, they had their orders. The arrests began. Some lay on the ground spread eagle, some prayed, some sung as they were led, dragged and escorted away to the awaiting Police Transits. We clapped and shouted our support. More Police in high viz jackets emerged, two abreast, stone faced, access to the road was now blocked. Those that ventured onto the tarmac were simply led away but no lorry ventured down the road.

Many Friends expressed their thankfulness that they had been there to experience such a spiritually profound and moving experience. A large number of "first-timers" or "not-for-many-yearers" felt energised and inspired to do it again next time. One Friend tweeted: "Outside of a Yearly Meeting, I have never in 33 years of being a Quaker seen a Meeting this big".

In total 45 Quakers were arrested that day. We are asked to hold them in our thoughts.