

# SCARLET WOMEN

15

September 1983/  
May 2019



Scarlet Women 15  
Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat

Foreword

Scarlet Women was the 'newsletter of the socialist feminist current in the Women's Liberation Movement' with 14 issues between 1976 to 1982. It was produced by an editorial collective which was based in North Shields and included women from Tyneside, the north west and London. The purpose of the newsletter was to discuss issues faced by women who identified both as feminists and socialists - this at a time when the left by and large were of the view that the liberation of women from their oppression had to wait until the workers' revolution had triumphed. Issues of the newsletter reported on campaigns and discussions in different parts of the country, as well as issues such as women's reproductive rights, financial independence, imperialism, new technology. It was always concerned with trying to reflect a variety of views on the topics being discussed.

The last printed issue of Scarlet Women came out in early 1982. This issue on the Nuclear Threat was put together by Ann Torode, a key member of the editorial collective. She did much of the interviewing, requesting of articles and selection for printing. The issue never got published because by the time it was ready for printing in 1983 the other members of the collective had melted away, involved in other activities and concerns. As a remaining member of the Tyneside part of the editorial collective I am delighted that this issue will now see the light of day, thanks to Holly Argent from the Women Artists of the North East Archive. It has been produced in conjunction with the Star & Shadow for a screening of Sandra Lahire's films, as part of the Revealing Women Series. As with so many of the articles in previous issues of Scarlet Women many of the articles here are still relevant, drawing attention to issues and activities still current and still unresolved.

A new issue of Scarlet Women is being prepared, thanks to Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), with the theme: What's changed for women since 1982? It will form part of the TWAM archive on Women in Tyneside and a copy will be available on their website from June 2019. More information about Scarlet Women and its origins can be found there.

Finally I'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ann Torode without whose energy, determination and intellectual clarity Scarlet Women would probably not have existed. Ann (1943 - 2017) was born in London and came to live in Whitley Bay from Leeds in 1972. She was a founding member of the Coast Women's Group which initiated the discussions which resulted in Scarlet Women, and with others established the North Tyneside Women's Aid Refuge and Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre. Ann was a passionate feminist and a lifelong campaigner against oppression and exploitation in all its forms. She would have been so happy to see this issue of Scarlet Women finally published and its contents made available to others to read and discuss.

Penny Remfry

May 2019

Cover: Taken from a poster 'Merseyside Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat'



## Reading Scarlet Women with Sandra Lahire

It is with great pleasure to be printing the 15th issue of Scarlet Women with Penny Remfry 36 years after it was first written. The dialogue in this issue, 'Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat' is eloquent, well informed and offers space for a multitude of perspectives on nuclear-related issues with openness and understanding. As a collection of conversations between women, it takes an intersectional approach, demanding an acknowledgement of the contributions by people of all genders to numerous political struggles.

We are printing Issue 15 on the event of screening filmmaker Sandra Lahire's Anti-Nuclear Trilogy (also known as the radiation trilogy) at Star and Shadow Cinema in Newcastle upon Tyne. The screening is part of the Revealing Women series, a diverse, collectively organised programme of seven events exploring women's histories - and the representation of women - in comedy and horror, through political and social documentaries, experimental forms, and within debates around science and technology.

Sandra Lahire was a lesbian experimental filmmaker (1950-2001) who studied Philosophy at Newcastle University before studying film at St Martin's College and the Royal College of Art in London. A year ago, Lahire's essay 'Lesbians in the Media' was inserted into the Women Artists of the North East as a means to bring Lahire's practice in proximity with other individuals that make up the library. My hope is that on this occasion, Sandra Lahire's films can offer three further contributions to this nuclear issue of Scarlet Women; *Serpent River* (1989), *Uranium Hex* (1987) and *Plutonium Blonde* (1987) unveil the physical threat of radioactivity on communities, our earth's resources and labouring bodies. Made in direct relation to the feminist anti-nuclear movement of the 1980's. Intricately layered images and sound attempt to locate the positions women hold within the nuclear industry and the campaigns for its dissolution; whether as heroines, technological stand-ins or poisoned interlocutors, the figures always circle a threat of ecological catastrophe.

Both Lahire and the contributors to this issue make visible the hidden protocols of imperialism and the ruinous consequences of the nuclear industry; it's potential for social, environmental and economic exploitation. As an accumulation of voices, these articles also address the toxic fallouts of oppressive infrastructures, imperialist powers, patriarchal dominance, and what an appetite for destruction can cause across the world.

Lahire's filmmaking practice was radical beyond the process of shooting and developing photographic film. As a teacher and key member of Circles (1979-1989) - a women's experimental film distributing network, reclaiming the means to distribute and screen their own work in a landscape dominated by male filmmakers - she often collaborated with other key feminist filmmakers of the 80's-90's, such as Tina Keane, Sarah Pucill, and Circles initiator Lis Rhodes. Cinenova Distribution (the legacy of Circles) continue to distribute, curate and advocate for the filmmakers in its collection and it is with enormous thanks to Cinenova that we are able to screen Lahire's work today.

It is disappointing that this publication was not read and discussed by Scarlet Women's readership of its day, I hope that by printing it now, the conversations can continue and another generation of readers can grow. The only edits made to the original publication are the addition of two sections at the end: a list of acronyms used by contributors and brief notes about the organisations and campaigns mentioned in this issue.

Finally, thanks go to Penny Remfry, Star and Shadow cinema, the Revealing Women programme team, Film Hub North and BFI Film Audience Network - Changing Times: Women's Histories Fund for all their support in printing this issue and screening Lahire's films.

Holly Argent

Women Artists of the North East Library

May 2019



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You must get involved in our campaign! This is the most important issue since sliced bread! Drop everything and devote yourself to the cause!

How often have you heard that cry? How often have you felt you ought to be involved in at least 20 different campaigns and struggles? Should we all go to Greenham, should we be fighting the proposed Police Bill instead, should we fight the health service cuts or should we really be out on the streets over the government's occupation of Ireland? If our energy were taken up with anti-Cruise activity, what happens to the Women's Liberation Movement - who will take on the violence against women issue, who will have the time to organise around our feminist demands?

Life as an activist can feel like being on a hamster wheel - you rush around a central issue getting nowhere very fast. You end up exhausted, resenting all those who did not join you on your particular wheel. And yet every 'central issue' links up with every other 'central issue'. It's up to us to see the way the issues are connected, to spell out the links between, say, the occupation of Greenham, male violence, the British presence in Northern Ireland and the cuts in the NHS. If we can do this, we needn't feel so guilty about not doing everything and being everywhere. If we cannot see where all the pieces of the jigsaw fit, then we will always be browbeating each other, getting 'burnt out' and losing our impetus and potential.

Wherever we're involved, we will come up against the same enemy, a well organised enemy, an enemy who is waging a global offensive: the Imperialist and Patriarchal State, be it British, French, American or whatever. This State protects the interests of the multi-nationals and of profits generally, and it protects Male Power. It will always lash out at anyone who attempts to challenge the prerogatives of the wealthy or of men.

The Brits shoot Irish patriots, Reagan sends troops into Grenada, advisors and military equipment to Central America, not to mention Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, etc. And yet these same nuclear super-powers tell us that nuclear weapons have preserved the peace since 1945. What peace? Whose peace? and where? It all depends on who you are and where you live.

Of course, apart from the war in Northern Ireland, there has been a sort of peace in Western Europe for the last 40 years, but Western Europe is not the world, even though so many Europeans assume that it is!

Even if the nuclear stalemate has maintained a precarious peace here so far, the advent of Cruise missiles will change all that. They allow a 'limited' war in Europe, with Russia and the United States fighting it out over European territory. Today Europeans are faced with a new reality - that our lands have been set aside as a nuclear war zone. This is why so many of us are taking to the

## Editorial . . . . .

streets just now, why our peace movements are mushrooming as they are. Megadeaths are just around the corner.

Megadeath is not news in the Third World. Even without actual wars - and there have been over 100 wars since 1945 - peoples have been dying all over Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Every tick of the clock sounds a death knell for some starving, ill children and adults in those countries. Starvation, chemical pollution, the chopping down of forest homelands, and company takeover of farmland all take their toll.

We come out in our millions against the bomb, proclaiming 'the non-violent way', as a speaker at the big CND rally in October put it, and yet to those even more millions dying of hunger or so-called 'conventional' wars, our protests must raise a hollow laugh. They could say, and do say, you're frightened of a third world war? Well, let us point out to you that the Third World is at war and has been for years. Your nuclear peace has not meant peace for us and neither will your non-nuclear peace necessarily mean much to us. And talking of non-violence, tell that to the marines or to the latest imperialist gimmick, the multinational peace keeping force - invasion by another name . . . . .

**FREEDOM FIRST, THEN PEACE!**

**YOU WILL NOT BUILD YOUR PEACE BY STANDING ON OUR HEADS**  
Grenadan speaker at CND rally  
London, October 1983

So what is this peace? How can we say the anti-nuclear struggle is the most crucial ('.) struggle when for most people, definitely for most women, in the world, the pressing concerns are staying alive, keeping their kids alive and fed and fighting for space to breathe, let alone think.

More guilt. Ought we after all work on the anti-nuclear issue? Is it really just a western luxury, an issue for the 'fat cats'?

The answer has to be 'No!' Thinking about and struggling against the possibility of the earth being blown to radio-active dust is hardly a luxurious option! Taking on the military machine that is imperialism is not an easy thing to do whether we are fighting against U.S. troops in Grenada or the Lebanon, or whether we are lending our bodies to the struggles against Cruise on our soil.

No-one wants an early violent death, whether by The Bomb or by slow starvation.

And anyway guilt saps energy. We in the west can explore and expose the links between nuclear production and imperialist exploitation. We can support and publicise the fight of African and Australasian peoples against the nuclear industry which is stealing their lands for uranium mining. We can expose the myth of world peace put about by the western nuclear powers and question the idea that peace can flourish in an oppressive world. As feminists we know that there's little enough peace here in this country for women. We can show how money and resources consumed by the arms race is taking food and livelihood from starving and exploited

people all over the globe, and we can support anti-imperialist struggles in Third World countries because imperialism sustains the nuclear industry and the arms race.

We in the west cannot expect other people to fight our battles for us. We have to take on our common enemy in his homeland.



ON MARCH 8th 1983 the GLC WOMEN'S COMMITTEE ORGANISED A DAY ON THE THEME WOMEN AND PEACE. HERE FOLLOWS TWO INTERVIEWS RECORDED ON THAT DAY, AND THE TEXT OF 2 SPEECHES:

# GREENHAM - could only happen in the West

Interview with a woman from the Iranian Womens group, London.

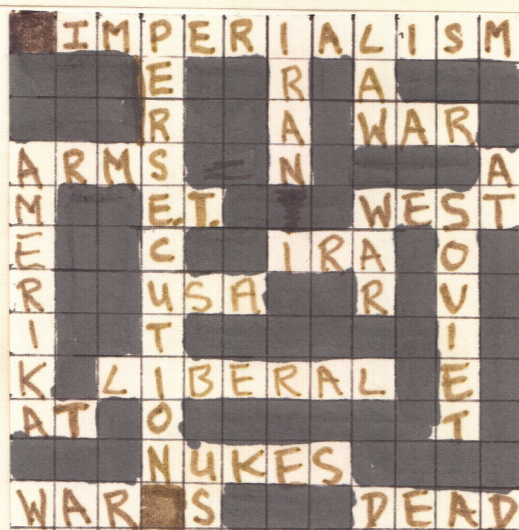
Our group was established in London in the summer of '79 after the revolution. We are a women only group, really we are a very small independent group, non political as such not affiliated to any of the other organisations. We started with CR (consciousness raising) sort of activity and now with the situation getting worse and worse in Iran we have to say where we stand. We obviously do not agree with the present war with Iraq and though we do not support Khomeini, we really can see no alternative at the moment from the women's point of view. The main opposition to the regime, the Mojahadin, which has its base in Paris now, is really an Islamic organisation. So really what will happen if they come to power? I don't think things will be any better, maybe a little bit, but nothing special. The Feyadin are split, part of them are with the Todoh party, supporting Khomeini and the rest, the minority, are non-existent, not really a big power if the regime falls. The Iran-Iraq war is not a nuclear war but what is happening is devastating. From the figures that I've seen about two hundred thousand people have died in the war and there are about sixty thousand political prisoners in the cells. They've executed about 25,000 political opponents of the Khomeini's regime, and the situation of women is really bad

Women are being sent back home to cope with the burden of running daily life, the rationing and queuing for food because the country is so short of food.

Because there are so many women who are without husbands, brothers and fathers, with the war, prostitution is on the increase. To try to stop prostitution the regime is forcing women and young girls to marry older war victims without even seeing them first. All in the name of Islam. It is a terrible, terrible situation.

Q. Can you tell us how the war started?

A. I think it started because Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi president thought that the government and the military in Iran was weak, and that if he attacked he would get a quick victory. He was wrong because the regime used Islam to mobilise the men into war. And now the regime is using the war. The Iraqis have said a few times that they were ready for peace, ready to pull back, but the regime is not accepting this because they know Khomeini will fall. The war keeps the pressure on the people, keeps them busy .....



Q. What do you think of the peace movement over here? What do you think of non-violent direct action?

A. Greenham, I think is wonderful. I hope it will be successful, especially now with Thatcher and Reagan. I think if more and more people revolt, then the governments will be forced to listen. I hope that the women will succeed, especially when you think that it started out with so few women, and now it's everywhere. It's just wonderful. I really think it's the best thing that's happened in the last few years. Somehow it seems that it's helped the womens' movement as well to experience a kick sort of, and make more solidarity between women which is wonderful.

Q. Do you think that the Greenham action has had any influence on women in other countries at all?

A. Yes, on Western women, but I don't think that women in Third World countries, no. Because I think that's another thing that when we talk about peace, it's so different the whole concept is so different. I mean here in the West, we can sit and talk about it. In Iran, you can't even sit and talk with each other, because you are thinking 'who am I talking to?' there are so many things you have to watch before you can sit and talk about things. going on. The West is culturally so much different from the Middle East and Latin America. Greenham could have happened in England, Germany or France, but you could not see this happening in Chile or Iran or Iraq, because they have other priorities .....

Greenham photo of troops, police + women





PHOTO: PENNY  
GREENHAM - July '83

GREENHAM COMMON  
BLOCKADE JULY 8<sup>th</sup> '83

Iranian Attache.





## The State International vs. Women

I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak here today because there has been a lot of confusion about the Falklands/Malvinas war, and many people in the peace movement don't know where they stand. There isn't a British and an Argentinian side to the war. There's the side of the State - British and Argentinian - and the side of the peace movement, led as it has always been by women. Because even though the British and Argentinian governments may be each other's enemies right now, they have never been on our side and are ready to support each other against us at any time, as they have done in the past. Let's not forget that Margaret Thatcher sold arms to Galtieri until a few days before the beginning of the Falklands/Malvinas war; arms which were to be used against us and in support of the dictatorship.

As an immigrant woman in Britain I have a double responsibility;

- 1) I have the responsibility to bring the struggle of Argentinian women to the immigrant community here. Because whether we are here as political refugees, migrants on work permits, whether we are Black or White, in fact we are all immigrants.
- 2) I also have the responsibility to get something for those of us who are back home, to put the power of the immigrant community, the women's movement and the peace movement available to our sisters back home.

A good example of this double responsibility to both the immigrant community here - Black and White - and to my sisters back home was the

Child Benefit For All Campaign in 1977. The government wanted to take away Child Benefit from Third World parents whose children were living abroad. A number of organis-

ations campaigned against it, and we had a meeting in the House of Commons where I spoke about how the British government takes away the money which goes to mothers and children, and instead gives government aid which goes from government to government and is usually used to buy more arms, more arms to kill us with.

Women in Argentina are not fighting against our local government only. Every time we take on our government we take on Thatcher and Reagan without whom Third World dictatorships would not exist. We take on the State internationally when we fight for peace here and there. At different times in different places women have used different tactics: some of us have been involved in arms struggles, some of us are camping at Greenham Common or other peace camps. There are many ways to make a struggle and those of us who have had to use guns (and I come from a tradition of armed struggle) cannot turn their noses up on those who are fighting in a more 'peaceful' way (mind you, Heseltine didn't think that Greenham was very 'peaceful') and vice versa. Our struggle is not more valid or less valid because we use one tactic as opposed to another. We do what we have to do in the best way open to us at a particular time. Those with guns are often considered the heroes, and women are usually left with the sorrow and the work of picking up the pieces. We are the servants of the heroes. But the servants who have picketed the Casa Rosada (government's house) in Buenos Aires for years on the issue of the 'disappeared' and the servants at Greenham Common are now in charge of our struggle and we intend to win.

Speech by Nina Lopez-Jones, an immigrant woman from Argentina.

# "IF I WANT TO SEE PEACE FIRST OF ALL I WILL HAVE TO FIGHT....."

Interview with Pelusa from the Chilean Womens group.

Scarlet Women: Can you tell me something about the deal that Pinochet made with Britain?

Pelusa: Well, in 1982 the minister Rees went to Chile to offer uranium for sale to develop two nuclear reactors that Chile had got, because Chile has also joined the nuclear race within our continent. Already Brazil and Argentina have been trying to develop a super nuclear power which will give them the force and the power they need to control behaviour and dictate policies.

Merlin Rees tried to deny that he sold nuclear reactors and uranium to Chile. Chile already produces a small amount of uranium - about 300lbs. of it, but they need 30 or 60 tons to make the reactors work and to enable themselves to make an atomic bomb. That's what it's all about.

The Tory Government are interested in selling arms to repressive regimes. For the arms exhibition recently, they produced a catalogue in Spanish for the representatives from Latin America who had been invited to attend. There is a group of 400 civil servants within the Ministry of Defence just to promote the sale of arms and sophisticated torture equipment to those regimes in third world countries, and how I see this, is that there is a need for the developed countries to maintain governments like Pinochets in power in order to increase the arms market - that is how I see that.

S.W.: What does the struggle for peace mean to you then?

P.: The struggle for peace means first of all to get rid of the repressive regime. When I said before that the Pinochet regime is spending money in the nuclear race and also buying sophisticated armaments, and when they have increased their armed forces

from 55 thousand men in '73 to 146 thousand in '83, then you can see that all the money they get from abroad only goes in defence. They say they have to defend the borders, but in reality they are spending money to oppress our people, to keep our people subjugated by the power of arms and to me that means we have to get rid of this unjust system, and spend the money in social development instead. There is a lack of houses in my country, there are no educational facilities, everything has gone private now with the new monetarist policies

of the Pinochet regime. There is not a health service either. How can there be peace unless we destroy the same power which is stopping our people get what they should get as human beings? We can't even get enough food for our children today. And there is more than 30% unemployment in a working population of 4 million - just imagine how much 30% means! So if I want to see peace first of all I will have to fight - I know for many people who are peace lovers that will sound a bit extreme, but I don't care. How can they justify that they are fighting against the setting up of Cruise Missiles in this country and then turn a blind eye to the plight of the people in the third world countries, where they are fighting for the right to have drinking water, for the right to have something to eat and to have medical attention for our children? So that is why peace means first of all to get rid of the oppressor and to get rid of U.S. imperialism, which is using Latin America as its own backyard, and who is pouring in billions and billions in arms for those dictatorship regimes.

S.W.: So you think the peace movement over here has got the wrong priorities?

P.: No, I wouldn't say that, but what I would say, is that I would like to see them linking their demands for peace and for a nuclear free zone in Europe with our demands for social justice back in the third world countries, and see that the amount of



money that is being spent by the European Governments in arms and nuclear weapons should be canalised to aid and develop new industries and new possibilities for people in this country, because we don't want any of their investment in our countries; that means to continue the domination, but at least they should press their governments here to do something for their own people also. It is not enough to fight against Cruise Missiles when you have people here also in extreme poverty.

S.W.: You don't think that these links are being made by the peace movement?

P.: Up till now I haven't seen them, except today, when I heard that woman from Greenham Common who was talking about the wealth going to better use, and you have to consider the plight of people from third world countries, that is the first thing I have heard. Up till now, the only thing that I have heard is that we don't want Cruise Missiles in Britain, but Britain is only one part of the world, there is

also the third world countries, and if there is a nuclear war it is not only the Europeans who are going to be affected.

S.W.: What do you think of Non violent direct action?

P.: Well, I will say that in order to stop the Cruise Missiles in this country, peaceful means are not going to be enough. The British people are not dealing with the kind of government who is going to listen. So if they really want to achieve something, they will really have to step up their actions, and to use violence if it is necessary. If you don't really take up different kinds of actions, you aren't going to be able to achieve any peace, or to change the mind of this government. In terms of our countries of Latin America, we're taking up armed struggle because we see that as the only way to get rid of all the injustice.

What I mean is, I think that the peace movement have to realize that in order for this government to produce nuclear weapons, and really to sell sophisticated weapons to third world countries, they have to realize that those governments, in order to

have the amount of money they need, they are going to our countries to steal our raw materials, to exploit our people, and to make profits from the labour force in our countries, and that has enabled them to have the amount of money necessary to join the arms race that is going to destroy humanity. The peace movement have to realize that also they have to denounce how and where these governments are getting their money.

In Europe unemployment is increasing every day, and the governments are spending so much on arms, and you will know that while there is not the money for investment here, there is still investment in third world countries, which exploit our people in order to make the money they need back here - but not for jobs for the people mind you!



# Black Women & the Peace Movement

At the first meeting of the GLC Women's Committee - Peace Working Group in December 1982, a woman from Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp asked me, as the only Black woman there, to talk about what the peace movement - so visibly white and middle class - could do to involve more Black people. To paraphrase her, it is particularly obvious in an international city like London that to win the peace movement must be seen also to be Black.

I think she spoke for growing numbers of women who are fighting racism against Black people because it interferes with their own lives and not as a favour to somebody else. Still it is altogether too rare....

But it testifies to the Greenham Common women's determination to win, and to what their struggle has already taught them, that the issue of Black participation was raised in a self-critical look at the priorities of the peace movement; as an organisational challenge on the way to complete victory; and as a mutual responsibility between Black and White people, beginning with women. For me that was already a victory.

## It's a long row to hoe

But it's a long row to hoe. At that first meeting several women were silent. One or two others told me afterwards they found what I said helpful. A woman from Brent, the borough with the largest Black population in Britain, seemed interested in practical ways to be active on her home ground. But a woman arrived at the meeting and, seemingly incensed that I was speaking, immediately interrupted me at the point where I was saying that nationalism is as dangerous to the peace movement as racism; that I do not as a Black American wish to be identified with Ronald Reagan's war mongering; and that the peace movement in the United States has taken on new life

by taking leadership from women organising for peace in Europe. She countered that we shouldn't widen the issue away from peace, that it's a European problem, and that we should be discussing what Europeans were going to do. Perhaps it was my saying that it is important to distinguish the American government-military-industrial complex from people in the U.S. that incensed her. But her response was familiar. It was on the one hand that the issue of "race" was a diversion from "peace". And at the same time, her insistence on a "European solution" is tied up with not wanting to deal with race or nationalism, since Europeans are by no means uniform or united racially or nationally.

## Immigration, Education, Police

Black people in Europe, and since the 1981-82 urban rebellions, most visibly in Britain, are preoccupied in daily survival with "wider" issues which are inseparable from peace. To name three "wider issues" in particular that preoccupy Black people, immigration, education and the police, what is becoming increasingly clear is how integral these three issues are to the peace movement. While for Black people immigration may focus on the Nationality Act, the freedom of women peace activists to cross international boundaries is also about immigration. What is immigration about if not our freedom to make a life for ourselves - including organising to save our lives - wherever we choose? While Black people are preoccupied with the schools programming our children for menial jobs and low wages, peace organisers are just as concerned with the schools programming our children to be perpetrators and victims of war. To say nothing about how low wages and scarce jobs are a necessary part of the climate of military buildup. As for the police, the Greenham Common women, like the Black movement, have begun to document police violence against them for stepping out of line. (See for example



Peace News 21/1/83.) The police are a domestic army but an army none the less. Their actions on a daily basis in Black communities and when they deem necessary against any group which move "out of place", clue us in to the function of all armies, which is to deter struggle for a New Age at home and abroad; that what governments really mean by deterrence is deterrence of social change.

Women's experience trying to change the world - whether as Black mothers protecting our sons from "sus" rape survivors protecting ourselves; prostitutes demanding civil rights; or peace organisers protesting Cruise and nuclear power - most bears out that the police are there to protect property from the world's people who have produced it and who are the poorest. Women do  $\frac{2}{3}$ s of the world's work, get 5% of the income and own 1% of the assets. Yet Minister of Defence Michael Heseltine accuses peace women of using physical violence to prevent him from speaking, when he places our lives in mortal danger every minute. It reminds me of the Establishment accusing Black people of racism when we organise to protect ourselves from racism. As Women Against Rape has demanded of the Ministry of Defence: give us the money, we'll defend ourselves.



WHITE POWER

## "Black Issues"

The military monopoly of world resources - the arms trade to prop up dictatorships; the pillage of raw materials from the Third World; the concentration of industrial and technological development on military hardware - means that in Bangla Desh women spend several hours a day just fetching water; while in Harlem or the East End of London, older women annually freeze to death with Reagan and Thatcher cuts.

Between North and South, and in the South which is within the North, the government-military-industrial complex daily turns Third World countries and inner city ghettos into ecological disaster areas which cannot be cordoned off. From the point of view of women of colour, who are the majority of the majority of the world's people, and also the poorest, the threat of nuclear war and nuclear power, which is inseparable from day-to-day government-military-industrial repression, obliterates all distinction between "Black" and "White" issues, between "race" and "peace". "Black issues" are all the issues that must be fought for and won, for any or all of us to live in peace.

## Black Women's Autonomy

But Black women's autonomy - the autonomy of those of us with the least power and therefore most in jeopardy - is the best protection that all the issues of survival will come out. In the civil rights, national independence and Black power movements of the '50s and '60s, Black people drove a wedge into the international Establishment that opened a way for the "women's movement". But when Black men were in charge of the Black movement, Black women's views were never fully taken into account; and so it is now with white women in charge of the women's movement. Black women are still fighting for white women and Black men\* to recognise that the women's movement is also Black.

Just as women's autonomy in the peace movement has expanded what the whole movement is capable of, by expanding the capacity of the least powerful to speak for ourselves, Black women raise survival issues for the whole of the Black community from the bottom up. In this era of Thatcher and the Assam massacres, we should have no illusions that white or Black women being in charge means justice; just as a long line of Black heads of state should by now have convinced us that substituting Black faces for white is not revolution. But it is also now the common experience of the Movement that in order for the least powerful really to be in charge: instead of our ambitions, we must put the work of building a movement in charge. The work of building the peace movement, and all the other movements, cannot be accomplished so long as Black women's contribution is hidden. Black women's situation sets the terms on which victory can belong to all of us.

These are some of the most basic terms. In order to protect themselves more powerful sectors of the movement together with us must plan and implement how to protect us, since we are most vulnerable: as Afro-Americans used to say in the '60s, white radicals can always take a bath and comb their hair. We need the hard-won resources - people, connections, expertise - of the peace movement to be put at the disposal of fighting all the survival issues that seem most immediately to involve Black people but really involve everybody: for example, the Nationality Act (whether Tory or Labour) terrorises Black people and other immigrants into not demonstrating for peace, while the Police Bill threatens to drive everybody's peace organising underground.

We don't need more disaster pamphlets to "educate" us to the nuclear nightmare. Cooped up and stranded in some of the most dank and decrepid housing, in some of the most noisy and polluted areas, with the least access to public transport, social services, nuclear holocaust is no challenge to our imaginations.



We need for more powerful sectors to understand that because we are poor doesn't mean we are stupid, and that like the majority of working class people, especially women, we are terribly overworked, terribly underpaid and often too exhausted to rally to any cause. What it also means when we are not at "peace" demonstrations is that we have had to make other priorities for peace because we have so little time or money. It also means that being Black women doesn't make us less fearful of confronting the State than the majority of white people who are also not there; on the contrary, if there is such a thing, perhaps ours are the most understandable reasons to cop out. What can most prevent us from copping out, however, is visible support and acknowledgement of the "peace movements'" common cause with us on the issues where we are most visible; a pooling of our resources for changing the world - especially when our areas of work in the movement are divided; and respect for our mutual indispensable, though different, priorities.

## Violence in self-defense

One of these areas of difference is over violence. And I am not talking about the self-destructive violence with which we take out our frustrations on each other within the working class. As long as Black people are denied self-determination,



reliable allies, and the resources to liberate ourselves, some of us will resort to our power to destroy as the only power we have, and as the only way to get more power. In that context our violence is always in self-defence; and white people who have more power than we do, counselling us against violence place themselves in the indefensible position of presuming to choose our weapons for us - like men's presumption in complaining that women are shrill. How we fight for our lives depends on what tools and supports are available to us; but fight we will - by any and every means necessary.

Black women's autonomy also means setting the same terms for ourselves as we set for other people. We have experienced enough careerism in the Black and women's movements to refuse to tolerate double standards among ourselves any more than between women and men, Black and white. We have no excuse not to work with people who have proved they are determined to pool resources with us to win. It's when you are on the front line that you find out who your friends are. And Black women, prostitute and non-prostitute, up against the police in King's Cross, London, are proud to count among our friends the women of Greenham Common and Molesworth Peace Camps who came to the English Collective of Prostitutes Occupation of the Church of the Holy Cross (17-29 Nov. '82) because, like us, they understand what it means to be up against the police fighting for civil rights; and because, like us, they

want the military budget for people so that no woman is forced into prostitution of any kind. Refusing to embrace other sectors in struggle is one way of making a career off racism, by dividing the least powerful sectors of Black women from the help they most need - which is a luxury no Black woman can afford. Among Black women our point of reference must also be from the bottom up. And while we refuse to entertain men - we can't justify not using our experience and resources with white women, on our terms, to sort out the direction of the peace movement, which is as much ours as the Black movement, which we are trying to sort out with Black men, on our terms. We educate, on our terms, ourselves, our sisters and brothers out of racism and sexism, not by rhetoric and "explanation", but by our own autonomy, organising - which includes proposing to other sectors the kind of support we need, as well as listening for and acknowledging their proposals, so that everyone's skills are integrated into the work of winning.

### Black American Experience

We have been this way before. One of the biggest ripoffs of the peace movement has been to hide how it has always been Black and white. Beyond acknowledging Martin Luther King as a great man, to know our own herstory in the Black, the women's and the peace movements, we must look for the Black women behind him. Drawing on the power of the international, as women are doing today, King learned

from Gandhi's experience of successful non-violent direct action in India. Women of African and Asian descent can go a long way together to build practical unity by discovering together this earlier contribution to the peace movement by African and Asian women.

Many people know that the visible phase of the U.S. civil rights movement for which Martin Luther King eventually became the standard-bearer was touched off in 1955 by the non-violent direct action of a Black woman named Rosa Parks, tired on her way home from work, who refused to move to the Black section at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Fewer people know that Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968 while he was organising for the Poor Peoples Campaign, which was to be a tent city of Black and white poor people on the lawns of State power in Washington D.C.

### Black Welfare Mothers

Martin Luther King's points of reference - on the verge of his most profound challenge to the U.S. government-military-industrial complex - were the Black Welfare mothers of Mississippi, the most dread and poorest of the old slaveholding states, who were refusing to send their sons to Vietnam to kill and die for a State which kept them on the edge of starvation. It was not that Martin Luther King was there "organising" Black Welfare mothers; he was there to listen and learn from them, to pool some power. Throughout the '60s, Black Welfare Mothers had organised a nationwide movement of non-violent direct action across the U.S., and with support from people in Europe, to raise the living standards of the poorest people in the richest nation on earth. They had won increased money and services for themselves, their children and men in the Black community. They had spread the wealth around by a campaign of public education on welfare rights so that the welfare rolls skyrocketed. They sat in at offices and schools, destroyed the files used to police them, marched and picketed and generally obstructed the bureaucracy. They were visibly led by Black women, but their movement was thoroughly integrated (the majority of women on welfare are white)



among poor women of American, Latin American, African and European descent. They drew substantially on men's expertise in the bureaucracy and propaganda. Throughout the '60s, they preoccupied the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations with their demands. And in the short-term they won. The struggle continues today,\* with the '70s and '80s Ford, Carter and Reagan backlash against workers waged and unwaged, still focussed on controlling welfare.

As in the '60s, Black women winning over welfare is still central to the victory of the peace movement: it would be impossible for the American State to maintain its military presence at home and abroad without filling its ranks, fast approaching a majority, with the young Black women and men who have no economic alternative to the U.S. army. The U.S. government is increasingly preoccupied at its army's lack of military will, variously put down to the inferiority of Black intelligence. On the contrary, the welfare mothers of these young people have educated them very well to get reparations from the U.S. government for centuries of ripoff, while refusing the killing work. As a welfare mother





put the welfare-peace movement in perspective in 1972:

If you think that I'm gonna have a baby - and watch that child grow up with no food or clothing; and then watch him go to school where teachers don't teach him anything; and worry that he's gonna become a pimp or start shooting up dope; and finally, when he's raised, see him go into the army and get really shot up in there - if you think I'm gonna go through all that pain and suffering for an extra \$50, or \$100, or even \$500 a month, why you must be crazy.\*

Peace and power.

\*For an update on the welfare movement in the U.S. today, see Margaret Prescod-Roberts, Black Women Bringing it all back home, Falling Wall Press, Bristol '80, available from King's Cross Women's Centre, 71, Tonbridge St., London WC1, (01 837-7509.)

\*Milwaukee County Welfare Rights Organization, Welfare Mothers Speak Out, We ain't gonna shuffle anymore. W.W. Norton & Co, Inc. New York. '72.

Wilmette Brown  
Black Women for Wages for Housework,  
and Co-opted member of the GLC Women's  
Committee, London  
8/3/83 - International Women's Day.



# Mothers Against Missiles

"She looks at me and I think of the bombs"

I was gobstruck when a sister said to me that the women on the 'embrace the base' demonstration on Dec. 12th. were 'glorifying their maternal role'. Silenced, I eventually managed to splutter that I didn't want my kids to be blown to pieces - nor any other kids for that matter. Not very coherent, but then I was extremely angry.

For one thing, my maternal role is a weekend role. For the past six years I have only had my sons for the weekends. They live with their father for the rest of the time. This 'arrangement' brings me great pain. It's still hard to write or talk about it easily.

So much for glorifying my maternal role at Greenham or anywhere else. I should be so lucky !

I was angry too because I felt dismissed. A common enough feeling for mothers in the women's movement I know. My reality was 'incorrect', 'sissy' even. How soft to burble on about not wanting my kids to die !

Personally I thought it was great to decorate the fence round the base with the pictures and the names of children and their toys and clothes. I took down some booties, a rattle, a couple of T-shirts and a large piece of white sheet covered with children's names. I cried as I penned these names on the sheet, and as I walked round the fence I was fighting back the tears - which of us wasn't ? But we none of us went down there <sup>just</sup> to have a good cry. The idea was to highlight the grim reality of nuclear policy in a way that would reach other women and empower us all to act against the state, the warriors and the financiers behind the warriors.

Women with children are well aware of this nuclear reality. When our kids ask what shall I be when I grow up, the mushroom cloud hangs like a question mark as we attempt a reply. Their trusting eyes. A woman I know who has just had her first baby said 'I didn't realize. She looks at me and I think of the bombs. I no longer see the sun on a nice day - just a large bomb overhead, over her head.' Our children personify the future, they make it our responsibility in a very immediate way. No this is not a party political broadcast on behalf of 'the family' or a woman's place. I'm not suggesting that we are unfulfilled without children, that we should all look after children as a life work or anything like that, I'm merely trying to put feelings into words, feelings very probably shared by most mothers in one way or another.



GREENHAM DECEMBER 1983 - Photo: Terry Black



Some of us involved in putting this issue together had a discussion about this the other week and one woman said having a baby and caring for him, had opened a gulf of feeling in her not just for him but for other babies. I remembered being in hospital after having my first child and he wasn't eating. He cried but wouldn't eat. The woman in the next bed had the same problem. She said she now knew how Biafran mothers felt, and I, a politico of long standing, suddenly knew too.

This demonstration tapped that feeling and that knowledge.

Would those feminists who think that it is reactionary to organise as mothers on this issue, say the same about groups of mothers organising on other issues? Would they say lesbian mothers shouldn't get together to challenge custody decisions, or that any mothers should not fight for custody where we want to live with our children? Would they argue that mothers on supplementary benefit shouldn't fight the DHSS for more money, or that mothers in paid work shouldn't fight for nurseries, after school and holiday child care facilities and maternity leave? How is the fight to stop our children being burnt, poisoned or shattered to death any different?

In all these struggles mothers are trying to gain control over our lives as mothers, we are trying to gain control over the conditions in which we are bringing up our children.

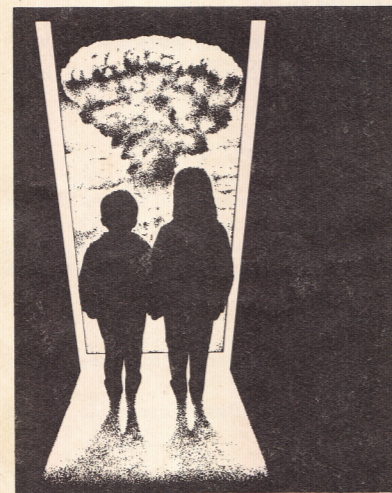
We are women against the system, not in any way acting to confirm the stereotype of the passive, accepting mother ... as of course the system is only too well aware.

The ruling class, those who profit by the nuclear arms race, do not give a damn about our maternal feelings, not a damn. They will use our feelings against us to get the

nappies washed, the dinners cooked and the cleaning done. We will be told how to be 'good' mothers and heavily penalised if we are deemed 'unfit' or 'inadequate'. We have to be straight, we have to be married and living with our husbands and we have to stay home and enjoy staying home, unless of course our work is required elsewhere too. In this way the ruling class ensure for themselves a more than adequate supply of workers waged and unwaged, and soldiers for the future.

In other words, our feelings have been exploited in the creation of a myth of the perfect mother, a woman who is everything that we can never be .... a woman who leaves us feeling guilty and inadequate. This perfect mother haunts us all, mothers or not. 'Everybody knows' we have to bear children and raise them to feel fulfilled, to be a 'real' woman.

As feminists we have spent time and energy fighting the potency of that myth both in our personal lives and in our campaigns and the hostile reaction to mothers organising as mothers on this issue comes from the very real fear that we are witnessing a refurbishing of the myth in a progressive - and therefore more deadly - guise. In this article I have been arguing that this is not really happening at all; that mothers do have very strong feelings about our children and that when we turn these feelings against the system we are giving power to women, not to a myth.



# THE IMAGE OF GREENHAM.

I have some serious doubts and disagreements about the politics of the women's anti-nuclear campaigns and their compatibility with feminist politics and aims. I am writing as a radical feminist who has not been involved in the actions or the organisations, but I want to comment on the impressions which come through the media of these, and make one or two more general points also.

I understand that Greenham Common etc claim to be women's campaigns and not feminist ones. What distresses me most about them is the image of women that is coming through as the symbol and justification of these movements. On the TV and in the newspapers I see women saying that they are here for the good of their families; that they are simply "ordinary" women who are deeply moved by the urgency of the situation, that they are "naturally" concerned to preserve life and defend their children, that if there were no nuclear threat, they could go on being nice, ordinary women and all would be OK. I'm sure you can see from this the stereotyping of women - granted, it is coming thro' the media - but it is also deeply interwoven with the politics and tactics of the women's protest and perpetuated by many of the participants. I was disturbed to see a picture in the newspaper (it was the Guardian in January) of a Greenham Common woman giving her blessing to the statue of "Peace" outside the GLC. The statue looked like a 60's model, young, thin woman in shorts with long, straight hair (obviously white), holding a dove

The base is "embraced" and covered with (mostly) baby clothes and pictures. All this is precisely the kind of protest that is expected of and allowed to women. It is the traditional voice of the

poor woman left at home who can only use emotional appeals (on others' behalfs) to influence those that do have power. Popular press attitudes (the favourable ones!) take the view that they really must start to take some notice ... if the 'real' women have come out of their homes - they'd better be pacified again.

This 'ordinary' woman (and she is only 'real' if she is 'ordinary') is the heterosexual, white, married with children, housewife - the appeal depends upon that image to be taken seriously. I know that feminists and lesbians, the childless and black do participate, but that's not the point here. Every time this 'ordinary' woman is held up, those of us who are not her are betrayed. The approved version of all women which feminists have been struggling to destroy is constantly reinforced. This is not accidental, it is crucial to the politics involved. Being women-only doesn't make the campaign a feminist one, on the contrary, the ideas behind this kind of organising are actually in opposition to feminist aims.

Every time this 'ordinary' woman is held up, those of us who are not her are betrayed.



The idea that women are naturally non-violent, could not be responsible for wars and the development of nuclear technology, that is, wouldn't even if we had access to weapons and science; that it is a particular female characteristic to respect life - this is a dangerous one for us to hold. It goes along with some biological notion that we inherit our behaviour with our genitals, or that we are protectors of life because we bear children and that this is all right and proper. This is odd both coming from women whose intention presumably is to influence men and/or those women who very definitely don't conform to this image - if you don't have children, do you not respect life?

It is highly suspect for women to be basing any claims on their supposed link with the natural. Yes, I too feel turned-on by small, furry animals and mountain scenery, however, I feel no particular affinity to the tapeworm, or the male of my own species, if it comes to that. I would remind everyone that the smallpox virus is as natural as the panda, but no-one calls it an endangered species! The point is, that our idea of what's natural is highly selective and inconsistent. The point is that we shouldn't be using that as some given, unquestionable criterion. Surely we've learned our lessons about the way that the so-called natural has been used against us. To base a campaign on that kind of largely unspoken, but strongly present feeling is not only double-think, but it is not in our interests as women and, therefore, likely to have reactionary rather than radical consequences.

Instead of being panicked or guilt-tripped into thinking that we have to save the world from imminent destruction (even were it likely that the campaigns could succeed in any other than the short term), it's important for us to consider what creates these situations. Instead of fighting repeated, rear-guard actions which use much of our resources and don't alter the balance of power, we should be working solidly against the whole structure of patriarchy. Women's oppression is fundamental to maintaining the system which is the backbone of our oppressive, destructive society. It is not a secondary issue to be attended to 'after the revolution', or after you've saved the world. You can't do either without it. To undermine women's liberation in such a project is, therefore, self-defeating.

It is difficult, it seems, for women to take their own oppression seriously, see it as important and urgent for its own sake. It's always easier to say - it's for the children, or for someone less privileged than me, etc, etc. If we don't take it in hand,

no-one else will, and despite protest, the real powers in this society will not radically alter in the ways that would make life (and not just surviving) possible.

The politics of the single-issue campaign such as these and CND (a prime example) are rather dubious too. They depend upon wide appeal, the lowest common denominator not only in terms of attracting large numbers, but importantly in determining their aims. Of-course, no-one wants to be blown up by a bomb. Of-course, I'm in favour of life on earth (though I like some bits of it better than others). It

Of course I'm in favour of life on earth - though  
I like some bits of it more than others!

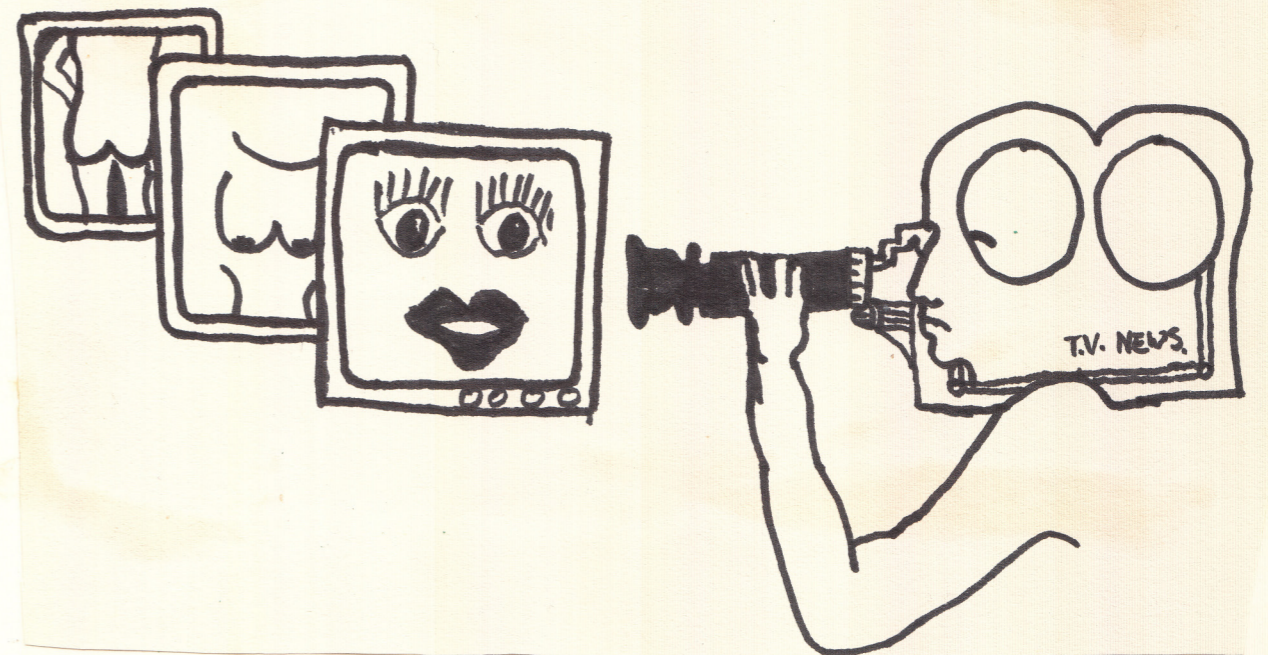
becomes meaningless cliches on that level - what you are going to do about it; what it itself is - as soon as you get down to the nitty-gritty, political disagreements occur. It's like trying to do politics without the politics. Remember the Peace People in Ireland? They failed because in theory everyone wants peace, they don't necessarily want it at any price. You have to carve out a political analysis to organise, to be effective - you can't depend upon vague good intentions and a large show of bodies. Yes, the anti-nuclear campaigns might be said to have influenced Labour Party policy, but I would remind us again that the Labour Party has betrayed the disarmament cause before.

Anyway, the point I want to make is about not sacrificing feminist aims simply in order to attract large numbers of women to these campaigns on the basis that somehow that in itself will count as a feminist gain. It doesn't in my book, any more than the women's institute represents feminist organisation or a mixed CND represents a serious challenge to patriarchal power.

A final couple of points about violence and demos. I've heard it said that the point of these demonstrations being women-only

is to keep them non-violent because women are non-violent and hence will not provoke violence from the police. This simply is not true. I won't go into the awfulness of the gentler/feebler sex business again, but would like to point out that the police will attack demonstrating women if the cameras are not on them. There have been violent police actions at non-violent, women-only Reclaim the Night marches. Are we to take this as our failure? Perhaps we did not have enough "women-magic"? It is highly dangerous for women to rely on their moral superiority to protect themselves from men. We should not perpetuate this or the myth of chivalry. Just be prepared for the time when the campaign is not the latest media darling, or when they decide that none of you can be "real" women or you wouldn't be on the street, lesbian, black, uppity, wearing trousers, shouting ....

Lynn Alderson.





**'It gets heavy with all of us girls together'**

"It will just show what sort of people they are. What do you expect of them?"

"I came here to be free to live as a lesbian and just be myself. But sometimes I just wonder how much longer I can go on. "It gets heavy with all of us girls here together."

**The grim facts**

The desolate and filthy camp site was bad enough, the few women squatting round the smoky fire were a total shock.

changes of mood. They hold hands, hug and kiss each other on the mouth, talk, tease, laugh—and seconds later fight and cry.

shaved heads, combat clothes and bover boots of the grimy-faced women who inhabit the most famous peace camp in the world.

# INSPIRATION FROM GREENHAM.

I'd quite accidentally been on the St. Thomas' Peace Camp in Newcastle, I went to see what was happening and I stayed. A woman took care of my child and I stayed for a week. I was interested in the nuclear problem. I was scared to death as a teenager thinking the world would be blown up and again over the Cuba crisis. I've always been concerned about nuclear weapons, but what drew me to the camp was that it was all women. For the previous four years I'd been retired completely from any kind of women's activities, because I had found it such a conflict being a lesbian and the mother of a son. But then I was screaming on my own and I wanted to get out to see if things had changed: to see if there was support for me. I'd heard about St. Thomas' peace camp and I went

especially at eight in the morning, when there's snow on the ground and you're freezing and trying to make coffee and some smart photographer is standing over you, taking pictures without even asking if he could. The bit of rough stony ground the women live on is their home. Its their kitchen, their living room and their bedroom. A 24 hour day week by week home. They have one tap to wash by and one Elsan lavatory that has to be emptied down a hole every day. Apart from going up into the camps in the woods for rest and re-

cuperation, they are living totally exposed not only to the elements but to anyone who wants to come and harass them. On Friday and Saturday nights they are harassed by drunk men who drive out just for the fun of looking at them.

The thing that was most important to me was to be in an all woman environment, with women of every age and background, women from 14 to 75, married, grandmothers, working class and middle class women, lesbian and straight, and to experience so much care for one another constantly. When I got angry with the photographers, a woman held my hand and told me we had to keep our energy for survival and look after each other, because if we didn't keep our strength together then the camp would fold up. So the whole emphasis was on taking care of one another. And quite honestly I have never experienced that as a total 24 hour process in my life before. I've experienced it in brief periods of a few hours or so here and there, but not as a day by day experience. Of course because there are no men there, all the energy just goes into the women. Men do visit, they do help by fetching wood or in other ways, but they are not included.

along..... as the days went by during that week I realized how incredible the experience of women living together 24 hours a day could be, the unity that grew between those women was amazing and the love we shared was all quite new to me. After that I decided that I wanted to go to Greenham Common to find out what the women were doing there.

I arrived on Good Friday during the big CND link-up, which involved tens of thousands of people. Greenham Common Main Gates were surrounded by men and women, television cameras and reporters. I walked to where the women lived and found them huddled in small groups around camp fires. I was immediately welcomed and involved in the day to day business of survival. I slept under a piece of polythene along with about eight other women and I helped with keeping the campsite clean, talking to visitors, trying to deal amicably with reporters and photographers, which I found extremely difficult

# MISERABLE

**MISERY**

**Outcasts**

In one of these manic bursts, one girl suddenly announced: "My parents allowed me to play with girls. No wonder I'm a dyke."

PROTESTER: Carol, with pins in her cheek, lips, nose and ears.

**Scraps**

Gingerly, they helped in the filthy rat infested kitchen which was littered with discarded food scraps and dirty pots and pans.

**Greenham**

**Scared**

I don't like the way she holds knives. It really scares me, do you think she could kill? they ask each other.

These women have been described as a "bunch of lesbians". Sadly, there's some truth in this, and for some, this is the very reason they came here and the reason they stay.



"A bunch of lesbians" An easy effective way of cancelling out every other fact of a woman's life - mother, sister, carer, fighter, pacifist, activist etc.

A tactic used against the early women's liberation movement - now to be used with equal success against the women's peace movement???

**Sad truth**

behind a protest for peace

taken from Daily Mirror 11/7/83 Sunday Express 17/7/83

Then a handful of peace women went off to the pub, to spend their social security benefits, as others settled by the fire to roll the first of the evening's "joints".



To be able to sit around the camp fire at Greenham Common with a few dozen women, to talk and to tell one another stories about our lives, to sing songs about women, about the strength and love of women, about how much we care about our lives and the world we live in, to tell jokes, to laugh, to cry and to hold one another and to take care of one another, to me it was just like walking into the dream that I'd always had, that women were capable of enormous strength and enormous love, especially when we're left alone together and not intruded upon by men. I found it the most inspiring experience that I've had so far in my life. I don't think anyone can understand it by looking at it from a distance. The only way to understand what's happening at Greenham is to go there, to live there for a few days because it's only by experiencing the love and care the women have for one another that you can feel the strength and power of the women there, and it's not as though these women are different from any other women anywhere else, they are just ordinary women, no bigger, no better, no cleverer than anyone else. It's just by living in that camp together, they are discovering their power and love and anybody is welcome; anybody can have that experience as I did.

My time at Greenham has certainly changed me. I'd spent a lot of time feeling isolated and frustrated, wondering how women could get together to love and care for one another and although obviously over the years I've experienced love and support, I've always felt a conflict. I mean I'm the mother of a boy and I've felt rejection at times from other lesbians and in day to day life you have to cope with so many situations involving men, at work, travelling around or wherever, you don't often get the opportunity to live in an all women community.

The camp will have changed all the women, I think. It could hardly not. I imagine they will take great strength and energy from the experience of living with each other and that strength and energy will be used in other ways for women, I'm sure of that.

I would have loved to stay at the camp, but I had to get back for my son. I was very tempted to stay. As it was I left after 5 days and in that time I'd only just begun to scratch the surface, there was so much more to learn about myself and how I can be with women. There was my son, but also I did not feel sufficiently committed to the anti-nuclear issue to go through all that those do. I could not get my body bruised nor be locked up in prison ..... though that too is to do with my son. At the moment I couldn't really leave him with anyone.

You asked if we talked about the political implications of the camp or whether we discussed feminist issues. We didn't while I was there certainly. It was more a matter of practical everyday living. For me in those few days it was a matter of learning to live with women and that was a very valuable experience. I think that sometimes it's too easy to sit and talk and intellectualise about women's situation. I've done that plenty of times in my life. What I really need and I'm sure what a lot of women need is to experience being with women, living with women and coping with ordinary day to day problems with women. I think out of that a new consciousness and a new idea of what we can achieve will arise.

The Greenham experience has affected all women, I think. Women have become aware of the camp, which has become the focal point for the moment. Suddenly we can see what a group of women can do. It has had an enormous effect in terms of media coverage and in terms of aggravating politicians. The new interest in the peace movement is due to this camp. The reason that nuclear weapons is now a big issue is because the camp is women only. A group of women doing it on their own. This is very, very confronting to everybody. It's very confronting to men and I think that to any woman who wants to see women gain power, strength and freedom for their mothers, sisters and daughters it's a point of inspiration. The camp gives power to all women and we have to remember it's only two or three dozen women doing all this!

Mary Liddall



## Interview with Rebecca Johnson, member of Greenham Peace camp.



Scarlet Women: Would you like to say how the camp got started in the first place?

Rebecca: It was started by a group of mainly housewives from Cardiff, who marched to Greenham Common because they felt the people ought to learn about Cruise Missiles, and ought to have the chance to make some kind of decision. They were ignored by the Government, so they decided to stay. That was in September '81, and there's been a women's peace camp there ever since then, outside the main gates of USAF Greenham Common, the site of the first 96 Cruise missiles in Europe.

S.W.: Do you think it should be a woman only camp?

R.: Yes, absolutely. There are other mixed camps, but I think that Greenham must be a women only camp, because it is necessary as a focus and an inspiration for women all over this country, all over the world, for us to develop our ideas on how to solve conflict, on how to co-operate, and for women to gain the confidence and also the sense of responsibility for acting to protect ourselves. It's very necessary, I think, for men to have to learn from us, what we're doing and why we're doing it in those ways. We use non-violent tactics, and the reasons for that are that Cruise missiles represent the ultimate logic in violence, being used to solve problems. The biggest fist or the biggest weapon and that's a very macho

approach to the problems that you have, and if we're going to say you shouldn't have the Cruise missiles, then we've got to be saying really that there are other ways of solving problems. That means that we can't use violence to solve our own differences, to win our way to peace. When men confront the force of the State and authority somewhere like Greenham Common, it becomes a microcosm of the very problem that we're trying to prevent, and the State and the police are confronted with women and children singing and linking arms, doing all sorts of imaginative actions, going into the base as snakes, or going in and dancing on the silos. When we refuse to use abuse or violence against them, what are the police to do? They say they are the protectors of women and children, they say that war is supposed to protect women and children, but

they use brutal force.

S.W.: What would you say to those women who say that the police already use force against women on Reclaim the Night marches and the like?

R.: Yes, I think that is absolutely true. I think that the police are the violent arm of the State and yes they do use violence against women, but it's much harder that they are exposed by using violence against women, they are exposed for what they really are. They do use violence against us at Greenham. On Dec. 13th., during the blockade, certain of us were picked out and pushed or dropped on our heads when the cameras weren't looking, but when they use violence against women, they are exposed as the violent arm of the State, and I think we need to expose that.



S.W.: Do you think that non violent direct action is applicable in all situations - like for instance Northern Ireland, or in other anti-imperialist struggles as in Latin America ?

R.: That's a very difficult question, because it's very hard from this far away to say to people living in the most appalling oppression under imperialism, to say to them, you should not take up arms, but history has shown, that if they take up arms, they replace one form of violent patriarchal leadership with another form. That's happened time and again in South America and in Africa, and it would happen in Ireland. If we are really wanting to get to the root of the problem we've got to use means other than the means used to perpetuate the oppression, and that means finding a non violent way.

S.W.: What is the root of the problem then ?

R.: The patriarchy is a fundamental root of the problem. The oppression of the feminine principle by the masculine principle, which is seen in colonialism, it's seen in the exploitation of the working class, it's seen in the exploitation of the third world, it's seen in the exploitation of women in violence against women. That's the root.

S.W.: Would you say something about Dec. 12th., what you thought of it ?

R.: Absolutely tremendous. Since Dec. 12th. we've had far less need to justify why we're women only, and why all our actions are women initiated, and women co-ordinated, because that was where 35 to 40 thousand women came and with our own bodies,

"Women for Peace photo"

and with our own symbols we showed how we feel about nuclear weapons and men's toys. And there were men wandering around, saying where's the action ? This is very badly organised, what's happening ? And women saying - This is what's happening, we're making it happen, and we had no leaders, on one focus, and experts standing up and telling us how we should think, every woman who went down there was herself the action, herself involved and we proved it could work, and it was tremendous.

The next thing that's happening is that we want to build the roots of the peace movement in women's own locality. So Greenham has been a focus, an inspiration for the women's peace movement, it's where women suddenly have realized we can do it, but now we've all got to go back into the areas and work in the unions, and work with our neighbours and women's peace groups. Organise locally, that's where real roots are going to be laid for changing the whole system.



Photo: Penny  
Greenham July '83



M. Black '83



# Why Women-only?

At the last Greenham Women Support Group conference in January, women from the camp told us of the pressure they were experiencing from men who arrived at weekends to join in the action. They also talked about attempts to make Greenham a mixed action now that Cruise had arrived. These moves come from women as well as men.

Some of us felt that this was such a serious issue that the conference should make a public statement in support of the women at Greenham who are having to deal with this harassment. We also felt that we had begun to take for granted that Greenham was women only, and it was worthwhile talking about why again. We drew up the following statement and asked conference to endorse it, but it was felt that instead the issue should be discussed at the next conference:

"In the light of suggestions that Greenham should become a mixed camp and that actions there should involve men, this conference re-affirms that the Greenham Common Peace Camp and all related activities and actions should remain women-only because:-

- (1) it has set a precedent for women participating in the dialogue about war in a way that questions the traditional gender expectations. Women are no longer participating in a male-defined way but are now making decisions and taking control of our own and the world's future.
- (2) the strength and power of Greenham lie in the fact that it is a women's action, and to question the validity of women-only at Greenham is to undermine its unique strength, and the strength of all of us women.
- (3) the example of Greenham has been taken up by women all over the world, and for it to become mixed would be a blow to Women's Action for peace worldwide.
- (4) Greenham women are very happy to accept support from men, from the back, for example, looking after the children, raising money, talking to other men about the issues, at home and in their own areas."

If the statement had been accepted we had hoped that more reasons would have been added because the 4 mentioned obviously don't cover everything that could be said. Here are some more which we heard mentioned during the conference:

"It's good that women are taking the initiative in 'general' struggles, because men usually take the lead and in doing so define the struggle in their interests and on their terms."

"Women ask different questions because we have different interests; we bring a feminist understanding to bear on the issue."

"The sisterhood and the support that women at the camp give each other, which has enabled them to keep going so effectively for so long, would never have been possible had the camp been mixed."

"This action which has inspired the peace movement generally has also given women energy in our other struggles."

"The camp has reached through our apathy and shown us that women can take on the military machine."

When we talk about the issue amongst ourselves, we come up with more and more positive reasons why Greenham should remain women-only.

As the two of us writing this talked about it, we became more and more angry that we were having to think about justifying this women-only action. Men don't have to give reasons for their men-only activities (not that there are many when you include the women who are usually around serving and servicing them in one way or another!). The problem with men is that they can't leave us alone. Because they need us they feel threatened when we exclude them, especially when we are taking the initiative in an area of activity they have always considered their territory. Women at Greenham are not just fighting Cruise, they/we are fighting to maintain our right to act independently from men.

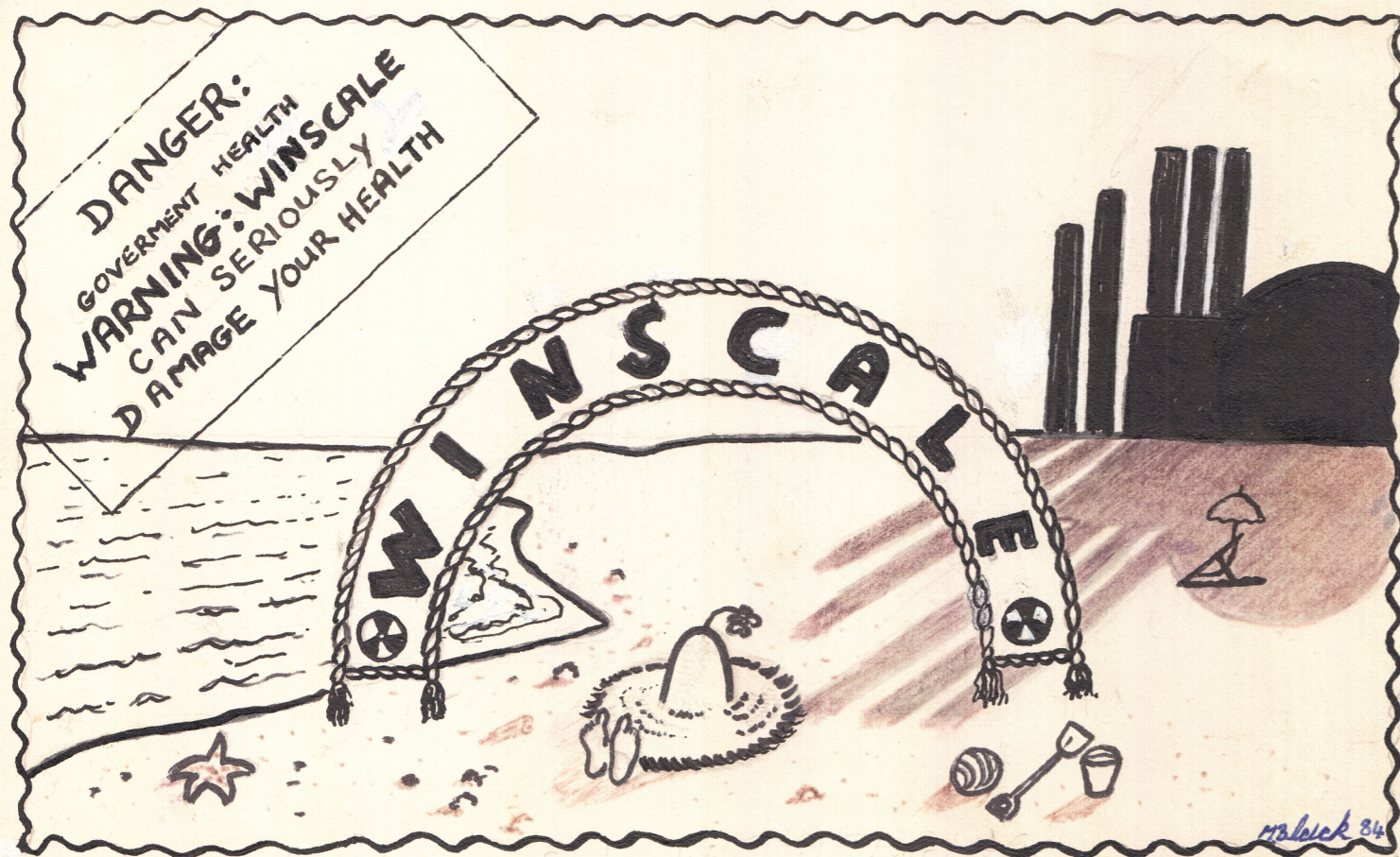


# Radiation -

## Our donation to the future?

Many women regard nuclear power technology - especially as seen in the proposed new PWR\* programme, of which Sizewell B would be the first - as yet another of the boys' toys. It is proposed to set up a string of these reactors across the country, regardless of the danger to the health of the people who mine the uranium necessary - in countries far away, who can therefore be ignored with impunity; - regardless of the fact that there is still no solution to the problem of disposing of radioactive waste, nor is there any sign of making 'safe' in the future these substances which threaten our health, genetic structures and lives, and those of our children and grandchildren for centuries to come; regardless of the fact that this waste has to travel around the country by train in 'secure' conditions through places where thousands of women, men and children live; regardless of the danger of a 'meltdown' of the reactor vessel, or other accident due to the complexities of a technology which no-one really understands or can absolutely control. All these factors make the new PWR programme such a risky venture that any ordinary person would surely assume that we would have to be absolutely desperate for energy to undertake it. This is not so. Evidence given at the public enquiry shows quite clearly that the case of the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) is full of holes - wrong assumptions, exaggerated projections of need, and a total lack of regard for ways of saving energy or of producing it by alternative means.

\* PWR = PRESSURISED WATER REACTOR



I assume from all this that the boys need their new toy for reasons of prestige, status, competitiveness, commercial interest and all those other aspects of a world dominated by male values, which does not seem to touch on my life in a positive way.

Confirmation for this sad view comes from a few hours spent at the Sizewell enquiry. Here are many besuited and extremely polite gentlemen discussing aspects of our future in a way which is not only almost completely incomprehensible, but is also by the nature of the language used as removed from its emotional content as possible. Deaths of station workers are spoken of by reference to graphs as some 'acceptable' minimal death rate is sought. Accidents in PWRs throughout the world are discussed in technical terms which avoid the possible impact of the accident on the people living nearby. (Incidentally, the number of accidents, though not so far fatal, is far greater than one might think, and the causes often trivial in a way that cannot be countered by technology and more stringent safety measures). A lot of the arguments are technical and complex and quite inaccessible to the public.

Of course, the public at the public enquiry is usually sparse for this and many other reasons. There are rarely many women there. I feel a total alien in the environment, and naturally there's no creche.... It's definitely not a place where one feels at home and able to contribute to a discussion on an issue of such importance to our future. I sometimes have dreams of how differently our 'democratic' processes could work if we were not treated so contemptuously by an establishment 'in the know'.

On International Women's Day about 100 women from East Anglia and further afield tried in a small way to reclaim the inquiry. In the morning we symbolically laid a 'dead baby' and wreaths by the Inspector, and held up cards saying: 'Radiation - our donation to the future?' to the inquiry. In lovely sunshine we picnicked, played and sang on the grass outside. Late afternoon saw us singing powerfully in the hall, injecting a note of joyous protest and woman-strength into the drab proceedings. This challenged the 'rules of silent protest', and resulted in an early adjournment of the proceedings.

Nevertheless, we as women feel fairly powerless to shape the inquiry or the decisions that will be made. Some of us will be making our individual objections later in the year. Most of the women concerned about nuclear power are also involved in actions concerning nuclear weapons and the struggle for feminism. Where can we best put our energy to ensure a safe future?

Joy Bounds, July 1983



# Radiation - a deadly legacy

Q: Why do you think the nuclear programme was developed in the first place?

A: The U.S. Army were operating power stations - or what were essentially power stations - to produce plutonium for bombs and other weapons. They were coming under a great deal of criticism because of the danger of radiation hazards to the population at large and the idea was that if they used the excess energy produced by those stations to provide electricity, the whole programme could be presented to the public as producing energy too cheap to meter so that some good could be seen to be coming out of what had hitherto been perceived as evil.

Q: This was the Atoms for Peace Programme?

A: There was a big panic response to the Russians setting off their first atomic blast in Siberia during the time of the Korean war. The Americans realised they hadn't got the technology to themselves and that the Soviets could develop weapons as well. So to accelerate their research and development programme, to keep the money coming in, they introduced 'Atoms for Peace'. The peaceful use of nuclear power was to solve the energy problems of the 'developing' world as it would provide them with energy sources other than oil and coal and the usual organic fuels they were so short of.

Q: I was in CND in the '50's and '60's. We used to argue for the peaceful use of atomic energy then. I can't understand, looking back, why we didn't see the connections between arms production and research and nuclear power. Nor why we were so unaware of the radiation danger.

Medium and low level waste is dumped into the sea but the real poisons have been under armed guard for 38 years

## An Interview with Janice Owens

A: Everyone was very anxious for there to be a good use of the technology because it was felt to be such a marvellous, miraculous thing. How clever it was! Male scientists particularly were bemused by how brilliantly clever they were to be able to destroy on such a scale. Everything that was reported about the Atomic Programme, weapons, and Atoms for Peace, came over in a quasi religious tone. People felt we were beginning

to crack all life's basic problems - science would find the answers. We needn't worry about the oil and coal running out, the Earth had limitless resources in the form of nuclear energy.

Q: Do you think CND has the same attitudes now?

A: No, oh no. I think they realise now, 38 years on. We've still got very high levels of radioactive wastes from the very first nuclear power stations. They are still in cold storage waiting for the scientists to develop some safe way of disposing of them. There is no safe way. They cannot come up with an answer. 38 years of the accumulation of that kind of poison! It's extremely dangerous stuff which is going to be around for a quarter of a million years. The scale of danger is extreme.

Q: They can't put it in the sea?

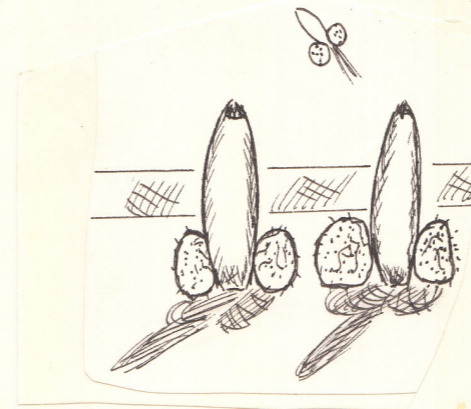
A: No, not the high level radioactive waste. They can't put it anywhere. It's sitting near the power stations under guard. Medium and low level waste is dumped into the sea, but the real poisons are under armed guard.

Q: Is this the stuff they are trying to bury in the Cheviots?

A: Yes, they are trying to find land sites to bury it. Nuclear power is a highly dangerous technology. You have the wastes to deal with, but apart from the wastes it is dangerous. They have not yet perfected a container safe enough to hold the radioactive materials used in producing this energy. You need indestructible and incorruptible containers. Each one has to be welded and has to be able to withstand great heat and nuclear bombardment. There can be human error in the welding, or anywhere else in the technology. They want fully automated power stations, but automatic systems are designed by people and people are fallible. Even people using computers can come up with incredible errors.

Q: If the welding didn't hold, the containers would leak?

A: They'd crack and the stuff would come out into the atmosphere. But then power stations regularly emit radioactive steam into the air.



Q: That's not because of a fault, that's part of their functioning?

A: No, that's part of their functioning. Also they regularly dispose of radioactive coolant into the sea. That's why nuclear power stations are built by the sea, rivers or lakes.

Q: And it stays in the water?

A: Well, it gets into the food chain once it gets into the sea because the plankton absorb it, and plankton is eaten by shrimps and so on and at each stage the radioactivity gets more and more concentrated.

Q: And then we eat it. So it never goes away, basically.

A: No, there's no waste in the universe, things transform, they never disappear.

Q: And radioactive substances take a long time to break down?

A: It varies. Some of the waste products become harmless in a very short time, in as little as a day, but others take over a quarter of a million years to lose enough radioactivity to become harmless.

Q: What harm does low level radiation do?

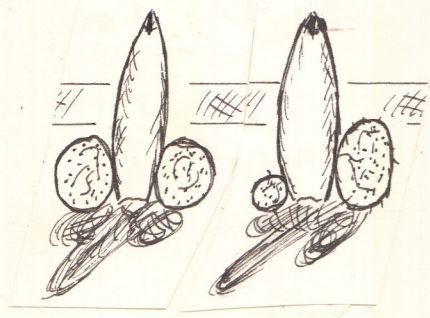
A: Very difficult to assess because the background radiation we live with is already quite high. This means that a small increase in the amount of radiation we're exposed to isn't going to produce any very dramatic effects. There will be a long term effect. We can see some of these long term effects now in the conscripts who were present at the British testing sites in the '50's atmospheric tests. The British tested their bombs in Aboriginal land in Australia. They used the conscripts as guinea pigs. They were placed at different distances from the tests, given different instructions. Some were told to cover their eyes and sit with their backs to it, others were given glasses and told to look at it. Very callous.

We know what happened to some of these soldiers. They developed forms of old age diseases. What are traditionally diseases of the over 70's, old age cancers. The incidence of this kind of cancer is much higher than it would have been had they not been exposed to the tests.



In Britain, the number of children under 10 with diabetes has doubled recently.

Rosalie Bertell is the most persistent researcher into low level radiation hazards, and what she is coming up with after many years of research confirms these soldiers' experience. An increase in radiation can be measured in an earlier onset of what are typically old age diseases, like non lymphatic leukemia, which is occurring earlier now. These diseases are occurring earlier still near nuclear power stations or nuclear weapons' depots. The population in these areas are showing a higher incidence of these diseases at an earlier age. Yes, it's true that any given individual might have got leukemia at 66 anyway, but looking at the population as a whole you can see a number of effects.



Women are particularly vulnerable to the genetic damage that is caused by radiation. Our bodies remake themselves because the genes can recreate proper functioning tissues. Any rise in background radiation seriously affects this capacity. The incidence of thyroid cancer and breast cancer in women and the age at which these diseases are occurring is showing a connection with the increased radiation background near the power stations and the other facilities.

Men don't seem terribly interested in these things, they seem too bemused by their own cleverness.

Q: And this is from the radioactive steam the stations emit?

A: Yes, from the steam and the stuff that leaks in to the water and from the occasional little accident like a little fire that releases just a bit of Caesium 137 or the big fire at Windscale in 1957, for instance. That put a lot of very nasty stuff into the atmosphere, so much that even the Government were worried. Gallons upon gallons of milk were thrown away - and where did they throw it? Into the sea.

If we look at the effects of radiation on the reproductive cells, the future generations will be more badly affected than those directly exposed. The genetic damage may be very slight, just enough to reduce the body's capacity to cope with the kind of chemical onslaught that we have to deal with daily. Detergents and such wouldn't make anyone ill by themselves, but if the genetic material is damaged very slightly, the child might have feebler defences, be unable to cope with these chemicals. So you would expect to find an increase in diabetes, for instance, or more allergies. In Britain, the number of children under 10 with diabetes has doubled fairly recently. This is the kind of genetic damage that Rosalie Bertell believes is happening is a very widespread, widescale way. Her article will be published in October in a book called 'Reclaim the Earth' which has been put together by WomenFor Life On Earth (Women's Press). You see, men don't seem terribly interested in these things, they seem too bemused by their own cleverness.

Nuclear power stations are not selling at all in the United States since the accident at Three Mile Island..... Westinghouse and Kraftwerke are both pushing nuclear power stations in the 3rd world.

Q: Do you have any other objections to nuclear power?

A: Yes, I worry about the way the industry has to be protected because of its connection with the military programme. A lot of the processes are secret and subject to the Official Secrets Act. People working in nuclear power stations have to sign the Official Secrets Act. Not only that, but their families are intimidated if they try to talk to the press. I see that as a terrible reduction in civil liberties for all the people connected with the programme. Also, the wastes are so dangerous that the threat of terrorists getting hold of any of the radioactive materials is such that armed guards are employed by the CEGB, the only company in England that is allowed a private army. There are about 3,000 armed men protecting the waste. In the U.S. there have been at least 10 occasions when terrorist threats were taken seriously enough for big police and army operations to be mounted to see if the stuff really had been stolen. Every year, over here, a certain amount of plutonium goes missing. Plutonium is the end product, important in nuclear weapons production. Every year some cannot be accounted for. It could be Britain is supplying the U.S. weapons programme. It could be a secret diversion to the U.S. although this would be against international law.

The peaceful use of nuclear power was a spin off from and a cover for the nuclear weapons research and development programme, and in its turn nuclear power production has a spin

off for the nuclear weapons programme. Power stations create the much sought after plutonium. It is this connection which has caused CND to look again at the the question of nuclear power.

Q: Nuclear Power stations aren't selling so well in the United States these days?

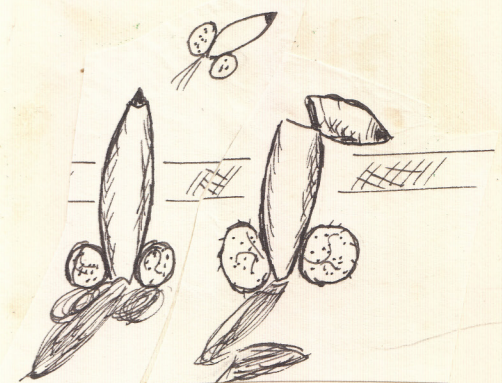
A: Since the accident at Three Mile Island, they are not selling at all. Westinghouse and Kraftwerke in West Germany are both pushing stations in the Third World. I think there's just over 500 orders on the books for stations of different sizes and technologies to be built in different Third World countries - some of them in earthquake areas, some in volcanic zones, all of them ignoring what the people there actually want. Very often people lose their homes to make way for the power station.

Q: So who's keen on having them over there apart from Westinghouse and Kraftwerke?

A: The Third World has very serious energy problems. There's been a tremendous loss of wood because the multi-nationals have cut the forests down for their own profits, and hydroelectric dams too often interfere with the traditional ways of irrigating the country, so there really are serious problems with energy. There are alternatives - windmills, watermills, etc - which are really much better. They can be controlled by the people who use them. Nuclear power places control in the hands of trained experts, the state or big business.

Q: So if Third World countries buy nuclear power stations, they become tied more tightly than ever to Western Imperialism.

A: Yes, it makes them very dependent. It does not provide work for their people, but it does make their governments more interested in maintaining the status quo, more willing to be militarised.





# OUR BODIES OUR LAND

From: "Ain't nowhere we can run - A Handbook for women  
on the nuclear mentality" by Susan Koen and N. Swaine.

Article by Nina Swaine.

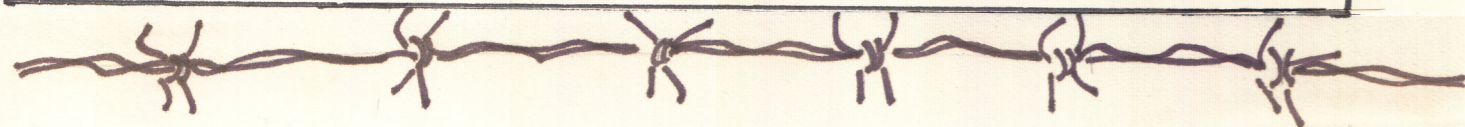
"When I was about 9, I got a cheque from the federal government. It was for \$94.66 - I remember. It got me really angry because they were paying for Chippewa land they had taken away. That was their idea of compensation: \$94.66."

Winona la Duke, a Chippewa Indian, is a founder of WARN, Women of all Red Nations, and an anti-nuclear activist. As a Native American woman, she is concerned with the historical exploitation of Native peoples, the colonisation of Indian lands, and the current dangers facing Native people as a result of uranium mining and milling. In the February/march issue of Rain magazine, Winona states:

"In 1974 100 per cent of all federally controlled uranium production came from Indian reservations... We predict that about 80 per cent of all federal uranium production comes from Indian lands now. And since the U.S. is a major producer of uranium what it looks like on a world scale is that Indians are the No. 4 producers of uranium in the world."

It is her belief that the major focus of the anti-nuclear efforts must address the issue of uranium mining and milling as the real source of the problem, and not the plants or weapons which are really only symptoms.

"A nuclear power plant is a symptom, ... weapons bases and all those things are symptoms... Y know none of that stuff is gonna hurt you unless it's got uranium and that's where it's got to be stopped."



The Autumn, 1979 issue of Akwesasne Notes, a publication of the Mohawk Nation, states:

"For 30 years, multinational corporations have been at work in the Southwest, extracting uranium ore for the production of nuclear weapons and as fuel for nuclear power generating plants... Much of the uranium mining and milling process takes place on Indian lands, far from the sight and therefore the minds of most Americans."

Most Americans have the luxury of separating themselves from the nuclear debate, content simply to argue the relative dangers of the nuclear industry in light of current energy needs of the country. Native people do not have this luxury!

The push in this country to create more nuclear power plants and weapons results in the direct "rape" of Indian lands by uranium mining, and involves the employment of Indian peoples to perform dangerous mining and milling tasks. Native people are, then, effected by nuclear proliferation on the personal, social, economic, and political levels to a degree even more significant than other Americans.

"The nuclear industry, besides giving jobs to workers which slowly kill them and the surrounding population, has left an estimated 60 million tons of untreated uranium tailings on Indian and non-Indian lands in the state of New Mexico alone."

The high unemployment rate of reservations has forced Native people to take the hazardous jobs of uranium mining offered by the industry, resulting in increasing lung cancer, death from radiation exposure, and respiratory diseases. In addition, the practice of the milling industry of leaving mill tailings (a fine grey sand left over after the milling of uranium ore contains radium and emits radon gas) scattered on these lands insures the continued exposure of all Native peoples to the dangers of radiation. The economic base of Indian tribes lies in their people and their land; the milling industry has exploited both of these "natural resources" leaving only radiation exposure behind in return.



It is out of this background that Winona and many other Native American women have begun to take an active part in the fight against the nuclear industry, and the American energy policy that supports this continued reliance on nuclear fuels. Winona explains this activity on the part of Native women when she says:

"Women are considered to be the backbones of the Indian nations because the responsibility for future generations belongs to the women."

For this reason, Women of All Red Nations (WARN) was founded in September 1978 by 200 Native women to bring back the traditional role of women in the Indian nations and in the leadership and guidance of AIM (the American Indian Movement)... It has taken as one of its main focuses the link between the repression of the Native peoples and the theft of the resources explicit within the uranium mining controversy. Winona argues:

"The government targets the men, like Leonard Peletier, and puts them in prison. They create distractions while stealing our resources. Leonard Peletier is a prisoner of the national energy policy. So that's what the women are fighting."

She clarifies the way in which Native women view the battle over uranium mining and other examples of exploitation in the following passage:

"We view ourselves as an integral part, almost a representation, of the earth. The earth is our mother - a woman. As women are exploited, so our mother is. And we must fight both battles simultaneously."





Photographs © JEB, Washington, D.C.  
Women Vol 6 #1

# BRITAIN AND NAMIBIA - THE NUCLEAR LINK

*Namibian Womens Group, London*

Recently, Frieda Williams, a member of the SWAPO Women's Council of Namibia, visited Britain to talk about how the women of Namibia are struggling for their own and their country's liberation. She stressed how important it is that Namibian women, unlike their sisters in some of the other independent nations of Southern Africa, reap equal benefits to men from the liberation of their country from imperialist powers.

Namibia was occupied and administered by Germany from 1884 until the First World War. After that, South Africa was given a mandate by the League of Nations to 'Promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants of the territory.' However, since then, the South African government has instead exploited the people and resources of Namibia and annexed it as a colony. In 1945, the newly-formed UN ordered South Africa to hand over Namibia to UN Trusteeship; South Africa refused to do that and continues to illegally occupy Namibia with a huge military presence.

Namibia is very strategically important to South Africa because it has so many raw materials - uranium, diamonds, copper zinc, as well as other more rare metals vital for aerospace technology; as well as for its strategic position geographically as a buffer and base for raids into Angola. These raw materials are needed by most western capitalist countries and South Africa is one of the most reliable suppliers. So they are prepared to underwrite the South African government both politically and financially in order to ensure these supplies. As Barbara Rogers testified at the 1980 UN hearings on Namibian Uranium.

"There is no shortage of uranium, so the whole question is why are these particular companies and Western Governments placing so much emphasis

and putting so much investment into an occupied territory and the answer can only be a political one. They actually prefer to deal with a country where there is no chance of the local people having any control whatsoever of the way in which it is being done.....They are free of anti-pollution controls, they are free of health and safety regulations, they are free of the international agencies. They can more or less exploit the mines however they decide."

The uranium she refers to supplies 50% of Britain's supplies for the nuclear power and weapons industries here, as well as large quantities being stockpiled while the supplies are cheap and plentiful. It comes from the Rossing mine, the majority of which is owned by the notorious mining multi-national, Rio Tinto Zinc.

The deal which ensures RTZ's contract to mine the uranium and to export it to Britain involves British (and US) secret support and training of scientists for South Africa's nuclear bomb, a prototype of which was tested in 1979. This bomb is a great threat to the newly independent states of Southern Africa - Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, in particular. South Africa is determined to undermine and overthrow their governments through political and military harassment. If Britain were to break the contract with South Africa, it would be an important blow against her military and imperial intentions as well as making our own government reconsider the advisability of the nuclear programme in Britain.

While many Native people, both men and women, have taken an increasingly active part in the anti-nuclear movement, their involvement still comes from a place of caution and scepticism. These people have been engaged in a struggle to protect their land and all natural resources for centuries, and the recent affinity with the anti-nuclear movement seems almost too late for Native people. An interview in Healthright, a women's health journal, with two other members of WARN included this statement:

"One of the things that indigenous peoples are really concerned about is that this struggle has been going on for hundreds of years in terms of the land being taken away and always struggling for the land. The anti-nuke is new and there is a tendency to distrust and think, 'Once the anti-nuke movement is over, is that it?' Do people realise that there is a longer term, deeper commitment to make?"

In responding to a question about the relationship of WARN and other Native American groups to the anti-nuke movement, Winona provided an even more graphic picture of the scepticism felt by Native people:

"I think there is a lot of potential there but I think it's going to require that both parts do some learning... What we see with the American no-nukes is ....Americans are always responding to a crisis situation....All of a sudden they decided that nuclear power and weapons are a bad idea....So they start looking around for allies and of a sudden they figure out-lo and behold!- Indians got the uranium, let's start talking to them! We understand that there's been a war going on for 400 years. Although there are few of us and we are oppressed, our power comes from a balance between our spiritual centre and its manifestation in the way we fight the war. We have to be respected from that basis..."

The challenge is clearly there for the anti-nuclear movement to become sensitised to the historical, cultural, economic, and political position of Native peoples and to look closely at anti-nuke activities in the context of the larger struggle for our human dignity and natural resources. In this struggle, Native Americans bring vast experience from their history and culture.

While many of the efforts of the anti-nuke movement have been directed towards the concrete dangers of nuclear plants, weapons, and mining activities, the perspective offered by Native people like Winona reminds us that the target of the struggle is really against the nuclear mentality that supports such proliferation.



Not surprisingly, successive governments, both Tory and Labour, have refused to cancel the contract. Also, they are members of the Contact Group (along with the US, France and Germany) which is meant to be arranging diplomatically for the South Africans to withdraw from Namibia, but they continuously design stalling measures and help out the South African government.

In the Rossing mine itself, the black labour force work in open pits exposed to uranium dust with almost no safety provisions and they, unlike white workers, have no regular health checks or medical facilities. They are nearly all in the lowest paid jobs and live in camps downwind of the uranium dust; while the white workers live in a desirable area near the coast. If the black workers have their families with them, they are still only allocated one room in housing which one observer described as 'the worst in Namibia' - however, the conditions under which they live and work are typical of most blacks in the white areas of Namibia. Most women work as domestic servants for white families or live in the black 'homelands' of Namibia where they farm the most unproductive land in the country - a few more highly educated women work as nurses and teachers - the only 'professions' open to women. In one way or another they are separated from the men of their families and community almost all the time, so it is easy to see why the politics of women in the family have a low priority in their struggles, but in the politics of work, they are very active.

Frieda talked of how thousands of Namibian women live in refugee camps in Angola and Zambia to which they have fled from South African repression, (many women are imprisoned in Namibia for organising politically). In the camps they have organised sewing and weaving classes so that they can build their traditional skills for productive work; as well as driving and motor-mechanic courses for women so that they can enter traditionally male occupations and break the boundaries of low pay and status for women's work. All this work is assisted by the 24 hour nurseries for the children of women who are training or working.



from Isis Autumn 1978

As Frieda stressed again and again, women are not only organising to overcome their own oppression as women, but they are also fully involved in the fight to liberate Namibia from South Africa and to build socialism. Although they have not yet achieved 50% representation in SWAPO or PLAN (the liberation army)

they do have a relatively high degree of representation. The SWAPO Womens' Council, which was formed in 1970, is constantly lobbying and arguing for more. Women are also increasingly involved in the military war against the South Africans and are being trained as technical experts in such fields as anti-aircraft.

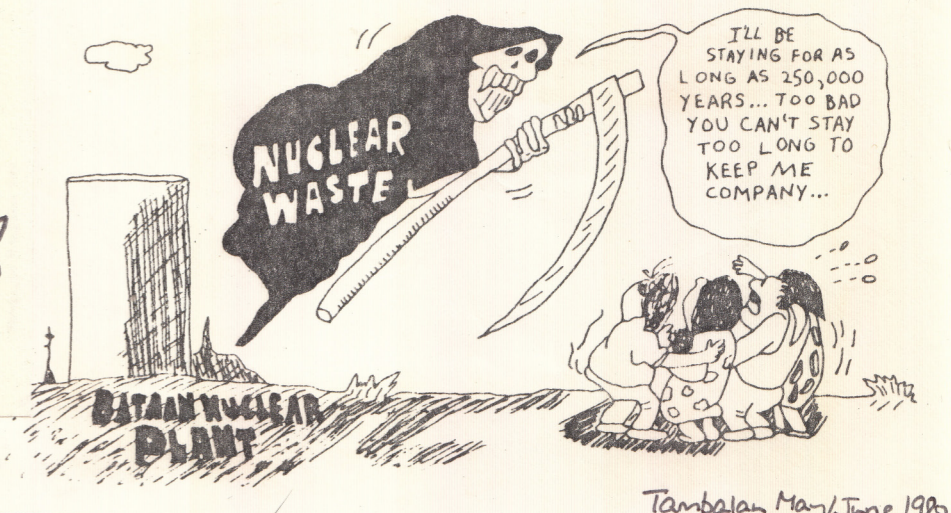
Frieda called on women here to pressurise our government to cancel the uranium contract. Since they are refusing to do this, it can only be achieved by direct action by the unions and other activists to stop the import. It is clear from the work of the SWAPO Womens' Council, like that of the women of Greenham Common, that women are not just taking up 'women's issues' but are at the forefront of all anti-imperialist struggles.

The SWAPO Womens' Solidarity Campaign which is the support group in Britain for the SWAPO Womens' Council is at 96 Gillespie Road, London N5. 01 359 9116.

At the time of writing, 1 in 5 of the adult population in Namibia is a South African soldier.

# Pacific Resistors

Excerpts from a report on a Conference held in New Zealand. From BROADSHEET



Tambalan May/June 1980

People from all over New Zealand and the Pacific met at the Tatai Hono Marae in Auckland in Mid-November 1982 for a 7-day hui on a nuclear free and independent Pacific .....The hui gave "an opportunity to Pacific in their broadest context - the struggle of indigenous people everywhere to regain power over their lives and lands. This means resisting global military and economic interests."

The hui was the first of its kind in Aotearoa. It was spearheaded by Pacific People's Anti-Nuclear Action Committee and organised by a broad based steering committee of Maori women.

## The Philippines

The Philippines is under control. The control of multi-national corporations and American colonialism. The Philippines is the puppet of foreign investment. It has allowed the people of the Philippines to be exploited for profit. The profit of other countries. Said Mariflor Parpan ..... "We have become squatters in our own land.".....

Mariflor is an activist, working for the people and on controversial issues. Some of that work is

"our preoccupation with the nuclear power plant, which is supposed to be an energy strategy to solve our energy problems. It is a Westinghouse nuclear power plant which is a prototype of its kind." So nobody knows what can and cannot go wrong with it. Mariflor says, "It is significant that they exported this nuclear plant when there was a downtrend and zero orders for new nuclear reactors in the United States. So they have tried to ram it down the throats of Third World countries. And who would be fool enough to accept it? -

## The Pacific

"In looking at the Pacific through native eyes it was inevitable that the white mentality be challenged. Pacific nations have a history/ies of colonial invasions and native resistance. Our past is our present and our future. The Nuclear Bomb comes from the white past. And thus it is this new form of white mushroom terrorism which threatens to wipe out all Pacific nations: the U.S. nuclear tests on the Marshall-ese people post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the French tests on Mururoa and Fangataufa in Polynesia; white nations practising nuclearisation on small isolated peoples of the Pacific. Down and out Racism. The Pacific people are not only little black guinea pigs for the nuclear radiation syringe -but even our homelands are the practice ground for World War III. When they have perfected their bombs on our bodies, then they will engage in the "real war"."

(Hilda Halkyard)

their puppets." Puppet countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and the Phillipines. →



## Philippines (cont)

"There is now growing opposition to the American presence in the Philippines and it is getting crystallized because of the nuclear power plant and the realisation of our being part of the nuclear crisis. And then the issue of US military bases has been coming up. There are nuclear weapons in the bases and the energy power lines will really be leading towards the bases and the export processing zone, which is largely owned by the US multinational corporations."

"We are really a neo-colony and the ones who make it possible are the local elites who stand to personally gain from collaboration with the Americans and other multinational corporations, including the Japanese, Australians and French. And with every other super-power - even Russia and China. Through all this the ones who suffer the most are the women. I think one of the saddest manifestations of colonization is the degradation of women, women who cannot be engaged in truly productive and dignified work. A great number are in prostitution, selling their bodies at the military bases. And the saddest of all is child prostitution. Children from nine to 14 years old had to be hospitalised with VD and other physical ailments. They had been kept prisoners and forced into prostitution by an officer in the US military base and a local counterpart. We were able to file a charge against the American but he was sent to Guam for prosecution. We don't have any power over there".....



## Australia

Gracelyn Smallwood spoke about aboriginal land rights at the hui. Later she talked about the Brisbane Commonwealth Games and the aboriginal struggle against oppression in Australia. She asked Broadsheet to print the Statement of Protest which was issued by the aboriginal opposition to the Brisbane games.



## Australia

### STATEMENT OF PROTEST

Now HEAR THIS

We are the indigenous people of this country, now called Australia. Our people lived here for approx fifty thousand years, divided into about five hundred distinct groups in their own areas that had recognised and stable borders. Our society was stable, our still unrelinquished sovereignty over our land was absolute.

Our ancestors evolved a basic and just system of laws. Laws that allowed all individuals to experience the ultimate of reasonable positive pleasures and allowed the achievement of their ultimate human potential. The dignity of the individual is maintained by these laws else they would have been un-maintainable.

Our society was stable. We had not the need of monarchs, prisons or armies. We did not have the need to invade and colonise other countries because our technology was not destructive to the and our culture was not destructive to human experience.

Since the white invasion destruction has been wrought on our homeland and her children. We have been, and still are, the victims of genocide, racism and exploitation. Our lands are being destroyed by a technology that is destructive to the planet and thus to human existence on the planet. We have lost much. Injustice is forced upon us. Our humanity is being degraded and our history distorted by strangers. We wish no more of this.

We are taking another step in the process of decolonisation. Before the World, we accuse White Australia (and her Mother England) of crimes against humanity and the planet. The past two centuries of colonisation is proof of our accusation.

We hereby demand yet again recognition of our humanity and our land rights.

Hear us, white Australia, we are the spirit of our land. Our name is humanity. Our aims are self-determination and justice. We will not be defeated. We are our history, our culture, our land. We are now.

# U.S. Imperialism — the global threat to peace

Nuclear Power and Nuclear Weapons are but the visible and frightening tip of the iceberg of U.S. Imperialism.

IMPERIALISM - the extension by one country of its authority over other lands by political, military or economic means. (Larousse).

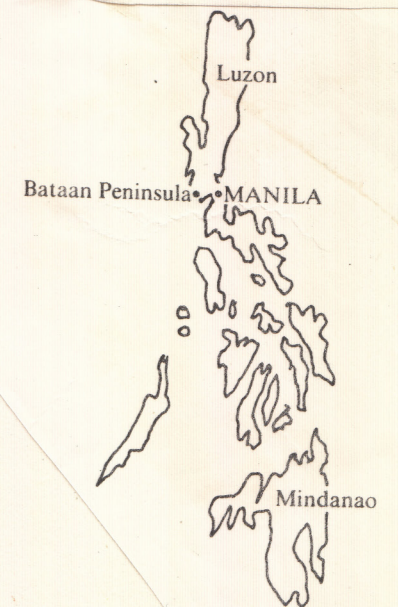
## The Philippines - A Paradise for Profit

In spite of Thatcher telling us that the Russians are our sworn enemies, in spite of Reagan claiming to be the God-given guardian of the free world, many women in the peace movement think that America is the most dangerous country in the world. A look at the recent events in the Philippines reveals some of the interlinked strands of political, military and economic means by which the US extends its authority over that group of 7,000 islands.

President Marcos, first elected in 1966, declared martial law in 1973 when he was negotiating with Westinghouse to install nuclear power stations in Bataan peninsula, and meeting organised opposition from thousands of Filipinos. At about the same time, he increased the internal war against the Muslim population of the southern island of Mindanao. His wife, Imelda, is the Governor of the capital city Manila, and her cousin-in-law was paid \$3.5 million to make sure that the contract for the PWR stations went to Westinghouse. The ruling elite of the Philippines have been dependent on US support to keep them in power since 1946 when they were granted 'independence'. Although the population is mainly Catholic, many of the clergy are now subject to imprisonment as subversives. The wealthy people tend to follow the way of life enjoyed by rich Americans.

*'What devilish conspiracy is it  
That would place a nuclear dome  
On the slope of a volcano, beside  
An earthquake fault, on a coast  
Prey to tidal waves and typhoons  
Among people ravaged by malaria  
And stunted by malnutrition?'*

*Anonymous poet of Bataan*



## Arms make Profits....

The main military bases in South-East Asia are the Clark Air Force base and the Subic Naval base, both in the north of the Philippines, with a total of about 33,000 servicemen. The US took over control of the



Philippines from the Spanish in 1900, and before World War 1 US marines had killed 300,000 Filipino nationalists. Although the UK, West Germany and Italy all sell arms to Marcos, the biggest supplier is the US, who have 5 ways of lending money to buy arms, or of giving them away, and who also provide training in modern warfare. These are the mounts of money allocated in this way by the US to the Philippines between 1950-79, in US \$million at current values:

|             |  |                 |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| MAP grants  | - grants of arms, equipment, and services under the Military Assistance Programme  | 560.2           |
| FMS credits | - credits awarded under the Foreign Military Sales Programme for the purchase of US arms   | 94.1            |
| EDA         | - deliveries of 'surplus' US arms under the Excess Defence Articles Programme  | 98.1            |
| IMET        | - training provided under the International Military Education and Training Programme  | 34.4            |
| ESF         | - subsidies awarded to threatened pro-US regimes from the Economic Support Fund (formerly known as the Security Supporting Assistance Programme) | 195.3           |
| TOTAL       |  | \$982.1 million |

### ...and Arms defend Profits

Where are all these arms and trained military personnel employed? To a large extent in Mindanao, the southern island, where Muslim villages are now officially battle fields, families need military permits to buy nails, batteries and medicines, and the expedient of 'destroying towns (with napalm) to save them from the guerillas' is reportedly widespread.

President Marcos gives positive encouragement to the multinationals, offering tax holidays, repatriation of profits, allowances, and a low wage labour force, government control of the unions and strikes banned. The Mariveles Free Trade Zone just outside Manila is built on part of his estate. Pollution controls are non-existent, and maximisation of profits is the dominant ethic.

### The Philippines - A Hell for the People

Dole, Del Monte, United Fruit and Sumitomo operate between them 67,000 acres of fertile land which used to be cultivated by occupant-farmers. The farming methods are modern, and involve massive use of pesticides so that the fruit will be free of blemishes and will fetch a good price in the countries where it is sold. Some of the dispossessed farming families are employed on the plantations. The wages they get are too low to permit them to buy the kind of food they were previously able to grow for themselves; they live crowded together, and the water they use for drinking and washing is heavily polluted by pesticides; they are sprayed along with the crops as often as three times in a month; they get ill. Teen-age women are able to go to the Free Export Processing Zones and find employment in the factories of the multinationals. They are good at making microchip components, but the work is so exacting that after about 5 years their eyesight deteriorates. At the age of 23 they must look for new employment; they are able to work as cleaners or prostitutes at the US bases. One side effect of bringing women together to work in the factories is that they talk to each other. They see their lives in relation to the flamboyant wealth displayed around them in Manila and they quickly become politicised. When they find that there is no help available from moderate opponents of the ruling elite they become radical. This turning to communism is denounced hysterically in the American Press, so the American people continue to allow their government to supply arms

to President Marcos so that he can maintain 'law and order' and guarantee that nothing will interrupt the flow of profits to the investors in the multinationals, or the flow of interest due to the banks for the enormous loans they make under the umbrella of 'Aid' to a developing economy.



Vadillo, Siempre (Mexico)

The resources of the poor nations provide the basis for the well-being of the rich - and military regimes, often supported from outside, ensure the 'stability' which makes possible this exploitation.

taken from 'Food, Poverty and Power' by Anne Buchanan, 1982

So we have a system whereby a government can only continue to govern because of the strength of weapons, and it is called 'democratic'. We have people who try to use the legitimate means of improving their lives, such as withdrawing their labour or trying to hang on to the land they were born on, and they are called 'communists' or if they get hold of arms they become known as 'guerillas'. In any event, the overall result is increasing militarisation of both government and opposition.

### Food - the new tool of control

It's not just in the Philippines where this is happening. The US Secretary of Agriculture in 1975, Earl Butz, said on TV: "Agri-power is the name of the game. Food is now one of the principal tools in our negotiating kit. If we get a country that openly criticises us, I'm not very sympathetic to that kind of treatment." (Clutterbuck and Lang: More than we can chew). The process by which traditional land use for subsistence farming is transformed into systems congenial to the agribusiness giants is described in several books which are listed below. It is largely the creation of large numbers of dispossessed peasants drifting into urban life that leads to the pressure for social change in developing countries. This clamour for a livelihood leads the governing elite - whatever their previous political stance - to look towards the Western powers or to the USSR for weapons with which they can control their discontented people. Only governments can borrow money in large quantities from the IMF or other banks. The conditions stability demanded by the lending agencies require a strong government hold on law and order. And the militarisation of the Third World increases in response to this position of stalemate. In their struggle for the basic necessities of life non-violence is no longer an option for many of the would-be liberated; they too become increasingly militarised.



## "How do we organise the World?"

The military, financial, agricultural and nuclear links with the Philippines are not confined to the US multinationals; UK, West German and Japanese companies are also getting what they can. Nor is the pattern of development in any way unusual - the same kind of system operates throughout the 'Grand Area' which was defined during World War II.

In her article "Take the Toys from the Boys" published in *Over Our Dead Bodies*, Connie Mansueto refers to the 'elite group of American bankers lawyers and businessmen and politicians' who were all members of the Council on Foreign Relations. This group of rich white men met for a 6-year period from 1939 to 1945 to develop the U.S.'s post-war foreign and domestic strategies.

"They knew certainly by 1942 that the war was going to end with the US in a position of enormous global dominance, and the question then arose: Well, how do we organise the world? They developed the concept of Grand Area Planning, where the Grand Area is understood as that which in their terms was strategically necessary for world control .....(this area) .....included the entire western hemisphere, the former British empire (which the US was in the process of dismantling) and the Far East. That was the minimum; the maximum was the universe, and somewhere between the two lies the Grand Area."

(Noam Chomsky: The United States - from Greece to El Salvador)

Chomsky reckons that a major function of the nuclear threat is to distract criticism of US intervention in 'Developing' countries by focussing domestic attention on the danger of nuclear war between the Superpowers. Nuclear escalation/stalemate which we are told has maintained the peace since 1945 has provided a perfect cover for US adventures in the Third World. There have been more than 120 wars since 1945, and the US has provided arms and training for all of them, and has sent in US forces into 79. During the same time, the USSR has sent forces to help in 9 wars.

## While poverty kills 90,000 people a day

While our eyes are fixed with horror on the apocalyptic dreams of destruction, the real wars and the real deaths are in the 'developing' countries, where even in the absence of fighting the deaths run at a rate of 90,000 a day. Fidel Castro said at the meeting of non-aligned nations this year (1983) that if we kept silent for one minute for each child under the age of 5 who had died through lack of food during the last 10 years, we would not be able to celebrate the advent of the twenty-first century - we would still be silent.

## Imperialist Assumptions...

The threat of nuclear holocaust is only one strand in a power network which sustains the economic dominance of the 'First World'. Underlying all our legal and banking systems, as well as our business practices are a number of very powerful myths, developed in the first place to justify the theft of gold and minerals, human beings, land and natural resources from lands invaded and colonised by the countries of Western Europe. Education, literature and art have all served to make these myths an unconscious part of our view of life. It seems to me that some of these myths can be set out as follows:

- the British Empire (and the French, Spanish, Portuguese, U.S. etc) brought civilisation to savage, brutal, underdeveloped people;

- it is a law of nature that the strong make decisions on behalf of the weak, strength being accompanied automatically by a responsibility to dominate;
- the inventive energy and aggression of white people demonstrates their innate superiority;
- technological development is proof of progress in all fields from agriculture to weaponry;
- western methodologies in everything from education, science, business, work and communications to the use of outer space and the sea are superior to all others;
- books, usually published in English, are the only valid expression of intelligent thought;
- white, wealthy men are the best leaders and they have an undisputed right to make decisions embodying life-or-death power over everybody else;
- 'advanced' people are entitled to use land, natural resources, bodies and labour of 'underdeveloped' nations since the only reason for non-exploitation of such potential wealth is ignorance;
- it is a law of nature that men should protect women, since men are superior; in fact, all women, together with black, asian and poor men are less "real" than rich white men.

## ... and the Peace Movement

An uncomfortable proportion of the literature produced by peace campaigners reflects these same underlying assumptions, as do many of the terms for negotiation on disarmament issues. For example, take the poster put out by the GLC in its Nuclear Free Zone Campaign. It showed London parks as Christian burial grounds with rows of crosses - a clear reminder to the hundreds of thousands of Moslems, Hindus, Jews and people of other religions living in London that they are invisible even to the most well meaning and progressive people. Not only that, but the cross is a symbol of imperialist oppression in many parts of the Third World. How could the GLC be so unaware of this symbolism for so many of its inhabitants who come from countries which used to be part of the British, and other European, Empires? Another example of thoughtlessness in Visual material is the poster put out at the time of the election, which carried a picture of three children - white middle class children - above the slogan: "In the nuclear election Vote for them". This does nothing to make black sisters feel they are included in the campaign. As a friend said to me, "Who are we supposed to vote for, the NF?"

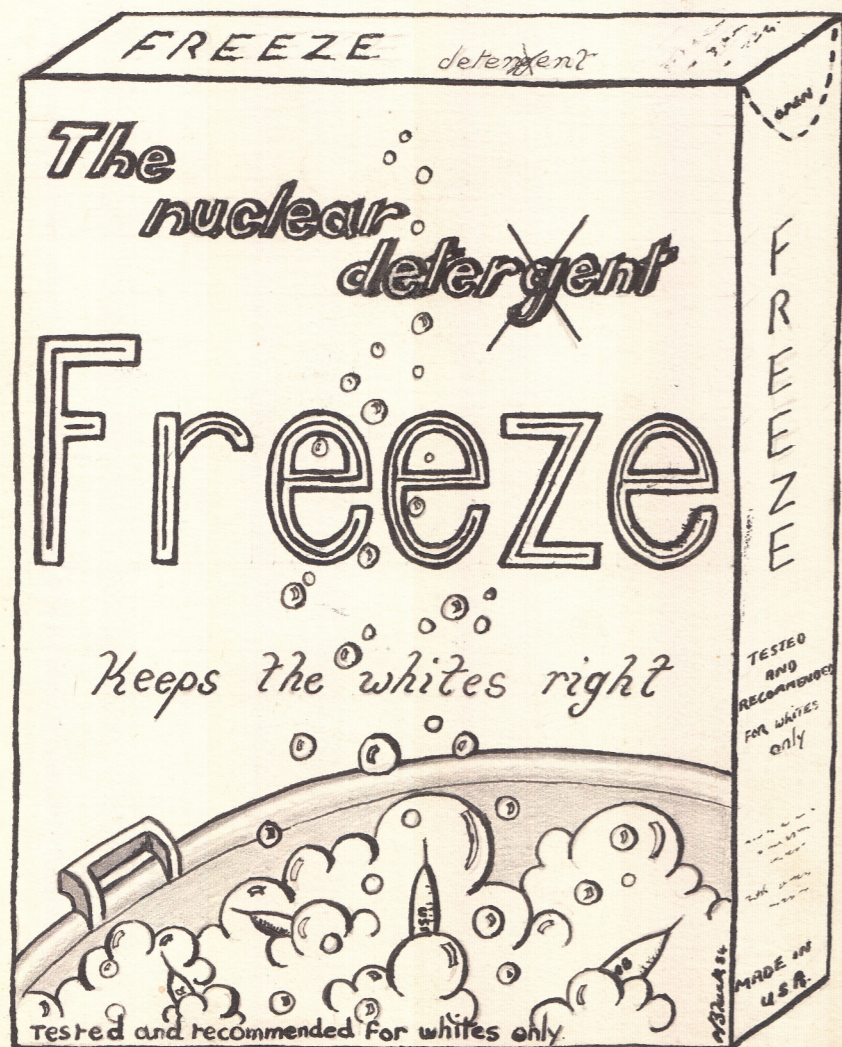
Many people who would not see it as their business to take sides in the Palestinian struggle, or who do not know what to believe about Nicaragua, are members of CND because they can understand only too well the danger of Cruise missiles to themselves and their way of life. There seems to be an assumption in CND literature that this way of life embodies the best human values and the ultimate expression of liberal democracy and scientific progress. CND questions little but the existence of nuclear weapons, campaigning only for their abolition without challenging the nature of the system that produces them. Working within 'acceptable' structures, it accepts racist and sexist attitudes and assumptions, keeping its image untarnished for its middle class supporters, to impress the powers that be with the 'reasonable' nature of its case. Under pressure from the women's peace initiatives, CND has recently started to break away from patriarchal ways of operating, although its intention is still to work through established government with popular pressure.



The international equivalent of CND is the Freeze Campaign, started by the United Nations Associations, and demanding a total halt to the research, development and manufacture of nuclear weapons worldwide. This too operates within established institutions, and has built up support by millions of people signing the Freeze Petitions directed at their own governments. The underlying assumption which appeals to the west is the 'probability' that nuclear weapons will be acquired by 'irresponsible and unstable' governments in places like Pakistan and Brazil, not to mention Argentina. In view of the fact that over 200 nuclear tests still take place in Superpower and allied countries every year, the idea that the 'developing' nations are irresponsible is rather ironic.

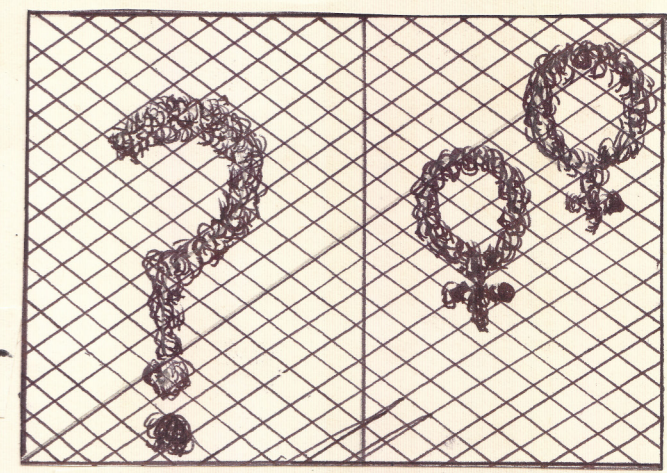
Given the thought that the nuclear arms race takes people's minds off what the U.S. is doing in the 'Grand Area', neither the Freeze Campaign nor CND goes far enough in making the links between the nuclear policy and imperialist aggression. The critics of the U.S.'s support of military and repressive governments in Latin America, the Far East and Africa, tend also to overlook the connections between the brutality of nuclear technology and the business methods of the multinationals.

CND, of course, is not the entire Peace Movement, but it is influential and gets a lot of media coverage. The links between imperialist exploitation and military and nuclear build-up are being explored and exposed by other peace workers, many of them women. Perhaps it is women in the Peace Movement throughout the world who, seeing beyond the call to protect a status quo that doesn't do much for most of us, will develop the connections most clearly in the '80's, and start demanding that the world's resources be freed to sustain the world's people.



## Internal dialogue "Going Round in Circles"

or



"Is it a feminist issue?"

A. But is it a feminist issue?

B. US bases pollute the land, loaded bombers fly overhead, vast sums are spent on defence, nuclear power threatens our health, our lives and the very future and you ask, is it a feminist issue? Where are your priorities?

A. But is it? Why are so many women, feminists even, getting involved in the anti-nuclear issue now? What about the WLM - our priorities?

B. Maybe they're worried sick and feel they have to make some kind of stand; to try to stop the nuclear escalation before it is all too late. Cruise Missiles are due here this year, first strike missiles. We'll be a floating target, even more so than now. Not to mention the Sizewell decision. Can we really afford to ignore all that to work solely on our campaigns? What's the point of working for a women's refuge if we do not also work to prevent it being blown sky high?

A. But if you are working to get a refuge for women, you cannot also spend hours on anti-nuclear work, not if you want to stay sane. Can we afford to let our energy be diverted into the anti-nuclear movement, to let our activities go by the board to work for peace? What would happen to our priorities, our consciousness? We'd lose our impetus, getting absorbed eventually into a mixed movement for the 'brotherhood of man'. In time, we would hardly be heard as feminists, we'd become those 'hysterical women', 'extremist manhaters', disturbing the peace of the peace movement, reduced to crying 'what about the sisters?' at speakers talking to the brothers.

B. Look, no-one is saying 'let's forget we're feminists to unify against Cruise or whatever.' They're saying the anti-nuclear struggle has to have a feminist perspective, that we can understand the nuclear arms race and the nuclear power industry better if we also look at it through feminist eyes .....

A. That's all very well, but if we let the WLM go in our eagerness to fight for peace, who will pay any attention to our 'feminist perspective', even if it does shed light on the whole issue? They, and by they, I mean men, they only listen to us when they have to and without the power of the women's movement behind us, we will not be heard whatever we say.

B. But don't you think the women are only too well aware of this possibility? After all, the peace movement has been male dominated for a long time now. By organising as women, they are getting power within the anti-nuclear struggle. Yes, this power depends on the continuing of the WLM, but maybe the women's peace initiative has given more power to women and to the WLM. Maybe you are wrong to assume women organising together on this issue will weaken the feminist movement. There are a lot of women in this country - there's a lot of energy around. It may not be either a local refuge or getting rid of Cruise. The 12th December demonstration at Greenham inspired many women, made many of us feel stronger in one way or another....

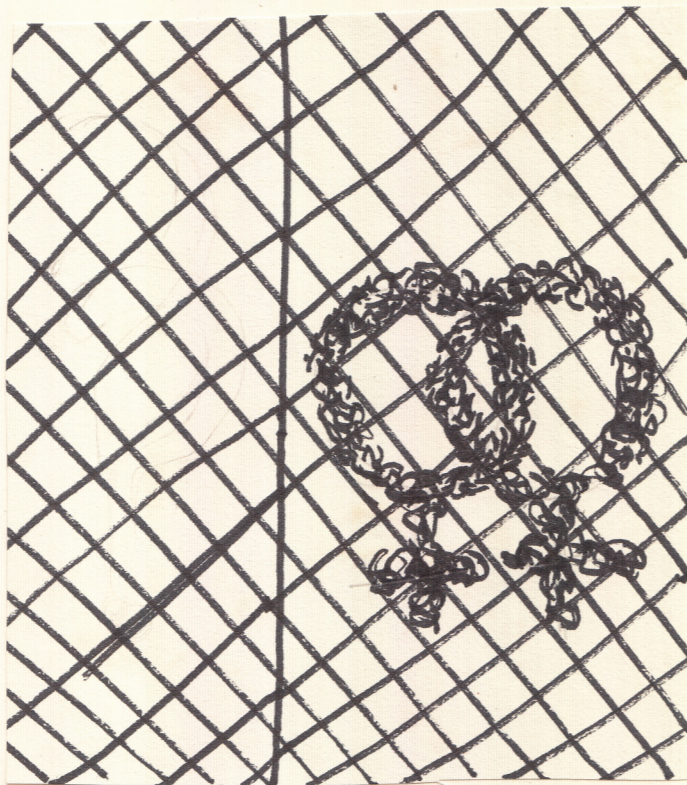


A. OK, but let's not get carried away. Women can organise together and not be consciously feminist. What about the woman on the coach coming back from the July Blockade at Greenham, who spent practically the whole journey fussing over the driver because he felt threatened with all these lesbian man haters.

She told us she assured him that we were normal, healthy women, respectable women, some of us doctors' wives.

It's not just organising together. It's what we organise for, our ideas and demands. And even if we are clear about our ideas and demands, it is a constant struggle to uphold them in a system where our views are dangerous and threatening and so different to received opinion. Each of us has to battle with the little voice telling us we're wrong, 'deviant' and 'hysterical'. And the most conscious feminist can get co-opted, like those Suffragettes who found themselves working for the war effort, encouraging boys into the army. They were militant alright, but still many of them succumbed to the system's reason in the end. It can't happen again.

B. Now look who's getting carried away! We are talking about women challenging the war machine, not succumbing to it - not doing a deal with the government in exchange for a concession. It does boil down to ideas and demands and that's where you are doing women involved in the peace movement a dis-service. Many of them are thinking about a feminist approach to the nuclear issue, even if the woman on the coach wasn't, and who knows, maybe even she will change. In fact, many women got involved through their feminist commitment. Why should they go back on this any more than you would in your work with Women's Aid? You could forget your revolutionary outlook in the day to day running of a refuge.



A. I am aware of that. This is always a danger. You become a 'voluntary organisation' in a world of local government agencies and wonder where the revolution went. But we are fighting specifically against male power. Male violence against women, rape, battering, pornography, incest, is clearly a feminist issue.

Women struggling to take back control of their lives from men and local bureaucrats are clearly fighting feminist battles, but I fail to see how the anti-nuclear struggle can be a feminist issue on the same level.

B. It isn't, though, is it? But there is a feminist approach to this issue, a way of looking at nuclear power and the arms race that adds to our present understanding.

A. Like how?

B. Well, we can explore the connections between male violence against women and the glorification of war. See how maleness has become identified with aggression, competitiveness and bluster, so much so, that men are coned into the army to kill and be killed because they are sold on the idea that it's a 'man's life'.

A. Yes, but it is a con. What do the majority of men gain by fighting imperialist wars for their masters? Anyway, lots of them join up because there are no jobs.

B. True, that's one reason, but so is the macho propaganda. Male bonding around tank and gun - very powerful imagery. Men also have another, contradictory, image of themselves as the rational sex pitted against the unreasoning nature of women; as humanity rising above and conquering its natural environment, exploiting the resources at its disposal with women as just another resource. They tend to distance themselves from the 'natural', refuse to take responsibility for the natural, whether it is a nappy that needs changing or a polluting side-effect of a 'progressive' scientific advance. We can see this in medicine, in the nuclear programme .....

A. Sweeping statements. The drugs industry makes millions with its pills, and the west uses nuclear power to fuel its anti-communist arms build-up.

B. Not many feminists would disagree there. I don't think the feminist approach is really an alternative explanation. It does increase our awareness of the acute danger we are all facing by showing how deeply the pro-war, pro-technology at any cost, feelings run in our culture. Can the anti-nuclear movement ignore this perspective any more than we women can ignore the impending arrival of Cruise Missiles? Can it afford not to challenge the average man's assumptions about violence and maleness?

A. But what about our struggles, our liberation? And don't give me we've got to get rid of Cruise first - I've heard that one before.

B. We are going round in circles. This struggle is part of our liberation. The money that's going on missiles could be going to women. Our Social Services are

being cut to pay for all this scientific warfare. We're having to work hard in the home. We have the worry of what radiation is doing and will do to our children. In this sense, the anti-nuclear struggle is part of the struggle to take control of our lives from the system.

A. We are going round in circles, true. It's just that I have this feeling we're all going to get absorbed into earth-mother pacifism and we'll lose our anger and fire in a mess of natural goodness - gentle, passive women doling out lentil soup to our brothers. I've been to Greenham and know it's not at all like that, but old experiences die hard and I can remember a Women Against the Nukes Conference some years ago, now, where it was all very much back to nature, even to the extent of being told we should all chop wood to keep warm and not buy all these machines to help with housework.

B. No, it's not like that at Greenham. What I do like about our movement is that we challenge everything. We do think in terms

of political consequences and we do analyse current trends critically. Without this, we could fall into media set traps or get caught up trendy cul de sacs. We are not likely to do either of these things, as it is, I think it is really quite positive. After all, if the peace movement was developing without a feminist input, we would be concerned, telling ourselves women should be challenging its sexist assumptions and trying to develop a feminist perspective and way of organising and here, where women are doing just this, we worry about the dire effects it will all have on women's liberation!

Meanwhile,

Cruise Missiles

are due in December....

Anne Torode  
Sept '83



Acronyms

We acknowledge that there are a number of undefined acronyms in this issue and for the purpose of clarity; here is a list of their full descriptions:

CEGB - Central Electricity Generating Board

CND - Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

CR - Consciousness Raising

DHSS - Department of Health and Social Security (1966-1988). Superseded agencies were the Department of Health and the Department of Social Security. In 2001 these were absorbed into what is now the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

GLC - Greater London Council

NF - National Front, Fascist Political party in the UK

PLAN - People's Liberation Army of Namibia

PWR - Pressurised water reactor / Power

RTZ - Rio Tinto - Zinc Corporation, now known as the Rio Tinto Group, is an Anglo-Australian multinational and one of the world's biggest metals and mining corporations.

SWAPO - South-West Africa People's Organisation

UN - United Nations

USAF - United States Air Force

VD - Venereal disease

WARN - Women of All Red Nations

WLM - Women's Liberation Movement

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Tyne and Wear NE30 2HE

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Thursday eve.

Dear Fina,

This came in an effort thought, as we were going to write something about why this is the last issue, but then we thought about it here didn't seem like anything really worth saying.

You'll notice that we have 2 sides too many or two few. Maybe some more photos could be put in - cost. page?

And we do have it done anything about the photos - hoping the printers can do whatever is necessary.

Looking forward to seeing you soon  
Fina



## Campaigns and organisations

Contextual information and current offices for campaigns and organisations mentioned in this issue:

### **Black Women for Wages for Housework**

The International Wages for Housework Campaign was initiated in 1972 and called for compensation for domestic labour. From this campaign formed the autonomous **International Black Women for Wages for Housework**, founded by Margaret Prescod and Wilmette Brown in New York City, U.S in 1974. The Black Women for Wages for Housework also called for compensation for domestic labour whilst also campaigning on specific issues experienced by black women and women in the Global South, including reparations for "slavery, imperialism and neo-colonialism."

### **Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)**

CND launched in 1958 following a surge in anti-nuclear voices and raising public concern since the British Government announced its Nuclear weapons development programme in 1948. CND continues to campaign for British nuclear disarmament, a global ban on nuclear weapons and to end the British participation in the US missile defence system.

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Mordechai Vanunu House,  
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General enquiries: 020 7700 2393 / enquiries@cnduk.org

### **Tyne and Wear CND**

1 Rectory Avenue  
Gosforth  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE3 1XS

Enquiries: 0191 285 1290 / rhpg@btinternet.com

### **Chilean Women's Group**

We have struggled to find more information about the 'Chilean Women's group' mentioned in this issue. **If you have any further information about the group, please do get in touch with Scarlet Women.**

### **Freeze Campaign**

The Nuclear Freeze campaign was a mass movement in the U.S in the 1980s. Initiated by Randall Forsberg, it sought to secure an agreement between the U.S. and Soviet governments to halt the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons. Gaining public support with antinuclear allies abroad, the campaign played a key role in restraining the nuclear arms race and preventing nuclear war.

### **Greater London Council (GLC) Women's Committee**

The GLC Women's Committee (1982-86) was established to promote representation of women and women's interests. The committee championed issues affecting women including: improved childcare, public breastfeeding and the fight against female circumcision. They sought to involve a wide spectrum of women, by holding open meetings and co-opting women to represent such groups as lesbians, the disabled, and trade unionists.

The committee also produced a bulletin (1983-86), topics covered: Black Women's Centres, employment for women in London, childcare, racism, transport, lesbian issues, older women, health, women as carers, women and disability, black and ethnic minority women.

### **Iranian Women's Group, London**

We have struggled to find more information about the 'Iranian Women's group' mentioned in this issue. **If you have any further information about the group, please do get in touch with Scarlet Women.**

### **Namibian Women's Group, London**

We have struggled to find more information about the 'Namibian Women's group' mentioned in this issue, however, it is possible that this group were associated with the **Namibia Support Committee (NSC)** formed in London in 1969 (formerly known as Friends of Namibia).

The **Namibia Support Committee** supported the Namibian national liberation struggle against South Africa (1966-1989), raised public awareness of the political situation and was active in organising meetings, lobbying Parliament, and arranging the transportation of supplies to SWAPO's camps in Angola and Zambia. See paragraph on **South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)** for further notes.

**If you have any further information about the 'Namibian Women's Group' please get in touch with Scarlet Women.**

### **Pacific People's Anti-nuclear Action committee (PPANAC)**

An Anti-nuclear protest group in New Zealand headed up by Hilda Halkyard-Harawira in 1980. Their objectives were based on the Peoples Charter for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific. The group opposed nuclear testing, because it was destroying Pacific communities, poisoning people and fish, since after the First World War. One historical incident in the Pacific was when people of Rongelap and Utilk were evacuated from their islands due to severe radioactive contamination after the U.S nuclear weapons test "Castel Bravo" on nearby Bikini Atoll in 1954.

The committee's primary focus was on anti-nuclear testing in the Pacific but was seen as part of a broader struggle for land rights for Pacific and Maori people.

### **South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) 1960 - present**

The South West Africa People's Organisation were a major independence movement that began in Namibia (formerly South West Africa). The organisation founded in 1960 after South Africa refused a United Nations order to withdraw from the trust territory in 1966. SWAPO took up armed resistance and carried out guerrilla warfare against the South African Government through the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN).

In 1978 the United Nations General Assembly recognised SWAPO as the 'sole and authentic representative of the Namibian People'. The South African Government accepted the resolution in 1988. SWAPO became the country's leading party following independence in 1990 and is now known as the SWAPO Party of Namibia.



**SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign (SWSC) 1980-1991**

SWSC was a sub-group of the organisation, Namibia Support Committee (NSC) that grew a national campaign in support of the Namibian liberation movement.

**Women for Life on Earth**

A peace group formed in response to the decision to march from Cardiff to RAF Greenham Common near Newbury Berkshire, against the storing of American cruise missiles on British land. Starting the 120 mile march on 27 August 1981 and arriving at Greenham common on 5 September, the group was made up of approximately 36 women, 4 men and several children. The camp they set up upon arrival would become the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, a protest camp that would be there for 19 years. Their act brought the nuclear debate into public and political discourse.

The group subsequently organised more peace marches, including Cardiff to RAF Brawdy, Pembrokeshire march in May and June 1982.

**Women of All Red Nations (WARN)**

An activist group founded in 1974 formed of the women supporting the **American Indian Movement (AIM)**.

**The American Indian Movement** (1968-) is a civil rights and advocacy group, founded in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S in 1968. Their main goals are to ensure the protection of legal rights for Native Americans: economic independence, respect for traditional culture, autonomy over tribal areas and the restoration of land believed to have been illegally seized.



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