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Susan Kleckner and Documents from the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (September 1984–March 1986)

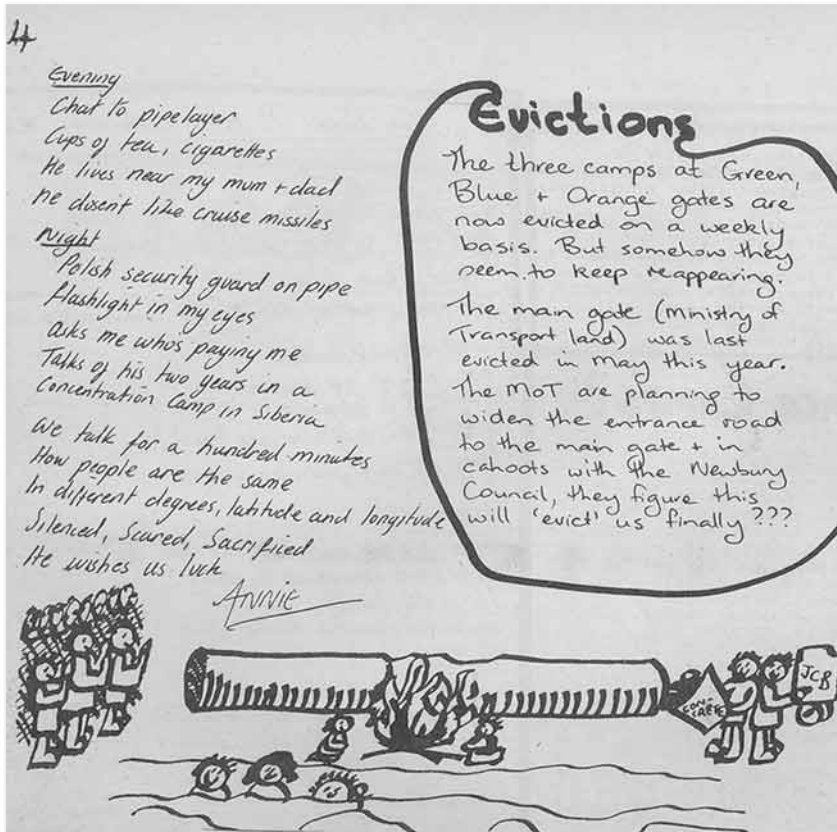
Susan Jahoda

Susan Kleckner's life's work primarily focused on women's struggles to become visible and equal. This was articulated through a diverse and ongoing studio practice and written articles on acts of conscience and civil disobedience. The following images and texts situate Kleckner's work at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp as well as make visible the varied forms of representation and documentation of life during the nine-year protest.

Key Words: Art and Activism, Feminism, Protest Movements

Susan Kleckner and Documents from the Greenham Common
Women's Peace Camp (September 1984-March 1986)

"...it is becoming more difficult to talk to you
through the fence..." *



Detail from Greenham Women's Peace Camp Newsletter (undated), p. 4, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive.

Susan Jahoda

* From Letter to Soldiers from some Women at Greenham Common, November 1983, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1981, A GROUP OF PEOPLE, MOSTLY WOMEN, WALKED 120 MILES FROM SOUTH WALES TO GREENHAM COMMON, IN ENGLAND. They wanted to protest the deployment of U.S. Cruise Missiles around the world, and particularly in England. Greenham Common, once a large, beautiful park, was appropriated by the military to become one of the major sites for these nuclear weapons. When the marchers arrived, a couple of women chained themselves to the fence, and others remained to set up the first peace camp in history. It was eventually decided that only women should live at the camp: women had designed the action, and the police are more violent when men are protesting: the women wanted to do things their own way. Images of primarily male military on one side of the fence and women protestors on the other present a strong metaphor indicating who really creates the present arms situation. The women are offering an alternative to Patriarchy.

The organization - sometimes the anarchy - of how things are done at the camp, how "actions" are designed and performed, is decided collectively, by consensus, or by whomever is present. There are no formal "leaders", and every one is expected to be in charge. New women arrive daily, despite false reports by the media that the camp has been cleared out. The action is now four-and-a-half years old, and although the women and their belongings are constantly evicted by the bailiffs, the women remain, they return, they will not leave.

None of the fence-decoration or habitats in these photographs exist any longer, there have been brutal evictions this winter, recently as often as 5 times daily. But as I write, women are cutting through the fence, climbing over it, being arrested, making tea, using the shit-pits, singing, and generally making their presence and objections known to the military. There have been peace camps in over seven countries, and a couple in the U.S. are still strong and functioning.

Many of these photographs were made during my first trip to Greenham, for the "10 Million for 10 Days" action, September 1984. I returned New Years '84-85, and for the camp's fourth birthday this past September. I have just returned (March '86) from a brief trip to videotape the protesting of alleged "Zapping" (deliberate exposure of the women, by the military, to low- and high frequency sound and microwaves, infra-red, and other electro-magnetic warfare, thought to be used at the camp since September '84). The zapping issue is particularly insidious because victims cannot see, hear, or taste the radiation. It is difficult to prove because the military is in control of instrumentation needed to measure it, and the symptoms vary enormously. There have been a series of miscarriages, severe disruption of menstrual cycles, radiation burns, and a variety of other responses by the women. The military denies that anything untoward is happening. Help is needed to determine exactly what is going on there (a small group from Electronics for Peace is investigating).

I WISH YOU TO UNDERSTAND MY FEELINGS: that the womens' peace camp at Greenham Common is one of the most creative and significant non-violent events in history, that the women who live there, and the men who support them, are our true warriors, and that non-violence is the only true revolution acceptable in our time. The people living in the peace camps are doing it for all of us, and people on our planet are only beginning to register their rage from our collective nuclear death race. HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Susan Kleckner, nyc, 3/86.

Susan Kleckner, *Artist Statement*. in *Carrying Greenham Home: Greenham Common and Other Women's Peace Camps*, April 1986, The Peace Museum, Chicago. Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



9/30/84 FREE FOOD CARAVAN,
BLUE GATE.



9/29/84 POSTING DOCUMENTS WOMEN
TOOK FROM INSIDE BASE CONCERNING
CHEMICAL WARFARE PREPARATIONS.

Notes on a Full Life Lived.*

Susan Kleckner's life's work primarily focused on women's struggles to become visible and equal. This was articulated through a diverse and ongoing studio practice and articles written on acts of conscience and civil disobedience for publications, including *Heresies*, *A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, *Plexus*, *West Coast Women's Press*, in and *Women's Quarterly Review*. Parallel to her life as a visual artist and writer was her interest in spirituality. In 1999 Kleckner attended the New Seminary for Interfaith Studies. Choosing the title of Rainbow Reverend, she was ordained in 2002 as Minister of Divinity at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York.

Kleckner taught and lectured at many national and international venues; however, the school of The International Center of Photography in Manhattan was her teaching base and primary source of income. In her later years she discussed her approaches to pedagogy as a part of her studio practice and a way to collapse the boundaries between art and life.

The film *Three Lives* (1970), codirected with Kate Millet, is on three uniquely different women who openly narrate their stories on coming out. *Another Look at the Miami Convention: A Work in Progress* (1972) documented the nomination of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, a Democrat of New York, as the first woman and African American to seek a presidential nomination. Kleckner was one of the founders of The Women's Video News Service and, in keeping with this approach, the Chisolm film radically departed from other news films of the day because it ventured behind the scenes of the main event. In the spirit of a women's grassroots "do-it-yourself" approach, Kleckner edited *Another Look at the Miami Convention: A Work in Progress* over a long weekend in a friend's living room in Bearsville, New York. Three months later Kleckner's *Birth Film* (1973) premiered at the Whitney Museum of American Art. A statement on women's reproductive rights, the film shows Kristin Booth Glen, now a surrogate judge for New York County, giving birth to her son, Sam Glen, at home. Kleckner's other films include *Bag Lady* (1979), *Pierre Film* (1980), *Amazing Grace* (1980), *Desert Piece* (1983), and *Performance for Cameras* (1984), with Donna Henes, Helene Auyon, and Linda Montano. In 1992 Kleckner's first three films, *Three Lives*, *Another Look...* (video), and *Birth Film* were shown as part of the New American Film and Video Series, *Documents and Documentaries from the Women's Movement*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The Greenham Tapes (1984-87) document the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in England and were made over the course of three separate visits to the camp. Some of Kleckner's still photographs from Greenham can be seen on the following pages. In addition, her presence at Greenham is elaborated upon within the context of present Occupy movements in a conversation between Paula Allen and Susan Jahoda.

Windowpeace, (December 1986-January 1987) was a year-long action located in a storefront window on West Broadway in New York. Each week, different women artists lived in the window, working on their own approaches to issues of peace. Onlookers were encouraged to engage and participate in their actions. Kleckner equipped the bulletproof window space (5 feet by 6.5 feet) with a loft bed, portable toilet, television monitor, video tape player, telephone, hot plate, and curtain to draw when privacy was needed. Kleckner took the first and last weeks at *Windowpeace* to edit the *Greenham Tapes*. In the name of peace, hundreds of visitors came with food and other supplies. Other events throughout the year included organized musical programs and discussions. The month after *Windowpeace*

* "Notes on a Full Life Lived" is an edited version of an obituary written by Patt Blue in July 2010.



A WOMAN LIVED HERE.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY 29A EMERALD GATE - GREENHAM COMMON 30 A/P



LEADERLESS ACTION, SNAKE DANCE.

"10 MILLION WOMEN FOR 10 DAYS" 42A YELLOW GATE, GREENHAM COMMON 43 ARTIST'S PROOF '84

Susan Kleckner, *Greenham Common*, silver prints, 1984. Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

SUSAN KLECKNER IN WINDOW, 5TH DAY, WINDOW PEACE



PLEASE CREDIT PHOTOGRAPHER (SEE OVER) → *W:info*

Susan Kleckner, *Editing Greenham Footage, Windowpeace*, December 1986. Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

closed, Kleckner was in Berlin, performing a nonviolent art action involving climbing the Berlin Wall. She was arrested and interrogated by the East German authorities for more than 20 hours and then released along with all her film. Newspapers headlined the story “New Yorker Arrested on Berlin Wall (2/26/87).”



Susan Kleckner, *Daily News*, 26 February 1987

In addition to her film, video, performance and photographic work, Kleckner was engaged in a long-term project that continued to the end of her life. *Daily Journals* consisted of the traces of her everyday placed into plastic envelopes, sealed and dated, with titles: “Diaries,” “Cages,” “Family Secrets,” and “Cage Rooms.”

In February 1988, NOW-NYC awarded Kleckner, for *Windowpeace*, the Susan B. Anthony Award for Art in the Community. The award honors grass-roots activists dedicated to improving the lives of women in New York City. The day after receiving the award, Kleckner had a cataclysmic breakdown. Unknown to most, she had struggled since she was a teen with bipolar disorder and had been in and out of hospitals and on and off medications. During the many months inside a locked ward, she photographed her world of internment, creating raw images that would be awarded, nine years later in 1997, the New York Foundation for the Arts Catalogue Project Grant for women photographers over the age of forty.

Diagnosed with unspecified cancer in 2004, Kleckner lived for six more years. During the last two, with portable oxygen, she taught, made drawings and photographs, co-counseled, acted as an advisor at the One Spirit Interfaith Learning Alliance, worked with the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance to raise awareness about ovarian cancer, and volunteered on the SHARE hotline for cancer support. In January 2012, eighteen months after her death, Susan Kleckner’s Archive was donated to the W. E. B. DuBois Library, Special Collections and University Archives, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Letter to Soldiers from some Women at Greenham Common,
November 1983.

Dear friends,

As it is becoming more difficult to talk to you through the fence some of us have decided to write and explain who we are, and what we are trying to do.

We are ordinary women from all walks of life who whatever our differences are united in two things: Our opposition to Cruise Missiles and our belief in nonviolence as a means of change. Please understand that our protest is not directed against you personally - we too would like to go home. But we cannot do so while Cruise Missiles are being installed against the wishes of the majority of the people of this country. We have to demonstrate our refusal.

There is no doubt that under International Laws to which Britain and the U.S. are signatories, nuclear policies are criminal: because they threaten mass destruction they threaten the mass murder of unarmed civilians; they threaten the use of indiscriminate weapons to attack the old, the sick, the young, and other protected persons; they threaten the use of poison (radiation) they threaten damage to the environment and they are based on terror and a denial of basic rights.

The use of any Nuclear Weapon would be a War Crime far greater than any tried at Nuremberg. Yet Cruise Missiles with a destructive power 200 times greater than the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima, are designed for USE. Their accuracy, unsteerability in flight, and vulnerability on the ground, bear this out. Moreover NATO's flexible response strategy means that they can be used first in a conventional war that we appear to be losing.

We share the same values as you do. A belief in the importance of peace, freedom and justice. That is why we cannot support any system of defence that violates those same values. Because we are not living in peace - but in a state of terror and anguish where at any moment by accident or design, everything we care about, the world

itself, maybe totally destroyed. We cannot feel free when there is no way of refusing to take part in nuclear destruction, threatened and carried out in our names, and when the missiles are targeted on innocent people who are themselves oppressed. Nor do we see any justice in resources drained away from the jobs & health care that we need today to be spent on weapons of mass destruction. This year some 25 million children have died for lack of clean water. One torpedo would buy permanent clean water for 150,000 people.

In 1916 British Law made it possible for people to refuse military conscription on grounds of conscience. In a nuclear age, that right has lost all meaning. All of us are conscripted, whether we like it or not, into preparations for Armageddon. Yet none of us can win a nuclear war, we are all victims.

That is why we feel we have to act now. Airey Neave - the late Conservative MP said in his book 'Murderers' (there comes) a point when a man must refuse to answer his leader if he (is) to answer his conscience. For us that point has long been reached. We feel that all of us have a choice and that all of us can take responsibility for our own actions and that we must do so. Our ability to create a just, free, peaceful, loving world depends on our ability to live out those principles now.

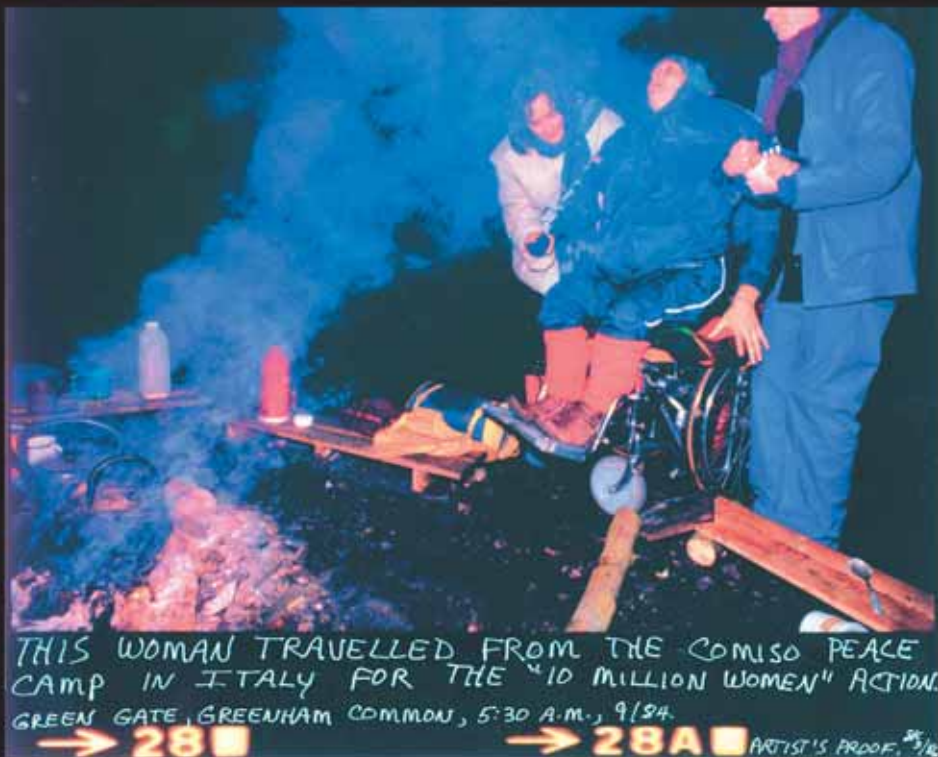
So we struggle for peace in a world that prepares for war. Peace that is not the absence of conflict but the ability to solve conflicts without violence. Peace which could perhaps be that much closer if we did not have to face each other across a barbed wire fence.

With love,

Some Greenham Common Women



Paula Allen, *Hello, can you stop for a talk?* *The Observer*, 12 December 1982, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive. On following five pages: Susan Kleckner, *Greenham Common*, C-prints, 1984-1986. Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.





THE MISSILE SILOS ARE A FEW HUNDRED YARDS BEHIND THE TREES. THIS ENCAMPMENT - EMERALD GATE - IS ONE MILE FROM THE ROAD -
SEPTEMBER, '85 ▶ 20A GREENHAM COMMON A/P SK 3/8 21



AT EMERALD GATE THE WOMEN ARE CLOSEST TO THE MISSILE SILOS, AND MUST CARRY ALL FOOD, WATER, AND OTHER THINGS THRU THE WOODS.
EMERALD GATE, GREENHAM COMMON, 1985 ▶ 19A ARTIST'S PROOF SK 3/8 20





SINCE SEPTEMBER, '84, THERE ARE OFTEN
5 EVICTIONS A DAY.


YELLOW GATE (MAIN) ► 17A GREENHAM COMMON 9/85. 18 ARTIST'S TROOP 9/84



MANLY WOMEN BELIEVE THAT ANARCHY WORKS.

R.A.P. GREENHAM COMMON, WOMEN'S PEACE ENCAMPMENT
ORANGE GATE, 10 MILLION WOMEN ACTION, 9/30/84, 10:35 P.M. ARTIST'S TROOP SKETCH



SEPTEMBER, 1985, WAS THE FOUR-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENCAMPMENT.
YELLOW GATE (MAIN)  15A GREENHAM COMMON, 9/85 ARTIST'S PROOF. 16 SK 3/86



MY FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO THE FENCE.
ORANGE GATE,  20AB  GREENHAM COMMON, OCTOBER 1, 1984, 9:09 AM ARTIST'S PROOF. 7 SK 3/86

Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles



From *Johnny's World* Forum

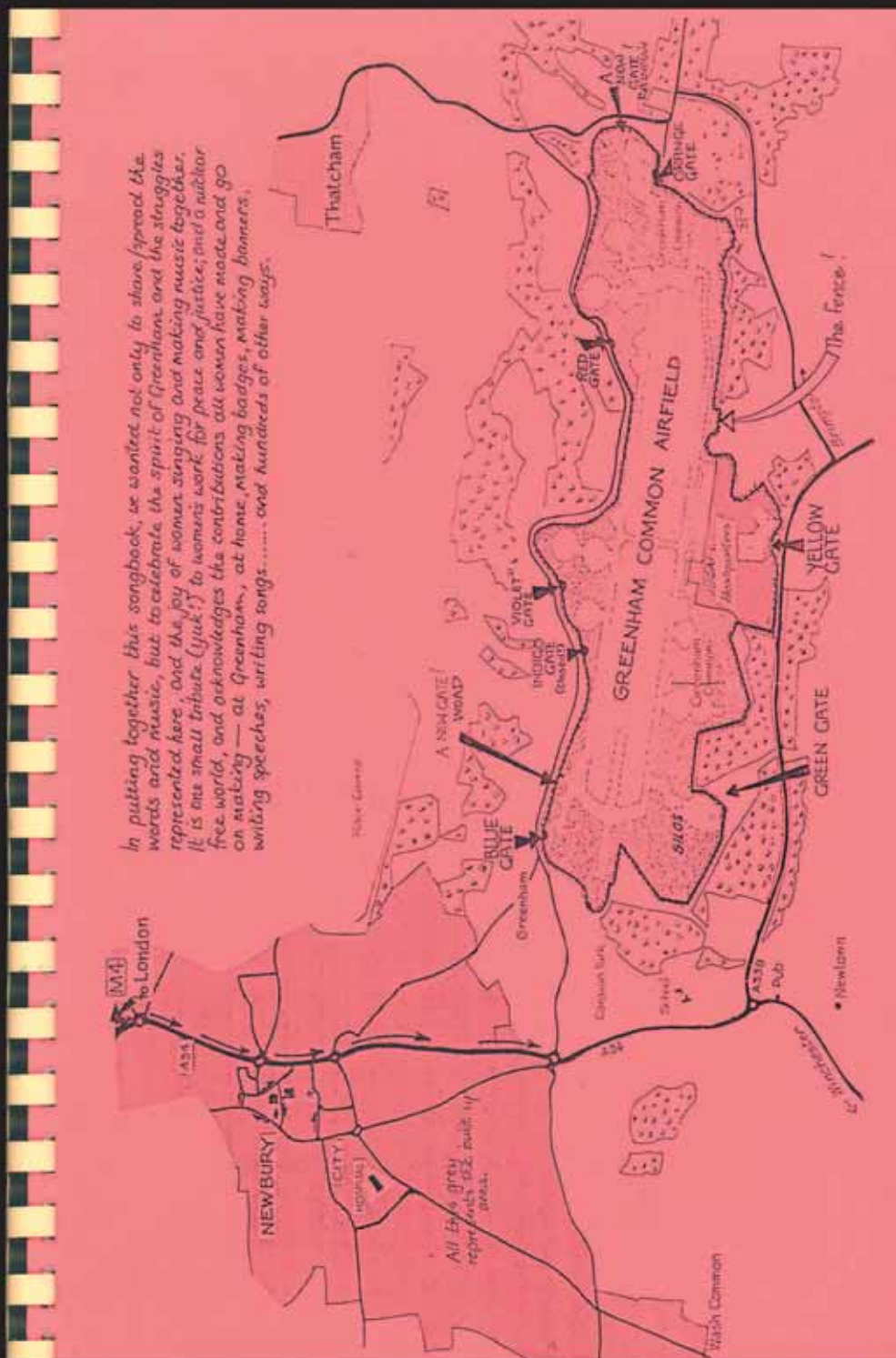
3,000 women blockade USAF base, Greenham Common, England. December 13, 1982

Center for Constitutional Rights



Legal Education Pamphlet

Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles, published by the Center for Constitutional Rights, New York, 1984, Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.



Back cover, *Greenham Song Book*, Manchester, UK, 1983, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive.

FOR THE POLICE



Every breath you take
Every move you make
Every law you break
Every woman you take
We'll be watching you.

Chorus Please don't guard me,
Guard your family.
For your children's sake,
See that the worlds at stake

Every single day
Every word you say
Every game you play
Every night we stay
We'll be watching you.

Every breath you take
Every move you make
Every law you break
Every woman you take
We'll be watching you.

THE CONVOY CAME OUT AT 3 AM ON TUESDAY 23RD APRIL (ST. GEORGE'S DAY). IT WAS OUT FOR SEVEN FULL DAYS AND RETURNED JUST BEFORE 3 AM TUESDAY 30TH APRIL (BELTANE) BUT IT WAS FAR FROM A SMOOTH RUN, IN FACT THE EXERCISE WAS HAMPERED ALL THE WAY. WE HAD BEEN EXPECTING IT TO COME OUT, AND 3 RRR WERE INSIDE THE BASE WATCHING THE VEHICLES ASSEMBLING FOR QUITE A WHILE, ALTHOUGH THEY DIDN'T FULLY REALISE THAT IT WAS THE CONVOY LINING UP BECAUSE THE WHOLE THING WAS DONE VERY QUIETLY. PATROL CARS WERE SWEEP SEARCHING FOR RRR CONSTANTLY BEFORE FEELING SECURE ENOUGH TO SEND THE CONVOY OUT. HAVING SATISFIED THEMSELVES THAT THERE WERE NO RRR NEAR THE HANGARS, THEY DECIDED TO GO - AT WHICH POINT THE RRR RAN UP TO THE MOVING CONVOY, 4 LAUNCHERS WENT OUT BUT ONE CAME LIMPING BACK, AND OF COURSE THE CONVOY WAS FOLLOWED TO SALESBURY PLAIN, WHERE IT PARKED AT WEST DOWN CAMP. AN IMPROMPTU RRR'S PEACE CAMP WAS SET UP OUTSIDE WEST DOWN, IN TILGHLEAD CAR PARK, AND THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES INCLUDED PAINT SPLATTERING AND BLOCKADING TANKS, WITH AN EVENING TRESPASS UP TO THE HEAVILY GUARDED FENCE AROUND THE CONVOY. 3 RRR WERE ARRESTED THERE, AND A FURTHER 5 ARRESTS WERE MADE THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON WHEN THE M.O.D. "ACQUIRED" AND FENCED OFF THE CAR PARK (RIOT VANS WAITING IN THE REAR) HAVING MOLESNOTHERED IT, AND PICKED UP A TELEVISION CREW, THE M.O.D. UN-FENCED SAID CAR PARK A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER. OVERREACTION RULES OK!

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF TUESDAY MORNING AMID HARASSMENT ALL THE WAY, INCLUDING PEACE SYMBOLS PAINTED ON A LAUNCHER, THE CONVOY CAME BACK. WE HAD A SPECIAL WELCOME HOME CONSISTING OF 11 RRR WHO RAN OUT IN FRONT OF IT. IT WAS STOPPED CLOSE TO YELLOW GATE AND WHILE RRR WERE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE FIRST LAUNCHER, ONE RRR CLIMBED ONTO THE BACK OF IT AND CLUNG ONTO THE FIRING DOORS (WHERE THE MISSILES ARE LAUNCHED FROM). THE CONVOY SORTED UP AGAIN AND WENT IN THE

Convoy caught short

STRONG FROM THE ACTION IN ONE SETTling BACK DOWN AT GREENHAM OF EVICTIONS. ON 9TH MAY, GATE, WHERE ON THEIR SE VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE W POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER CO EMBARRASSMENT OF THE FOR THE NEXT ONE SUMS 9TH MAY, ALMOST PRED AS HARD AS THEY CO THE CONVOY WAS A MEMORABLE PEECE CONVOY CAPERS CO PLAY WITH IN THE THAT TRANSPORT PAST FASLANE - H HOWEVER THIS PA A "BROKEN ARROW TO PLAY TOGETHER 50, MAY 9TH 15 A



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Greenham Women are Everywhere, Songbook, p. 81, ca. 1984, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive. This songbook was collectively produced.

Conversation between Paula Allen and Susan Jahoda, 22 June 2012

Paula Allen, a photographer, arrived at Greenham Common in 1981 and was based there until 1984. She documented the movement and lived at Yellow Gate, the main entrance to the missile base.

S. In December 2011, in the midst of various present national and international occupations and evictions, we began the laborious task of packing up Susan Kleckner's archive for shipment to the W. E. B. DuBois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. As we sorted through the boxes and drawers it seemed timely to revisit and make visible her work on the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common in the 1980s. Sorting through both yours and Susan's collected materials (generated by the women occupiers at Greenham), it seemed that the communiqués about what to do if you get arrested, etc., might have been written this past year.

P. One of the things that I promised Susan, after she was diagnosed with cancer, was that when she got well we would go back to Greenham and the nine-mile perimeter fence. It would be thirty years later. I had been back in the last ten years and observed that so much of the encampment is still there. You can still see the women's drawings on the fence posts and what remains of the fence itself. All these years later the movement is still present in the space. It's like Zuccotti Park. I think that now, no matter what, Zuccotti is permanently imprinted with the protest, with the occupation. Greenham is now common land again, it's public land, but you walk around and sense its connection to the protest movement. It's how occupations work. A few people show up and then more and more people come. You know, Zuccotti Park was a tiny space that had to accommodate people with different backgrounds, different needs, different agendas, everybody who came. And the more people that came and occupied the more threatening it seemed. From the city's perspective it was unmanageable and chaotic – it was an "eyesore," and it had to be evicted. It was the same with Greenham. There were multiple evictions. The authorities thought the women at Greenham would go away. That's the hope, you know, that on one miserable night when you can't light the fire and you can't get warm, it's enough to make you give up. But the women at Greenham didn't. Zuccotti occupiers didn't go until they were forcibly removed.

S. A community begins to build and you feel a sense of belonging and solidarity. That becomes a reason to stay. What brought you to Greenham?

P. I had visited other peace camps in England. There was one in Molesworth, where I was for a while, and from there I went to Greenham. It was in early September 1981. The Welsh group Women for Life on Earth organized a march from Cardiff to Greenham to contest the sighting of ninety-six Cruise nuclear missiles there. There were about 150 women and children. They asked for a public debate with the Ministry of Defense, which they never got, so they refused to leave. Some women chained themselves to the fence and then more women came.

For a very brief time it was a mixed camp, both women and men were living there, but the women declared that they preferred the camp remain a women's only space. That happened pretty quickly and the men left. Men were welcome to come; they just had to leave. They were in support roles. The women at Greenham were heterosexual, bisexual, undefined sexual, and lesbian. Some women came out at Greenham. Whether you were a lesbian or not, it was a lesbian space. Occupy had nothing to do with women and it may not be sustaining itself because of that.

S. I'm not sure I agree with you on this point. I think that there are other complex reasons why

NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION TRAINING

Below is a list of women to contact to arrange NVDA training workshops. Non-violence forms the basis of every action we take to promote peace, so it is important to have an understanding of NVDA. By taking direct action non-violently we are working on a different level from the authorities - and the effect of this is very confusing for them since they are only trained to respond to aggression with aggression. And even in a situation where one is passively resisting, the authorities still respond aggressively with riot suppressive tactics. How do we deal with this?

If a violent confrontation arose, they would be bound to win with the extensive technology and resources available to them: it also means we are acknowledging their power. But power is not a personal quality that a minority possess - it is something we give by compliance and co-operation. Through NVDA we are no longer co-operating ... we are reclaiming the power we have vested in others and which they are abusing.

Sorry! ... the list isn't available as we go to press, so if you want more info, send a s.a.e. to:

NVDA Training Workshops
7 White Hill,
Eccinswell,
Newbury, Berks.

OR

NVDA Training Workshops
1 Crowland Terrace,
Islington,
London, N1.



Pam Isherwood

contemporary Occupy movements are struggling with sustainability. Although Greenham was primarily focused on nuclear disarmament, and Occupy is primarily focused on the economy, what is common and underlying to both movements is class struggle. The kinds of necessary transformations required to end exploitation requires all genders to work together to recognize their shared interests.

P. I think that part of it has to do with the fact that men tend to isolate. I think the cohesiveness of Greenham was that it was a women's action. The only women's space that formed at Zuccotti was when a woman was raped and when women were being sexually harassed. Nobody took this seriously as an issue and so a women's tent was built. This action wasn't coming from a place of empowerment but from a need to create a safe place to protect women from men. Can men sustain a movement where women are equal, where sexual violence is a non-issue? Greenham was about making militarization an issue that was unacceptable to women.

S. So are you saying that the success of Greenham was determined by the fact that it was driven and implemented by women?

P. This was the only way it could sustain itself. It was a very clear decision of people there. We wanted to do something differently. It worked. I don't think men would have stuck it out for so many years. It was rough. It was really hard.

S. Would you describe the Greenham occupation as a leaderless movement?

P. At Greenham everything was done by consensus. But there were people who were better at things than others. Like Lynn who assumed leadership around nonviolence. She was also phenomenal with media and was always speaking up. Women deferred to her and she got flack for that. Rebecca was incredible at something else. Then there was Helen who left her whole family behind, charging her husband to take care of their children. There was also Sarah who gave birth in a bender to her son Jay. Everybody contributed something.

The way to look at Greenham is that the base was nine miles, with nine separate and different entrances. There was a camp set up at every single entrance. The gates had different reputations. I was at Main Gate, partly because I was there also as a journalist. I was photographing and I needed to document the convoys going in and out. It was a very public gate. There was Green Gate, which was completely up in the woods. The women who occupied there were more "spiritual" and were less inclined to get involved with political actions. On the other side were Blue and Emerald Gates and these were on the road itself. If you lived there you were camping right on the side of the road; you were the most vulnerable. The women who stayed there were willing to take that on.

S. How did people feed themselves and each other?

P. Every single thing that came to Greenham came in the form of donations, including food, warm clothes, knitted mittens, and money. It all came at different times. There was a lot of food and a lot of supplies ... Then a couple of women started a garden. People did tasks according to what they were good at, what they were motivated to do and what needed to get done. There were regular meetings where specifics were determined (food prep, pending evictions, actions, etc.) and a lot of it happened organically by being there. For example, the fire needed to be lit in the morning. Whoever was awake early would build a new fire and prepare the tea.

S. How was the distribution of resources managed, especially money?

P. Through consensus. Everything was done, as much as possible, through consensus and community building. There were women who were living there for years; Greenham was their address. Women also dropped in for the weekend. In this sense it was very much like Occupy. But there was a central core of people who were committed to being there full time.

S. How would you describe the range of women that gathered at Greenham? Also, what drew women to this particular protest?

P. It was an international movement and people came from all over the world. There were German, Japanese, African American women from every class. If I think about class very carefully, there were more European working-class women who also identified with the movement as a labor movement. There is a politics that comes with being working class in Europe that isn't in place in the USA.

You have to look at what they were doing there to begin with. What were they protesting, what was the point? And that was very clear to me. They were there because they cared about their future, which was being threatened by the placement of ninety-six cruise missiles on a joint UK and USA base. There were also missiles going, at the same time, to Sicily, Germany, upstate New York, and, right here, at the Staten Island Harbor.

S. Do you have any thoughts about how one might talk about feminism, if at all, in relation to this movement?

P. By being at Greenham one became a feminist. That's what being there did for you. I didn't go because I was a feminist; I wasn't. I went because of the issue and I went because it was creative. Women were actually doing something that was unique. I would like to back up a little here because I am remembering that I met Lynn prior to Greenham at the November 1980 Women's Pentagon Anti-nuclear Action. Women from all over the USA went to the Pentagon, and they surrounded it. They shut down the Pentagon. They wove, with yarn, all the entrances to the Pentagon shut. They had puppets, they lay down, women were dragged off, and more women came. They literally formed a chain around the building. It was one of the most outrageous nonviolent actions in this country. Thousands of us marched from the Pentagon to Arlington Cemetery and, in silence, marched through the cemetery. I had witnessed women's nonviolent creative action and I felt that I was an activist but not, at that time, a feminist. The loud voice for me was not feminism. But, as Greenham grew, and I witnessed women becoming angrier, bolder, and more outrageously creative, I began to understand what feminism was, what it could be. This, to me, was feminism in action.

S. What would an outrageously creative day look like at Greenham?

P. It could be just waking up in the pissing rain, getting dressed and out of your bender, then helping to build a fire to get the kettle on for a cup of tea; after that, getting food going and checking in on other people. It's home and you are living there and it's not like you are going to leave at the weekend. There was laundry, getting water and gathering wood, and planning meetings. The creative beauty of Greenham was that you just were there. Like Occupy, just being there to sustain the space for others to join in and discover why they were there was what Greenham provided. I would say constantly there were actions. Women would form action groups at the various gates and go onto the base. They would cut through the barbed-wire fence, roller skate on the runways, dance on the silos, and at Christmastime dress up as Santa Claus bringing presents to the soldiers. They dressed in bunny-rabbit suits on Easter and hopped through the base. They blockaded, such was the incredible human creativity.



WOMEN'S PENTAGON ACTION OUTSIDE WINDOWPEACE - 3RD WK.
DIANA MOONMADE-IN-RESIDENCE - PHOTO BY Paula Allen

Above: Susan Kleckner, *Action Outside Main Gate*, silver print, ca. 1984. Below: Susan Kleckner and Paula Allen, *Women's Pentagon Action outside Windowpeace, Diana Moonmade-in-Residence*, silver print, ca. December 1986. Courtesy of Paula Allan Archive.



Lesley McIntyre

May 24, 1983. International Women's Day for Disarmament. A symbolic dying in central London

People can turn their fear and anger into action of many kinds.

"I pushed myself into going to a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament meeting I had seen advertised in a local newspaper. This was a big step for me." (Christine King)

"... The next day I went to join them and the 30,000 other women at the camp and took part in the blockade of the base on December 13th. I felt strong to see so many other women feeling as I did." (Sue Bolton)

"I decided I had no choice but to engage in acts of disobedience to the law in order to draw attention to the horrific situation threatening us." (Jean Hutchinson)

"All my strength, my time and what little money I have is spent on stopping these missiles. I have even been to prison at the age of 72." (Nell Logan)

S. Can you elaborate a little more on the relationship between the women and the soldiers at the base?

P. These men were soldiers and not the police. They couldn't come off the base but they would walk the perimeter on the other side of the fence. Some women felt that establishing relationships with the soldiers was very important. Other women hated the soldiers, because they were the enemy. It varied. Some of the men would chat and others wouldn't. Sometimes women made tea and passed it through the fence. There wasn't anything wrong to do. However, nonviolence was the key. Even when provoked and dragged off, women stayed nonviolent. In the end, the missiles didn't come. The protest, as long as it was, had impact; it got enough media attention and coverage (both negative and positive). But, most importantly, the women persevered and refused to give up. That's not to say there weren't multiple evictions. Women started to put their benders on platforms with wheels so that they could be wheeled out and then back in. Nobody was going to stop and go away until the goal was achieved.

S. How did the local population respond to the peace camp?

P. If you think about where this protest was, Newbury, a very conservative town where nobody wanted these actions, it was remarkable that it sustained in the ways that it did. There was a lot of antagonism towards the women including signs everywhere that said "Greenham women not welcome." Yes, there was a group of Quakers living in Newbury who supported the women, who housed them when necessary and made regular visits to the camp. There were also a handful of residents who helped women—Lynette and Evelyn were two of them. They offered showers, phones, and a meeting place. It was tricky for them because they had husbands and children who were not so supportive of us. They made a tremendous difference (even the small pocket of support), because the majority (or so it seemed) of the town were not supportive. They saw the need for the missiles; they were employed at (or in a job connected to) the base. We learned which stores, restaurants, pubs, launderettes, etc., were supportive and which were not. It was not the residents who did evictions—it was the police.

S. Do you remember when Susan first came to Greenham? How would you describe her presence there?

P. She came during the third year of the protest, in September 1984. The camp was very established at that point. She was filming and making still images. Susan stood out. She was there because she had to be—the way so many of us had to be there. We were genuinely (and rightfully) terrified of the threat of nuclear war. We knew that we had to put our bodies on the line—to not go home, to take action. Susan was a creative powerhouse and we shared the same compulsion for similar reasons to be at Greenham. It was our political urgency and creative passion and belief that it was women who could make a difference. Greenham was exhilarating, visual, challenging, daring, inventive, crazy, loving, risky. It met Susan's needs.

S. Did she have women perform actions for the camera?

P. I can't say with certainty that this was the case. Susan documented the protest in ways that were different from everyone else. She saw art forms in everything: in the shapes and forms of the benders, the weaving on the fence, a steaming cup of tea in the rain, a woman in the freezing damp walking by in a heavy woolly hat. I was there doing magazine work, feature stories; I knew what my job was. Susan didn't have a job as a documentarian; she was there to make her own work.



Paula Allen, *Kleckner—1st Night, Windowpeace*, silver print, December, 1986. Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

“The way the system works is everyone goes around keeping quiet, just pattering along very comfortably, thank you very much. But what it needs is all people to make those stands. The stands that they make can be at any level. They can be coming to live at Greenham Common and getting arrested and going to prison. Or they can be doing non-arrestable actions. They can be getting someone else to do the dishes in your home for the first time in years. They can be working to create a nursery for your kids. They can be working against male violence in a refuge; they can be any, any place. If there is something that really affects you, that makes you feel really bad, it's your bloody job to get up and do something about it, because nobody else is going to do it. And that's the important thing. It's not the sort of ...oh wonderful Greenham women, nobody else could do it... the point is that everybody should be doing it.”

—From an interview in *The Greenham Tapes*, Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Special Collections and University

S. Was Susan's Greenham project coincident with any of her other previous work?

P. If you look at what preceded Greenham, the film she made at the Democratic Convention in Chicago (1970), or her Birth film, one can see that she was intent on creating an impact. She considered herself to be an activist, her camera being the focus of that activism. Susan was deeply committed to women's rights and wanted to be there when women acted together, when they created together, when they got arrested and risked together.

S. I don't mean to force a declaration about Susan's intentions in regards to her studio practices. I remember her as an extremely spontaneous person whose arrivals and departures were always dramatic and somewhat intuitive. She wasn't particularly analytical about her own work, but she was clear about where she wanted to be and what she needed to do when she got there.

P. Yes, I think she was a reactive person. She knew when she had to be somewhere. She didn't question or go through the reasons why or why not. That kind of rationality would not have produced the kind of work Susan made. Her photograph of a bender looked the way it did because of the way she worked. The texts written in a particular way on the images took the work out of its context and then resituated it in a very revealing manner. Susan bent the edges; she went to the edge in every way. Susan was a master printer and the printing of that work—how she printed it, the tonalities of the images, what she wrote on the images and the informal way in which she wrote it was as important for her as making the photographs. Even more of Greenham happened for Susan post-Greenham.

S. Do you recall other work that came out of Greenham that had a similar impact? Also, I'm curious about whether there is an available archive.

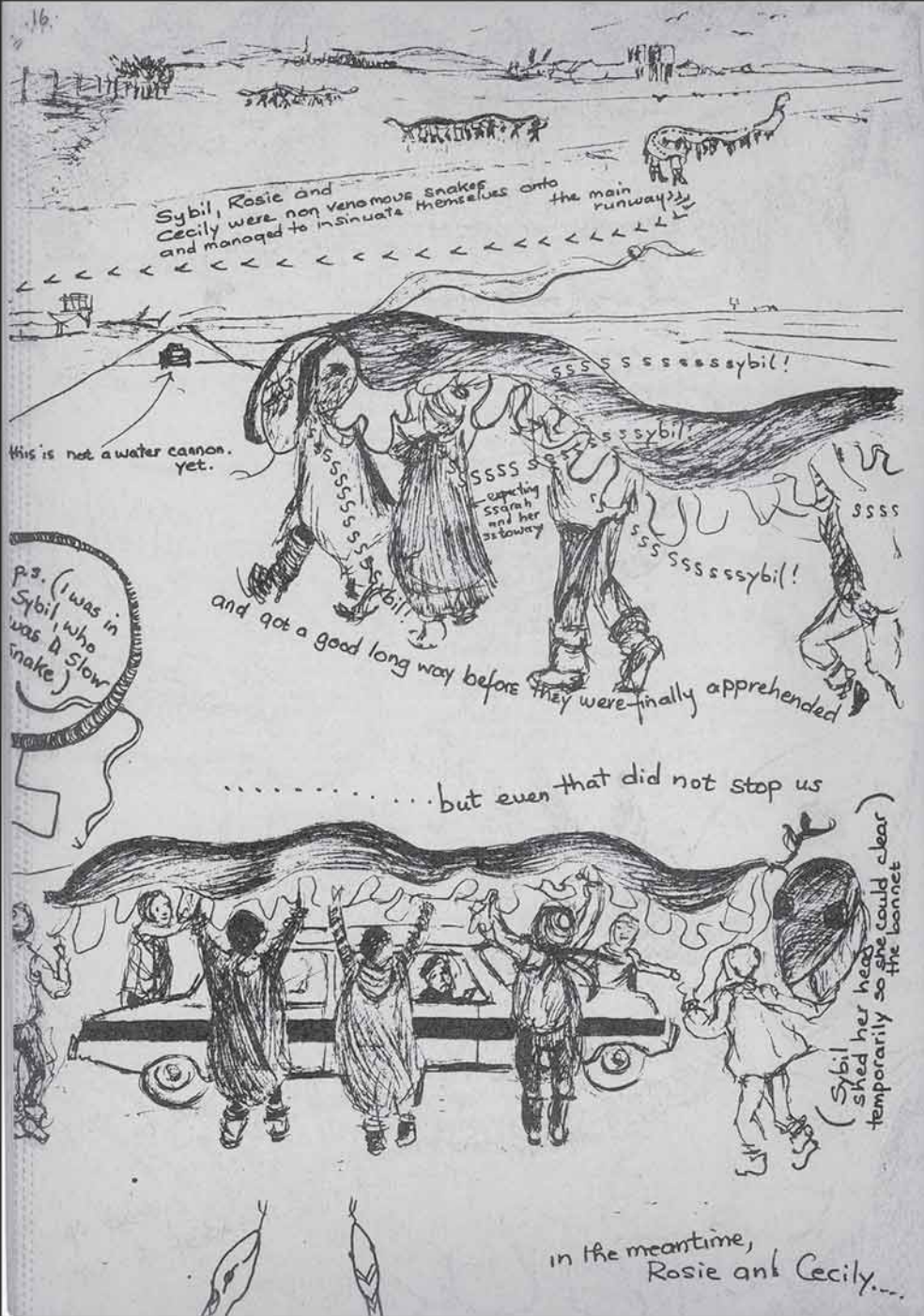
P. There was a handful of photographers who were the documentarians of Greenham, myself included. There were also women from the only women's photography agency, Format Women's Picture Agency located in Britain. So there was a core of women and one man, Ed Barber, who was very involved. Ed was a photographer on the "left." He worked for publications that supported the women. He was "known" to the women because he was around consistently.

I think most of the work is in our own possession. I'm sitting with thousands of slides and negatives. I think it would be extraordinary to make Greenham visible. The timing is right. I remember one image by Raissa Page that is devastatingly beautiful. It's of women dancing on the silos at dawn on New Years Day. Hundreds of women got to the base at dawn, held hands and danced. Yes, it was mainly women who photographed but once the international press became interested, a lot of journalists from all over the world started arriving to make photos and reports. Some of the women were "good" with the press and understood the necessity and benefits, some of the women were hostile and mistrusting, and others ignored them. The women photojournalists at Greenham were working to get images out. Susan was doing Susan: she wasn't trying to get work out. It didn't mean that she was less an activist. She was both passionate and compassionate about Greenham. Susan would say that being an artist and being an activist were one and the same thing.



Above: Raissa Page, *Dancing on the Silos*, 1st January 1983, p. 8. Below: Ed Barber, *Untitled*, *The Greenham Factor*, p.9, published by Greenham Print Shop (undated), Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

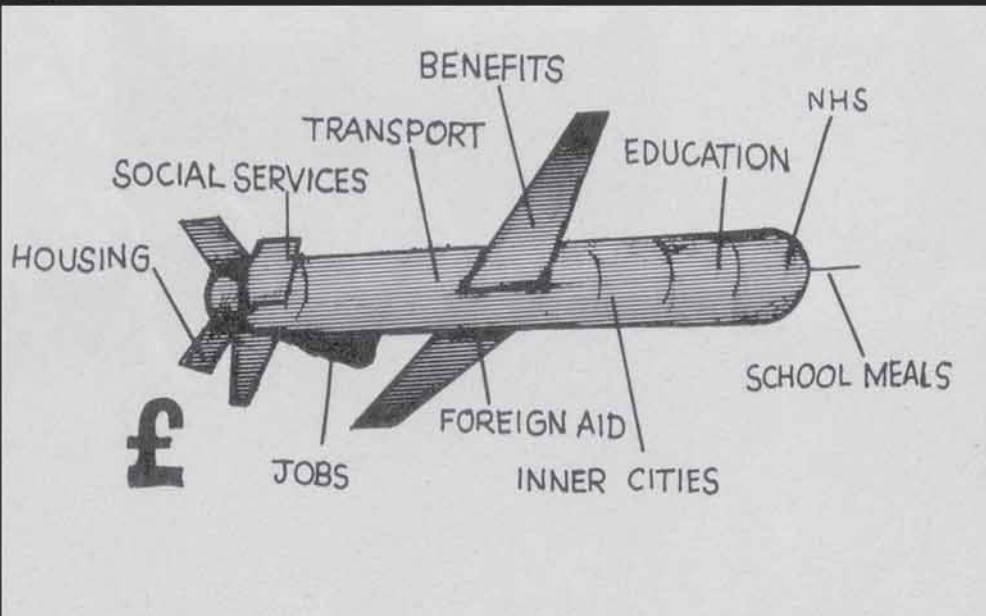
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Snaky Story (detail), p. 16, Women's Peace Camp Newsletter, February 1983, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive.



Paula Allen, *30,000 Women Embrace the Base*, 12 December 1982, Courtesy of Paula Allen Archive



The Greenham Factor, p. 7 (detail), published by Greenham Print Shop (undated), Courtesy of Susan Kleckner Archive, Special Collections and University Archives, W. E. B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.