

YR YMGYRCH YN PARHAU!
(THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!)

AN EXPLORATION
OF THE NARRATIVES FROM WALES,
EMERGING FROM
THE GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S PEACE
CAMPS 1981-2000

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Abstract

In 1981, a group of women from Wales formed a protest march against the positioning of 96 nuclear weapons at an RAF base at Greenham Common. This protest subsequently developed into several women-only protest camps situated around the perimeter fence of the base, and as time progressed became increasingly referred to as a feminist campaign. Despite the attempts of the authorities, some of these camps persisted for a considerable time with the final camp being brought to an end by the camp residents in 2000, nineteen years after the arrival of the first women.

The purpose of this research project is to contribute to the analysis of this significant event in the history of women's political movements in Britain, by focusing upon the subjective stories told and political analyses given of the campaign by participants over time. As a consequence, the project involves the collation and analysis of new oral histories in conjunction with a critical examination of the existing published accounts, written and oral, and archival material. In recognition that there was a notable contribution to the campaign by participants from Wales the emphasis is placed upon the region in order to examine the complexities of the protest narratives in relation to the wider historiography of the event. Consequently, the overall objective is to present fresh perspectives of both the Greenham protest and women's political activity in Wales, casting new light on the existing knowledge by offering an analysis of previously untold stories.

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List of Abbreviations

BWWFH	Black Women Wages for Housework
CCND	Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
DAC	Direct Action Committee against nuclear war
GAMA	GLCM Alert and Maintenance Area
GLCM	Ground Launched Cruise Missiles
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCANWT	National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests
NWWPC	North Wales Women's Peace Council
NVDA	Non-Violent Direct Action
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAGE	Ratepayers Against Greenham Encampment
SALT I & II	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative (popularly known as 'Star Wars')
UK	United Kingdom
USA/US	United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WFH	Wages for Housework
WFLOE	Women for Life on Earth
WLM	Women's Liberation Movement

Glossary of Selected Terms

Action	A protest action designed to demonstrate an objection to nuclear weapons.
Bender	A makeshift tent made from bending young branches and covering with plastic sheeting. These were used following the start of camp evictions.
Black Cardigans	Bolt cutters. These were used to cut the perimeter fence.
Bridget Evans	A woman who wished to be anonymous (usually when arrested). ¹
Cruisewatch	A group that monitored the movement of Cruise Missiles around the countryside as the United States Air Force carried out military drills.
Chain Letter	The method of communication to engage with wider public. Generally used to publicise an event or gathering. The originator composes a letter and copies are distributed to multiple recipients. Each recipient then copies the letter several times and distributes to their network. The process is on-going until the event is past. ²
Gate	Entrance to the base at Greenham where a women's camp was also set up.
Keening	An eerie wailing sound traditionally used to express grief. This was used by some Greenham women as a form of protest against nuclear weapons.
Muncher	The rubbish truck used to clear the possessions of the women by bailiffs during camp evictions.

¹ Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, eds. *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), 70.

² Rachel Adam et al., *You can't kill the spirit: Yorkshire Women go to Greenham* (Wakefield, Bretton Women's Book Fund, 1983), 5-6.

Daniel W. Van Arsdale, "Advocacy chain letter. Greenham Peace Camps - recruitment. England, 1986," *The Paper Chain Letter Archive*, accessed November 15, 2016, http://www.silcom.com/~barnowl/chain-letter/archive/ae1986-02_greenham.htm.

Selected Chronology¹

1661	Quaker “Testimony of Peace” sent to King Charles I.
1815	The ‘Peace Society’ is formed.
1915	‘International Congress of Women’ held at The Hague.
1926	‘North Wales Peacemakers Pilgrimage’ women march for peace.
1941	Greenham Common is requisitioned under wartime emergency powers.
1944	American troops stationed at Greenham join the ‘D-Day’ battle.
1945	United States of America (USA) atomic bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
1947	Greenham de-requisitioned, but not restored to common land.
1951	Greenham re-requisitioned for the United States Air Force with local protests.
1952	35 march to Atomic Weapon Research Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston. First United Kingdom (UK) atomic bomb test off the coast of Australia.
1953	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) undertake 5 nuclear tests.
1954	First USA hydrogen bomb test.
1956	UK ‘National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests’ formed.
1957	First UK hydrogen bomb test. ‘Direct Action Committee’ formed in UK. Windscale fire at nuclear power plant. USA conducts first underground nuclear test.
1958	‘Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’ (CND) formed. 10,000 people march to AWE Aldermaston.

¹ Various sources including:

Anon, “What’s been happening?” *Women’s Peace Camp Newsletter*, February, 1983.

Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, ed. *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire* (London: The Women’s Press, 1984), iii-vi.

Beth Junor, ed. *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp: History of Non-Violent Resistance 1984-1995* (London: Working Press, 1995), 15-305.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, “Nuclear Timeline,” *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://cnduk.org/campaigns/global-abolition/effects-of-nuclear-weapons/item/446-nuclear-timeline>.

David Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 205-207.

Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: The British Peace Movement 1958-1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 5-346.

“Greenham Common - A chronology,” *The Guardian*, September 5, 2005. Accessed March 17, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/sep/05/greenham4>.

1960	'Committee of 100' break from CND over non-violent direct action (NVDA).
1961	15,000 take part in 'Committee of 100' NVDA protest at Trafalgar Square.
1962	Cuban Crisis. 100,000 people attend a rally at the end of a CND march to AWE Aldermaston.
1966	Greenham becomes a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) standby base.
1968	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened.
1972	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I). Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT) signed by USA and USSR. UK Labour Party conference votes for unilateral nuclear disarmament.
1979	
March 28	Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident in the USA.
June 18	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) signed (not ratified).
May 4	UK Conservative Party elected. Margaret Thatcher is Prime Minister.
December 12	NATO agrees 'double-track' strategy.
1980	
March 10	BBC Panorama episode "If the bomb drops" broadcast on UK television.
June 17	Greenham Common and Molesworth confirmed as Cruise missile bases.
November 4	The Republican, Ronald Reagan, becomes President Elect of the USA.

THE GREENHAM PROTEST

1981	
August 27	'Women for Life on Earth' (WFLOE) depart from Cardiff City Hall.
September 5	WFLOE arrive at Greenham. 4 women chain themselves to the fence.
October 24	250,000 people attend CND march through London.
December 12	Protest march in Newbury to mark anniversary of the NATO decision.
December 13	Temperatures drop to -20 degrees centigrade overnight.
December 21	Women stop sewage pipes being laid by sitting in front of machinery.
1982	
January 18	Greenham women 'keen' outside the House of Commons.
January 20	Newbury district council eviction notice served on peace camp.
February 1	The camp becomes women only. Men can visit during daylight hours.
February 23	Nuclear Free Wales Declaration, under provisions of Local Government Act.
March 21	Spring equinox. 10,000 people converge at base.
March 22	A 24 hour blockade of base by 250-300 women. 34 arrests.
April 2	The Falklands war starts.
May	Exercise Regenerate. Home Office civil defence drill (uncompleted).
May 27	First camp eviction at Greenham. 4 women arrested.
May 28	Women refuse to be bound to keep the peace and are imprisoned.
June 6	CND rally in Hyde Park attended by Greenham women.
June 7	75-80 women 'die' at the London stock exchange. 7 arrests.
June 8	USA President Ronald Reagan consigns communism to the 'ash heap of history' in a speech to the House of Commons. 20 women arrested for keening outside.
August 6	Hiroshima Day - women place 10,000 stones on Newbury war memorial.

August 9	Nagasaki Day – 8 women attempt to present the last of 1,000 origami symbols of peace to the Greenham Base Commander.
August 27	Women occupy the main gate sentry box until arrested.
September 28	Second camp eviction.
October 3	Sewer pipe action and the weaving of webs. 13 arrested.
October 30	Civil defence exercise 'Hard Rock' planned to begin, but 'postponed' in July.
November 15	The sentry box action trial is held. Women are imprisoned for 14 days.
November 17	Sewer pipe trial. Women imprisoned for 14 days.
December 12	'Embrace the Base'. 30,000 women link hands to encircle the 9 mile base.
December 13	Up to 4,000 women blockade the base.

1983

January 1	44 women climb the fence and dance on the Cruise missile silos.
January 20	Second camp set up at Green Gate.
January 22	New camp attempted at Blue Gate.
February 7	Michael Heseltine visits Newbury. Large protest in the town. Over 100 women enter the base dressed as snakes.
February 15	Trial of silo protest women results in 36 imprisonments.
February 22	400 women present affidavits stating that Greenham is their home. High Court eviction hearing against named women adjourned.
March 8	'Evil empire' speech by Reagan to USA National Association of Evangelicals.
March 24	Women blockade visit to base of NATO generals.
April 1	200 Greenham women enter the base to have a picnic dressed as animals. CND organises a human chain of 70,000 people to link Aldermaston, Burghfield and Greenham Common.
June 9	Majority Conservative government led by Thatcher elected.
June 25	Rainbow Dragon Festival. 2,000 women sew a 4.5 mile snake banner.
July 24	Women symbolically 'die' at the Greenham Air Tattoo.
July 25	7 women paint peace symbols on a new spy plane, 'Blackbird'.
August 5	'Star Marches' from across Britain arrive at Greenham.
August 18	'Blackbird' trial. Ministry of Defence (MoD) withdraws charges to avoid publicity.
September 5	Women obstruct laying of fuel pipes into base. 27 arrests.
September 26	USSR false alarm. Stanislav Petrov prevents nuclear war after false missile threat readings are received in Moscow.
October 2	Neil Kinnock elected new Labour Party leader as Michael Foot retires.
October 22	CND march in London the UK's biggest at circa 400,000 participants. An estimated 600,000 gathered in West Germany on the same day.
October 29	Fence cutting action at Greenham. 15 women arrested.
November 1	Michael Heseltine confirmed Greenham intruders ran the risk of being shot.
November 9	Federal Court action lodged in New York by Greenham women. 24 hour vigils at all 102 USA military bases in the UK.
November 14	First of the missile-carrying transporters arrive at Greenham.
December 11	'Reflect the base' attended by 50,000 women. Hundreds arrested. Police violence reported.

1984

March 5	'Cruisewatch' formed to track missiles on training exercises outside base.
April 4	'The final solution' eviction. TV coverage is broadcast across the world.
May 13	'Visibility Action' by 30 women.
May 30	National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) delegation visits Greenham.

September 20	'10 million women for 10 days' action commenced.
September 23	Drama 'Threads' broadcast on BBC 2.
November 7	Ronald Reagan re-elected in USA presidential election.
1985	
March 11	Mikhail Gorbachev made USSR General Secretary of the Communist Party.
March 13	7 women reinstated onto Register of Electors by Newbury Crown Court.
March 27	NATO endorses Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).
April 1	A mass trespass in contravention of new MoD by-laws. Women arrested.
April 11	Anne Francis from Abergavenny sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.
1986	
April 26	Chernobyl nuclear power station explodes in USSR (Ukraine).
July 23	Green Gate camp folds.
October 18-19	Wages for Housework hold a peace camp in Argyle Square, London.
October 25	Wages for Housework open Green Gate camp for a weekend of workshops.
1987	
June 23-27	'World Congress of Women' (WCW) held in Moscow.
July 30	A Yellow Gate statement condemns behaviour of women at WCW in Moscow.
August 23	'Cruisewatch' cease communications with Yellow Gate.
September 21	Orange Gate camp is no longer open full time.
September 29	Blue, Woad and Orange Gate publically disassociate from Yellow Gate.
October 1	Yellow Gate accepts separation and withdraw from the Newbury Quaker House facilities.
December 8	Reagan and Gorbachev sign Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.
1988	
	MoD by-laws judged invalid. 2 convictions for 1985 trespass quashed.
	USSR inspectors visit Greenham and Molesworth as result of INF Treaty.
1989	
August 1	First Cruise missiles are removed from Greenham.
August 5	Traffic accident at Yellow Gate. Helen Thomas from Wales is killed.
November 9	The fall of the Berlin Wall.
December 9	Yellow Gate 'Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg' (Welsh Language Society) workshop.
1991	
	Last missiles leave Greenham. '501st Tactical Missile Wing' is disbanded.
1992	
	3 women from Yellow Gate enter the base at AWE Aldermaston.
1993	
	MoD puts Greenham airfield up for sale.
1994	
	Blue (Bloo) Gate camp is closed leaving only Yellow Gate open.
1997	
	'Greenham Common Trust' purchase of airbase.
	'Newbury District Council' acquisition of the commons.
	The perimeter fence is demolished.
2000	
	Yellow Gate, the first and last camp, is closed by its residents on the 19 th anniversary of the arrival of WFLOE.

Introduction

The Greenham Common protest lives in my memories as a wonderful thing that happened because a group of women were prepared to stand up, put themselves out and say 'not in my name'. I think they did make a difference, they certainly taught me what it means to stand up and be counted.¹

So Gorbachov and the Politburo, members of a brutal dictatorial system which paid no attention to the 400 million people under its control, was swayed by some people in the West camping out on roadsides, doing marches and singing songs. Nothing at all to do then with SDI, or the fact that their political system was on the verge of collapse!²

Greenham Common sits nestled into the heart of the rural English countryside of Berkshire. A piece of rare lowland heath of around 855 acres it is advertised with views “across the wooded gullies ... to the heights of Watership Down.”³ With large areas open to the public, who are guided along the network of paths traversing across the site by the large display maps at the various car parks, it today seems a wholly unlikely scene for one of the most globally infamous and polarising anti-nuclear weapon demonstrations of the Cold War era. Closer inspection however reveals a modern business park along roads named ‘Ministry Way’ and ‘Sixth Street’, a disused air traffic control tower, a partially dismantled runway and huge grassed over concrete silos. The remnants of the military past of the site. But significantly this was also the former location of several Women’s Peace Camps positioned amid the gorse on the outside of the now dismantled barbed, wire mesh fence, that had once stretched around the nine mile perimeter of the military air base contained within. This was a place that had once provided the backdrop for thousands of individuals as they engaged in an important political debate during the 1980s and 1990s about nuclear weapons, militarism and war.

This thesis is a historical study of that protest and in particular it is an examination of the depth and breadth of the political debates that it encapsulated. It is a study that expands beyond a chronology of the physical events that took place to consider how the protest has been perceived and explained at various junctures in its history. Moreover it is a study that adopts a

¹ Kayin Krakow, comment posted September 3, 2013 (09:20) in response to Beeban Kidron, "The women of Greenham Common taught a generation how to protest," *The Guardian*, September 2, 2013, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/sep/02/greenham-common-women-taught-generation-protest>.

² Gilbert3, comment posted September 2, 2013 (22:22) in response to Kidron, "The women of Greenham Common taught a generation."

³ West Berkshire District Council, "A virtual tour of Greenham and Crookham Commons," *Greenham: A Common Inheritance*, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://www.greenham-common.org.uk>.

different approach to the analysis, in that it moves the focus of the investigation away from the Greenham site to look at the protest from an alternative perspective. It does this by introducing a regional history aspect to the analysis by placing some of the focus upon participants from Wales and exploring the themes pertinent to their stories. This enables an examination that begins to situate protagonists in the wider context of their lives and politics, rather than viewing them solely through the prism of the protest itself and concentrating upon their actions at Greenham in isolation.

The purpose of this approach is to demonstrate the variety of viewpoints and philosophies that participants brought into the campaign, and how it was often either the wider adoption or rejection of these ideas that ultimately influenced their levels of identification and participation in the protest. In doing this, the thesis also aims to demonstrate how the protest absorbed ideas, techniques and theories developed within other movements, or in other situations, to become an increasingly complex mix of political narratives. This it is argued had the potential to lead to as much disagreement and conflict, as to consensus and solidarity amongst those involved.

Using a variety of sources, including new oral testimonies, it is an examination of how the various interpretations and understandings of the protest evolved over time. This is either as events rapidly unfolded and as individual participants moved in and out of the protest, or as time has passed since it ended. It also illustrates how certain perspectives can be shown to have gained momentum and dominance at specific points. This allows for a consideration of the development of the over-arching explanations most regularly given for the conception, direction and ultimate purpose of the protest. It is also recognition that this was a process that also led to the silencing, eclipsing or expulsion of other alternative opinions and beliefs. This resulted in the complete disengagement of some participants, whilst simultaneously reaffirming and enhancing the engagement of others.

This thesis is not therefore an examination of the protest from the perspective of 'insiders' but rather foregrounds those who do not 'fit' with the traditional depictions of Greenham, as well as those who ultimately became dejected by the direction and development of the protest as it evolved. Consideration is also given to those more obviously defined as direct opponents of the anti-nuclear weapon movement to show how and why particular narratives were more, or less, likely to gain precedence at Greenham.

The overall objective of the thesis is consequently to consider afresh the way that the stories of Greenham evolved, and how these subsequently transferred into the popular and historical narratives of women's activism, and perhaps more broadly the impact of these various accounts upon the discussions of feminism, in the late Twentieth Century and beyond.

Before expanding into more detail regarding the specific questions, methodology and theoretical positioning of this study however, it is necessary to briefly describe the circumstances leading to the events at Greenham (discussed again in more detail in chapter 1). This will also enable the introduction of my own motivations for choosing this as a topic to be explored.

The Greenham Protest

The protest began very modestly in the autumn of 1981 when a small group of marchers from South Wales became determined to publicly display their objection to the ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) modernisation programme of the Western nuclear forces contained within the NATO Double-Track Decision of 1979.

Following on from the 1969-1979 Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)⁴ that had curtailed the numbers of specific types of weaponry held by both the East and West superpowers, this agreement acknowledged the continuing military build-up of the Warsaw Pact countries. Under the Double-Track policy NATO offered immediate negotiations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with the goal of banning nuclear armed middle-range missiles from Europe.⁵ This was with the provision that the same missiles could be installed if negotiations failed. It was therefore a policy constructed by the Western Allies with the express purpose of reinstating a balance in armaments between the two sides. This was rationalised as a restoration of the effectiveness of the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) strategy, which was endorsed as a deterrent against an enemy strike, particularly from the USSR. It consequently included the plan

⁴ SALT I was a series of negotiations between the USA and the USSR between 1969 and 1972. On May 26, 1972 two documents were signed to freeze specific types of arms at existing levels and to obligate the exercise of restraint in the development of new types of weapon.

Nuclear Pathways project, "Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I," *AtomicArchive.Com*, accessed November 19, 2017, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Treaties/Treaty8.shtml>.

SALT II talks took place between 1972 and 1979 to replace the interim agreement with a long-term comprehensive treaty. This was signed on June 18, 1979 but was unratified by the US Senate.

Nuclear Pathways project, "Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II Treaty (1979)," *AtomicArchive.Com*, accessed November 19, 2017, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Treaties/Treaty13.shtml>.

Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II," *NTI: Building a Safer World*, accessed November 19, 2017, <http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/strategic-arms-limitation-talks-salt-ii/>.

The terms of the SALT II agreement were honoured by the USA until November 28, 1986 when President Ronald Reagan announced the USA would break through the agreed weapon limits under his favoured SDI policy.

"U.S. to Break SALT II Limits Friday", *The Washington Post*, November 27, 1986, accessed November 19, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/11/27/us-to-break-salt-ii-limits-friday/796f8715-e76e-41be-822c-dd33109813a9/?utm_term=.eb31c7c2aa3c.

⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, "Special Meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers (The 'Double-Track' Decision on Theatre Nuclear Forces, December, 12 1979," *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*, accessed December 12, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27040.htm.

to deploy 572 new American controlled nuclear missiles in Europe. This involved the positioning of a total of 109 Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) in huge concrete bunkers in the United Kingdom (UK) at two Royal Air-Force (RAF) bases, located at Greenham Common and Molesworth. In total 96 of the weapons were to be stationed at Greenham Common in Berkshire, England.

Incensed by the endorsement given by the British Government to this decision, and how it signified an escalation of the Arms Race and the Cold War between the global superpowers of East and West, instead of the promise of decline some had perceived in the SALT Treaties, a protest march from South Wales was organised by a small group of outraged women.⁶ Spurned by the media and the authorities, the 36 female participants and their supporters arrived at the base still determined to be heard. They consequently chained themselves to the fence and, when that too was met with disdain, they began an impromptu peace camp outside the main gate with a demand for a public debate on the issue. Their aim was to force the Government to change tact by persuading the wider public that, far from providing protection, Cruise Missiles threatened all life on earth by intensifying the potential for global nuclear war. These weapons of mass destruction, they asserted, were a dangerous folly that needed to be stopped.

With tensions mounting between the East and West Superpowers, this relatively low level demonstration of discontent rapidly gained momentum becoming a major peace demonstration recognised the world over by the end of 1982. Hitting the headlines in December of that year, as 30,000 women encircled the base in an attempt to prevent the weapons ever reaching the UK, it became a phenomenon that excited passionate responses. These ranged from enthusiastic endorsement to incensed condemnation. The strength of these feelings was also often intensified dependent upon whether there was support for the declaration, announced earlier in that year, that the protest was to be a women only campaign.

Within a few months additional camps were set up at the other entry points to the base. As the protest progressed the participants increasingly became engaged in non-violent direct action (NVDA) campaigns. Many of these were constructed to disrupt the activities of the British and American military and those civilians contracted to work with them on the site. In the years that followed, these 'actions' engaged thousands of people either at the site or in the broader debates surrounding militarism and nuclear weapons. It also inspired other similar protest campaigns to emerge at various other locations around the UK and across the globe.⁷ The debates also

⁶ Ann Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham: How the Peace-camp began and the Cold War Ended*, (Dinas Powys: Honno, 2006).

⁷ Some of the most prominent examples include Molesworth, Upper Heyford, Faslane and Aldermaston in the UK, with Comiso in Sicily, Pine Gap in Australia, Soesterburg in the Netherlands, and Seneca Falls, New York. For further international information see:

diversified, often becoming more feminist in their focus, but as the first transporter planes flew into Greenham the authorities significantly intensified their efforts to suppress the protest and to ridicule or criminalise those involved. Following a televised eviction of the camps in the Spring of 1984, which was reportedly dubbed “the final solution”⁸ and framed to depict a conspicuous defeat of the movement, the protest noticeably began to wane in terms of numbers at the site. Despite this however, the camps remained in place and continued to attract substantial attention from a global audience. This ensured that many women persisted in taking actions at the base to visually and vocally express their on-going discontent and objection.

As tensions between the Superpowers finally calmed with the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 1987, the Greenham protest began to slip from prominence. This was largely because the INF Treaty required the United States of America (USA) and the USSR to eliminate, and permanently forswear, all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles.⁹

Alison Bartlett, “Feminist Protest in the Desert: Reaching the 1983 Pine Gap Women’s Peace Camp,” *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 20, no.7 (2013): 914–926, doi: 10.1080/0966369X.2012.753585.

Alison Bartlett, “Feminist protest and maternity at Pine Gap women's peace camp, Australia 1983,” *Women's Studies International Forum* 34, no.1 (2011): 31-38, doi: 10.1016/j.wsif.2010.10.002.

Berenice A. Carroll, “Women Take Action! Direct Action and Social Change,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 12, no.1 (1989): 3-24, doi:10.1016/0277-5395(89)90074-5.

April Carter, *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1992).

Cynthia Cockburn, *Anti-Militarism: Political and Gender Dynamics of Peace Movements* (Chippenham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Debra D. Burrington, “Free Riding, Alternative Organization and Cultural Feminism: The Case of Seneca Women's Peace Camp,” *Women & Politics* 10, No.3 (2018): 1-37, doi: 10.1300/J014v10n03_01.

Benjamin Ziemann, “A Quantum of Solace? European Peace Movements during the Cold War and their Elective Affinities,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, no.49 (2009): 351-389, <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/74457/>.

⁸ Beth Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp: History of Non-Violent Resistance 1984-1995* (London: Working Press, 1995), 15.

⁹ The permanence of the INF Treaty was subsequently called into doubt by the Obama administration in 2014, which concluded that Russia had violated the INF Treaty by testing a ground-launched cruise missile of prohibited range. This was reportedly due to Russian fears about its military inferiority versus the West.

Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. says Russia tested missile, despite Treaty,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 2014, accessed February 15, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/30/world/europe/us-says-russia-tested-missile-despite-treaty.html>.

This perception in the West has also intensified on 1 March, 2018 when Putin confirmed the creation of a new line of nuclear-capable weapons.

Andrew Roth, “Putin threatens US arms race with new missiles declaration,” *The Guardian*, March 1, 2018, accessed March 1, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/01/vladimir-putin-threatens-arms-race-with-new-missiles-announcement>.

Though the last of the weapons left Greenham in 1994, one camp remained outside the main gate in protest against the ongoing military occupation of the site. When the base was finally closed in 2000 with an agreement to return the land to the Commoners of Newbury, the remaining women finally departed. Whilst this represented the physical end to the story, the strength of feeling it stimulated failed to dissipate in the years that followed. This can be demonstrated by reference to the opening quotations to this introduction, which were posted online in 2013.

Why a thesis on the Greenham protest?

The reason this topic was chosen was not because I ever visited the camps, or had a close connection to anyone who had done so. Instead my interest was sparked by the 2006 publication of an English-Welsh local history about a village in Carmarthenshire, South Wales.¹⁰ Printed in final pages of the book was a photograph of a woman who I recognised as a supply teacher to my school in the mid-1980s.¹¹ This woman was named as Ann Pettitt. From her small holding it described how she had become inspired to organise the protest march to Greenham in 1981, taking “on the two big powers [to] become the catalysts of change.”¹²

Growing up in the 1980s under the shadow of the bomb, my peers and I would passionately debate the threat of a nuclear holocaust at school. It was an issue that had been heightened in our consciousness as a result of being given the novel, “Cyn Daw’r Gaeaf” to read in class.¹³ This text written by Meg Elis, based upon her diary whilst staying at Greenham, had won the coveted National Eisteddfod Prose Medal in 1985. Translated as ‘Before the Winter Comes’, it described the experiences of a Welsh woman who fulfilled a New Year resolution to visit Greenham before the year was out. It made an explicit attempt to draw associations between the peace protest and the militant Welsh language campaigns that had pre-occupied a large contingent of Welsh nationalists during the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴ These themes of civil disobedience and Welsh culture appealed to many attendees of my Welsh-speaking comprehensive school.

¹⁰ Arwyn Thomas, *Hanes Llanpumpstaint: A History* (Carmarthen: Carmarthenshire County Council, 2004), 288-290.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 298.

¹² *Ibid.* 290.

¹³ Meg Elis, *Cyn Daw’r Gaeaf* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1985).

¹⁴ For further information on these refer to:

Gwynfor Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, (Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2002).

Peter Merriman and Rhys Jones, “Symbols of Justice: The Welsh Language Society’s Campaign for Bilingual Road Signs in Wales, 1967–1980,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 35, no. 2 (2009): 350–375, doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2008.07.018.

It was also a text designed to outline the growing contemporary fear of 'nuclear winter'. This was an emerging scientific theory that forecast the devastating impact of a nuclear exchange upon the earth's climate and the capability of humans to grow sufficient food.¹⁵ This was also a subject that resonated with a group of pupils from the rural and agricultural communities in South Wales. In order to facilitate our discussion further we were shown part of the terrifying 1984 BAFTA award-winning television drama, "Threads."¹⁶ This vividly depicted the horror of a nuclear bomb explosion, the total collapse of society after a nuclear attack, and a nuclear winter.¹⁷ The scene for this film was Sheffield, but the threat was easily transferred to South West Wales because of the proximity of the listening station at Brawdy in Pembrokeshire.

The methods deployed in the teaching of this subject was not unique to our school,¹⁸ but it was certainly not part of a State endorsed curriculum. We were however tasked to write an essay imagining ourselves as a child of one of the women living in the mud at Greenham.¹⁹ It was an exercise I remember clearly as I likened it to my own environmental experience on a small Welsh hill-top farm, characterised by harsh weather conditions and many practical difficulties. I imagined the women struggling to save us from nuclear war and the end of the world. They were, unsurprisingly, the heroines of my childhood.

Charlotte Aull Davies, "Women, Nationalism and Feminism", in *Our Sister's Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales*, Jane Aaron et al., eds. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994): 242-255.

¹⁵ The phrase 'Nuclear Winter' was coined in 1983 but the science had been in progress since the 1950s. For references to the development of the theory during the period see: Carl Sagan and Richard Turco, "Nuclear Winter in the Post-Cold War Era," *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no.4 (1993): 369-373, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i217660>.

For critical analysis of the role played by this theory in anti-nuclear politics see: Paul Rubinson, "The Global Effects of Nuclear Winter: Science and Antinuclear Protest in the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1980s," *Cold War History* 14, no. 1 (2014): 47-69, doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2012.759560.

¹⁶ For a broader analysis of the impact of this drama see: Daniel Cordle, "'That's going to happen to us. It is.' Threads and the Imagination of Nuclear Disaster on 1980s Television," *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10, no.1 (2013): 71-92, doi.org/10.3366/jbctv.2013.0122.

¹⁷ *Threads*, screenplay by Barry Hines, directed by Mick Jackson (1984; UK, BBC 2) DVD 2005. First screened September 23, 1984.

The script was closely aligned to the Home Office civil defence plans devised in 1982 as reported by Sanchia Berg, "The nuclear attack on the UK that never happened," *BBC Magazine*, 30 October, 2013, accessed January 19, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29804446>. See also released records held in *The National Archives*, "Exercise Regenerate: Training for Staff Designated for Wartime Regional Government," Reference HO 338/164.

¹⁸ There are reports the film was shown in other British schools, for instance comments posted by Jevs Sandham, Damian Wrexham, Andrea (London), Darren (Peterborough), Si, Tim Thomas, Seth Blackthorn, Sarah Furniss in response to "Sheffield and South Yorkshire Culture: Threads in Pictures," *BBC Magazine*, September 24, 2014, accessed January 19, 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/southyorkshire/content/image_galleries/threads_gallery.shtml.

¹⁹ Author's note - it subsequently transpired that at least two children in the school had relatives directly involved at Greenham.

Twenty years later, in exploring the story further it became apparent to me that the legendary event was much more complex than my limited exposure at the time had led me to understand. It emerged as an intense and dramatic event that challenged much more than just the politics of nuclear weapons and war. I became aware in particular of the extent that feminism was incorporated into the debate following the adoption of a women-only policy by the protestors. This was a noticeably different history to the version recreated within the local history book and that I also recalled. Indeed it was evident (as will be discussed further in chapter 1) that historians had identified the campaign as a new development in a long history of women's political agency and peace activism.²⁰ There were also other academics that had identified the campaign as a moment when women explicitly confronted patriarchy and openly challenged the societal rules that governed their lives.²¹ This was shown to have empowered many.²² It was also claimed that this produced "radical transformations in individual women's lives."²³ However it was also evident that this perception of change had resulted in an enormous backlash against the protest.²⁴ Launched by the agents of the state and the media, and supported by a contingent of Newbury locals²⁵, this gradually became more pronounced and more hostile as the campaign progressed.²⁶ As a consequence the protest became notorious, not only as part of the debate about NATO and nuclear weapons, but also with radical, separatist and lesbian politics. This shift meant that it

²⁰ Jill Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (London: Virago, 1989).

²¹ Sasha Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham* (Oxford: Open University Press, 1995).

Alison Young, *Femininity in Dissent* (London: Routledge, 1990).

²² As declared by many of the contributors to:

Alice Cook and Gwyn Kirk, eds. *Greenham Women Everywhere: Dreams, Ideas, and Actions from the Women's Peace Movement* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, eds. *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire* (London: The Women's Press, 1984).

²³ Sasha Roseneil, "Transgressions and transformations: experience, consciousness and identity at Greenham," in *Practising Feminism: Identity, Difference, Power*, eds. Nickie Charles and Felicia Hughes-Freeland (London: Routledge, 1996), 86-108.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

Also highlighted during Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

²⁴ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

²⁵ For a contemporary account of the local Newbury backlash refer to: Caroline Blackwood, *On the Perimeter* (London: Heinemann, 1984).

²⁶ L. Broadbent, "Greenham Common: The Media's Version," *Peace News*, 21 January 1983, 12-13. Christopher Moores, "Opposition to the Greenham Women's Peace Camps in 1980s Britain: RAGE Against the 'Obscene'," *History Workshop Journal* 78, no.1 (2014): 204-227, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbt038.

increasingly became associated, by those who sought to quash it, with definitions of social deviance.²⁷

This expanded reading however posed the question why the protest did not on the whole appear to be either celebrated or remembered in quite the same context in Wales. Like the local history book that had captivated my attention, it appeared that the predominant memory of the protest was much less centred upon the feminism or the 'deviance' of the protestors. Instead the popular memory remained almost exclusively focused upon the mission of removing the nuclear weapons from the UK as an act of humanity.²⁸ Indeed when looking further at how the protest had been commemorated it was interesting to observe how involved Welsh people appeared to be. For instance under the trees in the remembrance garden, situated outside what had once been the main entrance to the military base, there are seven Welsh quarried standing stones. These have been placed in a circle around a metal sculpture of an everlasting camp fire with white quartz gravel underfoot. Looking at the donation records it is evident that six of the standing stones were paid for by Welsh contributors, men as well as women.²⁹ There is little to suggest that this was a gesture that paid homage to a feminist interpretation of the protest.³⁰ Adding to this perception was the bronze 'peace sculpture' unveiled in Cardiff City Hall in 2003, to commemorate the "contribution of women to the cause of peace in the nuclear age."³¹ This was a mother-figure from the 1980s walking barefoot and carrying a young child on her hip. In the child's outstretched hand sat the dove of peace.³² This depiction was more of a traditional image

²⁷ Tim Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 97-145.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Margaret, L. La-ware, "Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red: Feminist Rhetorical Invention and Strategies of Resistance at the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common," *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 16, no. 3 (2004) 18–41.

Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

²⁸ The Welsh reaction was not universally positive. The Assembly Member for Monmouth, and Conservative chief whip, David Davies for instance branded the women as, "a bunch of con artists, communists and drop-outs" in "Greenham women branded 'con artists,'" *BBC News*, June 5, 2000, accessed February 12, 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/778126.stm>.

²⁹ Sarah Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women v The Crown Prerogative* (Chippenham: Greenham Publications, 2005), 182.

³⁰ The memorial garden project was not supported by all women who had participated at Greenham. This in part may be explained by differences that emerged between the various camps late in the protest history, but it was conceivably also because it did seek to build bridges with the Newbury community. Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*.

³¹ Thalia Campbell Interview for *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, directed by Hamish Campbell, Undercurrents Foundation, December, 2004, VHS.

Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

³² Peace Pledge Union, "Memorials for Peace: Greenham Common Statue," accessed November 12, 2016. <http://www.ppu.org.uk/memorials/peace/aaukwide/cardiff2.html>.

of female concern for peace. A view enhanced by the accompanying plaque which included the text:

Her soul ignited goodness on our nuclear land;
The burning bush of her sacrifice and faith will never be extinguished.³³

This English translation of the Welsh text appeared to be more than a passing reference to a Christian scripture for it also appeared bound to Welsh cultural narratives of women as the moral conscience of Wales (a theme which will be returned to in chapter 5).

It was notable that where the protest was reviewed with a more political focus in Wales that it appeared to be within the context of historical Welsh dissent and radicalism.³⁴ In an S4C documentary produced in 2002 for example the campaign had been set clearly within the context of the direct action Welsh language campaigns, which in turn were closely linked to perceptions of Welsh identity (which will be covered in chapter 4). It included lengthy interviews with two women who were heavily involved in NVDA for both movements.³⁵ This alignment of politics also corresponded with the literary depiction I recalled from the reading of Meg Elis' text in the mid 1980s.

It was the recognition of this apparent disparity in the historical narratives that inspired the direction and construction of this thesis. The questions in particular were whether it was possible to distinguish a narrative, or series of narratives, that explained the Welsh commemorations of the protest? How was it that they appeared to have so little in common with the feminist interpretations identified by academics? This also posed the central questions of how historical memories become created and what happens when we pay attention to competing stories of experience? Is it possible to see the debates across time as alternative perspectives that continually vie for space? Do particular accounts only come to the fore within those environments that enable the telling, and what impact does all this have upon subsequent historical analysis of those events and our understandings of their 'meaning'?

Tackling the Greenham Collective

³³ For an image of the plaque see <http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=bffa7683-9b54-4f77-8134-09df43c501b1&gid=3>

³⁴ Avril Rolph, "Greenham and its legacy: The women's peace movement in Wales in the 1980s" in *The Idiom of Dissent: Protest and Propaganda in Wales* ed. Robin T. Chapman (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2006), 97-122.

³⁵ *Cofio'r Comin*, S4C, May 30, 2002. Broadcast again April 2013. Includes interviews with Sian Ap Gwynfor and Menir Fransis who were arrested for Welsh language and Greenham actions.

Central to this thesis is the recognition that the Greenham story is not, nor could it ever be, one single narrative. Whilst other researchers have acknowledged this, it is evident that much of the work done has largely concentrated upon examinations of the communities of women that were formed at the camps. As a result the analysis has focused upon the development of collective understandings of what the protest represented.³⁶ This project expands the scope to probe behind the creation of these grand narratives of explanation.

There is a consensus that as the protest developed, the emphasis of the debate shifted so that it became less about the specific presence of nuclear weapons, or the precise military strategy under which they were authorised. Significantly less has however been written about the passionate and persistent internal debates that often underpinned these moves.³⁷ Beyond an often cursory reference to the difficulties “often vociferously expressed” that “sometimes rocked the camp” and “created real differences,”³⁸ little attention has been paid to how the various participants determined what the collective positioning of the protest should be. Nor has there been sufficient exploration of these debates as power struggles between the women or the informal groupings they were representative of.

It is an obvious objective of any political movement to attempt to establish a unity of purpose and perspective that can be utilised to emphasise solidarity amongst the protest participants. This drives action and creates momentum for the cause as well as providing a barrier to attack from opponents. That this might ultimately lead to the formation of dominant narratives of explanation about Greenham, and the suppression of those perspectives which did not fit and could not be incorporated without appearing to compromise the integrity of the whole, is an area of research which needs more focus. The objective of this research project is therefore to pay attention to the ‘little narratives’. These are the variations to the common understandings already extensively documented about the Greenham protest. It aims to do justice to them as alternative or additional motivations for participant mobilisation by allowing them the space to be included in the wider analysis. This is even if they can be held to be in contradiction, or misaligned to, the widely accepted existing explanations.

This approach is in recognition that the commonalities expressed were often purposefully created and projected outwards by a select few participants. This produced not only a perception

³⁶ Examples would include Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

³⁷ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 273.

Zoot Sayer, “Women,” *Anti-nuclear Action: Discussion Magazine for Socialists and Feminists*, no.1 (1982): 1-4.

Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunnicliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011. Also Annie Tunnicliffe unpublished personal archive of letters submitted to CND magazine, *Sanity*, 1982-1984.

³⁸ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 172.

of power directed at opponents of the campaign, but more significantly established a clear hierarchy within the movement by determining who could legitimately speak and who could not. Women who, in becoming involved with the collation and editing of campaign newsletters, or who contributed pieces for inclusion in contemporary publications, were able to cultivate and expand the women's peace movement in line with their own interpretations of the issues.³⁹ In particular, by building on much of the feminist analysis that had come to prominence during the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), and embracing the new theoretical perspectives that followed, such as those published by Dale Spender in the early 1980s, many of the participants at Greenham had developed a critique that identified patriarchy as the fundamental problem. This in itself was not an entirely new perspective, with similar sentiments having been expressed to varying extents by women in relation to much earlier conflicts.⁴⁰ However the deconstruction of the concept of militarism to produce an explicitly feminist analysis allowed parallels to be drawn between the normalisation of weapons of mass destruction and the constructed attributes or identities promoted as 'normal' for either men or women. This became one of the central and most contested components of the Greenham protest. In this analysis women were traditionally considered passive and men assertive or more precisely, men were the designated 'protectors' of women. The dominance of this interpretation meant that alternative rationalisations for the Greenham protest were perceived as contradictory or mis-aligned. War and militarism, it was argued, could only be solved by an overthrowing of the male dominated power systems that enabled aggression and violence, often in the name of female protection, to be normalised in the first place. The problem of nuclear weapons could therefore only be solved by tackling patriarchy.

This was certainly not a position that appealed to all. Indeed there is evidence that many Greenham participants objected strongly to this evaluation, particularly those who had been determined to prevent the weapons arriving at Greenham in the early 1980s. Some of the most

³⁹ Newsletters at the camp were irregular and there was no clear editorial body. Examples of newsletters are held in the Women's Library collection housed at the London School of Economics library, <http://twl-calm.library.lse.ac.uk>.

There are accounts of disputes due to heavily edited or omitted articles. Refer to Jean Freer, "Why I burned 5,000 Greenham Newsletters," in *Raging Women: In reply to Breaching the Peace: A comment on the Women's Liberation Movement and the Common Womyn's Peace Camp at Greenham* (London: Wymn's Land Fund, 1984).

Edited accounts from various women were also published as books, for instance:

Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*.

Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*.

⁴⁰ Catherine Marshall, C.K. Ogden, Mary Sargent Florence, *Militarism versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War*, ed. Margaret Kamester, and Jo Vellacott (London: Virago, 1987).

vocal objectors included two of the original marchers, Ann Pettitt⁴¹ and Karmen Cutler⁴², who repeatedly declared the preoccupation with patriarchy, and language constructions, as an unnecessary distraction and deflection from the urgent threat of imminent nuclear war. Others who had been involved with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) for many years, such as Annie Tunnicliffe, were also dismayed because this repositioning of the debate explicitly excluded men as allies to the cause. Men who were equally passionate about the removal of nuclear weapons from military strategies were being unfairly targeted they argued, and this weakened the overall effectiveness of the campaign.⁴³

Indeed there is ample evidence to suggest that mobilisation and on-going support for the movement was neither exclusively or always predominately about feminist concern at all. For some women, maternal or humanistic concern, environmentalism, religious conscience, the pursuit of socialist ideals, and anti-colonialist politics also played a significant part in their reasoning. For these women, feminism could either be an additional motivation, an inconsequential other, or a dangerous distraction. Whilst it is the case that many of the existing analyses have alluded to alternative motivations and/or perspectives and the depth of debate that occurred amongst the women as a consequence, it is often a story told in celebration of the broad mix of women who joined together to unite in a common discourse.⁴⁴ Little has conversely been written to address what happened when the differences that emerged were irreconcilable, or even what ideas these alternative (defeated) versions embodied. Moreover, as a result there has been little consideration of whether an over-reliance upon the over-arching narratives of explanation projected by the group, may have worked to conceal critical differences in opinion or interpretation that were expressed by individuals, or how a continual re-enforcement of the collective 'we' may have been utilised by those in control of the discourse to deflect attention from any internal instability within the protest itself.

Therefore, whilst much of the existing analysis has been produced to demonstrate how Greenham can be shown to be an example of women's agency and power when acting as a united

⁴¹ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*. Also Ann Pettitt Interview for, *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, directed by Hamish Campbell, Undercurrents Foundation, 2004, DVD. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3kTXI>.

⁴² Karmen Thomas (nee Cutler) interview for *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*.

⁴³ Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunnicliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011. Also Annie Tunnicliffe unpublished personal archive of letters submitted to CND magazine, *Sanity*, 1982-1984.

A reference is made to a chain letter, signed by Annie Tunnicliffe and Ann Pettitt in 1983 that sought to change the women-only position, in Margaretta Jolly, *In Love and Struggle: Letters in Contemporary Feminism* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2008), 131.

⁴⁴ Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

The Guardian, *Lorna Richardson Interview on 'Your Greenham'*, <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

group against a common source of oppression,⁴⁵ the conceptual framework of this thesis also recognises that the individual participants who took part in the Greenham protest were significantly more complex than the continual reference back to the 'collective' metanarratives alone would allow for.⁴⁶

A central aim of this investigation is therefore to investigate the extent that the shift of narrative to an overtly and dominant feminist ideology began a process of closing down the discourse so that dissenting voices from within became harder to hear. The success of this, it will be argued, not only ensured a coherent purposeful campaign could emerge at the time, but that the notion of a unified movement perpetuated thereafter. It is a thesis that therefore considers the implications of the marginalisation of particular people and ideas within the analysis of political movements. By overtly interrogating the generality of the gender constructed experience that an over concentration upon the protest as a feminist struggle has enabled, by seeking out the interpretations that differ from the generalised view, or put another way, by searching out the competing truth claims that continually threaten to pervade the stories told about the protest,⁴⁷ it challenges the notion that there can be an uncritical acceptance of the assertion that Greenham embodied the creation of an alternative utopian 'society' of women.

This is not to suggest, however, that it is a study focused only upon finding extreme moments of conflict within the protest movement. For whilst there are undeniable tensions, the project's scope also allows for a more subtle exploration of difference by looking at how individuals coped with these pressures to secure more positive outcomes. It is for instance entirely possible, as will be shown in throughout the thesis, to find mobilisation reasons that do not conform to the overarching interpretation of feminist activism, but which were nevertheless still able to operate within or alongside the dominant identity definitions that involvement with the protest was presumed to represent. The identification with feminist perspective did not inevitably preclude anyone from also being a Christian or a socialist for example, and it was arguably possible for women to occupy multiple 'positions', 'identities' or 'selves' simultaneously. Likewise, it was equally feasible to only ever identify with one of those identities in relation to the protest, or even

⁴⁵ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*.

⁴⁶ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ Paul Rabinow, ed. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984. Vol.1.* (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no.1 (1980): 5-27, doi.org/10.1086/448086.

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, eds. *The Myths We Live By*. (London: Routledge, 1990).

Beverly Southgate, *History meets Fiction*. (Harlow: Longman, 2009).

to explicitly shift between them at various times, whilst still getting involved with the action at Greenham. The analysis consequently includes an acceptance of the multiplicity of human beings, and the apparent irreconcilable contradictions they often embody as they shift and modify the various constructed identities that they inhabit dependent upon the circumstance, or their perceptions, at any given time.⁴⁸ It is consequently an attempt to follow in the footsteps of other scholars who have been concerned with recognising the discursive constitution of women's experience, whilst also enabling a re-appraisal of the 'we' of Greenham.⁴⁹

This focus is not to imply that the perspectives represented in any other body of work are in any way invalid or illegitimate explanations or understandings of the protest, indeed it is evident that much of the collective 'we' was indeed representative of the protest for many of the women involved.⁵⁰ It would be ill-logical and disingenuous to suggest otherwise. Instead it illustrates that other possibilities are available that disrupt or dispute the dominant versions, so that the wider scope of the protest can be revealed. As Joan Scott, (a key theoretical influence as will be shown later) has argued, it is about making "visible the assignment of subject-positions"⁵¹ and broadening the overall understanding of historical events. It is thus a de-simplification that allows women's activism to be viewed in all its multiplicity and difficulty.

Regional politics at Greenham

Geographically women came to Greenham from all over the world, and after their participation in the protest they dispersed back into the world, either back to where they had come from or to new places. Therefore it became an early premise of this research that there is no real reason why the focus should always be upon the site of the protest itself, or that we only consider what participants did or said within that one particular contextual environment. This is

⁴⁸ Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*.

⁴⁹ Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Women* (London: Virago, 1986).

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

Elspeth Probyn, *Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1993).

J. Stacey, "Feminist Theory: Capital F and Capital T" in *Introducing Women's Studies* eds. Victoria Robinson and Diane Richardson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 54-76.

Liz Stanley, *The Auto-Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto-Biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*.

David Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*.

Junor, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

⁵¹ Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no.4, (1991): 773-797, doi.org/10.1086/448612.

particularly so if we are interested in exploring individual stories in comparison with the grand narratives of explanation already well documented. This means the centre of the study can legitimately move away from the site of the protest itself, which in turn opens up the scope and scale of investigation, by geographically distancing the historical exploration so that the effect of alternative 'outside' discourses can be included in the analysis.

Whilst the adoption of such an approach to Greenham has the potential to allow for a global interrogation it would not only become too vast and unmanageable, but it would likely miss some of the intricacies of the discursive influences on the protest narratives. There were many geographical areas in which support for the Greenham protest was strong. In London for instance there were several support groups,⁵² and a number of women from Denmark also travelled to the UK to take part. This thesis, however, will focus upon Wales as a case study. This is because, not only did the participants in Wales kick start the campaign by way of the opening march, and by forming the initial camp in an act of stark defiance, but they and many others from the region continued to become involved as the protest took hold.

There are for instance an abundance of references suggesting that women from Wales were conspicuous by their level of engagement with many subsequent displays of rebellious dissent at Greenham. Indeed some texts and personal testimonies have suggested that the particularly militant actions at Greenham were inspired, encouraged or instigated by 'the Welsh women,'⁵³ as was their involvement with one of the most prominent legal challenges against the weapons before their arrival in the winter of 1983.⁵⁴ There are also indications that one of the camps on the east perimeter of the base, known as Orange Gate, was predominately occupied by a group of women from Wales. Though it is unclear for how long this was the case, this location did become a recognised destination point for those visiting the camps from Wales.⁵⁵ In an analysis of Greenham songs, it has also been observed that there is at least one reference to Welsh

⁵² The Kings Cross Women's Centre; Greenham Office; The London Women's Peace Support Network and the Danish Peace Academy are all examples.

⁵³ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 62.

Also referenced in the Rebecca Johnson interview recorded for the "Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project," conducted by the University of Sussex, 2010-2013. Held by the British Library Sound Collection.

⁵⁴ The 'Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles v. President Reagan' was filed in the New York Federal Court November, 9 1983. Six of the women were from Wales.

⁵⁵ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 145.

Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September 12, 2015.

Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

Elaine Titcombe, *Sian Ap Gwynfor Interview*, June 28, 2015.

There is also a photograph of five Welsh women at that gate in 1983, accessed 2016, <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-some-of-the-welsh-protesters-at-orange-gate-greenham-common-pictured-20206220.html>.

women.⁵⁶ Furthermore, one major academic study of the protest completed in 1995, also acknowledged the involvement of a significant cohort of women who had been living in Wales amongst the contributing participants surveyed. Whilst this particular study did recognise that there was a strong link between Greenham and Wales, it was however explained as an inconsequential accident of sampling methodology.⁵⁷ Whilst this is not entirely inconceivable, it is nevertheless interesting that there was such an identifiable connection and it is contended in this thesis that this swift dismissal overlooked some important narratives of explanation within the protest.

It will be contended that the geographically produced politics of Wales impacted directly upon the direction of the protest at key points of the campaign, and that some underlying sentiments and tactics also transferred directly into the Greenham movement. As referred to earlier there were for instance Welsh language campaigns, which made considerable use of direct action in order to challenge the underlying notions of British imperialism and Anglo-centric dominance. This recognition draws upon an albeit unexplored point acknowledged by James Hinton, that nuclear weapons were a means of exerting dominance and control over other nations.⁵⁸ This was relevant for many people living in regions such as Wales where they could conceivably have viewed this as a reminder of their own oppression, to their dominant neighbour, England.

In this context it is interesting that the axiom “Yr Ymgyrch yn Parhau!” the Welsh translation of “The Struggle Continues!” formed part of a banner pinned to the fence at Greenham.⁵⁹ Written in Welsh, and displayed in an English environment, it pointed directly to the debate about autonomy that persisted in Wales in the wake of the devolution referenda held in Scotland and Wales in 1979. For, whilst nationalist demands appeared largely defeated, particularly in Wales where devolution had been resoundingly rejected, an undercurrent of discontent persisted particularly with regard to the perception that Welsh ‘culture’ was in danger of eradication, and

⁵⁶ Anna Feigenbaum, “Tactics and Technology: Cultural Resistance at the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp,” PhD Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 2008), 238.

⁵⁷ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 179.

⁵⁸ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace politics in 20th Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), p.ix.

⁵⁹ Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*, Chapter 6. Title is “1989: Yr Ymgyrch yn Parhau!” in memory of Helen Thomas, from Newcastle Emlyn. She had been living at Yellow Gate when she was killed in a road traffic accident. She was an impassioned Welsh speaker and campaigner, and had translated a Greenham publicity pamphlet into Welsh. She also inspired many of those at Yellow Gate, such as Mary Millington, Jean Hutchinson and Sarah Hipperson to investigate Welsh nationalist politics. This was confirmed in unrecorded conversations for this project at a memorial service at Greenham in 2010. It is likely that a banner was also created either by Helen or in her memory. A photograph is printed in Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent women*, 176.

central to this was the perceived threat to the Welsh language.⁶⁰ Consequently, the use of the Welsh language at the Greenham protest invites a consideration linking Welsh nationalist concerns with anti-nuclear politics. As a result therefore the questions posed in this thesis explore whether the support for the presence of nuclear weapons by the British Government was interpreted by some as the continuation of a British role, or identity, with its roots firmly embedded into ideas of Empire? Could support for the Greenham cause therefore demonstrate an objection to the notion of power that the weapons explicitly embodied as they were used to exert the dominance of particular Nations over others?⁶¹ Consequently is it possible to see the ongoing political struggle for power with England, in conjunction with a continuously developing debate around Welsh national identity, as a discourse that enabled an alignment of purpose with the Greenham campaign, and did this in turn help to create an alternative popular memory of the campaign in Wales?

In addition to an exploration of Welsh identity politics the analysis also acknowledges that there was a significant period of anti-nuclear dumping activism in many areas of Wales immediately prior to the NATO double-track decision in 1979. It therefore considers how this activity was important, and explores the newly emergent ideas about environmentalism and human responsibility for the earth which were an integral part of these campaigns in Wales. This is in order to evaluate how these contributed to the formation of nuclear aware groups and networks in the region, creating an important foundation from which the Greenham protest could emerge. In a similar way the analysis looks at how other anti-nuclear related activities in Wales that occurred concurrently with the Greenham protest, may have enabled the development of methods and approaches in protest action which influenced the direction of Greenham actions.

This study therefore enables a consideration of the important and hitherto under-recognised contribution of women from Wales to the protest and the wider connections and cross-transference of ideas from Welsh nationalism and Welsh environmental politics into the anti-nuclear campaigns of the era.

Another important consideration, throughout this analysis, is consequently the role that cultural memory played⁶² and in particular the popularised notion of a Welsh historical tradition of resistance. For some this dated back to the creation of non-conformity, whilst to others it was of major significance during the establishment of the Labour movement in Wales, but there were also numerous examples of direct militancy which have persisted in the popular memory, such as

⁶⁰ Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*.

This is also an over-arching theme to the essays contained in: Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*.

⁶¹ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions*, p.ix.

⁶² Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction," *Signs* 28, no.1, Gender and Cultural Memory Special Issue, (2002): 1-19, doi.org/10.1086/340890.

the Newport Chartist rising (1839); the Rebecca Riots (1839-43); the razing of the Carmarthen workhouse (1843); and in the early twentieth century the hunger marchers (1936). These were all historical events passed through the generations in folk stories and via schools, chapels and trade unions. The thesis therefore considers if this historical memory of radicalism enabled an atmosphere of support on a localised level in many parts of Wales to develop, and could this explain the often sympathetic response of Welsh communities to the exploits of the Greenham women that seemed so out of step with that reported by the London based media outlets?⁶³ There is consequently some attention paid to how the regional press reported the Greenham campaign.

Another distinct theme to emerge from the texts of Greenham that can be closely linked with Welsh identity is that of religious objection to militarism and war. Whilst this motivation for action against nuclear weapons cannot be claimed exclusively by Welsh participants, many communities in Wales were intensely traditional. Many of the ideas around a distinct Welsh culture revolved around ideals of Christianity, particularly those preached within non-conformist chapels. Often deeply embedded in these teachings were the concepts of 'responsibility' and 'bearing witness', as well as a profound belief that war was counter to the gospel. Whilst religious motivation has been acknowledged by other researchers as an important aspect of historical peace protest, and in particular absolute pacifist objections to militarism, it has often been observed as a traditionally conservative viewpoint.⁶⁴ This predominantly hinged upon a conceptualisation of women within traditional female nurturing roles, with an emphasis on women as the moral guardians of society.⁶⁵ Possibly as a result of this and the explicitly feminist articulations of the protest, the existing Greenham analysis has tended to focus upon a wider understanding of spirituality rather than the traditional forms of religious motivation.⁶⁶ As a result the research considered if much of the support that came from Wales could have become hidden. Was it possible to determine if religion, and in particular if Christianity, played a part at Greenham and was this of particular significance for those who came from Wales?

Recognition of fluidity and transience

In addition to addressing specific themes and questions the regional analysis undertaken in this study also allows for a consideration of the fluidity of the campaign, for, whilst the actions

⁶³ For a discussion of the London based media refer to Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

⁶⁴ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions*.

⁶⁵ Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.
Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

⁶⁶ Christina Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change at Greenham Common Peace Camp," *Journal for Faith, Spirituality and Social Change* 1, no.1 (2010):50-67, doi.org/10.1177/0966735009348668.

generally took place at the military base, the participants were often significantly more transient in their association with the site. Only a small number of women ever really lived permanently at the camps and an even smaller number were resident for a significant period of time.⁶⁷ Many women had other commitments, such as dependants or work and consequently the protest could not always be their primary concern. Indeed, it is contended in this thesis that an emphasis upon the activity at the camps inevitably favours the politics of the women who were present for more time, and whilst this is perhaps justifiable particularly if looking to determine the long-term effect of participation upon individuals, it does not necessarily enable a contemplation of the wider politics involved in mobilisation or support. It instead risks the production of an unbalanced view where ideas that may have driven more transient supporters to participate are easily concealed or lost, and similarly their impact upon the direction of the overall campaign may be missed. By enabling women to appear in their alternative, but often concurrent contexts away from the encampments, some space for the effect of the continuous moving in and out of participants at Greenham is therefore allowed into the analysis. This approach also allows them the space to be involved simultaneously in other campaigns, perhaps nearer to their home communities, and explores the implications of such a cross-over including the transference of narratives to other movements, and vice versa as outlined earlier.

This is a departure from the existing literature, which has understandably placed a disproportionate concentration on the actions of participants whilst at the camps. In such reviews it is clear that there is a tendency to categorise women according to how long they stayed at the camps, thereby disproportionately enabling those who stayed longer to exert a larger influence over the resultant explanation of the protest.⁶⁸ This correlation between length of engagement and intensity of commitment however serves only to enhance the notion that Greenham can be understood as one continuous movement that women ‘joined’, a pre-existing narrative that they aligned themselves to, rather than something much more random that evolved and moved in

⁶⁷ Whilst some participants did live at the camps for a considerable period of time the majority either returned home for periods, whilst others moved elsewhere to form other protest camps. One example of this movement is discussed by Juley Howard, *My Greenham Common*, <http://www.mygreenhamcommon.co.uk/November-1984---August-1985.php>.

The few who were present at Greenham for a number of years can often be traced through the texts published during the protest. See:

Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*.

Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*.

Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*.

Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.

⁶⁸ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*.

La-ware, “Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red.”

accordance with the particular mix of individuals present at any given point irrespective of the actual length of their commitment to the protest.

Allowing women to encompass contradictions, to occupy multiple identities simultaneously, and not be singularly defined by the points where they aligned with the constructed concept of the Greenham woman, is therefore a central strategy for this project. It is an approach that recognises and attempts to incorporate the participants in all of their humanity and complexity as individuals into the history of the protest. It explores how they, as subjects with agency, enabled a vast web of narratives to emerge and converge into a mass protest against nuclear weapons.

Rather than being something ‘apart’ therefore, participants are recognised as being always more integrated into the ‘outside’ world, than has hitherto been allowed by the narrower feminist analyses where only their participation at Greenham (or closely linked feminist inspired campaigns) are readily acknowledged. In this study participants are permitted to exist beyond Greenham, not just before or after, but simultaneously. This enables a tracking of the ideas themselves to other contexts in order to see how they developed, what connotations they carried and how they were enabled or disabled at Greenham. Utilising this strategy means, as Joan Scott has argued, taking “all categories of analysis as contextual, contested and contingent.”⁶⁹ This allows the common assertion, that the Greenham campaign was an unprecedented radical and innovative feminist episode, to be more thoroughly tested so we can better understand what that meant.

Theoretical Positioning

Perhaps the most significant text underpinning the direction taken in this thesis is Jo Freeman’s seminal 1970 essay, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness.”⁷⁰ A highly critical appraisal of the non-hierarchical groupings, organisations or collectives that followed on from the consciousness-raising stage of the (American) second wave feminist movement, it is an article that prompts important questions regarding the study of any group claiming to eschew hierarchy and leadership. The protest at Greenham, from its very first conceptions, was a movement that adopted a distributed leadership approach. This meant that there were no leaders and no spokespersons who could legitimately direct or speak on behalf of the whole group. Instead direction was said to be formulated through discussion followed by ‘equitable’ decision-making.

⁶⁹ Scott, “The Evidence of Experience.”

⁷⁰ Jo Freeman, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness,” *Women's Studies Quarterly* 41, nos.3-4 (2013): 231-246. [Reprint]. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23611519>. First written up from a conference paper in 1970. The first official publication of the article was in, *The Second Wave: A Magazine of the New Feminism* 2, no.1 (1972).

Initially at Greenham this was more accidental than contrived, a product of the formation of an informal and small protest group of concerned individuals with limited prior exposure in the organisation of direct action activism⁷¹, but as time progressed it became more of a definitive attribute and proclamations abounded that the protest was a fully functioning example of feminist structurelessness.⁷²

Originally formed in reaction to “over-structured society ... and the inevitable control this gave others..., and the continual elitism of the Left”⁷³, Freeman argued, more than a decade before Greenham, that this idea of structurelessness had “become an intrinsic and unquestioned part of the women’s liberation ideology.”⁷⁴ She challenged this form of group organisation pronouncing it an ineffective ambition of activists. This was because she contended that there can be no such thing as a ‘structureless’ group wherever human beings interact and relate to each other. There were instead only groups that had ‘decided’ not to be formally structured.⁷⁵ It was particularly problematic to aspire towards such an unattainable goal within large scale revolutionary groups. This was because the required high level of communication between participants to enable consensus-making would be impossible to achieve or maintain.⁷⁶ Most importantly, “a blind belief that no other means could possibly be anything but oppressive”⁷⁷ had “become a way of masking power.”⁷⁸ This, meant that it was a methodology, “most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not).”⁷⁹ Therefore:

...to strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an “objective” news story, “value-free” social science, or a “free” economy. A “laissez-faire” group is about as realistic as a “laissez faire” society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others.⁸⁰

Rejecting the whole notion of the possibility of structurelessness, the most common characteristic of unstructured activism (where no attempt had been made to define the operators of power) was the inadvertent development of elites, usually emerging as close friendship groups formed. The controlling elite was therefore “a small group of people who have power over a larger group of which they are part, usually without direct responsibility to that larger group, and

⁷¹ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*.

⁷² Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*.

⁷³ Freeman, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness,” 231.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 232.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 232-3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 239-240.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 240.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 232.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 232.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 232.

often without their knowledge or consent.”⁸¹ Furthermore, it was inevitable that as the power of the controlling elite became established that they would begin to make all the critical decisions.⁸² This was because they alone were aware of the “rules of how decisions are made”⁸³, whereas others on the ‘outside’ and who were “not chosen for initiation”⁸⁴ would always be left without the knowledge and thus the power to effect any true influence. These ‘outs’ may raise objections, but as “their approval was not necessary for making a decision” they could be ignored without significant consequence for the controlling elite.⁸⁵ This is because in order to participate fully the “rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone” and the “structure must be explicit, not implicit.”⁸⁶ Everyone, Freeman argued, must have access to the language of power.

Failure to acknowledge this need for a “common language” in large groups of diverse individuals, and to address the issue of access to power, would mean that participants would “continually misunderstand each other.”⁸⁷ This would lead to those involved agonising over inevitable and bewildering conflicts. Disputes that essentially disarmed the cause they were fighting for and which therefore undermined the overall effectiveness of the group to accomplish their wider aims. This propensity to create elites in unstructured groups also led to splintering, or a take-over by “political comrades” as other informal groups joined in and begin to establish their own implicit structures of control, resulting in power struggles between the old and new informal elites within the movement.⁸⁸ This was because debates cannot be openly acknowledged because, aside from there being no mechanism to raise objection, to voice differences of opinion ironically involves the exposure of the group as a whole to accusations of elitism.

Freeman also pointed out that the dedication to maintaining the ideal of the structurelessness risked the creation of ‘the star system’.⁸⁹ This she defined as situations where individuals who catch the public eye are thrust into the position of ‘spokesperson’ by external operators (such as the media). But, as this happens without the consent of the whole group, because it is against the fundamental basis of the movement, it results in resentment. This:

...leaves people with no place to go, and the lack of structure leaves them with no way of getting there. The women in the movement either turn in on themselves and their sisters or

⁸¹ Ibid. 233.

⁸² Ibid. 233.

⁸³ Ibid. 232.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 232-3.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 235.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 233.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 239.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 242.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 237-239.

seek other alternatives of action... Some women just “do their own thing.”...Other women drift out of the movement entirely.⁹⁰

The analysis of the Greenham protest in this thesis utilises Freeman’s ideas in order to try to tease out a better understanding of the dynamics involved in the groups involved. In particular it considers whether it is useful to view Greenham through the context of her central conclusion that:

Unstructuredness ... has its limits; it is politically inefficacious, exclusive, and discriminatory against those women who are not or cannot be tied into the friendship networks. Those who do not fit into what already exists ... will inevitably be discouraged from trying to participate. Those who do fit in will develop vested interests in maintaining things as they are.⁹¹

The purpose of this, much like Freeman’s original analysis of WLM, is to contribute to a wider debate about how radical and revolutionary movements have dealt with the issue of democratic representation. Indeed it is worth noting that Freeman’s analysis has troubled and agitated anarchists from publication right up to the present day.⁹² It is also an approach that follows in the footsteps of others who have considered the operation of power within the politics of the Left. Hilary Wainwright asserted in 2006, with reference to Freeman that, “we need always to be aware of the tyranny of structurelessness” which “in reality...too often disguised an informal, unacknowledged and unaccountable leadership that was all the more pernicious because its very existence was denied.”⁹³

In addition to the array of questions arising from Freeman’s article regarding the operation of power within the Greenham protest, the thesis also points to the work of other historians for theoretical perspective. In particular it has long been discussed how the events and ideas that we study are only available for analysis through the statements and descriptions given about them, either through the texts produced by participants at the time of the events, or in subsequent recollections or accounts. Whilst details can be corroborated between the various accounts to build, and verify, an outline of what likely happened, when, how, and involving whom, the ‘meaning’ attributed to those events is often substantially more complicated to decipher. This is

⁹⁰ Ibid. 241.

⁹¹ Ibid. 243.

⁹² Cathy Levine, “The Tyranny of Tyranny,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 1970.

Jason McQuinn, “A Review of ‘The Tyranny of Structurelessness’: An organisationalist repudiation of anarchism,” *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, 2009.

Reference to the programme of the *Bristol Anarchist Book Fair* held in September 2017, 4. Accessed February 2018.

<http://www.bristolanarchistbookfair.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Bookfair-programme.pdf>.

⁹³ Hilary Wainwright, “Imagine there’s no leaders. It’s easy if you try...,” *Red Pepper*, October 1, 2006, accessed November 6, 2017, <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/Imagine-there-s-no-leaders-It-s/>.

particularly the case when there is conflict, or when a certain political perspective is an integral part of the understandings being formulated and articulated. This is because ‘meaning’ can never be an objective fact, but is instead a subjective reasoning which is used to explain the events or the ideas described. Meaning is therefore the narratives constructed by human beings to clarify and justify their actions or to explain events. This is not to suggest, as some might argue, that these accounts are consequently the equivalent of fiction, mere tales, and that history writing is therefore an impossible task where fact and fiction have become inter-changeable⁹⁴, but rather, that they are the subjective rationalisations of how people witnessed or interpreted proceedings. They are unavoidably shaped by value judgments and are therefore underpinned by some form of knowledge that has been gained through other experiences. As Joan Scott has argued, experience is “at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted.”⁹⁵ This is because human beings do not come to events in a vacuum, as apolitical individuals, and neither do they recount their relationship to those occurrences somewhere on the ‘outside’ of their contemporary surroundings. All experience is consequently shaped by reference to other pre-existing interpretations. As a result the descriptions given for historical episodes will also be heavily loaded with conceptions about what those events mean. Moreover these might also shift over time. This will either be in the context of what came before or what happened after and will also depend largely upon the point in time when the actual telling occurs. They are therefore an opportunity to see how “people established, interpreted, and acted on their place in society” and “the patterns and relationships that constitute understanding or a ‘cultural system’” at a particular point in time.⁹⁶

The enquiry therefore begins from the premise, formulated by Carolyn Steedman, that the “personal interpretations of past time – [are] the stories that people tell themselves in order to explain how they got to the place they currently inhabit”⁹⁷ and it consequently explores the “social specificity of our understanding of those stories.”⁹⁸ It examines the politics of the construction of experience and rejects what Joan Scott refers to as the “fixity and transcendence of anything that appears to operate as a foundation.”⁹⁹ As such it is an exploration of the battle to control the discourses of Greenham over time, and an attempt to “understand the operations of

⁹⁴ White, Hayden, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no.1 (1980), 5-27.

⁹⁵ Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 797.

⁹⁶ Joan W. Scott, “On Language, Gender and Working-Class History,” *ILWCH*, 31 (1987), 6.

⁹⁷ Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, 6.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 5.

⁹⁹ Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 796.

the complex and changing discursive processes¹⁰⁰ involved. Searching out the junctures created as conflicting analyses of the underlying issues were encountered, it presents the campaign less as a movement of the 'united', and forces a more open consideration of the limitations of presenting history from the perspective of a single, unitary 'collective'. In effect it means not assuming that the adoption of a feminist identity was "inevitable or determined, not something that was always there simply waiting to be expressed, not something that will always exist in the form it was given in a particular political movement."¹⁰¹

This thesis is therefore an explicit attempt to utilise postmodern ideas to scrutinise the assertions of feminist purpose at Greenham, to challenge this as a received or universal 'truth' about the action, and to examine the process by which it became established and maintained as the central position. Placing narrative construction¹⁰² explicitly at the heart of the analysis in this way, this thesis is therefore an exploration that seeks to reveal the complex and diverse nature of the campaign in the wider historical context. It does this by demonstrating how participants developed their conceptualisations of their experience by absorbing, rejecting or modifying particular language constructions, in order to put it to action through the creation of Greenham discourses of understanding which they in turn endorsed or rejected.¹⁰³ Each new version revealed is therefore part of a continuous and on-going shifting of subjective creations or realities.¹⁰⁴ Subjectivities that also move as the metanarratives of explanation alter in relation to other narratives in the current time.¹⁰⁵ This is one possibility for why people do appear to change their position, revise their memories and re-appraise their participation as time passes.

This thesis is an examination of how the history of the event has been constructed by those involved in the action. In taking this approach the study can also point to what Hilda Kean has referred to as "the public history" of events, or "the ways in which [they have] been popularly seen and represented and how such histories were constructed and developed," particularly by those with an interest in how it would subsequently be read. This illustrates how the reliance upon participant led accounts articulating a dominant perspective, or upon the sources collected and preserved by those most concerned with ensuring a particular version of history is maintained can create a popular memory of the campaign; that whilst not untrue it can never be taken as entirely representative either. These are effectively the foundational concepts of the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 796.

¹⁰² Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*.

Liotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

¹⁰³ E. Benveniste, "Subjectivity in language," in *Identity: A reader*, eds. P. Du Gay, J. Evans, and P. Redman, (London: SAGE, 2000).

¹⁰⁴ B. Jerome, "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991), 1-21.

¹⁰⁵ As demonstrated by Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*.

protest, the dominant narratives of explanation, which whilst intact or unchallenged will always reproduce a particular knowledge, so as to enable “different generations [to] create histories of feminism for their own times”¹⁰⁶, but the depth of complexity that is involved in the creation of such a coherent and consistent perspective will persistently remain hidden, reducing our overall historical understanding of the processes involved the creation of change.

Furthermore by considering how Greenham has been remembered and/or subsequently constructed/ re-constructed over time, and in recognising that these narratives often have as much relevance to the present as they do to the past, the purpose of this study is also to bring into view the breadth of debate, and sometimes intense disagreement involved as the women became “engag[ed] in the daily practice of maintaining ... cohesion”¹⁰⁷, and to demonstrate how that discursive clash, or collision of different ideas, continued to play out in the years after the campaign ended, albeit often in the background. Illustrating how the struggle to be heard, to win over - as the title of this thesis suggests - is always on-going. Though the context may change the underlying political debates often persist, and as a consequence they too can move through time, erupting to the surface again as situations present. This is because, as Carolyn Steedman has argued, history writing, “is a distinct cognitive process precisely because it is constructed around the understanding that things are not over, that the story isn’t finished: that there is no end.”¹⁰⁸ It is therefore as much about the accounts that do not fit and the versions that, “cannot be absorbed into the central one”¹⁰⁹ as it is about those that do.

Questioning the received knowledge of the campaign is therefore not about revealing ‘truth’, rather it is about always asking ‘what truth’ we are telling. It is about analysing the politics involved in the production of that knowledge, and how therefore people have constructed their conceptions of the ‘experience’ expressed in their accounts of the protest. Indeed, it has been indicated that memory itself is unstable and may become tangled (possibly unconsciously) with other versions or information later acquired by the participant. In utilising accounts often centred around the recollection of experience this study therefore also enables a “history of the imaginary”¹¹⁰, whereby the boundary between ‘imaginary’ and ‘real’ is largely considered irrelevant because it is how the human beings involved have interpreted the events and their meaning that actually matter. Historians have suggested for instance that participants may create

¹⁰⁶ Hilda Kean, “Public History and Popular Memory: Issues in the Commemoration of the British Militant Suffrage Campaign,” *Women's History Review* 14, nos.3-4 (2005): 1-24. doi:10.1080/09612020500200440.

¹⁰⁷ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Luisa Passerini, “Mythbiography in oral history,” in *The Myths we Live By*, 52.

versions based on what they wish to have descended from, thereby influencing the subsequent historical narrative.¹¹¹ Many Greenham participants for instance identified their actions with those of the suffragettes or with earlier peace protagonists, the imagined historical 'sisters' spurring them on and subsequently justifying why they had to do what they did.¹¹² Though there are distinct differences, not least in the fact that historical narratives have the capacity to be true¹¹³ and are therefore constrained by a form of truth-valuation in a way that fictional texts are obviously not, the incorporation of a fictional element to an account does not invalidate the experience because it is still a part of the production of knowledge about an event.

Although there are only a few fictional texts relating to Greenham these have also been included within the analysis where appropriate. This is justified because for fiction to work it must be sufficiently based in a perceived reality to be convincing, or as Kuisma Korhonen has argued, "there is no fiction that cannot be interpreted as an allegory of this world"¹¹⁴, it is the freedom permitted in fictional texts that enables an exploration of the 'possible' in a way that can be useful. It is in this broader "network of possibility" that a deeper understanding of historical events can potentially be achieved.¹¹⁵ By considering how fictional narratives interact with the production of non-fictional historical stories of events and vice-versa, historians may discover alternative avenues of exploration. Historical fiction has therefore been incorporated into the analysis of Greenham in order to try to open the way to deeper understandings of how people at particular points in time actively created and challenged discourses and made choices as they sought to shift the balance of power. It can consequently help to demonstrate in a dramatic way

¹¹¹ Dee Birkett, and Julie Wheelwright, "How Could She?" Unpalatable Facts and Feminist's Heroines," *Gender and History* 2, no.1 (1990): 49-57.

¹¹² Thalia Campbell Imperial War Museum interview 1992.

Lesley McIntyre interview for 'Your Greenham', <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>;

For an account of how the women utilised the suffragette sister refer to: Elaine Titcombe, "Women Activists: Rewriting Greenham's History," *Women's History Review* 22, no.2 (2013) 310-329.

There were also clear attempts to publish histories of peace women by those sympathetic to the Greenham cause, for example:

Jill Liddington, "The Women's Peace Crusade: The History of a Forgotten Campaign," in *Over our dead bodies: Women against the Bomb*, ed. Dorothy. Thompson, (London: Virago, 1983), 180-198.

This was in the tradition of the WLM which promoted research into women's history – see Anna Davin, "Women in History," in *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-72*, ed. Michelene Wandor (London: Stage 1, 1972).

In addition texts from prior generations of peace women were republished with direct reference made to the contemporary peace movement in the preface, for instance:

Catherine Marshall, C.K. Ogden, Mary Sargent Florence, *Militarism versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War*, ed. Margaret Kamester, and Jo Vellacott (London: Virago, 1987).

¹¹³ C.B. McCullagh, "The Truth of Historical Narratives," *History and Theory* 26 (1987): 30-46.

¹¹⁴ Kuisma Korhonen, ed. *Tropes for the Past: Hayden White and the History/Literature Debate*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 17.

¹¹⁵ Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 12.

the tensions suppressed by the production of the meta-narratives of 'factual' explanation. Put simply, fiction enables a less restricted form of comment and allows the exploration of what could have been / could still be, thereby helping to reveal both the dominant and silent narratives at work.

Sources and Methodology

The analysis began with a review of the existing literature and the various available primary resources. The initial stages of the research process therefore involved a comprehensive analysis of the materials produced by the participants during the campaign and now held in archives in various locations in Wales and in London.

In particular research was conducted at the British Library, the Women's Library, the Feminist Library, and within the various locations of the Women's Archive of Wales. Containing newsletters, magazines, newspaper clippings, personal and chain letters, cards, postcards, badges, banners, song-sheets, photographs, and objects such as mugs and pieces of the fence these archives provided a rich source of information which conveys a sense of what was important for the women who compiled them. Much of the archive material was collated by participants, (followed by the standard acquisition process carried out by archivists), which does raise the inevitable questions regarding what material has been chosen for preservation and what has been removed. A problem that cannot either be easily or satisfactorily resolved but which must at least be acknowledged as a factor that also plays significantly to 'power' and to the precise 'internal' group involved in the collation.

There are few formal documents in the archives, and these are largely limited to court documents, the external transactions with the authorities. Due to the way the camps operated, using non-hierarchical distributed leadership methodology, there are no membership lists or meeting minutes to consult which means that there is no clear way to determine how decisions were reached or by whom. There are also no formal records of how disputes and disagreements were tackled, or the results of any actions taken by any of the women to address problems. However there are less formal documents, such as the camp newsletters that do provide some evidence of the issues that did arise and how they were discussed at the time. In particular, it is evident that as the document dates progress through the 1980s into the 1990s, the tone and content is more serious, and the exhilaration of action is largely replaced with a sense of duty and the theme of taking of personal responsibility. There is an impression that numbers dramatically depleted, as did funds after the mid 1980s, and that tensions began to significantly rise between

the women. There is also an indication of how relations with external support groups became increasingly fraught as time passed.¹¹⁶

In Wales the archives are held by the Women's Archive of Wales at various locations.¹¹⁷ The submissions to this largely took place before the camps completely closed, but there were some personal papers collected during public roadshows.¹¹⁸ A large part of the Greenham collections cover the original march and the setting up of the first camp, however there is also a significant contribution from the Abergavenny Women's Peace group which was very active both at Greenham and locally. It is not clear however if this group was unusual by the level of activity they engaged in or if it was simply preserved more efficiently by those involved as they accumulated newspaper cuttings and kept copies of the documents they produced.

In addition to the archive material there is also an abundance of personal testimony published as autobiographical and biographical compilations covering the period whilst the protest was in progress,¹¹⁹ as well as more reflective accounts published in the years following the camp closure.¹²⁰ Within the written texts, particularly those published during the early active years of the protest, descriptions abound of the almost farcical situation comedies between the women and the authorities as they refused to comply with the 'rules', as well as accounts of the misery of evictions, and the imprisonment of impassioned participants. There is a strong sense of the excitement, urgency and purpose of the early years, but also an overwhelming number of voices. This not only conveys the depth and breadth of engagement by women but also indicates the chaotic and disordered nature of the protest. There is a clear purpose to these works as they urge their intended readers, their female contemporaries, to join with them, but nevertheless it is still possible to see some women contributors displaying a consciousness that what they were doing by writing was constructing a historical moment for women, and that it should consequently be

¹¹⁶ The 1987 Yellow and Blue Gate split is dramatically laid out in the newsletters. Other personal conflicts have also been written into the documents, with significant emotion. The role of the Wages for Housework, and the Kings Cross and Camden support groups is also included. Copies are held by the Women's Library Archive housed at LSE.

¹¹⁷ The Women's Archive of Wales Greenham material is mainly held at the South Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff, but there are some parts held by the Abergavenny Museum and in the Record Office in Swansea.

¹¹⁸ The roadshows were part of a wider project launched in January 2008, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which enabled members of the public to make their stories part of history by preserving original material recording women's lives in Wales. The Women's Archive of Wales website, accessed February 06, 2018, <https://www.womensarchivewales.org/en/history>.

¹¹⁹ Blackwood, *On the Perimeter*.

Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*.

Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*.

¹²⁰ Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*. Published in 2005.

Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*. Published in 2006.

framed in a particular way. Whilst it is possible to pick out some key women from their words, tone and prevalence in these texts, most of the contributors are completely untraceable. Participants are generally referred to by their first name only. There is therefore a strong sense of anonymity, at least from those on the 'outside' of the campaign.

In subsequent texts, published from the late 1980s and after the end of the protest end there is frequently an impression of wishing to 'set the record straight'.¹²¹ For the best part this involves a re-appraisal of the 'history' as told by the authorities, which have continuously maintained the narrative that the protest was entirely inconsequential in bringing about the end of the Cold War, or in changing anything within society as a whole. There is therefore a celebratory tone to much of these works as the women are shown to have been collectively effective despite the 'official' State endorsed view. It is in these reflective texts that tensions and disputes also appear more visible. Significantly however, there is very little direct discussion of what the specific points of contention were, and only a very few individuals are named. This presents many issues for the historian as much of the research consequently results in an investigation that attempts to piece together who, what and where. Questions such as background and political perspectives are therefore difficult to answer from such a mix of unnamed participants and events described largely in positives. The significant risk to any research in this field is therefore that words and actions become misappropriated and misinterpreted as individuals are incorrectly identified and confused with others by the researcher who is not from 'within' and who has no first-hand knowledge to draw upon.

It was also important to review what opponents of the anti-nuclear cause offered as alternative narratives, particularly those who sought to explain the NATO decision regarding the nuclear weapons.¹²² This revealed that an alternative contemporary debate was also raging amongst those who supported nuclear weapons. In this debate Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) was considered an unethical suicide pact. This led directly to the development of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), popularly known as Star Wars, announced in 1983. It was however also a strategy that many considered another escalation towards nuclear war, and was therefore intrinsically linked to the development of militancy during the Greenham campaign as will be discussed further in chapter 5.

¹²¹ Titcombe, "Women Activists."

¹²² David. A. Hobbs, *Cruise Missiles: Facts and issues*, (Aberdeen: Centre for Defence Studies, 1982). Coalition for Peace Through Security, *50 tough questions for CND*, (London: Coalition for Peace Through Security, 1984). Coalition for Peace Through Security, *30 questions & honest answers about CND*, (London: Coalition for Peace Through Security, 1985).

The oral histories already included in various archives were consulted, but in order to focus more upon Welsh accounts further testimony was required. New oral interviews were consequently undertaken as part of this thesis, resulting in new testimony from 9 women and 2 men, all of whom had a connection to Wales during the protest. Details of these participants, including age, education level, geographical locality and time spent at Greenham is contained in Appendix 1. These 11 participants for this project were not selected and approached entirely at random, nor are they considered a representative sample. The focus was upon qualitative value rather than quantity because the analysis did not rely solely upon their testimony. Supplementing the information in the written sources, the interviews were consequently utilised to probe for further understandings, to humanise the texts and to enable the questions about how histories are constructed and whose versions are included and whose are not, to be better considered.

Interviewees were invited to participate in the study because of their involvement with Greenham as participants from Wales, and because it appeared that they could offer an individual perspective of the universal explanations already well documented. As the project developed the choice of participant also developed because they as individuals appeared to have particular interpretations to offer that could enhance the exploration of specific narratives that had been identified in the other texts. By centring the research upon participants from Wales, those approached were often those on the periphery of the debate rather than those central players who regularly appeared over the years as the 'reluctant' spokespersons of Greenham.¹²³ This enabled fresh perspectives to be added to the analysis. Adding to this approach the study also steered away from inviting an interview from some of those in Wales who had already provided substantial interviews as part of other projects, or had written extensively on the subject either at the time or subsequently, as their views could already be incorporated through other means.¹²⁴ This is not to say that the interviewees who were selected had never appeared elsewhere in the literature, as in fact many of them were already named individuals and were traced precisely because of this. Some had also been interviewed previously by other researchers, though this was not known at the outset. For others the interview for this project was the first time anyone had asked them for their views and experiences to be added to the historical record.¹²⁵ Whilst all this

¹²³ It is common for women to precede any statements they make about Greenham with a comment about not being representative of the whole because they do not to speak for all women.

¹²⁴ Examples would be Anne Pettitt or Thalia Campbell who were part of the original march. Pettitt has given several interviews and has published an autobiographical account.

Campbell gave a full oral history for the Imperial War Museum and has been interviewed many other times. Campbell has also published her views online with a dedicated website to the protest: <http://www.birdchildsandgoldsmith.com/acatalog/Greenham.html>

¹²⁵ One interviewee has never been quoted or directly referred to in the printed records from the camps. However her name and the town she lived in was published as a caption to a photograph

did mean that those included in the project had at some point chosen to associate themselves with the protest in sufficient detail so as to become traceable, it was considered an unavoidable partiality in view of the geographical scope and the inherent difficulty of researching protest movements that lack formal documents.

Despite this obvious bias I did not consider these limitations problematic because this thesis is not concerned with the creation of an 'as it happened' history, nor does it seek to establish a definitive history or reveal the 'real' story of Greenham by disproving other interpretations. Instead it is an exploration of the broad spectrum of thought incorporated into the campaign, where contradiction is as permissible as consensus, enabling a demonstration of the depth of complexity involved in writing histories of radical political movements.

It had been anticipated that the interviewees would be recruited to the project through the posting of advertisements for willing participants to respond to. This however quickly proved an unrealistic method as it placed the onus on others to contact me. It also largely failed to understand the emotions involved with the protest or the long-term effects of how vilified the women had often been for speaking out and in using acts of civil disobedience. It was also evident that other researchers attempting to contact people in this way appeared to receive little response. As a result the method had to be changed, moving instead to one where participants were identified, traced and then approached. The initial contact was by letter followed by an informal chat. Before each interview the formal arrangements, including the consent form allowing their testimony to be utilised in the project, were completed.

Most of the women interviewed were aged 65-75, with one in her 80s, one of the men was aged 54 and the other was 79. Three had University degrees, though most had undertaken education to college level. There was a range of childhood experience and upbringing, 6 self-defined as working-class whilst one described herself as rural Welsh. Geographically 3 of the interviewees no longer live in Wales. Of those remaining 3 were in Wrexham, 1 in Ebbw Vale, 1 in Porthcawl, 1 in Haverford West, 1 in Llandysul, and 1 in Carmarthenshire. This gave a coverage across many areas of Wales, but it was interesting to note how many had crossed paths, even if they had been unaware of it.¹²⁶ One of the interviews was conducted as a group session at the request of the women involved, which gave mixed results as some questions could not be

posted online: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-some-of-the-welsh-protesters-at-orange-gate-greenham-common-pictured-20206220.html>. This particular woman had also deposited her Greenham memorabilia to the Women's Archive of Wales <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/13293>

¹²⁶ A photograph was uncovered with two of the women interviewed sitting next to each other at Orange Gate. Neither woman knew the other when asked. <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-some-of-the-welsh-protesters-at-orange-gate-greenham-common-pictured-20206220.html>.

pursued whilst conversely the women seemed to spur each other's memories.¹²⁷ One of the interviews was also conducted in Welsh.

The first interviews were undertaken early in the project and before the specific themes for investigation were fully developed. This impacted upon the direction that those interviews took but also how subsequent consultations were framed particularly as new information was presented and different avenues of exploration arose. A list of questions had been developed, and this was circulated upon request to the interviewees prior to the meeting. In practice the interviews were usually less structured with the interviewee taking the lead. The decision to circulate the questions prior to the interviews was carefully considered, but it was in some instances necessary in order to gain participation, indicating some caution by those being approached for an interview. This did mean that the participants knew in advance what I wanted to ask and therefore they did have some time to organise their thoughts and responses. This could be considered positive, as events from twenty to thirty years ago perhaps needed to be recalled by way of consultation with diaries or other archival items. It did however mean that decisions could also be made in advance by interviewees about how much information to divulge and how answers would be framed. In reality it was likely that an element of this would have occurred whether or not I had provided this information as extensive research into the construction of 'self' and the relationship to experience has demonstrated that people always create stories about themselves through specific interpretations of the past.¹²⁸ They would have known I wanted to discuss the protest and therefore what was likely to be asked.

Again, these issues were not significant for this project, because these interviews were intended to provide a sense of how the individuals themselves reflected upon Greenham, and how this influenced the way the story was being told. For instance, one woman expressed how important Greenham had been to her and her account was consequently full of the joy of the camps and a deep sorrow that it had all disappeared. For another woman the Greenham experience was still a formative one, in that it resulted in civil disobedience and prison, but it was

¹²⁷ Elaine Titcombe, *Janet Tyrell, Pauline Smout and Rowena Thomas Interview*, August 22, 2011.

¹²⁸ Robert Perks, and Andrew Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006). Passerini, "Mythbiography in oral history."

A. Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981): 96-107.

J. Peneff, "Myths in Life Stories" in *The Myths we Live By*, eds. R. Samuel, and Paul Thompson, (London: Routledge, 1990).

Scott, "The Evidence of Experience."

S. Alexander, "Memory Talk" in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, eds. S. Radstone, and B. Schwarz, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 235-245.

F. Callard, and C. Papoulias, "Affect and Embodiment" in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, 246-262.

not an all defining aspect of her life thereafter. As a result her account was less animated and a perceivable sense of 'distance' existed that was not there for the woman in the first example.¹²⁹

Where available the interviews were facilitated by using information found in the archives that could be anticipated to have an association with the individual. The length of the interviews varied considerably, between an hour and a whole day. Participants were invited to express a preference regarding the venue for their interview. A practical arrangement easily overlooked, this was an important question for those involved and often signified how at ease the participant was with their involvement and with me. Many of the participants also wished to know more about me before agreeing to be interviewed. This was also important as it raised the issue of the relationship between interviewee and interviewer. It has been noted by other researchers that being on the 'inside' of Greenham was an advantage because it meant they were "already empirically literate" and could "avoid the faux pas of the visitors and journalists."¹³⁰ However there was some indication that for the interviewees in this project it was actually more important that I was not a Greenham woman. This was explained to me by one interviewee, "it was all very difficult at the time, a lot of judgements were made. A lot of it wasn't fair. You wouldn't have all that."¹³¹ This is an important point as Anderson and Jack have advocated listening to emotion as well as to words when utilising oral histories. It was in doing this that the difficulties of talking about Greenham became evident.¹³² Another interviewee also discussed this in terms of preconceived ideas and how previous interviews had led to misleading newspaper headlines¹³³, a theme also discussed by oral history historians in relation to the inherent problems of interpretation that arises from spoken evidence.¹³⁴

Each interviewee was asked if they wished to have a copy of the interview. They were also asked to make contact if they became unhappy with the content or wished to re-consider their account in any way. No one has to date made such a request. One significant development that did occur as a consequence of this research project was that one woman decided to deposit her personal archive into the Special Collections at Bradford University. This was also followed by an

¹²⁹ Elaine Titcombe, SE Interview, November 14, 2015.

Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September 12, 2015.

¹³⁰ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 8-9.

¹³¹ Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunicliffe Interview*, August 22, 2011.

¹³² K. Anderson, and D.C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds. S. Berger Gluck, and D. Patai (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 11-26.

¹³³ Elaine Titcombe, *Janet Tyrell Interview*, August 22, 2011.

¹³⁴ Thomas Charlton, Thomas L., Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless, eds. *Handbook of Oral History*, (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2006).

Katherine Borland, "That's not what I said: Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Andrew Thomson (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 310-321.

article in *The Guardian* which she used to clarify an action which she and a male friend had carried out at Greenham in 1981.¹³⁵ This is an interesting demonstration of some of the unintended consequences of oral history work. Similarly by utilising the archive material at the Abergavenny museum a new exhibition using the collection and bringing new exposure to the actions of local women thirty years ago was constructed and put on display from May 2017.

There are also various oral interviews with some of the participants, as well as some shorter radio dialogues held at The British Library and the Imperial War Museum. These also span the breadth of the protest with some of the earliest recorded for The Hall-Carpenter Archives.¹³⁶ These interviews date from the mid 1980s and focused upon lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activism. Not all of the interviews in this collection were connected with the Greenham campaign and of those that do there is a varying level of discussion about the camps depending upon the level of importance the protest had for the participant. The main focus of these interviews is upon the experiences of the women as lesbians. This provided a good grounding of information for the thesis and in particular helped to explain the passionate debate surrounding sexuality at Greenham, a key part of the decision for many who supported the women-only ethos of the camps (discussed further in chapter 2). There were however, some other important topics broached by some of the women in these interviews that did bear a stronger significance and relevance for the direction developed for this thesis. In particular there were interviews with Cheryl Slack, Sue King and Pat Arrowsmith that discussed the structurelessness of the campaign and the seriousness of the conflicts that arose as a consequence.¹³⁷ The women also talked about the impact of influential women at the camp upon the other women and how this could affect the direction of the protest. The proximity in time to the protest of these interviews is one of their most prominent features. The emotions are sometimes clearly very raw and the tensions really are evident. This marks a clear difference to the interviews carried out for this thesis which on the whole were much more reserved.

At the Imperial War Museum a further collection of recordings were commissioned in the early 1990s to explore pacifism throughout the twentieth century. The interviews consulted for

¹³⁵ Annie Tuncliffe, "That's me in the picture: People were looking for a focus for their anxieties, and Greenham was it," *The Guardian*, May 6, 2016, accessed May 6, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/may/06/greenham-common-protest-1981-remembered>.

¹³⁶ Held in the British Library, Sound Collection.

Sue Donnelly, "Coming Out in the Archives: The Hall-Carpenter Archives at the London School of Economics," *History Workshop Journal* 66, no.1 (2008): 180-184, doi:10.1093/hwj/dbn042.

¹³⁷ Cheryl Slack interviewed by Margot Farnham November, 11 1985; Sue King interviewed by Margot Farnham May 12, 1985; Pat Arrowsmith interviewed by Margot Farnham May 2, 1990. All interviews in the British Library, Sound Collection.

this research were all conducted by Lyn E Smith. Amongst the interviewees were some of the most often mentioned women of Greenham, the unofficial 'stars' of the movement such as Ann Pettitt, Katrina Howse, Sarah Hipperson, Helen John and Rebecca Johnson,¹³⁸ in addition to several less prominent figures. It was in the exploration of these interviews however that it first became apparent that there were some men who felt a sufficient connection to the protest to include the topic in their interviews. Of particular relevance to this thesis are the interviews by Ian Campbell and Alf Englekamp.¹³⁹ Both men lived in Wales and both were married to women who became heavily involved with Greenham. The impact of their accounts was significant. This was because they appeared to contest much of the existing knowledge about the protest and as a result it was decided that they should become part of the exploration for this thesis. Contact was therefore made with these men for this research project but only one agreed to participate.

Whilst all these interviews, existing and new, were all utilised in some way during the formation of this thesis the contribution levels were not all identical as themes were picked out in accordance with their relevance to the central questions under consideration in the study. This inevitably meant that the direction of questioning for the new interviews did take a particular course. Conversely it must also be recognised that the existing interviews in the archives were directed by someone with an alternative purpose. In both instances the bias of the interviewer is consequently an inevitable factor in the content accumulated.

Contemporary publications such as *Peace News*, *Sanity*, *Ynni*, *Spare Rib* and *Marxism Today*, along with many national and local newspapers also have references to the Greenham campaign.¹⁴⁰ There were also several video documentaries, made both by the women and by reporters either during the campaign or later as reflective pieces,¹⁴¹ alongside some shorter

¹³⁸ Ann Pettitt began the march to Greenham; Katrina Howse was the longest serving resident at Greenham arriving in early 1982 and leaving in 2000. Sarah Hipperson was also a resident for a similar period. Both served several prison sentences for their actions at Greenham; Helen John was one of the original marchers from Wales but who stayed on to establish the camp after the others had returned home; Rebecca Johnson was also an early resident and became a prominent spokesperson for the media in the early phases. Rebecca originally left Greenham to set up the Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, which still operates on a part time basis to date.

¹³⁹ Ian Colin Campbell interviewed by Lyn E Smith July, 6 1992.

Alf Englekamp interviewed by Lyn E Smith July, 8 1992.

¹⁴⁰ *The Guardian* and *Observer* were often supportive of the camps whilst papers such as *The Sun* and *The Express* were in opposition. See Young, *Femminity in Dissent*. Local papers consulted included the *Abergavenny Chronicle* and the *Carmarthen Journal*. Other papers included the *Western Mail* with coverage across Wales.

¹⁴¹ *Carry Greenham Home*, directed by Beeban Kidron, National Film and Television School, 1983.

Non-Violence in Action, narrated by Father Jose Blanco, Concord, 1986.

Greenham: The Making of a Monument, directed by Hamish Campbell, Undercurrents Foundation, December, 2004, VHS. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

Yellow Gate Women, directed by Margaretta D'Arcy, 2008, DVD.

broadcast news reports from the time.¹⁴² These help to generate an important visual and auditory awareness of the contemporary environment at Greenham to coincide with the written versions. Moving into the digital environment there are also several dedicated websites containing timelines, documents and links to short filmed interviews with some of the former participants.¹⁴³ Other documents, some of which are currently in the process of being released to The National Archives under the 30 year rule, have also been utilised, detailing the response of senior government ministers and their advisors,¹⁴⁴ as well as papers from other political parties, trade unions, religious bodies, and various professional experts such as doctors¹⁴⁵ and scientists.¹⁴⁶ Several contemporary fictional texts such as novels, plays and poetry produced at various points during the protest have also featured as part of the analysis where appropriate.¹⁴⁷

Structuring the Thesis

The thesis begins by exploring the general consensus of the history of the protest in chapter 1, to include the geography of the site, so as to provide the context from which the subsequent and contested versions can be more carefully assessed. This is followed by a detailed review of the current literature, indicating how this thesis takes a different approach. In Chapter 2, I examine the impact of the defining moment of the protest, when the men are excluded. Usually denied

There are also several short films on You Tube including:

Common-sense: Greenham Actions, 1982.

Greenham Women - A Great Strength.

Part 1 & 2 The Greenham Challenge: Bringing Missiles to Trial, 1983.

¹⁴² The *British Film Institute* archive includes news reports from Greenham including the Sentry Box Court case in November 1982 discussed in chapter 4.

¹⁴³ *Your Greenham*, <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

Bloo's on Greenham Common Wimmin's / Women's Peace Camp, <http://www.muierpalabra.net/activismo/greehamcommon/bloogate>.

The Danish Peace Academy: Greenham Common, <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/abase/sange/greenham.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ *The National Archives*, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/>

¹⁴⁵ Helen Caldicott, *Missile Envy: The Arms Race and Nuclear War* (London: Bantam Books, 1986).

¹⁴⁶ Carl Sagan and Richard Turco, "Nuclear Winter in the Post-Cold War Era," *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no.4 (1993): 369-373, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i217660>.

¹⁴⁷ Elis, *Cyn Daw'r Gaeaf*.

Nicky Edwards, *Mud*, The Women's Press Fiction, London, 1986.

Nicky Edwards, *Tough at the Top*, Onlywomen Press, London, 1992.

Tony Harrison, *The Common Chorus: A Version of Aristophanes' "Lysistrata"*, Faber & Faber, 1992.

Fiona Evans, *My Greenham: The diaries of Ginette Leach*, BBC Radio 4, produced by Pauline Harris, broadcast December 2014.

Nigel Jenkins, and Menna Elfyn, eds. *Glas-Nos: Cerddi Dros Heddwch/Poems for Peace: An Anthology for Peace by the Poets of Wales* (Powys: CND Cymru, 1987).

Menna Elfyn, ed. *Hel Dail Gwyrdd* (Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul, 1987).

Menna Elfyn, *Merch Perygl: Cerddi 1976-2011* (Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul, 2011).

any place in the history at all, the analysis explores how the decision to exclude men became a narrative of concealment. This is because it hid how the supportive men considered themselves an active part of the protest, and how many women were unthreatened by this collaboration. In chapter 3 the protest is reviewed as part of a wider conflict of political ideologies in Britain during the period. In particular it considers how the protest was intricately woven into a battle of Right and Left wing politics, especially as it gathered a feminist momentum and began to align with lesbian issues. The analysis reviews how this background helped to shape both the contemporary view of the protest and the women activists. In addition, I provide some contextual background for Welsh politics during the period and demonstrate how this was also a significant political battleground. For chapter 4, the analysis takes on a more regional focus by turning to Wales to consider the ways that Welsh environmental politics converged with traditional Welsh historiographies that would impact directly upon the direction of Greenham as participants moved between campaigns. Chapter 5 then moves the analysis to focus upon the way that several individual women utilised a Christian narrative to support their involvement at Greenham, not only to justify their involvement in the campaign but to frame their attack of the State position. Not a unique discourse to Wales it was however a narrative that enabled an impassioned and vehement localised support for the women engaged in the protest to develop. It was also a medium that enabled a Welsh-speaking audience to engage with the action taking place in England, either through the pulpit (and representatives of non-conformity) or through the works of eminent and celebrated poets that interpreted Greenham as a sign of Christianity in action.¹⁴⁸

The thesis concludes with a review of the themes covered and the main conclusions that can be drawn from the study. Looking at how the narratives of Greenham progressed in the years following the protest, the study ends with a discussion of what on-going relevance the Greenham protest has and considers how it continues to be held up for future generations as an inspiring instance of feminist political history.

¹⁴⁸ For example Meg Elis, "Duw yn Greenham," (God at Greenham), in *Glas-Nos*, eds. Jenkins, and Menna Elfyn, 3.

Chapter 1

The chronology and historiography of Greenham

This chapter outlines the basic chronology of the Greenham event compiled from the women's personal accounts, the existing academic research and the archival resources. This is followed by an account of how the story began its journey into historical debate, a detailed literature review of the existing analysis, and a discussion of how a metanarrative for Greenham can be shown to have emerged. The main point of this is to provide a contextual basis from which the subsequent chapters can be read. As the stated purpose of this thesis is to explore the narratives of Greenham, or more precisely to consider how there are multiple available narrations of the protest that are part of a continuous and on-going shifting web of subjective realities and struggles for power, it is necessary to first determine a base point from which the analysis can proceed and refer back to. This is therefore an account of the general proceedings of the protest in order to establish what basic story has underpinned much existing knowledge about the event and the academic analysis that has already been conducted.

The point however is not to simply recreate an account that might be found elsewhere. Though the general flow of the events will obviously remain fairly consistent with that which has already been published, many of the details included in this section have been gleaned from the archives adding further context to the existing general knowledge of the event. Whilst some aspects of this narration will subsequently be re-considered as part of a contested narrative, it is only by knowing how they have been generally represented previously, that the alternative views can become visible, and the extent of the unravelling of the grand narratives more readily appreciated.

The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camps 1981-2000

As outlined in the introduction the story of the protest at the Greenham Common military base began in the late summer of 1981. On the 27th of August 1981, a group of thirty six women and four men aged between 25 and 80, along with four children in pushchairs, set out from City Hall, Cardiff to walk the 110 miles to a military base on the outskirts of Newbury in Berkshire. A relatively innocuous group walking, singing and dancing along the road with a police escort, their aim was to engage the British Government in a debate before the missiles arrived on British territory. They maintained this discussion had not taken place with the electorate before the

NATO agreement, and was consequently a decision taken without a mandate. However, following a total lack of attention from either the media or the Government as they marched along, some of the women decided they would need to take more drastic action. With more than a casual reference to the Suffragettes four women therefore chained themselves to the fence on arrival, whilst another read out a prepared statement to the lone security guard on duty. The security guard reportedly mis-took them for the cleaners and puzzled over what they were doing. Undeniably comical, the situation not only illustrated the naivety of the protestors in their anticipation of a larger military presence and certain arrest followed by enormous publicity, but it also demonstrated how unexpected the action was by the State and military authorities.

The women's statement, repeated later to a much larger gathering as the press and a television crew arrived, and subsequently delivered in writing to the base Commander, declared that:

We fear for the future of all our children and for the future of the living world which is the basis of all life. We have undertaken this action because we believe that the arms race constitutes the greatest threat ever faced by the human race and our living planet...The British people have never been consulted about our Government's nuclear defence policy...We in Europe will not accept the sacrificial role offered us by NATO...We have had enough of our military and political leaders who squander resources on weapons of mass destruction while ...millions of human beings' ...needs cry out to be met...We want the arms race to be brought to a halt now – before it is too late to create a peaceful, stable world for our future generations.¹

When this too was subsequently dismissed, with the base Commander famously and contemptuously telling them that as far as he was concerned they could stay there "as long as you like,"² they held an unplanned rally and from the back of a trailer demanded a public televised debate on the subject.³ The response from the Government was that it had already been discussed within selected British Universities and did not require a public consultation. Undeterred, the protestors decided to set up camp, still determined to be heard. No one on the march had intended to stay at Greenham and they were ill-equipped to do so. Local supporters from nearby Newbury, however, began to arrive with supplies, tents and other resources. But still no debate came. As time progressed the small protest began to attract others who were prepared

¹ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 16.

² Helen John in Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 8.

Ann Pettitt Interview for, *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, directed by Hamish Campbell, Undercurrents Foundation, 2004, DVD. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

³ Footage of this can be viewed on 'Your Greenham' <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

to camp out, and as many of the original marchers returned home they were replaced by others who shared their concerns of the impending threat of nuclear escalation.

The authorities, who had initially undertaken to ignore the protest, hoping it would fade away, began to tire as it survived the bitterly cold winter of 1981-2. Following disruption to the laying of pipes at the base by several women, but while still viewed as more of a nuisance than a serious problem, the local council began a process intended to remove the camp. Initially they made attempts to agree an end date for the protest, engaging three representatives of the camp in a meeting on the 20th of January 1982. When the proposal for the protestors to “peaceably give up possession of the Council’s land and remove [the] encampment”⁴ was blatantly rejected however, Newbury District Council served a letter of notice upon the women that they would proceed to apply to the Courts to evict them from the site. The letter gave the protestors fourteen days’ notice to leave.

Choosing to stay, but with this expulsion by force pending, some of the women began to assert that the presence of men at the camps made the possibility of violence more likely in the event of an eviction. Men would, some suggested, be targets for police provocation, and they would be more likely to retaliate should they see women being mistreated. The result was contentious and divisive, as recalled by Lynne Jones:

A week previously all the women present at the camp had met and unanimously decided that, while under the threat of eviction, women only should actually live at the camp ... Others returning the following day were unhappy with the decision as were the men involved. By Sunday afternoon ... voices were rising. It was obvious that we were too large a crowd and feelings too strong to reach agreement. So all the people actually living at the camp at the time went into a caravan....’Women only for two weeks, then the decision would be reviewed’ ... The two weeks passed andwhen the decision was reviewed, those who disagreed weren’t there.⁵

A press release announcing the decision shortly followed with the added assertions that:

Men are welcome to continue their support for us off site... We intend to deal with women representatives of the authorities and wish to communicate our actions through women in the media...We need as many women as possible ... The peace camp welcomes all women.⁶

Whilst the threatened eviction took many more months to materialise, the decision to become a women-only space was never reversed. Though not known at the time, it was to

⁴ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 29.

⁵ Lynne Jones, ed. *Keeping the Peace: A Women’s Peace Handbook*. (London: The Women’s Press, 1983), 86-89.

⁶ *Ibid.* 85.

become the central defining moment for the whole protest, not only in practical and real terms for the many women and men involved, but also for the subsequent development of the protest narratives. It is a theme that will be returned to in Chapter 2. Despite all their best efforts in the months that followed, however, the authorities continuously failed to evict the women, returning to Court on several occasions as the camps moved from one piece of land to another, the women having discovered that different agencies owned different strips of land outside the main gate.

In the Spring of 1982 work also began in earnest on the site to prepare for the delivery of the missiles. In building giant missile silos and preparing the barrack facilities for USAF troops, large numbers of men were bused onto the site to work. By using several alternative entrances onto the base than that at the Main Gate where the camp was situated, the men were not only closer to the place of work but they could also avoid the protestors. In response some women quickly set about trying to influence the contractors involved by shifting their protest to these new entrance points. Lynne Jones reported that Fran DeAth for instance set up “a one-woman picket...sitting with a primus stove she’d hold out a sign saying ‘Will you stop and talk’, and another for when they returned saying ‘How about a cup of tea on the way back then?’” or she would display poems asking them to:

Imagine your anguish if you survive the bomb,
knowing the part you played.
Wages you earn from the graves you dig...
Leave this job for someone else’s conscience.⁷

She was not part of a Trade Union and believed the only way to reach these men was on a personal level.

This development of the base also marked another change in the protest. Until the construction work began the protestors had not interfered in any way with the business of the base, allowing free entry and exit, but in response to the ongoing refusal to engage in any debate some women began to take more decisive actions. Initially this was confined to a handful of women, as they sat in the road, in front of bulldozers or in holes in the ground, but on the 22nd of March 1982, 250 women sat in the road in a planned blockade to prevent workers entering. The result was 34 arrests as the police cleared the way for the buses and lorries, marking the beginning of a new phase in the protest as the women’s actions increasingly pushed at the boundaries, slowly edging towards militancy.

As a result of this shift in the centre of action, and also in an attempt to allow women the space to escape the media glare which has become predominantly focused at the main gate after

⁷ Jones, ed. *Keeping the Peace*, 82.

the women began to act militantly, several demonstration camps were formed and situated at each of the entrance points around the nine mile perimeter fence. In an effort to add some cheer, the women named each of the gates after a colour of the rainbow, in part to contrast with the dull colours of the military, the buildings inside the base and the surrounding mud, but also possibly drawing on the ancient, and for some biblical, symbolisation of life as represented by the image of a rainbow. Yellow gate was at the main entrance; initially it acted as the central point for communication, with its own postal address, and was the site of the water standpipe. It was also the place where most of the communication with the Press occurred and consequently attracted many of those who “liked to be at the centre of things”⁸. It was also known as the ‘serious gate’⁹. Each of the other gates attracted different groups and as a result developed different ‘identities’ depending upon who was present at a particular time. According to one source, “Blue gate was a much younger gate, full of humour and quite punky, while Green gate was very separatist, international and mystic.”¹⁰ There are also numerous reports that indicate Green Gate was the sole women-only camp at all times with men being permitted to visit all the other camps during the day. Violet Gate was a ‘foodies’ gate, Red Gate had a strong link to Essex, but was also known at one time as the artists’ gate. Orange Gate was situated away from the main roads and was often identified as a religious gate attracting many Quakers and older peace movement women, also becoming known as Welsh gate for a time. Some of the camps were also more permanent than others, and for a time camps such as Emerald, Woad, and Turquoise also existed. Whilst it would not be correct to argue that all women at Yellow Gate were serious or able spokeswomen, or that everywoman at Blue Gate was young, working-class, anarchic and lesbian, these broad generalisations did enable women visitors and camp residents to choose a community at Greenham with which they felt comfortable. This is not to suggest that any of these identities were static as there are accounts that show women did move between the camps as required. This was frequently due to fluctuating numbers of women on site which decreased during the winter and increased again during warmer months. As the protest progressed however, allegiances and differences between the groups of women at each gate gradually made any interchange between them less likely.¹¹

⁸ Jane Powell interview on ‘Your Greenham’, <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

⁹ Jinny List quoted in Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 80.

¹⁰ Jane Powell interview on ‘Your Greenham’, <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

¹¹ Ann Pettitt Interview for, *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, directed by Hamish Campbell, Undercurrents Foundation, 2004, DVD. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

Attracting considerable attention in the early 1980s, the camps and the scale of support the women achieved facilitated the intensification of the debate and significantly contributed to the polarisation of opinion on the issue of nuclear weapons in Britain. Opposition to the protest, however, was particularly strong from the Conservative Government which fully supported the NATO strategy of deterrence through MAD, arguing that a position of military strength alone enabled any prospect of negotiation with perceived enemies. As a result alternative women's groups were formed such as 'Women and Families For Defence' (WFFD) under the leadership of prominent Conservative women such as Lady Olga Maitland, Dame Angela Rumbold, and the Members of Parliament (MP) Virginia Bottomley, Ann Widdicombe, and Angela Browning.¹³ Other groups, such as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) which had been supported by the Home Office since 1955 to persuade women through a targeted education campaign that it was possible to adequately prepare for and survive a nuclear war, also helped to support the notion that the NATO decision was justified and rational.¹⁴ However, despite rigorous attempts by such counter movements, and the popular press to ridicule their arguments, and the persistent endeavour by the Courts and their agents to evict them, the camps remained in place.

Despite a further large scale protest, where 50,000 women shone mirrors onto the base in order to 'reflect the evil back upon itself' after the weapons entered the base on the 14th of November 1983, protestor numbers and public attention gradually dwindled. This development had evidently signalled for many that the protest had ultimately failed: it had not prevented the work on the base, and it had not stopped the weapons arriving. A downward trend in protestor numbers was also undoubtedly enhanced by the Conservative election victory of that year which had been fought largely by the Labour Party on the promise of unilateral disarmament (in addition to increased nationalisation of industry), but won in part off the back of the triumphal war in the Falklands. Furthermore a large scale eviction eventually occurred on the 4th of April 1984 being televised all over the world and widely portrayed as the end of the camps. Despite not actually ending the protest at all, the women merely gathering all they could and moving to the other side of the road, the Press began to stop reporting on the camps. For some women this signalled that the State had issued a command to starve the protestors' of an audience using a Defence Notice (D-Notice or DSMA Notice). This was a system overseen by the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Committee (DPBC). It was designed to, "prevent inadvertent public disclosure of information that would compromise UK military and intelligence operations and methods, or put at risk the safety

¹³ Beatrix Campbell, *The Iron ladies: Why do Women Vote Tory?* (London: Virago, 1987).

¹⁴ Jennifer Hunt, "WRVS: The One-in-Five Scheme," The Women's Royal Voluntary Service Archive, accessed 25 June 2017, https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/About%20us/one_in_five.pdf.

of those involved in such operations, or lead to attacks that would damage the critical national infrastructure and/or endanger lives.”¹⁵ Whether or not the Greenham campaign was subject to a D-Notice, the cumulative effect was that further large protest gatherings such as those witnessed in December 1982 and again in 1983 were never repeated despite on-going efforts by the remaining women to inspire further actions. As a simultaneous development to this change in coverage and attention, the women at the camps progressively refined their non-violent direct action (NVDA) stance to allow for the potential to damage property. As a consequence the protest became increasingly militant, resulting in further Crown Court appearances and prison sentences for many women as they cut or pulled down the fence, or took part in incursions onto the base. In part these increased criminal court appearances were also the result of new bye-laws that removed the rights associated with common land and allowed the Ministry of Defence (MOD) the right to enclosure of the land. As a result of these new fences, by 1990 it was reported in Parliament that, “since the byelaws came into operation on 1 April 1985 2,448 arrests have been made, and in 1,503 of these cases the person arrested has been charged. There have been 812 convictions.”¹⁶

Unsurprisingly the tone of the protest progressively changed after the mid 1980s and the frivolity that characterised much of the earlier years gradually diminished as tensions grew. Where previously actions had often projected an outwardly colourful and purposefully carnivalesque¹⁷ protest, the tone changed to become decidedly more confrontational. This led to more radical actions such as pinning blood (or more likely red paint) stained tampons to the fence to symbolise war as menstruation envy.¹⁸ Or a naked protest on Hiroshima Day in 1985 where at least four women covered themselves in mud and ash to simulate how survivors would look following a nuclear exchange whilst they interrupted traffic as it attempted to enter the base.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, this shift to a more openly hostile attitude was mirrored by the authorities and the military, but it also began to surface between the various communities of women represented at the different gates around the base and their supporters. It was a development however that not all women on the ‘outside’ of Greenham understood. For instance, in June 1987 a woman from

¹⁵ Defence and Security Media Advisory (DSMA) Notice System, “Welcome to the website of the Defence and Security Media Advisory (DSMA) Notice System,” accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.dsma.uk>.

¹⁶ Hansard, “Greenham Common (Arrests),” HC Debates vol. 168, March 05, 1990, c538W.

¹⁷ Feigenbaum, “Tactics and Technology.”

Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*.

¹⁸ La-ware, “Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red,” 36-37.

Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*, 111.

¹⁹ Royal Air Force Police Associates. “Greenham,” *Royal Air Force Police Associates*, accessed June 6, 2015. <http://www.rafpa.com/Greenham.html>. There are several photographs of this action but no written account from Greenham women records the activity. It is not known who the women were.

the Camden Greenham Women's support group suggested that a conference meeting, attended by several Greenham Women from Yellow and Orange Gate, "begin by singing songs, adding that they had brought song books."²⁰ This they believed might attract more women to the workshop. Beth Junor of Yellow Gate objected, "because this is something we rarely do at camp, and would have seemed artificial to me. Also I wanted genuinely interested women to come, not those attracted by music on the spur of the moment only to find they were unknowingly involving themselves in a serious discussion."²¹

Shortly afterwards other tensions came to the fore. It was publicly reported in 1987 that a split had occurred between the women of Yellow Gate and the other remaining camps (Blue, Woad, Orange and Red). The dispute was documented all in its resplendent colour in the various camp newsletters created at the time. This was itself a signifier of change, given that until that point the gates had each taken it in turn to create a single newsletter with contributions from all gates, but thereafter separate versions were produced by Yellow Gate. There are different accounts of what underpinned this explosion of pressure, leading to a permanent split amongst the women. Some attributed it to racism²², whilst other testimonies explained it as an attempt by an external group²³ to control the protest and impose a structure of command that was not acceptable to the majority of the camps at Greenham.²⁴ This is an important observation in view of Freeman's theories regarding the pitfalls of structureless groups.²⁵ In the first instance it demonstrates how particular individuals could be expelled even without an elected group but it also points to how an 'elite' group was in control. They could reject those they did not wish to be involved with their campaign.

This was reported, especially in left wing circles, with headlines like "As Cruise's future looks uncertain, why are the women campers turning on each other?"²⁶ It was an episode that publicly demonstrated for the first time how Greenham was a fragile consensus of continually competing aims, which had begun to appear prone to collapse. Indeed, soon afterwards, as the USA and

²⁰ Beth Junor, "Towards 2000 – Without Nuclear weapons! For peace, equality, development!" *Yellow Gate Camp Newsletter*, October, 1987.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, 88-89.

²³ This group was known as the 'Wages for Housework' group. This was founded in 1970 by Selma James. In addition the group 'Black Women for Wages for Housework' was headed by Wilmette Brown.

²⁴ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.

²⁵ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."

²⁶ Reported in the socialist newspaper, *Morning Star* September, 29 1987; *Reading Weekly Post* September, 26 1987. Also Fiona Shand, "Greenham Rifts: As Cruise's Future Looks Uncertain, Why are the Women Campers Turning on Each Other?" *Marxism Today*, November, 31 1987.

USSR began to negotiate to end the Arms Race, the camps rapidly began to decline in size and resources.

Eventually, following the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by the USA and the USSR in 1987, and with the subsequent departure of the last nuclear missile in March 1991, the majority of the camps were closed. Blue gate and Yellow gate were the last to be maintained, with the former closing in 1994. However, it was not until 2000 that the base was decommissioned and much of the site returned to common land, following many further court battles to prove the 1985 bye-laws introduced by the MOD were illegal. The last remaining campsite at Yellow Gate was brought to an end by the small number of long-serving camp residents on the 5th of September, in the millennium year, marking the nineteenth year anniversary of the arrival of the first women at the site.

The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp had passed into history, the weapons gone and the base closed, with the majority of the land returned to the commoners. This point in time represented the end of the events themselves but it began the subsequent period of historical reflections and commemoration.

Greenham Literature Overview

Academics who have considered the Greenham Common Women's Peace Campaign have included historians, sociologists, geographers, theologians as well as scholars of Law, Politics, English and Media Studies. As a consequence the Greenham story has already received considerable attention and much theorising despite being only a relatively recent event. Chronologically the academic analysis of Greenham began relatively early, dating from the late 1980s, and well within the lifetime of the camps. Consequently, a substantial amount of research was either completed by participants or by their contemporaries, all of whom would at least have had a first person awareness of the events and their related context. This factor presents some interesting questions for later historians, and often causes a blur in the line between primary and secondary source material. For it is possible in such a scenario for an author to present an analysis or interpretation that not only describes and offers explanations for a historical moment, but which also seeks to exert an influence over those events which are perceived to have not yet concluded or otherwise passed into history. This is not to argue that these texts are actually any more or less biased than any other, but it does present some interesting issues when making assessments about what work has already been done and what conclusions have previously been drawn both explicitly and implicitly about the protest. By surveying and drawing together the key themes and approaches of the existing literature for instance, it can be demonstrated how little

attention has hitherto been paid to how the protest narratives have been constructed, performed and re-constructed over time by both participants and observers. This reveals the mechanics in the production and perpetuation of a meta-narrative for the protest, and effectively silencing those (often unpublished), accounts which suggest alternative, often co-existing, histories of the events.

Greenham and Cold War histories

Fundamentally the Greenham protest was a response to a global issue. This was the renewed escalation of militarism as the Cold War between the East and West Superpowers re-intensified during the 1970s and 1980s. Many historians have examined this long running cold conflict in considerable detail. Until relatively recently however, the peace movement was not a significant feature of this scholarly work. This is perhaps because the peace movement narratives depended upon the potential for hot conflict for their meaning, whilst the Cold War histories could exist independently, without any reference to the peace movement at all. Indeed because the incorporation of contrary perspectives into the rhetoric of the Cold War would have been deemed a clear weakness from a militaristic and tactical perspective, it was perhaps inevitable that academics would also avoid the topic. The turn to examine the role of peace narratives has often therefore been driven by the recognition that other researchers had largely failed to give any space to the debates, as will be outlined briefly in the following discussion. This observation demonstrates just how marginalised the peace groups and their stories actually have been historically. This points to how difficult it was, and perhaps still is, for their difference of opinion to even be heard.

It cannot be disputed that the Cold War was hugely significant politically and that it was comprised of a complex series of events. It was by failing to acknowledge the attempts of thousands of people worldwide to change the course of those politics and events however, that many historians had mirrored the dominant wartime/military discourses of the time. They omitted the peace campaigners from the Cold War analysis precisely because they were not acknowledged by the central power holders of the time. In addition, by tracing the historiography of the Cold War it is also evident that the politics of peace were also competing with another more dominant discourse. This was a debate amongst historians themselves as they deliberated how the East/West situation occurred and continued to escalate during the period. Indeed a closer look demonstrates that it was this debate that kept the peace narratives out of the analysis as much as it was the apparent lack of importance attributed to them by those in power at the time.

Though undoubtedly an overly simplistic approach it can be broadly held that the historiography of the Cold War is defined by four distinct typographies: Orthodox, Revisionists, Post-Revisionists, and 'New' Cold War historians²⁷. Whilst a detailed review of these does reveal an interesting debate, providing a demonstration of how historical representations shift over time dependent on the contemporary dominating discourses, there is insufficient space to address it adequately here. However, it is possible to argue that the various debates within these four identified approaches narrowed the focus of the analysis largely in accordance with the time in which they were produced. This is because historians also compete for their versions to gain acceptance, and in the context of the time their work was produced, peace narratives would also arguably have diluted the reception of their analysis. However, it can be acknowledged that with the final phase, defined as that of 'New' Cold War histories or 'Twenty-First Century perspectives', there has been a particular move of some interest. As pointed out by Timothy White:

The end of the Cold War has changed how many historians examine and interpret this period. Increasingly, scholars have gained access to documents, especially on the Soviet side, that have allowed them to go beyond past conjecture and utilise archival evidence. The end of the Cold War has removed much of the passion that surrounded writing Cold War history while scholars and states were still living it. This increased detachment has allowed historians to move from placing blame to recognizing the ideological conflict that was at the centre of the Cold War's origins.²⁸

And as Odd Arne Westad also asserted, historians must now:

...situate the Cold War within the wider history of the twentieth century in a global perspective. We need to indicate how Cold War conflicts connect to broader trends in social, economic, and intellectual history as well as to the political and military developments of the longer term of which it forms a part.²⁹

Though not directly inferred from either of these historians, it was the emergence of this latest phase of debate that enabled 'peace' as a narrative to gain some credence and be openly considered as part of same history of the Cold War. Drawing on the concerns expressed by historians such as Ken Booth, who claimed that "unless Western historiography of the period changes dramatically, the Cold War of the books will remain in the hands of those for whom the

²⁷ Timothy J. White, "Cold War Historiography: New Evidence behind Traditional Typographies," *International Social Science Review* 75, nos.3/4 (2000) 35-46.

White has taken a more thematic approach and identified seven explanations in the literature across all three established typographies in order to better explain overall the origins of the Cold War.

²⁸ Ibid. 35.

²⁹ Odd Arne Westad, "The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century". In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Volume 1 eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 19.

dominant memory will be that of a managed confrontation between ideological enemies in which the Right triumphed"³⁰, Mark Phythian's article, "CND's Cold War" published in 2001 further promoted this analysis:

The key to the way in which CND is remembered lies in how the Cold War itself is remembered. Sometimes referred to as the 'uneasy peace', will the emphasis come to lie on the peace which was maintained during the Cold War, or on the state of more or less constant unease and threat that the existence of the nuclear weapons created? At present there seems to be little room for CND or other peace movements in the triumphalist narratives of the Cold War. ... If it continues, as at present to focus on the outcome, the role claimed for deterrence in securing peace, and the 'positive' contribution of Reagan-era defence and ... Star Wars to the West's winning of it, then CND's efforts will inevitably come to be seen as having been misguided. ... It is a history that is clearly incomplete.³¹

The signs of other historians making the shift of emphasis were also made visible in two conferences held in Washington DC during 2010. These were entitled, "The Peace Movement and the Second Cold War: European and Transatlantic Perspectives"³² and "Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War, 1975-1989."³³ During these two events papers were presented integrating the narratives of the peace movement into discussions of the Cold War. The tone was not that these were simply subversive or ridiculously naïve views of irrelevance, but rather that they were the reasoned arguments arising from contemporary intellectual analysis. Of particular note was a paper by Wilfried Mausbach that explored how concepts such as the scientific theories of nuclear winter and environmentalism became, "the one and only new concept [to] separate[] the struggle against nuclear weapons in the 1980s from its antecedents in the 1950s."³⁴ As will be shown in chapter 4 this theme is an important

³⁰ Ken Booth, quoted in Mark Phythian, "CND's Cold War," *Contemporary British History*, 15, no.3 (2001), 152.

³¹ Mark Phythian, "CND's Cold War."

³² German Historical Institute Conference, "The Peace Movement and the Second Cold War: European and Transatlantic Perspectives," Washington DC, USA, March 4-6, 2010. Accessed November 17, 2017, <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/the-peace-movement-and-the-second-cold-war.html?L=0>

³³ German Historical Institute Conference: 'Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War, 1975-1989', Washington DC, USA, November 4-6, 2010. Accessed 17 November, 2017, <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/accidental-armageddons.html?L=0>.

³⁴ Conference report reference to Wilfried Mausbach, paper presented at the German Historical Institute Conference: "Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War, 1975-1989," Washington DC, USA, November 4-6, 2010. Accessed 17 November, 2017, <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/accidental-armageddons.html?L=0>

consideration in relation to the development of peace narratives in Wales particularly in the lead up to the Greenham protest.

In the keynote lecture during the same conference, Lawrence S. Wittner also argued that civil dis-obedience acted as a medium for the introduction and dissemination of new narratives of understanding regarding nuclear weapons during the 1980s. His analysis indicated that this not only occurred within the peace movement, but that it could also be tracked into the discourses of both Superpowers as the Cold War drew to an end.³⁵ In particular he argued it appeared to lead directly to “Ronald Reagan’s stunning course reversal in the mid-1980s.”³⁶ This was a radical departure from the established view that the peace movement was irrelevant to Cold War histories. Wittner consequently advocated much more attention needed to be paid to peace campaigns.

On a less positive note, another important paper was that of Kyle Harvey. This considered the eco-feminism of the 1970s and 1980s during the Seneca Falls Women's Encampment in New York. Unlike the other two papers it concluded that, “feminist radicalism turned off many potential supporters” and reducing the impact of the protest upon the nuclear weapon debate.³⁷ As a similar campaign to the Greenham protest this observation is of particular interest and is addressed in various parts of this thesis.

It is evident that in this recent change of approach to the Cold War by historians that the various discourses of peace and the peace movement have begun to be incorporated into the wider history of the period. In the concluding remarks to the March 2010 conference, Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke observed that, “the peace movements were not just about peace. Rather, they ought to be regarded as part of a larger shift in the self-conception of society associated with the radical breaks, crises, and transformations of the 1960s-1980s.”³⁸ This is an important theme for this thesis and features in the discussion in chapter 3.

³⁵ Conference report reference to Lawrence S. Wittner, paper presented at the German Historical Institute Conference: ‘Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War, 1975-1989’, Washington DC, USA, 4-6 November, 2010. <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/accidental-armageddons.html?L=0> Accessed 17 November, 2017.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Conference report reference to Kyle Harvey, paper presented at the German Historical Institute Conference: ‘Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War, 1975-1989’, Washington DC, USA, 4-6 November, 2010. <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/accidental-armageddons.html?L=0> Accessed 17 November, 2017.

³⁸ Conference report reference to concluding remarks, Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke, German Historical Institute Conference, ‘The Peace Movement and the Second Cold War: European and Transatlantic Perspectives’, Washington DC, USA, 4-6 March, 2010.

Taking a fresh look at the peace movement narratives and their construction for this research project is therefore a very timely exercise. In understanding the nuances of the various debates within different facets of the peace movement, historians will open the way to a more comprehensive understanding of how the various discourses interacted and developed throughout the Cold War era.

Greenham and Peace Movement Histories

Published in 1988 one of the most comprehensive accounts of the first phase of activity was published by Richard Taylor, a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) member since 1959.³⁹ The purpose of Taylor's research was to draw out how the first wave of peace activism encompassed a broad range of ideas reflecting the wide range of people attracted to its cause. Partly in order to exert a positive influence on the contemporary situation however, Taylor's work also pointed to how this diversity ultimately led to significant issues and splits within the Peace Movement which were not resolved before the second wave of activism emerged in the 1980s.

Equally engaged in an attempt to resolve ongoing issues, James Hinton and Jill Liddington both published accounts in 1989 that sought, through a wider re-assessment of the origins and characteristics of British peace narratives, to situate CND and Greenham in a longer history of British concern with anti-militarism. Indeed tracing the roots of anti-militarism back into the Nineteenth Century they illustrated how the analysis was also often fragmented and thus less well understood as a whole. As Hinton pointed out, this was because the Peace Movement "has had little continuous institutional life, consisting rather, of a series of short-lived outbursts."⁴⁰ The earliest of which they both traced back into the 1800s. Hinton contended that these were predominately moral challenges stemming from Nineteenth Century religious discourses, whilst Liddington recognised a tradition from within radical suffragist campaigns.

Writing from a Left Wing perspective and as a leading figure in CND, Hinton asserted that the historical development of anti-militarist narratives centred upon a middle class that saw Britain as the major civilising force for the World. In this he argued the expansion of capitalism was married to the idea of civilised society, which was in turn deemed inherently peaceful. This point, he claimed, had entrenched damaging imperialist pacifism into the British Peace Movement which persisted through both World Wars, and into the later Twentieth Century Peace campaigns of

Conference report, <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/the-peace-movement-and-the-second-cold-war.html?L=0> Accessed 17 November, 2017.

³⁹ Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: The British peace movement, 1958-1965* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

⁴⁰ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace politics in 20th Century Britain* (Hutchinson Radius, London, 1989) vii.

CND. This he contended posed particular problems for the historical and contemporary relationship between CND, socialists, and the Labour Party (explored further in Chapter 3) which could not be resolved until their historical roots were fully understood, thereby openly exposing the purpose of his analysis for his contemporary reader. Published in 1989, his text also appeared at a point where the Labour Party had suffered another significant defeat under a disarmament agenda which had prompted much contemporary debate.

Liddington's work concentrated upon the involvement of women in the development of anti-militarist debate through time, declaring that "historians would be remiss to neglect the links between feminism and anti-militarism, stretching back as they do over 170 years."⁴¹ Though, like Hinton, Liddington did not attempt to assert the existence of a continuous movement, her analysis actively sought to reveal a cyclical tradition that her contemporaries could claim thereby adding further credence to their cause.⁴² Positioning herself as a second wave feminist, Liddington had greeted Greenham with excitement once recognising in it an embodiment of a renewed popular feminist energy arising out of the declining WLM. Also writing in 1989 Liddington had perceived that feminist activity was once again at a critical point, much as it had been in the period after the vote was won and at the end of the 1970's when WLM had begun to decline. It is notable that her analysis both started and ended with a comment about the time of publication (the beginning of the 1990's) as an opportunity for 'reappraisal.' As with Hinton, who described himself as a 'peace activist', it was her involvement and support of the Greenham movement that inspired her to look back over history to see if women had been involved in anti-militarism protest before.⁴³ This was not a new approach to writing women's history. Laura Nym Mayhall demonstrated how second wave feminists re-invented the suffragette sister in order to enable a discourse of sisterhood that transcended from one period to the next.⁴⁴ Nor was Liddington alone in drawing out a long history of women's involvement with peace politics or in blending WLM with the emergence of a Women's Peace Movement in the 1980s.

Writing in 1987, Josephine Elgin argued that without the women's movement it would have been unlikely that "they would have proliferated to the same extent without the political consciousness generated amongst women as a result of a decade of experience in WLM."⁴⁵ However, the crucial difference between Liddington and Elgin was that the former recognised a

⁴¹ Liddington, J. *The long road to Greenham*, 5

⁴² Ibid.2

⁴³ Ibid.3

⁴⁴ Laura, E. Nym Mayhall, "Creating the 'suffragette spirit': British feminism and the historical imagination," *Women's History Review* 4, no.3, (1995): 333

⁴⁵ Josephine Elgin, "Women and Peace from the Suffrage to the Greenham Women," in *Campaigns for Peace*, eds. Richard Taylor, and Nigel Young, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 240.

decline in WLM and the need for a new outlet for feminism; whilst the latter, like Hinton, was less concerned with feminism than with peace. As a consequence Elgin ultimately was considerably less sympathetic of women-only campaigns such as Greenham, concentrating instead upon an argument that separatism was inherently destructive to the Peace Movement as a whole.⁴⁶

Margaretta Jolly's work published in 2003, also tracing WLM into the Peace movement of the 1980's, was however more hesitant than both Liddington and Elgin. It was particularly critical of the interpretation that the shift of emphasis from a small scale protest group of maternal concern to a women-only, staunchly (separatist) feminist protest camp, was a natural and 'relatively' easy progression (all commentators recognise short periods of discontent articulated by a few women but most ultimately afford it only a passing comment). Jolly promoted the analysis that Greenham did see the "eventual replacement of humanism as the frame for women's involvement in the peace movement with a feminism that brought together elements of seventies lesbian feminism and eighties identity politics."⁴⁷ However, it is her subsequent question, "whether it succeeded in creating an alternative public sphere in its own terms, however small, or whether the demands of creating and stabilising a community created too many of its own rules and exclusions" that needs further exploration. Jolly in particular highlighted the fact that in order to establish a new dominant discourse which contrasted with the movement's origins as a predominately heterosexual maternal campaign, those involved could "revert to a centrifugal managing of identity that could be severely judgemental of those perceived to threaten it."⁴⁸

Historians like Hinton and Elgin, also pointed to questions regarding the impact of class on the historical peace movement arguing that, "middle-class women were the ones with the leisure and the economic security which enabled them to work for peace."⁴⁹ Despite asserting that Greenham women had done much to encourage working-class women to the movement, little evidence was presented to show this was significant. This question was subsequently posed again by Gwyn Kirk in 1997 when assessing why the Women's Peace Movement had declined. She asserted that, "crucial connections between militarism and the oppression of women were emphasised while racism and class oppression were downplayed."⁵⁰ In part Patricia Monica Shaw addressed the problem of class in her PhD thesis in 1993, examining the links between the Greenham campaign and the women support groups for the 1984 Miners Strike. In this she illustrated how "romantic

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Margaretta Jolly, "Greenham Common - feminist seventies, Writing the web: Letters from the Women's Peace Movement," accessed February, 10, 2016, <http://www.feministseventies.net/Greenham.html>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Josephine Elgin, "Women and Peace," 242.

⁵⁰ Kirk, Gwyn. "Eco-Feminism and Environmental Justice: Bridges across Gender, Race and Class." *A Journal of Women Studies* 18, no.2 (1997): 7. doi:10.2307/3346962.

ideals of sisterhood and a common womanhood, far from supporting the struggle of affiliation and co-operation between women, obscure the power differences between them.”⁵¹ However, historians have much work to do to explore these themes further, particularly from within the various groups that have often been bundled together under the all-inclusive banners of the first and second wave peace movements.

Overall, historians have begun to show that the peace movement in Britain was never a single campaign or movement. Instead it incorporated ideas and ideologies that often brought as much internal conflict as unity. Nevertheless, they have often actively sought to simultaneously draw all the threads together in order to present a strong counter narrative to that of the Cold War. Arguably this is an unsatisfactory position, for it is in this attempt to establish a common discourse of intellectual substance that historians risk contributing to the creation of dominant discourses and the silencing of others.

CND was by far the largest, oldest and most recognisable faction of the post war movement drawing support from men and women alike, but as pointed out by Graham Stewart in a recent study of Britain in the 1980s, this was because it operated in much the same way as other organisations, such as Trade Unions, with its Member Lists and Committees.⁵² Debates and disagreements were often documented and played out in public forums such as the official CND magazine, *Sanity*. Groups such as the women at Greenham had no such organisation and only sporadic newsletters, preferring instead to operate a form of distributed leadership that was by nature less traceable. Consequently the true extent of support for Greenham has not yet been established, nor has its internal workings been critically reviewed. As a result, actively seeking out the narratives of the women is crucial if we are to place them not only in the context of the Cold War, but also in relation to the wider Peace Movement and Women’s Movement as a whole. Historians such as Taylor, Elgin and Hinton, broadly supported the women’s motives but found it hard to reconcile the separatism of Greenham with their own anti-nuclear activism. Others, such as Liddington, found themselves caught in a desire to promote a new outlet for feminism in recognition that internal splits and divisions risked the movement’s future, ultimately resulting in a less critical analysis which others such as Jolly have begun to challenge. Therefore, moving the history of Greenham forward requires further exploration of several critical themes. These include male exclusion, interaction with groups such as CND, imposed divisions from within, as well as an exploration of the multiple identities of participants as they crossed between the various peace groups and encountered other external influences. Though much of these were contentious

⁵¹ Monica Patricia Shaw, “Women in Protest and Beyond: Greenham Common and Mining Support Groups,” (PhD Theses, Durham University, 1993), 3, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5651.3>.

⁵² Graham Stewart, *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013).

questions during the 1980s and 1990s, it is possible for many of these issues to now be explored without the heat and passion of being a contemporary bearing down, as it potentially has done to date.

It is also pertinent to looking forward briefly to current academic work in progress. This includes work conducted by Christoph Laucht of Swansea University, which conceptualises the 1980s anti-nuclear campaigns of the medical profession as a form of “professional activism.” In this analysis medics, driven by the ethos of their profession, used their expert authority as a platform from which to speak out against the threat of nuclear arms. In addition, and following in the footsteps of the Greenham activist Gwyn Kirk’s work on eco-feminism and environmental justice,⁵³ Paul Sims has conducted PhD research into the development of environmental politics in post-war Britain from an anti-nuclear perspective.⁵⁴

It is envisaged therefore that this thesis looking at the narratives of Greenham adds to this growing body of historical analysis by emphasising how varied the debates were and how difficult peace activism could be as a consequence.

Greenham in other academic disciplines

The preceding analysis demonstrated that Greenham and the post-war peace campaigns remains an emerging field of exploration for historians, which is perhaps unsurprising in that it is still a relatively recent event. Possibly more surprising is how other academics have viewed and utilised the existing narratives, particularly those of Greenham, in their analysis and theorising.

In 1988, the first major academic piece of work was submitted for a PhD by Alison Young, a criminal sociologist. Subsequently published as a full length book, *Femininity in Dissent*, Young adopted a postmodern approach to reviewing the portrayal of Greenham women by the media. By examining how the definitions of normal and deviant were constructed in connection with the Greenham women, Young argued these literary devices were utilised in order to provoke a particular reaction against the women, as deviants and subsequently criminals.⁵⁵ Young’s text progressed to “reveal the lines of division conventionally drawn within contemporary society: normal/abnormal, criminal/law-abiding, good/evil, mad/sane,” and to examine the consequences of these constructed divisions.⁵⁶ Overall this work utilised Greenham as a case study in order to present an early example of deconstructive theory whilst simultaneously exposing the mechanics

⁵³ Gwyn, Kirk. “Eco-Feminism and Environmental Justice.”

⁵⁴ Paul Sims, “Contested Modernity and the Growth of Environmental Politics in Britain.” Unpublished thesis, (Queen Mary University of London, School of Politics and International Relations).

⁵⁵ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*, 59.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*3.

of the opposition to Greenham. This was remarkable not only in what it was able to demonstrate, but also because it emerged at a point in time when postmodernism was far from an accepted method of analysis within the academy. Indeed it was a few years later that historians publically engaged in a heated debate over the linguistic turn. This theme of the media and Greenham would subsequently be taken up by several others but Young remains the pioneer of much that would follow.⁵⁷

Following in Young's footsteps, Tim Cresswell, a geographer also began to utilise some of the new theories of post-structuralist analysis.⁵⁸ Using Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque, referring to moments when traditional rules and order are put aside and the world is turned upside down and the routines of daily life are absent, he demonstrated how the women of Greenham employed this as a technique to thwart the authorities and subvert the 'normal' in order to undermine the patriarchy. He also went on to consider how Greenham illustrated the significance of the concept of 'place' where it represented something deviant because it was 'out of place'. Women were living outside in camps independently of men, children and the accepted norms of Western society. As a result they posed a threat to established society as a direct consequence of the *place* they were in.

Sasha Roseneil, another sociologist, and former resident of the Green Gate camp, is perhaps the most prolific published author of the Greenham protest. Up to and following work on her thesis completed in 1994, there are numerous journal articles, several chapter contributions and two academic books. All deal almost exclusively with feminist discourse development utilising Greenham as a case study. After 2000 Greenham fades from her focus slightly, but re-emerges in 2009-13 when, after becoming involved in an archaeological dig at Turquoise Gate, she was compelled to revisit her involvement with Greenham and in the process some of the assumptions held about the ecological feminism that Greenham embodied. In this process of re-engagement with her previous work, she openly acknowledged that she had "endeavoured to insert Greenham in the historical record of radical dissent and social movements."⁵⁹ Indeed throughout her career Roseneil has been particularly keen to establish how the women-only ethos, stripped of patriarchal structures successfully destabilised the 'normal' as defined by established society at the time, thereby arguing for a reading of Greenham "as an early instantiation [*sic*] of queer

⁵⁷ Reference to J. Emberley, and D. Landry, "Coverage of Greenham and Greenham as Coverage," *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 3, (1989): 485-98;

Nick Couldry, "Disrupting the media frame at Greenham Common: A new chapter in the History of Mediations?" *Media, culture & society* 21, no.3 (1999): 337-358.

⁵⁸ Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*, 128.

⁵⁹ Sasha Roseneil, "Situating the Greenham Archaeology: An Autoethnography of a Feminist Project," *Public Archaeology* 8, nos.2-3 (2009): 225-245.

feminism.”⁶⁰ In this therefore her work expanded on that begun by Young’s analysis of the media portrayal of deviance at Greenham.

Queer theory, “an offshoot of postmodernism [that] aims to deconstruct and confound normative categories of gender and sexuality, exposing their fundamental unnaturalness”⁶¹ is largely concerned with the debunking of stable identities such as sex, gender and sexuality particularly from a lesbian and gay reworking. It contends that these concepts can exist only as a constellation of multiple unstable socially constructed positions and as such they can be deconstructed or inverted. Roseneil’s central position therefore was that Greenham enabled a space for women to explore their own desires and instincts in more depth and was particularly relevant in the construction and subsequent normalisation of lesbian identities previously considered ‘deviant’. In this analysis, she placed significant prominence on women undergoing “transformations in consciousness and identity” whilst at Greenham.⁶² Her evaluation applauded this aspect of Greenham, but in so doing largely overlooked the experience of any other and in particular the heterosexual and single woman, unless referred to in relation to the identity of the lesbian woman. In this approach Roseneil demonstrated similarities to the historian Sheila Jeffries who, writing in the mid-1980s about single women up to the 1930s, also propelled lesbian identity to the fore by eclipsing all others.⁶³ The approach of both Roseneil and Jeffries subscribed to the strand of feminism that declared heterosexuality to be a construct of patriarchy in order to hold women in subordination. Women could therefore reject this subordination by consciously changing what was deemed ‘normal’. The rejection of the heterosexual identity of women was a theme discussed in much of the Women’s Liberation material of the 1970s and 1980s. Consequently, in this context it is evident that Roseneil was determined to add to the historical record and demonstrate in the immediate post-script to Greenham that it was a pivotal moment in the fight against patriarchal norms. As such she asserted that at Greenham, the women not only matched up to, but progressed, the ideals proclaimed by those from the earlier Women’s Liberation movement. In the process they brought about emancipation for many individual women by demonstrating the deconstruction of heterosexuality and the normalisation of lesbian relationships in public.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ S. Wilkinson and C. Kitzinger, “Dire Straits? Contemporary Rehabilitations of Heterosexuality,” in G. Griffin, et al., eds. *Stirring it: Challenges for Feminism*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 75-91.

⁶² Sasha Roseneil, “Feminist political action: The case of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp,” PhD Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, (1994), 11.

⁶³ Sheila Jeffries, *The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930*. (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1997).

⁶⁴ Sasha Roseneil, “Situating the Greenham Archaeology” 225-245.

However, the space allocated to non-lesbian Greenham women by Roseneil is either away from the camps, where they can continue as housewives, mothers and ‘grannies for peace’ or at Greenham as disillusioned left wingers who, she implies, can only find political inspiration and fulfilment in a separatist, lesbian feminist environment. Roseneil’s emphasis therefore largely aligned with the strand of lesbian feminism that argued the more radical and separatist a woman was, the more she outwardly demonstrated her feminism and illustrated her rejection of the patriarchal system, which heterosexual women inherently contribute to and thus perpetuate. Therefore it is evident that whilst Roseneil’s analysis indicated how women at Greenham began to recognise lesbianism as a natural possibility through their work against nuclear weapons, it essentially marginalised women who did not identify themselves with this particular form of feminism at Greenham. Consequently there are those who are included and those who are actively excluded in this analysis.

This exclusion of specific players in the story, or rather the de-legitimising of particular stories, is also evident in another way in Roseneil’s analysis. In her book *Disarming Patriarchy* (2006) she appeared to dispute both the chronological start and end dates for the protest. Whilst historians like Liddington, had traced the protest beginnings to September 1981 with the arrival of the women from Cardiff, Roseneil argued that this action was merely the catalyst for the ‘real’ protest that began in earnest from February 1982, when the women present at that point made the first step towards a declaration of a feminist intention and excluded the few men who were living at the camps. This she maintained was the moment at which everything really began. This she further emphasised by openly criticising and naming those who complained the feminism of the campaign ‘betrayed’ their vision.⁶⁵ This was a clear attempt to lessen the influence of these alternative narratives, moreover it was an attack levelled at historians who she argued failed to recognise the complexity of the campaign by focusing upon the dates and the initial players in the drama. However it could also be deemed a twist of the plot being created in Roseneil’s narrative to strengthen her case that Greenham was a feminist and a lesbian awakening, rather than a straightforward campaign against weapons of mass destruction, much like those that had happened in other periods in Britain (as will be explored further in Chapter 3). Roseneil also challenged the end date of the protest. As indicated in the account given at the beginning of this chapter, the last two camps at Greenham were at the Blue and Yellow gates. They were however completely separate protest groups after the notorious split in 1987, and as such the date ‘selected’ to end the story of the protest was shown by Roseneil’s analysis to be dependent upon which side of the split an author aligned themselves. Giving no explanation in her text for her

⁶⁵ Roseneil, S. *Disarming Patriarchy*.

decision Roseneil chose to end the campaign in 1994, the point when the nuclear weapons left the site. On paper this appears a fairly innocuous detail, and arguably only signified that the protest had changed its stated purpose at that point, but in terms of establishing the legitimacy of narrative and which versions are given precedence it was a clear signal. For those associated with Yellow gate until 2000 Roseneil had clearly dealt a blow, suggesting that their version was somehow different and less representative. As a movement without any membership and no official records, Roseneil's analysis demonstrated how the 'facts' of Greenham were as vulnerable to challenge as any other narrative, but more importantly how realities could be constructed in order to establish certain narratives over all other possibilities.

Other researchers such as Margaret L. La'Ware and Christina Welch continued to support the 'persistent destabilising' analysis of Greenham.⁶⁶ Their work demonstrated the diverse and innovative ways that the women subverted language constructions, via the utilisation of myths, religion, spirituality and the visual in their protest actions to attack the authorities and the military. La'Ware emphasised the depth of symbolism in some of the women's actions from a literary perspective and illustrated the level of the performance involved with these. Unfortunately, however, the analysis gave no indication of how effective these actions were in terms of their audience. This lack of engagement with how 'outsiders' viewed the actions of the women is an important gap that requires some further research particularly as some participants did raise concerns that the symbolism had become too complex to have any impact.⁶⁷ Welch focused her research upon religious symbolism at Greenham. Whilst some mention was made regarding Christian activity at the camps, the paper was primarily dedicated to spiritualism and the way that traditional religion became subverted by the women through the development of eco-feminism, and the replacement of the Christian male deity with the goddess or mother earth. These are themes that will be explored further in the discussion in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

Overall it is evident how much of this Greenham specific analysis broadly followed the same discourses as those articulated and projected from the camps during the protest. Much of the camp literature also discussed these themes at length; consequently the conclusions reached by these academics are easily supported and they therefore appear relatively unproblematic. However as was suggested earlier, an analysis of the primary sources indicates that the texts created by the women during the campaign were distinctly self-aware and as such were actively and consciously framed by their authors to convey particular messages outwards. Consequently,

⁶⁶ La-ware, "Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red."

Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change at Greenham."

⁶⁷ Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunncliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011.

Elaine Titcombe, *Robin Sommers Interview*, January 19, 2011.

whilst the work of these academics is ground-breaking, particularly in establishing Greenham as an example of queer theory in action, it has some underlying weaknesses as a 'history', that have not yet been addressed.

The Greenham Metanarratives

According to Lyotard there are particular forms of metanarrative, some can be defined as the cultural stories passed from generation to generation which inform a society of the acceptable and the permitted as well as what actions are prohibited. Another form of metanarrative he referred to as the "grand narratives of modernity."⁶⁸ These he defined as the underlying and unquestionable ideas expressed in particular narratives that depict human progress. They point towards a future in which the problems a society faces will be resolved. This may be through the acquisition of knowledge through an evaluation of new ideas against an existing accumulation of knowledge, for instance a scientific discovery, or alternatively the use of knowledge as the basis of human emancipation and freedom from oppression.

Knowledge finds its validity not within itself, not in a subject that develops by actualising its learning possibilities, but in a practical subject – humanity. The principle of the movement animating the people is not the self-legitimation of knowledge, but the self-grounding of freedom or, if preferred, its self-management. The subject is concrete, or supposedly so, and its epic is the story of its emancipation from everything that prevents it from governing itself.⁶⁹

Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the Marxist grand narrative whereby the workers are freed from the exploitation of their masters and are able to develop their own lives. Transferring this approach to Greenham can also be helpful. The Greenham narratives created by participants during and after the campaign abound with stories of women gaining enlightenment through the awakening of their feminist consciousness at the camps.

Of course I didn't know until I got here what things you can learn. It's about living differently. You get so trapped into this way you've got to be. The values you're supposed to have and everything. Your values change here and you're bound to take that back with you.⁷⁰

Living differently in a new society, it was claimed women could achieve their emancipation from patriarchy. This has been most clearly articulated in the work of Roseneil, where women and

⁶⁸ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 35.

⁷⁰ Unnamed woman, "Carry Greenham Home," directed by Beeban Kidron, National Film and Television School, 1983.

particularly lesbian women were able to live freely as themselves. However, it is possible to argue that this did not mean a continuity of how one had lived previously on the 'outside' but in a different physical place, or amongst different people. Instead it meant by definition 'performing the self' in an entirely different way. It was therefore always more than simply living apart from men as it also included the acceptance of a particular truth. It meant adherence to the belief that the rules of society on the 'outside' were always fundamentally constructed against women and that women would naturally behave differently if set free. The inherent problem with this was that this 'different way' could become a prescribed form of emancipation determined by those in control of the discourse. It was this issue that Freeman identified in "The tyranny of Structurelessness." A comparison would therefore be organisations on the Left who use Marxist ideology to ensure that members keep to the 'party' line.

Nowhere is the impact of this 'elite' form of control and the utilisation of meta-narrative at Greenham more blatant than in the 2017 autobiography of Charlie Kiss, a vulnerable teenager who became increasingly confused as a consequence of attempting to live by the rules of the lesbian community.⁷¹ Later to become a trans-man, it is a powerful and disturbing account that presents a significant contradiction to the much celebrated positivity of lesbian identity at Greenham. In particular there is a level of violence and even abuse not often acknowledged elsewhere.⁷²

On the one hand therefore this narrative of emancipation, and freedom was certainly exciting and it held a promise for women that had hitherto been largely absent, but on the other it created a new set of rules for women to measure themselves against. Was one ever feminist enough?

Tracing the internal arguments between the various camps, particularly in the latter years when external popular support had waned, it is evident that transgressing the 'new' rules of the Greenham feminist meta-narrative that had been created, had significant consequences for participants. It could lead to bitter, hostile and personal attacks, much as Freeman had alluded to in her article during the early 1970s in relation to WLM, as previously outlined in the introduction⁷³ Perhaps the episode most illustrative of this is the 1987 split between Yellow Gate and the other remaining camps. Far from being the result of one incident as many of the Greenham histories have described, it was more likely the amalgamation of much underlying disagreement about what the Greenham metanarrative was, and the inherent lack of avenues

⁷¹ *A New Man: A memoir by Charlie Kiss*. (Leicestershire: Matador, 2017).

⁷² *Ibid.* 75-79.

⁷³ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."

available to participants to deal with their differences due to the informal structure of the movement and the lack of representatives.

Yellow Gate had become strongly associated with the Wages for Housework (WfH) and Black Women's Wages for Housework (BWWfH) campaigns and the King's Cross Women's Centre from which they operated under the leadership of Selma James and Wilmette Brown⁷⁴. These were groups who pre-dated Greenham and which had always had a tense relationship to feminism due to the way they were seen to endorse the traditional roles for women as nurturers, carers and home-makers. Heated debates had featured for instance during the 1970s and amongst some of those involved with WLM.⁷⁵ They argued that women would only be truly free when their work in the home was recognised as the basis of all industrial production and received a share of the world's resources through a wage for their work. Other feminist women argued this was at odds with the goal of emancipation from patriarchy arguing that it re-enforced gender divisions. As described by Sarah Hipperson in her autobiographical account in 2006, the impact of this dispute was long lasting:

There was the unstinting practical support ... given to us by the Wages for Housework Campaign, ...whose very name offended 'feminist' careerists within the women's peace movement, including as it does the word 'housework'. There were those who struggled with the political direction [of] Yellow Gate ...[which insisted] on a commitment to non-violent direct action rather than lifestyle politics ... The women [of Yellow Gate] ... were far too focused on our work against the Cruise Missile.⁷⁶

It is clear throughout her account that Hipperson's aim was to ensure that the Yellow Gate Camp was distinguished from all others. In this post millennium published version of the protest, it was irrelevant what all others claimed because the Yellow Gate focus was always on the 'real' reason for being there – to remove nuclear weapons. Thus, those with 'hidden agendas' were portrayed as those who questioned, then or subsequently, the authority of Yellow Gate to speak on behalf of Greenham.⁷⁷ On several other occasions, she referred to Yellow Gate as the original peace camp and the only one to have been constantly occupied throughout the nineteen years of

⁷⁴ Brown was also a controversial figure within CND by the late 1980s. This was highlighted in the *Yellow Gate Camp Newsletter*, September 5, 1988, 16.

⁷⁵ Some of these debates are contained in letters within the Ellen Malos collection held by Feminist Archive South.

⁷⁶ Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*.

⁷⁷ F. Shand 'Greenham Rifts: As Cruise's future looks uncertain, why are the women campers turning on each other?' *Marxism Today*, 31 November 1987. This suggested that the women at Yellow Gate had a sense of superiority, and that this was partially to blame for the 1987 split. This was re-iterated by Taylor, D. "When two tribes go to war," *The Guardian* February, 4 1999.

protest.⁷⁸ This too elevated Yellow Gate, and by implication its occupants, to the top of the hierarchy. The ‘others’ in Hipperson’s history were thus less deserving of esteem because they did not maintain a permanent presence. Their resolve and political basis could not therefore have been as robust as those at the main gate.⁷⁹ “

This is interesting given that in this construction of the Greenham protest, Hipperson presented a history that directly conflicted with the literature produced during the early years of the protest. This consistently emphasised the leaderless nature of Greenham and the high levels of respect that the women had for each other’s opinions at the camps. It was this, many argued, that made it necessary for the camp to be ‘women only’ as it was in this space that women could ‘find’ their voice.⁸⁰ What appears apparent therefore is that Hipperson, after the event (and in particular the 1987 split), was determined to ‘write out’ other versions in order to legitimise and propel that of the group she identified with to the fore. This was even if that meant betraying that the original outward ethos of the protest and any notion of a supportive ‘sisterhood’. This observation also supports the theories of Freeman that the informal framework of feminist protest is often a continuous struggle for power, but it is also evidence of how the story does not ever truly end either as the other theorists described in the introduction have argued.

It is striking that Hipperson disregarded the radical feminism of the campaign in her text. With reference to the WLM she stated that, “Greenham’s quarrel was not with the man next door and his ‘privileged’ life within the hierarchy/patriarchy.”⁸¹ Women who saw it in that way were, she suggested, missing the true point of Greenham. In the Hipperson version, the importance of Greenham was that it enabled the individual to bear witness to the immoral actions of the State:

Greenham challenged the State at its highest level. It struck at the heart of Her Majesty’s Government, at the politicians, the military, bureaucrats, the law, courts and prison systems. Women were prepared to take these on ... in defence of life itself.⁸²

In all of this Hipperson contrasts starkly with the Roseneil account which states that the ultimate aim of Greenham was not to effect change in the system by pointing to the errors in its ways, but instead to push for a re-write of the entire system from a feminist perspective.⁸³

It is in this episode of conflict that it is possible to catch a glimpse of the metanarratives that have underpinned accounts of the Greenham protest. Stepping beyond the boundaries of what

⁷⁸ Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*, 1, 10, 152 and 157.

⁷⁹ For other examples of this see Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*, 96-100, in reference to Orange and Woad Gate closures in 1987.

⁸⁰ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*.

⁸¹ Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*, 23.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

was 'permitted' undermined not only the whole basis of the protest but also its structure as a women's campaign. Why this mattered so much may also in part be explained by looking to how propaganda operates.

Greenham was a campaign first and foremost that sought to bring about change. In the first instance this was the removal of the nuclear weapons, but it also wanted to change the system that enabled the construction of the weapons at all. For many participants this was defined as patriarchy. The opponent was therefore the highly organised and well established 'State' in all its various forms. In order to have any chance of success the women involved had to be able to present a coherent case but this was not easy. The women were always a diverse group and though a few women were present for almost the whole length of the protest, in the main it was also an ever changing group. Without any leaders or structure to pass on to the next 'generation' of women the maintenance of a single and consistent narrative to explain the protest was of great importance. The only feasible way for this to operate was therefore through the construction of a grand narrative of explanation. To be at Greenham, to speak at Greenham, really meant being subservient to this narrative. To dispute this ran the risk that the whole protest could lose credibility as a 'movement' and always be doomed to fail.

As will be shown in the next chapter, it was not that women were forced to accept the meta-narrative, but working as a collective meant that those who could not were effectively silenced by the majority and pushed aside as unrepresentative. The impact on the history produced is therefore the propulsion of the accounts by those who felt included, because they 'spoke' in the accepted form, and the omission of those who could not conform to this.

Chapter 2

Greenham Men:

Constructions of masculinity and the narratives of exclusion

*No Cruise Please. There are Better Ways to prove your virility.*¹

One of the most distinctive features of the Greenham protest is that it was declared women only. This chapter explores what that meant. It does so not only in terms of the men who had been involved in the lead up to the decision to exclude them and the various male supporters who provided practical assistance, but also how this storyline has subsequently been woven into the wider plot to uphold feminist interpretations of the protest. This is not to deny the enormously positive reactions that being women only inspired amongst many of the women, which are also discussed, but rather to explore how this turn in the deliberately projected narrative also served to exclude or delegitimise the voices of those who did not agree with the decision. It does not therefore only point to a few individual men involved, but also shows how more generally the various constructions of masculinity operated in relation to the feminist understandings of the issues and the impact this has had upon the wider history of the protest.

In much of the existing Greenham literature masculine identity has been used to convey opposition to the aims of feminist Greenham, and therefore it is most prominent in roles that are in direct contrast to the work of the camp, such as soldiers or police for example. Conversely the male sympathiser has rarely been referred to beyond playing an inconsequential part, the bringer of supplies or the child-carer enabling female participation by acting as an obliging man. Where men are addressed directly in the camp literature, it is in the context of a supporting role of providing women with the space and means to attend Greenham.

The notable exception to this lack of men in the narrative was when men living at the camp were evicted by means of a vote by some of the women residents. This was a move depicted as a significant marker in the feminist version of the protest and has been used regularly to enforce the notion that there was a significant move to impose a feminist agenda at Greenham. It is scarcely ever mentioned that 4 men set off from Cardiff on the original march or that for a brief time a mixed camp, known as Rainbow Camp, was set up at Greenham. In addition, instances when men did attempt to join the protest have been ignored, as has any discussion about the

¹ Quote from a Greenham banner tied to the fence circa winter 1982. Published in *Marxism Today*, February 1983, 13. (News-cutting held in The Women's Library collection.)

extreme responses some have claimed this provoked from the women residents. There is also little or no reference to the claims of some women that they allowed their male partners to stay with them overnight at the camp, in direct opposition to the one 'rule' that they were all expected to abide by. The total silence of all of these men is conspicuous in virtually all the existing histories of the protest and this must be scrutinised.

Following on from the work of other historians, this silence requires some investigation. Sandra Stanley Holton for example has demonstrated how men were actively excluded from suffrage histories because their presence "continually undermine[d]' the 'suffragette identity ... and rhetoric of female rebellion" created by members of some organisations.² Another interesting consideration by Laura Ugolini³ showed how support for the cause of women's rights often conflicted with the other interests of male supporters, for instance their commitment to socialism. This may also be relevant as the protest narratives shifted further towards a feminist rather than socialist emphasis at Greenham.⁴

The following chapter gives evidence that some men from Wales fought hard for the Greenham cause. Their activities included public declarations, questions raised in Parliament, as well as practical help which was not only offered, but also accepted. Often completely silent in the histories of the campaign, the actions of these men add an alternative view to the story of Greenham. This chapter also explores the place of emotion in oral history to inform the historical debate, as some men were left with strong feelings of rejection and resentment after their interactions with some of the women at the camp. These feelings potentially intensified over time due to the lack of space openly available to them to discuss what this meant for them. Drawing again upon 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' it also considers whether separatism at Greenham to the creation of a 'society' which in the end was no less discriminatory than the patriarchal one it claimed to have replaced. The analysis therefore challenges the feminist creation of the masculine character at Greenham, and reveals the extent that the political narratives worked to alienate some men and women who were not prepared to submit to the will of the collective, and who were determined instead to challenge the assumption of its authority.

² Sandra Stanley Holton, "Reflecting on suffrage history," in Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan, and Laura Ugolini, eds. *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*. (London: Leicester University Press, 2000) 20-36.

Angela V. John, and Claire Eustance, eds. *The Men's Share: Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890-1920*. (London: Routledge, 1997). 110-134.

³ Laura Ugolini, "It's only justice to grant women's suffrage: Independent Labour Party Men and Women's Suffrage, 1893-1905," in Eustance, *Suffrage Reader*, 126-140.
John, *The men's share: masculinities*, 62-87.

⁴ Shaw, "Women in protest and beyond"

Greenham becomes 'Women Only'

It is well recognised that the protest at Greenham quickly developed into a peace camp that was not just led by women, but which was exclusively for women only. The decision in February 1982 to evict and exclude men has been pinpointed as the signifier of a definitive turn to gender politics in the protest. This was not simply because it created a single sex group, a fact which alone does not confer a particular outlook or politics, but rather because it revealed how the politics of Greenham were shifting and “becoming feminist.”⁵

Never absent, this crucial storyline has not however received particular attention as a narrated event, and as a consequence it has not been considered specifically in terms of its performance as a literary device, or as a central and ever-present plotline. A theme utilised, not simply to define the space or direction of the protest at one specific moment in time, but as a critical denominator in shaping the overall politics and in conferring judgements of legitimacy or illegitimacy thereafter. This, it will be shown, enabled certain individuals to gain a more authentic voice, whilst simultaneously closing out alternative evaluations as somehow irrelevant or not expressive of the ‘right’ or ‘true’ meaning of Greenham. Drawing attention to how men have been constructed and what kind of characterisations were permitted for them, and the women who supported them, the analysis in this chapter demonstrates how a reflection upon the women-only narrative, and the inclusion of previously disallowed accounts, adds new depths to the knowledge of the protest.

In unpicking the mechanics of this complex plot formation it is therefore necessary to look closely at the beginning of the story, paying particular attention to where the men are and what they are shown to be doing in the various accounts, as well as the emergent feminist narrations and tracking their development as the protest persisted.

Men at the back!

Beginning with the march from Cardiff to Greenham by the WFLOE group in August 1981 it is known that 4 men began with the women, with two more participating at some point along the way, though not necessarily for the whole of the 110 mile march. Conceived of and organised as a ‘women's initiative’ the pre-publicity had sanctioned this limited male involvement by suggesting that men would be welcome to show support by walking alongside the women for part of the way, provided they accepted that only women would lead the procession, take decisions and act as spokespersons for the marchers.⁶ However, this ambiguity of definition according to the main

⁵ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 63.

⁶ Thomas, *Hanes Llanpumpsaint*, 42.

organiser of the march, Ann Pettitt, quickly resulted in the women being entreated by two of the young men to be allowed to continue along the whole route.⁷ As she later explained, this was because the march provided an outlet for people, especially those who had little previous political experience, who simply wanted to adopt a direct action approach to raise their objection to the weapons:

They had been along to Cardiff CND...but ...the experience had been bewildering. “Nobody seemed to want to talk to us, all they did was argue among themselves...You people are what we’ve been looking for, you’re doing something that makes sense – we’ll babysit while you have meetings, we’ll stay at the back, we’ll do anything – please can we stay?”⁸

The WFLOE group did not particularly align themselves with any feminist ideology, though they were absolutely resolute that it should be a women’s campaign in recognition that women’s voices had been closed out of the official debate within Government and at the selected Universities, but also from within the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). As a consequence they agreed that the men could continue, provided they remained in the background. Any small move to the foreground was vehemently refused as one woman later interviewed for this thesis recalled.⁹ Another woman, interviewed by David Fairhall, also claimed that upon returning from a supply trip in the van and finding two of the men right at the front ‘absurdly’ carrying the ‘Women for Life on Earth’ banner, they screeched to a halt and cried, “Stop! Give that banner to the women. Get to the back, and don’t ever let me see you at the front again.”¹⁰ So whilst the men were not at this point being entirely excluded from the action they were nevertheless being kept firmly in place by the women. Their role was essentially a domestic one and as such there was arguably an element of role reversal. However, it must be pointed out that these men were all fairly young comparatively speaking to the principal women leading the march, and consequently it must also be acknowledged that the relationship was conceivably akin to that of a parent and an adult child. This is an important observation, and one which was mentioned during two of the interviews conducted for this thesis, as it was a dynamic that would have consequences for the men later on as the protest evolved.¹¹ Overall the men were considered to have been generally happy to remain in a subordinate role, and as no real tensions between them and the women can be traced, they appear to have acted on the whole as they were requested.

⁷ One of whom was called Steve. See Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 154.

⁸ Ibid. 51.

⁹ Elaine Titcombe, *Janet Tyrell Interview*, August 22, 2011.

¹⁰ Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 6.

¹¹ Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunnicliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011.

Elaine Titcombe, *Janet Tyrell Interview*, August 22, 2011.

One incident that illustrated the way that the participating men fully respected that the protest was women led was revealed in an interview with one of the first few women to arrive at the base in support of the WFLOE marchers after they had set up camp. Annie Tunnicliffe was someone who had been involved in street theatre long before Greenham and consequently she and a male friend, Colin decided to create a performance for *The Guardian* newspaper to report in order to create some headlines a few weeks into the camps. He consequently created a “beautifully crafted cardboard missile” which they were to present to the base Commander, however at the last minute some of the women decided that as a man he could not be involved unless he dressed up in a radiation suit to hide his face. He agreed and the story was reported as “the women delivered a Cruise Missile to the base.” Hidden from view at the time, and until recently still invisible in the story, this man made no attempt to thwart the desire of the women to keep up the appearance of it being a women’s campaign.¹²

Interestingly, though not confirmed, it is also possible that one of the men photographed at the camp in the early days looking after the children, would subsequently leave Greenham to become involved in the CND Bridgend bunker peace camp which began in late January 1982, just days before the men were asked to leave Greenham.¹³ As will be discussed later in the thesis, the Bridgend action was to be an important event in the history of the Greenham protest. This was because several of the women involved there subsequently became instrumental in moving the Greenham protest to a more direct action phase as they moved to occupy the Sentry Box in late 1982.

These few men were not the only ones professed to have experienced a form of societal role reversal as a consequence of their involvement at Greenham. As Karmen Thomas (nee Cutler) later pointed out, there were several men assuming a domestic role in the background. Husbands and partners were at home taking care of the children and household matters whilst the women walked.¹⁴ Indeed this narrative appears regularly amongst the memories recorded. There was,

¹² Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunnicliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011.

Annie Tunnicliffe, “That’s me in the picture: People were looking for a focus for their anxieties, and Greenham was it,” *The Guardian*, May 6, 2016, accessed May 6, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/may/06/greenham-common-protest-1981-remembered>.

¹³ There is a likeness in the two photographs, “Steve from Cardiff” in Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 154 and the “Peace Camp Coordinator Steve Samuel” in Tony Simpson, *No Bunkers Here: A successful non-violent action in a Welsh Community*, (Merthyr Tydfil: Peace News & Mid Glamorgan CND, 1982), 29.

¹⁴ Undercurrents Foundation, Karmen, Cutler/Thomas Interview for Interview for *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, Undercurrents Foundation, December, 2004, VHS. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

therefore, a distinct and practical reason why many of the women had no desire, or need, to alienate any men by steadfastly asserting or imposing a women-only stance.

One of these other husbands at home in Pembrokeshire was Ian Campbell, whose wife Thalia and teenage daughter Lucy, were amongst the last to be invited to join the WFLOE march. The Campbell's had both been acquainted with Ann Pettitt through prior anti-nuclear activities in Wales (though it is worthy of note that they were not necessarily in total alignment either in politics or approach). Indeed the Campbell's had a long association with various campaigns, a number of which related specifically to Wales, stretching back over many years. Born in 1936, Ian also had strong connections to the Labour Party, several Trade Unions and some socialist groups over an extensive period. Whilst most of the Greenham histories record that the women received very little publicity or media attention whilst on their march, despite their best efforts to stir up interest along the way, it is not recorded that Ian also attempted to use his long-standing media and newspaper contacts to try to get them some publicity. Spending hours calling both *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* from his home in Wales, he was however disappointed. Despite being as unsuccessful as the women in attracting attention to the march, what must be acknowledged is that he was making the attempt at a positive contribution to the action. His was therefore an active form of participation, in the same way that it would be for any of the women engaged in the same activity.¹⁵

Likewise Ian's version of events recorded in 1992 for the Imperial War Museum oral history collection also appear to suggest that he believed he had played a far greater role in the protest than any other account has ever attributed to any man. His account could of course have been excluded due to inaccuracy, or he may indeed have been one of the men that the women later writing the campaign history objected to. He could conceivably for instance have made attempts to impose his vision, or drive the protest in particular directions. It is interesting however that instead of being the subject of an open deliberation, his version has been utterly silenced in favour of the more popularised accounts where only women can be seen to have taken initiatives. He simply does not feature at all. In Ian's story however it is claimed that he played a central role in several notable aspects of the camp's development. He often utilised his standing as a Trade Unionist to glean vital pieces of information from the Authorities at the base, and he applied his survival training to enable the camp to survive the first, and extremely bitter, winter of 1981/2. But perhaps most controversially he also laid claim to a much greater involvement in transforming the camp to a women-only campaign. Before turning to this however, it is necessary to consider

¹⁵ Ian Campbell interview Imperial War Museum, July 6, 1992.

how this particular event has hitherto been written into the Greenham story, so that the extent of difference can be made clear.

Men must GO!

The pivotal decision to exclude the men took effect on Monday February 1st 1982, four months after the arrival at the base of the WFLOE marchers which had included a small number of male supporters. The culmination of several days of discussion and a particularly heated weekend of debate, it was a tactical decision that arose at that moment in reaction to the impending threat of eviction from the Newbury District Council. It also occurred only days after an action when, “two of the men at the camp were arrested for painting designs on one of the gates to the base.”¹⁶ This was an exploit which had not only brought attention to the men present at camp, because it was a much more active involvement than perhaps the women were happy to accept, but also because some women indicated it was a more aggressive incident than any that had previously occurred. The decision that the men would have to leave was thus explained as the answer to a concern that a male presence amongst the protestors, if an eviction was to take place, could invoke a violent confrontation with the Authorities, especially if the men attempted to protect the women. As Sue Lamb, from Rhondda (and later Pembrokeshire), rationalised in 2004:

It was a pragmatic and practical decision. Because police were actually using it at the time, they would aggravate a woman in front of her partner. The man would lose it, and we were going to end up being connected with those sorts of ... you know arrests for breach of the peace, in a way that we didn't want it. It wasn't of our choosing. We were being manipulated through it, and that's why the camp became women only.¹⁷

The decree itself occurred when the women physically present, and who were actually living at the camp, gathered together in a caravan away from the few men who had also made the camp their home, and voted for Greenham to become a women-only space. Upon their return to the wider group, which also included some female visitors who had been excluded from the final decision making deliberations, the men were asked to leave the camps for an initial two week trial period. During this time, the subsequent press release proclaimed, they were “welcome to continue their support ... off site and to keep in contact.”¹⁸ It was also suggested that they could

¹⁶ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 31.

¹⁷ Undercurrents Foundation, Sue Lamb Interview for *Greenham: The Making of a Monument*, Undercurrents Foundation, December, 2004, VHS.

Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

¹⁸ “Women’s Peace Camp Greenham Common Press Release,” February, 1982, reprinted in Lynne Jones, ed. *Keeping the Peace*, 87.

set up their own protest¹⁹, or join in with the initiatives of ‘mixed’ groups elsewhere – it was a proposition which would be re-iterated many more times as the debate became more heated and moved beyond the few who were present on the day. Whilst initially this was presented as a temporary and very reasonable, sensible request to the men present at the site, the promised review of the situation a fortnight later confirmed the position would be made permanent. Partly in answer to practical concerns and partly as a concession to prevent accusations of divisiveness, it was agreed that men could still visit during the day to provide support to the women.

The men, some of whom had already made a substantial commitment to the camps by living there permanently during the extremely harsh winter, were reported to have been understandably wounded by this decision. One woman recalled that, “the nice men were deeply upset, scarred by it.”²⁰ However it was the visible reactions to the communication (a hastily composed and read out ‘group statement’) by some of the men present that became so important in the subsequent recounts. Though the versions of the story do vary, with some more dramatic and arguably violent than others, they are often utilised to imply that the women’s fears had been justified and the decision therefore appropriate. In the account published in 1984, and reiterated in 1995, one man reportedly picked up an axe and started demolishing a structure he had built, shouting wildly that no one else could use it if he could not. Another man either knocked thoughtlessly against or purposefully tipped a boiling water pot over Helen John as he sprang up in anger.²¹ “All hell was let loose. The men went completely mad. Their worst elements came out.”²² One of these men was also reported to be an ‘expert’ in self-control, with specialist knowledge of performing non-violent direct actions and the avoidance of confrontation with the police – an anecdote not told without a taste of irony.²³ It was also said that abuse and allocations were hurled at the women as the men and their supporters demanded an explanation. They wanted to know if those who took the decision wanted a separatist protest. For some it would be a step that would alienate allies. How did they think CND would carry on funding them if they were separatist?²⁴ The women however became resolute and the men eventually packed their things and left. The Women’s Peace Camp had been born.

The Men are gone

Also referenced in Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 32.

²⁰ Fran DeAth, “Fran DeAth about the early days at Greenham Common,” *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015. <https://soundcloud.com/radiochitchat/fran-death-re-greenham-common-jan-2015>.

²¹ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 32.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

²² Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 32.

²³ Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 26.

²⁴ Jones, *Keeping the Peace*, 86-89.

A story often told, or perhaps more specifically a story often re-told, this is a crucial part of the Greenham history. Setting the scene for the actions that would follow, it is a narrative that performs a function of primary importance in every description of Greenham. By publicly excluding the men it guaranteed that the focus would from that point always be fixed upon women. It is therefore the contextual detail that simply cannot be omitted. Sometimes it is no more than a carefully worded sentence, such as that in the 1995 publication by Yellow Gate women which emphasised the move was a “majority decision.”²⁵ Other accounts extend this to a few paragraphs but no more. Overall it is overwhelmingly described in affirmative or celebratory terms. Depicted as, “an epiphanic moment”²⁶ underpinned by “a number of sound reasons,”²⁷ a decision “made for political and practical reasons,” but which was above all “immensely liberating and inspiring”,²⁸ Undermining “dominant gender relations”²⁹ it was “empowering to women,”³⁰ whilst providing the means to make “a strong and affirmative message” in support of a female “nonhierarchal minisociety.”³¹ For though it is generally conceded that the decision to evict the men arose almost inadvertently in reaction to the threat of eviction, the move has nevertheless become widely acclaimed as a fortuitous and formative event for the development of a feminist interpretative standpoint. As one woman later reflected, “I didn’t realise for quite a while that the camp had to be women-only. Then it suddenly sank in and it became obvious that it was the right thing to do.”³² This was perhaps particularly inevitable, “in the face of criticism that something calling itself a ‘women’s peace camp’ included men.”³³

This however also enabled the protest to begin to become synonymous with the development of feminist “collective identity.”³⁴ It was suggested that this allowed women the space to develop their collective understandings, alongside “their increasing sense of personal power.”³⁵ Multiple academics, such as Young, Roseneil, La Ware, Freigenbaum, Cockburn,³⁶ have subsequently supported this view that the “decision transformed the Women’s Peace Camp into a feminist

²⁵ Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*, X.

²⁶ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

²⁷ Cockburn, C. *Anti-Militarism*, 38.

²⁸ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*, 31.

²⁹ Cockburn, *Anti-Militarism*, 38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*, 102.

³² Jayne Burton quoted in Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 32.

³³ Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, 236.

³⁴ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cockburn, *Anti-Militarism*.

Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

La-ware, “Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red.”

space of public action and self-discovery for women who sought to challenge the course of nuclear strategy and military policy and wider systems of patriarchal control.”³⁷

Patriarchy, Militarism and Violence

The exclusion of the men has therefore been taken to be representative of a growing understanding amongst participants that their campaign was more than an attempt to prevent Cruise or even a nuclear war. Instead it enabled the protest to become defined as a struggle against a broader explanation of militarism. A perception that increasingly began to incorporate an analysis of gender:

For many women the issue is about reclaiming power for ourselves, and not remaining victims of a male-defined world characterised by violence...it makes us angry ...and this anger has led many women to reject any involvement with men over this issue.³⁸

Increasingly expressed as the ultimate manifestation of male violence, underpinned by a society based upon patriarchy, the discourse surrounding the Cruise missiles thus began to incorporate ideas that stretched beyond Greenham as a location for their deployment under NATO, forming a much broader analysis of the condition of women’s daily lives.

We have grown up in a world where violence/domination is used to ‘solve’ problems both in the home and between groups of people called nations...Peace isn’t just about removing a few pieces of war furniture, or bringing about an international cease-fire; it is about the condition of our lives...For generations we have stored up our rage against men, whether they were our fathers, bosses or our husbands. These are the relationships in which we all too often feel personally powerless. And for generations we have missed out on the love of other women. The chance to choose for ourselves, free of men’s expectations and demands.³⁹

At their most radical, though no account ever suggests that all Greenham women connected with these ideas, discursive links began to be made to align masculine authoritarianism in everyday life to the justifications given for war (hot or cold).

Cruise missiles are only the tip of the iceberg. All that has led to their invention has to be tackled too if disarmament is to be possible and permanent. The connections between the nuclear arms race and the structure of our society need to be clarified. ... Patriarchy literally means father rule – and once you spot it, it never goes away...Peace is the absence of greed

³⁷ La-ware, “Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red,” 20.

³⁸ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*, 87.

³⁹ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 2-4.

and domination by a few over the rest of us. So the fight is bigger and longer than we thought!⁴⁰

Patriarchy as a system was recognised to confer upon men the duty to protect the women in their care / possession from all harm; it was this broadly defined notion that allowed men an elevated status within society.⁴¹ This potential for harm, however, once broken down to its core, it was reasoned could only conceivably originate from other men. Therefore the male duty was fundamentally to protect his subordinates from the harm that his peers would inevitably inflict.

War, it could be contended, was generally justified as the collective protection of the weak from an undesirable aggressor. Consequently, if “there is always that feeling that women and children have to be defended”⁴², the justification for the use of extreme violence, such as nuclear weapons, was no more than the extension of the everyday patriarchal duty of men. To lose the battle would however be to surrender, albeit without consent, those in whose defence the war had been fought into the possession of the enemy. The implications of this discursive linking was that, if men were protecting women by going to war they were also akin to those defined as aggressors in so far that they also threatened other men’s women. Under this code, in becoming victorious they too would be entitled to the spoils of war. This it was argued by some of the women could be evidenced by the “the systematic association of rape with victory.”⁴³ In the context of the 1980s this would have been substantiated by events such as the notorious My Lai Massacre of 1968 during the Vietnam War. As a result some women began to argue that all men posed an inherent threat to all women. This was a view expressed by one interviewee for this project. A 79 year old woman with extensive experience of work in a women’s refuge and a survivor of domestic abuse in her own life these connections made perfect sense.⁴⁴

This was a similar discourse which many radical feminists involved with WLM had also adopted in relation to other violations against women, particularly domestic violence and rape. By building upon the potential for violence against women by men through war, discursive linkages to domestic violence therefore also became evident in the Greenham debate. Aside from any personal experiences suffered by any of the women in their own lives, a factor which certainly influenced one of the interviewees for this project, it was often the sexualised warnings or taunts

⁴⁰ Ibid. 2-3.

⁴¹ Marilyn French, *The Women's Room* (London: Virago, 1977).

Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

⁴² Helen John quoted in Sarah Benton, “A New Force for the Land,” *Marxism Today*, February, 1983, 8.

⁴³ Fanny and Annie, “Women only at Greenham,” printed in *Anti-nuclear Action: Discussion Magazine for Socialists and Feminists*, no.1 (1983), 4.

⁴⁴ Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

levelled at the protestors by soldiers and others that drew attention to how threats of violence were indeed every-day and commonplace for those deemed to be acting in deviance. Even well-intentioned warnings that the women should withdraw their protest because, “it being Saturday night, the Jack Daniels would be flowing, and they might be raped by drunken Americans”⁴⁵ or the harassment endured by the women at the camps from the male military inside the base reported by Caroline Blackwood’s, demonstrated the role played by the perpetual forewarning of violence aimed as a punishment against women who were deemed to have stepped out of line:

We had such an awful night with the soldiers. They abused us all night. They just wouldn’t stop. It was sexual, of course. It’s always sexual The foulness of their language as they shouted at the peace women befouled them ... They seemed be-splattered with their own oaths and spoiled by their own sordid fantasies ... bellowing their horrible obscenities... the peace women brought out everything that was sadistic and infantile in these men.⁴⁶

It was a language that has most vividly been brought to life in Tony Harrison’s, ‘The Common Chorus’ published in 1991 as a reworked version of the ancient play, *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes set outside Greenham. Arguing that heterosexual women could achieve their goals by withdrawing entirely from the males in society – a suggestion put forward by several self-defined radical feminist women during the period of WLM⁴⁷, it utilised the language and tone of a USAF song book (which was for sale to the men at Upper Heyford). In doing so, Harrison graphically illustrated Blackwood’s account of the linguistic violence of the protest at Greenham in his play. Read a quarter of a century later the result is a shocking awareness of what the women often claimed to have endured on a daily basis. The language used in the play is starkly brutal and utterly offensive. This is an important contextualisation because the actual detail of the abuse is almost entirely absent from the protest literature and the women’s own recounts. They do not recite the taunts for the historian, but only record the fact that they took place. To an extent therefore Harrison’s fictional text fills this gap in the history and in so doing it succeeds in revealing the possible extent of the sex war taking place at the fence in a way that the women’s own accounts fail to do. It is with the recognition of the intensity of the sexually abusive language used that historians potentially gain an insight into how and why the feminist arguments of Greenham developed and evolved as they did. Rather than an arbitrary set of ideas derived

⁴⁵ Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 7.

⁴⁶ Blackwood, *On the Perimeter*. 14

⁴⁷ Hannah Kanter et al., eds. *Sweeping Statements: Writings from the Women’s Liberation Movement 1981-83*, (London: The Women’s Press, 1984).
Anna Coote, *Sweet Freedom* (London: Picador, 1982).

entirely from philosophical discussion or the experience of separatist living, the shift in the reasoning at Greenham emerges as the consequence of a very active altercation at the fence.

In this context, it is apparent how effortlessly domestic violence could therefore be understood to be the threat that all men held over all women in order to maintain their patriarchal control, by preventing digression and dissent: “To feminists ...they see domestic violence as an expression of the power that men wield over women, in a society where female dependence is built into the structure of everyday life.”⁴⁸

Understood entirely in binary terms such as power and control, strength and weakness, repressor and oppressed, nuclear weapons were therefore representations of the same male patriarchal violence that enabled women to be beaten up and/or sexually abused (physically or verbally) by ordinary men. It was unsurprising to therefore uncover the same threat in existence within the Peace Movement itself. According to Anna Reading two alleged rapes at other mixed gender peace camps was another of the reasons why Greenham remained women-only.⁴⁹ Indeed in 1986, the Yellow Gate women recorded that there were “three women and four rapes” at the Molesworth Peace Camp.⁵⁰

Even if not always endorsed by some of the women, it was nevertheless a compelling reason to concede that the camps should be women-only, as Sue Lamb pointed out:

I had a lot of sympathy with women who chose or felt it necessary to become separatist. A lot of women have got horrific tales of violence and they’ve experienced a lot of horrors. If those women find it safer, and that their best means of expression is in a women-only community, then I believe that they should have a women only community.⁵¹

By equating the battle against nuclear weapons with a damning assessment of male conduct in other ways, the debates shifted so that they could also include political lesbianism as a potential solution:

Greenham is at the moment the most vigorous force for lesbian liberation in the world... We are saying ... nuclear missiles [are] the ultimate destructive expression of patriarchy. That the

⁴⁸ Ibid. 41.

⁴⁹ Anna Reading, “Singing for My Life: Memory, Nonviolence and the Songs of Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp,” in *Cultural Memories of Non-Violent Struggles: Powerful Times*, eds. Anna Reading, and Tamar Katriel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 148.

⁵⁰ Junor, Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp, 69.

⁵¹ Sue Lamb interviewed as part of the Making of a Monument documentary. ‘Greenham: The making of a monument’, Undercurrents Foundation, December, 2004, VHS. Available on YouTube; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

masculist values of warfare is the same mentality that creates pornography and racism. That rape of women goes hand in hand with ecological destruction of the earth and imperialism.”⁵²

Overall therefore, the decision in early 1982 was a principle and a fundamental moment for the protest, defining and explaining much that occurred subsequently. It not only ensured the focus remained upon women, but also enabled the establishment of a causal link between patriarchy and nuclear weapons. With the potential to lead any observer, contemporary or otherwise, into an understanding of the intensification of Cold War militarism as the direct consequence of male supremacy in the world, it was thus a straight forward step to recognise it as a situation which could only be altered by changing the social structures that enabled this perpetual domination.

Following the expulsion of the men from the protest the dominant representations of their sex appear in opposing roles such as soldiers, police, local councillors, court officials, bailiffs, vigilantes, and so forth. Furthermore as the men exit the story, any female supporters of continued, albeit limited male participation in the campaign against the weapons, are also presumed to want to move onto mixed demonstrations being held in alternative locations, such as Molesworth or Upper Heyford.⁵³ This was an important point to add into the narration as it ensured that any women who subsequently arrived would have been aware of the separatist nature of the camps, thereby enabling the idea of consensus and a collective to become firmly established within successive narratives. As one woman, present at the time explained, “when it became women-only, more of the men-hating women...I call them ‘cut-the-balls-off fascist feminists’... started arriving at the camp.”⁵⁴

As an underlying plotline therefore it is evident that as more sympathetic women left and more separatist women arrived, the narrative had shifted establishing a new dominant code. In placing the emphasis on how the decision enabled the protest to proceed in a positive direction, and by also providing the possible alternative for those who felt “outraged and hurt”,⁵⁵ it effectively closed off disputed versions of what happened from any significant inclusion in the historical record. It effectively negated queries about positive male contributions, whilst also

⁵² Jean Freer, *Raging Women: In reply to Breaching the Peace: A comment on the Women’s Liberation Movement and the Common Womyn’s Peace Camp at Greenham*, (London: Wymn’s Land Fund, 1984), 4.

⁵³ A protest began in December 1981 at the Molesworth RAF Base, where 64 GLCM were also to be based under the 1979 NATO agreement. In the spring of 1982, 12 peace activists also set up a peace camp at RAF Upper Heyford, which was a quick response base from where a nuclear strike would be launched.

⁵⁴ Fran DeAth, *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015.

⁵⁵ Young *Femininity in Dissent*, 31.

rendering the possibility of dissent amongst the protestors themselves as unlikely or so rare it was simply inconsequential.

Finding the men again: Ian Campbell

It is at this point that the analysis must return to Ian Campbell and the interview he gave for the Imperial War Museum collection in 1992, which was notably a time when the protest was still in progress at some of the gates. According to Ian it was in the lead up to the first winter that his wife, Thalia received a telephone call urging a meeting from Helen John. Helen had been living at the camp for several months but had returned to Wales temporarily to stay in Ystradglynlais with another former marcher, Eunice Stallard. The camps were in a dire state and at times seemed to be falling apart with only a handful of residents, particularly as severe gales and rain swept across the country. As Fran DeAth from Bristol recollected in 2015, there were only six residents, male and female, when an elderly couple arrived late one night to donate some kindling wood.⁵⁶ Barbara Doris, another marcher, recalled that “some nights we wondered if it was all worth it when there was only three of us there, sitting round the fire. It got very thin on the ground.”⁵⁷

Getting progressively worse, Ann Pettitt also recalled that by the end of October 1981, despite a huge CND rally in Hyde Park at which she had spoken about the camp, “Helen was still at times, the only person at Greenham.”⁵⁸ The Campbell’s recalled, she desperately needed their help or the camp would likely fold. As Thalia could not drive, and was working as a teacher at the time, Ian drove Helen back to the camp taking tents and supplies with them.

Once there Ian set about utilising the survival skills he had learnt during the 1950s and he and Helen began to get the camp properly organised. Visiting the Thames Water offices he discovered that they could buy a water hydrant and request a connection to the mains water which had become necessary after the military had removed the tap they had originally helped the protestors to install. He quickly set about the task and Yellow Gate thus acquired a clean, safe water source of their own which would subsequently serve all of the camps for almost the duration of the protest. Once again he rang his contacts at *The Guardian* and a small piece was printed the next day. Within days of the article, caravans and then a portakabin arrived for the protestors to use as shelter and an office. It was recorded in Harford and Hopkins’ account of the early years of the camp that the portakabin did involve a rent of twenty pounds a week and funding was offered by various trade unions, but what was not disclosed was how financial support for this and the more general maintenance of the camp was secured during the early

⁵⁶ Fran DeAth, *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015.

⁵⁷ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 22.

⁵⁸ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 139.

stages of the camp. Whilst a considerable amount arrived as “letters of support from all over the country” with “enclosed fivers”, funds did reach the camps in other ways.⁵⁹ Exploiting his connections in the Trade Union movement, Ian visited all the local branches and asked for regular donations into the new camp bank account which Helen now controlled. He also went to Newbury Council to find out how the protest could proceed without offending local people and again as a Trade Unionist he met with a fellow representative from the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) branch. Having discussed the regulations for caravans Ian ensured the camp complied with the rules by ensuring the vehicles were all parked a particular distance apart and were provided with items such as fire buckets. It was at these meetings that Ian was also given photocopies detailing three different land owners for the land⁶⁰ on which the camp was situated, a critical piece of information upon which the women would later rely as they fought to circumvent eviction proceedings by the various authorities. A much celebrated aspect of the women’s campaign, as they out-witted the authorities, he had also spent a considerable amount of time in Libraries researching the implications of the different ownerships of land particularly in the lead up to the first eviction court case. Without the aid of computerised records during the early 1980s, it was a time-consuming and laborious task.

On their own all these details might appear relatively trivial, but when taken in the context that many of these actions conceivably enabled the camp to survive beyond the first few months and left it well equipped for the extremely harsh winter of 1981/82, whilst also laying the groundwork for some of the subsequent court proceedings, they do acquire a new significance. It is apparent that Ian adopted various identities of his own to get results for the protestors still at camp. He also without doubt employed some of the privileged positions he occupied as a man. He could also, perhaps more than some of the other younger men at the camps, speak to officials using the same language and with an assumed equal status. They would respond to him as an ‘equal’ allowing him to glean important information or reach particular understandings with them with regard to the camp. Overall this was conceivably a time in the life of the Greenham protest when being a man did make a positive difference to the camps. Without some of these practical measures and the initial negotiations with the authorities it is not implausible to suggest that the camp would not have survived beyond the first severe snowstorms of December 1981.

Men like Ian, as Caroline Taylor at the time asserted, “for the most part were happy to do an ample share of the menial tasks and stay in the background.”⁶¹ There were however, men who did

⁵⁹ Ian Campbell interview Imperial War Museum, July 6, 1992.

⁶⁰ The Ministry of Defence, Newbury Council and the Ministry of Transport all owned different parts of the land outside the base.

⁶¹ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 23.

not wish to continue with the domestic roles assigned to them. As Roseneil has pointed out, some women “argued that men were a drain on the camp, had not taken responsibility for their share of the domestic labour, and were pushing women back into traditional housewifely roles.”⁶² As one woman explained, “the men were a problem. They put us in the role of mothers. “Mummy show me how to do this”, and always pushing to see how far they could go.”⁶³ A similar perspective was also implicit in Ann Pettitt’s 2006 autobiographical account. She reflected that the commitment of the men living at the camp was called into question, as they “strummed their guitars and attracted undesirables from the town.”⁶⁴ Nor was it an evaluation that the Campbell’s would dispute either. Despite his own endeavours to help set up the camps, Ian later asserted that the main reason for the women-only decision was to eradicate a criminal element operating amongst the men at the camp:

There were people there who were not there for the right reasons. There was a stolen car trade as well as a drugs run between South Wales and Amsterdam. One man went to the pub, got drunk, came back and beat up a woman! Helen and I discussed what to do and the best thing was to chase all the men out. There were also problems with the men and money. Every morning the post would arrive with envelopes full of cash. Whoever got there first got the money, and it was always the men... I’d spoken to the RAF commander and the MOD police chief also gave me information... I was warned that a drugs plant... so we cleansed the camp of anyone we didn't know. It got quite aggressive, and violent, but they went and the Police didn't bother with raid. Men were the main perpetrators of criminal behaviour so they had to go.⁶⁵

It was evident that whilst Ian did not live at the camp he considered himself constructively involved. More significantly, however, he clearly did not view his role in the campaign evolution as that of a silent or a background player. Once more utilising male established networking he depicted himself helping to force matters to a head as he fed information back to the women. If they did not act decisively he claimed their campaign would become vulnerable to damaging distortions as he had heard that news of apparent criminality was likely to reach the broader public domain. This representation of the problem as being caused by a small handful of irresponsible and degenerate men is of crucial importance to the remainder of Ian’s story of Greenham. In refusing to align himself with the main reason for their expulsion, he maintained and asserted an entitlement to be able to continue to actively participate in the campaign. This was regardless of the women-only proclamation which was never revoked. In view of all his work he saw this as an unfair position:

⁶² Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

⁶³ Shushu Al-Sabbagh quoted in Lynne Jones, *Keeping the Peace*, 88.

⁶⁴ Elaine Titcombe, *Ann Pettitt Interview*, July 8, 2011. Also: Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 143.

⁶⁵ Imperial War Museum, *Ian Campbell Interview*, July 6, 1992.

I found that quite offensive. I understood it but it was very difficult because each group of women who went to Greenham didn't really respect what had gone on before, and didn't take account of what had gone on before, and thought that they owned it at the time.⁶⁶

This was not too dissimilar to the account given by Fran DeAth when interviewed in 2015. Her view was that, "the extreme feminists took over...to an extent not even boy babies were allowed there."⁶⁷ It was clearly an uneasy association with the camps for Ian after the men were asked to leave. He did however continue to go there in his van with Thalia on many more occasions, staying overnight despite the women's decree that no men should be allowed to stay after dark. This was primarily due to the distance between their home and the camp.

During this time he claimed to have taken part in the actions by giving various women lifts between the gates or by shouting out warnings when the police approached. On other occasions he was more active, recalling that he was once able to drive the van onto the base with Thalia and a group of women in the back. Using a pass he had been given by the Assistant Chief of Police as part of an organising group for a CND mixed action on the 1st of April 1983, he was waved straight through the police security at the gate. From inside the base they drove to the next gate and asked a soldier on duty for directions to the peace camp. He also claimed to have enabled a women's demonstration on the same afternoon known as the 'Teddy Bears' or 'Furry Animals Picnic' by using his pass to drive his van full of short sections of ladders through the police lines to the camps so that the women could later scale the fence. Though never at the centre of the actions, and thus never arrested, the role he created for himself was to be there to enable others and to provide assistance where deemed necessary. In this capacity he also recalled having aided the development of ideas that would play a wider role as the protest progressed. Whilst he did not cut the fence at Greenham for instance, he found out from a contractor that it was not put up with view to anyone potentially taking it down. Therefore if three particular wires were cut, the fence would fall.

Ann Pettitt also described the participation of men in a similar way by alluding to an 'alternative' protest on the 12th of December 1983, the anniversary of the 'Embrace the Base' demonstration, and which took place shortly after the arrival of the weapons:

The women at the camp decreed noise, expressing anger and outrage. ...We held a silent vigil... Since we had become Greenham heretics, there were members of the opposite sex also there with us. Silence can be strangely powerful, more so than noise.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Fran DeAth, *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015.

⁶⁸ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 281.

Having been actively engaged in a failed attempt to force the women to accept a mixed demonstration a few months earlier, Ann and those who joined her were also defying the women living at the camps.⁶⁹ As much a 'silent' protest against the direction being imposed from the camp women themselves, the suggestion that there were 'alternative' demonstrations taking place in parallel with those instigated from 'within' the women's peace camps, by women and men who felt strongly that Greenham belonged to no one is an important point. It therefore was no over-exaggeration that the women-only decision had caused conflict, becoming "a source of misunderstanding, alienation and hurt for some women and many men,"⁷⁰ but the continued emphasis on the collective identity of the protest as women only effectively enabled the silencing of any active attempts at male inclusion either by the men themselves or by women who could not agree that anyone had the right to claim the space from any other person. However, it is in these transgressions of Greenham's fundamental but essentially unenforceable rules that it becomes evident how vulnerable the women-only stance was, and thus how hard the narratives were needed to work to establish and subsequently maintain it. This is a particularly relevant point if we consider that in order for Greenham to truly become a women's peace camp, it clearly relied considerably upon the compliance, and more controversially, the consent of men. Given that the peace movement as a whole had grown significantly after 1979, attracting support from both sexes, any men who opposed the weapons had to make a positive commitment to the Greenham campaign by agreeing not to participate in overt actions at the base despite it being the single most important and symbolic site in the whole campaign. Ian's story demonstrates however, that there was considerable ambiguity in what individuals considered participation to mean.

The support of a partner: Donald Francis and others

In the Greenham story men are more often described as the reluctant supporters their wives, mothers, daughters or sisters. This was even if ostensibly they claimed to share their anti-nuclear politics. More often they have been portrayed as oppositional, or obstructing:

Many male partners expressed more or less open hostility to Greenham, in the form of sarcastic remarks, mocking criticisms, or 'meaningful silences.' Others refused to take

⁶⁹ Ibid. 273.

⁷⁰ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*, 85.

responsibility for childcare or domestic tasks to enable women to participate to the extent they wished.⁷¹

This was not an accusation which could be levelled at the Reverend Donald Francis of St Teilo's Church near Abergavenny. Donald was the husband of Anne Francis, a woman who gained several convictions for criminal damage at Greenham (as will be discussed further in chapter 5). He took an active part in answering many of the thousands of well-wisher's letters received whilst she was in prison and answered several hundred telephone messages. Quoted in the *Abergavenny Gazette* he declared that, "I regard my wife as a prisoner of conscience, and I support her fully."⁷² This public support for his wife extended further. In one of the letters held in the archives Donald is discussed as having defended his wife within the Anglican Church, taking part in a heated exchange of letters in *Church Times*. Writing to Anne in May 1985, one of her close friends (also an Abergavenny peace woman) also reported that he "was quite the star on the HTV film the other night," whilst another friend confirmed that the television channel had dealt with her protest very sensitively.⁷³

Other husbands and sons also provided much practical and emotional support for the women. Pauline Smout's husband, Pete, also took an active role by driving the van for the Wrexham 'Star Marchers' in 1983.⁷⁴ Another interviewee's son presented a proud report of his mother's activities as part of his final year English exam at school in Porthcawl.⁷⁵ Though sometimes small gestures, they were nevertheless vitally important to the women concerned. They illustrate how men could, and did, offer a positive contribution to the Greenham campaign despite their exclusion from the main action.

Private Protest: Alf EngleKamp

Some other men however wanted to still make a more prominent statement as an objection to the weapons, but without transgressing the women's protest. One such man was Alf EngleKamp from Aberystwyth who was also interviewed for the Imperial War Museum oral history collection in 1992. Alf's wife Jo had become a regular camper after her first visit to the camps on Hiroshima Day in 1983 having been a marcher on the 'Star March' from Brecon to Greenham.⁷⁶ On the day of the group's arrival at the base, Alf had joined his wife and two young

⁷¹ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 151.

⁷² Donald Francis, *Abergavenny Gazette* April, 18 1985.

⁷³ Letters from Marion Peplar and Liz Stoker, *Anne Francis Papers*, Women's Archive of Wales.

⁷⁴ Elaine Titcombe, *Pauline Smout Interview*, August 22, 2011.

⁷⁵ Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

⁷⁶ The *Star Marches* were devised by Annie Tunicliffe and were comprised of several individual marches from all over the country walking to Greenham arriving on Hiroshima Day 1983.

children for the last day of walking. Upon reaching the main gate, he embarked upon a solo protest action, "I had learnt to stand in a relaxed fashion, so I stood in front of the gate for several hours motionless. No shifting, as I had learnt to do it."⁷⁷ This he argued was not an encroachment upon the women's action because it was an entirely independent demonstration that represented no one except himself.

Alf was extremely supportive of his wife's involvement at Greenham, particularly in a practical way by taking on the sole responsibility for their child and joint business whilst she took part in the camp and other actions, tasks which they normally attempted to share equally:

I encouraged Jo. I thought it would be good for her to ... leave me to get on with it. When the other partner is away only then do you truly become responsible. So I took care of the childcare fully. That is better than just half. Who does what, even when you try to share, is often traditional; so I built the house, she cooked... We all develop, it might have happened anyway, but Greenham helped.⁷⁸

Intellectually he also supported the Greenham camps, and had no objection to the women-only ethos:

Men breathe down women's necks and run things traditionally... Men would have done it differently; they would have done it technologically. It was less dangerous, less scary. Men would have found more scary ways, which would have changed the way the soldiers viewed it and violence would have escalated.⁷⁹

Later in 1983 when it was leaked that the weapons were due to land at Greenham, Alf had been at Molesworth with his sister and brother in law. They instantly decided to drive to Greenham to make a visual protest that they hoped would make it onto the television and newspaper reports marking the arrival of Cruise. Standing at the edge of the fence nearest the runway, they proceeded to blow up helium balloons which they planned to bunch up and launch with an attached CND symbol at the moment the weapons landed. As it transpired the trees got in way and the demonstration failed, but crucially Alf remained adamant that this was an autonomous event and thus had no bearing on the effectiveness of the women's campaign. Therefore, though it could clearly be argued that Alf was transgressing the women-only rule by using the site to display his position with regards to nuclear weapons, he deliberately made the distinction between both sets of actions in order to avoid the charge.

The call for mixed action persists

⁷⁷ Imperial War Museum, *Alf EngleKamp Interview*, July 8, 1992.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

This episode however does prompt questions about what was considered a legitimate protest action at Greenham and what therefore could be included in the history. There are other instances of protest actions which are entirely omitted from the existing histories because they were not carried out, or endorsed by the Women's Peace Camps. These were generally mixed action campaigns, such as the CND organised event at Easter 1982. This involved the creation of a human chain of an estimated 70,000 people, stretching 14 miles across the Berkshire countryside. Relations between the Greenham women and CND were never entirely amicable. From the outset the women's campaign had been considered with considerable suspicion. It was a position from which CND never really shifted. It was a question that also filled much of the 'outside' literature produced during the early years of the protest discussing the merits of women-only protest.⁸⁰

There was a mutual guardedness between the Greenham women and CND, as Helen John stated in a joint interview with Joan Ruddock, CND Chairperson and Sally Davison former National CND organiser, for *Marxism Today* in 1983. Helen herself claimed to "have closely identified with CND since the peace camp was set up", adding that she believed it was "a very brave thing indeed for CND to keep ...[their] nerve in the beginning when we appeared to be just a pack of lunatics."⁸¹ This was a clear indication that CND had upheld the women's right to organise and demonstrate as a single-sex group, but not entirely willingly. This statement therefore barely masked the considerable amount of discontent from within the Peace Movement over the subject.

Many women who had been involved at Greenham at the outset did have a strong connection to CND and had felt betrayed by the decision to allow the women to dominate the space. One such participant was Annie Tunicliffe:

I submitted a paper to the (CND) Projects Committee ... suggesting a two-week blockade at Greenham ... The idea was formulated in a wish to pour oil on the situation being created by the divisiveness of the demand from the Women's Peace Camp that there should always and only be women-only actions at Greenham... As a climax to our 'No Cruise' campaign we need one, whole-movement, mass action at Greenham... the Women's Peace Camp and the rest of the movement are and have always been, united against Cruise, and that we are not in competition with each other. Support and tolerance for each other's ideas should be mutual and are essential if the peace movement is to have anything new to offer society instead of the same old bitter divisions.⁸²

⁸⁰ Sarah Benton, "A New Force for the Land," *Marxism Today*, February, 1983, 7.

Another example was *Anti-Nuclear Action: Discussion Magazine for Socialists and Feminists* produced between 1982 and 1983. It was also a topic regularly discussed in *Sanity* and *Peace News*.

⁸¹ Helen John quoted in Sarah Benton, "A New Force for the Land," *Marxism Today*, February, 1983, 11.

⁸² Annie Tunicliffe, Unpublished letter to "CND Projects Committee, National Council," March 26, 1983. Private papers shown to author. Information to be submitted to Bradford University Archives shortly.

Going further Karmen Cutler also subsequently argued that Greenham:

...became an area, a little plot of land in Britain where anybody who had a grudge about anything, especially women, went....It was like – oh yes disarmament, oh we'll sort out my 'women's problems' and whatever else first... A lot of the bad press was deserved. Some women behaved with an appalling lack of respect and dignity to the people who were turning up for support.⁸³

It was a position Fran DeAth also referred to when recalling the immediate period after the camp became women-only:

One night at about 11 o'clock, in the cold, in the dark, in the rain, two young lads, they were about 17 turned up. Maybe there were three, and they hadn't heard it had gone women only, and they'd hitch-hiked all the way from Sheffield. And so I said, "go on pitch your tent, over there behind the hedge, you had any supper? No?" so I made them supper. So then in the morning – All hell let lose! "Fran let MEN stay on the camp!" So then we're having this big argument...I'm saying, "If you want peace you have to have compassion."⁸⁴

It wasn't humane...people were turning up at night in the dark and in the rain, and having to leave. I felt we were a strong enough group to cope with that and not stick to rigid rules.⁸⁵

What emerges therefore is not a unified consensus of women in terms of the 'men' question, but rather the signs of a bitter and emotion-ridden conflict. It was a continuous struggle to own the space and the repercussions stretched out across the whole of the peace movement. Nor are there any signs that this bitterness abated with the passage of time. An article published in September 2013 claimed that, "Greenham was a place where a generation of women found a public voice. It was a voice that was predicated on inclusion and difference, multiple perspectives not a single dominant view."⁸⁶ One angry participant responded:

As a young woman who visited there, I can tell you that even by 1980s left-wing activist standards, Greenham Common was self-righteous, intolerant 'right-on' central. If you had the misfortune not to toe the party line in everything from separatism to Zionism, you were made to feel like a piece of shit...Sorry to say, but the peace camp soon became all about Being Women. The missiles, the ongoing Cold War policies, even the wider disarmament movement, all seem to become incidental. I got the feeling that if a bunch of blokes had come up with a foolproof can't-fail plan to somehow magically get those missiles safely out of

⁸³ Karmen, Cutler/Thomas Interview for 'Greenham: The making of a monument', Undercurrents Foundation, 2004, VHS. Available on YouTube; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

⁸⁴ Fran DeAth, *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015.

⁸⁵ Fran DeAth quoted in Lynne Jones, *Keeping the Peace*, 89.

⁸⁶ Beeban Kidron, "The Women of Greenham Common Taught a Generation How to Protest," *The Guardian*, September 2, 2013.

Greenham, they would have turned it down. Because they were men. Greenham Common had become a separatist community, not a nuclear protest.⁸⁷

It is also glaringly apparent that Greenham was a place with 'rules' despite all the claims to structurelessness. Indeed Charlie Kiss later wrote about how it felt to leave the camp:

I started to think about all the things I didn't like about Greenham Common. I didn't like the habitual hugging of everyone whether you knew them or not. I disliked the euphemistically called 'non-hierarchal' set up (because hierarchies still existed) and I preferred structures and order. The so-called 'non-hierarchal' set-up simply made it easier for the more confident women to do what they wanted to and the lack of structure meant decision making was exhausting...endless emotional meetings didn't suit me. I yearned for structure and security.⁸⁸

When examined in more depth therefore it is evident that the active exclusion of men also caused many women to feel on the 'outside'. These were mainly the women who would have preferred a more open and inclusive campaign. However these women were often framed as those who were unable to break from the discursive of patriarchy. As a result they were given little space to articulate their objections, either at the time or subsequently. Roseneil, for instance in 1995, allowed one short sentence. "Ann Pettitt, in particular, believed that her vision had been betrayed and continued to actively oppose the policy for many years, often bringing her male partner to camp on the common."⁸⁹ This statement closed the conversation down further. Ann had betrayed the Greenham ethos. This was by her continued insistence that Greenham should not, and indeed could not, be an exclusive place where one group dictated the terms upon which individuals could protest against the weapons. Her dissent on this matter was not authorised and as a consequence she could no longer form a substantive part of the event's history. It is this exclusion that Freeman's article on the problems of structureless groups helps point us to.⁹⁰ With no means to raise a challenge to the 'leaders' of the camps there was often no alternative but to leave or to simply 'go it alone'.

The multiple identities of Greenham women

Some women who became involved with Greenham, however, could move between protest actions, transitioning unproblematically between mixed and single sex activities. This was particularly the case for women who continued to live in their main homes, often with a male

⁸⁷ Thunderbird5 comment posted September 2, 2013 (19:45) in response to Beeban Kidron, "The women of Greenham Common taught a generation how to protest," *The Guardian*, September 2, 2013, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/sep/02/greenham-common-women-taught-generation-protest>.

⁸⁸ Kiss, *A New Man*, 107-108.

⁸⁹ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

⁹⁰ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," 231-246.

partner, whilst only visiting Greenham for short periods. Anne Francis, from Abergavenny for instance was able to take actions at Caerwent or to offer her support to the Carmarthen Bunker opposition.⁹¹ Similarly Sian Ap Gwynfor from Llandysul combined her peace work at Greenham with her involvement with anti-imperialist Welsh Nationalist groups. She was also able to take part in other on-going Christian witness activities, both as part of a mixed congregation in Llandysul and as a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales.⁹² Further discussion about the activities of these two women will however be returned to in chapter 5.

Insiders and Outsiders

As a defining episode, exclusion of the men therefore contributed substantially to the creation of the Greenham legend, securing it as a moment of almost revolutionary,⁹³ reputation for many subsequent younger feminist scholars. Sophie Mayer for instance commented that, “the legend of Greenham – an alternative world created by and for women activists – was something I absorbed during my feminist becoming.”⁹⁴ This legacy however is severely challenged by some of these accounts, which suggest that far from being a utopia, Greenham could be a very rigid and harsh social environment, especially if a person was considered an outsider.

This analysis is not to suggest however, that participants and researchers alike have not acknowledged that the eviction of the men in February 1981 was a point of painful contention and debate and the first major point of conflict. Indeed for some it was certainly recognised as a difficult or impossible position to adopt;

One woman was nervous – it seemed unfair, she said, that all the men who had changed their lives to enable women to stay at the camp should now not be able to bring the kids down and stay at weekends...It was the wrong decision for her, there was no doubt about that, and she and others decided to leave after the March Festival.⁹⁵

One academic, Anna Feigenbaum has also conceded that “an investigation of the complex dynamics of Greenham’s separatism and the anxiety it caused both interpersonally and structurally, could easily be the focus of an entire study.”⁹⁶ Whilst Alison Young the first to publish an analysis of the protest raised the point that “there are certain problematic assumptions which

⁹¹ Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September 12, 2015. Also Anne Francis letters held in the Women’s Archive of Wales, Abergavenny Museum collection.

⁹² Elaine Titcombe, Sian Ap Gwynfor Interview, June 28, 2013.

⁹³ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 5.

⁹⁴ Sophie Mayer, “The legend of Greenham Common women’s peace camp,” February, 2016, accessed April, 2016, www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/sophie-mayer/bringing-home-legend-of-greenham-common-womens-peace-camp.

⁹⁵ Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 34.

⁹⁶ Feigenbaum, “Tactics and Technology.”24.

underlie this celebration” and that “it is possible that the Greenham women were perpetually attempting and failing to constitute such a radically different sphere”⁹⁷ as they attempted to create an idealised non-hierarchical female society outside the gates of the base. Whilst it is regularly acknowledged that it was the culmination of several fraught discussions, and that it “represented the first major conflict”⁹⁸, provoking “uproar”⁹⁹, “rage, bewilderment, and tension”¹⁰⁰ or at least “controversy and some acrimony”¹⁰¹ amongst both the women and men involved at the time, it is this analysis that has demonstrated that it has nevertheless been largely told from the perspective of those who supported the measure. In general it was a development that could be summed up by the assertion in 1984 that, “the rightness and necessity of that decision has been borne out time and time again ever since.”¹⁰²

In shifting the focus away from the women to consider exactly how men, as representations of masculine identity became situated in relation to a female defined space, it is evident that certain conceptualisations were purposefully constructed. The continual emphasis on these enabled some feminist interpretations, particularly the more radical critiques of militarism, to gain traction and ultimately endurance. Therefore quite aside from the question of individual participation by empathetic men, the analysis is also an important recognition of the understanding that, “masculinity/ies must be a relational construct,” where, “neither masculinity nor femininity is a meaningful construct without the other; each defines, and is in turn defined by, the other.”¹⁰³ It is therefore in the attentiveness to these mutually exclusive terms of reference, that the extent that binary oppositional structures that underpinned much of the argument emerging out of Greenham can be contemplated. The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated how it is in the relatively unchallenged acceptance of particular unscrutinised suppositions that obstructed alternative possibilities of understanding. In particular by continuously placing the emphasis upon the development and exercise of ‘power’ by the women as they removed the men and created their own space, other participants who did not share this ideological position became ‘irrelevant’. They are the ill-legitimate voices of Greenham.

Forcing the analysis to look at whose articulations have been allowed, by inversely selecting a group most obviously excluded, it can be acknowledged that whilst all history writing is a process

⁹⁷ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*, 31.

⁹⁸ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 40.

⁹⁹ Cockburn, *Anti-Militarism*, 38.

¹⁰⁰ Sarah H. quoted in Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 33.

¹⁰¹ Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, 236.

¹⁰² Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 5.

¹⁰³ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 103.

of interpretation and selection, there can be specific issues for protest movements. In the process of the creation of consensus, or from a historical perspective - the ideal feminist heroine, it can be demonstrated how certain socially specific interpretations of experience have been enabled, shaping the popular cultural memories. The recognition of this is not an attempt to re-write history or to put the record straight, but rather it follows in the footsteps of other academics, such as Carolyn Steedman, that expose the problems of assumed collective identities. For instance it can be shown that in establishing certain concepts, particularly in relation to masculinity and militarism, and by alienating many of those participants who could subdue their influence, particular ideas eventually became so deeply ingrained that they no longer required explanation or critique by those involved. It was essentially a new cultural language understood by those involved, or more specifically those on the inside of the protest. Silently expressing the fundamental 'truths', at once everywhere but nowhere, these understandings ultimately supplied the unstated starting points from which the narrative could be expanded further. But it also allowed the earlier protest actions to be re-imagined, as the experience of Ian Campbell clearly indicates. However, it was this development of a new social norm that those positioned outside the inner circles of Greenham potentially became increasingly distant from the discourse presented at Greenham. As Pettitt recalled, "Apparently sensible people descend[ed] into serious discussion over the spelling of the word 'women' – should it be 'wimmin', 'womyn' or 'wombyn'?"¹⁰⁴ As observed by Christina Welch, "this move fitted with contemporary feminist thought, where women often became wimmin to avoid patriarchal designations, where men were, on the whole, the enemy."¹⁰⁵

The symbolism of the women's actions was also arguably lost on an external audience not privy to the underlying narration, particularly as the actions became more abstract or radical. It could not for instance be immediately understood why women stood at the fence to shine mirrors onto the base in December 1983 after the missiles arrived. Intended to 'reflect the evil back upon itself' whilst challenging the male military to also consider their role in the war game. Nor could it have been anything but shocking to any outside observer to see women lying naked, smeared with dirt and ash on Hiroshima Day in 1985. It was intended to represent the effect of a nuclear explosion whilst simultaneously presenting men with images of femaleness. It was an extreme direct action, which whilst symbolically potent, also undoubtedly contributed to the gradual disengagement of the wider public. It was a gap in communication and understanding, a discursive divergence that allowed the women to become increasingly exposed to criticism,

¹⁰⁴ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 272-3.

¹⁰⁵ Christina Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change," 52.

ridicule and derision. For the women involved however this reaction from the Press and Authorities merely became further evidence that, in stepping outside their nominated roles they were perceived as a threat to patriarchy and were thus winning the discursive battle. This belief arguably drove further misunderstandings as the women, who were also fewer in number continued to present evermore extreme actions. For those participants, who had found their protest aspirations increasingly pushed to the perimeters, this was evidence of movement that had taken the wrong course, heading into decline precisely at the point when it was ironically on the brink of being at its most effective in terms of influence over the State and nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁶ In particular it was argued that it had alienated a whole body of support, especially those active in CND.¹⁰⁷

Eventually struggling to attract large numbers to take part in the actions at the base, perhaps in response to the intensification of feminist rhetoric, the heyday of the protest was perceived by some to be over long before the signing of the INF Treaty in 1987. As argued throughout this chapter this was as much to do with the protest narratives themselves as it was to do with any backlash of a patriarchal state or society. Arguably for some the “extreme feminists”¹⁰⁸ had essentially become the nemesis of their own newly created collective Greenham identities. This was also however, as Freeman described, the point at which those who were not part of the internal elite began to drift out of the movement entirely.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Elaine Titcombe, *Annie Tunncliffe Interview*, May 23, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Caroline Blackwood, *On the Perimeter*, 16.

¹⁰⁸ Fran DeAth, *Radio Chitchat Interview*, January, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Freeman, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness,” 241.

Chapter 3

The Battle of Ideology

The purpose of this chapter is to position the Greenham Common campaign within the context of the shifting political philosophies in Britain from the 1970s into the 1980s and beyond. Starting with a review of the historical analysis to date concerning the emergence of the New Right, defined later as Thatcherism, it will illustrate the impact of the attack on socialism and subsequently all politics identified on the political Left, and how this impacted upon the events and protest movements of the period. In so doing the analysis will indicate how different versions of the Greenham campaign are enabled when it is viewed from wider perspectives; whilst simultaneously revealing how some narratives of explanation have been utilised in order to privilege certain perceptions over others for a wider ideological purpose. In particular it will demonstrate how the anti-nuclear campaign became vilified not only as a 'women's protest' but as part of a wider attempt to discredit the Left by proponents of a Right wing agenda. Against this backdrop the analysis will discuss how the protest absorbed and challenged some of the key frictions of these shifting discourses as participants actively took part in a wider battle to gain dominance, and influence the course of politics in the world.

Constructing narratives of consensus

The Greenham protest emerged at a critical time in relation to the post-war political consensus. In much of the historical literature relating to Britain in the 1980s, there appears a common view that it was in this period that a political consensus that had defined British affairs for more than two decades after the end of the Second World War was brought to an end.¹ Broadly explained as a political and economic agenda that was endorsed by both the Left and the Right without significant or fundamental disagreement, some historians cite the emergence of this consensus to the inter-war period.² Most however, follow in Paul Addison's analysis which attributed its establishment to the formation of a new wartime coalition government in May 1940. This emergency situation, he argued, created through necessity an intensification of any prior political cooperation that had existed in the inter-war years, and consequently set in motion

¹ Andy McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2010).
Alwyn Turner, *Rejoice! Rejoice! Britain in the 1980s* (London: Aurum Press, London, 2010).
Graham Stewart, *Bang! A History of Britain*.

² Brian Harrison, "The Rise and Fall of Political Consensus in Britain since 1940," *History* 84, no.274 (1999): 301-324, doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.00110.
Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1992).

the basis of what was to become the Welfare State, whilst simultaneously paving the way for the acceptability of widespread nationalisation of industry and production.

In the midst of war was... social security for all, family allowances, major reform in education, a National Health Service, Keynesian budgetary technique, full employment policies, town and country planning, closer relations between the State and industry – all these had been set on foot by the Spring of 1943 ... The new consensus of the war years was positive and purposeful... When Labour swept to victory in 1945 the new consensus fell, like a branch of ripe plums, into the lap of Mr Atlee.³

In this analysis the post war period of regeneration that followed 1945 was characterised by politicians actively seeking to ensure that the perceived wartime spirit of community and solidarity was maintained, irrespective of which party was in government at any given time. The reason for this continuation of consensus politics after wartime conditions ended has been explained as the necessity for post war governments to rebuild the country following the devastation of war and to avert disaster in a period where food and other commodities had to remain in state control as a result of ongoing shortages. In addition following the sacrifices given in wartime, politicians considered it vital to remove the poverty and ill health that had afflicted the working-classes during the economic depression of the inter-war years. Not only was this necessary in order to avoid unrest within the masses, but it was deemed entirely possible from a nation that had pulled together to defeat a powerful enemy.⁴ It was a sentiment that would be important in the Greenham campaign as the women consistently expressed the view that the role of the state was to look after people rather than spend millions on warfare. For example, the 'International Women's Day' poster in 1983 asked, "Last year Britain spent £11,200 million on armaments. Shouldn't we spend this on helping children to LIVE?"⁵ The Welfare State therefore appeared as a sign of continuing national pride at a moment when Great Britain was visibly in decline and unable to continue to function as a great Empire.⁶ The result was that:

Since 1945, the UK had edged towards becoming more 'socialist', with free medicine, free schools, state pensions and more than 40 per cent of the country's industrial capacity owned by the State...[T]he United Kingdom had been slowly but steadily becoming a more equal society, as the gap between richest and poorest closed.⁷

³ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London: Random House, 1975), 14.

⁴ A sentiment displayed in the (left leaning) documentary film, *The Spirit of '45*, directed by Ken Loach, 2013. DVD.

⁵ Leaflet held in, *Greenham Common Collection (Yellow Gate)* The Women's Library.

⁶ David Edgar, "The Free or the Good" in *The Ideology of the New Right*, ed. Ruth Levitas (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), 55-79.

⁷ McSmith, *No such thing as Society*, 9.

Constructing the 'end' of Consensus and the 'birth' of the New Right

Despite this apparently positive outlook, however, it has been argued that these consensus politics (of the Left) increasingly came under attack from the early 1970s as Britain's economy virtually collapsed. This was attributed to an influential group of individuals on the political Right who were able to seize the moment during economic crisis. Key figures in this have been identified as Enoch Powell and latterly Keith Joseph, who were highly critical of what they viewed as an increasingly socialist perspective and who were supporters of a new economic language known as monetarism. This rejected the Keynesian demand management economic strategy adopted by all the post war governments and promoted ideas such as those discussed by a think tank known as the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). Originally formed in the 1950s in opposition to the continuation of the Atlee Government's programme of public ownership and centralisation beyond the point of post-war regeneration, it drew heavily on the supply-side market economic theories of Milton Friedman, Friedrich Hayek and others.

Advocating the withdrawal of the State from industry in addition to a major constriction of the Welfare State, it was argued that these ideas had drained resource from those who worked hard and disproportionately shouldered the burden through excessively high taxation. It was a philosophy based upon the neo-liberal ideas that a government's sole responsibilities were to ensure that the currency was secure in order to enable a free market to operate, and that the rule of law was maintained. These principles formed the basis of what was to be termed the 'New Right' movement, and as such they represented a radical departure from post-war consensus politics.

This dramatic change of direction is widely cited to be of central importance to any consideration of events that took place during the 1980s.⁸ In particular this was because the New Right rhetoric was adopted and promoted by, the only politician to subsequently lend her name to a political doctrine, Margaret Thatcher – who became Prime Minister from May 1979 to November 1990. Leading her Party to election victory in 1979 she openly declared her position;

⁸ Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The politics of Thatcherism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

Paul Cloke, *Policy and Change in Thatcher's Britain* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992).

McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society*.

Stewart G. *Bang! A History of Britain*.

Stuart Hall, and Martin Jacques, eds. *The politics of Thatcherism*. (Marxism Today ed. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983).

Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988).

Heather Nunn, *Thatcher, Politics and Fantasy: The political culture of Gender and Nation* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2002).

“The Old Testament prophets did not say ‘Brothers I want a consensus.’ They said; ‘This is my faith, this is what I passionately believe. If you believe it too, then come with me.’”⁹ It was a perspective she repeated and refined in a speech during 1981:

To me consensus seems to be —the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no-one believes, but to which no-one objects. The process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead. What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner “I stand for consensus?”¹⁰

This underlying principle that rejected the idea of consensus was also a rejection of the notion of a socialist State. This subsequently became defined as ‘Thatcherism’. It was an ideological position that would ultimately lead to accusations against the Conservative Government of creating a more selfish society. Indeed Thatcher would later declare, “who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families, and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first.”¹¹

Re-aligning the discourse of consensus

Some historians have however rejected the ‘end of consensus’ explanation, indicating that no such post war agreements ever existed, either formally or informally. It has been suggested instead that this idea was a simplistic construct of the New Right, primarily used to disparage opponents. It is however still considered by some to be a useful method to consider the mechanics by which the British (and American) political discourse shifted decidedly to the Right after the mid 1970s. Richard Toye in 2013 for example, suggested that because ‘consensus’ is an elusive term that can “exist only at the level of language or ideas” it was ripe for a challenge.¹² In his examination of the language used his conclusion was that the New Right did not end a political consensus, but that it instead re-defined and re-named the entire concept to promote a different agenda, “The trope of consensus was deployed as a rhetorical tactic, to suggest that one’s

⁹ Margaret Thatcher speech to a Conservative Rally in Cardiff April 16, 1979. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104011>.

¹⁰ Margaret Thatcher “Sir Robert Menzies Lecture,” Monash University, October 6, 1981. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104712>.

¹¹ Margaret Thatcher interview for *Woman’s Own*, September 23, 1987. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed February 12, 2018, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>.

¹² Richard Toye, “From Consensus to ‘Common Ground’: The Rhetoric of the Post-war Settlement and its Collapse,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no.1 (2013): 15.

opponents did not belong to a wide and established national community of common sense.”¹³ This meant that rather than, ‘middle ground’, the new way was termed ‘common ground’.

Whilst the terms appeared similar they were in fact conveying entirely different ideological agendas. The ‘middle ground’ stood for the Welfare State and intervention, but the ‘common ground’ was set in the principles of the individual and the market. Margaret Thatcher in particular actively portrayed the ideas of her Party as good ‘common’ sense. She often did this by invoking powerful imagery such as the housewife prudently managing the purse-strings.

Any woman who understands the problems of running a home will be nearer to understanding the problems of running a country...Whether you're running a home, or a business or the Government, you've got to budget to live within your means. Anyone who tries to convince you that you can spend as if there were no tomorrow is leading you up the garden path...the question any good housekeeper has to ask is, “If the unexpected happens, have I left myself enough in reserve to cope?”¹⁴

The alternative to this approach was described as “the ever growing dominance of the State, with all its despotism and frustration of human happiness.”¹⁵

The Right therefore manipulated the interpretation of the word ‘consensus’ to attack their opponents and shift the popular perspective. According to Toye, they “did not abandon the structure of consensus rhetoric, so much as repopulate it.”¹⁶ Consensus, when defined as the desire to have the support of the majority, was still therefore ever present but its precise definition was being increasingly challenged. It is this understanding of the desire of the New Right to shift the political discourse in 1980s Britain that is so critical to an analysis of events, and in particular any exploration of protest movements, in the period.

The response of the Left

The Left were acutely aware of this manipulation of the language, as Ruth Levitas indicated in 1986.¹⁷ The attacks upon the concept of consensus in the 1980s were consciously constructed to define the post-war social democratic consensus as a period of state socialism, which was in turn declared as a catastrophic failure. Thatcherism would therefore become synonymous with the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Margaret Thatcher speech to the Conservative Women’s Conference June 4, 1986. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106412>.

¹⁵ Margaret Thatcher speech to a Conservative Rally in Cardiff on 16 April, 1979. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104011>.

¹⁶ Toye, “From Consensus,” 23.

¹⁷ Ruth Levitas, ed. *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

mechanics of the shift from demand management to supply management, through the privatisation of industry and some services along with the deregulation of the financial sector (known popularly as the Big Bang in 1986). However, although economics undoubtedly underpinned much of the policies of the New Right, these new strategies were arguably not so important in the history of the 1980s as the other implications they provoked. Conceivably, as those on the Left argued, it was the linguistic alignment of socialism with failure and the implication that it led to the destruction of enterprise and hope, which mattered most. This was not an entirely new suggestion by opponents of the Left, having being first been voiced in the 1920s and 1930s, but from the perspective of the early to mid, 1970s, the discourse could be re-employed with effect. From this position it was possible for the Right to cajole popular support for the policies of monetarism that advocated the constriction of the State and Free Market conditions. This was despite the inevitable pain of unemployment that would follow from the adoption of pure market forces on the economy. Importantly it was not so much whether or not the analysis of the Right was correct, but the fact that the Left was manipulated into a position from which they were unable to counter this turn in the political discourse:

Before the election of the first Thatcher government, [Left wing proponents] characterised the post war era as one of state monopoly capitalism. More recently, commentators ... have tended to refer to it, as the New Right does, as a period of state socialism. The problem is ...that the New Right has hi-jacked left wing criticisms of the limitations of the welfare state ... for its own purposes making it difficult for the Left to voice such criticisms in ways that do not lend support to the New Right ... This leads to disconcerting similarities between commentators on the New Right and the New Right itself.¹⁸

Once socialism was conceived of and popularised as the enemy of economic advancement the language evolved further in order to disparage the Left and words such as serfdom and servitude appeared so as to conjure up particular fears and emotions. To compound the effect other threads of debate were weaved into the discourse and manipulated to further serve the attack on the Left. Under the mantle of a constructed idea of common sense and a new common purpose that was projected outwards to an 'imagined' electorate who would in turn influence the 'real' electorate in this "hegemonic project,"¹⁹ it was evidently possible for the New Right proponents to discredit any opposing discourses as the Trojan Horse of socialism.

Respectable Winners and the "Revolt of the Masses"

¹⁸ Ibid. 12.

¹⁹ Peter Taylor, argued that Thatcherism was a class based battle of hegemony in "Changing Political Relations" in *Policy and Change in Thatcher's Britain*, ed. Paul Cloke, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), 33-54.

The shift to the Right and the impact of the economic policies however also resulted in huge shock waves across the UK. Protests and strikes were an everyday occurrence as people began to feel they were being abandoned by the Government. One of the most influential thinkers upon both Margaret Thatcher in the UK, and Ronald Reagan in the USA, was Friedrich Hayek. His central concern for government was that it should ensure the state was strong, upholding law and order so that market forces could operate freely, theoretically enabling all who participated in this capitalist project to benefit. This theme was one on which Conservatives, and Republicans alike, became particularly vocal from the mid 1970s. It continued to develop as a central theme during the 1980s as the cost of implementing the change from Keynesian economics to monetarism resulted in unrest and other undesirable behaviours in some sections of the population. Following riots in areas of inner city London and Liverpool that drew upon racial tensions, unemployment and deprivation exacerbated further by right wing policies, Thatcherites moved to demonstrate that any libertarian ideas previously expressed were qualified.

Initially, a great deal of the reasoning behind the economic shift to monetarism was that socialism disabled entrepreneurship due to excessive trade restrictions and trade union rules, and that government was therefore tasked with liberating enterprise so as to allow people to make and build their own fortunes. These economic liberal ideas from the Conservative Party however were not taken by the Left as a sign of general libertarianism. David Edgar argued that, “events in the early 1980s...effectively concluded the pure libertarian phase of Thatcherism, and substituted a new authoritarianism that owed [little] ... to the Institute of Economic Affairs.”²⁰

Drawing on the immediate reactions of Conservative commentators to the riots of the early 1980s Edgar demonstrated how the analysis was constructed to effectively eradicate any notion that the supporters of the New Right stood for universal liberty for all. Within the debates there emerged the new idea that it represented a politic populated by those who deserved freedom to pursue their own interests and those who needed to be better controlled:

Peregrine Worsthorne’s immediate response ...”It was always Utopian to expect the body politic to suffer the pains of economic retraction without violent convulsions” ... On the very morrow of Toxteth, George Gale blamed the riots on a “revulsion from authority and discipline” which reached its zenith during the ‘permissive revolution’ of the sixties; not long after, Edward Norman argued that the rioters had been “nurtured in a society which offered them seemingly endless expectations to personal and social satisfaction”, a society furthermore in which (according to Colin Welch) “all fidelity, restraint, thrift, sobriety, taste and discipline, all the virtues associated with work, with the painful acquisition of knowledge, skill and qualifications”, have been undermined. ... “The Revolting students of the 1960s are

²⁰ Edgar, “The Free or the Good,” 78.

the revolting teachers of today, reproducing themselves by teaching as received wisdom what they furiously asserted against the wisdom received from their own teachers.”²¹

Going further Edgar noted that feminism and homosexuality had been defined by others on the Right as “a form of plague” that had arisen from the permissiveness and responsibility shirking attitudes of the 1960s.²² Indeed these two themes would play out dramatically at Greenham; however what is clear is that these topics were intrinsically linked to the cause of the New Right as it sought to purge the nation of all that was considered feckless or immoral, and believed to have been enabled by the freedoms created by the Welfare State.

Homosexuality in particular was targeted during the 1980s, against a backdrop of AIDS and HIV, leading to a renewed level of homophobia in the mainstream media. This was compounded by discernible links between the gay and lesbian communities with Trade Union and Left wing politics.²³ At the 1985 Labour Party conference, a resolution committing the party to support lesbian and gay equality rights passed for the first time. This was particularly due to block voting support from the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), following the support of lesbian and gay groups during the 1984 Miners Strike. This ensured, as Diarmaid Kelliher has argued, that “Thatcher’s government focused increasingly on issues of sexuality after defeating the miners.”²⁴ A view also held by Matt Cook who concluded that, “in a period of recession and unemployment, gay and lesbian threats to the family and morality were convenient diversions and were strategically deployed to justify the dissolution of the Greater London Council and other city-wide authorities in 1986” which were being run by those on the Left.²⁵

These debates culminated in 1988 however when several Conservative backbench MPs argued that left-wing councils were indoctrinating young children with homosexual propaganda.²⁶ This resulted in the passing of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which stated that, a local authority “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the

²¹ Edgar, “The Free or the Good,” 57.

²² Ibid. 69.

This was a specific reference by Edgar to Norman Podhoretz an American commentator who expressed feelings in an extreme way but whose sentiments were likely amongst those on Right in the UK and the USA.

²³ Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain: How the Personal got Political* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Diarmaid Kelliher, “Solidarity and Sexuality: Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners 1984–5,” *Oxford History Workshop Journal* 77, no.1 (2014): 240–262. doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbt012.

²⁴ Ibid. 255.

²⁵ Matt Cook, “From Gay Reform to Gaydar, 1967–2006,” in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Matt Cook (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishers, 2007), 204.

²⁶ The amendment has been associated with members of the Conservative Monday Club and was introduced into Parliament by Jill Knight and David Wilshire.

intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."²⁷ As the Act became law several direct action protests were staged. Two of the most publicised protests were carried out by lesbian women who first abseiled into the House of Lords after the vote was completed, and then took part in an infamous invasion of the BBC's Six O'Clock News on the night before it became law.²⁸ Whilst it is difficult to ascertain the identity of these women, who interestingly appear to have given false names for a subsequent TV debate about direct action protest,²⁹ it has been suggested by two former Greenham activists that they were Greenham Common women.³⁰

It is apparent therefore, that from the early 1980s, the New Right combined their purely economic arguments into a populist language designed to play to people's fears and emotions. In this construction the expansion of the Welfare State had become equated with libertarian socialism, which if taken to its end, would result in the eventual destruction of 'civilised' society in Britain. Opponents to this narrative, interpreted broadly as 'the Left', were consequently often recast as irresponsible, or childlike in need of the firm hand of control:

The "politics of compassion" have turned not just the poor and the recipients of welfare, but the entire British population, into "a collection of noisy children crying 'it's not fair!'"³¹

Young people are impressionable... The standards of society are set by what we tolerate, by the discipline and conventions we set.³²

The solution to society's problems, according to the ideology of the New Right, was therefore to build a strong State. However, in contrast to Edgar's assertion that this had little to do with economics we are also reminded if we return to Hayek, that the capitalist project considered a high level of State authority as integral to ensure success. As Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony

²⁷ Local Government Act 1988: Section 28. Accessed February, 19 2018. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/pdfs/ukpga_19880009_en.pdf Section 28 was eventually repealed in 2000 in Scotland and 2003 elsewhere.

²⁸ 'Lesbians abseiling into House of Lords protest section 28 clause' YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoTtl8hNBNk>.

²⁹ 'Central Weekend live with women who invaded 6 o'clock news in protest of section 28' YouTube published 11 May 2016. The two women interviewed were introduced as Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler, but these were likely to be the names of the 'Ladies of Llangollen' who lived together for over 50 years, having met in 1768, rather than their own. "Central Weekend Live with women who invaded 6 o'clock news in protest of section 28," available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk3hU7xx2oI>.

³⁰ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 172.

Kiss, *A New Man*, 103.

³¹ *Ibid.* 75.

³² Margaret Thatcher speech March 23, 1985. The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106412>.

Jefferson and John Clarke perceived, the New Right were actively constructing the ‘need’ from which they could implement a far greater authoritarian rule over the population.³³ In their analysis, which considered the construction of the phenomena of mugging during the 1980s and the consequential increase in police powers, they demonstrated how the New Right emphasised problems and created popular extremes in order to advocate greater control and observation by the State. In doing so, State power appeared necessary, desirable and proportionate to the general population. The apparent contradiction of the Right, “between the anti-statism of free market ideology, and the authoritarianism of the traditionalists”³⁴, was therefore shown by those on the Left to be part of the same strategy. From the position of dominance, all that could oppose the free market - the ideals that brought about the perceived 1960s revolution and greater ‘rights’ for the working-classes – needed to be silenced and quashed. This would leave the capitalist project to run unabated.

The rhetoric was also being carefully constructed to ensure that individuals who conformed to their role in the capitalist system could receive some reward. In many ways this could arguably be seen in the selling off of council housing to any who wanted to purchase their home, whilst simultaneously banning the building of new council homes with the proceeds. It was also visible in the advertising and popularisation of small scale share ownership schemes which arose as previously owned public sector enterprises, such as BP, telecoms, gas and other utilities, were sold off throughout the 1980s. Those who were deemed to be continuing in the attempt to subvert the system, including the unemployed, single mothers and homosexuals amongst others, would conversely suffer the consequences. They would see their liberties or welfare benefits cut by the State. In this atmosphere, the shift in the language of the State from freedom to intolerance also impacted upon the way that protest as a whole was both perceived and dealt with.

Constructions of Greenham as subversive

As the 1980s progressed, the State increasingly dealt with women from Greenham as subversives. They either had to be silenced through the full force of the law or undermined as juveniles or deviants, regardless of whether or not this depiction could stand up to any scrutiny. Whilst it is clear that some women relished these labels viewing them as evidence that their campaign was causing disruption to the patriarchy, many did not see themselves or their actions reflected in these characterisations. However, the important point is that in having applied these

³³ Stuart Hall, and Martin Jacques, eds. *The politics of Thatcherism*.
Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*.

³⁴ Edgar, “The Free or the Good,” 75.

depictions to the women as a group the Government ensured that thereafter there could be no possibility whereby the State would appear to concede on any level to the demands of the women. For that reason, there could be no public debate over the weapons and absolutely no concessions. Indeed as the protest persisted punishment had to become more punitive and the language more intolerant. To agree would have implied a weakness of government which was simply impossible in the broader context. This was particularly relevant in terms of the wider implications upon the New Right project to curtail the intervention of the State in industrial disputes, as part of the monetarist project. If the Government was prepared to talk to anti-nuclear women it would have to speak with groups of striking workers, and indeed any other group raising an objection to the changes being implemented under their ideology for Government.

Policing Greenham

According to Home Office documents, MoD officials attempted to compel Thames Valley Police to crack down on the Greenham Common protests, reminding the Chief Constable that the police “would be in neglect of their duty if appropriate action were not taken to prevent further damage to defence property or incursions” onto the base.³⁵ Dated the 16th of July 1982, it was most likely in response to the presence on the common of a large convoy of travelling people, often referred to as Rainbow Camp.³⁶ Whilst the women had been involved in a week long blockade of the base from the 4th of July 1982, the Reading newspaper, *Red Rag* reported that “a convoy of some 130 vehicles” arrived at the start of the month, setting up “a 'Cosmic Counter Cruise Freedom Festival' at the Green Gate.”³⁷

Notably the Ministry of Defence letter to the Chief Constable referred to “the serious turn of events ... on the night of 8/9 July” resulting in “criminal damage ... amounting to over £10,000” in the wake of “generally aggressive behaviour” and other “serious breaches of the peace” in the weeks preceding. In particular the Ministry raised objection to the way the policing had been conducted in the lead up to the incident on the 8/9th of July and openly implied that the Force was “turning a blind eye” and failing to “react positively to the situation”, most probably, it was inferred, in order to conserve police resources.³⁸

³⁵ Letter dated July 16, 1982 from the Ministry of Defence to the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police (some details obscured). Released under the Freedom of Information Act by the Home Office in 2006. Reference 2460.

³⁶ *Morning Star* October 12, 2006 reported that the references in the FOI documents were in relation to the Women’s protest but this appears unlikely as no major actions by the women have been documented for this date. Indeed it is conspicuous by its absence from their texts.

³⁷ *Red Rag*, July 11, 1982, 3.

³⁸ Letter dated July 16, 1982, from the Ministry of Defence to the Chief Constable.

That the particular action which had provoked this severe criticism was not one carried out by the women protestors is apparent from *Red Rag*:

I arrived to see a crowd of people streaming along a fence, smashing the concrete posts with sledgehammers, bouncing on the chain-link and waving to the bemused MoD police. Hard work, and only a handful of hammers, but 200 yards went down in 5 minutes. Police reinforcements arrived as we reached the gates, and people held back a little as the tension rose. For several hours a lot of people did a lot of things, always trying to keep each other from getting carried away. Stones were thrown a couple of times, and the police provoked a lot of lost tempers we felt strong together and knew how best to react if the police decided to invade the Greenham Free State. They did, complete with military style marching in squads, later in the day. They were dressed for trouble. They were grim, they were trying to intimidate or provoke. They failed.³⁹

With the spotlight on his Force, the Chief Constable is noted to have made a “fairly forceful response” in order to defend the police action “claiming that the untoward turn of events could not have been foreseen.”⁴⁰ The implication of this could have been that the Police recognised a new contingent of protestor had unpredictably arrived at the site, but this is not clear from the minimal text that has survived in the records.

At the time of writing to the Chief Constable, the MoD did not anticipate that the protestors would leave the site “in the foreseeable future” and therefore that there was a distinct possibility of increasing violence and disorder. Interestingly the MoD did not appear to distinguish between the convoy protestors and the women associated with the Peace Camps. Whilst this may have been a deliberate attempt to capitalise on the escalation in disorder at the base in order to instigate a response, it may also have demonstrated a lack of understanding of the nature of the women’s non-violent protest at that time. However within a few weeks, after CND and some of the Greenham women had publically distanced themselves from the violence of the convoy action, only a small rainbow camp remained at Greenham and the atmosphere calmed. From the Home Office notes dated the 3rd of September 1982 it is clear the urgency had decreased considerably, however this incident had opened up a new politically charged dialogue between the Ministry of Defence and Thames Valley Police regarding the protests at Greenham. In the process the Home Office had also been made aware of the situation ensuring that the matter would continue to be monitored. In particular however, this incident had brought to the fore the extreme pressure experienced by the British Military from the United States authorities to “do

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Home Office memo September 3, 1982 released under the Freedom of Information Act. Reference 2460.

Ultimately the convoy was to run into trouble again with the Authorities at the notorious ‘Battle of the Beanfield’ in 1985. Andy Worthington, ed. *The Battle of the Beanfield*, (Enabler Publications, 2005).

something.”⁴¹ Added into this mix was the growing local concern from Newbury that the Government was not actively supporting the local Councillors efforts to remove the protestors, making it difficult for many politicians to visit the area comfortably.

Imposing the rule of Law

In the month after the traveller convoy left Greenham in August 1982, eighteen women entered the base for the first time to occupy the Sentry Box (a story that will be returned to later in chapter 4). This clearly indicates that not a significant amount of extra policing had been deployed despite the concerns of the MoD, and indeed the police took more than an hour to attend from nearby Newbury. Video footage of this action also shows that this was again a relatively good-natured exchange between the police and the women with much singing and laughing.⁴² Nevertheless, the disruption caused by the women ultimately led to trials in the Magistrate’s Court and prison sentences. This was a clear indication that the founding principle of the New Right, to ensure that the rule of law was maintained, was to be applied to the women of Greenham. This was even if one of the women imprisoned was pregnant and voicing what many onlookers would likely have considered a genuine concern for her unborn child.

Shortly after this event a mass protest was organised to take place during a weekend at Greenham shortly before Christmas 1982. The first day was the event known as ‘Embrace the Base’ whilst the following day the 13th of December was referred to as ‘Blockade the Base’. The first day was viewed as a traditional protest with ‘ordinary’ women in attendance. Reported in *The Times* the blockade of the following day was again portrayed as a relatively mild mannered affair, but several accounts implied an underlying tension. A police spokesman said:

We have been able to police a difficult situation largely with good humour. In the main the women have been peaceable but there comes a time operationally when you have to take action.’... A number [of women] who declined to give their names told of ‘police aggression’ particularly in the early afternoon along the gates and gaps on the north side of the nine mile perimeter fence.⁴³

At a ministerial meeting in the House of Commons, Jo Richardson commented on the hostility experienced by some of the women:

For the first time since the women camped at Greenham Common, there was a good deal of heat between the demonstrators and the police. There were few arrests but the House will recall that when about 20 women were arrested a month ago and were sent—it was a terrible

⁴¹ Letter dated July 16, 1982, from the Ministry of Defence to the Chief Constable.

⁴² Video available online <http://www.guardian.co.uk/yourgreenham>.

⁴³ *The Times*, December 14, 1982.

decision—to prison for disturbing the peace at Greenham Common, public opinion was excited and there was public support for what the women had done and what they were having to go through because of it. The tactic on Monday changed. The order went out: "Do not arrest people, but it does not matter if you are brutal in what you do with them." I have heard from many women over the past few days that there was more brutality on Monday than there had ever been before at any demonstration at which they were present.⁴⁴

Papers released in 2013 from The Margaret Thatcher Foundation also indicated that the depth of concern felt by some UK Government advisors had increased as 1982 progressed. A memo from Lord Beloff, a Conservative Peer, to the Prime Minister dated 15th of December demonstrated that the women of Greenham Common were increasingly being perceived as a threat. In this instance however the concern was less about public disorder and damage to property than with the stability of support within the UK for the NATO decision to site nuclear weapons in Europe. In particular, Beloff asserted that, "the danger arises from the erosion of the credibility of the deterrent and of the chances of multilateral disarmament"⁴⁵

Whilst he believed ministers had already presented good reasons for the policy of deterrence to "an open-minded and sophisticated audience" he implied that the broadcasted demonstrations illustrated that there was a danger from another section of society which was susceptible to "an induced mass-hysteria impervious to argument."⁴⁶

Despite the derogatory inference towards the intelligence of the women of Greenham, and the subsequent suggestion that their disposition made them liable to manipulation by the Soviet Union or other anti-Western regimes, this statement is illuminating. Beloff's words indicated a concern that a shift in the discourse was in fact being accomplished by the women. The timing of his memo illustrated the fear that the anti-nuclear discourse of the women was gaining momentum. However, the extent to which Beloff considered deterrence as a principle to be vulnerable was most apparent by his suggestions about what needed to be done to counter the threat the women posed:

We must abandon the kid-gloves approach and seek publicly to discredit the Greenham Common women and their supporters in the country. Ministers must stop prefacing their speeches with tributes to their fine motives and tender consciences. This just helps to build them up. To do the reverse we need ... a proper investigation of the background and characters of the Greenham Common women. ... We need to know more about their political and personal backgrounds so that the aura, of martyrdom can be stripped from them.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ NATO Council (Ministerial Meeting) House of Commons Debate Vol. 34 December 15, 1982, cc310-54.

⁴⁵ "The Anti-CND campaign: A note from Lord Beloff," December 15, 1982. Released in 2013 by The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed January 2014, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122590>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The Prime Minister was also called upon to make a speech, “addressed to the women of Britain on the theme that the protection of their lives and families are being wilfully jeopardized by the women of Greenham Common - that the danger to them is from Soviet missiles not those of our allies.”⁴⁸ Whilst Thatcher did not make this speech, it is notable that she did subsequently respond to further protest actions at the base during March 1983, saying that:

...it would make far more sense for those women to link hands around the Berlin wall. If, by doing so, they managed to persuade the Soviets to take it down, to remove the guns, the dogs and the mines that are there to kill those who attempt to escape to freedom, they would be achieving something. If they do not succeed in persuading the Soviets to take it down, they will prove that the freedom of the Greenham Common women and the freedom of all people in this country still needs to be defended.⁴⁹

The recently released documents and other sources therefore indicate that, despite the prevailing historical analysis which has hitherto ignored or dismissed the Greenham women as no more than an irritation to the Governments of the UK and the USA, a battle to control the discourse by the authorities did begin to emerge during the course of 1982. Recognising that the women’s peace movement was gaining ground and that it was utilising a language outside of the normal rhetoric (or as defined by Lord Beloff, ‘hysteria’), the State initiated a deliberate attack to regain dominance over the narrative.

Changing the language

Stories and sensationalist headlines emerged linking the camps to the Soviets, particularly in relation to the funding of the camps. Anne Francis recalls that TV programmes were also broadcast that alleged Soviet spies were using the camps to penetrate the West.⁵⁰ Without any substantial evidence it appeared that associations were being created for the consumption of the British public in an attempt to starve the women of support. In general the story went that if the women were against the nuclear weapons they would want their Government to unilaterally disarm, but as this would be to the obvious advantage of the Soviets, the women were obviously working with, or being duped by them. Whilst this was a ridiculously simplistic argument, it did serve to secure the position of the women in the public consciousness as being on the far Left of

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Prime Ministers Questions, March 31, 1983, The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105288>.

⁵⁰ Elaine Titcombe, Anne Francis Interview, September 12, 2015.

It is worth noting that this narrative is still utilised over thirty years later. The article by Jamie Doward, “Corbyn, the spy and the Cold War’s Long Shadow,” *The Guardian*, February 25, 2018, implied Greenham had been infiltrated by Soviet spies and propagandists.

the political spectrum. This meant that they were open to the same level of attack from the establishment, particularly following the land-slide victory of the Conservative Party in June 1983, following the Falklands War.

As one woman, who had taken part in one of seven 'Star Marches' walking to Greenham in 1983, described in her interview:

There was a huge pressure to stop any form of protest at the time. We were brave to do what we did. ... They practiced the police horse treatment on Greenham before they did it with the miners.⁵¹

This correlation with the police reaction to the miner's strike in 1984-85, and quite possibly a reference to the controversial events at Orgreave⁵², was also referenced by another Greenham woman in a book published in 1995. Mary Millington a long-term resident at Yellow Gate noted that by 1984:

The Metropolitan Police, who had been drafted in to practice techniques they would use on miners' pickets, were using horrendously violent crowd control tactics, isolating individuals and then attacking them in groups of 6.⁵³

Whilst these statements clearly demonstrate the mechanics of a participant 'knowing now what was not known then' in their recalled experience, in order to elicit particular reactions in their audience, they do serve to strengthen the perception that the Greenham women had become part of a wider battle in British politics at the time. This view is further endorsed because it was no secret that they had gained most of their support and financial backing from the Left, with many Trade Unions and Members of Parliament openly supporting their actions. In addition feminist and particularly lesbian feminist discourses were also easily aligned with the subversive characterisations the New Right increasingly sought to quell. As a result the women were increasingly distanced by the language of the State from the popular and comfortable image of mothers and grannies for peace. Radical, men-hating, anarchist, lesbian feminists were as much the enemy of the emerging language of Thatcherism as Soviet adversaries. They were therefore included in Thatcher's classification of the 'enemies within'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Elaine Titcombe, *Pauline Smout Interview*, August 22, 2011.

⁵² The Battle of Orgreave was a violent confrontation on June 18, 1984, between police and pickets at a British Steel Corporation coking plant in Orgreave, South Yorkshire. Amber Rudd MP rejected the possibility of an inquiry into events, following a pressure group campaign.

Alan Travis, "1984-85 Government rules out Orgreave inquiry," *The Guardian*, October 31, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/oct/31/government-rules-out-orgreave-inquiry>.

⁵³ Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, 29.

⁵⁴ S. Milne, *The Enemy Within*.

The women fight back

There is no doubt that tensions between the women and the Authorities progressively intensified, but it was not only the Police who began to change their approach. By the end of 1983, though blockades and lie-ins remained a prominent feature of much of the women's daily protest against the base, the publicity attracted by such actions had dwindled making them less effective overall. Instead the spotlight of the media focused much more on the evictions, which suggested to the wider audience that the State had begun to regain dominance over the women's campaign. However, following the action to occupy the Sentry Box many of the women recognised that incursions onto the base could not only frustrate the business of the military, but they also had the power to embarrass the British Government on the World Stage. Signalling this as a change of tactic, on New Year's Day 1983, 44 women climbed over the fence and danced on the Silos which were under construction. This resulted in one of the most iconic photographs from the whole campaign, and the publicity received was immense.⁵⁵

Unlike the incursions by those at Rainbow Camp the extent of damage done was reported as "some of the officers' uniforms became so dirty they had to be destroyed."⁵⁶ The women had however, succeeded in highlighting the insecurity of the base as they had scaled the fence without any hindrance from the Police, despite having briefed the Press beforehand, singing loudly and wearing luminous painted tops as they did so. This prompted a question in Parliament from one MP, "Is it not a fact that the women who have got into Greenham Common have proved that there is no security there?"⁵⁷ This was a great psychological accomplishment for the women, "We had done it. The fence was no longer a barrier, and that made us want to get into the base more often."⁵⁸

In the months that followed the women regularly entered the base. Perhaps with a sense of irony their approach was often childlike, dressing as furry animals going for a picnic, or as snakes with ladders to scale the fence, and they often successfully drew the MoD Police unwillingly into their games. The women had become conscious that through word play and associations they could effectively undermine the discourse of militarism and consequently this increasingly formed the basis of their protest actions. This led to the progressively 'creative' nature of the women's protests. This was later explained by one participant as the women attempting to find a way to

⁵⁵ Photograph by Raissa Page, "Dancing on the Silos," Coverage filmed for NEWS AT TEN (ITV Late Evening News), January 1, 1983. <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

⁵⁶ Jon Ryand, "Day Peace Women went Over the Top," February 15, 1983. (The Women's Library "Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp Collection," news-cutting unknown publication).

⁵⁷ Mr Flannery, House of Commons Debate, Vol.52, January 17, 1984. cc152-4.

⁵⁸ Eleanor McManus quoted in Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 102.

maintain non-violent direct action (NVDA) without having to remain passive. The women argued that as women were expected to be passive in a patriarchal society, they could not instigate change effectively by using the same language that was used to define them inside the status quo. They therefore had to subvert that language in order to succeed.

This however also arguably led to a disassociation between the women involved in the campaign and those they were aiming to influence. Some argued for instance that the discourses had become so distant from the original 'concept' that those caught up in the 'normal' society outside of their campaign were often unable to grasp the meaning at the root of the women's actions. This disconnection enabled the opposition to the protest to regain some of its power, as illustrated by a press conference with the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine where he set up the actions of the women as contrary to civilised behaviour:

We are having to face in the Western World a range of new approaches towards civil liberties or disobedience, towards public protest, towards the attitudes of groups of people, many of whom have understandable and legitimate concerns, but [serious tone & slow speed] many of whom belong to a political extremism which has motivations which I think should be clearly understood. Who are prepared to break the law, to involve in trespass, cause all sorts of disruption to the normal, peaceful process of society, and [slows] therefore one is having to look more and more carefully at greater and greater cost and greater and greater inconvenience to those who have to keep the police .. er the peace, particularly the police.⁵⁹

Embracing the discourse of subversion

Once the principle of subversion had been established, however, it became evident to many women that nothing was beyond their scope. One of the most significant concept questions was that of the 'Fence' and what it could be shown to represent. Many women began to see it as a more than a physical barrier. In the first instance it could be shown to represent the oppression of the people to the actions of the State because citizens had no right of access and consequently could not view the military machine in action. However, once viewed as a means of repression, it was possible to see it also acting as a psychological barrier. It was the difference between abiding by the rules and breaking them, between right and wrong, but if those rules were seen as unjust, the fence could legitimately become a target for protest in itself. In parallel to this the definition of non-violence also came under scrutiny. Following long debates it was finally accepted that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) could include damage to property as this did not compromise the principle that the women represented the antithesis of militarism which, through word association, was equal to death and the infliction of pain. This was a significant shift in the

⁵⁹ Michael Heseltine press conference speech, November 1, 1983 following discussions in Parliament about women trespassing running a risk of being shot. ITN footage available in BFI National Archive.

women's campaign which was further intensified by additional freeplay in the language that transformed the fence into a symbol of patriarchal repression. It had been placed there by the military men in power, who were constructed as being intent on destroying all that was alive and cherished by women, and therefore it was symbolic of the repression of women also. Women were on the outside while the men within were on course to their destruction. Cutting the fence therefore became vital, not only to resist the advancement towards nuclear war, but to the entire concept of freedom and, in particular, to the emancipation of women:

I knew when I was up there we were opening up something very big, exposing a nerve so sensitive and afraid without its protective layer ... being able to see clearly the causes of all this pain and illness and for the first time staring it right in the face, able to confront and deal with this monster machine.⁶⁰

Whilst the fence had been 'dismantled' by some of the women during the summer, the first cutting exercise took place on the 29th of October 1983 where women were invited to come with their 'black cardigans' (bolt cutters) to bring the fence down. Once completed for the first time as a collective action it subsequently became another more regular feature of the women's campaign with the women opening "windows and doors" into the base, often in symbolic shapes such as doves.⁶¹ As a consequence, arrests and court appearances became more frequent and the state acceptance of the women's claim to a right to free speech and protest noticeably declined. In the lead up to the delivery of the first weapons in November 1983, Heseltine made the headlines by claiming that he could not guarantee that any woman trespassing on the base would not be shot as a suspected terrorist. Women have subsequently stated in their recollections that this was no threat to them as this had been a consequence and fear they had already prepared themselves for prior to the first incursions on the base.⁶²

From a very early stage in the protest, particularly following the first arrests in 1982, the women had recognised that an arrest and court appearance could generate significant interest in the campaign and allow them a platform from which to legitimately record their objections to the actions of the State. Initially, as the reports from the Sentry Box action demonstrate, the women attempted to answer their case in the conventional form of the Law Courts. They had legal representation and they called eminent witnesses to their defence. However, as many of the women began to experience Court more often they increasingly began to represent themselves. Whilst in part this was due to costs (and the refusal of legal aid in a growing number of instances),

⁶⁰ Theresa McGinley quoted in Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 159.

⁶¹ "Rebecca Johnson talks at women's history month pre-launch event: Portcullis House," January 20, 2011, YouTube, accessed August 12, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3BOxMPTfmw>.

⁶² Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 99.

it was also in some cases referred to in terms of a rejection of the “conspiracy of gentlemanly lawyers to keep the dealing in women’s freedom in their own hands” and to prevent the women from becoming “puppets for the lawyers to hang their case on.”⁶³ Women began to address the Courts in their own way. The Camp newsletter in February 1983 demonstrated this with a page of extracts from the statements of women tried in Newbury Magistrates Court during the previous November. They ranged from accounts of their personal fears, to poems, to direct challenges addressed to the Magistrates to show exactly how they were keeping the peace by convicting the women. In many instances the women ‘failed’ to properly defend themselves and this was acknowledged by the Chief Prosecuting Solicitor in a memo to the Chief Constable.

Almost all those charged have contested their cases, though a large proportion have sought to justify their conduct through incorrect submissions of law and have not disputed the essential facts alleged by the prosecution.⁶⁴

In January 1984, Leon Brittan confirmed to the House of Commons that there had been a total of 1,175 arrests at Greenham Common. Of this number 623 had been prosecuted with the most common penalty a fine of £20.⁶⁵ The Chief Prosecution Officer was later to question the economics of prosecuting women for nominal fines to be passed in. Whilst the most common punishment was noted as being a fine however, this masked the fact that several women refused to pay the penalty and some even took steps, such as signing over all their possessions to a spouse, to ensure nothing could be taken from them in lieu. This often led to a prison sentence of a few days, which added further cost to the state. This further subverted both the economic discourse and the rule of Law narratives of the New Right, which the women had come to realise essentially relied upon compliance.

Compliance consequently developed into a central theme of the Greenham campaign. One woman reflected for instance that; “The single most important thing that it gave me was an understanding that rules aren’t necessarily to be kept, and this kind of ‘good little English girl’ act, can stop you from doing an awful lot of things.”⁶⁶ This articulation illustrates a crucially important conception of what the protest was about for many of the women involved. In particular it pointed to how societal rules, whether defined as Laws or as expected norms, were perceived as constructions that had become embedded with ideas of patriarchal dominance, and which had

⁶³ Carole Harwood, “Back in the Rhondda: Interview with Chris King, Sue Lamb and Lynne Fortt,” *Peace News*, June 9, 1989, 5.

⁶⁴ Memo released under Freedom of Information Act from Chief Prosecuting Officer to Chief Constable March 15, 1985. Reference 2460.

⁶⁵ House of Commons Debates Vol. 52, January 19, 1984 cc429-30.

⁶⁶ *The Guardian*, “Barbara Jane interview,” *Your Greenham: Bringing the Fence Down*. <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

effectively silenced women. This recognition of the imbalance of power between the sexes, with women in a subordinate position to men, could however empower women to actively challenge the weapons (another patriarchal symbol), by actively and consciously transgressing those rules. Consequently breaking the Law, or simply behaving in ‘unladylike’ ways by living in spaces where women were not expected to be,⁶⁷ or having relationships not supported by a patriarchal ‘normal’ view of the world, were perceived to be more than an objection to nuclear weapons. Instead they could be construed as an attack on the whole fabric of society; a challenge to the ‘truth’ claims that underpinned the everyday interactions and practices of men and women and which, by their acceptance, had continuously served to reconstitute the patriarchal structures from which they came.

These ideas were not unique to Greenham however, and rather unsurprisingly they had distinct links to the feminism articulated during the period of WLM, which had immediately preceded the Greenham protest and which had begun in the late 1960s. In particular it included a rejection of the ways that society had constructed women’s place so that they had become conditioned to conform to particular ideals of femininity. Moreover it presented a challenge to how these prescribed behaviours had effectively conspired to prevent women’s full participation as citizens, despite their enfranchisement. Whilst such debates had a clear basis in the mid Twentieth Century they often hinged upon themes that could also be traced back to much earlier periods of feminist philosophical development.

Militants and Constitutionalists

Though the threads of feminist thought can be seen in the writings of women dating back to the Twelfth century, the momentum and nature of the challenge to women’s place in society only really began to grow during the late Eighteenth century.⁶⁸ Prior to this, and in particular during the Reformation, patriarchy (though it was not necessarily termed as such until WLM) had gradually matured so that male control extended over nearly all facets of society. Men were perceived to be rational, objective and intellectual. Women were, in contrast, emotional, nurturing and lacking in the ability to reason philosophically.⁶⁹ Men were therefore suited to be active citizens, whilst women were increasingly prescribed passive citizenship characterised by domesticity.⁷⁰ A period of intellectual advancement, the Age of Enlightenment brought the first

⁶⁷ Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*, 97-145.

⁶⁸ June Hannam, *Feminism* (London: Longman, 2012), 4.

⁶⁹ Famously Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile*, referenced by Hannam, *Feminism*, 12.

⁷⁰ Antoine-Leonard Thomas, “On the character, nature of morals and spirit of women through different centuries” published in 1772 quoted in Barbara Cattunar, “Gender Oppression in the

stirrings of real challenge to these notions.⁷¹ Much of this debate subsequently manifested into the demand for the vote for women which gradually intensified until reaching fever pitch in the early Twentieth Century.

Whilst ultimately some women did gain the vote in 1918, which was expanded to all women on the same terms as men in 1928, it came only after a long and tumultuous campaign. A campaign that had involved numerous organisations demanding the vote for women, such as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) amongst many others. These groups often differed not only in terms of the tactics they employed in their campaigns, but also in terms of what their ultimate goals were once women's suffrage was achieved.

The call for the enfranchisement of women was a heterogenic cause that drew together multiple long-standing issues under one banner. For some it was a route to securing better education for women, access to the professions and economic emancipation whilst for others it would enable moral and social reforms connected to prostitution and temperance. Others also believed it could lead to better foreign policy and a greater reluctance to engage in war. Often drawing women from multiple backgrounds the campaign created a sense of sisterhood for participants, especially as close friendships formed and particularly when they were faced with a hostile angry reception to their demand for the vote.

Within the discrete objectives included under the umbrella of the campaign for the vote however, there was often a huge breadth of debate. As events unfolded these friendships could therefore become strained, or new alliances formed, as differences in opinion emerged. Some early historians, such as Olive Banks, indicated that these differences were often between those who demanded equality for women on the same terms as men,⁷² and those who recognised women as different to men and who consequently had different needs. Subsequently however this has been challenged as too narrow a definition. This is because the ideas underpinning the suffrage campaign were often complex and continually shifting as situations altered, or alliances and tactics changed. This is perhaps most apparent in relation to the conduct of the various organisations involved. In particular a very clear difference emerged between those who, like the suffragette Pankhursts of the WSPU, endorsed a militant campaign involving tactics such as

Enlightenment era," 1-9, paper presented for the *Humanist Society of New South Wales* July 13, 2014, accessed December 17, 2016, <http://hsnsw.asn.au/articles/WomenOfTheEnlightenment.pdf>.

⁷¹ Reference to John Locke, Claude Adrien Helvetius, Thomas Hobbes, Jeremy Bentham, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Astell and Catherine Macaulay as examples. Others such as Elizabeth Montague, Elizabeth Vesey and Hester Thrale also utilised the popular salon culture to further the debate. See Cattunar, "Gender Oppression," 1-9.

⁷² Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1988).

smashing windows, slashing paintings, blowing up post boxes, and burning buildings; and those who, like the suffragist Mrs Fawcett in the NUWSS, insisted the only way to gain citizenship was to behave in line with its principles and to agitate constitutionally within the Law for a change.

Like the suffrage movement Greenham was also a multifarious cause, and it is evident that women spent a considerable amount of time debating what exactly it was that they sought from their protest. It is however interesting to note how the Greenham narratives often invoked the memory of the militant suffragette in the construction of their protest.

Many Greenham women's accounts refer to a suffragette ancestor. Angry at being ignored, the women chain themselves 'suffragette style' to the fence in an act of militant defiance.⁷³ It was a carefully constructed act designed to conjure up an image that could be associated with women fighting to have their voice heard. Moreover it was a tale persistently re-told in the same way so as to ensure the connection would continue to be made thereafter, and the scene set so that all subsequent actions became framed as the continuation of a longer struggle for the active citizenship of women.⁷⁴ It was a narrative construction not lost on Rebecca Johnson who stood as a WFLOE candidate in the General Election of 1983 in Henley against Michael Heseltine. One of the campaign photographs shows her dressed as an Edwardian lady utilising all the romance of the suffragette sister.⁷⁵ A potent image for a campaign of militancy many testimonies refer to the painting of banners in the colours of the suffragettes and the wearing of the symbolic colours as well as actions that mimic those of the Edwardian militants.

We danced on those silos on New Year's Day 1983...While awaiting trial... we organised a suffragette-style "rush on Parliament" with banners ...and a die-in that blocked vice-president George HW Bush's car as he visited Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street.⁷⁶

The Greenham women also committed damage to property, were arrested, went to prison, adopted a non-compliant attitude and also overtly adopted the Suffragette language and their methods of communication such as songs, pamphlets, banners.

This link to the theme of women's citizenship became re-enforced further when, in early 1985, the local Newbury group Ratepayers Against Greenham Encampment (RAGE) successfully argued to an Electoral Court that the women living at the Peace Camp could not legally qualify as electors of Newbury. This it was argued was because their residence outside the base was

⁷³ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 59-61.

⁷⁴ "Rebecca Johnson talks at women's history month pre-launch event: Portcullis House," January 20, 2011, YouTube, accessed August 12, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3BOxMPTfmw>.

⁷⁵ Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*.

⁷⁶ "The women who refused to give up," *Morning Star*, November 14, 2013.

unlawful. This action disenfranchised seven women⁷⁷ though the decision was overturned on appeal.⁷⁸ Subsequently this moment in the campaign would be narrated as “Votes for Women!”⁷⁹

But for some women the link to the suffragettes was less direct in its narrative association, becoming much more intertwined with the feminism expressed during the WLM era;

It was just a natural continual from the suffragettes, that’s the thing for me....it’s to do with progressing the rights of women, a way of flagging it up; the absurdity of patriarchal military structures. So it was up close and personal really.⁸⁰

Also often referred to as second wave feminism, WLM had erupted in the late 1960s as an expression of the frustration women had with the construction of masculinity and femininity in Western society. Recognising that these were not biological differences but constructions of society, the term patriarchy became the common means by which to depict the ways that men exerted power over women. Furthermore it emphasised how the personal was political, for it meant that everything women did or believed of themselves needed to be scrutinised if women were ever to be truly emancipated from male dominance. Patriarchal militarism was consequently the way that men (as the constructors of society) threatened extreme violence in order to maintain their control, and thus how men essentially dominated women also in an unequal system.

The unhappy relationship between WLM and Greenham

Rebecca Johnson opened ‘Women’s History Month’ at Portcullis house, Westminster in January 2011, by highlighting how Greenham was not WLM:

We got a lot of criticism from feminists. 1970s feminists found us quite hard to deal with because we were... clearly feminists but we were not just arguing on what were considered women’s issues like abortion and pay and so on. We were there insisting on a feminist analysis of violence in the State and ...we did a lot of work around violence against women. The State violence, violence against all of us, nuclear weapons and we did that in an unashamedly feminist way...Some media tried to portray us as concerned housewives, mothers and grandmothers ... and then overnight, when we would blockade the base... we were transformed into burly lesbians (audience laughter). Same women doing it of course.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Sarah Hipperson, Rebecca Johnson, Caroline Rebecca Wynn Griffiths, Naomi Griffiths, Sarah Green, Muriel Jane Dennett and Katrina Howse.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*, 43.

⁷⁸ “Women win right to vote,” *The Glasgow Herald* May 2, 1985.

⁷⁹ Junor, *Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp*, 35.

⁸⁰ Lesley McIntyre, interview *Your Greenham: Politics*, <http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk/>.

⁸¹ “Rebecca Johnson talks at women’s history month pre-launch event: Portcullis House,” January 20, 2011, YouTube, accessed August 12, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3BOxMPTfmw>.

This is a crucial point to note and one which Monica Patricia Shaw highlighted in her PhD in 1993.⁸² It was evident that while much of the discourse in both movements followed very similar themes, in so far that they both rejected maternalism as the natural role of women and considered how women may collude with patriarchal society in their everyday practices, they were very much divided about what the priority of women needed to be. This debate was highlighted on the 10th of April 1983 when a “radical feminist half-day workshop called ‘The Women’s Liberation Movement versus The Women’s Peace Movement or How Dare you presume I went to Greenham?’” was held.⁸³ The papers presented were published in a pamphlet entitled “Breaching the Peace.”⁸⁴ In this collection the over-arching question asked was why women felt compelled to put peace before the struggle for emancipation:

As a woman I am engaged in a continuous war that has little to do with the existence or otherwise of...cruise missiles in Greenham. It is a war waged on me every day of my life by men.⁸⁵

Our strength as a movement and as women within the Women’s Liberation Movement has derived from our common fight against our common oppression. That oppression is our oppression as women. I would like to ask what the Women’s Peace Campaign has to do with our oppression as women?⁸⁶

Ending male domination begins with women developing a sense of our identity as women. With focusing on what we have in common as women...An important political act is to stop taking on guilt for the crimes of men – it is they who made this world as it is...My fear is of large numbers of women abandoning women’s liberation struggles in favour of what is seen as a ‘larger cause’... [that] will only lead to frustration.⁸⁷

This divide was also an issue highlighted when Nicky Edwards, who described herself as “a lesbian feminist and ex-peace camper”⁸⁸, published her novel ‘Mud’ in 1986. Depicting a young lesbian woman who had returned to London after a year living at Greenham, it exposes the immense pressure placed upon individuals to conform to the constructed metanarratives developed at Greenham. The over-arching narratives developed by the controlling elites, as

⁸² Monica Patricia Shaw, “Women in Protest and Beyond: Greenham Common and Mining Support Groups,” (PhD Theses, Durham University, 1993), 108-110, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5651>.

⁸³ Brenda Whisker et al. eds. *Breaching the peace: A Collection of Radical Feminist Papers* (London: A Woman's Place, 1983), 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Margrit, “Getting out of Greenham,” in *Breaching the Peace*, 38.

⁸⁶ J. Bishop, in *Breaching the Peace*, 31.

⁸⁷ S. Laws, “Dear Sisters,” in *Breaching the Peace*, 43-44.

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Mud*, inside cover.

pointed to by Freeman's analysis of 'structurelessness'.⁸⁹ As such it is a novel that challenges not only the popularised Greenham philosophies of maternal pacifism and non-violent dissent, but also the notion of a united feminist sisterhood. One of the most emotionally charged scenes is the confrontation between a group of lesbian feminist non-Greenham women and the central character as she defends her participation in the Greenham protest. Whilst the reader is aware they all share a sexual identity, an outlook on society, patriarchy and men, the passage powerfully demonstrates the intricate differences between the two contemporary feminist positions that their characters encapsulate. Appearing to misunderstand the Greenham women completely, the 'right-on' feminists construct an identity alien to the central character;

"It's not surprising you did so well with 'ordinary women' as you call them ... falling over yourself to be respectable baby-loving nurturers like you do. What good wives and mothers! A nice little enclave of hets in a sea of dangerous threatening dyke feminists." ... I couldn't believe what she was saying ... "A heterosexual enclave? Come off it. It's the only separatist living situation I've ever been in that worked."⁹⁰

In the echoing of the actual debate that occurred between some radical feminists and Greenham women during the campaign in a fictional context, the tensions and conflicts within feminism are dramatically brought to life. The focus subtly shifts from the dispute about whether or not Greenham distracted from or actively furthered feminism, to the intense and passionate emotions created by such debates and what that meant for individuals. Going further, the fictional story allows the exploration of whether the gap between differing ideological positions could be bridged by concentrating upon points of commonality rather than difference. But the conclusion is initially bleak and symbolically demonstrated by the eventual ending of the, albeit brief, relationship between the central character and one of the non-Greenham feminist women. Whilst the different ideological perspective did not prevent a relationship, it was not a sustainable one.

Overall, whilst it is apparent that Greenham did include many of the sentiments expressed by women who identified with WLM, it was not often an easy relationship between the two groups. Indeed it is conceivably due to these difficulties that Greenham women placed so much emphasis upon making Greenham a women-only space. Or more specifically that it developed into a separatist environment where lesbianism became established as the norm. In doing this it could be asserted that Greenham women were creating a utopian feminist society, refusing to adapt in any way to patriarchy, unlike those on the 'outside' who inevitably had to. As shown in chapter 2

⁸⁹ Freeman, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*, 233.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Mud*, 74.

however, whilst this may have answered the 'radical' feminists of WLM, it often led to bitter disputes within the anti-cruise campaign itself.

It was a difficulty that also became intensified as women found themselves being ascribed particular labels by other women. For whilst it is now generally accepted that feminism is a fluid, diverse and shifting narrative, it was remarkably common for women to define each other or themselves with particular terms. Women would be described as either radical feminists, socialist feminists, maternal feminists (though this was contested as some women believed maternalism was not compatible with feminism at all), lesbian feminists, lesbian separatist feminists or separatist feminists!

Constructions of women from suffrage to Greenham

Despite a campaign for the enfranchisement of women growing in prominence from the 1860s, presenting a multitude of compelling reasons to allow women the right to act as citizens, the principle of male privilege was fiercely defended by anti-suffragists. Perhaps what is most striking however is how close the early Twentieth Century rejection to the principle of female influence over politics was to the sentiments expressed by Lord Beloff's memo to Margaret Thatcher in 1983. The language was remarkably similar as was the sentiment; women were still considered to be emotional, unresponsive to reason and prone to manipulation by adversaries. It was evident therefore that for some the narrative had changed little, women could not be trusted to understand "the great problems which came before ... Parliament" their nature rendering them "impervious to argument." Consequently their position over the nuclear weapons when they entered the discourse was not a legitimate concern, and their protest not a demonstration of citizenship. It was a perspective that would not be confined to secret memos however. In response to the same 'Embrace the Base' protest for instance, some of the tabloid press constructed the women as a well-meaning mass of women manipulated by Soviet agents, the "unwitting dupes of a propaganda coup by Moscow"⁹¹ and a "national embarrassment."⁹² They were not 'real' women because they appeared more like the feminists of WLM because they challenged how women should behave, as well as the boundaries of what women should discuss. These were dangerous women and they needed their reputations to be tarnished to prevent their ideas carrying the British public towards a wholehearted refusal to accept Cruise.

The struggle for power in Wales

⁹¹ "Russian TV cameras roll," *Daily Express*, December 13, 1982.

⁹² "What about the Russians?" *Daily Mail*, December 13, 1982.

Another prevalent political discourse during the period that is particular theme in this study is that of nationalism, and in particular how the cultural identity questions that arose as a consequence of that specific debate helped to create an environment in Wales where widespread support for the women's protest at Greenham was not only possible, but publically endorsed. Central to this analysis is the recognition of how a long established Welsh nationalist sentiment, dedicated to national liberation from a perceived colonial power, fed into the politics of nuclear weapons, and how the protest became aligned with the characteristics that also enabled particular constructions of Welshness. For not only could an anti-imperialist and a non-conformist tradition be drawn upon to provide a justification for the rejection of militarism, but it is also evident that certain idealised and historically constructed conceptions of the Welsh, and especially Welsh women, also contributed.

As those aligned with the ideological goals of the New Right set about their project to reform industry in Britain, by reeling back the role of the State whilst simultaneously working to dissolve the power of the Unions, people previously divided by their distinct constructions of what being Welsh meant began to join together in response to "fight for peace, jobs and communities." As a consequence it became evident that common expressions of resistance had become increasingly facilitated within Wales as the 1980s progressed. More specifically it is evident that as particular notions of nation and culture evolved during the period, it became possible to cut across the traditional notions of class, geographical difference, and political Party divisions. United in a struggle against a perceived shared enemy of Welsh life and culture, it was evident that it was from within this context of growing solidarity that the increasingly hostile critiques of the women's protest at Greenham outlined above, and promoted by the Thatcher government and its agents, became essentially disallowed. Also perceived to be locked in a battle for 'freedom' from an oppressive State, the women, and to an extent the feminism, of Greenham was actively drawn into the same political battle as the Welsh nation.

"This realm of England is an empire"⁹³ – Tracing the nationalist spirit

Nationalism has many facets, but in Wales it was a left-wing or leftist nationalism that dominated the narratives. A form of nationalism based upon social equality, popular sovereignty, and national self-determination it espoused anti-imperialist notions, much like those utilised by the Irish Republican Party Sinn Féin, or the Scottish National Party (SNP). As such, like other ideological positions, it was essentially an understanding of the contemporary world framed upon very particular interpretations of history. In the case of Welsh nationalism this was a history that

⁹³ The Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) as drafted by Thomas Cromwell. Quoted in Evans *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, 99.

centred predominately on the Welsh language; or more precisely the attempts that the proponents of self-determination identified through time where an English monarchy or government could be shown to have been creating particular obstacles designed to exert power over the Welsh. For this purpose Welsh historical narratives underpinning nationalist perspectives generally referred back to the period of conquest in the Twelfth Century which eventually culminated in the 1536 Act of Incorporation, when they maintained that Wales began to be held in subjugation and unjustly persecuted by its dominant and oppressive neighbour State.

Key to this dominance was the imposition of English Law after incorporation which necessitated that English become the only language of the courts of Wales. Further to this those using only the Welsh language were not to hold public office in the dominions of the King of England. Recognising that opportunity for the middle classes was heavily dependent upon the English language therefore, over successive generations Welsh became confined to the working and lower middle classes. Increasingly those who spoke it in their everyday transactions therefore began to be viewed as unsophisticated and backward. Whilst some historians have argued that it was unlikely that the English Authorities sought the extinction of Welsh but instead a uniform administration and the creation of a Welsh ruling class fluent in English⁹⁴; those who support the nationalist cause have asserted instead that the assimilation of Wales into England could not be achieved, “as long as the Welsh spoke a different language...Lacking any national political structure, Wales the nation would have disappeared if the language were lost. That was a fate devoutly wished by English Government.”⁹⁵ This it has been argued was demonstrated clearly by the commission of a Government report in 1846 into education standards in Wales.

Brad y Llyfrau Gleision (The Treachery of the Blue Books)⁹⁶

Now an infamous story in Welsh history, it began in 1845 when the MP for Coventry, William Williams⁹⁷ called for an inquiry into education standards in Wales. Parliament agreed believing the social unrest of Merthyr Tydfil in 1830, followed nine years later by Chartism in Newport and the Rebecca Riots in Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire⁹⁸ had all been the product of poor education amongst the working-class. Consequently three English, Oxford trained, commissioners; R.R.W.

⁹⁴ John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1994).

⁹⁵ Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, 100.

⁹⁶ The term ‘Brad y Llyfrau Gleision’ was the title of Robert Jones Derfel’s 1854 response to the publication of the three-volume parliamentary “Reports of the commissioners of enquiry into the state of education in Wales,” published in 1847. It is a term which subsequently passed into the Welsh historical memory. Evans, *The Fight for Freedom*, 114.

⁹⁷ Formerly of Llanpumpsaint – the same small Welsh village that Ann Pettitt moved to 132 years later and where she would begin the march to Greenham.

⁹⁸ During which the Carmarthen workhouse was invaded leading to the last cavalry charge in the UK.

Lingen, J.C. Symons and H.R. Vaughan Johnson were sent to Wales with the task of examining “the state of education in Wales.”⁹⁹ The commissioners visited every part of Wales collecting evidence and statistics. However, they spoke no Welsh and relied on information from witnesses, many of them Anglican clergymen at a time when Wales was a stronghold of Non-conformism. In their conclusions they found the education system severely lacking as there were too few schools and poorly trained teaching staff, but in their report they exceeded their brief and denigrated the morals and language of the Welsh as a people. They were particularly critical of Welsh women. Their solution was to bring the civilisation of Empire to the working-classes of Wales by fully anglicising the population, reinforcing the attitude that English was the language of modernity and progress.¹⁰⁰ As a result many of those in positions of authority, including the Welsh middle classes, began to instigate practices that were designed to promote Englishness and berate those who continued to speak their native tongue. Schools for instance introduced the notorious ‘Welsh Not’ punishment for children who deigned to use the language, and pupils were purposefully taught a history full of English heroes. Women in Wales were also particularly targeted by this in drive to convey respectability, whereby their role in society became increasingly framed in the image of the saintly ‘mam’, a theme which will be returned to in more detail in chapter 5.

Plaid Cymru and the rejection of militarism

In 1925 however Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales) was formed with the express purpose of removing “from our beloved country the mark and shame of conquest.”¹⁰¹ Consequently, when it was decided in Westminster to establish an RAF bombing school in Penyberth on the Llyn Peninsula in Gwynedd in 1936, Saunders Lewis, declared that the UK Government was determined to turn the “essential homes of Welsh culture, idiom, and literature into a place for promoting a barbaric method of warfare.”¹⁰² The issue was particularly highlighted when it became clear that the Welsh site was agreed after two other locations in England had been rejected due to local protest. The half a million objections from Welsh locals were ignored. Construction of the bombing school building began exactly 400 years after the first Act of Union annexing Wales into England, and in a symbolic act of defiance activists decided to burn it down. Three men, Saunders Lewis, Lewis Valentine and D.J. Williams were subsequently found guilty of arson and sentenced to prison terms. Upon their release they were treated as heroes for

⁹⁹ Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, 114.

¹⁰⁰ Geraint H Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 213-216

¹⁰¹ A.N. Wilson, *Our Times*, (London: Random House, 2011).

¹⁰² Davies, *A History of Wales*, 592.

thwarting the plans of the English Government and for demonstrating a resistance to English dominance by the Welsh nation that it was claimed had not been witnessed since the time of Owain Glyndwr.¹⁰³ This challenge to the perceived imperialism of England grew steadily throughout the middle years of the Twentieth Century.

These political perspectives intensified significantly following the broadcasted legendary speech in 1962 by Saunders Lewis, entitled ‘Tynged Yr Iaith’ (Fate of the Language). In this scripted dialogue with Welsh-speaking Wales he described how the Welsh nation was under renewed attack from England, and that the target was again the Welsh language which the English had consistently sought to eradicate in order to strengthen their hold over the country. His speech was constructed to conjure echoes of English imperialist jingoism. The English were demonised as the exploiters of Welsh assets, such as coal and slate, and the Welsh were encouraged to regard all actions of the English based Parliament with deep suspicion.

Therefore it is relatively unsurprising to see that on the 20th of April 1983, Dafydd Wigley the Plaid Cymru MP for Caernarfon asked leave to bring a motion in front of the House of Commons for a Bill “to provide for a referendum on whether cruise missiles should be located within the countries of Great Britain.”¹⁰⁴ Whilst proceeding to detail his opposition he revealed the concern with the impact of the policy upon Wales, whilst also simultaneously demonstrating an allegiance and level of respect for the Greenham Women which was not a widely held view within Westminster at the time:

The advantage of cruise missiles... is that they are less vulnerable than fixed missile bases. The enemy would not know where to attack to knock them out... the logical response would be to hit Britain with everything at once ...That is why there has been such a massive protest against them by the women of Greenham Common, to whom I pay tribute, and by people elsewhere on mainland Europe.... In Wales, opinion is particularly strong, as might be expected in a country that last year declared itself to be a nuclear weapons-free area. In a recent house-to-house survey in a town in Gwynedd—in a Conservative-held constituency—78 per cent of the people were against cruise missiles.¹⁰⁵

These comments in Parliament were supported in the Plaid Cymru Manifesto of 1983. In addition to the “erosion of Welsh language and identity” London’s most important failure for the people of Wales was declared as its:

¹⁰³ Hence the name of the militant Welsh Nationalism faction during the 1980s that primarily targeted English owned holiday homes in rural Welsh communities, ‘Meibion Glyndwr’ (Sons of Glyndwr).

¹⁰⁴ House of Commons Debates Vol. 41, April 20, 1983 cc287-95 “Cruise Missiles Referendum”, Dafydd Wigley.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

...obsession with Nuclear weapons [that] makes Wales a certain target for Soviet nuclear missiles. While no country could isolate itself from nuclear conflict, a self-governing Wales would be a safer country as well as a voice for peace in the world.¹⁰⁶

Drawing directly upon the historical figures and importantly the Greenham women it went on to asset that Plaid Cymru was;

...the only political party whose support for world peace is in accord with Welsh aspirations. Throughout our history, the Welsh people have produced leaders in the cause of peace – Henry Richard, George M. LL. Davies, Gwynfor Evans, and the women who marched from Cardiff to Greenham Common during 1981. The party welcomes the leadership which has been given by the women’s peace organisations, whose decentralised structure parallels Plaid’s own policy of decentralised, community socialism. Plaid Cymru fully supports the peace movement and seeks the dismantling of the imperialist power blocs on both sides of the Iron curtain, beginning in the United Kingdom...Plaid Cymru works for Peace, a peaceful political structure and complete nuclear disarmament. A self-governing Wales would be a voice for peace in the international community, while subjection to London rule exposes us to the danger of annihilation.¹⁰⁷

This link between the politics of Plaid Cymru and the opposition to nuclear weapons also directly encouraged women to join the campaign. As Roseneil points out, Sian Evans a Plaid Cymru member from the age of 13, saw Greenham as an extension of her existing politics:

The nuclear issue has always been a very strong policy with Plaid, it’s a very pacifist party...I was ...very influenced by the Welsh influence on it, that there were so many women from Wales...As a women’s section [we] were going to maintain a presence at Greenham at weekends.¹⁰⁸

The English speaking Welsh

Despite the undoubted presence of a growing nationalist identity and the reaffirmation of a strong cultural code in Wales during the period, the extent of its influence over politics could on the surface be called into question by the ‘No’ vote during the Welsh referendum of 1979. Held on Saint David’s Day, to decide whether there was sufficient support for a Welsh Assembly among the Welsh electorate, the motion was defeated by a majority of 4:1 with only 12% of the Welsh electorate voting in favour of establishing an Assembly. These results inevitably generated various questions and debates regarding the nature of contemporary Welsh society and politics. One factor noted by John Morris for the scale of defeat was the political and economic circumstances

¹⁰⁶ 1983 *Plaid Cymru Manifesto*, 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 9.

¹⁰⁸ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, 48-49.

of the period.¹⁰⁹ Without a majority of votes in the Commons after the general election of February 1974, the Labour Party was highly reliant on the support of the Liberals, and the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists to ensure that its political programme was adopted by the Commons. Consequently as a Party with a historically strong support base in Wales, particularly amongst the English speaking Welsh, there was a huge disincentive to devolution. Moreover, on the economic front, the Labour government was confronted with high rates of inflation and increasing unemployment, and consequently it appeared a significant risk to jobs to opt for an Assembly at that moment. There was also confusion and a general lack of information leading to increased fear of change. Another theme that emerged was the fear that a new assembly and its civil service might be run by a Welsh-speaking elite from the rural and Northern areas of Wales indicating a large internal cultural split that essentially pivoted round the language question.¹¹⁰ It was not the first time this problem has emerged as it had resulted in the failure of Cymru Fydd, the first movement established with the objective of gaining self-government for Wales in 1886. Indeed it was a distrust that was perhaps again reinforced by the early leadership of Plaid Cymru which had advocated a monolingual nation based upon an agricultural economy which would necessitate the deindustrialisation of South Wales.¹¹¹

A common cause

The other significant reason for this suspicion of the rural Welsh was therefore a left-wing belief in class unity against ethnic sentimentality. South East Wales was a vast industrial region and in particular it had huge mining communities. They were traditional God-fearing non-conformist communities with male breadwinners and female homemakers, which although English speaking, were proud of their Welshness. These were communities that had a long and often fraught relationship with the industry owners and Government. Engaged almost continuously in disputes over jobs, conditions and wages these were people who were acutely aware of their class struggle, brought home often by tragedies such as Senghenydd in 1913 and Aberfan in 1966 (which was also compounded by the injustice of the Coal Board use of the disaster fund). Therefore when the mining communities became aware of the proposals to increase Nuclear Power generation, whilst simultaneously closing South Wales' mines, the situation was met with considerable alarm. It was therefore not entirely surprising to find that

¹⁰⁹ John Morris, Baron Morris of Aberavon, Labour MP and Secretary of State for Wales from 1974 to 1979.

¹¹⁰ John Morris, *Fifty Years in Politics and the Law* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011).

¹¹¹ In these ideas Saunders Lewis has been linked to fascism, which was furthered by his insistence that Wales should play no part in the war against Germany in 1939. However, this is still hotly disputed by Plaid as Lewis was never an advocate of absolute sovereignty or a centralist government.

South Wales' miners took part in the CND demonstrations in London in 1980 and again in 1983. In those same years, at the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Conference the Area Representative argued for unilateral nuclear disarmament and in 1983 Terry Thomas, South Wales Vice-President, opposed the American military presence in the country, arguing that Britain should not be allowed to become Reagan's "unsinkable aircraft carrier."¹¹²

In June 1983 it was reported that 27 of the 33 collieries in South Wales were ear-marked for closure under the Conservative Government's broader political objective of a monetarist reconfiguration of the economy. Within a few months the British Miners' Strike began, and in a return of support, the Greenham Common women "who had ... been entertained by a South Wales striking miners' choir,"¹¹³ sent food parcels to help support the families of striking miners. Some of the Greenham groups also made direct contact with the Women Against Pit Closures groups, one such link was made with the women associated with the Oakdale colliery in Caerphilly.¹¹⁴

Hywel Francis, the MP for Aberavon who was chair of the influential Wales Congress in Support of Mining Communities during the 1984-85 strike also reported that;

The sedate calm of respectable Wales ... was broken by public meetings on the Eisteddfod field in support of the miners. Farmers, Church leaders, teachers, public employees, Welsh language activists, historians, poets, folk-singers, communists, members of the Labour Party and Plaid Cymru, ministers of religion, the women's movement and the peace movement all made common cause in support of Welsh mining communities....Such seemingly unlikely and unexpected alliances could never have been anticipated ...it is a resistance movement...part of the same phenomenon...that saw the women's anti-nuclear march...the Welsh Language Society campaigning against unemployment because without work the Welsh language will die; valley parents involving themselves in direct action to oppose cuts in school bus services; and valley communities uniting with NUPE members to oppose hospital closures.¹¹⁵

Whilst published in *Marxism Today*, and arguably with an agenda that made such links between the groups desirable, there nevertheless is some indication that this connecting of the Greenham campaign to the plight of the miners did occur. There are reports for instance that miners donated coal to the women after the strike¹¹⁶ and in 2000, when the women of Yellow gate were seeking funds for a commemorative garden at Greenham, the NUM donated £5,000 for this "lasting testament to the courageous women of Greenham Common."¹¹⁷ It was an affinity that was clearly formed in 1984 but which was facilitated by the identification of common threads

¹¹² Ben Curtis, *The South Wales Miners 1964-1985* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), 157.

¹¹³ Hywel Francis, "Mining: the popular front," *Marxism Today* February, 1985, 13.

¹¹⁴ Sue Finch, "Socialist-Feminists and Greenham," *Feminist Review* no.23 (1986), 96.

¹¹⁵ Francis, "Mining: The Popular Front," 12.

¹¹⁶ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

¹¹⁷ Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 154.

of narrative which stretched through the political divides in Wales. Narrative alignments that Francis would subsequently claim broke down old barriers paving the way for the alliances that featured in the 1997 devolution referendum and which successfully established a Welsh Assembly in Cardiff.¹¹⁸ All of those involved he argued, considered their cause to be against an oppressive English Government, and all considered it “a social responsibility to take extra-Parliamentary action.”¹¹⁹ Therefore it could be argued that this convergence of different causes also enabled the debate about Welshness to move forward by effectively enabling broader definitions of being Welsh to co-exist.¹²⁰

It was a link forged also by the solidarity that the Miners’ wives felt for the Greenham women, particularly in the wake of extreme violence witnessed on the picket lines as the Police attempted to prevent strikers from bringing the whole of industry to a halt in the region. Women who had been at the scene, and who later saw radically different and distorted interpretations being broadcast on the TV of the miners’ actions, began to wonder if the media reports about the Greenham women were accurate.¹²¹ Furthermore, as chapter 4 explores further, it is evident that Welsh working-class women from the valleys were playing an integral part in the Greenham protest. Many of these women, actively combined other debates to the protest narratives. This in particular raised the question of how it was acceptable to spend vast resources on nuclear weapons, when their own local communities were being pulled apart and their livelihoods threatened by an ideological goal associated with notions of fiscal prudence.

What is evident from this overview of Welsh politics therefore is how long-standing ideas about national identity became intertwined with the protest at Greenham and other contemporary struggles. It is in this context that it became possible for a narrative of solidarity, support and mutual respect to develop which ensured that the Greenham women could not be successfully targeted by their adversaries in Wales as they often were elsewhere in the country (as will be discussed again in chapter 5).

Ideological battlegrounds

Overall this wider context of an ideological battleground illustrates that the handling of the women and their cause by the Authorities during the 1980s was not simply a product of purely

¹¹⁸ Hywel Francis, *History on our Side: Wales and the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike* (Ferryside: Iconau, 2009).

¹¹⁹ Quote from South Wales Annual NUM Conference 1981, in Ben Curtis, *The South Wales Miners*, 156.

¹²⁰ R. Fevre, and A. Thompson eds. *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999).

¹²¹ This was also expressed in connection to sexuality and race politics as described by Sian James MP Swansea East 2005-2015. “All Out! Dancing in Dulais,” produced by LGSM, February 1985, accessed December 16, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHJhbwEcgrA&t=207s>.

feminist or anti-feminist thinking, and that this has perhaps been over-emphasised by many of those involved in the construction of Greenham analyses by focusing upon the development of feminist ideologies.¹²² The attacks launched by the State on the women were arguably on a par with the attacks on Labour, the Left and any other group deemed subversive. Therefore, whilst economics were conceivably the initial driving force in the rise of the New Right, the debate had been strategically engineered to equate socialism, and by extension the Labour Party, Trade Unions and interventionist politics such as feminism, as the “enemy within.”¹²³ Indeed as the Labour Party, many Trade Unions and other radical groups actively and publically supported the Greenham campaign at various stages this perception grew as it increasingly became utilised by those in opposition to undermine the campaign ideologically. Moreover, not only was Greenham part of an internal enemy, but because its stated aims were for Britain to back away from a military defence against its communist enemy, the USSR, it could also be ideologically positioned in alignment with the ‘enemy without’ too. This could either be construed as being in opposition to the virtues of the New Right, which had laid claim to the concept of ‘common sense’, or as a blatantly traitorous act where the ‘freedom’ of the Western world was under attack from an oppressive regime of socialist concept of the State.

As a result, it is evident that a historical analysis of Greenham as a feminist campaign in answer to an ongoing patriarchal problem is too narrow a focus, and does not fully explain the intensity of the reaction against the women or how they were portrayed at the time by the State and their agents and in particular the media. The protest is undeniably a part of the history of evolving feminist discourses and debate, and a vitally important mobilisation factor for participants, and especially for lesbian feminists. The concentration on these specific narratives can however work to conceal a great deal of what was an escalating, and ultimately far larger, struggle both for and against libertarian ideals during the 1980s. The feminism of Greenham was therefore only one aspect in a multifarious web of competing narratives which were intrinsically linked to each other, and which continuously moved in relation to each other. The ideals expressed through Greenham could consequently never really triumph unless the greater battles of ideology were won. Indeed it is a battle which has persisted into the post-Cold War period, and which consequently ensures that the Greenham women continue to fight for their space in the historiography.

¹²² Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*.

¹²³ Margaret Thatcher used this term to attack the remaining remnants of socialist power in the trade Unions (the NUM) and Labour councils but it is likely she would have included all who opposed her vision.

See: S. Milne, *The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against The Miners*, (London: Verso, 1994).

Chapter 4

Women from Wales and Welsh Cultural Identities at Greenham

The purpose of this chapter is to focus the analysis upon Wales, to re-examine how the anti-nuclear debate developed within that socio-political location and how this influenced those who became involved with the campaign at Greenham. The analysis begins with a focus on how the wider growing ecological awareness during the period enabled a new framework for maternal objection to nuclear weapons to develop in particular areas of Wales. Incorporated into this is a consideration of the impact upon this debate of the way power relations were constructed in the region at the time, particularly in regard to the control of the Westminster based Government in the period before devolution. It considers how this contributed to the creation of a political environment in some communities within Wales that not only publically resisted nuclear weapons, but which entwined the debates about them with a historically specific Welsh Celtic heritage and cultural identity inherently opposed to imperialist notions of nation and power.

It is also an analysis however that recognises difference between the various regions of Wales by contemplating how the anti-nuclear debate also evolved within the industrialised areas of the South East, which were not particularly associated with nationalism. Areas which were instead coming under increasing pressure as one of the heartlands of Labour, and a target of New Right ideology. In doing so it reflects on how this political environment also enabled a reappraisal of the traditional conceptions of women and their role in society, and demonstrates how the ideas that were deeply entrenched into all parts of Welsh society and culture, came to be utilised as a narrative to subvert and challenge nuclear policy.

It is these localised narratives it is argued that were crucial in the creation of region wide support for the Greenham women, but they also help to understand why a different memory of the campaign, as described in the introduction, is possible in Wales.

Where did Greenham begin?

Though the protest is widely reported to have begun in Wales in virtually all of the Greenham texts, the geographical association is largely presented as statement of fact to describe how the camps came into being. It attracts very little attention analytically:

1981. South Wales. It was here that the idea of a women-led march from Cardiff to Greenham, took shape and grew. Women in Wales learned about a march organised and led by women that went from Scandinavia to Paris.¹

The march itself was a leaf from the book of successful non-violent actions for peace and justice, and was to become part of an international history of resistance which includes Gandhi's marches... in South Africa and ...in India, as well as the US civil rights marchers.²

Historically, culturally and politically, therefore, the inspiration for the march was often attributed to places far away from the actual place of origin. Therefore it is unsurprising that few researchers have placed any particular focus on telling the Greenham story through the prism of Welsh history.³ As a consequence, little work has been done to track how the Greenham discourse erupted in the specific place and precise time that it did. As a result some of the wider complexities of explanation have been hidden from view.

In particular it is evident that the introduction of ecological awareness into local Welsh politics has not been considered in terms of its importance to the Greenham story. This is both in terms of how the protest came into being, and how it produced a blending of ideas to create a narrative of ecological motherhood which was quite different to traditional conceptions of women. It was a combination which would pave the way for the subsequent ecofeminist spiritual conceptions into the Greenham protest (a theme discussed further in chapter 5). For whilst there has been some attention paid within the Greenham texts to maternal objections to nuclear weapons, these have often been utilised as a point of difference from which to define the feminist interpretations. They have not generally been considered as developing narratives themselves. To begin to grasp at these less accessible histories it is therefore necessary to look again at where the story of Greenham begins and to examine the process through which participants were politicised.

According to Thalia Campbell, the protest did not begin in Cardiff, or in the Llanpumpsaint kitchen of my school teacher Ann Pettitt, or even with the Peace Walk from Copenhagen to Paris that it claimed to emulate. Instead, she asserted, it started with a Government commitment in July 1979 to a programme of test drilling, to include several sites in Wales, for the investigation of disposal options for high-level radioactive nuclear waste. This dumping of nuclear waste, she claimed, was the catalyst that brought people in Wales together to start talking, making connections and protesting. It was a campaign, she argued, that united whole communities

¹ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 11.

² Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp* x.

This is also repeated on the commemorative sign erected in 2002 for the Peace Garden at Greenham.

³ Rolph, "Greenham and its legacy," in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 97-122, being the exception.

against central Government and ultimately ignited the drive in the 1980s against nuclear weapons.

The Government was planning four nuclear dumps in Wales...The whole Community was out in protest. Entire villages turned out to Public meetings, and took part in direct actions... and out of all this came Nuclear Free Wales where all Councils voted to be Nuclear free, AND the march to Greenham Common. Ann Pettitt in Carmarthenshire had been protesting against the dumping... she had the idea of marching to Greenham to protest about the first strike Nuclear Cruise Missiles soon to arrive from the USA.⁴

It was, she maintained, the method through which ordinary people began to make the associations between Britain's highly reactive nuclear waste, as an environmentally damaging and highly dangerous substance, with what nuclear science meant overall. By impacting directly upon their daily lives, and more specifically the places they knew of as 'home' (with all its cultural definitions intact), the complexities of the wider debate were dramatically opened up. Therefore it was an awakening of an environmental awareness, a concept which had gained support rapidly around the world during the 1970s, when linked to the localised toxic nuclear waste dump that led people to investigate how it came into being and to question why it was necessary at all. Created as a consequence of producing energy or weapons by the State on the 'behalf' of its citizens, this questioning enabled a much bigger shift in the consciousness of the people involved. From a narrow single issue debate about waste management, therefore, a discourse of ideological objection could be facilitated whereby many of those involved began to believe that neither nuclear energy nor nuclear weapons were desirable at all. Once links between the waste and weapons were made other associated debates were also enabled and a strong anti-nuclear weapons position could develop.

The nuclear programme debate

Thalia's testimony does bear some scrutiny when considered in the wider context. A few months earlier in March 1979, a major catastrophe had occurred at 3-mile island in the United States releasing significant amounts of radioactive material into the surrounding atmosphere. Demonstrating the vulnerabilities of nuclear energy and the scope for human error in handling such materials, it was an event which was easily aligned in Britain with a devastating fire that had occurred 22 years earlier at Windscale in Cumbria in 1957, during which large areas of the UK and

⁴ Thalia Campbell, http://www.birdchildsandgoldsmith.com/acatalog/Campbell_Stories_and_Articles.html other similar accounts of the same story also given in her oral history interview produced by the IWM and the various documents connected to the fund raising campaign for the Cardiff Statue held by the Women's Archive of Wales.

beyond had been contaminated with radioactive isotopes. Though the true scale of the disaster was not known until 1988 when data was published under the 30-year rule, it was understood by most as a public health episode that had resulted in the disposal of considerable amounts of milk at sea to prevent human consumption.

Despite a general reluctance to acknowledge in depth the dangers of nuclear substances by the British Government, it was a subject being actively researched and discussed within academia. For instance, studies completed in the late 1970s in the UK and USA contended that cases of Myeloid Leukaemia were more likely close to Nuclear installations. As part of this widening unease, concern groups formed. For instance, The World Information Service on Energy (W.I.S.E), founded in 1978, began to report on the risks to anyone working in the vicinity of radioactive materials as an attempt to raise awareness and prompt debate.⁵ Others also began to debate the subject as an environmental issue in journals such as *The New Ecologist*, which reported in early 1978 that a total of 45 uncontrolled plutonium leaks and 11 fires had occurred at Windscale alone between 1951 and 1977. Indeed, during the latter years of the 1970s articles appeared at a steady rate referring to leaks and contamination, near accidents, mis-management and the impact upon the natural world, including human health. Despite this, only abridged versions of the official investigations of accidents were ever released into the public domain, leading some involved in environmental campaigns to suggest that the populace were not being kept fully informed of the full extent of the risks.

All of this was incorporated into a widespread and growing debate about the environment and human activity, also reflected in the development of ecological or 'green' parties, particularly across Europe, Australia and New Zealand throughout the 1970s. In the UK, the Ecology Party⁶ rose to national prominence during the May General Election of 1979. Fielding 53 candidates, it attracted TV and media coverage for the first time, resulting in a soaring membership from a few hundred to approximately 6,000.⁷ Other environmental groups were the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA – also formed in 1973) which worked to influence Trade Union

⁵ W.I.S.E. No 4 March, 1979 for instance reported that three laundry women had suffered plutonium contamination, resulting in serious lung problems, whilst washing Nuclear power protective clothing.

⁶ Originally formed as 'People' in 1973 but renamed in 1975, and subsequently re-branded as the Green Party during the 1990s.

⁷ It never entirely encapsulated the whole of the environmental movement in the UK due in part to its early Right Wing tendencies. This included the rejection of women's emancipation and the integration of foreigners, alongside advocating strong authoritarian government as an answer to the perceived disintegration of society following industrialisation. Latterly deep factional divisions also emerged between electoralists and anarchists.

Refer to Lowe, Philip D. "The Withered 'Greening' of British Politics: A study of the Ecology Party." *Political Studies* 34 (1986): 262-284. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1986.tb01595.x.

positioning, the Liberal Ecology Group (LEG - 1977) and Friends of the Earth (FOE). With the exception of FOE, all these groups also became affiliated to an umbrella group known as the Anti-Nuclear Campaign (ANC) after 1979.

There were also numerous publications during the period highlighting environmental causes to the wider public. The British scientist James Lovelock, for instance, published an accessible text written for the non-scientist in the summer of 1979, exploring the hypothesis that “the earth's living matter - air, ocean, and land surfaces - form a complex system that has the capacity to keep the Earth a fit place for life.”⁸ For many people during the 1970s, therefore, the world appeared to be on the edge of environmental catastrophe as humans persistently and aggressively over-exploited its resources.

It was against this background that the exploration of potential sites for the disposal of nuclear waste was confirmed in July 1979, followed closely in December by an announcement by the Secretary of State for Energy, David Howell that the Government intended to press ahead and investigate the expansion of nuclear power in the UK in anticipation of future global declines in energy resources such as oil, gas and coal.⁹ This was not unique to the UK as similar decisions occurred in France and Germany, where a similar emergence of green politics was also underway. Prompting a long parliamentary debate in the UK, it was apparent that a significant opposition movement had already begun to engage with the public and threatened to derail the government's plans:

The nuclear programme... could run into serious difficulties. There has been plenty of evidence cited and comments made to that effect from Opposition Members... If the industry and Government [do not] make greater efforts to disclose fully sensitive documents and material... the anti-nuclear lobby will exploit the fears and anxieties of the British people.¹⁰

Nuclear Waste Dumps in Wales

Interestingly Leo Abse MP for Newport also contributed with a comment that supported Thalia's appraisal of the nuclear waste dispute in Wales, warning that “if there is any suggestion that Wales [be made]... into a radioactive wasteland” there would be a strong reaction against the Government's plans to expand nuclear power.¹¹ Though not explicitly mentioning any particular campaigns, further exploration suggests his comment implied a forewarning connected to the activities of groups such as MADRYN (Mudiad Amddiffyn Dynoliaeth Rhag Ysbwriel Niwclear - also

⁸ James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), introduction.

⁹ David Howell MP, Hansard House of Commons Debate vol. 976 December 18, 1979 cc287-304.

¹⁰ Peter Rost MP, Hansard House of Commons Debate vol. 976 December 18, 1979 cc303.

¹¹ Leo Abse MP, Hansard House of Commons Debate vol. 976 December 18, 1979 cc299.

Welsh for 'cunning fox')¹² and PANDORA (People Against Nuclear Dumping on Rural Areas) which had formed with branches all over mid and north Wales to oppose the nuclear dumping test site exploration programme.¹³ These groups resembled in structure and aim the local organisations in Scotland which had occupied the proposed nuclear power station site at Torness only a few months earlier. Abse was clearly making a guarded reference, for an audience who would have understood the context, that additional power plants generating even more waste for the authorities to deal with, would meet with serious opposition if Wales was selected as a suitable disposal area.

In fact, MADRYN and PANDORA were extremely effective in mobilising whole communities in opposition, not just against local dumping proposals, but to the whole principle of nuclear waste. Writing in *Peace News* one observer reported that, "during the early public meetings it became clear that people felt it would be very wrong for any campaign to simply oppose dumping in this area alone, and so a policy of opposing dumping everywhere was adopted from the outset."¹⁴ They also enabled participation at all levels. In one PANDORA member's recollection, "people packed a public meeting in Newtown in July 1979"¹⁵ to air their views, but as Paul Wesley, one leading member of MADRYN, wrote in *Peace News* in 1982¹⁶, meetings quickly developed into more direct actions:

Madryn then set about making available a wide range of oppositionary tactics... providing something for every supporter to feel able to do ... to explore all 'democratic' channels... So there was letter writing, petitions, lobbying elected representatives, lots of talking, public meetings, rallies, marches, occupation of offices, obstruction of the Institute of Geological Sciences workers – something for everybody.¹⁷

Ranging from the mild to the militant, participants thus became rehearsed in the various forms of public popular protest. These included letter writing to the occupation of the Forestry Commission offices in Aberystwyth - as a protest against permission being granted for the Government's survey team, The Institute of Geological Sciences (ISG), to carry out the assessments on their land – and later outright obstruction. As Thalia Campbell recalled these

¹² Translates as 'Movement for the protection of Humanity against Nuclear Weapons'.

¹³ MADRYN had at least 5 branches as reported in *CARN, Celtic League Quarterly A Link Between Celtic Nations* 30 (1980): 11.

One of the most notable members of PANDORA was Julie Christie the Hollywood actress. Christie subsequently participated in Greenham events and led marchers from Greenham Common through Brussels in March 1983, addressing the crowds who gathered.

¹⁴ P. Wesley, *Peace News* June 25, 1982. This was a republished version of an earlier article published in *Ynni*, January, 1982.

¹⁵ Reg Taylor, quoted in *Country Times* March 25, 2011.

¹⁶ P. Wesley, *Peace News* (undated news-clipping).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Welsh anti-dumping groups successfully stopped the ISG operating in the designated area in June 1980:

When the English Government Scientists came to check out the nuclear dump sites, they were blockaded in their Bed and Breakfasts by local cars. When they went to ask for help from the local Welsh police they were always too busy to sort out this difficulty. When the English scientists got up in the hills to do their job they were surrounded by Welsh farmers in their Land-rovers with their dogs and guns and could not do their work.¹⁸

The protestors utilised a tactic, which would later be put to use by Cruisewatch at Greenham, known as a telephone tree. If a farmer, or anyone else, saw one of the surveyors on any piece of land they telephoned three others in their network. They in turn would call another three and so on until sufficient people could be mobilised to prevent the work progressing.¹⁹

By December 1981 the whole project in Wales was abandoned by the Government and the protest declared a resounding success. Perhaps more importantly however, as Thalia pointed out, “people in Wales became used to campaigning, and winning.”²⁰ In other words individuals could be seen to have made a difference by taking action. The significance of this belief in the power of democracy cannot be underestimated and it can be traced through many of the Greenham narratives as a call to personal responsibility.

The Welsh Nation and the development of cultural objection

Interestingly this can also be shown as a point of connection to a different narrative, where the same premise of duty and obligation was linked to the assertion of a cultural identity perceived to be under threat. Of particular significance to this was the way the dumping protest had become framed within a context of nationality. Particularly in relation to MADRYN, a whole Welsh community, including those in positions of authority, were explicitly at odds with a perceived ‘English Government’ and the agents they sent into Wales to conduct their business. One woman recalled that after she and two other women had blockaded two surveyors in their guest house car park, “they called out the police but, after the policeman told us in Welsh that he was on our side, he turned to them and said he couldn’t do anything because the protest was on private land and the owner had gone out and could not raise a complaint.”²¹ This notion of a conflict between cultures permeated many of the narratives in Wales (and other Celtic nations)

¹⁸ Thalia Campbell, http://www.birdchildsandgoldsmith.com/acatalog/Campbell_Stories_and_Articles.html.

¹⁹ Zonia Bowen, *Dy Bobl Di Fydd fy Mhobl I*, (Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2015), 48.

²⁰ Thalia Campbell, “The Road to Greenham 1981” unpublished papers, 3.

²¹ Bowen, *Dy Bobl*, 50.

throughout the 1980s and it is therefore not surprising to discover that it merged with the anti-nuclear campaigns (including Greenham as will be shown later).

Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples of this convergence of narrative in relation to the anti-nuclear waste campaign was from Geraint Bowen, the chair of MADRYN, who was also the Archdruid of Wales from 1979 to 1981. Using his position during the Eisteddfod in June 1980 he called for unity among Celtic peoples; he spoke out against the Anglicisation of Wales in defence of the Welsh language; he also lent his authority to the campaign for a fourth television channel broadcasting in Welsh, while going on to denounce the Nuclear Waste Inspectorate.²² Drawing on the historical origins of Welsh nationalism as a Christian pacifism, and tying together the threads of these different narratives, he alluded to the creation of a new political discourse firmly rooted within specific conceptions of place. Incorporating the protection of physical environment alongside a historical cultural narrative, it addressed contemporary ideas about Wales and Welshness. These ideas were firmly centred upon a rejection of a perceived imperialist power being exerted from an England centred Government.

These discourses had also played a role in the devolution debates connected to the first Welsh Assembly referendum held during March 1979, two years before Greenham began. During that debate decisions with a detrimental environmental and cultural impact on Wales for the benefit of other parts of the United Kingdom, such as the flooding of the Tryweryn Valley to provide water for Liverpool in the late 1960s without compensation or remuneration, were condemned as actions against the Welsh nation.²³ These were historically significant discursive connections that would subsequently inform parts of the Welsh peace movement that increasingly viewed the Westminster support of nuclear weapons as incompatible with Welsh National identity. It was this conceptualisation that generated a particular form of support from Wales for the Greenham women in opposition to the central government's position on nuclear weapons.

However, to fully appreciate how these environmental concerns related to the proposals to dump nuclear waste, and how Nationalist debates led to an involvement with the Peace Movement and Greenham in the first place, it is important to trace the points of convergence of a series of different narratives. Most importantly, how did nuclear waste and nuclear weapons become connected and considered as one and the same by many people?

Linking Nuclear Waste and Nuclear Weapons

²² Ibid.

²³ Liverpool City Council have subsequently apologised to the Welsh nation for this action.

Nuclear waste was the product of an industrial production process and, as such, questions regarding it as a necessity were inevitable by those engaging in the debate about what to do with it. Why deal with it at all if the problem could be avoided altogether by ceasing or limiting production? It would therefore have been immediately apparent that, as well as being a product of the generation of electricity, it was also created as a result of producing weapon grade materials. In the British context, the biggest plant Windscale had always been concerned with the production of weapons, having been commissioned by Winston Churchill in connection with Britain's H-Bomb project during the 1950s. In subsequent years the site had become involved with the enrichment of uranium into military grade plutonium which was significantly supplied to the US for their weapons programme. Therefore as a site it was always concerned with nuclear weapons. However, Calder Hall near the Windscale site demonstrated clearly to a concerned audience how electricity production was in fact interchangeable with weapons grade plutonium production, having been involved with both since the 1960s. With plenty of other nuclear power stations around the country, including Wylfa in Anglesey, and proposals to expand the programme further (including into Wales), the debate could easily shift from radioactive waste to nuclear power and on to nuclear weapons – all three intrinsically linked in the minds of many people.

This linking process was facilitated by organisations which acted as disseminators of information. One of these was the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance (WANA) based in Lampeter, formed in 1980 as an umbrella organisation for “individuals and groups of people opposed to the expansion of nuclear power and the dumping of radioactive waste, and in favour of the conservation and rational use of energy.”²⁴ It incorporated anti-nuclear groups, trade unions, political parties, local government representatives, churches and the women's group, *Merched Y Wawr*.²⁵ As one observer noted in 1982, “The strength of WANA was its capacity to link people directly with the issues, develop knowledge and awareness and unite community with community in a common concern, represented in a range of local groups.”²⁶

It is not surprising that for many concerned observers it seemed that the nuclear age in Britain had truly begun when it was confirmed in Parliament that NATO had agreed to place 464 United

²⁴ Select Committee on Welsh Affairs Minutes of Evidence. Written Evidence from Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance.

²⁵ ‘*Merched Y Wawr*’ was formed in 1967 by Zonia Bowen who was also co-founder of MADRYN (and wife of the chair, Geraint Bowen Archdruid). This was in reaction to the Women's Institute ruling that all proceedings had to be conducted in English.

²⁶ Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*, 6.

States nuclear weapons and 108 missile launchers in Europe.²⁷ Taken together all these announcements, regarding nuclear power expansion, waste disposal, and the modernisation of American missiles began to alarm many observers in Wales and elsewhere. Taking place almost simultaneously with the World's worst nuclear accident at that time, the problems of nuclear contamination and nuclear warfare became intrinsically linked.

Nuclear-Free Wales

In Wales, and already fired up by the resistance to centralised rule and proposed dumping sites, opposition groups immediately sprang into action. A major conference was held by WANA in Aberystwyth in April 1980 where "environmental and anti-military nuclear awareness" was the focus. This, as one contemporary observer claimed shortly afterwards, "preceded the revival of CND",²⁸ firmly placing Wales at the front end of the opposition movement. It was at this meeting that a plan of action was agreed to lobby and persuade all eight Welsh County Councils to ban all nuclear arms from their territory and declare themselves 'Nuclear Free', with the aim of declaring Wales the first nuclear free country in Europe. It was an attempt to democratically demonstrate that the will of the Welsh people was in direct opposition to Central Government and any shift towards militarism. Once passed as a resolution it ensured that no local Council could collude or assist with the Government in any preparations for nuclear war, including in relation to the building and refurbishment of regional control centres. As will be discussed later in this chapter, it was as a result of this campaign that one particular event in Mid Glamorgan would occur. This was an episode which, it will be argued, had a direct impact upon the campaign at Greenham, changing the direction of the women's protest by setting it on a militant course against the Authorities, leading many women to court appearances and prison sentences.

However, in 1981, whilst 'Nuclear Free Wales' was only emerging as an idea, and before Greenham was ever envisaged, peace groups had begun to spring up all over Wales in anticipation of the American controlled weapons' arrival. In South Wales alone, it was claimed, "20 new peace groups formed with weeks."²⁹ These groups held public meetings, took part in local marches, and gathered to watch the controversial and harrowing film, *The War Game*, which had been made by the BBC in 1965 but not broadcast because of concerns about its content. Membership numbers increased rapidly and a distinctly Welsh contingent of CND was also formed, to which the Welsh Labour Party subsequently became affiliated. There were vigils for peace as well as an 'All Wales

²⁷ In December 1979 the Secretary of State for Defence, Francis Pym MP announced the NATO decision. Hansard House of Commons Debate Vol.975 Deb December 13, 1979 cc1540-56.

²⁸ Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 7.

Peace Festival' in Cardiff. In the same year the eminent academic and peace campaigner, E.P Thompson³⁰ drew a crowd of 1,000 students, and the Military Tattoo in the city was picketed. Soon attention began to focus upon an RAF base in West Wales.

RAF Brawdy - The first march

In addition to the British RAF who had taken Brawdy over in the early 1970s, it was also home to the US Navy as an "Oceanographic Research Station." Little was known about the purpose of the station was but it was generally acknowledged to be a listening station for submarines. It was, however, increasingly viewed with suspicion as the Cold War began to intensify and as people began to suspect that it was not only part of the War machine itself but also made South Wales a prime target for a Soviet strike should a nuclear war begin. As a result, on the 6th of June 1981, 1,500 "people with banners from all parts of Wales"³¹ gathered outside and demanded the removal of the US base at Brawdy.

Women enter the debate and redefine maternalism

It was one of a growing surge of such actions across the UK taking place outside military bases, but perhaps significantly, two of the people there were Ann Pettitt and Thalia Campbell. Both of these women would subsequently march two months later to a different military base in Berkshire to demand that the US military be denied permission to bring their weapons to that site. Thalia recalled hearing Ann speak that day, "there were 12 speakers all men, religious, political and scientific. Women became agitated feeling they should be doing something; Ann Pettitt jumped up and spoke about giving birth, and nurturing babies."³²

This was the theme that later would be heavily criticised by some feminists as a maternalism that did not challenge the underlying patriarchal attitudes that created violence and militarism. It was argued that upholding the separate spheres of men and women, enabled women to be ignored and thus to remain powerless. However, this kind of criticism would be to misunderstand the historical context and significance of the speech entirely. Pettitt was not scheduled to speak at the rally; instead it was an impromptu moment that occurred because no one there that day had spoken 'for her' or any of the other women there. Recognising the total absence of women from the dialogue, Pettitt graphically highlighted the point using a language quite different to that of

³⁰ E.P. Thompson, *Protest and Survive* (London: Penguin, 1981). This became a seminal text for the peace movement as a whole.

³¹ Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*, 7.

³² Thalia Campbell, "60 Years of US Bases Europe. Past their sell by date?" unpublished personal account January, (2009): 2.

the other invited and official “religious, political and scientific” speakers. She spoke in terms of “giving birth and nurturing babies.” It was a different type of language and a quite specifically female one. This was not a soft romantic and comfortable vision of motherhood. It brought into the debate an area of life (and a language) from which many men had been excluded until the 1970s when they began to regularly attend the birth of their children. It was therefore still a difficult subject for many men in the public arena. Existing outside the experience of many men from an older generation, it was a topic generally relegated to the ‘women’s branches’ and excluded from ‘serious’ political debate. However, birth for Pettitt was symbolic of her understanding of why nuclear weapons were so abhorrent. It was demonstrative of the deep human emotions she understood nuclear weapons to threaten, and it was this that signified that humans were a part of nature, not separate from it. These weapons more than any other ultimately threatened life on earth altogether, the living and the unborn alike, and it was this she was trying to convey when she spoke of the mothering process. It was not a feminist position, but equally it was not a non-political one, nor one that did not challenge the men in power to think differently about weapons by utilising a female perspective. Having moved to Wales to live in the countryside in a sustainable and healthier way, for “real food grown without chemicals”, she had a deep sense of the natural world and a desire to see humans taking their responsibility for the planet. “One piece in a kaleidoscope cannot shift without changing the whole”, she asserted. It was akin to the responsibility she experienced as a mother with two young children. Therefore what she expressed was a desire to see a shift in the political debate to incorporate ‘real life’ where humans existed as part of a living planet. To express this she incorporated her experience as a mother giving birth and rearing her children, in contrast to the hypothetically and scientifically dry or religiously motivated moral arguments of seasoned male peace campaigners. Life, she wanted to emphasise, would not simply go on as before after a nuclear war, the entire ecological balance of the natural world was completely at risk. It was therefore a sentiment deeply embedded in an environmental and ecological awareness, not a simple maternalism. A subtle but significant shift from the romantic maternalism that had characterised women’s role in the earlier peace movement of the 1960s, it was also not eco-feminist, in that it did not contain a critique of patriarchy, nor did it include references to ‘mother earth’ or claim any special connection between women and the planet. Instead it was a perception very much set in its time, and one very closely associated with the Welsh countryside. Pettitt later acknowledged this, “I know that if I had been living in another place...I would not have decided to walk to Greenham Common. The cow patted fields of Gwastod Bach... play an integral part.”³³ Pettitt’s point was that

³³ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 29.

rural Wales was a space where the natural world was accessible and ‘real’ in all its challenges, and where the imagined contrast to a nuclear winter world, following all out nuclear war, was most vivid.

Cultural Identities in Wales – Insiders and Outsiders

This is an important observation to make, particularly in the context of Wales during the period. The post war influx of English speaking immigrants into rural Wales, was often characterised by their desire to escape the inner cities to pursue a healthier lifestyle for themselves and their families in the countryside. Concerned with pollution and the effects of consuming mass-produced foods, they sought to take control of their lives and to live in a more natural way. This applied not only to Ann Pettitt but to Karmen Cutler, Helen John and to some extent Thalia Campbell. Effie Leah, the oldest marcher, originally from Kent, described herself as “living on the alternative side of things”, growing and selling home produced food.³⁴ Often finding that their limited resources could stretch further in the Welsh countryside, they purchased small run down cottages and farmsteads which had become more widely available as market forces impacted upon small, almost subsistence, agricultural practices that compelled the rural youth to seek outside the area for work and a better standard of life than their ancestors. These immigrants were not always well understood or welcomed into the communities they moved into, seen as a contributing factor to the Anglicisation of Wales and a threat to Welsh culture by some of those who wished to promote Celtic identity:

Free from mortgage worries and commuting costs they live a healthy life...either on the dole or setting up a craft cottage industry to cater for the summer tourists...Their interests are not in the community even if they live there permanently...Local authorities have been far from responsive to the...dispersed resettlement and inevitable Anglicisation of Welsh-speaking communities.³⁵

As a result, people moving into rural Wales often formed friendship networks stretching beyond the immediate locality in which they lived. In Pettitt’s view, “We were outsiders, immigrants into remote rural communities with a distinct culture and language, communities that had been suffering decline and depopulation, but whose reaction to people like us – universally identified as English hippies – was very mixed.”³⁶

Considering this as a back-drop to the march from Cardiff to Greenham, it becomes evident that the women involved were from a cohort of English-speaking people with an emphasis on

³⁴ Quoted in Rolph, “Greenham and its legacy,” in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 101.

³⁵ Michael O’Laoire, “Housing – A Burning Issue” *CARN, Celtic League Quarterly* 30 (1980): 20-21.

³⁶ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 38.

natural living. By calling themselves, 'Women for Life on Earth' with no translation, they signified that this was not a traditional Welsh movement. As such, it was not drawing upon the pacifist traditions of Wales in the way that the anti-nuclear waste group MADRYN did. Nor was it utilising the contemporary concerns demonstrated through other political movements. Michael Foot, the leader of the Labour Party, was an early executive Member of CND for instance; and Plaid Cymru Members, such as the renowned Gwynfor Evans, continued to maintain their Party's position as a pacifist nationalist organisation. This is an important observation which offers an explanation of why only a small number turned out to march, given that Wales had a long tradition of objection to militarism which has been traced back to the 1860s.

From Ann's early speeches and her later published autobiography, the Greenham march was utilising a different discourse. This was one that appealed directly to an English-speaking migrant class of health conscious and environmentally aware women, much like the organisers themselves. As Ian Campbell pointed out in an interview for the Imperial War Museum, this was also signified by how the initial group decided to promote the march. They turned not to the Welsh CND groups or any of the other established peace or anti-nuclear groups in Wales. Ian observed that Thalia, was only invited to take part towards the end of the organising for the march and was very much an after-thought, despite having met and been involved with Ann Pettitt during the anti-nuclear waste, the nuclear-free Wales campaign, and the Brawdy rally. Nor did the women organisers look to the Chapel preachers who had a significant voice within Welsh-speaking rural communities. Instead, in addition to *The Times* and *The Guardian* newspapers, and in magazines such as *Peace News* and *Cosmopolitan*, it was advertised in places such as a health food shop and in the alternative press publication, *Arcade: Wales Fortnightly* with an audience largely from the English-speaking communities.³⁷ Its reach in the early days was therefore limited within Wales itself, and instead the organisers had seemed to focus their attention beyond the rural communities in which they were living. This clearly pointed to the cultural differences between their secular environmentalism and the other more traditional and religious Peace groups, and to some extent it was a reinforcement of the English / Welsh divide. This was not entirely done without some consciousness as can be seen from Pettitt's appeal in *Arcade* for Welsh language campaigners to incorporate disarmament into their activism.³⁸ However, it was clear that they did not expect significant support from the Welsh-speaking community and therefore focused their efforts further afield. As a result the march was, by 1970s and 1980s standards, very small scale and made up almost entirely of women who had moved into Wales.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ann Pettitt, "Fighting the Nuclear Menace," *Arcade: Wales Fortnightly*, no.20, August 7, 1981.

This was not an unprecedented characteristic for women's campaigns in Wales. Deirdre Beddoe has suggested that the Women's Liberation Movement "just like the early suffrage movement...was strongest in urbanised south-east Wales" and that it was epitomised by "women who had moved into Wales... play[ing] a leading role."³⁹ Another historian of Welsh suffrage, Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, also pointed out as a comparative that, "the reaction of many Welsh-speaking women in rural and mid Wales to feminist activity in the 1970s and 1980s was that it was brought in by the English, who did not understand their ways, and that it was irrelevant to them and their experience."⁴⁰

The Greenham March did however reach at least one Welsh-speaking woman, Eunice Stallard, who saw an advert in Peace News. Her role was noteworthy in the group's decision to chain themselves to the fence once they arrived at Greenham:

About half the group had expressed their views, mostly doubtful, when Eunice Stallard, the white-haired grandmother from Ystradgynlais...took her turn to speak..."Well", she said, "What's the matter with you all? What are we all so afraid of?...So what if policemen's helmets roll? What are we here for? What's worse than a nuclear war? I'll do it!"⁴¹

One of the first four women to chain herself to the fence, Eunice was no stranger to political protest. Described after her death in 2011 by the Labour MP for Neath, Peter Hain, as "one of great socialist warriors in the grass roots of our movement", she had always had a strong political and international awareness. As a girl in the late 1930s she collected money for Basque refugees⁴², protested against American intervention in Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s, backed the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign in the late 1970s, and was a big supporter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. She was also set apart from most of the other Greenham Marchers because her position was informed by her non-conformist Welsh Baptist religious perspective, with its strong emphasis on taking personal responsibility. A staunch chapel goer she was a Member of the Peace Pledge Union. Motivated to join the March to Greenham by her grandson's fear of nuclear bombs, she cut through objections and apprehensions, to inspire the group to have the confidence to take the extra step and become more militant. It was not her idea to chain herself to the fence at the base, nor can it be asserted that she was critical to the decision, but her

³⁹ Deirdre Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 162.

⁴⁰ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, "From Temperance to Suffrage?" in *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, ed. Angela John (Cardiff: Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1991), 154.

⁴¹ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 66.

⁴² H. Davies, *Fleeing Franco: How Wales Gave Shelter to Refugee Children from the Basque Country During the Spanish Civil War*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011).

presence in the group certainly helped to ensure that it became a reality, setting in motion the sequence of events that the Greenham campaign would take forward.

RAF Greenham – The first march without the chains

Without this particular action the Cardiff to Greenham march would most likely have simply resembled an earlier walk on the 20th of July 1980, when 150 people from Newbury gathered at the main gate of the base, following the announcement in Parliament a few weeks previously that Cruise was to be sited there. Peace News reported this protest:

The centrepiece of the event was the handing in, by the kids on the walk, of a letter to the men (we decided there probably weren't any women on active service there) of the base stating our opposition to Cruise missiles and our intention to take all nonviolent steps necessary to prevent their installation. This was signed by almost all of those present, with a large number of personal comments added. Those at Greenham ranged from punks to pensioners and a good time was had by all.⁴³

A now largely forgotten story, it had a lot in common with the subsequent walk from Wales, which also intended to hand a letter into the base Commander but this time to demand a public debate on the issue of nuclear weapons, rather than to simply provide a statement of opposition. Indeed vigils and gatherings at Greenham were relatively regular during 1980-1981.⁴⁴ Without the chains that led to the camps, therefore, this could have been just one more protest.

Eunice was at Greenham primarily as a grandmother, fearful for the fate of her descendants, but it is clear that she was far from occupying the apolitical position which other (feminist) commentators believed a 'maternal' standpoint implied.⁴⁵ Eunice was a life-long community based socialist campaigner, always on the Left and always an opponent of militarism. Her fear for the children was the spur to action, but not the only reason for it. This is one of the reasons why the history of Greenham must make some attempt to name and investigate the individual players in the protest. It is argued here that only by recognising campaigners' backgrounds and outlooks can the myths underpinning the feminist metanarratives be revealed and challenged as the sole form of explanation. Though a few women would have taken part simply to express their need to protect their children, it cannot be assumed that this was the only kind of 'maternalist' position or that it could not be a challenging voice of dissent, particularly when combined with other political discourses.

⁴³ "Peaceful Protestors March to Base to say No to Missiles," *Peace News*, no. 2125, July 25, 1980.

"Peaceful Protestors March to Base to say No to Missiles" *Newbury Weekly News*, July 25, 1980.

⁴⁴ "Peace News for nonviolent revolution," no.3, August 22, 1980.

⁴⁵ Margaretta Jolly, "After the Seventies: Greenham Common Women and Dreams of a Common Language," in *The Feminist Seventies* eds. Ann Kaloski et al., (York: Raw Nerve Books, 2003), 173.

Eunice was perhaps one of the first women involved in the Greenham story to play a part in shifting the narrative to enable this protest to become the most notorious of its time, but she would not be the last. To discover some of these other women it is necessary again to look at what else was going on, and particularly in Wales.

The protest moves to The Rhondda Valley

In November 1981 a group of women, some of whom would later become central to many significant events at Greenham, heard that the women from the Cardiff march had set up a peace camp outside the main gate and “decided to let people know what was happening by mimicking their action.” One of these women, Sue Lamb, explained that they “decided to live on the streets at Porth Square, Rhondda Valley...to [get] information about nuclear weapons across to people.”⁴⁶ As Avril Rolph has documented, these five women would become known in Greenham circles as ‘the Porth Women’, but their part in the story would become overlooked as the narrative focused upon the collective story and concentrated on the feminism and identity politics of the camps. Keen to reintroduce these women into the history, Rolph named them as Susan Lamb, Christine King, Gaynor Hughes, Lynne Fortt and Leslie Rees.⁴⁷ The protest itself was relatively short and planned to only last a week. It took place at the junction of an important road for Valleys’ traffic to attract as much attention as possible. This was the first action by these women, who were all in their twenties, some with very young children, like Sue Lamb:

I’ve got two young children, and I’ve taken responsibility for their passage into adulthood. Everyone tells me they are my responsibility...Every plane that went overhead frightened here, and she put her hands over her head saying ‘Mummy they’re going to bomb us.’ Suddenly I became really conscious that they could be: that’s about as much warning as we would get...We in Wales... would have to sit and watch ...them die in agony and then die myself.⁴⁸

The women were anxious and worried that they might be arrested. However, local support was immense and the media coverage sympathetic. This drew attention not only to their campaign and the nuclear issue, but also to Greenham itself, “The action started a chain of letters to papers, and opened up discussion. The fact that people knew us all reinforced this.”⁴⁹ Significantly, it was by acting as a group of women who were integrated and a full part of a small Welsh community that enabled the action to be deemed a success. This is an important narrative

⁴⁶ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*, 38-39.

⁴⁷ Rolph, “Greenham and its legacy,” in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 109.

⁴⁸ Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*, 27-28.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

because it once again relies heavily on a concept of place, but this time where the protagonists are insiders. Because the women involved were from the 'inside' of the community they were able to connect with their audience:

Every night people would come and talk to us. Perhaps they wouldn't go to meetings, but they could easily approach an individual and talk about their fears and what they could do. We can't leave everything up to committees, we must take action for ourselves. Women are often intimidated by organisations like CND. They could identify with us and would come and talk.⁵⁰

This relationship conferred upon the women an acceptance of their behaviour as they stepped out into the public domain, which crucially enabled a new confidence to grow, "we went out of desperation and we came away knowing we could do it." People had "opened their minds" as they talked to them and they felt they had won over their community.⁵¹ They also grabbed the attention of the women still at Greenham, such as Eunice Stallard and Margery Lewis, who "dashed down there" to lend them their support.⁵² As a result, they were inspired to take further actions after the Porth Square camp closed after one week as planned. This episode would also serve as an interesting contrast to how other women were received not long afterwards as they took their actions into the cities. In 1982, for instance, women staging a 'die-in' in central London would be verbally abused and condemned by the national media.

In this context it is remarkable how positively the local press responded to the Porth women, who were not ignored, as one newspaper was keen to emphasise, "they are angry that their fellow nuclear campaigners in Newbury had to actually chain themselves to the gates of a military base before they were given any attention."⁵³ Another commentator, writing in *Arcade*, made a conscious effort to draw on a historical narrative of popular dissent specific to southeast Wales, "the Rhondda's history has been one of and political action, usually male dominated. This latest demonstration, led by Rhondda women, must be just the first in a series which goes to the heart of the local community."⁵⁴ Significantly, this was an attempt to draw parallels and to tap into a narrative of a Welsh tradition of radicalism. It was one designed equally to speak to, and be understood by, male readers as well as women.

The industrialised areas of southeast Wales had long since become accustomed to taking demonstrative action and understood the power of the ordinary citizen to instigate change. An

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Avril Rolph, *Interview with Margery Lewis*, transcript in *Women's Archive of Wales*.

⁵³ *Rhondda Leader*, quoted by Rolph, "Greenham and its legacy," in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 110.

⁵⁴ A. Homes, "Chain Action," *Arcade: Wales Fortnightly*, December 11, 1981.

area where poverty and hardship were embedded into the public consciousness, it was characterised by close-knit, working-class, communities. These had a long tradition of strike action for better working conditions and pay as members of the trade unions, especially within the mining communities. Combined with this was a deep sense of social justice which was as much to do with the prevalence of non-conformist religion and culture, as it was to any political commitment to socialism. Therefore, though the women were being aligned with a historical Welsh political activism during the Porth action, this was a much less clearly Nationalist position than had been evident during the anti-nuclear waste and Brawdy campaigns. But it was still a perceivably Welsh cultural alignment nonetheless.

This interpretation can be further supported by the observation that the Porth action drew upon a similar point in Welsh cultural and political history to that utilised by those more aligned with a Nationalist sentiment. This was the infamous 'Brad y Llyfrau Gleision' outlined in chapter 3. The 1847 report had led to the widespread questioning of Welsh culture and pointed to the perceived lack of morality amongst Welsh women (a theme covered in more depth in chapter 5). On the one hand, this inspired a resentment of perceived English rule over Welsh culture, which would lead to the type of Welsh language Nationalism in evidence within groups such as MADRYN. However, simultaneously, it also enabled the development of another defensive position which could traverse across the language divide in Wales. This placed women firmly within the domestic sphere where they could act as the moral compass of society. It was arguably this concept that was used as the framework for the Porth action. Drawing heavily on the idealised and cherished image of the stereotypical figure of the 'Welsh Mam', the Porth women could go "to the heart of the local community."⁵⁵ This is because as Beddoe has traced, this idea ran deep into the psychology of South East Wales. In this narrative the Mam "was pious, devout and a chapel-goer, she was the moral custodian of the home...an icon, venerated like the Angel-Mother."⁵⁶ By aligning closely to this the Porth women utilised their localised understanding of their own community. They therefore articulated their support of the Greenham campaign within a discursive framework that would be recognised and which would 'speak to' their community.

Originating from one of the most contentious episodes in the history of Welsh/English relations in modern times, the Porth women therefore manipulated the traditional idea of women as the moral custodians of society in order to find a voice within a very gendered and masculine dominated community. They can therefore be perceived to have been creating a narrative in tune

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Deirdre Beddoe, "Munitionettes, Maids and Mams: Women in Wales 1914-1939," in *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, ed. Angela John (Cardiff: Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1991), 207.

with their political landscape, but crucially they were also beginning to exploit and utilise it to good effect. By acting within the traditional framework of the 'Mam' the women could attempt to exert an influence over the community as a whole. The widespread support they reportedly received is highly suggestive that in this aim they did make some progress.

The Bridgend Bunker

It was not long before the same women would re-appear in another important campaign in Wales, only a short distance away from Porth. By December 1981, when the numbers living at the Greenham camp had reduced into single figures, Wales like the rest of Britain was gripped by a winter unparalleled for 35 years. With frosts of unprecedented intensity, temperatures dropped to minus 18 degrees with much of the ground covered in layers of deep snow. Whilst Helen John returned briefly to the Swansea Valley to discuss with Eunice, Thalia and Ian, what the next step should be, the 'Porth women' were engaging in a new protest that was beginning in Bridgend. Referred to as the 'Welsh Battle for the Bunker', it was a test of the 'Nuclear-Free Wales' campaign which demanded that no Welsh council should engage in any activity that could be construed as supportive of the Central Government's preparations for Nuclear War. Mid Glamorgan had not yet committed to the principle of being Nuclear Free and had approved plans for the refurbishment of an old war bunker at a cost of £389,000, into a 'super-bunker' capable of housing "a number of people" and sustaining "a direct hit from any appreciable explosive device."⁵⁷ Quickly it was understood by members of CND and WANA that this was the planned construction of a bunker from which local Government officials would exercise control if a nuclear strike occurred in Britain. On the 24th of January 1982, when lobbying seemed unlikely to prevent work commencing on the project, an occupation of the site and a continuous 'picket for peace' began with the aim of preventing the contract proceeding by non-violent means. The first occupiers of the caravan brought to shelter the pickets were "four women from Porth in the Rhondda."⁵⁸ The same women who had a month earlier held a symbolic peace camp in their own town were now involved for 'real' in an actual occupation for peace. Motivated originally by the women at Greenham, they had developed a confidence from their own action in their own community to become activists themselves. It was a significant transition because the action at the Bridgend bunker was to become extremely fraught. The protestors, men and women alike, would eventually act as physical barriers to the workmen when on the 8th of March 1982 they decided to take direct action to prevent the work progressing. "I haven't come this far to go home

⁵⁷ Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*, 10.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

now”, said a young woman from Rhondda. “We have to do something now.”⁵⁹ They climbed up onto the new bunker construction to try to prevent the contractors completing the construction of the bunker walls. Shockingly, the construction process was not halted. The site engineer, in the presence of the police, and despite the bodies of men and women lying head to toe along the top of the framework, continued to instruct the workers to force the tube carrying the cement between the people.⁶⁰ Despite this failure to stop the work the protestors did not accept defeat, “we’ve shown them. From now on the council will be resisted every foot of concrete.”⁶¹ Photographs from the protest clearly show the ‘Porth women’ alongside several others right at the centre of this action.⁶²

Moving to the Sentry Box at Greenham

Perhaps one of the most significant details uncovered by the investigation of the Bridgend bunker however, is the direct link that can be drawn from that action to Greenham. By tracing the women involved at Porth to Bridgend, it becomes evident that several of the same women also subsequently took part in actions at Greenham. It is even highly likely that these same women were the instigators of the first planned incursion of Greenham women onto the base, as Angela John pointed out following her interview with Margery Lewis.⁶³ This occurred during the Sentry Box occupation of the 27th of August 1982 (outlined in chapter 3). This is evident despite a lack of named individuals in any of the published accounts. In the Harford and Hopkins book for instance the lead up to the action is described as when:

The Welsh women arrived. They had been scheming... The Welsh women revealed their plans. They wanted to go into the base through the main gate and occupy the MOD Sentry Box.⁶⁴

This was echoed by Rebecca Johnson in 1984 who gave an account of her own mobilisation in the action by recalling that:

One of the Welsh women spoke and she put it so compellingly, the urgency, the imminence of what was happening, the way in which they’d started stepping up the big lorries going into the base... the building programme....I thought,...I’ve actually got to do something.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Ibid. 31.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid. 33.

⁶² Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*, 10.

⁶³ Rolph, “Greenham and its legacy,” in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 111.

⁶⁴ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 62.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The sentiment of this speech was a distinct echo of the views expressed by one of the Welsh women at the beginning of the Bridgend action described above.⁶⁶ It is even quite conceivable that this could have been the same person. This is because it is known, due to the highly publicised Court case that followed the Greenham action, that several of the Porth women who were active at Bridgend also took part in the Sentry Box occupation. This is a clear indication of how the ‘star’ complex described by Freeman has the potential to impact upon historical analysis. Individual women are often unnamed in the histories produced and endorsed by the collective, and so the details of how events emerged are always susceptible to obscurity.

Interviewed many years later in 2004, Sue Lamb suggested that it was the Sentry Box Court case and the immense media coverage⁶⁷ that it attracted that ensured the planned ‘Embrace the Base’ protest on the 12th of December 1982 was such an enormous success.⁶⁸ Attracting 30,000 women to join hands, this action became the defining moment in the protest for many contemporaries. It also finally attracted the full attention of the State, as indicated by the memo written by Lord Beloff discussed in chapter 3.⁶⁹ As a result questions were raised in Parliament and reported in the Newspapers.⁷⁰ The Welsh women had therefore set in motion a new chain of events at Greenham.

In creating an opportunity to publicise the protest by a physical action, they also enabled a new discursive challenge to be highlighted to the wider public. During the Court case that followed the action, an ITN news reporter covering the verdict and the subsequent prison sentences for a ‘Breach of the Peace’ noted that, “the defence ...concentrated on that word ‘peace’. Witnesses like E.P. Thompson, claimed the women were upholding the peace.”⁷¹ The implication of course was that the State was not. Defence lawyers argued that the installation of the missiles was illegal and in breach of the Genocide Act 1969. In opposing the Government they argued the women were therefore keeping, rather than breaching, the peace. This represented a growing trend amongst the protestors to test the language of the State in relation to the weapons. It was a challenge that would also lead some of the same women from Wales to New York.

⁶⁶ Simpson, *No Bunkers Here*. 31.

⁶⁷ *The Times*, August 28, 1982 & *The Times*, November, 17, 1982 as examples.

⁶⁸ Sue Lamb interviewed as part of the Making of a Monument documentary. ‘*Greenham: The making of a monument*’, Undercurrents Foundation, 2004, VHS. Available on YouTube; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKoWKF3ktXI>.

⁶⁹ “The Anti-CND campaign: A note from Lord Beloff,” December 15, 1982. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122590>.

⁷⁰ “Labour protest at jailing of women,” *The Times*, November 17, 1982, 4.

⁷¹ *ITN* news report November 16, 1982.

In November 1983 thirteen Greenham women, and sixteen of their young children, lodged a Federal Court action against President Reagan.⁷² It was an attempt to prevent the missiles from being deployed in Europe on the grounds that it would, “contravene provisions of the United Nations Charter regarding the threat of use of force, the right of survival, crimes against peace, laws of war and the crime of genocide.”⁷³

Interviewed for ITN in New York Lynne Fortt of Porth passionately stated:

The worst crime is not trying, there are so many people you know who say we agree with everything you say but there’s nothing you can do about it. We’ve got to try! I mean we’re all going to **die** if we don’t do something!⁷⁴

This action was not successful and the merits of the women’s claims were never discussed. In July 1984 the case was dismissed on the grounds that there were no judicially manageable standards for a decision. By posing “non-justiciable political questions”⁷⁵ it was ruled beyond the competence and expertise of the Court to collect the facts necessary for a decision.⁷⁶ The women appealed, but this too was declared unsuccessful in February 1985. Nevertheless this signalled the way that women were increasingly employing all avenues open to them in order to further their cause.

It is evident therefore that a change of gear and method at Greenham can be tracked to some key activities of women from Wales. These were also actions that had clear Welsh cultural understandings deeply embedded within them. These traditions ensured that the women were

⁷² “Greenham women against cruise missiles, an unincorporated association; **Rebecca Johnson; Christine King**, on behalf of herself and her minor child Bethan King; **Jean Hutchinson; Susan Lamb**, on behalf of herself and her minor children Jodie Lamb and Angharad Lamb; **Carole Harwood**, on behalf of herself and her minor child Albert Harwood; **Deborah Law; Lynne Fortt**, on behalf of herself and her minor children Aaron Fortt and Ryan Fortt; **Nell Logan; Angela Phillips**, on behalf of herself and her minor children, Clara Phillips and Jacob Phillips; **Elizabeth Forder**, on behalf of herself and her minor children Daniel Forder and Joseph Forder; **Carrie Pester; Susan Bolton**, on behalf of herself and her minor children Adam Pereira, Sophie Pereira, Jacob Pereira and Luke Bolton; **Simone Wilkinson**, on behalf of herself and her minor children James Wilkinson and Victoria Wilkinson; Congressman Ronald Dellums and Congressman Ted Weiss, Plaintiffs-Appllellants, v. Ronald Wilson Reagan, President of the United States; Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Defence; Vern Orr, Secretary of the Air Force; and John O.Marsh, Secretary of the Army, sued in their official capacities, Defendants-appellees.”

“Greenham Women against Cruise Missiles v. Reagan,” accessed July 30, 2011.
http://vt.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19850208_0040983.C02.htm/qx
 Jane Hickman, “Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles and others v. Ronald Reagan and others” in *Nuclear Weapons, the Peace Movement and the Law*, ed. John Dewar et al., (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986),200-218.

⁷³ Leigh Monroe, “Greenham Women against Cruise Missiles v. Reagan. 591 F.Supp. 1332.” *The American Journal of International Law* 79, no. 3 (1985). 747. doi:10.2307/2201907.

⁷⁴ “New York Court Action,” ITN news report, November 15, 1983.

⁷⁵ Monroe, “Greenham Women against Cruise,” 749.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

enabled to grow sufficiently in confidence to proceed to the next level of protest, particularly as the sense of urgency about the weapons grew. These actions also ensured that Greenham thereafter took on a discernible militancy which would ultimately come to characterise much of the popular memory of the campaign.

Overall this chapter has shown that the protest at Greenham emerged from a complex amalgamation of competing ideas about identity. Incorporated into this were various notions of culture, some of which can be firmly situated in Wales. Gradually pushing the boundaries, the women who utilised these particular ideas can be seen to have used them to take a central role in driving the anti-nuclear debate forwards. Welsh cultural politics therefore played a significant role, not only in the formation of the camp in 1981, but in the subsequent development of a more militant engagement with the State in the lead up to the arrival of the missiles at the end of 1983. This can be seen in the way that the formation of the original camps by the WFLOE women at Greenham inspired the women involved in the Porth camp. This in turn led to the Bridgend bunker, followed by the Sentry Box occupation (and the iconic 'Embrace the Base' action), and on to the New York Courts. This was symptomatic not only of people just moving between the different actions, but of the growth of self-confidence and self-belief which arose as the women interacted with each other.

It was also as a result of the convergence and combination of multiple political narratives. Some of these were historically significant for the specific locations that participants came from, such as those derived of working-class radicalism or Welsh Nationalism. There were also occasions however where other discourses merged, such as the adoption of ecological theories brought into the area by others. As with the development of feminist ideas at Greenham, this was not a static process either and it did not end once the women engaged with the anti-nuclear campaign. As the women met and discussed the issues, sharing their perspectives with each other, they can also be seen to have adapted their thinking further. One example, not extensively explored by Angela John, was her observation that Lynne Fortt and Carole Harwood from Porth, wrote a piece about their experiences of prison following their convictions for the Sentry Box action.⁷⁷ Interestingly this was published in a Wales based ecology magazine signalling how ideas were travelling across the different groups.

The analysis has illustrated that by considering the concept of maternalism in a specifically Welsh context, a different political debate emerges to that most often articulated within a feminist framework of analysis. For some participants, the maternalism they expressed was connected to the growing ecological awareness of the planet and the threat posed by nuclear

⁷⁷ Rolph, "Greenham and its legacy," in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 111.

weapons to the natural balance of the world. For others, it was a method by which they could exert an acceptable and respectable influence over their community, often through a subversion of the notion of 'Mam'. This was not therefore a demonstration of their lack of power, or a simplistic acceptance of a patriarchal system, as some women involved with WLM argued.⁷⁸ Instead it can be shown to be the method these women found to adapt the discourse without comprising other important aspects of their identity. Indeed for some the central inspiration for their action was the defence of their lives and their historical culture, the traditions of their way of life within their communities and their families. It was not consequently something that could be put aside. Therefore to dismiss their articulations as somehow 'outside' the Greenham narrative, is not only to neglect some of the powerful reasons for women's engagement with the protest, but a curtailment of the understandings we can glean of how and why the campaign developed in the way that it did.

It also risks masking explanations of what caused several of the original women from Wales to ultimately become dis-associated with the campaign as it progressed, particularly as it became increasingly feminist in focus (as discussed in chapter 2). This was because as the movement became less engaged with the narratives that had inspired these women they became more distanced from the protest. The result was that many women who had supported the campaign often became more vocal in their criticism both at the time and subsequently.

⁷⁸ Brenda Whisker et al. eds. *Breaching the peace*.

Chapter 5

Greenham participants, spirituality and Christian religious witness

The Sermon on the Mount and the command to be peacemakers is something which a Christian cannot escape, though many try. Christians among us have a rule: When we trespass on the base, we pray. We make a daily habit of trespassing.¹

This chapter considers the Greenham campaign in the context of one of the oldest historical narratives of peace by considering the relationship of the protest to Christianity. In particular it traces the threads of some long running Christian morality debates into the discussions of militarism and war to Greenham. This analysis seeks not to provide a history of peace per se, or the historical participation of Christians in anti-militarism campaigns, in the lead up to the Greenham protest. Instead the focus is upon the historical narrative constructions of what constitutes 'peace'. It is an analysis that therefore uses the Greenham protest as a case study in order to demonstrate how this is also a highly contested conceptualisation. This is because of differing versions of Christian witness and notions of personal responsibility as individuals interpret the Scriptures. Different versions that could simultaneously enable those working against the weapons, such as some of the women at Greenham, and those in favour of the military strategy supported by NATO, to use the same over-arching narrative of Christianity to justify their position. This paradox created a situation where the objective of 'peace' could consequently be used to support the same nuclear weapons that the 'peace movement' sought to eradicate. It is argued here that this fluidity of meaning is an important consideration in the historical understanding of the Greenham campaign and in explaining the reactions it often provoked.

Therefore in addition to demonstrating how the long-running debates about the relationship of Christianity and war played out at Greenham, the analysis illustrates how established religion was often an important factor in the mobilisation of women engaged with the Greenham protest. This is a significant departure from much of the existing analysis where Christianity has hitherto been given little space, and is often submerged due to the concentration upon the development of feminist constructions of spirituality, or overlooked as a result of the feminist interpretation that organised religion was a method used by patriarchy to dominate women. By looking at Greenham through the lens of Christianity however, it is contended in this chapter, that rather

¹ Jean Hutchinson, quoted in *The Greenham Factor*, (Women's Peace Camp Magazine), March 1983. She is referred to as a Molesworth resident in the article, but she was also a Yellow Gate resident.

than occupying a traditionally conservative position it is also possible to see how the many of women involved in the Greenham campaign actively utilised Christian narratives in order to present an open challenge, from 'within', against the established Church and its perceived power. This, it is argued, was hugely significant at a time when the position of women within the established Churches themselves, and the traditional patriarchal hierarchies they endorsed, were beginning to be contested.

In order to consider the use of Christian narratives in the context of Greenham however, it is first necessary to briefly look further back in time to look at how Christian debate has long been an integral element of objection to militarism and war.

Christianity and the origins of peace politics

The general consensus amongst historians is that the origins of 'peace' as a political debate in Britain can be traced to the turmoil and change created in the aftermath of the English Civil Wars of the 1640s, over three centuries prior to Greenham.² A series of bloody and violent conflicts, it is largely accepted that these events triggered a significant intensification of the long, but relatively muted debate about the relationship between conceptions of 'civilisation' and militarism. It was a debate that had existed in a subdued form since the age of the early Christians who had abstained from all involvement with war,³ but which had steadily begun to grow⁴ becoming increasingly invigorated as time progressed and the brutal realities of more modern and weaponised warfare began to be experienced.

The early years of this debate fuelled an expansion of several separatist Christian groups away from the Anglican Church,⁵ and it was these non-conformist⁶ groups that would be of particular significance to the on-going development and dissemination of Christian anti-war

² Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980).

Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.

Hinton, J. *Protests & Visions*.

Richard Taylor and Nigel Young, ed. *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

³ Some debate on this is inferred in James, T. Johnson, "Just War in the Thought of Paul Ramsey," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 19, no.2 (1991): 183-207.

⁴ Gordon L. Heath and Michael A.G. Haykin, eds. *Baptists and War: Essays on Baptists and Military Conflict 1640s-1990s* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

Paul, R. Dekar, "Twentieth Century British Baptist Conscientious Objectors," *The Baptist Quarterly*, (1993): 35-43. This demonstrates how followers of the Baptist John Smyth 1570-1612, expressed the conviction that they should follow in the unarmed footsteps of Jesus.

⁵ This process had begun in the mid sixteenth century. During the Reformation in the seventeenth century the Anglican Church became heavily enshrined in Law as the central religious authority.

⁶ The term relates to those who refused to comply with the Acts of Uniformity, 1559 and 1662.

narratives through the centuries. The Congregationalists (Independents), Unitarians, and Baptists, which were all highly active in Wales, all came to prominence during this period for instance. Referencing the New Testament they determined that it could never be acceptable for individuals to prepare for, or to use violence against another. War, was thus always contrary to 'God's Will'. Perhaps the most significant group to emerge to prominence however was the 'Religious Society of Friends' widely known as Quakers.⁷ Though they only represented a relatively small proportion of the population, with small pockets of followers, such as those known to have been established in mid-Wales, they have been credited with propelling forward the most highly contentious elements of the debate.⁸ Travelling across the country making public their avowals to be the 'friends of truth',⁹ a key component of the Quaker crusade was that the political repression of people and the social injustices orchestrated by powerful narrow elites were ultimately responsible for the most destructive forms of human behaviour, and that these manifested through militarism and war.¹⁰ In tackling the issue of war, they therefore ensured the discussion quickly expanded to incorporate a wider critique of power and legitimacy, presenting a highly credible threat to the contemporary establishment.

All these rejections of war shared the common perspective that irrespective of how justifiable a cause appeared, it could never be endorsed as a civilised response by any genuine Christian. This declaration was an explicit rejection of an important concept within traditional Christian discourse known as the 'Just War'.

The concept of Just War

First advocated in the wake of the fall of the Roman Empire, the idea of 'Just War' was constructed in order to rationalise militarism to Christians as a means of maintaining civilised society, or of creating a better state of peace.¹¹ It was built upon specific readings of the biblical

⁷ Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945*.
Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.
Hinton, *Protests & Visions*.
Taylor *Campaigns for Peace*.
Carter, *Peace Movements*.

⁸ Peter Brook, *The Quaker Peace Testimony: 1660 to 1914* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

⁹ David Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Richard Taylor and Nigel Young (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

¹⁰ George Fox, "A declaration from the harmless and innocent people of God, called Quakers, against all sedition, plotters, and fighters in the world: for removing the ground of jealousy and suspicion from magistrates and people concerning wars and fightings. Presented to the King upon the 21st day of the 11th Month, 1660." *Fox's Journal*, (London: Friends' Tract Association, 1891).

¹¹ John Langan, "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no.1 (1984): 19-38.

texts and born out of a need to protect Christianity from attack and demise. As the early Christians had always advocated pure pacifism it was argued that they were enabling the threat of their own defeat by inviting attack because they would not respond with any plausible resistance. It was therefore purposefully designed to counter the Gospel's teaching to "turn the other cheek",¹² which had previously been taken to be a total forbidding of the use of force to defend oneself or others.¹³ In order to determine on which occasion war was consequently permissible, the 'Just War' concept was developed. A justifiable war therefore became codified according to several distinct criteria.¹⁴ These multiple points were then used to establish both the "right to go to war" and the "right conduct in war."¹⁵ A society could therefore demonstrate its righteousness in the explicit adoption of the Just War principles prior to military engagement, because to do so implied a certain level of 'civilisation'. It meant the society in question was prepared to provide the ultimate sacrifice when called upon, but crucially not in the pursuit of selfish gain, but instead in the name of righteousness, charity and in the protection of third parties.

It was a theory that also created important characterisations in the construction of militarism as an idea, and which would persist through the centuries thereafter. In particular, individual soldiers were constructed as heroic martyrs to a higher cause, and aligned symbolically with Christ at the crucifixion. Leaders could in turn be cast as the custodians of good as they fought to ensure a deliverance from evil. War was thus not only permissible, but in certain circumstances, a moral obligation.¹⁶ Furthermore radicalism in opposition to the narrative of 'Just War' was considered to

Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*.

¹² Matthew 5:39, "But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, Good News Publishers 2001.

¹³ John Langan, "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory," 19-38.

Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*.

¹⁴ Reference to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Francisco de Vitoria (1492/3-1546) in Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*, 189-220.

Six criteria listed by Ormrod in, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*, 190, but these omit other principles which were present in the earlier versions, such as the belief that a war could be directly commanded by God.

Others have listed seven criteria such as James, T. Johnson, "Just War in the Thought of Paul Ramsey."

¹⁵ Also known as 'jus ad bellum' and 'jus in bello' in reference to Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD).

P. Weithman, "Augustine's political philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Stump and Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

James, T. Johnson, "Just War in the Thought of Paul Ramsey."

¹⁶ R.L. Holmes, "The Metaphysics of Pacifism and Just War Theory," *The Philosophical Forum*, 46, no.1 (2015):13-15.

be a transgression of the Christian duty prescribed by the scriptures to submit to the authority of Government:

For the one in authority is God's servant for your good ... rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.¹⁷

Those who disobeyed their leaders or who questioned their authority could therefore legitimately be deemed no longer entitled to the privileges or the protection afforded by the State to its citizens.

Nuclear weapons and the Christian Just War principle

The use of the binary of good versus evil was a critically important theme in relation to nuclear weapons. For instance, it was employed prior to their first use during the Second World War and it remained an important justification for their continued inclusion in an on-going defence strategy during the Cold War era even after the deadly effects of the weapons were fully understood after the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan during 1945. On the day of the Nagasaki bomb the US Democrat President Harry Truman addressed the American population with the words:

I realise the tragic significance of the atomic bomb ... It is an awful responsibility which has come to us... We thank God that it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes.¹⁸

It was a speech that drew heavily upon Christian narrative and the Just War concept to describe the dilemma of choosing to use nuclear weapons. Furthermore it concluded that it was the only available path. This was because, even if it meant the loss of innocent lives, the enemy was deemed sufficiently evil to make the action necessary, for the greater good. It was therefore a deed of last resort, intended only to bring about peace. Furthermore, the suggestion was that it had been God's will that the perceived race to build the atomic bomb, when it was believed that Hitler was engaged in the same pursuit, had resulted in it becoming available to those on the side of 'good'. This language was a determined effort to ensure that the bomb continued to be aligned with the idea of a triumph over evil.

¹⁷ Romans 13.4, *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, Good News Publishers 2001.

¹⁸ Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference by U.S. President Harry S. Truman, August 9, 1945. UVA: Miller Centre, *Presidential Speeches*, Transcript, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-9-1945-radio-report-american-people-potsdam-conference>.

Though much of the graphic footage and the realities of radiation sickness were suppressed for many years, the horrific effect of the bombs was reported in Britain and America relatively quickly. Killing between 129,000 and 146,000 people, half were outright deaths whilst others occurred afterwards from burns, radiation sickness and other injuries. As Jill Liddington notes, the use of these weapons had, “dramatically dissolved the traditional dividing line between civilians and combatants.”¹⁹ Wars no longer impacted only upon those in military positions as warfare turned to the skies, and cities became legitimate targets. This was a clear indication for some that the Just War principles had become questionable or indeed entirely deficient. Barbara Doris, a retired science teacher and pensioner from Wales for instance, felt compelled to action at Greenham because, “I became very worried about the effects of radiation ... it was my war memories that kept me there. Nothing else seemed worth doing while the threat of annihilation was so real.”²⁰ This knowledge of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons had also been a key factor in the formation of the British Ban the Bomb campaigns that preceded the formation of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1957. It was consequently no accident at all that the Greenham women utilised images from the Japanese cities to publicise why they were marching to the base in 1981, or that they chose to conclude the Star Marches in 1983 at Greenham on Hiroshima Day. More controversially the year earlier they had also placed 100,000 stones on the Newbury War Memorial to symbolise the number of instant deaths caused by the atomic bombs.²¹ These were actions clearly intended to demonstrate the inhumanity of indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction, and to shift the legacy definition of nuclear weapons as a force for good.

On the opposing side to the Greenham women however, the Republican President Ronald Reagan sought to reassert the prevalent theme of good versus evil. In a highly provocative speech in 1983, delivered to a highly sympathetic audience of the National Association of Evangelicals, but arguably directed elsewhere, he declared that:

A commitment to freedom and personal liberty ... is grounded in the much deeper realisation that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly sought and humbly accepted... [as] voiced by William Penn... "If we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants." ... Jefferson said, "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time."...As good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders ... repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas. That's their name for religion... Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war... Let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness. Pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the State, declare its omnipotence over

¹⁹ Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, 171.

²⁰ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 22.

²¹ *Ibid.* 58-59.

individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.... I urge you to beware...the temptation of blithely declaring... both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong, and good and evil.²²

The speech was delivered at a time when Congress was debating a resolution in support of a "nuclear freeze," a doctrine supported by the Soviet Union that would have prevented the deployment of U.S. Cruise and Pershing II Missiles in Europe. Reagan's analysis was highly inflammatory and quickly attracted much criticism, particularly from the Left which objected to the association of class issues with totalitarianism. According to Reagan, the Soviet Union was an ungodly nation which posed an iniquitous threat to Christian civilisation. With no apparent moral compass, and guided only by the desire to crush capitalism to replace it with tyranny,²³ he urged Christians to stand firm to the principles of the Just War by sanctioning the arms race as a moral necessity.

The speech was also an attack upon pacifist positioning, aligning those who would remove themselves from the fight as lacking in morality. This sentiment had featured heavily in the work of important writers such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Anders Nygren and Paul Ramsey from the 1940s onwards,²⁴ which continually reminded Christians of the long established notion that they shared a duty to deal with the moral ambiguities of life.²⁵ In the face of evil they were compelled to act out of a Christian ethic of love. Love, not for oneself, but in the protection of others. What is perhaps interesting about this is that Reagan felt it necessary to make this point, indicating perhaps how precarious, intense and diverse the debate had become in the wake of the Cold War nuclear weapon intensification programmes.

Drawing the lines of peace narrative through time

Given the way that those who endorsed the weapons were actively drawing upon a longer narrative tradition, at this point in the analysis it is therefore apt to consider if parallels can also be drawn between the non-compliant stance of the very early peace protagonists and the tactics employed by the Greenham women of the twentieth century. There is a strong correlation for

²² Voices of Democracy: The US Oratory Project, "Ronald Reagan, 'Evil Empire Speech' (March 8, 1983)," The University of Maryland (UM) and The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), accessed November 21, 2016, <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/reagan-evil-empire-speech-text/>.

²³ P. Kengor, *God and Ronald Reagan: A Spiritual Life* (London, HarperCollins, 2005).

²⁴ Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr 1892- 1971 & Anders Theodor Samuel Nygren 1890-1978, cited by James, T. Johnson, "Just War in the Thought of Paul Ramsey."

²⁵ Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*, 189-220.

instance in the way that the Greenham women rejected hierarchies, and by association the leadership of their governments, by adopting the principle of distributed leadership. This, in theory, afforded all women the ability to speak out without reference to any higher authority which is important as it held the promise of an environment that enabled participants to 'bear witness' and to follow their own conscience, much like the Quakers had long described their intent to follow their 'inner light'.

Similarities can also be detected in the methods utilised by the Greenham women to publically declare their position. It has been noted by other historians for instance that, in earlier times:

Quakers urged and enacted their experience of salvation in a highly public arena – in streets, marketplaces, churches, fields and prisons – and they did this through flamboyant public gestures, symbolic signs, charismatic preaching and martyrdom.²⁶

In a similar way the Greenham women also embarked on a campaign of high profile public engagement. They did this by being invited guest speakers addressing groups or communities,²⁷ by sending out chain letters through a network of women and interested individuals,²⁸ and by less conventional means such as, setting up temporary camps or building emergency fall-out shelters in town centres.²⁹ Indeed a popular riposte of Greenham women was that in contrast to the authorities, they were "Poised with the Truth, Quick to stop pretending."³⁰ Through this direct and confrontational approach the Greenham women, like the early non-conformist Christians, were attempting to carve out their own narrative space in a hostile environment. They were also laying out a claim to 'truth'. This was not only in order to break the silence surrounding the nuclear weapons, but to persuade new audiences round to another way of thinking about society and the normalisation of militarism. Furthermore in speaking to specific groups, particularly those

²⁶ Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: University of California Press, 1995).

²⁷ Harford, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, 114.

Sasha Rosneil, "The Global, The Local and The Personal: The Dynamics of Social Movement in Postmodernity" in *Globalization and Social Movements* eds. Hamel, Pierre et al., (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 99.

Shaw, "Women in protest and beyond,"

²⁸ Margaretta Jolly, "Greenham Common - feminist seventies, Writing the web: Letters from the women's peace movement," <http://www.feministseventies.net/Greenham.html>.

There are newsletter circulation lists in the Records of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (Yellow Gate), Women's Library Archives, Reference GB 106 5GCW/A.

²⁹ Elaine Titcombe, *Janet Tyrell, Pauline Smout and Rowena Thomas Interview*, August 22, 2011.

³⁰ The welcome sign to the base read "Welcome RAF Greenham Common: 501st Tactical Missile Wing, 'Poised to Deter, Quick to React.' The Greenham women created a parallel sign at the entrance to their camp.

Photographs published in Cook, *Greenham Women Everywhere*, 4.

perceived to be under attack from the New Right such as the Miners during the 1984 strike, the women sought to utilise commonalities of perspective in order to shift wider perceptions about nuclear missiles.

Like the non-conformists of the past, the women also became increasingly defined by their opponents as a threat to the social and political order. In the seventeenth century this meant non-conformists suffering imprisonments³¹, or otherwise being publically shamed.³² There were also mob attacks as well as the routine break up of meetings.³³ Furthermore, though not entirely explicit, there was even a threat of death for voicing their dissent.³⁴ By the time of the Greenham campaign the persistent breaking of the law by the women and their carnivalesque displays of contempt for the Court, were all similarly framed as a direct challenge to the moral authority of those in power. As a result they met with progressively harsher rhetoric and penalties.³⁵ Moreover, as the State vilified the women, they increasingly suffered vigilante attacks by persons unknown, as well as the almost daily, and even at times hourly, evictions from the site on the order of the local authorities.³⁶ At one point during the protest, the women also found themselves being openly declared at risk of being shot by the military if they transgressed the acceptable boundaries of their protest by entering onto the base.³⁷ In casting the women as wanton and even criminal, the authorities increasingly sought to attack the legitimacy of the campaign but they did so by utilising the same historical narratives that had been used to attack others who had previously refused to accept the doctrine of 'Just War'.

Furthermore, whilst the earliest protagonists of peace narratives had been restricted from many spheres of public life by law, such as the ban of non-conformists holding public office or attending university until as late as 1828, during the 1980s the desire of the State to cast the Greenham women as illegitimate members of society was blatantly illustrated by the attempted

³¹ The Act of Uniformity of 1662 and the Conventicle Acts of 1664 and 1670 were intended to enforce obedience to the established Church of England. The Corporation Act of 1661 and Test Act of 1673 reduced the civil rights of dissenters. John Ap John for instance was imprisoned in Cardiff several times in the 1650s. Williams, M. 'Early Quakers in Mid Wales', 1993. Accessed 21 November 2016. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.563.1983&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

³² Van Vleck Garman, M. 'Quaker Women's Lives and Spiritualities in Angell, S.W. & Dandelion, P. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 2013. Chapter 15. In 1653 Elizabeth Williams and Mary Fisher were stripped to the waist and publically flogged for their attempts to convert Cambridge students to Quakerism.

³³ Recorded in detail in the *Great Books of Suffering 1650-1856*, Friends House Library, London.

³⁴ This implied threat derived from the US execution of the Boston martyrs in the 1660s. Angell, S.W. & Dandelion, P. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 2013.

³⁵ Young, A. *Femininity in Dissent*, Routledge, London, 1990.

³⁶ Blackwood, C. *On the Perimeter*, William Heinemann, London, 1984

³⁷ House of Commons Debate Hansard 01 November 1983 Vol.47 cc.724. Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine confirmed to Parliament that he could not instruct those responsible for security at Greenham not to shoot at the women if they trespassed on the base.

dis-enfranchisement of some of those involved. In 1985 the camp was refused as the permanent place of residence for thirteen named residents, forcing them to fight through the Courts to regain their legal entitlement to vote.³⁸ Whilst the women eventually won the legal battle, they increasingly found themselves subject to arrest, criminal prosecutions, court orders, fines and prison sentences as well as general heavy handedness by State Authorities.³⁹ Moreover when the women suffered intimidation, received threats of rape or of being gassed in their benders like vermin,⁴⁰ or indeed when they were subjected to serious assault by some members of the general public,⁴¹ their complaints to the police were often met with either indifference or a lack of proper investigation, due to “a lack of available funds.”⁴² The clear implication, given that funding obviously derived from government, was that because the women chose to be there, when they were clearly not permitted⁴³, they had brought risk upon themselves. They consequently did not either deserve, or warrant, the protection of the State.⁴⁴

These links to the narratives of the past were often not conscious, but there are nevertheless examples that demonstrate that many would have been acutely aware of the historical precedence of the debates being rekindled at Greenham. For instance it is evident that many who

³⁸ ‘Court papers and related notes concerning a case heard before the Electoral Registration Court, Newbury, 07 January 1985.’ Records of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (Yellow Gate), Women's Library Archives, Reference GB 106 5GCW/A. Two Newbury residents objected to the inclusion of thirteen named residents of the camps on the 1985-1986 Electoral Register. These were upheld, and the women removed from the register. An appeal held in Newbury County Court in May 1985 reinstated the women's on the electoral register. A further appeal lodged by one of the primary objectors was dismissed.

³⁹ There is ample footage on record to show how the police applied considerable force when moving women involved in demonstration actions. Many interviewees also referred to finger bending, hair pulling and other physical assaults.

⁴⁰ Christopher Moores, “Opposition to the Greenham Women's Peace Camps.” Blackwood, *On the Perimeter*.

⁴¹ References to a serious attack upon two women camped at Jade Gate in 1985 are recorded in multiple sources.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*.

Archive letter from ‘Ann at Orange Gate’ to Anne Francis holding reference DWAW46, Women's Archive of Wales, Cardiff.

⁴² Ginny Leach, *Orange Gate Journal: A Personal View of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp* (Manchester: Meta-synthesis, 2014), 23-24. The entry for August 30 – September 2, 1984, refers to a concerned Police Inspector who was too short staffed to provide a regular patrol at the camp despite violent vigilante attacks upon the women.

There have also been some suggestions that deaths connected to Greenham or anti-nuclear women were not properly investigated, in particular that of Deirdre Sainsbury, Hilda Murrell and Helen Wynn Thomas. These are however unsubstantiated claims.

Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*:

R.A. Green, *Thorn in Their Side* (London: John Blake Publishing, 2013).

⁴³ Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place*.

⁴⁴ A subject explored in a different context by McCurry, *S. Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

identified with a Christian pacifism participated in the Greenham campaign, not only as activists as will be explored further later in this chapter, but also as part of a significant group providing support to the camps. The attendees of the Newbury Friends Meeting House for instance, provided practical assistance by installing showers and washing facilities for the use of the camp women, and allowing free access to the meeting room and an office with a pay telephone⁴⁵. In addition many local Quaker individuals contributed by offering overnight dry accommodation, food, firewood, and storage for the women's belongings when the evictions started.⁴⁶ There was also a special tent design known as the 'Greenham Getaway' which was donated by Quakers groups across the country for use at the camp.⁴⁷ Many others also played a part in the formation and running of Cruisewatch, which was a mixed group with links to both Greenham and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). This contributed significantly to the protest by tracking and publicising the movements of the missiles as they left the base on training exercises, ridiculing the claim that the weapons could "melt into the countryside" and avoid an enemy strike.⁴⁸

In this context it is consequently unsurprising to uncover an extract of a 1661 Quaker declaration addressed to Charles II reprinted and circulated as a leaflet amongst British peace groups during the Greenham period.⁴⁹ This republication of a key pacifist text was a clear effort by those involved in the twentieth century campaign to draw a direct line through time to the earliest proponents of anti-war sentiment. The purpose was to authenticate the protest as a whole and to justify the disobedience of those involved by illustrating how long the tradition of dissent actually was.

⁴⁵ Women's meetings at Newbury Friends Meeting House referenced in: Ginny Leach, *Orange Gate Journal: A Personal View of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp* (Manchester: Meta-synthesis, 2014).

Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 76.

Sasha Rosneil, "The Global, The Local and the Personal", 99.

⁴⁶ Newbury Quaker assistance detailed in Evelyn Parker Oral history recording, Imperial War Museum.

⁴⁷ The 'Greenham Gateway' tent is held by the West Berkshire Museum, The Wharf, Newbury. It was specially designed to be scooped up as the bailiffs carried out evictions. With an attached label designed to show it as a gift it was also classed as a personal possession so it could not be legally confiscated.

Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 76.

⁴⁸ Cruisewatch was formed in March 1984 to disrupt the military exercise 'Nighthawk'. Michael Heseltine reportedly used the phrase 'melt into the countryside' to describe how the weapons, when mobile, would be undetectable by the Soviets making a direct strike upon the base at Greenham ineffective and thus unlikely.

'Lynette Edwell Collection', Berkshire Record Office, Reference D/EX2519.

Evelyn Parker Oral history Recording, Imperial War Museum.

Kate Hudson, *CND - Now More Than Ever: The Story of a Peace Movement* (London: Summersdale Publishers, 2005).

Fairhall, *The Story of Greenham Common Ground*, 82-86.

⁴⁹ A leafleted copy was included in the archive submission of Anne Francis to the Women's Archive of Wales, Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff.

What is evident from this brief comparison of peace narratives over the centuries is how opposition to war was repeatedly viewed as a danger to the stability of the established power structures that underpinned the workings of society. It is also clear that as the conventional holders of power sought to control the definitions of war and peace, they repeatedly cast their opponents into the role of contemptible dissenter. This enabled the application of the severest of measures in order to silence the alternative visions being presented. It is this analysis that demonstrates just how persistent the determination was to maintain a conception of war as a necessary evil, and to deny any space to pacifist doctrines right up to and during the final phase of the Cold War in the 1980s.

Despite these apparent parallels in the narratives the protest at Greenham has rarely been reviewed through the prism of religious argument. This in part may be a reflection of the prevalence of identity politics, and particularly the various strands of feminism developed by many of the women at Greenham. These can be set the wider context of a continuing and steady decline of 'active' Christianity, together with the development of a more secular British society, from the 1950s onwards.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it is still a somewhat surprising gap in the analysis when considered alongside the work of other historians, such as David Ormrod who has argued that in this period institutions representing the various Christian denominations in Britain began to sincerely engage with the idea that modern militarism was at odds with the historical doctrine of just war.⁵¹ This doctrine had in the past enabled Christian support for military action under certain circumstances. Moreover, it has been argued that these shifts were largely driven from 'below' as the upper echelons of the various Christian denominations reacted to their members' increasingly demonstrative actions within the peace movement:

The dense growth of Christian peace networks and the publications which it generated [was indicative] that Christians [were] no longer content to wait for radical statements by Church Synods but [were] undertaking their own peace-making initiatives at a variety of levels...within the political arena [demonstrating] ...resistance through developing alternative forms of personal and social behaviour... and through symbolic and direct forms of protest.⁵²

Curiously also, David Ormrod, the historian making this point in 1987, went on to assert that, "Christians practising non-violent direct action in the 1980s, have moved closer to other sections of the Peace Movement, particularly the peace camps, women and Greens."⁵³ This pointed clearly

⁵⁰ Hinton, *Protests and Visions*.

⁵¹ Ormrod, "The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85" in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*.

⁵² *Ibid.* 214.

⁵³ *Ibid*

to a contemporary perception of a forming of narrative between these various positions. Before addressing this however, it is worth pausing the consideration of Christianity at Greenham to consider why this may have become a neglected point in the analysis.

Spirituality and Eco-feminism⁵⁴ at Greenham

To date there has been only limited recognition of Christian dissent at Greenham, with far more emphasis placed upon the development and growth of a new language emphasising women's spirituality outside the adherence to the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution. It is work that has demonstrated the diverse and innovative ways that many women subverted language constructions, in order to attack and undermine the Authorities and the military, through the utilisation of myths, magic, religious narratives and pagan spirituality in their protest actions.⁵⁵ Many of the actions, particularly during the early years and through to the mid 1980s, drew upon mythical and symbolic creatures such as Rainbow Dragons and Serpents, which were often linked by the women to North American Indian and Aboriginal Australian traditions.⁵⁶ Indeed Christina Welch has argued that, "spirituality played a significant role for a number of the Greenham protestors, informing their socio-political protests through poetry, song and prose, as well as visually - with eco-feminist theology a potent theme."⁵⁷

Of particular note are the numerous references to an ancient matriarchal religion in the Greenham literature, "reclaiming both the land, and the power of women, as well as the Goddess Mother Earth as a signifier for the importance of both."⁵⁸ Interestingly it was precisely this theme that a former Greenham woman, Nicky Edwards, would later incorporate into her 1992 novel, *Tough at the Top*, the follow up to her first novel *Mud* which had more explicitly dealt with the difficulties of the lesbian feminism at Greenham, as discussed in chapter 3. In this second story "a Neolithic lesbian" outlines how the evolution of Western culture,⁵⁹ became "seduced by the craft of metal-work, a new religion."⁶⁰ This critique of industrialisation not only depleted Mother Earth it was argued, but "a woman, however skilled, would never be more than a drone." It was a

⁵⁴ Gwyn Kirk, "Eco-Feminism and Environmental Justice."

K.J Warren, ed. *Ecological Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1994).

J. Plant, ed. *Healing the Wounds* (London: Green Print, 1989).

M. Miles and V. Shiva, eds. *Eco-feminism* (London: Zed Books, 1993).

⁵⁵ Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change."

⁵⁶ C. Knight, "Rainbow Serpent's Return" in *Rainbow Dragon Camp Newsletter*, (c.1983): 7.

⁵⁷ Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change," 50.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 60.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *Tough at the Top*, back cover.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 226-227.

theme that seemed to echo an anonymously written piece for a Greenham newsletter, produced a short time before the Rainbow Dragon protest in July 1983⁶¹, declaring that:

Metal is a natural element – use and abuse of metal is out of control – the core of the earth reclaims metal, from her core, for her own. The Goddess of uranium is ANGRY. ... The whole nuclear ‘thing’ is about man’s (I use the word deliberately) attempt to dominate over nature.⁶²

The Goddess also made a regular appearance in the Greenham Court proceedings, and as such was notably referenced in a chapter entitled “I’ll swear on the Goddess” in one of the key Greenham texts published in 1985.⁶³ It was a quotation taken from the trial of Sarah Green, who declared to the Magistrate, “I’ll swear on the Goddess but not on the God.” Her statement to the Court continued:

I am charged with disturbing the peace. My whole life is dedicated to peace... I am totally non-violent. I do not eat meat; harm any person or animal on this planet. I try to find harmony with the earth, my cycles with the cycles of the moon and planets. I search for peace in a world which prepares for war.⁶⁴

This ecofeminism was however often quite at odds with the established religions, and in particular with Christianity. Writing in 1983 Chris Knight made clear the distinctions in a piece proclaiming the “Rainbow Serpent’s Return.”

The serpent is a symbol of Goddess power and life...which has only been treated as ‘evil’ since patriarchal religions took over...The rainbow is an immense serpent which acts as the guardian...punishing those who abuse life by sending down lightening, floods and storms. One form of this myth is the story of Noah’s Ark. In this version however, the link between Rainbow and Serpent has had to be obscured in order to preserve...patriarchal cosmology...When women have solidarity and strength their reproductive cycles tend to synchronise with the...tides and the moon... Patriarchal religions are based universally...on forms of marriage and family life which exclude the possibility of menstrual synchronicity. The dragon is slaughtered by some patriarchal hero.

Other women also rejected the biblical associations of the snake and refuted Eve’s responsibility for the fall of man:

⁶¹ The ‘Rainbow Dragon’ was a series of banners sewn together to encircle the base.

⁶² Anon ‘Thoughts on Metal’ in *Rainbow Dragon Camp Newsletter*, 6.

⁶³ Harford, *Greenham Common*, 46.

⁶⁴ Jones, *Keeping the Peace*, 96.

There is an interesting note of comparison with the suffrage campaign where some early feminists were also vegetarian on ethical grounds.

See: Leah Leneman, “The Awakened Instinct: Vegetarianism and the Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain,” *Women’s History Review* 6, no.2 (1997): 271-287.

I don't believe that the serpent was a 'Baddy' in the Adam and Eve story. Whether the fruit of knowledge, in its maturity was given or stolen doesn't matter... Adam was not ready for that fruit. We have patriarchy and look where we are? On the brink of global disaster, the path of black destructive alchemy is nearing its suicidal end. Eve must take back the fruit, or grow another tree. Untangle the mess.⁶⁵

This sentiment was also expressed in an interview by a Greenham woman from Porthcawl, "What it says in the Bible is that Man was given dominion. *Dominion!*" she exclaimed, her repetition and tonal emphasis pointing firmly to her disdain of the Christian text.⁶⁶

It's the male principle" she explained, and again with added emphasis, It's the *male* principle ... subduing the earth, and using it for our own purposes... to be used and abused.... Religion is a male invention. Men and Women, the Bible says, were created equal in God's own image, as male and female to rule over the Earth, but quickly men were told they are dominant, after women led them into sin... [It] is about subduing the earth, and using it for our own purposes. I mean the church now comes out with all this stuff about 'we must treasure the earth' and look after it...well, religion is a male invention, isn't it? At its core, Christianity has persuaded women to abide by men's rule, with a threat of unimaginable violence – hell and damnation.⁶⁷

In the everyday she argued, it had also enabled the subduing of women, by claiming that, in punishment for that original sin, they must be ruled over by their husbands. This justified the degradation and subjugation of women whenever perceived to be transgressing or threatening the masculine position in any way. It was through the deconstruction of these narratives, which underpin patriarchal society, that violence towards women by individual men in the domestic sphere, and violence towards the earth as a whole in the form of nuclear weapons, became inseparable for her. It was the same for many other women at Greenham. As a result many women began to believe that the single greatest threat was not the weapons, but the doctrines that enabled their existence. Greenham, she triumphantly declared in her interview, "exposed this paradigm" and let women challenge all that they had ever been taught.⁶⁸ It shifted the analysis so that Patriarchy was the root cause of the weapons' existence and thus demonstrated that they could only be removed permanently by overthrowing the current belief system. The protest thus enabled "the connections to be made", focusing the debate squarely on a feminist

⁶⁵ Jayne Burton, "Ssssnakes on the Seventh of the Second," *Women's Peace Camp Newsletter*, February (1982): 14.

⁶⁶ Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

Reference to: "And God blessed them: and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 1:28 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, Good News Publishers 2001.

⁶⁷ Elaine Titcombe, *SE Interview*, November 14, 2015.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

analysis. By doing so it set women free. Women, who had suffered domestic violence, often in silence, could begin to recognise the problem was not in them, but in the systems and established rules that enabled some men to claim an absolute right to subdue their wives. Women could therefore see that the fear they had for their children's lives in a nuclear poised world, was the symptom of unchecked masculinity and a man-made desire to dominate / win at all costs, "backed up by Christianity."⁶⁹

It is abundantly apparent that for this woman, and many others, Christian argument served only to re-enforce the perceived reasons why nuclear weapons had been created at all. They were the method through which masculine dominance over the Earth could be maintained, ultimately keeping women in subservience to all men, which as a principle was justified through reference to a Christian God. Greenham was no religious protest, she asserted, "It wasn't religious people who started it." However, almost in immediate contradiction she conceded that some women had used a Christian message to articulate their protest at Greenham:

There were women who came ... Anne Francis, the Church of England woman who came.... I felt that Anne Francis, she got a lot of publicity with her claims to Christianity, but it wasn't religious people who started it, and there was never any religious theme to it in that way. People brought that to it. Quakers turned up there but they didn't start it. It's like the Church now is starting to acknowledge women, but that didn't come from within the Church. It's because women outside have started it and the religion has come limping along behind forward thinking people, in my view... Not only am I an atheist but I'm quite powerfully against religion. I think religion always latches on to what many of us have already thought.⁷⁰

The Church and the nuclear question in 1980s Britain

Whilst these were the views of one atheist woman, the argument that the upper echelons of the Church followed behind a change in attitude from its members can also be evidenced in some of the contemporary literature.⁷¹ It was also an analysis supported by academics of the period. Ormrod for instance, argued that it was only after the resurgence of an active Peace Movement had already begun that some Church leaders began to awaken to the concern that Western strategic thought was becoming widely accepted amongst militarists to no longer be limited to, "deterrence and other means of avoiding strategic nuclear war", but instead "to questions of nuclear war-fighting, such as targeting plans and policies, the dynamics of escalation during

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ A point raised in an article published in *The Tablet* September, 19 (1981): 22.

strategic nuclear exchange, and the termination of such exchange,”⁷² In other words the discourse had shifted to such an extent that the authorities were now actively making preparations for a nuclear war, and whilst ordinary people had risen up in objection, the Church had done little to counter or caution against such a turn to militarism. CND membership was already on the rise from the mid-1970s, before any of the Churches made any significant moves to address the issue, and within that the non-denominational Christian CND (CCND) had also grown steadily from May 1979 onwards.⁷³ As a result it appeared to some, like Canon Paul Oestreicher that “the British churches' anti-nuclear lobby has hardly begun.”⁷⁴

This clearly illustrated how British Christian pacifists in the 1980s looked progressively less towards the hierarchy of the Church institutions to solve their conscience and “developed a broad consensus on the desirability of non-violent direct action and disciplined forms of civil disobedience.”⁷⁵ However, as this participation at Greenham was not the result of an officially sponsored position by the various Churches, or groups such as CCND, individuals were likely to be more integrated into the broader based movement. As a result their distinct motivations would be much less visible and Christian witness would be but one thread woven into the whole group, rather than a stand-alone or conspicuous statement. Therefore whilst figurative actions, such as daubing items in red paint (“splodge”) and pinning to them to the fence as menstrual symbols can point clearly to a feminist stance; embracing the base, participating in a blockade, or a candlelight vigil are more difficult to pinpoint in terms of stimulus.

Added to these difficulties is the tenet that people are rarely motivated by one narrative of understanding alone. Individuals are a complex mix of shifting identities and emotional responses, absorbing and utilising many different discourses, as they react to multifarious situations. As a result their actions may not necessarily provide an over-arching coherent explanation (as outlined in the theoretical positioning set out in the introduction) and it is reasonable to assume that people of faith would also have been influenced by many of the same ideas that inspired others who did not share their perspective. As a result Christian women may also have participated in

⁷² D. Ball, “Can Nuclear War be Controlled?” *International Institute of Strategic Studies* (1981) quoted in Ormrod, “The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85” in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*, 193.

⁷³ By the 1984 CND Conference, local membership was approximately 250,000. National CND had 110,000 members.

Richard Keen, and Lydia Jackson, “Membership of UK political parties,” *House of Commons Library*, Briefing Paper Number SN05125, January 16, 2018, 22. Accessed March 5, 2018, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05125/SN05125.pdf>.

⁷⁴ A public refute was made by Canon Paul Oestreicher, *International affairs secretary of the British Council of Churches* during the ‘Profess and Survive’ conference.

⁷⁵ Ormrod, “The Churches and the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-85” in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements*, 214.

feminist actions, or may have expressed similar concerns regarding the impact of nuclear weapons upon the ecosystem as secular women.

In such an environment Christian frameworks for actions could also be buried purposefully by those who found it an undesirable narrative. For instance those who saw traditional belief systems such as Christianity as symptomatic of a broader patriarchal structure that sanctioned extreme violence, would have found the use of this narrative to justify Greenham as counter-productive. Similarly for those opposed to the Greenham protest, who sought to dismiss the protestors as a homogenous group embodying Left wing radicalism or liberal and 'immoral' attitudes (as outlined in chapter 3), Christianity at Greenham presented an obvious contradiction.

Overall it is evident that there was scope for religious experience to be marginalised in the historical narratives of Greenham, particularly in favour of socio-political arguments. That this is a likely conclusion can also be supported by the way that Greenham contrasts sharply with the accounts from other contemporary British peace camps:

At Molesworth... a simple multi-faith chapel, ...was built ...the camp was evicted and the chapel destroyed...a more permanent peace chapel was built in 1984, using rubble from the old runway and embedding personal objects in its walls...On 5 February 1985, over 1000 police and troops evicted Rainbow Village and erected a razor wire fence... On 14 April 1986, the chapel was bulldozed.⁷⁶

In May 1983, a 'Peace Pentecost' also involved the scaling of the fence at Upper Heyford and an incursion onto the base in order to hold a liturgy beside the runway. Significantly these activities were deliberately framed as Christian actions. This ensured that they could be distinguished from similar secular actions that also involved intrusions onto the base. In view of this it is therefore necessary to take a new look at Greenham to actively seek out occasions when women did make a clear reference to their faith.

Sarah Hipperson - The longest serving Roman Catholic at Greenham

One woman who did this regularly was Sarah Hipperson, a Glaswegian who has arguably become one of the most well-known Christian women involved in the protest. She was conceivably so visible because she not only stayed at Greenham for seventeen of the nineteen years of protest, but because she also made herself one of the key voices of Yellow Gate. Regularly quoted in the press, (though sometimes not by name but nevertheless recognisable) and without doubt an articulate, intelligent and confident woman, her words are readily available

⁷⁶ University of Bradford, "Papers of Tim Wallis on the Molesworth Peace Camp," University of Bradford Special Collections, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/library/special-collections/collections/papers-of-tim-wallis-on-the-molesworth-peace-camp/>.

in the Greenham sources. Perhaps for this reason it is Sarah, in her explicit linking of faith with protest at Greenham Common, who became cited as the rationale for Welch's "argument that religion should not continue to be marginalized in writings about the camp."⁷⁷ In this article, which made significantly more of mystic eco-feminism and spirituality rather than organised religion, there was however only a brief reference to Sarah:

...an archived image of her showed her protesting whilst holding up a crucifix. Hipperson... asserting that the New Testament was her manifesto and that Greenham Common Peace Camp was 'a spiritual place, a retreat', she is quoted as saying 'We're like nuns. Nuns in a convent focus on prayer. We focus on confrontation to bring about change'.⁷⁸

Depicted alone as a named individual Welch ensures she appears as the exception, rather than one of many, emphasising the prevalence of the feminist development of spirituality even further.

A Roman Catholic, Sarah had been mildly involved with CND in the 1960s. Forming the 'Catholic Peace Action' group in the early 1980s, before making her first visit to the camps at Greenham in March 1983, she openly constructed her personal protest within an explicitly Christian ideological reasoning. Often citing the scriptures in response to the actions she engaged in, she framed her protest in terms of morality, emphasising how the women had set an example for the world to follow as they sacrificed personal comfort and endured ridicule and persecution in their commitment to securing long-lasting peace. Challenging the positioning of the State directly, she was quoted in the camp newsletter in May 1983:

We should uphold the law of God not man. I symbolically cut the fence on loyalty to our Redeemer who suffered so that we could be free to follow Him. Not to be enslaved by the laws of the world but offered the freedom of His Kingdom.⁷⁹

In the November of that year, 51 women from a multi-denominational group in Greater Manchester, 'Peace Concern' visited the camps on a fact finding mission. In the resulting pamphlet they produced to record their experiences and impressions, it was noted that "Sarah Hipperson, a Catholic ex-magistrate in her fifties ...is on a prayer-fast in jail as a protest."⁸⁰ On return to the camp a year later the women were disappointed not to have encountered her again. This indicated that she had also become a focal point for other religious women as they visited the camps.

⁷⁷ Welch, "Spirituality and Social Change," 61.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *Women's Peace Camp Newsletter*, May (1983): 5. The quotation is attributed to 'Sarah' and goes on to describe her intention to carry out a fast whilst on a three week sentence in prison. It is believed this was Hipperson, as she refers to carrying out a water only fast whilst in prison in November 1983 in Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, 15.

⁸⁰ Ruth Cowhig, ed. *Greenham Visit*. Manchester: URC, 1984, 11.

This projection of the Greenham women as morally guided continued beyond the protest itself. In Sarah's autobiographical account published in 2005, she set out to demonstrate that the Yellow Gate women had consistently followed the teachings of Christ. In taking the State to task in the Courts for instance they had exposed the sanctimonious way officials upheld the system irrespective of whether or not it was truly just. Directly quoting from the book of Matthew she underlined the virtue underpinning the women's actions in contrast to those illustrated by the agents of the State, who unquestioningly proceeded to prosecute the women, "You have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness...You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."⁸¹

Indeed, through a process of linguistic association Sarah articulated this belief during several Court proceedings where she defended her actions. As an ex-magistrate, she would argue, that the law clearly "claims a theological justification" to which the Crown, personified by the Queen, is sworn to uphold. Amongst the Coronation Oaths the Sovereign must, "cause law and justice in mercy to be executed in all judgements, and, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the protestant reformed religion established by law."⁸² Therefore, by staking a claim to the true meaning of Christ's teachings, in that her actions sought to expose the genocidal preparations of the State military, Sarah argued that the Court judgements against the women were being passed illegally. The Queen's Courts were the defenders of righteousness as defined by the Protestant Christian faith and thus by utilising a theological position, Sarah actively sought to demonstrate how it was immoral and unjust to persecute the women at all. It was, she argued, they who were the true upholders of Christ's dedication to peace.

It was perhaps Sarah's own work to secure her place in the history of Greenham however, that has ensured her presence in the historiography. By undertaking to establish a Peace Garden at Yellow Gate at the end of the protest in 2000, and acting as a key contact in its ongoing maintenance, she became a prominent post-Greenham figure. She also had an enormous influence over the texts produced both at the time and subsequently. As a Yellow Gate woman she contributed heavily to Junor's book compiling the history of that camp between 1984 and 1995.⁸³ She was also one of the primary collators for the Yellow Gate women's contributions to the Women's Library archive, and she self-financed the publication of her own autobiographical account of the struggle to ensure the Common was released from the military after 1987. Her oral

⁸¹ Matthew 23:23 and 24, *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, Good News Publishers 2001.

⁸² Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*.

⁸³ Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*.

interview is also held by the Imperial War Museum along with other key figures from the post-split era at Yellow Gate.

Patricia Williamson – Fasting for Peace

The same cannot be said for Patricia Williamson however, who is fairly obscure within the Greenham records. Indeed the whole of her story is really only visible in the religious press of the time.

In January 1983, the Catholic Herald reported her case under the headline, ‘Catholic Peace Woman Gaoled.’⁸⁴ Described as a ‘devoted mother’ of four children, acting with the ‘full support’ of her husband, Patricia was a Franciscan tertiary, a member of Pax Christi, and Christian CND. With these credentials she was singled out by the paper as one of thirty two women who were charged with obstructing the roadway at the entrance to the site in a demonstration of over two hundred and fifty women on the March 22nd 1982. This was the first blockade of the base, which sought to prevent workmen entering in order to carry out the renovations in preparation for the arrival of Cruise. All pleaded not guilty, arguing they had done nothing wrong, but the Court returned a guilty verdict and fined the women £25 each. Most of the women refused to pay their fines, including Patricia, which resulted in a sentence of seven days to be served in Holloway Prison, North London. After less than four days she was released having refused food for her entire period in prison. Patricia, the paper claimed, was believed to be the first Pax Christi member to have been imprisoned for an act of civil disobedience at Greenham. Almost as if to absolve her of any danger of criticism, the reporter went on to mention that, “At a national meeting last year Pax Christi pledged their total support for any member who chose to commit civil disobedience in the cause of peace.”⁸⁵

Patricia subsequently re-appeared in the Catholic Herald one year later having served nine days of a fourteen day sentence for her participation in what the reporter constructively termed, ‘peace activities’ after again refusing to pay a fine of £25 plus USAF costs. In her Court defence she had declared, “I feel I must protest in non-violent ways in defence of the law of God. The use of nuclear weapons is never justifiable.”⁸⁶ The report also noted how she had also referenced the reported appearances in July 1981 of “Our Lady at Medjugorje, in Yugoslavia” “saying that “Our Lady had warned of the need to fast and pray for world peace, because the world was on the edge of calamity.”⁸⁷ Patricia again fasted throughout her sentence in symbolic gesture.

⁸⁴ *The Catholic Herald*, January 24, 1983.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *The Catholic Herald*, January 1984.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Anne Francis – Christian and Convicted Criminal

Turning to look at women from Wales, another significant Christian woman at Greenham was Anne Francis. The wife of an Anglican vicar from Llantilio Pertholey, a small village on the outskirts of Abergavenny, Anne was to become notorious in the mid 1980s as the woman convicted by a jury at Aylesbury Crown Court of two counts of criminal damage. Her crime was the cutting of the fence at Greenham. Her offence was not unique by that stage of the protest action, but the sentence of twelve months' imprisonment was the longest single sentence passed on any Greenham woman throughout the protest. It was a punishment that shocked her home community of Abergavenny. The result was the delivery of a 3,000 signature petition, compiled in the small Welsh market town during the ten wet days immediately after her imprisonment, to Leon Brittan the Home Secretary.⁸⁸ Provoking shock and anger from many others, the Western Mail also reported that:

Several dozen labour MPs yesterday signed a motion supporting peace protester Mrs Anne Francis. Led by Cynon Valley MP and CND member Mrs Ann Clwyd the MPs deplored the savage 12 month prison sentence imposed.Michael Foot says her Christian witness against Nuclear Weapons has upheld the cherished British right of dissent which is integral to a democracy.⁸⁹

Upon appeal the sentence was subsequently reduced to "six months imprisonment with six months suspended" in June 1985, however whilst the time to be served in prison was halved, it remained the most punitive punishment passed down by the Courts. However, apart from this single event, Anne's story is virtually hidden in the existing historical texts. In Junor's 1995 published account of the protest from the perspective of Yellow Gate, she received only two single sentence entries, one when sentenced and one when the appeal result was known.⁹⁰ In Roseneil's analysis published also in 1995,⁹¹ she is acknowledged as an interviewee but was never directly quoted or referenced, in contrast to most of the other contributors to the research. The most comprehensive account is that of Liddington published earlier in 1989:

Very heavy sentencing remained the exception: when Ann[e] Francis, Christian peace activist, was given a year in prison for causing £120-worth of damage to the fence at Greenham she claimed it was a 'righteous act'.⁹²

⁸⁸ Photograph by Barbara Hetherington, with the caption, "The 'Justice for Anne Francis' campaigners from Abergavenny and surrounding area with their petition," *Spare Rib* 155, (1985): 12.

⁸⁹ *Western Mail*, April 17, (1985).

⁹⁰ Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, 43 & 47.

⁹¹ Roseneil, *Disarming Patriarchy*, vi.

⁹² Liddington, J. *The Long Road to Greenham*, 282.

The obscurity of Anne Francis in the narrative is quite a curious point, and arguably it is precisely because of her explicit use of Christianity as justification for her actions, that her part in the protest has hitherto been so overlooked. Anne, like Patricia but in contrast to Sarah, made very little of her contribution to the protest. When approached to take part in an oral interview in 2012 to discuss her actions at Greenham for this project, she was surprisingly dismissive. Her words were, “Well I was just one of many women. I didn’t do very much really.”⁹³ It is perhaps this lack of desire to take the limelight, to be the “star” so heavily criticised by feminists, as pointed out by Freeman (discussed in the introduction), that has impeded the exploration of her motivations and their wider impact. Women who attracted the limelight were often not welcomed by the wider Greenham community, becoming widely criticised for attempting to establish their perspective above that of the collective as indeed the interviewee from Porthcawl indicated.

Anne did however donate a significant amount to the ‘Women’s Archive of Wales’ in the form of the cards and letters of support she received whilst in prison which is how she came to be part of this research. There was also a deposit to the Abergavenny Museum consisting of many letters that she wrote lobbying MPs, Local Councillors and Anglican Church officials against the deployment of nuclear weapons and the building of nuclear bunkers. She has not however published any memoirs to date.

Anne – Local hero challenges the Church

From an early age Anne had been involved with the Anglican Church, going each week with her mother whilst her brother was to go to the local Roman Catholic Church with his father. “My views were formed through the Church” she immediately asserted in her interview for this thesis. Her father, a Labour supporter and shop steward, was also keen to promote a broad political awareness in his children, regularly encouraging them to debate the political events of the day with him. However, it was the steadfast declaration by one of the girls at her school in Newport during the 1950s, that she was a “pacifist” that most intrigued Anne. “I couldn’t understand why the Church wasn’t pacifist. Why it supported war, and all things war” but crucially, she added, “it didn’t always, because there was the Lambeth Conference in the 1950s, and they came out very strongly against nuclear weapons.”⁹⁴ It was this knowledge, that the Church could be persuaded against these weapons, that was to shape her Greenham narrative, driving her use of expressly Christian language. To view this in context we need to take a closer look at her protest.

⁹³ Preliminary conversation between Elaine Titcombe and Anne Francis at The Abergavenny Museum 2012.

⁹⁴ Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September, 12 2015.

First arriving at Greenham at the 'Embrace the Base' demonstration in December 1982, Anne soon returned to the camps with her adult daughter, as part of a small group of women from her local area. One of nine women from the Abergavenny Women for Peace Group she was arrested and tried before Newbury Magistrates Court in early 1983. This was following her participation in a blockade of the base on the 7th of February, the day of a much publicised visit by Michael Heseltine to Newbury which had descended into a scuffle as people attempted to make their views known to him.⁹⁵ Her statement to the Court was subsequently printed twice, once in the Hereford Peace Campaign magazine, *Radiation Times*,⁹⁶ but also in *The Welsh Churchman*.⁹⁷ This meant it reached multiple audiences. The language was heavily structured much in the manner of a Church sermon:

I laid down with my daughter, in the road in front of an approaching lorry...then I was being arrested. My peaceful protest lasted for no more than a few minutes ... I am a Christian, a member of the Anglican Church in Wales. My husband is a clergyman.you have given me a bible to swear on, thereby recognising Christian law and morality. The two most important commandments according to Christ are the love of God and the love of thy neighbour. It is these commandments that followers of Christ are bound in love to obey. Any use of nuclear weapons is a deliberate denial of these commands to love. Christians over the centuries have bent these laws to justify war. It is sad that some leading Christians today are still trying to accommodate the warlike attitudes and actions of the state misleading Christians and non-Christians alike. Christians are called to preach the good news to all men. We cannot do this with nuclear weapons they have no part to play in the way of Christ.⁹⁸

In this she defined herself entirely in terms of her identities as a wife, a mother of four, and a Christian woman. Her justification for her action was the need to follow her Christian conscience rather than the rule of an unjust or immoral law. It was a thinly disguised challenge to the Church, and to all those claiming to be Christian, and a call for them to share in the responsibility of acting to prevent war. It is evident how Anne utilised Greenham in an attempt to galvanise the Church Leadership and all those proclaiming to be Christian into action. Indeed it was this precise narrative that launched her interview for this project – her incomprehension that the Church could stand by while the world prepared for war.

Her plea in Court was however rejected, as were those of all six women from the Abergavenny group who were prosecuted. They were given a conditional discharge and ordered

⁹⁵ Jones, *Keeping the Peace*, 86-89.

Women's Peace Camp Newsletter, February, 1983, 13.

Also heavily reported in the National Press see Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

⁹⁶ "I Have Heard the Dogs," *Radiation Times*, 1983, in Women's Archive of Wales DWA46 Anne Francis papers.

⁹⁷ *The Welsh Churchman* 21, no.248 (1983). In Women's Archive of Wales DWA46 Anne Francis papers.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

to pay £10 costs. According to local newspaper reports, “the courtroom was packed with supporters,”⁹⁹ and when Anne ultimately refused to pay the fine, receiving instead a prison sentence of 28 days, this support continued with an abundance of letters and cards from both people she knew and people she did not.¹⁰⁰ Taking up her stance, as discussed in chapter 2 her husband the Reverend Donald Francis argued that Christians everywhere needed to join the fight against the weapons as his wife had.¹⁰¹ Whilst many of these documents and recordings have not been traced, the letters they received in response to their actions have been preserved as an archive. These demonstrate that in Anne’s absence, Donald entered into some lengthy and heated debates. As a result he also received numerous messages of support. In one example, the Reverend Islwyn Davies of Dunvant, Swansea wrote, “Brenda, my wife has become a Greenham Woman.”¹⁰² Sharing the experience he and his wife had of being pacifists in the war years, and particularly when they were questioned and threatened by MI5, he went on to sympathise, “we knew then how official and public opposition could hurt us and hinder our witness.”¹⁰³ In another letter the Reverend A. B. King of Abingdon wrote;

Eighteen months ago my wife Janet was sent to prison for the non-payment of costs in connection with an arrest made at Upper Heyford ... I believe that your wife was one of those who wrote to her, suggesting (not altogether seriously) that they ought to start a group called ‘Clergy Wives against the bomb’.¹⁰⁴

Whilst it is apparent that both Anne and Donald became ‘imagined figures’ for many of those writing to them, and that the author of each letter projected and reflected their own version of Anne and Donald into their text, it does seem clear that they both successfully characterised themselves by their vocal and demonstrative Christianity. However, it is perhaps the condemnation of the official Church and its inability to challenge State policies which is most striking in this story.

Shortly after her release from prison Anne defied the Courts and returned to Greenham. On 8th of July 1983, she took part in an action to remove the bolts attaching the fence to the posts (an activity referenced by Ian Campbell as discussed in chapter 2). She was arrested again, along with fifteen other women. Four of these women had not been arrested at the scene of the ‘crime’.

⁹⁹ *Abergavenny Chronicle* unidentified news-cutting in Women’s Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers.

¹⁰⁰ Women’s Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers, includes over 2000 letters and cards of support sent to Anne Francis whilst in prison.

¹⁰¹ There were articles in *Church Times*, and possibly *Sanity*, in addition to an unidentified *HTV* programme.

¹⁰² Women’s Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Letter addressed to Donald Francis in Women’s Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers.

They decided this was not just, so they re-enacted the action and took photographs of each other 'in the act'. They then proceeded to present themselves, dressed in the same clothes, to Newbury Police Station. The trial at Reading Crown Court for criminal damage commenced in April 1984, but was disrupted due to the publication of articles naming individuals in the *Daily Express* as part of an undercover story from the camps. Resuming in July 1984, the women disrupted the Court proceedings as much as possible by challenging all the established rules they could. Mary Millington recorded in 1995 that:

We caused chaos in Reading Crown Court. At first they searched us every morning on our arrival ... Some women insisted on stripping to avoid being touched by the prison officers, which caused such embarrassment to the Court that the searches were discontinued.¹⁰⁵

At the end of the Court case some of the women received custodial sentences but Anne, along with four others was given a four month suspended sentence. However, whilst on bail for this offence, Anne did not avoid taking further action.

On the 4th of April 1984 at 6am a huge police operation was launched to evict the women from the camp as part of an extensive road widening scheme along the main route to the base, designed (though it was publically denied) to create hardship for the camps. Home Office documents show that the women were to be given no notice of the plan in order to minimise resistance, though it was not anticipated that it would result in their successful removal from the site.¹⁰⁶ However, the Press widely reported that the eviction had taken place. The women quickly realised that from that date onward there were no further reports published on their activities in the mainstream media. Many women claimed a D-Notice had been issued. Several women decided to push the matter. On the 12th and 13th of May 1984 they took part in what was known as 'Visibility Action' in order "to make their struggle visible again, after the media silence following the big eviction."¹⁰⁷ It was recorded that approximately thirty women took part. Anne Francis was one of these women and it was for her part in this protest that she subsequently received her sentence of twelve months immediate imprisonment.

Like many other Greenham women, Anne defended herself in Court during her trials and took the opportunity to make another statement to the Court. This was reported in the Abergavenny local paper:

¹⁰⁵ Mary Millington quoted in Junor, *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, 29.

¹⁰⁶ Home Office redacted memo regarding the "proposed road improvement scheme at the Southern Main Gate to the base," September 13, (1983), released under the Freedom of Information Act. Reference 2460.

¹⁰⁷ Hipperson, *Greenham: Non-violent Women*, 27.

It included with the Judge's permission the showing of a video film from Japan showing the effects of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Mrs Francis contended that she had committed a lesser crime in an attempt to prevent a greater evil. But the court ruled this was only permissible with immediacy. She told the court, "for me the state is obviously no longer Christian and I have to do everything in my power to stop nuclear weapons." [The prosecutor in response directed] the jury that however noble they thought her motives and however much they agreed with her views having noble actions was not a defence."¹⁰⁸

What is absolutely clear is that Anne was extremely active at Greenham and that a significant part of her protest was articulated through a Christian discourses. These included particular understandings of morality, the need to bear witness, and to challenge authority when it ceased to act in accordance with the scriptures. However, it was precisely because she expressed her protest in these terms that she was arguably such a threat to the State. For many outside observers, for whom Greenham did not make a connection, the women could be easily summed up exactly as the media termed them. They could be dirty drop-outs and misfits, drug taking anarchists, or men-hating lesbians.¹⁰⁹ Anne however could not be successfully described in these derogatory ways, particularly as she had the public support of her husband and many in her local community. As a well-respected Vicar's wife, there are clues that she represented something far more problematic to the State. In his letter to Donald, the Reverend A B King of Abingdon also wrote:

I notice in the Observer report that the writer says that you have to be careful with your Tory voting congregation. I am sure this is true, for we parish priests have to be all things to all menhowever I am sure you will find a tremendous sympathy and respect even from those who disagree with her and you - this certainty happened here. My congregation even went so far as to elect [my wife] Janet to the Deanery Synod.¹¹⁰

What this suggests is that people within the rank and file of the Church were capable of extracting sympathy and respect from the very people that the Government relied upon for their power - the voting public. From this position, it was not implausible that further doubts could be fostered which would ultimately undermine the Government line that these weapons were needed to uphold the peace, and that they were a force for good, or a necessary evil. If people such as Anne could exert sufficient pressure to persuade the Church to shift from its already fragile position, from support to a more qualified support or even an outright condemnation, then the Government itself would be in a precarious position. This was particularly given that the traditional Left already supported unilateralism and there was no desire on the Right to

¹⁰⁸ *Abergavenny Chronicle*, April 18, 1985. In Women's Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers.

¹⁰⁹ Young, *Femininity in Dissent*.

¹¹⁰ Letter addressed to Donald Francis in in Women's Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers..

encourage any support for this position from the Churches. Therefore by utilising the language of ‘normal’ society, by acting from ‘within’ the accepted social discourse, it can be argued that Anne ultimately posed a much greater threat. The impact of her protest was therefore perceivably larger than that of women who adopted radical and feminist versions of the problem. These women aimed to address the issue from the ‘outside’ of ‘normalised’ society whereas Anne arguably threatened the position of the State from ‘within’.

There is little way of knowing if this positioning ultimately led to a stiff sentence being passed when Anne’s case came in front of the Judge at the Crown Court, but it cannot be entirely ruled out. It is a suggestion that Anne herself has subsequently contemplated. Speaking as part of this research project, she reasoned that the need to punish her as a consequence of her position in society was particularly evident in the way her appeal was considered, and the reduction in sentence delivered. Taken to Court to appear in front of three senior Judges, she received a thorough “telling-off” as they referred to her position in society as a vicar’s wife.¹¹¹ Without the leave to respond during this hearing – Anne was not someone who routinely disrupted Court proceedings as many other Greenham women did, perhaps in part because the crux of her argument revolved around her projections of respectability – she now reflects that the lodging of the appeal was the one regret she has carried from her Greenham involvement. “I really shouldn’t have done that. I should have served the whole twelve months. It would’ve been better, really.”¹¹²

Anne’s protest was not only driven by her faith at that time, but also her desire to spur the established Churches into action. For Anne, Greenham was essentially about acting out the words printed in Christian CND pamphlets, such as “Blessed are the Peacemakers”

As St Francis knew, the instruments of God’s peace are people – ordinary people, little people, often poor people serving ordinary little poor neighbours. That is where our most realistic hopes must lie.¹¹³

It is the reaction to Anne’s actions from within the Church leadership, however, that demonstrate how widely attitudes could vary regarding what was an acceptable form of protest and what was not. Whilst making preparations for her defence in early 1983, for her actions at Greenham, Anne had written to at least two senior figures within the Anglican Church in Wales asking for their support. The first to respond was the Archbishop of Wales, Derrick Childs, who had also served as the Bishop of Monmouthshire, where Anne’s husband ministered his congregation. His words were far from supportive:

¹¹¹ Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September, 12 2015.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ ‘Blessed are the Peacemakers’ read by Anne Francis during Elaine Titcombe, *Anne Francis Interview*, September, 12 2015.

I understand even though I cannot wholly go along with the position you and the Greenham Common ladies have taken up. But aware as I certainly am of the fragility of that veneer of respect for law and order which as Christians [we] must strive to retain against any breach caused by violence of any kind, I cannot share your logic in justifying an action which contravened the law of the land as a necessary Christian action, however deeply held your conviction in doing so. In an insecure society, conscientious protest does not, I believe, justify itself or strengthen its case by contribution to the breakdown of law and order.

...My principle difficulty then, while being very ready to attest your devout practice of the Christian religion, your concern to apply your Christian principals in a particular situation, and your deep seriousness in acting as you do, is that I cannot support the logic of the particular argument with which you say you are seeking to justify your actions.¹¹⁴

In stark contrast the Bishop of Bangor, Cledan Mears wrote:

Tired as you must have been after your witness at Greenham. I read with interest and care what you had to say in your testimony. It made sense and, what is more, it makes Christian sense. It is you, ladies, who have the courage to go to what is really the front-line in the fight against the enemy – in the form of these satanic and destructive cruise missiles, and I thank God for your stand. How easy it is for the likes of myself to make noises at a safe distance even though those noises are a distant echo of what you and others are doing. In a very real sense today the warfare of Christians is not “against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness” (Ephes 6,12).¹¹⁵

In these letters it is clear that a very real debate was raging within the Church in Wales. As a result actions by Greenham women who claimed a Christian motivation were being received in very different ways.

This was an experience that another woman, Rowena Thomas from Wrexham, also spoke of during her interview for this project. Having been publically castigated for her views during one Church of Wales service, where the presiding Minister had sneered, “Well, we all know what side Rowena is on!” She spoke of her joy in hearing of:

A Roman Catholic priest, Owen Hardwick [he] was starting a Peace Group in Wrexham. I’d heard about Owen, and everything I’d heard was good ... He gave a talk and I was hooked straight away, immediately, I joined straight away the Wrexham campaign for Nuclear Disarmament ... and out of it grew the Wrexham Women for Peace and the Wrexham Christians for Peace.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Letter from the Archbishop of Wales dated April 4, 1983 Women’s Archive of Wales, Abergavenny Museum Collection.

¹¹⁵ Letter from the Bishop of Bangor dated April 21, 1983 Women’s Archive of Wales, Abergavenny Museum Collection. Quotation from Ephesians 6:12.

¹¹⁶ Elaine Titcombe, *Rowena Thomas Interview*, August 22, 2011.

In addition to the direct response of Church officials to Greenham, the Anne Francis archives also reveal another interesting context for women and their Christian witness at the camps. Amongst the other letters received whilst in prison from thousands of people who did not know her personally, there were many letters from various other Greenham participants. Writing from many of the different gates, these indicated that not only was Anne a regular visitor to the camps but that she had a wide network of friends there. The version of Anne conveyed in these letters is not entirely at odds with how she portrayed herself in Court - her relationship with her husband and her self-identification as a vicar's wife and mother – nevertheless it is apparent that the woman projected by her Greenham companions is subtly different. It is clear that for many at Greenham she became like a mother figure, she was 44 at the time of her imprisonment, and they wrote to her whilst she was in prison to ask for help and advice with their problems and their feelings about the situation they were in. In one letter the author was particularly keen for Anne's help to understand her desperate feelings about God in relation to a nuclear war. There are also other letters that suggest Anne was actively engaged in teaching the Christian message whilst at Greenham. Margaret at Orange Gate wrote to provide an update in her 'absence', suggesting that Anne was usually active in co-ordinating events, "Indigo gate had a meeting for worship with about 20 present ... I'm re-reading the psalms, I am surprized how wonderful many of them are."¹¹⁷

Away from Greenham, Anne was the wife of a Clergyman and as such her main function was to support him in his work. Several letters from Donald's parishioners indicate that this was a role at which Anne excelled, but at Greenham she appeared to adopt a much more active pastoral role. This was interesting as the ordination of women into the Anglican Church in the UK did not begin until 1992 and consequently in the constructed female society of Greenham, Anne Francis had assumed a position not open to her sex as part of her 'normal' identity. The interesting point is that this was not an overtly feminist position and that it had appeared to develop out of need rather than by any design, or ambition, but it could nevertheless be construed as a challenge to the normal order of affairs outside Greenham. This was also a clear indication of how Anne was a complex mix of different identities some of which were created by her whilst others were conferred upon her by both supporters and detractors.

Sian Ap Gwynfor

Another woman who appeared to adopt a similar role and who also met with some criticism was Sian Ap Gwynfor. Sian had married into a particularly prominent Welsh political family to

¹¹⁷ Letter addressed to Anne Francis in Women's Archive of Wales DWAW46 Anne Francis papers.

become the daughter-in-law of Gwynfor Evans, the first Plaid Cymru MP elected to represent Carmarthenshire in 1966. Like his father, her husband, Guto Prys Ap Gwynfor, was a staunch nationalist and pacifist. He was also a Non-Conformist Minister in Llandysul, South West Wales. Sian was also from a Chapel going family and she recalled a profound belief that she was being “called to action” over the nuclear weapons at Greenham when interviewed for this project.

In a newspaper interview in 2011 however, she intimated that this involvement was met with some disapproval from within the deeply religious community she was part of:

For me, a minister’s wife, hanging around in muddy fields was just not a thing that was done...There was a photo taken of me standing next to a toilet, the ‘shit pit’, as we called it, a photo which went back home, to a lot of chapels. You can imagine what people would have thought of that. But, at the end of the day, things like that were not all that important.¹¹⁸

Not only did the photograph emerge, but it is evident that it was circulated with the intent to criticise or curtail Sian’s participation at Greenham. This disapproval intensified further when she went on to break the law as part of her protest. Despite this however she was adamant when interviewed for this research, “I don’t regret anything that I did, I don’t regret going or being a part of it at all. It doesn’t bother me that I have broken the law many a time.”¹¹⁹

Sian’s recognition of some controversy over her actions from some within her community might be explained by referring to a particularly Welsh vision of femininity. It was a version that she appeared to be transgressing by voluntarily living in squalid conditions and in being arrested at Greenham. These actions were in total conflict with all the desirable attributes associated with being respectable, a crucially important value within the Welsh-speaking and religious society she was part of.

This notion of the ‘proper’ behaviour of women which Sian was being judged against once again had a direct link back to the infamous education report of 1847 discussed in previous chapters. This report had caused the middle class in Wales considerable humiliation and shame. In it the authors had pointed to the morals of women as being in need of much improvement. Welsh women were described as “universally unchaste” and obsessed with the nocturnal courtship practice of “bundling”, which it was alleged, led to high illegitimacy rates.¹²⁰ Whilst the allegations did not go unchallenged¹²¹ the damage was done and Welsh women quickly became the centre of

¹¹⁸ Sian Ap Gwynfor quoted in: “As she tried to erect a banner soldiers tried to break her fingers,” *Wales Online*, April 15, (2011). <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/tried-erect-banner-soldiers-tried-1839793>.

¹¹⁹ Elaine Titcombe, *Sian Ap Gwynfor Interview*, June 28, 2013.

¹²⁰ *The Blue Books of 1847: Part 1*, Carmarthen, Glamorgan, Pembroke, 334.

¹²¹ R.J. Derfel, *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (The Treachery of the Blue Books):1854. Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, 114-116.

crude English jokes and derogatory comment.¹²² In the face of this, as Sian Rhiannon Williams has shown, the Non-Conformist leadership in Wales saw it as their duty to tackle the issue directly. Through the pulpits and Welsh language periodicals, such as *Y Gymraes*, they sought “to co-operate with the educational establishments of our time to produce faithful maids, virtuous women, thrifty wives and intelligent mothers.”¹²³ They aimed to create a nation of Christian pure and uncorrupted Welshwomen who would be above any future criticism. The stereotypical ‘Mam’ who ran a morally and physically clean household. In Wales the universally understood phrase for this was ‘tidy’. This was purposefully an English word rather than the Welsh translation, whereby cleanliness and order was perceived to be next to godliness. Adherence therefore denoted a woman’s respectability.

A ‘tidy woman’ adhered to a received moral and behavioural code, itself shaped by Nonconformity and policed by the women themselves. Those who fell by the wayside and slipped from the highest standards of cleanliness, religious observance or morality ... were perceived as a threat to all women.¹²⁴

This drive to purify the nation’s womenfolk continued well into the early Twentieth Century as illustrated in Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan’s work on the temperance movement in Wales.¹²⁵ However this is also an important context in which to view the Welsh reaction to Greenham, and in particular in terms of the response to Sian Ap Gwynfor’s activities which were arguably being judged in line with these Welsh ‘traditional’ expectations of women.

However, Sian’s father in law was the highly respected Gwynfor Evans. Prior to Sian’s involvement with Greenham it is interesting to note that he had addressed a second WFLOE march which took place in 1982. On this march women walked not to Greenham from Cardiff, but to RAF Brawdy in West Wales in order to highlight the extreme risk Wales was under if the nuclear arms race was allowed to escalate further. Evans was a pacifist like most other prominent Plaid Cymru activists. He had been active in Heddwchwyr Cymru, a Welsh organisation closely associated with the Peace Pledge Union, and a conscientious objector during World War II appearing before a tribunal. Also a vocal supporter of Cymdeithas yr Iaith following Saunders Lewis’ plea to the Welsh-speaking nation in 1962, Evans had threatened to go on hunger strike in 1980 if the Conservative Government did not fulfil its pledge to provide a Welsh language television channel. The Government, fearful of an unpleasant debate, and that Plaid would “fall

¹²² Geraint H Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 219.

¹²³ Sian Rhiannon Williams, “The true ‘Cymraes’: Images of Women in Women’s Nineteenth Century Welsh Periodicals,” in *Our Mothers’ Land: Chapters in Welsh Women’s History 1830-1939*, ed. Angela John (Cardiff: Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1991), 61.

¹²⁴ Deirdre Beddoe, “Munitionettes, Maids and Mams,” 204-205.

¹²⁵ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, “From Temperance to Suffrage?” 154 & 142.

into the hands of extreme left-wingers”, had eventually capitulated.¹²⁶ It is consequently important to note that Evans can be heard in the footage addressing the women on the Brawdy march in English. Of course on a practical level had he not done so many involved would not have understood him, and it would have been an insult to them rather than a show of support, but the important part of this action was that he chose to be there. By deciding to make a speech he was ensuring the protest would be reported on Welsh television. It simultaneously signalled to a Welsh-speaking, religious and traditional audience that what these women were doing was deserving of their attention, respect and admiration. This message was further reinforced by other prominent Non-Conformist Welsh men, who evidently saw the marchers as a receptive audience for their peace sermons.

Meanwhile however, what is perhaps more significant is that, “the women of various chapels along the route did what they always do, baked lots of Welsh cakes and made tea.”¹²⁷ Avril Rolph has suggested that:

There were different views on this among the marchers. Some felt that women should confront the view of a male-dominated world as part of the challenge to the nuclear age. Others felt that as they were visiting very traditional societies, it would be rude to challenge things.¹²⁸

It can be argued however that the women working in the background to provide the refreshments in support of the elders of their Chapels, who were busy engaging with the press or preaching sermons, were not necessarily operating entirely passively. Instead, in acting out their traditional role, they were actively showing their support for the cause by conferring upon it a sense of respectability through their public display of endorsement. This would have been communicated ‘silently’ to other women who were party to the historical Welsh discourse of female propriety. Therefore rather than a simplistic display of women’s subordination within Welsh society, this action instead a powerful message aimed at their own communities. Their making of the tea told all who could tune in to the discourse that this was an honourable cause worthy of support. It was a narrative displayed through action rather than words or declarations. It could however be easily missed or misinterpreted by those on the ‘outside’ of the targeted audience, as Rolph’s observation indicated.

¹²⁶ Margaret Thatcher Foundation Archive release December 30, 2010. Reported by BBC News, “New Papers reveal hunger strike secret of *S4C*’s birth,” accessed February 20, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-12062288>.

¹²⁷ Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham*, 158.

¹²⁸ Rolph, “Greenham and its Legacy,” in Chapman, *The Idiom of Dissent*, 117.

This version of female morality was not entirely unspoken by the women involved either. In an S4C News documentary, broadcast on the 7th June 1982, a Welsh-speaking woman was presented holding and pacifying a small child whilst describing why she believed peace was important news. It was notable that she appeared to deliberately take on the characterisation of the ‘Mam’ describing passionately how women needed to be the moral guardians of society.¹²⁹ This was a version of the protest that many feminists would of course reject, as outlined earlier, but within the deeply politicised Welsh context it was a vitally important narrative. This was because it enabled participation. It may explain for instance how, during the ‘Embrace the Base’ demonstration, there are photographs of numerous women from the Welsh version of the Women’s Institute, Merched Y Wawr at the base. Not an overtly politically active group, Merched Y Wawr generally sought to reinforce a traditional aspiration amongst Welsh women to be good homemakers and the moral guardians of the family. Therefore, whilst the women at Greenham were increasingly being portrayed as literally untidy and unfeminine by the English media, communities in Wales appeared to be turning this on its head by drawing attention to the moral respectability of the women. Indeed as Sue Lent has commented:

I remember the Welsh media was different from the English media, they were a lot more supportive... I remember a lot of English newspapers denouncing us as unclean, unwashed – and lesbians.¹³⁰

Re-writing the Image of Greenham Women

In addition to utilising the concept of morality, Sian also made it her personal crusade to illustrate how the women at Greenham were in fact acting out the role God would wish for them. Writing in her native tongue, and like Anne Francis utilising a tone quite like a sermon, she made a clear effort to inspire her fellow Welsh women and men to understand Greenham in terms of a Christian witness against the evil of which mankind was capable:

[Translation] The beauty of God’s creation and the ugliness of man’s devices are the defining features of Greenham Common. All around is the natural world in its glory; but, there on the Common, is a sight that serves as a reminder of the evil concentration camps. Part of the beauty are the Women’s Peace Camps ... laying siege to the Base, demonstrating to us the reality of the vulnerable situation the world is in. The Superpowers rape God’s creation by imposing their world destroying military in spots and upon societies such as those outside Newbury. But thanks be to God, it is also home to a group of women who challenge the

¹²⁹ *Newyddion Saith*, S4C June, 7 (1982).

¹³⁰ Sue Lent quoted in: “As she tried to erect a banner soldiers tried to break her fingers,” *Wales Online*, April 15, 2011. <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/tried-erect-banner-soldiers-tried-1839793>.

cruelty of the Arms Race and the authority of the world's most powerful... Sounds of singing, talking and laughing; this is the spirit that exists in the face of contempt, insults and persecution of all kinds.... One thing that cannot be denied is that the courage of these women is something to be admired and respected... As a committed Christian, I believe that the spirit of God is utilising these women, though often without their knowledge, to focus World attention on what man is capable of delivering as a result of sin.¹³¹

Using language that would strike a chord within her local community it is evident that she was involved in a process of re-constructing the Greenham campaign for her particular audience. There are references to the natural world, which as shown in chapter 4 was a strong cultural signifier in many Welsh societies particularly in the rural areas from which Sian came. The women are singing, talking and laughing like 'normal' women, which was perhaps a rejoinder to the reputation that these were somehow abnormal women. The women involved were held up as saintly and self-sacrificing. Interestingly however, she qualifies her narrative by saying that the women themselves might deny this moral righteousness, before going on to argue that it was evident to all who could 'see', that God was in fact at work through them. This was intended to explain why the protest was deserved of Christian support even though it was not overtly speaking in Christian terms.

This idea that the Greenham women were righteous was a theme also picked up by Menna Elfyn a Welsh language poet. In her 1984 poem, *Sul y Mamau yn Greenham (Mother's Day at Greenham)*, the women are referred to as 'playing house' around the camp fire.¹³² Quite possibly objectionable to some of the feminists, it was however a discourse that played to the Welsh audience for whom it was aimed.

God at Greenham: Meg Elis

This identification of the Greenham woman with the 'Mam' ideal also manifested itself in other publications of Welsh literature during the period. In 1985 the novel, *Cyn Daw'r Gaeaf (Before Winter Comes)*¹³³ was explicitly from a Welsh-speaking woman's perspective of the Greenham campaign and described in detail the hardship of life at the camps. Although feminism and the lesbian politics of Greenham were not ignored, it is interesting to note that Elis ultimately returned her lead character back to her husband and son by the end of the novel. This re-instated the world order associated with the Welsh traditional view of the respectable woman. The book was designed to reach the Welsh middle classes associated with the Eisteddfod and as such it was

¹³¹ Sian Ap Gwynfor, "Comin Greenham," *Cristion* May 4, (1984): 11.

¹³² Elfyn, *Merch Perygl*, 25.

¹³³ Elis, *Cyn Daw'r Gaeaf*.

again playing upon traditional and well understood concepts in order to create a voice for women.

Whilst Elis had written this prize winning novel, it was in her poetry that she revealed a similar narrative to that espoused by Sian Ap Gwynfor. Published in 1987 her poem, *Duw Yn Greenham (God at Greenham)*¹³⁴ claimed that God was there standing alongside the women, as “one of us, ridiculed by the military”, singing with the women, and cutting wire fences by the silos. In this poem God is unrecognised at first, taking part in all that the women do to resist the missile worshipping men, who hurl their abuse at the women (and by inference God). Once recognised however it appears obvious that this would be the case – God could simply not be anywhere else. In this poem Elis therefore elevates the women into a position of Godliness, and in them she asks the reader to trust.

It is interesting to observe that these Welsh-speaking women had extremely close links to *Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Cymraeg (The Welsh Language Society)* as well as to Plaid Cymru, and that they were utilising another recognised narrative amongst the Welsh middle / intellectual classes. This was a discourse that enabled dissent if it could be justified in terms of a Welsh nationalism that embodied a rejection of Imperialist notions that cast Wales in an inferior position to England. It was a justification long used within the Welsh civil disobedience campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s. However at Greenham, this took on another dimension in that it challenged the assumptions of the past that had placed Welsh women in subjugation to their English counterparts.

However these women were also arguably doing something else. Drawing upon an element of the feminism of Greenham to specifically position women as powerful, whilst simultaneously utilising a religious and nationalist discourse in order to deem themselves worthy of attention, they were also furthering the status of women within their own Welsh-speaking societies. They were utilising Greenham to carve out a new space where they had a prominent position within their own communities, a new voice and a new power.

Christian Service at Greenham

Like most of the women mentioned in this chapter, many other practising Christian women who travelled to Greenham also found it be a place in which they could engage with their faith, drawing in particular a great deal from the contrast between the activities of man, and the world created by God. Unlike the women in this chapter however, they did not necessarily do so

¹³⁴ Jenkins, *Glas-Nos*, 3.

through militancy. There were many other activities that they found enlightening, meaningful and hopeful:

The Communion Service outside the gates of the base was a very moving experience. During these moments of worship, it seemed we had the answer to all the world's problems. Around us were the signs of turmoil. Police patrolled – some on horseback. ... A helicopter surveyed the scene. Yet in the words of our hymns, prayers and readings could be found peace. Others stopped to listen. A policeman by the gate shared the bread and wine. We prayed together in unity – all denominations for a peaceful world. This surely was evangelism.¹³⁵

These activities at the base were not however always well received by the women living at Greenham. Revealing the tensions between Christianity and the emergent feminism, as well as the differences of generation that existed at the camps, one woman recalled:

Back at Red...I meet my first Greenham woman I positively dislike. She is 16, full of herself, hates all men and will have nothing to do with religion. They are signing songs...at the mention of "Green Grow the Rushes Oh" she shouts, "I'm not singing that; it's religious" and sits in a huff whilst the rest of us sing. By this time I'm seething, but refuse to cause trouble by teaching a 16 year old the true facts of life and the virtue of tolerance.¹³⁶

This tension between Christianity and feminism was also noted by the Greenham woman interviewed from Porthcawl. This was particularly if the women involved did not adhere to the women only request in their religious observance. Her precise example however was placed in a place and time far removed from the camps themselves. Taking place many years after the camp she found herself in discussion with a male clergyman who claimed to have been to Greenham and to have carried out a Mass on the site. This action however was not performed on his own initiative as he had been invited there by a group of religious women. "Well, that just showed how little they understood it. It was so powerfully a woman's thing. To invite a man there, a MAN ... well, I was incensed by it! **Incensed!**"¹³⁷ Therefore, whilst it was clearly possible for women to engage with the protest at Greenham on a spiritual, and more specifically through a Christian discourse, the same access was not generally granted willingly to any male anti-nuclear sympathisers. This was even if the events did take actually place.

This analysis has demonstrated how Greenham could and did occupy several different interpretations of spirituality simultaneously, but more importantly how these were also often in conflict with each other. Women for whom Greenham represented a Christian witness could not only derive a personal power from a space where the traditional leaders were precluded, but they

¹³⁵ Ann Gill and Ruth Cowhig, eds. *Greenham Revisited*. (Manchester: Peace Concern, 1985), 5.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Elaine Titcombe, SE Interview, November 14, 2015.

could also launch their own challenge to the establishment. They did this by openly setting themselves apart, taking a stand and aligning their actions with the scriptures themselves. By this means the narrative of women's place within the Christian Churches could itself also be challenged. In doing so they endorsed a revised version of female morality, elevating their status and consequently presenting their own challenge to women's accepted position in wider society.

Conclusion

The narratives contained within this research project have demonstrated why it is necessary to search out the myths entrenched within the histories of radical protest movements and to scrutinise these for the silences they mask. It draws attention to why we must search out the foundational mix of ideas contained within the popularised stories of activism, tracking their development and progress, so as to identify the positions concealed by collectivism. It is a search that tunes into the points of tension and division, especially within spontaneous movements like Greenham that formed without formal structures, and where there are few written records to consult. In looking closely at the glimpses of discord that can be identified, this thesis has shown how it is possible to discover how the underlying narratives of explanation became formulated and contrived, thus exposing the conditions that enabled dominant versions to emerge which not only impacted upon the on-going direction of the protest, but which subsequently shaped the histories produced by participants. It is therefore a study that addresses the operation of power in an environment where there was little opportunity for challenge or redress for those whose ideals did not fit with, and could not merge into the preferred collective position. It consequently demonstrates the ability of those who controlled the 'meaning' at any particular point to close out those deemed not to conform. More than this however, it is also an analysis that illustrates how those who did not occupy those dominant positions continued to seek out ways to be heard, whether it be by voicing or publicising their concerns, acting independently or simultaneously, or by splitting away entirely from the original movement to work in alternative groups elsewhere. Moreover it also highlights how this desire to be heard persisted beyond the end of the protest as participants began to write or tell their version of events, often in the name of history. It is suggested in this thesis that these are the moments when those on the 'outside' begin to fill the silences that the focus on the meta-narratives had hitherto produced.

This thesis is therefore the recognition that a 'unified' voice can often be so desirable, not only in order to present an effective opposing position against the ideas which inspire the movement in the first place – so in the case of Greenham the opposition to nuclear weapons – but also in order to establish certain ideals like the realisation of a feminist sisterhood or the formation of a female utopian society. They are ideals which are heavily loaded with emotions such as anger and fear, which make them so crucially important to those attempting to establish them, as well as hope and intense feelings of belonging. These are all extremely potent emotions but they are also often mirrored by equally passionate responses by the people who view themselves as squeezed out of the movement, locked out of the 'community' and new language being developed by those in control. There are consequently jealousies and rivalries as well as

bitter breakdowns in relationships, which are also often new and volatile having sprung up as a direct result of the protest itself. These feelings also intensify as arguments fail to be adequately resolved and people choose which version to support – all within a highly pressured physical and political environment where opponents were continuously attempting to break the will of participants. The emotional investments in activism are therefore an integral element of the investigation, for it is in the listening to these that the conditions that produced and propelled the movement become visible and the moments of silence creation pinpointed.

Greenham was not a straightforward single issue campaign, though it of course had one central focal point in that everyone who engaged with the protest sought to prevent nuclear war and the normalisation of nuclear weapons. It also provided an outlet for the fear and the frustration of people at a time of the great political shifts that had begun to permeate through the whole of British society. In this way it was at times task orientated, which Freeman also pointed to as an important factor in enabling 'structureless' groups to function. In the case of Greenham however, this determining of what needs to be done and by whom was largely confined to the actions taking place to demonstrate the women's protest. It is by peeling away the drama and the thrill of the action, and by putting aside the desire to find a utopian female society to aspire to, that it is possible to look at the interactions at work below the surface. It is therefore in the investigation of the points of contention and divergence that Greenham is revealed to have often been representative of the dis-function that Freeman had so clearly warned against a decade earlier. Greenham had, in adhering to the structureless ideal, created a situation whereby individuals could become alienated, side-lined or even attacked by those who claimed to support the same ultimate goals. It is perhaps this lesson that we are compelled to acknowledge most from Greenham.

Along the way however it has become evident that the protest did have a particular connection to those participants who joined it from Wales, and significantly that it was the actions of many of these people that not only began the protest but which helped drive it forward. In addition it was clear that the wider population in Wales often had sympathy for the cause which arose either from the ecological awareness that had often taken them to Wales, or as part of the various traditional Welsh identities that already informed their lives, and their conceptions of self. Whilst it cannot be argued that a universal narrative of experience was uncovered in looking at the participants from Wales, or even indeed that what they described was unique only to those from the region, it is clear that there were some commonalities of politics within the region that many participants not only understood, but which were an integral part of the mobilisation process.

By switching the focus of the analysis it did therefore become apparent that the feminist metanarratives of explanation, and in particular some of those centred on lesbian or separatist politics, were often not the main reason for participation at the camps. This is not to say that for some the solidarity of a community of women did not play an important part, indeed almost all accounts acknowledge that it was a moment in British history where women were actually being heard by those in power, though not necessarily producing an overly positive response.

Overall this study has demonstrated that the Greenham campaign continuously centred round questions of power. This could be the power of those with nuclear weapons, the law, the patriarchy, the industrialised state, capitalism, husbands, but most significantly of all other women. Moreover it is clear that these power struggles were evident from an early stage. They were almost certainly a consequence of having no formal structures in place within the group, which worked well for a small march walking from Wales as Freeman has suggested it might, but which subsequently enabled major directional decisions to be taken by a relatively small number of women without the consent of the others once the group had grown beyond its homogeneous base.¹ It was ultimately the lack of accountability built into the campaign that consequently drove many participants to practice their own form of protest, whether as ecologists, Christians, Nationalists or as men, either alongside or set apart from the feminist campaign.² As a consequence, perhaps the most significant finding of this research project has been just how problematic participation actually could be for many people. This is entirely contradictory to the narratives that the women often appeared to want to create and which if taken at face value would suggest a glorious campaign of female unity and solidarity. Furthermore it became apparent through the oral interviews that for some of those who had become excluded from the protest the experience had remained intensely emotional for many years after the weapons had left the Common. Whilst the interviews were not a representative sample, it is nevertheless clear that some women did document this discrepancy at the time, though often not in the 'official' publications or the camp newsletters. This is because these were not only designed to encourage participation, but which were also intended to convey a sense of strength and resolve to those who opposed the camps and the one undisputed purpose – to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

There is an interesting parallel here to how the Greenham campaign has subsequently been commemorated by some groups. In particular I attended a conference entitled 'Remembering Greenham' which took place at The Feminist Library in London on the 11th of September 2011, to

¹ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," 239.

² Ibid.

mark the thirty year anniversary of the event. It was attended by several Greenham women.³ From the outset it was clear there was some apprehension, and it was noticeable how some of the Greenham women in the audience began to re-position themselves around the room before the first speaker began, nervously, to deliver her presentation. Though the reason for this was never openly discussed it was evident to anyone present who was an 'insider' or who had studied some of the key texts of the protest that the women present that day were some of those who had been on opposing sides of the dispute that had led to the split in 1987.

Opening up the discussion other Greenham women were prompted for their experiences but this resulted in a challenge to the speaker, to discuss the 'internal problems' of Greenham. The woman concerned was from Orange Gate and subsequently Yellow Gate. She proclaimed that Greenham women had a 'duty' to inform others, especially a younger generation of feminists, of the issues that had arisen. This, she claimed, was necessary to prevent the mistakes of the past being repeated. Glossing over the challenge a Blue Gate woman trivialised it by laughing, "we couldn't even agree what to have for lunch most days. I've never argued so much in my life!" All subsequent attempts to re-engage with the political diversities of Greenham met with a swift rebuke from the chair. The audience was asked not to dwell on the 'problems' of Greenham and no further questions were allowed. The original Orange Gate woman who had raised the point, disgruntled at having been silenced, exclaimed, "There were consequences to not agreeing. It wasn't a simple case of 'let's agree to dis-agree'. It was much more than that." She and another woman then left the event.

The stated purpose of the conference had been to 'remember' Greenham, but perhaps what this exchange did was demonstrate exactly how many of those involved want it to be remembered. The version that is allowed is not one where the women could be seen to have fundamentally and bitterly disagreed over direction and strategy. The reason why, was given by the Chair as she brought the session to a close. Greenham, she said, was an inspiring movement that the younger feminists present could take forward with them into the next wave of feminist activism. Clearly seeking to build a new momentum this desire however only served to emphasise that the movement had masked intense struggles to control the discourse. These battles are not over many years after the closure of the camps. This has been a theme that has run all through this thesis. There were women who were pushed out because they could not accept the feminism of Greenham, and there were men who were not allowed to participate irrespective of how passionately they felt or how close they were to the campaign.

³ Lynette Edwell (Blue Gate & Cruisewatch); Lorna Richards (Blue Gate); Kay Chapman (Orange Gate); Sian Edwards (Orange Gate); Sasha Roseneil (Green Gate), and several others who could not be identified at the time.

This point that the ‘protest’ is not entirely over, despite there no longer being any camps at Greenham, raises an interesting question about the ebb and flow of protest movements for participants. In conducting several new oral histories an unanticipated question did emerge about how the individuals concerned dealt with the return to ‘normal’ life after a significant period of intense political activism. For some they simply move on to the next big battle with the State as they continue to support the cause to remove nuclear weapons. One interviewee has for instance been arrested and sent to trial for her part in a new action in North Wales. It is interesting however to note that feminism was not her main inspiration for activism, but rather her Christian objection. Others however have taken up entirely different causes as well as continuing to bring up their children and grandchildren. One woman, interviewed for this project however described the end of Greenham as feeling like a demobbed soldier returning from war – an interesting analogy itself of course - but one that made some sense. Indeed it was interesting to note that this was almost precisely how another former Greenham resident, Nicky Edwards had constructed her character in her novel about leaving Greenham.⁴ There had in many ways been a war waged at Greenham. Not only with those on the ‘outside’ of the campaign, but also those who should have been on the ‘inside’.

As I come to the end of my own journey with Greenham, it is important to reflect not only on the content of the history that I was able to put together, but also on how it was done. As all historians do, I have made particular selections in compiling this analysis and I have done so from the perspective of the world in which I live. I was not for instance particularly interested in asking my interviewees about their sexuality, though this was also because other researchers have previously covered this extensively as discussed in the literature review. Nor have I followed the analysis along the narrative constructions of race or class identities, which were also significant at Greenham and within the wider British population during the 1980s. Conversely I have been keen to follow up on how Welsh cultural identity, politics and Christianity mattered to those who became involved with the protest. This is because, quite simply, these are identities that I often utilise in my own construction of self and they are those through which I had consequently remembered the campaign. I do not therefore make any claim to have presented a new ‘truth’ about Greenham in this thesis, for of course no such single narrative of explanation is ever possible. Instead I have attempted to bring into view the diverse nature of the explanations utilised by participants. This revealed a mass of complex and sometimes conflicting histories made up of multiple narrative constructions, de-constructions and re-constructions, all shaped by experience and produced in relation to power, or conversely to powerlessness. In this way I have

⁴ Edwards, *Mud*.

utilised the theories of other researchers and in particular Freeman, Scott and Steedman. Their work helped guide a way through why the people I met often seemed to have a rather different story to tell than the 'consensus' and to understand the complexity of writing about experience in relation to tangible events and to determine 'meaning'. Surprisingly I found as a result that my work fitted well with the recent work of other historians who have been looking at the peace movement elsewhere. The themes I encountered, such as nationalism, anti-imperialism, environmentalism and religious objection, as well as methods of resistance such as the declaration of nuclear free zones, were all the subjects discussed during a 2010 conference in Washington DC.⁵ I did not attend the conference and my work was already underway when I uncovered the reports published but this revealed how the peace movement as a whole, and not just Greenham, was a curious mix of ideas and demands.

This project has revealed much about the history of Greenham and about Wales during the 1980s and 1990s. To take the analysis further, more research could be carried out to look at other actions undertaken by men and women in Wales during the period. In particular there were protests at Llanishen and in Carmarthen. These were not on the scale of Greenham, but could nevertheless help to explore the narratives of peace protest at the time. It would also be useful to examine other regions of the UK in a similar way. It is evident that Wales had a particular mix of politics in play, but it would be interesting to make a comparison with Scotland for instance. It would also be of relevance to know the dynamics of the mixed camps that were operating at other sites across the country. In particular to consider how the British anti-nuclear movement was experienced when feminism was not so integral to the action.

⁵ German Historical Institute Conference, "The Peace Movement and the Second Cold War: European and Transatlantic Perspectives," Washington DC, USA, March 4-6, 2010. Accessed November 17, 2017, <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/2010/conferences/the-peace-movement-and-the-second-cold-war.html?L=0>

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Photograph: 'Greenham Today'.¹

¹ Greenham Common, Berkshire, England. Author's own photograph, July 2017. This was taken on the site of the partially dismantled runway, with the former control tower in the background. Situated further behind this building is the former location of the Violet and Indigo/Woad peace camps. See map Chapter 2, 55.

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APPENDIX 1

Participant Information

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Education Level	Location of Interview	Date of Interview	Interview Length
RS	Male	54	College or University	Swindon	19/01/2011	60 minutes
AT	Female	69	College or University	Harringay	23/05/2011	120 minutes
AP	Female	65	College or University	Llanpumpsaint	08/07/2011	120 minutes
RT	Female	83	School	Wrexham	22/08/2011	90 minutes
JT	Female	70	College or University	Wrexham	22/08/2011	90 minutes
PS	Female	69	College or University	Wrexham	22/08/2011	90 minutes
SG	Female	65	College or University	Llandysul	28/06/2013	120 minutes
TC	Female	78	College or University	Pembrokeshire	04/10/2014	120 minutes
IC	Male	79	College or University	Pembrokeshire	04/10/2014	180 minutes
AF	Female	75	College or University	Ebbw Vale	12/09/2015	180 minutes
SE	Female	79	College or University	Porthcawl	14/11/2015	360 minutes

Interviewee	Participation Level at Greenham
RS	Original marcher to the camp. Short stay at camp before Christmas 1981.
AT	One of first supporters to arrive at camp. Organiser of Star Marches to Greenham in 1983.
AP	Founding member of WFLOE. Long term visitor and occasional camper during initial years.
RT	Long term visitor and fund raiser. Participant in WFLOE march and Star March.
JT	Occasional camper. Participant in WFLOE march and Star March. Arrested at Greenham.
PS	Occasional camper. Participant in WFLOE march and Star March. Arrested at Greenham.
SG	Occasional camper. Fellowship of Reconciliation member. Arrested at Greenham and elsewhere.
TC	Original marcher to the camp. Short term camper and long term visitor to the camp.
IC	One of original supporters of the camp. Participant in early stages of camp and long term visitor.
AF	Long term visitor and occasional camper. Persistent arrests and imprisonments.
SE	Long stayer at the camp but not permanent resident.

Interviewee	How found
RS	Known to mutual friend.
AT	Known by thesis supervisor.
AP	Former teacher and local resident of family parish.
RT	Fellowship of Reconciliation.
JT	Through RT.
PS	Through RT.
SG	Fellowship of Reconciliation.
TC	Via own website.
IC	Via own website.
AF	Following archive visit to Abergavenny Museum.
SE	As a depositor to the Women's Archive of Wales, Swansea roadshow.

APPENDIX 2

Information for participants – General Interview Structure

The interviews are informal in tone and consequently aim to follow the lead of the participant, but a selection of the questions below will be used to guide the interview along as required. No questions are mandatory and the interviewee can choose not to answer any query, without giving a reason (interview transcripts can also omit any rejected questions if desired).

General Questions

- Name; D.O.B; Place of Birth; First language.
- Family background e.g. Parent occupations; number of siblings; location of upbringing.
- Education: School / College or University / highest level of education attained & when.
- Occupational history – aspirations; first job; work after education; voluntary work etc.
- Marital status / Children.
- Current hometown / employment etc.

Political Background

- Political history – first awareness of politics & level of involvement prior to Greenham.
- Current political outlook or self-definition i.e. a feminist, socialist, nationalist, liberal, conservative etc.
- Political perspective changes over time i.e. have there been any notable shifts of perspective? Was Greenham part of any changes?
- Becoming Involved at Greenham
- What brought about the first awareness of the anti-nuclear weapon campaign / protest at Greenham?
- Approximately when did the participant go to Greenham? What prompted the initial visit?
- What reservations were there about being involved? Were others affected by the decision to become involved? What persuaded the interviewee to overcome any doubts?
- Were there any other peace or political groups / individuals encouraging / supporting the interviewee's involvement?

Degree of Participation

- How would the participant describe their overall involvement with the camps i.e. was it occasional, regular or full time? Did this alter over time? (How long was longest stay?)
- How important was it to stay and live at Greenham? Was this discussed with others i.e. family / friends / other activists?
- Did they engage in Greenham 'supporting' activities? If so, what? (e.g. fund raising; recruitment of new protestors/supporters; or political lobbying of MP's)
- What did the participant do when away from the camps? Were there local protest campaigns or did the participant use the time to attend to other responsibilities?
- Did they have any involvement with other political groups (national or local based)? How did these interact with participation at Greenham?
- How did the participant feel about women only protest? Was this of great importance? Did they have any involvement with mixed protest? If so, did it differ? How?
- Did they choose to take part in 'Actions'? Why and how was this decision reached / supported?

- What were the consequences of any 'Actions' for the individual i.e. arrest, court, prison & personal developments. (*Space for the individual to describe their own experience of protest participation and to reflect on outcomes / consequences*).
- What effect did participation at Greenham have on their 'other' life at the time? What reactions did they experience from their home community, family & friends? Was it discussed regularly?

The Greenham Camps

- What Gate(s) were visited / lived at? Why? What influenced the decision to choose one over another? What was the extent of knowledge of the other gates when making the choice? Was it common for women to move between gates during their stay?
- What communication existed between the gates? What forms did it take? Did it change over time?
- Did the interviewee recognise/ know women from gates she did not visit/stay at? Did the interviewee have any direct interaction with the other gates? If so, what kind of experience was it?
- Can the participant describe the women encountered whilst at Greenham? What age? Background etc.
- How were decisions reached by the women at Greenham? How did resolution of any conflicts occur? Were there roles that the camp residents adopted? Where did the interviewee see herself in relation to others? Did this position change over time?
- How did established women at the camps react to new arrivals? What about visitors? Did they welcome male supporters?
- Was the participant present during camp evictions? What was the experience like?
- How were the women treated by those on the 'outside' e.g. local residents, councils, local churches, police, magistrates etc.?

Ideologies / Religion and Politics at Greenham

- How much did feminist politics influence the philosophy of the women / participant? How was this communicated internally and externally? Was there much debate?
- Did religious consciousness / argument feature at Greenham? How did women demonstrate their faith at Greenham? How was this perceived from those 'outside' Greenham? If involved in worship at Greenham, did this differ to church service? How?
- Was awareness of the environment a feature of life at Greenham? Was this a strong reason for women's participation? How was this understood from those 'outside' Greenham? Did Greenham help develop a wider awareness of ecological issues?
- The Conservative Government perceived the women at Greenham as being socialist agitators – was this assessment accurate? How much support was given from Socialist groups / Trade Unions / Labour?
- Did the media coverage provoke changes in direction / behaviour as individuals and/or as a group?
- Did women from Wales play a significant role at Greenham? Was the participant aware of Welsh politics at Greenham e.g. campaigns for the language / desire for greater self-rule away from Westminster?

Leaving Greenham

- When did the last visit / stay occur?
- How did it feel to leave the camp (whether forced or voluntarily)?
- If it was before the protest end, was the intention to return at a later date or was it a conscious decision to leave permanently? How much contact was maintained after leaving? Is the interviewee still in contact with any fellow protestors from Greenham?

- What did the interviewee do after Greenham? Were there other political campaigns? Is the participant involved in any particular cause today?

Reflecting on Greenham

- How would the participant reflect upon Greenham in terms of overall success?
- Is the protest remembered by the participant with fondness or with some reservations? Is there anything specific to explain this?
- What are the most prominent positive and negative memories of involvement with the Greenham protest?
- How does the participant believe Greenham is viewed thirty years on? Can any explanations be offered for this?
- What important message from Greenham should historians account for?

Closing Question

- Is there anything the interviewee wanted to talk about that we didn't get to?