

## The women's peace camps have captured the imagination of millions. But how do we stop cruise?



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# A new force in the land

Chaired by Sarah Benton

*Helen, why was the peace camp at Greenham Common a women's camp?*

**Helen** The simplest answer is the truthful one; it was women who thought it up and women who actually did it. The original feeling amongst the group was to make a clear statement as women that we no longer accepted that we were being defended by our government's policy. We felt that it was very important to make women understand that and say something about it.

*There has been some controversy about the exclusion of men from the camp.*

**Helen** I think it has been largely a misunderstanding. We're not excluding men, we're positively discriminating in favour of women. The fact that Greenham has stimulated the growth of mixed peace camps up and down the country proves that we're not excluding men. Rather, we have one camp which we think it's important for women to identify with, gain confidence from and become very active in relation to; and Greenham has achieved that.

*Why the format of the peace camp in particular?*

**Helen** Well it wasn't a carefully thought out plan; it happened almost by accident. Everybody was being completely ignored, so we decided to stay there until the points were made. Initially, we were only asking for a debate with a Ministry of Defence spokesman. We thought that that was a very simple and straightforward request, and we weren't going to go away until we got it. But now of course we've broadened our horizons and we want more than we did before. We want a complete reversal of the policies with no attempt to put cruise missiles anywhere in Europe, let alone on Greenham Common.

**Joan** I can endorse what Helen said about the essentially accidental nature of the peace camp, because when I first met Helen and the other women, they were asking for a debate. They had arrived there with the expectation that their great march from South Wales would have received considerable attention. It didn't, so they decided to stay at Greenham Common until something did happen. But none of us at the outset imagined that now, more than a year later, the women would still be there. I think that's the thing that has caught the imagination of so many people in the peace movement. It is the enormous determination of the women; the fact that they were able to stay there throughout last winter when conditions were quite appalling.

*What are the peculiar qualities of such a peace camp, apart from the endurance of the women, which have been so dynamic?*

**Joan** Viewing it as someone who doesn't live there, I think the qualities are ones which have actually developed. They have come from the experience of the women living there together and sharing thoughts and ideas about actions and about the peace movement. Certainly endurance: to live in those conditions, to stay away from your own family and friends and all that is normal for most of us in everyday life, is a tremendous sacrifice and a struggle. The other thing which marks them out, I think, is that they are able to discuss together actions, but once they come to a decision they are able to carry that out as a group and that's a different way of working and living than most of us are used to.

*Helen, can you describe just how abnormal life is there in terms of people's normal experience of politics?*

**Helen** The physical difficulties of living there of course, are considerable, it's so much harder to boil a kettle. But living the

outdoor life, we have become incredibly fit and very much healthier both physically and mentally. And, as Joan said, it makes a great difference that we are able to live the subject, if you like, rather than trying to fit it in to all of the other exacting scenes that people are living daily. It means that we can discuss something until we get it right, whereas in normal groups you've got to leave things aside. So we are able to cover a great deal of ground and get to a greater sense of understanding of the situation very quickly.

*Sally, as someone who's been involved full time with CND, do you think a peace camp is something that CND could have made a decision to set up; or do you feel it had to have this spontaneous, accidental quality?*

**Sally** Well it's hard to answer because it happened spontaneously, but probably it couldn't just have been set up. The reason why it evolved the way it did was because it was a suitable thing to happen at that time. But can I say something more about the women side of things? There was a lot of discussion with regard to 12 December demonstration, about whether men should be allowed to attend and whether they would feel very peeved about either having to go and look after kids or not go at all. I think it is positive to have an event for women and it's not an exclusive thing at all. For example, I was talking to a lot of women afterwards, ordinary women who did not go, who, when they saw what had happened, said 'I would have really liked to go to that.' There is something special about a women-only activity. The point about the Greenham Common women is that they've been able to set up a women-only activity which is not in any way seen as something for only feminists to do, it's almost legitimised the idea of women-only activity, so that women who wouldn't normally identify with going on something for women only think 'oh yes I can see why, as women, we should go to Greenham and say something together as women'. That's quite a significant breakthrough.

**Helen** I was really delighted to find that the activities on 12-13 December encompassed for the first time women who clearly identified themselves as Conservatives; who came to Greenham because it was a women's camp and who will now, when they go back to their communities and have the label of 'communist agitator' put upon them, react very strongly indeed.

*What is it about women and peace as subjects that provides a connecting link between radical feminists, communist agitators, Tory ladies? Why that particular connection of women and peace, why this unique ability to bring together women of the most extraordinarily different social and political backgrounds?*

**Helen** For the first time it has become clear that we're really on the brink of disaster. People are having to examine the real

problems and there is always that feeling that women and children have to be defended, and it's the women who can see that they and their children are not being defended, but are on the point of annihilation.

*But why should women be more concerned about annihilation?*

**Joan** I think it's to do with imagination. I really do believe that women are essentially much more imaginative than men, and the threat of the total loss of our whole world and planet is something that women can actually grasp in a way that men just don't. And women are not so easily taken in by the idea of being brave and

courageous, and going out and fighting; they're not so easily whipped up into a feeling of aggression towards someone else. They know what it's going to mean to lose everything that we value, to lose life itself.

*But what about the attitude of women towards the Falkland's War?*

**Sally** I think it's worth saying that even over the Falklands there was a stronger feeling amongst women against the war than amongst men. But I want to deal with another, related aspect. As it came over on TV, there was this great emotion when the ships returned, with 'Rule Britannia' and so forth. But the actual emotion going on was in fact families being reconciled. Emotions were used so that the feelings of joy about getting your son back were turned into this display of patriotism. It just shows you how, although women do have a special relation to war and peace, this can be turned around. So although women are the caring people who are bound to think more about the consequences of war, that strong emotional tie which women have with men in war can be turned round and used to justify patriotism. So you can't just make a simple statement that because women are more emotionally caring they'll automatically end up as being more anti-war than men. What has been significant about the women's peace movement is that it's catalysed that emotion and turned it into a positive force.

## It's almost legitimised the idea of women-only activity

When we're thinking about the women's peace movement, maybe it seems a bit odd that the way we're getting women involved is because they're the ones who traditionally always worried about their children. But what is really good about this is that whether you're a feminist or whether you're someone who doesn't describe yourself as a feminist at all but identifies simply as a mother, you have got that thing in common about caring. So we are finding a way in which women of different political perspectives can organise together around the fact they are the caring sex.

*Doesn't this lead to something of a conflict in feminism? Many of the images that appear at Greenham are ones which feminists in the 70s fought very hard to reject: the idea that their chief job should be caring and bringing the children up. Yet these are precisely the images which are surfacing, perhaps the ones which are attracting more conventional, conservative women to the peace movement.*

**Helen** Feminists have to recognise the fact that the vast majority of women will always be child bearers and carers. This is a fact of life that's not going to go away. What will alter is the role in society of women who have traditionally been ignored and locked into a cupboard as it were. We are trying to suggest that women mustn't be ignored and we have to teach women not to allow it to happen to

themselves. It's all very well to say, you shouldn't have to look after children', but a very large number of women do want to do just that. At the same time we don't want to be denied the right to make ourselves heard on important issues because we are doing this very important task.

**Sally** I don't agree with everything that Helen just said about the inevitability of women being child rearers, but that doesn't really matter because whether you're going to be a child rearer or not, the fact remains that you're brought up as a woman in society. And because it's envisaged that you're going to be a child rearer, you're brought up in a different way, so whether you actually do it or not,



Photo: Maggie Murray



Photo: Maggie Murray

your emotional responses are different, and the feminist perspective on that is to say men should be brought up like that too, not that women shouldn't.

*Helen has suggested that there are fairly major permanent sex-role divisions in the sense that women will always be the child carers. What do you feel, Joan, about that in relation to the women's movement?*

**Joan** I have difficulty with this one because I am not a child bearer and I'm not going to be a child bearer in my lifetime, so it's difficult to separate people in that respect. I just know, and so I share Helen's view to some extent, that that is still how the majority of women see themselves. I've heard again and again at meetings women saying that this is why they are so concerned about this issue. So whatever we might like to think or believe, and whatever we women want to work for in other aspects of our lives for the future role of women, it's a huge motivating force.

**Sally** Even before there was any kind of women's peace movement, it was noticeable that there were far more women involved in the peace movement than there were in the average political campaign. Many political campaigns don't particularly appeal to the imagination of women, but with the peace movement there is a very immediate link. It is true that a lot of women experience their social relationship with the world through the family. Even if they've got a job, and most women do have a job nowadays, they still don't see that as the prime purpose of their existence. The fact that in the peace movement we've succeeded in connecting with women is a really positive thing. If you say, 'well I'm sorry, but we want to be ideologically pure about this and only appeal to women in correct ways,' then we're not going to reach women. I'd much rather reach women in a way that contains slight political impurities than not reach them at all.

**Helen** Can I just come back and say I'm not really recommending a sharp sex-role position that won't change, because the roles are changing. I know a great many men who are just as concerned in the care and upbringing of children as their wives. Indeed at the moment there seems to be a slight imbalance for men, because there are very many caring men in our society and they're falling between two stools: the more militaristic-minded men reject these slightly more enlightened human beings and look upon them almost as if they're a different species, but there isn't a definite role for them side by side with the feminist movement. Unfortunately the men are going to have to organise themselves. So what I said I meant: the majority of women probably always will be in the role of the child bearers and carers, but that doesn't put them in isolation any longer because the men in society are

changing. They're aware of the dangers of militarism now in a way that perhaps they weren't before. But at the moment my concern is to reach out and talk directly to other women.

*Do you think that in getting through to other women and perhaps involving them in the first political action of their lives, this will lead to a much wider general involvement of women in politics. And will it lead to a rethink by mainline political organisations, and also CND, as to their method of organising? The fact is that so far a lot of Greenham has worked by grapevines, by spontaneity.*

**Joan** Well I think mainline political parties ought, if they want to have a future, to pick up on this. Certainly in my experience, women who have come into the peace movement have begun to question many other aspects of political life in Britain. Many people are joining political parties as a result of participation in the peace movement, so it's up to the political parties to recognise this and make room for these people, because they are people who have not been attracted in the past by the mechanics of political parties as they are known to us. If the political parties don't adapt to the needs of the new participants, then they will be lost again to those parties. I don't see too much evidence, I have to say, of that adaptation occurring.

## I feel that if cruise missiles touch the soil of this country, we've had it

**Sally** What struck me first about CND was the large number of people involved in it from some kind of moral conviction. I found it a bit odd as a standard kind of lefty, all these people going on about what's right and what's wrong and morals and all that sort of thing. But having been involved with it for a number of years, it's made me question a lot of things about the Left, both the Labour Party and the Communist Party, and this is related to feminism as well. I like to think of feminism as having some kind of capacity to reconstruct humanism if you like, and I think that has a connection with the peace movement. The Left is not just about sloganising for higher wages or the overthrow of capitalism, it's about human values. CND has always had that as a very strong element within it and that's one reason for its success: it can appeal to people's emotions and the way they feel the world should be run. I think the Left in the last few years has moved further and further away from ideas about idealism and imagination. It's become too narrow. I would like to think that the peace movement, and particularly the women's peace movement, can play quite a major role in terms of widening the Left, widening the arena in which politics is seen to operate.

*What feelings do people have at the camp, Helen, towards CND and the political parties?*

**Helen** There's obviously a mixture of feelings. Lots of people who come to the camp are thoroughly disillusioned with politics because they don't trust politicians. I can't say I blame them. At the same time there is a need to achieve political answers and I don't have a great deal of sympathy with people who opt out of the political system because it makes the opposition's work so much simpler. Regarding CND again there are mixed feelings within the group. I personally have closely identified with CND since the peace camp was set up and we've always received the maximum support, in fact all the help we've asked for we've received. I think it was a very brave thing indeed for CND, and Joan in particular, to keep her nerve and CND's nerve in the beginning when we appeared to be just a pack of absolute lunatics, because that's exactly how we did appear. But I'm incredibly grateful it did happen. It was a very important boost to all of us to know that we did have a major organisation we could turn to for advice and support if we felt the need to do so.

*One of the things which is interesting about the response to Greenham is the comparative lack of aggression. Given that some CND members have been viciously slandered in the press and a lot of people in other political movements have been treated very badly by the police, why do you think the response from quite right wing papers like the Daily Telegraph or the Daily Mail, and the police, has to a certain extent been chivalrous in a very classic way?*

**Helen** They didn't have any option, they haven't had any toeholds in any unpleasantness that they want to portray. They haven't been able to say that we're aggressive and violent because we are not, it's as simple as that. Occasionally on large demos, you do get individuals who, when confronted with men, are less than pleasant to them, but you cannot say that those individuals represent what Greenham Common has become. The press haven't been able to wheedle out aggression; they've looked for it, they've tried very hard to find it and they've failed. They found a band of half crazy nutters sitting there singing songs, winding balls of wool around one another and the fence and so forth, and it's caught the press' imagination. On the 12-13 December, when all those items were put up on the fence, I saw very hard bitten reporters actually crying.

*Does it give any insight into the police and state power, this different kind of response?*

**Sally** There are contradictory aspects about being a woman. An example is that on the one hand you're oppressed but on the other hand people will be nice to you in certain circumstances; they aren't quite so likely to hit you over the head with a baton. I think you might as well exploit those contradictions and use them. In the case of the Greenham Peace Camp, as Helen was saying, it's not just a question of the police being more gentle than perhaps they would be to men at most demos. It also means that because the press have certain images of women — they've got mothers and probably kids — you are able to reach them in some way. It comes back to what I was saying before: you're in a world in which there are various things going on like sex role stereotyping and you might as well use these in a positive way if you can.

**Helen** When you can make a policeman challenge his own role by just sitting there, defying him, while being polite and pleasant,

he really does have to look at what he's there to do. He is trained to deal with violence, with aggression, but on the whole he's not trained to deal with women and he's certainly not trained to deal with non-violence.

*Do you think an ethos is developing, in terms of a strategy for defeating cruise, which will become a dominant ethos in 1983 for all peace campaigners, whether they're men, women, CND members or whatever?*

**Helen** That's a really hard one. When the National Front turned up in force at the London peace camp, which is a mixed camp, looking for trouble, the men spontaneously withdrew and the women came forward. There was only one man, who happened to be in a tent, who got severely beaten up because he couldn't remove himself from this aggressive band. The women actually walked toward these young men who then turned and fled. Otherwise, there would have been a great deal of injury because that's what they came there to do, they came there to inflict injury on these namby pamby peaceniks.

**Joan** It's an ethos which, because of its proven success at Greenham, is likely to be followed by most people at most peace camps. There is a growing awareness that this is a way of behaving which is not only good in itself, but is actually something that wins in situations where the peace movement is forced through no action of its own into confrontation with the authorities. It's workable and therefore I think people will take it up. But we need to remember that peace camps and the number of people who physically live at peace camps, or participate in them, are still a tiny minority of the whole peace movement. So we need to give some thought as to how the rest of the peace movement operates during the coming year. But it's certain that the example of the women at Greenham Common is a great inspiration to others.

**Sally** That trend within the peace movement for non-violence is growing and will be a strong part of the movement, but it will only be a part of it. The whole point about the peace movement, and CND in particular, is that it recognises some kind of pluralism in its approach, that there are lots of different ways of doing things.



*MOD guard attempts to remove Helen John from USAF Greenham Common during occupation of sentry-box.*

**Helen** The most heartening sight I've seen in the last few weeks is that at long last real measures of support are being taken. You've got a Labour controlled council withdrawing a contract for tarmacadam for no other reason than the contractor is building silos at Greenham. This is what we've waited for. This is the breakthrough we've tried to achieve. We are not suggesting for a moment that if everybody came and occupied a site outside the peace camp, we would win the argument, we would lose. What we are suggesting is that if these focal points of very positive resistance come about, they will stimulate people working in the trade unions, in armaments industries, and in all the industries that support the arms race, to take their own form of non violent direct action. Lots of people say we haven't got time, well a year ago nobody would have considered that Greenham Common could have had the impact that it now has had. You see phases in history where you just build and build, then a massive leap takes place, and I think that's going to happen this year.

*You seem to see the greatest hope for 1983 in terms of almost spontaneous industrial action?*

**Helen** That, in conjunction with political decisions: the two together will be the turning point.

**Joan** I don't think I share Helen's faith. I would love to see it happen, but I doubt if it's going to at the level of people putting their own jobs on the line and refusing to keep themselves in work in order to stop production. I don't think that will happen.

<sup>1</sup> This is one of CND's major campaigns for this year - a door-to-door questionnaire on cruise and Trident —• ed.

**Helen** Oh Joan, you haven't got enough faith my dear.

**Joan** I know, that's right, it's long years in the labour movement. The peace movement as a whole and CND in particular has said that work in the labour movement should be a priority and there are all sorts of people trying to put that into effect. What is excellent about the approach of the women at Greenham is that they are then able to say in a practical way, how that should be done and able to say to them go off and do this or do that, and to say that this isn't the only kind of action. The inspiration of what's happened at Greenham is something that's very much needed for other people. I think there's going to be a growth in actions of an industrial nature and the nuclear free zones are going to play a major part in that. The involvement of the local authorities and trade unions is in itself very significant and I do see a coming together and a certain amount of progress, but perhaps not as rapid a progress as Helen sees. The other area which is going to be enormously important and which links very much with industrial action is the political activity surrounding the general election, and that has to be a great priority for CND; to make this issue *the* issue of the general election. I think again the actions at Greenham have added to the possibility of making that so.

*There was some impatience amongst delegates at the CND Conference with that idea, there was quite an undercurrent of 'let's get out and set up a peace camp.' To what extent is CND going to be able to persuade its supporters to do this sort of political work?*

**Joan** I think it has some chance of doing so but it will be difficult, there's no doubt about that; the vote was very close on the peace canvas<sup>1</sup>. We did a poll of CND members and found that



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only a tiny number of people, about 8%, thought that non violent direct action was the priority of CND, although the great majority were in enthusiastic support of others doing it. The vast majority of people in CND said their priority was educational work, consciousness raising and information. I think we've got to go back to the membership and say that's what you said you were prepared to do, now this is the opportunity to do it in the most constructive way. The majority of people will not go into peace camps. And so we really have to ask the membership to come out and make their commitment as great as the women's has been, and if that means really boring footslogging then that's what they ought to be doing.

**Helen** The peace camps, in particular the women's peace camp, have come to very positive decisions on the next general election. We will stand as independent candidates against all the rightwing elements at the general election under the ticket 'women for life on earth'.

*But don't you think there's a difference between, say, Greenham Common, where you are all together day and night and the press are sympathetic, and women being isolated constituency by constituency, and where therefore the response will be much less sympathetic?*

**Helen** I don't think so. Jean Hutchinson is standing against Dennis Healey in Leeds, and she comes from Leeds, so she won't be isolated for two reasons: she'll have the weight of the peace camps behind her and she's a local woman. The whole thing will develop its own momentum. It's going to give a few politicians heart attacks, non violent heart attacks.

**Joan** That particular aspect of the women's peace camp activity will create some problems for local CND groups and certainly for local Labour supporters who will find themselves in some dilemma as to who they work for and with. But again I think it's the tolerance and broad base of the peace movement that must be used to enable us to stay together, no matter what the differences in tactics. CND would not support that kind of strategy, we have never supported it in the past, we would not have CND candidates fighting a general election. Rather our policy is to make the issue a prime one of the election and to do that at constituency level, to throw all our campaigning energies into that objective.

**Sally** The basic problem here is what you do when you know you've got the majority of the population behind you, and yet the chances are that the general election will not allow that majority view to be expressed. Even with the Labour Party, for example, you've got a large number of candidates who aren't going to stand on the platform which the conference adopted. The reason for the growth in the desire for action of some kind, wanting in some way to stand up and be counted which is part of the Greenham feeling, is that people feel so frustrated with the political system. People are trying to find answers to the problem of what you do when the electoral system is not very democratic.

It's quite interesting for the Left, because it has tended to see things in terms of more traditional mass action; that industrial muscle will bring down the government, like the miners' strike. But with something like cruise missiles you can't really do that, because they are built in the US and while UCATT could boycott all work on military sites, for example, it could still be done by using blackleg labour and that sort of thing. So you can't actually say: here is the focal point of the struggle around cruise missiles. Consequently, people are looking around for different ways to express that democratic opposition.



**Helen** Once you've convinced an individual that they can take on the state by simply not co-operating with it in its policies, you've gone a long way to looking in the right direction. And that has come about in the peace camps where there are a lot of people who are now looking to themselves to find answers. They're not looking to politicians, to leaders of peace movements or anybody else, they're looking to their own positive contribution to try to find an answer.

**Joan** I think the Labour Party is likely to fight an election on a very straight unilateralist ticket, and I doubt very much if the Labour right wingers are going to make their own positions clear to the electorate. Dennis Healey, of course, is not prepared to come out and say he's a unilateralist or make any concessions to unilateralism as such, but he is saying he's very much in favour of disarmament and he's going around trying to present himself as a very active seeker after peace. There's been a tremendous change over just the last few months even.

**Helen** Very recently we've heard that the missiles could be in position by April. So a lot of what we've discussed doesn't have a great deal of bearing on how we will have to act, because I don't think the election will have taken place before we have to face this problem. You were asking how one stopped the siting of missiles, and none of us have got the perfect answer to that. But the complete occupation of Greenham Common as a site is one of the ways to stop them actually putting these missiles there, because even when they fly them in they've got to land. If they're faced with hundreds of thousands of women and children sitting on the ground underneath their landing craft they're going to have problems.

**Sally** Although that sounds great, my feeling is that if we haven't got the kind of popular support which is going to defeat the Tories and bring in some sort of government which is going to do something about cruise missiles (and I think it should be said that one possibility might be a coalition government which included the Liberals and SDP, because both those parties certainly have moved

and will continue to move more in support of nuclear disarmament) then equally I don't think we will be capable of the kind of prolonged mass activity at Greenham which can actually stop the missiles arriving.

**Helen** I don't think the attitude is like that Sally, because the awareness is growing that this is definitely a last chance, life or death situation.

*A recent opinion poll showed that people still put unemployment far and away as their highest concern and amongst those who now list defence as one of their concerns, Tory supporters are much more numerous than Labour. Do you think there is a danger that peace is something that concerns everybody but is only a priority for a narrow range of people when it comes to deciding how to vote? If, for example, you live in Brixton or Chapelton in Leeds or the Gorbals in Glasgow, you simply can't understand what all the fuss is about when you're daily faced by crime, crumbling housing and that sort of thing?*

**Helen** But they are affected by what's happening and I think the issues are getting through to people who are worried about unemployment, because ultimately they're going to have to face up to exactly what their priorities are: are they going to stay alive to worry about being unemployed or are they going to be vapourised, because that's the choice they're going to be presented with.

**Joan** The other point about that poll was that disarmament was the subject on which people were most likely to change their votes; I took that to be the most significant thing, after all, it's never been an issue in elections. I see it as the job of the peace movement to make sure that it becomes the dominant issue, because then, politically, you really are playing for very high stakes. If people will switch, and the political parties can see that, and you can make it the biggest issue, then we become a very significant political force. That's what the peace movement's got to do in electoral terms.

I am not convinced about cruise missiles coming in prior to a general election. But if it did happen, then as a peace movement and CND in particular, we've got to be able to see our way through that situation. If they are sited, then we have to have a strategy that enables us to continue to campaign even if that has happened. You might actually fight an election in which it was easier to make cruise missiles and the new generation of nuclear weapons the major issue. Because then you'll be forcing political parties to say this was not a democratic decision, it was not put to the electorate. And you will have at least the Labour Party, but hopefully perhaps other parties as well, actually going out and saying: they're there, but we're going to get rid of them: we're going to send them back. So I don't see the siting of cruise missiles in quite the same make or break way that Helen does. And I agree with Sally that there's a danger, if you do take that position, you might as a movement not see the way past that first hurdle. Obviously it would be a setback, but it's something that would have to be overcome, because we're for unilateral nuclear disarmament and that means much more than cruise missiles.

*Helen seems to see the ultimate choice as are you for life or death. Do you also see it in the same way and is there a problem for a movement that's based on saying 'it is life or death' sustaining that degree of anxiety and apocalypticism for a long time?*

**Sally** There is a danger by going over the top and saying the only issue of the election is life or death, that people will stop listening to you. This is where I think there's a contribution that socialists

and the labour movement can make to the peace campaign which is its own special contribution, in the same way as the peace camps make their special contribution. That contribution is patience based on years of experience of struggle and trying to change government policies. So if there is a defeat over one particular issue, you don't think 'oh my god, that's the end of it', but you just carry on and say; 'well we changed public opinion to a certain extent, therefore it's possible to change it some more. We'll carry on trying to win people to support us'. So what I would really love to see is some kind of synthesis between the kind of old socialists who will slog on until they die and then get a mention in the *Morning Star* and the people who come along fairly new maybe, who say, 'oh yes, we've got the answers and that will be it'. If there could be some kind of synthesis between those two ways of looking at things, so it could combine the realism with the excitement, that's what I'd like to see.

**Helen** We have almost run out of time. We haven't got years and years to win this one and that's why I feel that you have to go to the electorate on a life or death issue, because that's what cruise missiles actually represent to the people of this country. If they're sited here, the British government won't have any control over them, the Americans will control them and, I think, use them. So we haven't got time to think in terms of strategies of what we'll do when they're here. As far as I see it, we've only got one hope of survival at all, and that is to prevent those weapons from coming here. Maybe I've got it completely wrong, maybe I shouldn't burden other people with my pessimism, but I feel that if cruise missiles touch the soil of this country, we've had it. I don't know how you're going to convince the Soviet Union that those weapons sitting here aren't going to be used against them. If I believed that you could plan beyond the siting of cruise missiles, I wouldn't be working quite as frantically as I am at the moment. I think it's a false lifeline that's being offered and I reject it out of hand.

*Joan, does your campaign take a different form or have different priorities?*

**Joan** No, I just disagree with Helen's analysis. I don't think that the cruise missiles as such will result by themselves in a nuclear exchange. Cruise missiles are part of a build up, of an attempt by the US to gain nuclear superiority, and nobody can quite gauge how quickly they will get in a position where they think they are superior, and whether they might chance their arm. I see it as part of a strategy, but I don't see it as something which by itself, by the very siting of those missiles, will bring about a nuclear war. But I

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do see us as on course for a nuclear war. So I can't imagine myself as part of an active socialist organisation, as I have been in the Labour Party and the wider movement, as ever being in a position to look back on our time, as socialists have looked back on previous struggles, and say, 'well we made it so far, but we couldn't go any further, so the campaign died and something else came in its place'. I see this campaign as one in which we do ultimately win or lose. Essentially I'm just disagreeing with Helen about the analysis and about the time-scale. I think we've got longer than 1983, but that it is a matter of years, and there will only be one end to the campaign, and if there is failure then we will have a nuclear war.