

Review and memory by Theresa Wolfwood

“The Greenham banners reveal much about the campaign ‘s proponents, ideology and reach. They are also evidence in a number of braider histories: the story of women-led campaigning, including the suffrage and Women’s Liberation movements; the history of peace campaigning before, during and after the First and Second World wars; the history of women’s art; and the history of the banners itself.” *From the introduction by Charlotte Dew.*

In 1995 on the Women’s Peace Train from Helsinki to the UN Women’s Forum in Beijing, I met Thalia Campbell. I had been to Greenham Common; I also have met and hosted many women who were campers. Meeting and getting to know Thalia over this journey was a wonderful experience. Her creativity, energy and deep sense of connection inspired me so much that I invited her to Canada to teach at banner making workshops. Here she shared her vision and her techniques. Other women in Canada and I were motivated to create our own banners. She is a great teacher.

I was thrilled to open a parcel with this book, a gift from a UK friend and see and read about the importance of banners in the art of resistance – resistance to violence, war, and many manifestations of injustice.

Greenham Common RAF base was used by the USA military as a storage base for nuclear weapons. A large group of women organized a walk from Wales to the base to express their opposition to this dangerous situation in 1981. When they got there, many decided to stay and the Greenham Women’s Peace Camp was born. Thousands of women from all over UK and the world camped there, joined demonstrations, were arrested and harassed, as they publicized this amazing peace action.



And banners were born. Along the walk Thalia (*photo on left*) made its first banner on a sheet that was used to change babies that were with their mothers. For Thalia it was the beginning of her connecting her vocation as an artist with her passion for peace. She went on to make many banners and to encourage others to also be creative.



This book illustrates other art that was part of this creative outpouring. Some of the photos of the bomb silos still give me shivers when I see them.

In 1991 the nuclear weapons were removed.

Photo R.: one of Thalia's many camp banners

The book is an archive of a unique historical event. One important aspect of this story is that the struggle for peace and disarmament continues to this day in many places and forms. Banners are made about many issues; exhibitions of banners that display decades of women's history are organized. Some were in a recent *"Disobedient Objects"* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Like the arpilleras of Chile, showing life in the Pinochet regime, these handmade textiles are part of the global treasures of the art of resistance.



So many women, including me, were changed by the experience of this camp. Our activism is infused by the hope, steadfast tenacity and courage of these women; our creativity is fired by theirs. We are all Greenham women to this day.

As I continue in the global campaign to abolish nuclear weapons and to make banners about other issues, but still also about peace, I know in my heart I am a Greenham woman. We are indeed everywhere.

Photo: from this book: photo on p.132

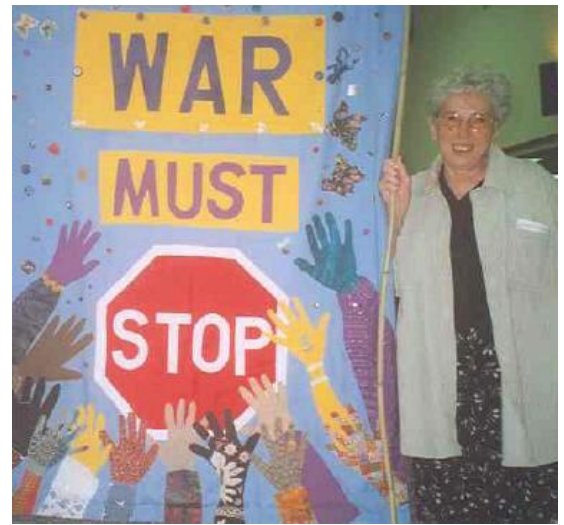
Twice while in Palestine supporting freedom for Palestinians, I have met up with Chris whom I met on my first visit to Greenham. Chris is featured in a new documentary film, *"Mothers of the Revolution,"* by a New Zealand film maker.

The author of this wonderful record understands the importance of activism nourished by creativity; how art can inspire creativity in action.

Be encouraged to make peace and justice your cause for life and to let your self be creative in every way as you can as you join with others to create a better life for all the world.

Thanks to Charlotte Dew for this precious record of women's power.

Photo: Banner made at workshop with Thalia Campbell in Victoria BC Canada. The word in yellow is removal and can be replaced with others - such as *Injustice, Racism, Militarism*. Shown here with distinguished scientist-activist Dr. Rosalie Bertell when speaking in Victoria.



White poppy banner by Thalia distributed in many countries in November; here are poppies from Victoria, BC and Banner displayed at Women in Black vigil in Victoria every November when handmade poppies and card with their history are given away.

White poppies for peace are made and distributed in many countries in November; here are poppies from Victoria, BC and Banner displayed at Women in Black vigil in Victoria every November when handmade poppies and card with their history are given away.