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Planting Peace in the Nuclear Heartland

NUKEWATCH SILO ACTIVIST BONNIE URFER
TO SPEAK AFTER GWEN VIGIL

October 15

NOON VIGIL AT TOWER
1:30 Program at Doc & Jo's



Furthermore, the Nukewatch people do more than map the silos, or travel 30,000 miles to do it. They break the anti-laws which legalize these monsters. They put flesh on their words, and by doing that say to us: We don't have to take betrayal and slavery and poison and hostageship to the Bomb. We can raise our voices and use our hands and invest our bodies in a huge, resounding, unequivocal public NO!—and a sacred YES! to life.

—Philip Berrigan,
in a foreword to NUCLEAR HEARTLAND

BETTY LEWIS, a 61-year-old Chicago mother of seven, climbed the barbed-wire fence of Minuteman nuclear missile silo L-9 south of Kansas City, Missouri, early one morning in August. Dropping into the restricted "deadly force" area below, she placed a rose on the lid of the underground rocket, fitted with a warhead a hundred times more deadly than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

Not far away, inside the fence of G-11, Franciscan priest Jerry Zawada of Milwaukee and Duane Bean of Chicago, a lay campus minister and volunteer with the homeless, displayed a banner on which they had painted the words from President Eisenhower's farewell address: "... every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed. . . ."

At K-8, Nukewatch co-director Sam Day, dressed in a clown's suit, and Katie Willems of Milwaukee, playing a recorder, tied balloons to the silo's deadly instruments and danced a jig when Air Force guards arrived. A few miles off, Nukewatch co-director Bonnie Urfer and Gail Beyer of Madison, Wisconsin, planted seeds in the barren gravel of missile silo K-6.

Ten of Missouri's 150 nuclear missile silos were entered simultaneously by 14 peace activists on August 15. It was the culmination of six months of planning by hundreds of participants from many parts of the Midwest. They called it "Missouri Peace Planting, '88."

"We reclaim this land for ourselves, the beasts of the land upon which we depend, and our children," said the Peace Planters in a statement. "We interpose our bodies, if just for a moment, between these weapons and their intended victims."

It's against the law—punishable by stiff fines and prison terms—to enter a nuclear missile silo without permission. But the Air Force, evidently ill-prepared to deal with such numbers, elected not to prosecute, even though some participants had committed the additional offense of cutting the locks of the silo gates. All 14 activists, plus four others arrested for watching them enter the silos, were released the same day with letters warning them not to return.

Undeterred by the Air Force "ban and bar" letters, and intent on pressing their point, some of the Peace Planters re-entered Missouri missile silos five times in the next ten days. Ultimately, seven were charged with multiple counts of illegal entry and "degradation of government property"—i.e., breaking padlocks. Maximum possible penalties range up to five years in prison and \$420,000 in fines. Trials are expected in late October or November.

Why take such risks? Janice Dover of Kansas City addressed that question at a ceremony held by supporters on the eve of the Missouri Peace Planting. She read aloud from the conclusion to NUCLEAR HEARTLAND:

"Here and there, Americans have begun to acknowledge responsibility for the missiles. Some have gathered at the silo fences as a way of confronting policies that countenance the waging of nuclear war. A few have gone over or through the fences, raising confrontation to the level of resistance, often at great cost to themselves. The numbers are pathetically small. But they are growing.

"The smallness of the numbers does not adequately measure the degree of public concern about the nuclear danger. Rather, it reflects the invisibility of the missiles, still as hard to notice as the arms race itself, and the widespread perception that little can be done about the problem."

The Missouri Peace Planting Project, in which Nukewatch people took an active part, coincided almost exactly with publication of NUCLEAR HEARTLAND, culminating three years of Nukewatch organizing in the seven nuclear missile silo states (Missouri, North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado). Each in its own way, the book and the project both are aimed at raising public awareness of the missile silos, thereby reinforcing political pressure for nuclear disarmament.

NUCLEAR HEARTLAND, edited by Sam Day and designed by Bonnie Urfer, consolidates the six missile silo field maps produced since 1985 by local volunteers in cooperation with Nukewatch. One chapter by peace activists Barb Katt and John LaForge of Minnesota describes their encounters with the Air Force and with farmers and ranchers during a four-month, 30,000-mile journey to verify the location of all 1,000 silos and 100 launch control centers. The book also presents a series of missile silo portraits by Montana photographer John Hooton and a foreword by Philip Berrigan, written from a Virginia jail, where he had been sentenced for damaging a cruise missile launcher on the *USS Iowa*.

Initial reviews of the book have been favorable. Alex Rakson of the *Los Angeles Times* expressed reservations about Berrigan's introduction but found that "this is a valuable book all in all, for it comes at a time when good U.S.-Soviet relations have tempted us to forget that the machinery of destruction is still in good working order, ticking under our ground."

An account in the *Great Falls (MT) Tribune*, widely circulated by *The Associated Press*, quoted the public affairs officer of Malmstrom Air Force Base, Capt. Don Planalp: "It's no secret where the missiles are. They're not hidden from sight. We can assume our enemies know where they are."

Available by mail from Nukewatch at \$12.50 plus postage, NUCLEAR HEARTLAND also will be offered at bulk discount rates to people and organizations interested in using it to raise public awareness of the missiles.

Putting flesh on the words about missile silos

Eastern Iowa Peace Alliance

Contact:

Springville...854-7026

Route 1 Box 95
Springville, IA 52336

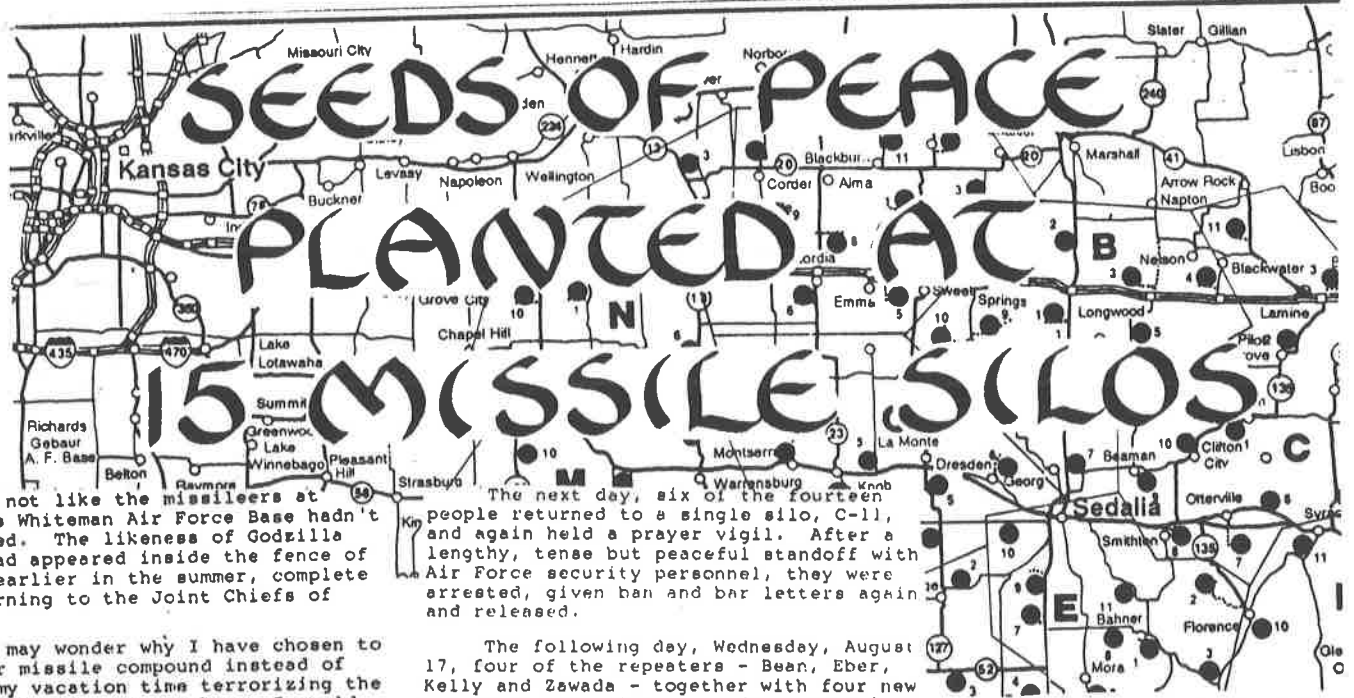
F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

AT NOON, SATURDAY OCTOBER 15TH, for the 30th consecutive month, there will be a vigil at the Ground Wave Emergency Network Tower located two miles east of Mechanicsville on Highway 30.

At 1:30 p.m. after the vigil there will be a program at Doc and Jo's Cafe on Highway 30 in Mechanicsville. Bonnie Urfer from NUKEWATCH in Madison, Wisconsin, will be speaking about a disarmament demonstration in which she took part, Missouri Peace Planting '88. On August 15th ten of Missouri's 150 missile sites were entered simultaneously by 14 peace activists. Bonnie Urfer's participation included planting seeds in the barren gravel of missile site K-6.

Bonnie Urfer is the designer of the recently published book Nuclear Heartland, which was edited by NUKEWATCH co-director Sam Day. This book brings together maps by citizen-activists which show the exact locations of the 1000 underground nuclear missile silos and 100 launch control centers of the Strategic Air Command. Nuclear Heartland says: "Far from protecting the people among whom they are deployed, the missiles of the Great Plains have increased their vulnerability to attack and contributed to the region's economic erosion."

The public is invited to the vigil at noon and Bonnie Urfer's presentation at Doc and Jo's Cafe at 1:30.



It's not like the missileers at Missouri's Whiteman Air Force Base hadn't been warned. The likeness of Godzilla himself had appeared inside the fence of silo C-2 earlier in the summer, complete with a warning to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

"You may wonder why I have chosen to visit your missile compound instead of spending my vacation time terrorizing the Japanese Islands. As you know, I would be lying dormant underneath the Pacific Ocean were it not for your A-bomb and H-bomb testing. As is characteristic of your species, you have shown an amazing lack of respect for the planet you live on ... And they call me a monster!

"And so, I have come to warn you that if you do not stop setting up these missiles that your mad scientists are creating, I will be forced to take drastic measures..."

On August 3, a public hearing in Warrensburg brought out 300 people in 3-to-1 opposition to the proposed siting of an MX-missile rail garrison at Whiteman. August 9, the seventh annual peace walk from Kansas City arrived at Whiteman, with eight arrests (see page 4). These were predicted protests, but unpredictably only a prelude to the coordinated actions of the Missouri Peace Planting '88, and the sustained silo occupation campaign that followed it.

Early on the morning of August 15, 14 people entered ten Minuteman nuclear missile silos sites in western Missouri. After cutting through locks and scaling fences, some of the activists sat silently and prayed. Some planted trees, and others left crosses bearing the names of Central Americans who have died in regional conflicts. All the participants left personal artifacts at the sites, including World War II medals, family photographs, and children's poetry.

Within minutes in some cases, up to an hour or more in others, armed security personnel from the Air Force surrounded the ten sites. Weapons were brandished and the protesters were frisked nervously, an apparent reaction to the simultaneous triggering of the ten site security sensors. Witnesses, some from among 75 Kansas City residents who had declared their support for the action, remained a legal distance from the silos to provide support for the arrested activists.

The fourteen - Duane Bean, Gail Beyer, Sam Day Jr., Dorothy Eber, Katey Feit, Katie Willems, Ariel Glenn, Sam Guardino, Kathy Kelly, Betty Lewis, Dan McGuire, Mike Stanek, Bonnie Urfer, Fr. Jerry Zawada - were taken into custody, most to the Bates County Jail. A few support people were also taken into custody, and all were released later the same day. The Air Force, in an apparent attempt to trivialize the scope of the coordinated, well publicized action, issued ban and bar letters rather than criminal citations.

The next day, six of the fourteen people returned to a single silo, C-11, and again held a prayer vigil. After a lengthy, tense but peaceful standoff with Air Force security personnel, they were arrested, given ban and bar letters again and released.

The following day, Wednesday, August 17, four of the repeaters - Bean, Eber, Kelly and Zawada - together with four new resisters and Ariel Glenn from Monday's action, returned to silo N-2. Arrested again, the nine were interrogated and threatened with conspiracy charges as well as trespass and destruction of government property (the cut locks). Yet for the third time, they were released with only ban and bar letters.

At this point, it became clear to the core group of resisters and supporters that the Air Force was hoping the mere threat of jail terms would be sufficient to drive them away and spare the government the publicity associated with a trial. Some Kansas City supporters grew fearful of conspiracy charges themselves, so a new name was chosen to represent the group committed to carrying on the silo actions.

Friday, August 19, the Silo Seeding Project '88 held a press conference on the steps of the federal courthouse in Kansas City, Missouri. At this courthouse, more than a dozen silo resisters have previously received sentences of up to 18 years in prison. There the Project defied jail threats, and nine people burned the ban and bar letter(s) they had received. They declared their intention to continue the nonviolent campaign of nuclear missile silo occupations.

"We take personal responsibility for these murderous weapons," said Duane Bean. "And only by sustained, determined resistance and risk-taking will we be able to liberate ourselves from this oppression. As long as we have our freedom, we will have a responsibility to return to the silos."

And they did. On August 23, Glenn, a Catholic Worker from Milwaukee; Eber, a grandmother of 11 from Chicago, and Zawada, a Franciscan priest from Milwaukee, entered Silo N-9 near Warrensburg, and were arrested after celebrating a Eucharist liturgy atop the silo. At this point, the U.S. attorney decided to prosecute. The three were held overnight and released on personal recognizance bonds the next day, cited for multiple counts of trespass and destruction of government property.

That evening, August 24, Bean and Kelly entered missile silo M-8. Banners were hung, ribbons used to symbolically tie down the missile, and seeds scattered before the two were arrested. They were briefly interrogated and again released with ban and bar letters, this time because a federal magistrate was unavailable to authorize their transfer to a federal jail.

On Sunday, August 28, Kelly and Bean, together with Gail Beyer and Bonnie Urfer, entered yet another silo. Following their arrest, Kelly and Bean were held in jail; Beyer and Urfer released pending arraignment September 7.

At the arraignment, the seven most recent silo occupiers were charged with one count each of trespass and destruction of government property for each time they had entered a silo. Urfer pled no contest, and is undergoing pre-sentencing investigation. Bean, Beyer and Kelly are set for trial before Federal Magistrate Hamilton on October 17. Eber, Zawada and Glenn were given a docket date of October 24 before a federal judge.

At the arraignment, Glenn folded her recognizance bond into origami cranes, as a symbol of her rejection of its conditions. She presented them to the judge who in turn revoked her bond and sent her to jail.

For more information, contact the Missouri Peace Planting and Silo Seeding Project '88; P.O. Box 22374; Kansas City, MO 64113; (816)444-1306.



The Silo Seeding Project '88 has issued a call for more people to continue the campaign following the upcoming trials. They note that about 90% of the Missouri silos await "seeding."

Duane Bean, Laura Ariel Glenn and Kathy Kelly remain jailed pending trials in October. Letters of support can be sent to the three, individually, at Cass County Jail, 208 W. Pearl; Harrisonville, MO 64701.

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the
Nuclear Resister

RECLAIMING THE LAND

During these drought stricken days, we are particularly mindful of the interdependence and fragile nature of all creation. The earth, given to us to hold in care for future generations, is the source of our very life and spirit. Creatures of the same molecules as mother earth, we are at one with all of her offspring, all of creation.

Into this delicate environment come weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction, purportedly to secure our well being. In reality, these weapons not only threaten all life and creation as we know it, but they are a cancer in the very earth of which we are part.

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki rooted a terrible evil in our world, the fallout of which still takes root in our individual and societal hearts. We have grown accustomed to a deadly paradox: the world's greatest megatonnage of TNT is buried in the heart of earth's most productive agricultural area. The Missouri missile silos are scattered in farmers' fields like razors in a loaf of bread.

To what can we liken our acceptance or complicity with systemic preparation for nuclear holocaust? It is as though we have climbed aboard a train bound for Auschwitz. We pay for first class tickets. As we travel in comfort toward mass extermination, the poor, their hunger and suffering exacerbated by the weapons buildup, travel wretchedly to the same destiny.

If we do not change our direction, we're likely to end up where we're headed.

We come here today from throughout the Midwest to signal our intent to change direction. Guided by our vision of a world without nuclear weapons, we reclaim this land for ourselves, the beasts of the land upon which we depend, and our children. We recognize the thousands of people who have risked much these last years to decry the evil in our midst. For our part we stand in solidarity with them, willing to risk ourselves as another ripple in the wave of resistance growing in the United States andp elsewhere. We join in their hope filled resistance, realizing that if we don't resist we are complicit. We interpose our bodies, if just for a moment, between these weapons and their intended victims. When Air Force alarms signal our trespass, they actually signal our outcry and that of mother earth and her offspring.

Part of our hope rests in anticipation that our action will encourage others to enter these missile silos and plant seeds of resistance. Ultimately, Dorothy Day's words help us interpret the effectiveness of our action:

"What we do is so little we may seem to be constantly failing. But unless the seed fall into the earth and die, there is no harvest. And why must we see results? Our work is to sow. Another generation will be reaping the harvest."



Why small towns are fighting a doomsday communications system—and winning

The prospect of nuclear war in your back yard

■ *Wanted by the Air Force: 11-acre parcel of relatively flat land close to highway and power line. Purpose: To build 299-foot tower for improved radio communications.*

To scores of local officials across the nation, such routine requests over the past five years have seemed innocuous enough. But lately, in the wake of a much belated explanation of the towers' pur-

form of objections from the doughty citizenry of Amherst, Mass. Their position was clear: They simply didn't want a towering government eyesore in their bucolic university community. The opposition solidified when a bit of probing revealed that the towers would be something more than just an eyesore. Says Nancy Foster, who cofounded the first opposition group: "Communities don't want to be forced to take part in the

nuclear explosions high above the earth. In a nuclear attack or accident, these pulses could cut off communications, hampering efforts to launch Air Force bombers and missiles from bases in the continental United States. GWEN, planners say, will survive in conditions that would surely knock out other communications systems. The real value of the system, then, is as a deterrent, letting the Soviets know that U.S. communications cannot be easily disrupted.

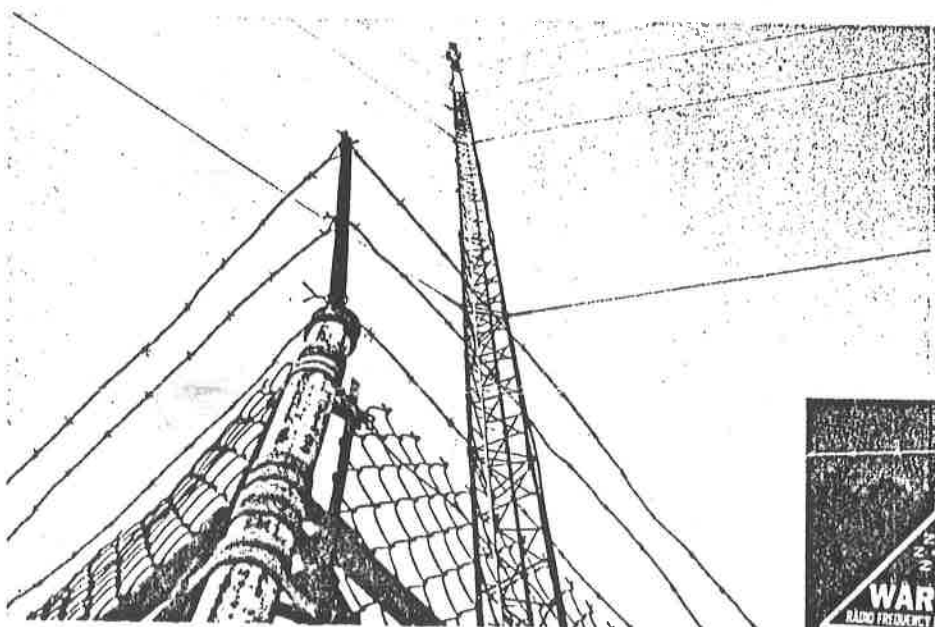
That fact hasn't done much to dissuade opponents, however. At public hearings from Biggs, Calif., to Elmira, N.Y., military specialists are spending hundreds of hours justifying and explaining their plan for the system, but they're running into opposition that goes beyond the debate over a potential nuclear apocalypse. The Conservation Law Foundation, a Boston-based public-interest group, and the attorney general of Rhode Island recently sued, unsuccessfully, to block the construction of GWEN towers, citing environmental reasons. The proposed towers, they believe, will endanger wildlife and water supplies, violate state coastal-management planning and national historic-preservation laws. Also, critics maintain, they are "just plain ugly."

Finally, the Pentagon seems to have measured the breadth and depth of the opposition to GWEN. Franklin Miller, director of strategic-forces policy at the Pentagon, concedes that before public pressure "raised the flag" on GWEN, the Air Force was not as candid as it could have been. He also points out that GWEN has been approved by Congress: Recognizing the communities' concerns, Miller says, the GWEN system still will

be built, somewhere. "The idea that the Department of Defense just goes out and does whatever it wants because it's a 300-pound gorilla," says Miller, "is wrong."

Maybe. But it is the policy behind the towers, rather than the towers themselves, that has intensified the opposition of the locals. "For all the money the Pentagon is spending on command, control and communications, they still don't get the message," says William Arkin, a military-affairs consultant at the liberal Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. "The public doesn't want to fight a nuclear war." ■

by René Riley



GWEN tower in Maryland: An uncomfortable reminder

pose, complacency has turned to consternation. Forced to fess up by angry citizens' groups in 18 states, the Air Force says that the towers would serve—before, during and after a nuclear war—as links in a vital communications network between the President and the nation's domestic bomber bases and missile-command posts. Critics put it this way: They would be giant lightning rods for strikes by enemy warheads. From the Pacific Northwest to New England, a growing alliance of antiwar, conservation and citizen-action groups has begun insisting: "Not in my back yard!"

When the Pentagon comes to town

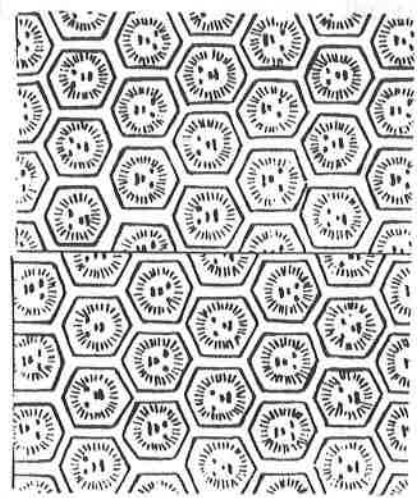
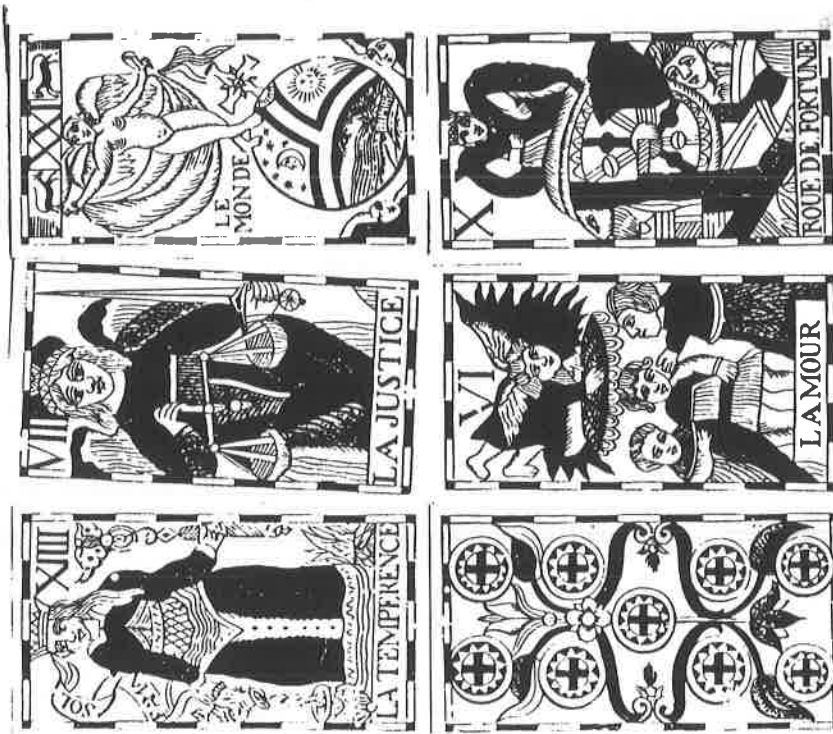
It's a fight that was late in developing. In 1983, Air Force planners began scouring the country for suitable sites for the radio towers, nicknamed GWEN, for Ground Wave Emergency Network. Many towers were built without local opposition. Then problems arose in the

Pentagon's preparations for fighting protracted nuclear war."

The battle, thus, was joined. After the Amherst Town Meeting voted 114 to 49 to fight towers "in Amherst, and anywhere," 10 other towns in the Eastern U.S. followed suit, voting "No" when the Air Force sought to erect towers in their communities. Other towns have since staged protests, and two weeks ago in Little Compton, R.I., 50 people picketed a proposed tower site in a heavy rainstorm to show their outrage. "For us," says Henry Laferriere, a high-school physics teacher, "it's an issue of the military infringing on our civil rights."

For all the opposition, the system is a valuable one. Originally conceived in the 1970s, GWEN was designed to withstand electromagnetic pulses caused by





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