What's ON

No. 8 June 1984

Round-up

women's news

20p



The First International Feminist Book Fair will be held at Jubilee Hall, Covent Garden, London WC2, on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of June. Publishers from 16 countries will exhibit on more than 150 stands.

The Book Fair launches Feminist Book Week throughout Ireland and Britain from June 11th.

Scheduled already for Dublin is an exhibition on the publishing process beginning June 12th and running all week at the Grapevine Arts Centre, Frederick St., D1. The Women's Community Publishing Co-Op will run a bookstall in conjunction with the exhibition.

Lunchtime poetry readings are scheduled for 1:00pm: Wednesday, June 13th, Evelyn Conlon in the Grapevine; Thursday, June 14th, Eavan Boland in the National Gallery; Friday, June 15th, Elaine Chuilleanáin in the Grapevine.

The main event is a talk by Mary Daly, feminist theologian and theorist, author of Gyn/Ecology, on Wednesday, June 13th, at 8:00pm in Liberty Hall. Ms. Daly will also be in Belfast June 14th, at



7:30pm in the Crescent Arts Centre, and in Cork on June 16th, at 8:00pm in the Quay Co-op.

Evelyn Conlon, Leland Bardwell, and Etna Strong will all speak on Feminist Literature on Friday, June 14th, at 8:00pm in the Grapevine.

Two workshops are scheduled for Saturday, June 16th, in the Grapevine. At 11:00 women from Arlen House run a workshop on Women and Writing with Jannette Madden Simpson speaking on "Discovering Our Lost Heritage". At 2:00 Terry Prone and Anne Tinnahill run a workshop on "How to Get Published".

Published by the NEWSLETTER GROUP, Women's Centre, 53 Dame Street, side entrance, Dublin 2. 710088

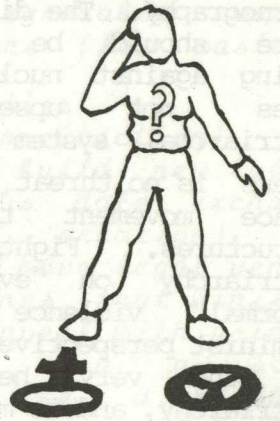
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Think It Over

One of the major components of feminist theory is a questioning and re-examination of all knowledge and experience. All assumptions are torn apart to determine their validity. But there are issues that are assumed to be feminist by many women without preliminary examination. One of these is the women's peace movement, centering around Greenham Common. This is a very dangerous move, as there are some very disturbing aspects of the peace movement for the women's movement.

First, part of the women's peace movement is the idea that women are closer to nature and have more spiritual or psychic powers than men. Women, through the power of the goddess, cast spells, weave webs, and change the patriarchy. But substituting one religion for another (even if it is headed by a "goddess" and is "for" women) is still relying on some external "force" for personal strength and answers. Women should be developing their own values and strengths. And any biologically related explanation of what women are like is ludicrous as well as dangerous. Copying a patriarchal idea, or structure, and valuing the female over the male is not a feminist strategy.

Second, the women's peace movement is increasing in numbers and receives increasing amounts of positive media coverage. This is because the ideals of the movement fit in very well with the stereotyped woman's role. "Of course, women care about the world and their children's future!" "Of course, women



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are non-violent, and will simply ask for what they want instead of making demands!" Anyone who has looked at women's history realizes that mass movements fighting on single issues, and in some way playing up to the patriarchy's idea of woman's role, may make some small steps for women, but end up drained of momentum. And these mass movements actually help the patriarchy to co-opt women's energy from feminist work by working on "larger" concerns (black civil rights, peace etc.) than "mere" feminism.

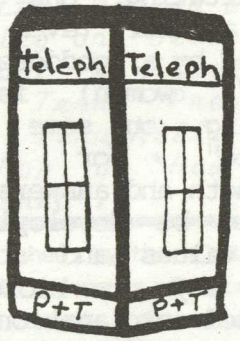
Third, working for world peace is not tackling the roots of the patriarchy. Everyone, of course, is against nuclear destruction of the world. But everyone is not against violence against women - whether it be violence in the home, advertising, child abuse, sex role socialization, rape, dyke bashing, or pornography. The difference here should be obvious. Being against nuclear war does not upset the patriarchal system because there is no threat from the peace movement to it s structures. Fighting the patriarchy on "everyday", "normal" violence from a feminist perspective strikes at the very heart of patriarchy, and is much more relevant to all women's everyday lives.

Fourth, the women's peace movement does not have any real political ideology. Being "for peace" or "against war" without well defined reasons and tactics does not persuade the unconverted, or move the world's political machinery. Feminist analysis would outline the development of an issue, clarify the problems in dealing with the patriarchy, and suggest purposeful tactics.

These are just some aspects of the women's peace movement that must be thought out before equating it with the feminist movement.

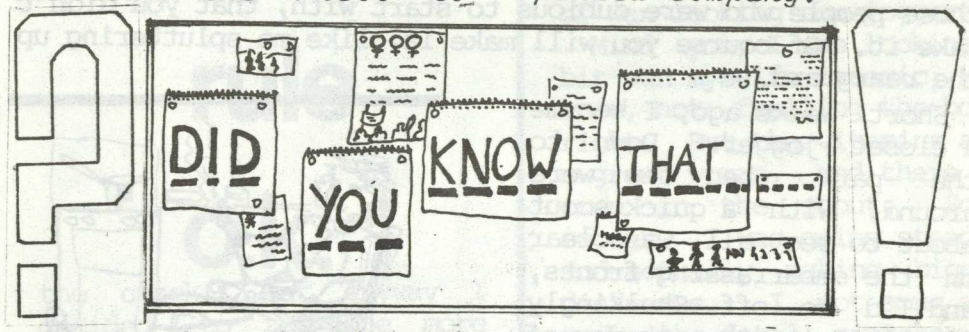
Kerry Corthell

IF YOU HAVE BEEN RAPED OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED - DO NOT BE AFRAID TO CALL FOR HELP!



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A trendy Dublin restaurant owner, has, he tells us, lost his respect for the Women's Centre, after an incident where 12 women turned up at his premises to support a waitress who had been unsuccessfully looking for £15 owed to her. The owner, faced with women who weren't going to budge, and who had invited the Press to join them, coughed up the money. He was very unhappy about it. After all, not only had he lost a waitress who worked a 40 hour week for £55 (tax or insurance didn't come into it), but oh, to be shamed during a Saturday lunch-hour by these immoveable females° The man's pride and profits, it can be said, happily parted company.



The Department of Social Welfare should consider replacingbutter vouchers with tampon coupons, as an immediate monthly measure. Tampons, as we know from recent times (when they tried to put 8% VAT on them) are a rather exclusive item of clothing in that they are worn internally. Butter, in comparison, is an unhealthy heart-disease-producing food which we can all cut down on. Tampons or sanitary towels, however, are a £5m industry which keeps the nation's women on the move (increased productivity), and creates considerable savings for us all on bio-degradable washing powders (low wastage).

Subsidise sanitpro(tection) we say, build new loos in women's dole exchanges (job creation), and let's have legal vending machines that Ministers can unveil with pride -- sure, such a scheme would be a bloodless victory for all.

flashing past....

You can do it. Even with your nicotine-stained lungs, and last night's beery breath, your unemployment rations, and even more inadequate runners, you can do it. Though your feet be blistered and breath coming in rasps, your shins a mess, and thighs much worse, you can make it. The ten kms that weeks ago seemed like the Lone Ranger riding into a never-ending sunset, are within your grasp. There are water stations, and walking breaks when no one you know is in sight, and then there is that sposorship card at the back of your brain. I mean, how could you explain to all those people who were dubious to start with, that you didn't make it. Of course you will make it, like me spluttering up the rearguard.

Short weeks ago, I became a closet jogger. Down to the park when few were around, with a quick scout about to see all was clear on the embarrassing fronts, and I'd be off. Skulkingly trotting in the shadow of bushes and trees - late at night or early in the morning was best. As I got more courage, I could even handle the mitching school kids laughing at my whiter than white body and ABC legs, and I'd grinningly grimace when the grandmammies shot past on what seemed like their 99th lap. Still, I was having breakthroughs like the day I flashed too fast past the flasher to know he was flashing until half a lap on, and the gardeners started smiling and treating me like a regular. Not one



of these fly-by-nighters, if you know what I mean, out twice and never seen again. I turned up to routine. But it wasn't easy. I was still a stop and start jogger. You know, stitch in the side - STOP; splutter and cough - STOP; pain in the legs - STOP: too much slagging -STOP. More stopping than starting really. Stiff going.

So I stopped and thought.

What is it that makes those others joggers and me just a pretender? The women I knew seemed to be making great strides with stopwatches and sprinting, and steady running and schedules, but I just wasn't in on the secret for success. Maybe it was that being more of a cigarettes and coffee person I just wasn't cut out for

runners rule o.k.

the crack. But anyway I decided to try one more day. And whether it was the increased flow of oxygen to the brain, as I slogged my way around the park or what, the answer, the essence of jogging just slipped into th'auld consciousness. Masochism was what it was all about. Running till you decided you'd drop. Not just dropping because you were tired but keeping on past your first wind, and your second, and on and on. Tiredness was a non-runner, it just couldn't figure.

That was a great discovery that gave a whole new dimension to my jogging. Just like climbing mountains when you concede beforehand that the best part will be sitting in the pub afterwards looking out at the dark hulk you've conquered. It was exhilarating. I'd run and run, and wonder what kind of loony I was to be putting my body through this kind of punishment, but then I could stroll up the street afterwards, self-satisfied, feeling sorry for those kind of wan-looking non-joggers.

Mind you, I was looking a bit wan myself. Anaemic, you know, not fuelling the body right. But the vitamins are a great woman, and there is iron in the stout. Soon enough, I was going steady, and actually making bigger distances. I got smug and made the fatal mistake of coming out as a jogger. A barrage of advice and warnings descended on me. They looked at my plebeian shoes, and said my shins would get jarred, and if I wasn't already hobbling, soon enough there would be splinters (of shin) floating around my leg. Another woman warned me about jogging and damage to the brain, and how the heartbeat got fiercely disturbed if you didn't do your warm-up excercises.

So I turned for solace and rational advice to the

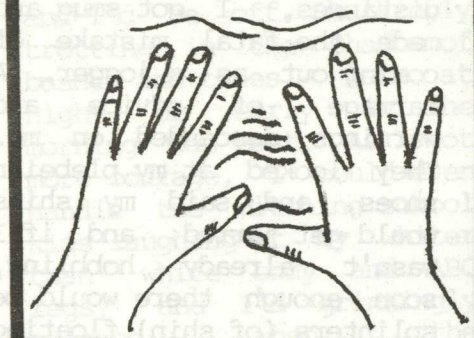
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Evening Press. But how can you take them seriously when they run headlines like "Run, Girls, Run" and give out prizes of £100 of beauty products? Anyhow, their advice was rational but it was geared to normal women who trained in the right ways in the right clubs, and I've always been someone who succeeds only by doing things skewways. Like I hold my pen the wrong way, but write faster than anyone I know, and I'm great at picking grapes backwards, or canoeing rapids and capsizing in still waters. So I'm giving up the pursuit of doing things properly, at this late stage, as I jog my four mile limit (should be up to six), I'm planning on just pacing my way through all of those damned ten kms.

I won't be a 30, or a 40, or a 50 minuter, but who is into speed anyhow when you can build up, oh so slowly, to all that amazing adrenalin afterwards.

Anne

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TITLES from the recommended list of FEMINIST books from the FEMINIST BOOKWEEK now available.

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Last month, Roundup brought you news of the initiatives from the April National Women's Conference, and information about El Salvador from one of the conference speakers. This month we we have information from a conference speaker on the South African women's struggle, and two women's reactions to the conference itself.

YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK

Black women in South Africa suffer the triple exploitation of colour, class and sex and have always been confined and chained by apartheid. Alone, they raise their children in abject poverty. African married couples are not allowed to live together in areas reserved for whites. Female domestics are housed in servants' quarters on their bosses residential premises. These are usually located next to their employer's garage. The homelands or "reserves" are areas usually on the worst desert land where black urban wives and families have to live, hundreds of miles away from their husbands. They live on what their husbands send them which amounts to no more than £20 a month (the average family size is seven or eight). The husband is allowed home on holidays once a year for two or three days.

Female domestics, if married and with children, must live alone. If there is no husband the children stay with relatives or friends surviving on a large proportion of the mother's £10/£15 per week wage. These women rear white children, often forming attachments with them. But later they are treated with contempt as the children learn the ways of their fascist parents. Women cleaners in white hospitals work a 60 hour week for an average wage of £10/£11 and live in prison – like dormitories.

Black women workers in South Africa are regarded by the Regime as nothing more than labour units with no social needs
Identity passes, or in the Regime's terms, reference books are the key instrument in controlling the movements and labour of black women in Namibia and South Africa. Every black African adult has to carry the pass wherever he/she might be, under threat of arrest and detention.
Women are ill-treated by the Regime. They equal their

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male counterparts only in their suffering of indignities and the appropriation of their basic human rights by the fascist women and men who prop up this Regime. Passes were first issued to black men in 1890 and black women in 1913. Progressive women in South Africa immediately went on the offensive, refused to carry the passes or burnt them as they felt the more papers they carried, the more they were oppressed and controlled. Women of all races first organised a women's conference to fight for women's rights in South Africa in 1915. The Regime began issuing passes to selected groups of women least likely or able to protest i.e. domestics and women working in jobs where they were isolated from other black women. White employers drove their black women workers to collect their passes. If they refused they would lose the meagre wage they had. These women would sometimes burn their passes. Protests by women grew all over the country, culminating in a mass demonstration by 2,000 women in Pretoria in 1955. The following year on the 9th August (which has since been declared by A.N.C. to be African Women's Day) 20,000 women overcame tremendous personal and authoritarian difficulties in order to join the protest. Despite intimidation the women worked and saved together for buses, trains and cars to bring women to Pretoria for the protest, sometimes from thousands of miles away. All processions in the Capital were banned that day so women marched to the



Regime's headquarters in ones and twos to avoid arrest. All Pretoria was filled with progressive women of all colours and races. Thousands of signatures against the pass system were handed to the Prime Minister who refused to meet the protesting women leaders. The leaders were then arrested and put on trial for high treason whilst the women outside chanted "Now you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed". This was before A.N.C. and other national liberation organisations were banned and thousands of women wore the green and black blouses of African National Congress. Some of the women leaders of the protest were "banned". A "banned person" may not

a) be in the company of more than one person at a time.

b) leave the area to which they are confined,

c) communicate with another "banned person"

d) publish any writing or be quoted in print,

e) enter public buildings such as schools or factories or join in social activities.

They must report to the police every week. They may also be subjected to curfew and weekend house arrest. Progressive women of all races have been "banned" for organising against the South African Regime. Helan Joseph born in 1905 was among those accused of treason after the 1956 mass protest and served with a banning order which expired in 1962. She was the first to be put under curfew and weekend house arrest. Inspired by the women's Campaign to object to the pass, men joined them in 1960. A.N.C. declared that year to be the year when women and men would march together against the passes. The police turned on the march with guns and batons, 69 people were killed, many were shot in the back and hundreds were injured. Thousands of black people were detained, held under house arrest or banned. In 1963 the fascist Regime of South Africa finally succeeded in forcing native black African women to carry the pass.

(to be continued.)





Being a recent convert to feminism, I had looked forward to the Women's Conference for some time. As I entered the hall there were women everywhere and a feeling of excitement and solidarity in the air. It was difficult to decide which workshops to attend.

Feeling very strongly about violence against women I entered a very crowded workshop. We split into three groups - Rape, Incest, and Domestic Violence. There were five of us in the Domestic Violence workshop. To my surprise questions were asked dealing with why women marry violent men and return to violent homes, and does violence exist only in working class homes? One of the women believed that women enjoyed being battered. I left the workshop feeling very frustrated and angry.

The next workshop I attended was on pornography, which was also crowded. The women from CASE presented a very clear cut feminist point of view which I wholly supported. Some of the women felt very strongly about women who have taken part in sexist ads and pornographic videos. The feeling was that women receive ludicrous financial benefits, and for this they betrayed all women. But most women felt that women took these jobs because of economic necessity and were actually victims - not benefactors.

The next day's workshop on nationalism and feminism had Margaret Ward arguing from feminist viewpoints and the Sinn Fein Women's Group arguing the nationalist. This was the turning point of the conference for me. The Sinn Fein women were shouting at anyone dealing with a feminist, or non-violent point of view. Intimidation was in the air, angering many of us. Trembling, I left the hall.

At the end of the conference women's groups from all over Ireland introduced themselves and told us of their activities. Resolutions were read out with women interrupting and asking questions, only to be told that there was no time left for discussion. Resolutions passed among anger and frustration. Some of the resolutions had nothing to do with feminism, and were clearly intended by Sinn Fein women to manipulate the conference for their own propaganda purposes.

I left the conference disappointed and frustrated, very concerned for the women's movement, and wondering why the articulate feminists were not present.

Pam Tracey

ANOTHER VIEW

The spread of age and background made this the most representative conference of the Women's Movement in Ireland so far. The number of women and the level of participation must have been very encouraging for the organisers.

It is a pity to have to overcome a feeling of bitterness at the manipulation of the nationalism workshop and the rushed plenary session that followed, in order to focus on the interest and strength of the workshops on Saturday and the encouragement that grew as more women arrived.

In retrospect, it was inevitable. Ever since the most recent wave of the movement started in I970/'71, every major grouping and meeting has disintegrated on the national question, or more specifically the question of support for the armed struggle campaign of the Provisional IRA and the INLA.

Why is it that the national question is such a divisive issue in the Women's Movement in Ireland?

This is the question that I wanted to discuss, and maybe try to work out some kind of working agreement. But, as always, that didn't happen, and the session got stuck in the groove of support for the armed struggle.

On Sunday many women from the North arrived for the Feminism and Nationalism session. Despite the fact that there were over 150 women there this was the only session not to break up into smaller workshops, which made the discussion more formal and organised. The discussion was dominated, naturally, by women from the North.

This made it clear that there are deep divisions between those who are supporters of the armed struggle in the north and involved in specifically republican

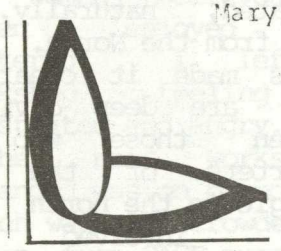
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women's groups and those who are in other groups, some deliberately trying to involve women from both communities. I found the tone of many of the women who supported armed struggle bullying and dismissive of those who didn't share their viewpoint. The resolutions from this session to the plenary in the afternoon were worded so that, while individually most of them were not actually in support of the armed struggle campaigns of the IRA and INLA, when taken together, they gave an impression of a high level of support from the conference as a whole.

Because of lack of time the plenary session was rushed so there was no chance for the full conference to discuss or amend resolutions from workshops. There was no real pulling together of all the strands of the meeting so as to get a coherent view of the present state of the movement.

Mary Flynn.



Would Sandra Hogan please contact the Newsletter group concerning her letter which we would like to print.

LIBRARY NOW OPEN: Monday Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 2.00-4.00 pm.

Roundup invites a response to all articles, critical or otherwise.

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court'n condoms

The same vending machines, the ones for little balloons otherwise known as condoms or French letters, have been causing embarrassing problems lately. Now it's notthat your money gets stuck (like phone boxes) or that they break down (like cigarette machines) but that they work far too efficiently. Condoms, we know, are dangerous devices, which can only be safely handled by qualified doctors and chemists, and not by the like of irresponsible machines in premises like the Wellwoman Centre. A court, recently presented with evidence of this threat to the country's moral standards, referred the offending machine to a superior authority, the High Court. The problem, it seems, as defence counsel for the Wellwoman raised it, was that the Gardai acted off their own bat on this occasion, and had not secured the signature of the Minister for Health, which was necessary to proceed with the case.

Mr Desmond, under subpoena to appear in the court, politely declined. Meanwhile the machine and others, continue to efficiently dispense 2 condoms with the drop of a 50p in the appropriate slot.

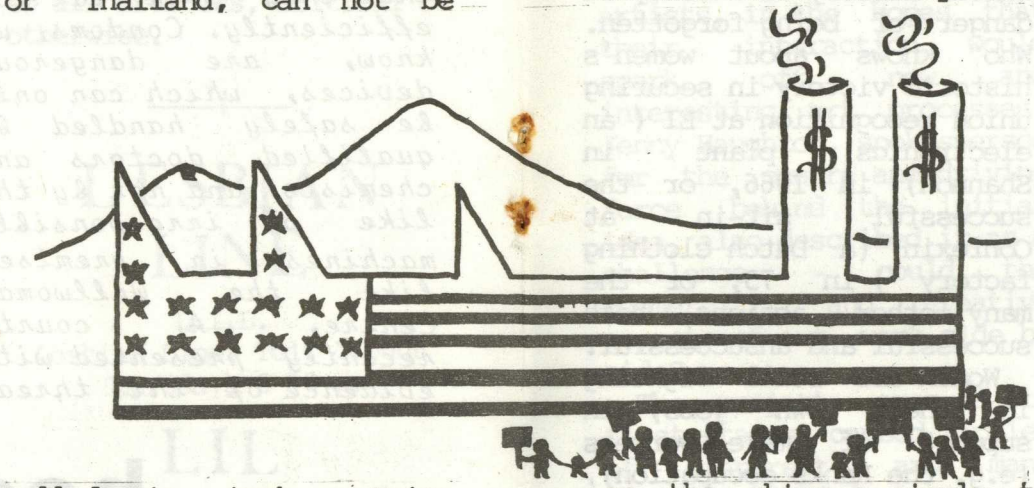
bookfair

The Bookfair Committee has published a recommended list of new feminist writings published in 1984 along with a selection of previous writings from the women's movement. These pamphlets, along with many of the recommended titles, are available in the Women's Centre Shop. Any of the selected books not already in stock in the Shop can be ordered for individuals or groups.

WOMEN, M'NATIONALS, REAGAN.

Many women in recession-torn Ireland have responded to Reagan's visit this June by thinking or saying aloud " I've more things to be worried about than Reagan". Lack of housing, bad health and childcare, unemployment and other issues, are immediately on their minds. But Reagan is a bread and butter issue in less obvious ways than say the fact that money for the family's food has run out halfway through dole week.

The U.S. government's policies around locating multinationals in Ireland have tremendous economic implications for Irish women. The industries that have already come here employ mainly male workforces in the areas of chemicals, and women in pharmaceuticals/health care , and the electronics industries. As recently as I982 these firms were arriving to the 26 counties at the rate of one every 4.6 days. The multinational subsidiaries now have well-earned reputations for being "fly by nighters" - they cash in on the substantial loans, grants and tax-free holidays offered by the IDA, and pull out as soon as better profit margins can be secured elsewhere - e.g. in the third world where more than 6 million young women have already been used and cast off by multinationals. Multinationals that decide to relocate in Taiwan, Korea or Thailand, can not be called to task. Being privately owned businesses that cross national boundaries, they are not subject to the laws of this country any more than they are to the laws of any other. When you lose your job, or your husband is put on short-time, any security in planning for the future can just go by the wayside.



Economic instability in the 26 counties grows worse daily. Wastelands are being created in both rural and urban areas with the desertion of industrial estates. The workers in the adjacent housing areas, are left unemployed and often isolated from services and facilities, since their estates were usually built on the skimp, simply to service industry.

American (and Dutch/West German/Japanese) multi-nationals come to Ireland with dangerous work processes and products that have often been banned in their countries of origin. They benefit from the lax industrial safety legislation in this country such that already over 200 companies and establishments are using low-level radiation. Multinational plants here produce poisonous chemicals, and dangerous drugs, and then try to dump the toxic wastes. They are assisted by the Irish government , who, in I980, produced a Safety in Industry Act which included only 16 of every 100 working women in its inadequate provisions and excluded many male industrial workers. The female workforce here is a vulnerable one because two-thirds of women workers are of child-bearing age and health/reproductive hazards are many. These hazards are present when working with such substances as radiation, lead, vinyl chloride, pesticides, mercury, carbon monoxide, organic solvents, and oestrogens.

Unions don't often provide much protection for women workers. Sex discrimination is rampant as much in multinationals as elsewhere. Women are usually the lowest-paid, lowest-level workers. They are employed in areas like

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packing, checking, on the assembly line, or in ancillary work e.g. cleaning, canteens and clerical work. Training for these jobs if at all, is carried out by AnCO or on the job, and provides women with few useful skills e.g. women who are semi-skilled in assembly work in one electronics plant will not be able to transfer this narrow skill in the future, because of technological change, and incompatibility of work processes between different plants. The profile of women working in multinationals is young and single as against older married men. There is a new machismo in e.g. the electronics industry where management reinforce sex roles by having cosmetic evenings, running beauty contests etc. The aim is for conciliatory worker-management relations, and the atmosphere is usually hostile to trade unions. Where unions are present , often it's a situation where some trade-off deal with management has been done so that one union, and one union only, is recognised by the company.

Since the advent of the synthetic textiles industry (courtesy of the multinationals) women have lost traditional jobs in the garment industry and have not made corresponding gains in other areas. Instead skilled machinists may find that the work they can get is with the new CMT firms, "Cut , measure and Trim " outfits that operate as labour sub-contractors, taking women on only for casual contract work at low rates.

Irish women workers have fought against bad working conditions, redundancies, and unsafe practices. Yet their contribution to recent labour history is already in danger of being forgotten. Who knows about women's historic victory in securing union recognition at EI (an electronics plant in Shannon) in I966, or the successful sit-in at Confexin (a Dutch clothing factory) in '75, or the many other actions, both successful and unsuccessful?

Women are still fighting in their own jobs, in support of male workers (e.g. the Ranks occupation), and against the environmental hazards brought in by the multinationals.

Ireland continues to be bankrupted. The realities of American (and other multinational) investment here are not pleasant. This is one of the many reasons why women must oppose Reagan's coming here.

temple bar

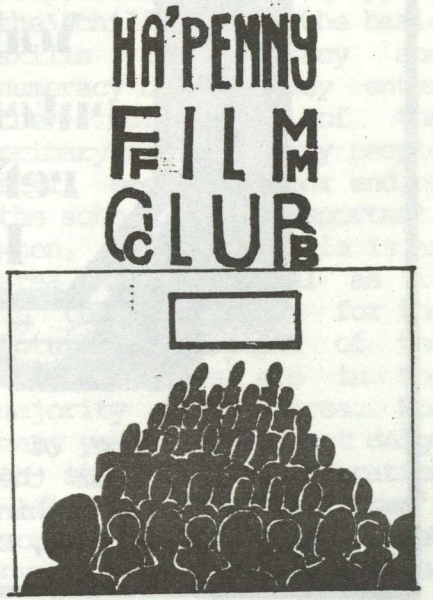
When an old clothing warehouse in Temple Bar, (a continuation of Fleet St.), was secured, cleared of rubbish, its wiring and plumbing taken care of , Temple Bar Studios, as a company, was off to a head start.

Its main function was that of providing private workspace for a variety of artists, in the hopes that their interaction would spark off new and interesting art processes. Jenny Haughton, spokesperson for the centre and driving force behind the initial idea, also described it as a challenge - could the commercial and creative aspects of art, work side by side?

The project, even in its first stages, caused ripples of interest, and many artists asked for workspace during renovation. This was in the Autumn of '83, and now eight to nine months later, it shows no signs of flagging. Indeed the building, spartan though it appears, fairly buzzes with activities either planned or in action. Apart from a photographic studio, a printing studio, a huge work area for artists,and a food co-op, preparations for a large exhibiting gallery are well in advance. An already well-established project is the Ha'penny Film Club which was set up by Trish Mc Adam and Jane Gogan and which runs showings on Thursday nights.

It is from Temple Bar that Pauline Cummins, an Irish woman artist, produces canvasses dealing specifically with women's sexuality. Her own experience of pregnancy and childbirth demonstrated to

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her the appalling lack of respect for, and understanding of women. Our natural bodily functions, e.g. menstruation, are seen as forms of mild physical handicap, troubling and distasteful. In her work an attempt is made to reverse these misbegotten beliefs, for herself as much as for other women. Power, strength, dignity, celebration are all words she uses in connection with being female. And Temple Bar Studios provide her with a base from which to express these views.

The Arts Council have paid the premises a visit, but support was not mentioned, leaving finance as the usual old headache. Upkeep is maintained through commercial events, sponsorship, rents, evening classes etc., and while a problem, it's never allOwed to clog the works.

In the meantime, the challenge has been met both artistically and creatively.

Strange that a disused warehouse could lend itself to such a novel project. Makes you wonder, like Jenny Haughton, how many more of Dublin's abandoned buildings could be used for similar purposes.



One of six new postcards from the Women's Community Publishing Co-op, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.

Blackboard Jungle

My very first morning as a teacher, I was ushered into an empty classroom, given a box of chalk and the roll book, told the times of breaks etc. About three minutes later, I was joined by 35 seven and eight year old boys, and I was suddenly a TEACHER. I survived the first morning. I can't remember how, and tottered out of the school at three o'clock. Teaching practice has never been like this ----.



Teachers teach. They are given a two volume set of the New Curriculum and expected to implement it. This new curriculum is designed for child-centred education and requires the teacher to plan activities and work for each individual child's needs. At the same time they are expected to reach certain standards set by inspectors and to do this while coping with numbers in excess of 35 children per class and , in some cases, even more.

Schools and teachers are expected to teach more than the subjects on the curriculum. There is the core of attitudes and behaviour that school communicates: the "hidden curriculum" of socialisation. This differs for boys and girls and even at the very junior end of the school the subtle differences in expectations are communicated to the children.

The infant teacher is responsible for equipping the children with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy before they enter the mainstream of the primary school. Many people still see the junior end of the school as unimportant, when, in fact, this is an area that is crucial as it is the foundation for the future development of the child. Women are in the majority in this area. For many years men did not deign to study infant education -after all that was women's work. The boy was handed over to the "Master" when he

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was eight and the master would make a man of him. The lesson was clear to the young boy pupils, women were soft, men were tough. You called the male teachers "Sir".

"It's a great job for women but it's not so good for men. There's few chances of promotion. Only a few can be principals or inspectors." Thus spake one of my colleagues, (male of course). It was an all-boys school, and I was one of the first female members of the staff. It was very difficult for boys' schools as the number of male teachers was dropping and they HAD to take women. This situation had 'worsened' over the past few years and nowadays men are in the minority in all the colleges and make up less than 25% of the membership of the INTO. Despite this numerical imbalance men hold a disproportionate number of principalships, and are much in evidence at upper management levels and on the committees of the INTO.

I don't think I'd heard the word sexist mentioned the whole time I was in college but as my first year of teaching went by the notion that there was something radically wrong with the System became firmly rooted. I had discipline problems because I didn't use the stick, and the boys wanted to be treated like the "big" boys, and whacked. I had strong words of protest from some parents when I introduced knitting and simple embroidery.



Some male members of staff lamented the passing of the all-male staffroom when they could sit around in friendly camaraderie and discuss GAA and women, undoubtedly in that order. Looking at the text boks, and some of the things I was expected to teach I knew that I'd have a hard time dealing with Irish books where "Mamaí(was) sa chistin i gcónaí".

Many more teachers are aware of the evils of sexism now and are doing what they can to fight it. But as long as we have a school system that is run on single sex lines and controlled by the Church there is very little that the individual can do. Schools, especially the large urban ones, often resemble federal republics. Teachers are very isolated from one another , often afraid to voice their difficulties for fear of compromising their appearance as a professional. Others become cynical, and disillusioned and relax safe in the knowledge that their job is secure. One of the reasons for sacking a national school teacher is gross moral turpitude. Teachers' private lives are a matter for public concern as the Eileen Flynn case showed very clearly recently.

Despite the conservative climate and the increasing problems of schools where finance is just not forthcoming for materials or extra staff, women teachers are organising within the unions to work on problems that particularly affect them as workers and women. But as long as primary education is under-financed and undervalued it's an uphill struggle all the way. The commitment to work for change is there, and the days when all female teachers wore twin sets and put the kettle on for the "Master" are gone.

Carol Lanigan

the SATURDAY NIGHT SYNDICATE

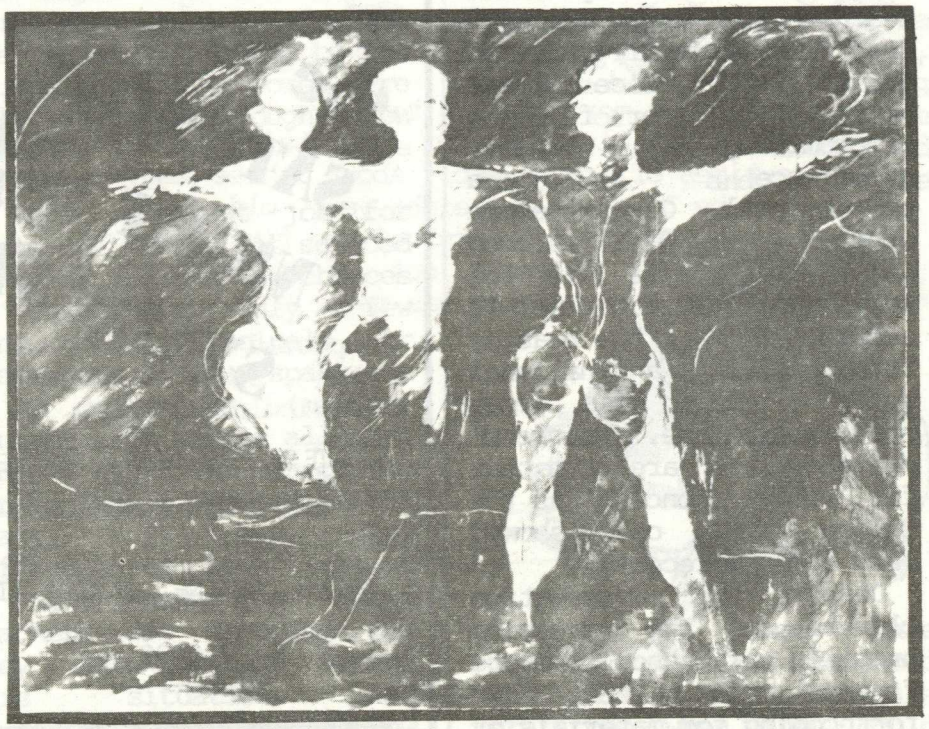
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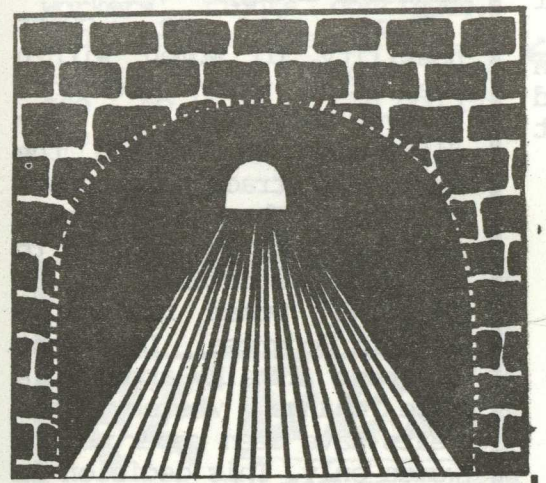
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ESB Is THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?



A month ago, the E.S.B. introduced a special package to entice workers to accept redundancies. The present overall policy in the ESB is to cut down on staff and for the past few years, they have been operating a no-recruitment policy. Because of the negative attitude within the company towards their women workers, especially the married ones, many of the latter will be applying for the special packages because they find them an attractive alternative to working for an organisation that cares very little for them.

Among the pressures on women to seek redundancy are:

*The lack of essential facilities e.g. childcare and adequate maternity leave.

* The general negative attitude towards married women in the company.

Gaye Cunningham, vice-president of the ESBOA, (The staff association of the ESB), spoke to us about the situation from a union perspective. Gaye has been with the ESB for eleven years and actively involved with the union for the past nine years. The president of the union is also a woman, Delo Collier.

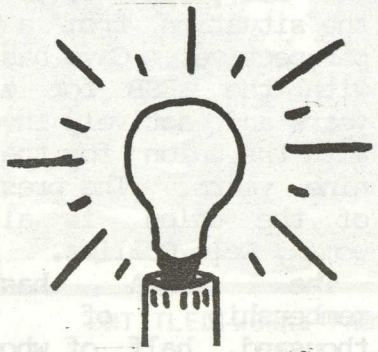
The ESBOA has a membership of three thousand, half of whom are women.

It has a tradition of strong female involvement, especially in senior positions. It has had three women vice-presidents in the past, and the present executive committee has ten women members. It is very interested in the promotion of equality within the world of Irish trade unionism which tends to be totally male-dominated. The union runs special women-only courses on trade unionism in conjunction with the ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions). There is a two day

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introductory course to trade unionism and a intensive nine day course for women who want to gain more powerful positions within the trade union movement.

Of the 12,000 workers in the ESB, 2,000 are women who are mainly in clerical and domestic positions. There are only a few women in middle-management, and that is a relatively recent achievement.



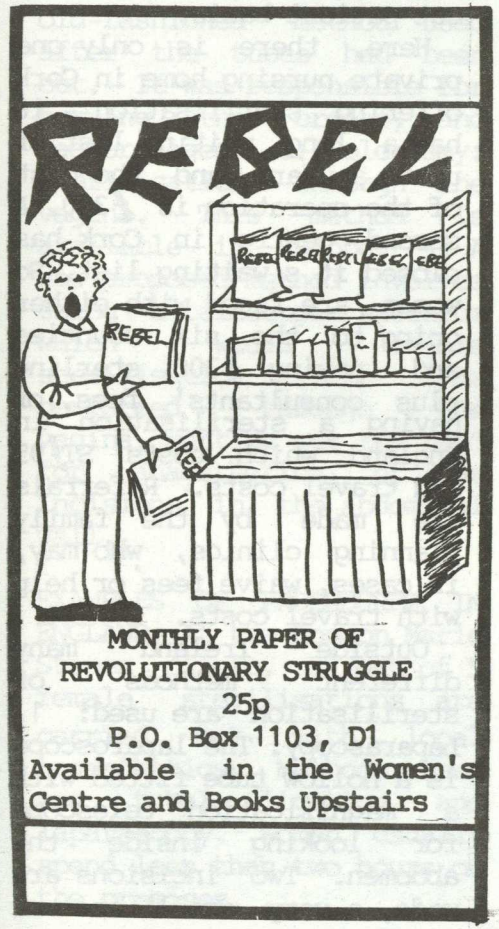
Some years ago, the ESB produced a report on women in the company. Not surprisingly, the company found that women were quite happy with their situation. The report, says Gay, was a complete whitewash, and there had been no union involvement in it. The ESB, she says,have a nominal policy in favour of equality among the workers, but, in reality, take no positive action to promote women in the workplace . The union has been pressing for childcare facilities and maternity leave with little response forthcoming. There is subtle discrimination in the way that workers are encouraged (or not) to take external degrees. While men get lots of support, the women are made to feel such degrees are a waste of their time and energy.

There is no overt hostility to women within the trade union movement. However they find it very difficult to breach the world of trade union power politics. The men in power are very keen to hold on to it with predictable results :e.g. No woman has held a seat in Congress. Last year Congress finally approved a rule change whereby two seats have been reserved for women only. This decision is to be confirmed in the July elections.

A group of women within the ICTU have worked hard in recent years to highlight the issues that affect women in work such as childcare facilities, maternity leave and the ban on night work for women. Licences are being granted at the moment by Rory Quinn to legalise night work. However, says Gay, there are not enough protective measures attached to the licences. The women are fighting for the introduction of such measures.

They have also made a number of submissions to various government commissions on women's affairs, interdepartmental committees, all-party committees on women's affairs and the Committee on Marital Breakdown.

The fight for women workers' rights continues, and unless the oppressive structures are changed , we see no light at the end of the tunnel.





ROUND

UP

RONNIE!

STERILISATION

Sterilisation, as a form of contraception, is not an option available to most women in the 26 counties. It is inaccessible, expensive, and frowned upon by church and state. Even where a woman's life is endangered by another pregnancy and sterilisation is called for, her "case" must go before an ethics committee in the catholic maternity hospitals, and theatre nursing staff may be actively discouraged from participating in such operations.



Female sterilisation, as carried out in the south, is a tubal ligation procedure performed under general anaesthetic. That is, a small cut is made on the lower abdomen above the pubic hair through which opening, the fallopian tubes are located and tied. Because a general anaesthetic is used, the woman has to remain in the clinic for at least 48 hours. The after-effects are soreness and tiredness. In other countries tubal ligation is carried out with a local anaesthetic on an out-patient basis.

Here, there is only one private nursing home in Cork offering sterilisation - it has a long waiting list of up to a year, and the cost of the operation is £300. A second centre in Cork has closed it s waiting list. So women are faced with either going to the six counties and paying £300 sterling plus consultants' fees, or having a sterilisation in England which costs STG£95 and travel costs. Referrals are made by the family planning clinics, who may, in cases, waive fees or help with travel costs.

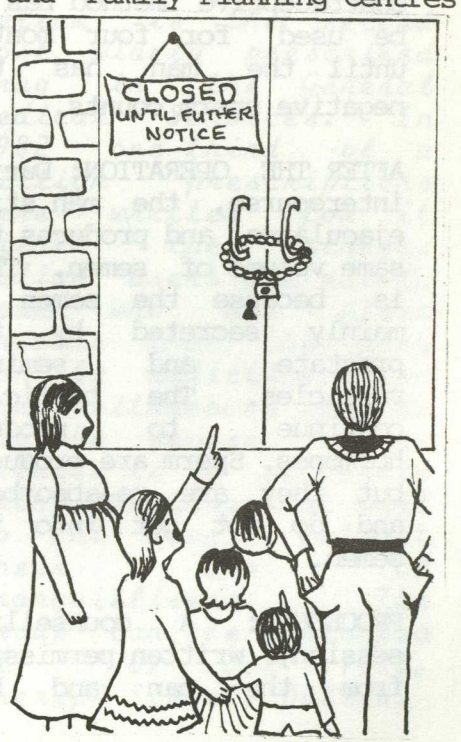
Outside Ireland many different methods of sterilisation are used: 1. Laparascopy: The laparoscope is a hollow tube fitted with a magnification telescope for looking inside the abdomen. Two incisions are made, a very small one at the navel and one just below the bikini line. Through one incision the laparascope is inserted to see the fallopian tubes. Through the second incision a pistol-like instrument is inserted which shoots a plastic clip (about one-third the size of a match) onto the tube. Scars, 2cms long, are covered with sticking plaster. A laparascopy can only be done on a fairly thin woman. 2. Cauterisation: This was an old-fashioned method used after the tubes had been cut. It was responsible for burning other organs, and haemorrhages. 3. Coloptomy: Sterilisation through the vagina. This method is available in Europe. 4. A new proposed method involves using a telescopic speculum which would enable sterilisation to be performed through the vagina, cutting out the need for anaesthetics, or the incisions in the abdominal wall.

EXAMPLES OF PROCEDURES IN ENGLAND: At the London Marie Stopes clinic, 3 out of 5 female sterilisations are carried out with local anaesthetics. Methods used are tubal ligation and laparascopy. Women usually spend less than two hours on the premises.

SIDE EFFECTS OF STERILISATION: A higher percentage of women who have been sterilised do have increased menstrual pain.

PROCEDURES IN IRELAND: There is an initial counselling session to reach the decision about tubal ligation. The woman and her partner have to sign a consent form. Although sterilisation can sometimes be reversed, the couple are encouraged to approach it as irreversible.

MALE STERILISATION - VASECTOMY Vasectomies are carried out by the Wellwoman and Family Planning Centres



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in Dublin and Cork, and by some GPs. The cost is £80 plus travel expenses. The price includes a pre-vasectomy counselling session, the vasectomy and two sperm counts afterwards.

Vasectomy is a simple operation which takes no more than a few minutes, and is carried out with a local anaesthetic. The operation entails the Vas, which is the tube that carries the sperm from the testicles to the penis, being cut and the ends sealed. It's done through one or two incisions in the scrotum, and is virtually painless. Sperm is still stored above the incisions so a back-up contraceptive method has to be used for four months until the man has two negative sperm counts.

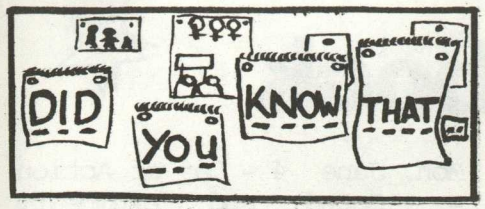
AFTER THE OPERATION: During intercourse, the man still ejaculates, and produces the same volume of semen. This is because the semen is mainly secreted by the prostate and seminal vesticles. The testicles continue to produce hormones. Sperm are produced but they are re-absorbed, and do not get into the semen.

PROCEDURE: A counselling session, written permission from the man and his partner, then about four weeks later, the vasectomy. Couples are counselled to regard the vasectomy as irreversible. If a woman is pregnant or the last child is just a few weeks old, vasectomies are postponed. Vasectomies aren't carried out if there are psycho-sexual problems, marital problems, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the man, if he has a history of psychiatric illnesses, if the woman has medical complaints which might require hysterectomy in the future. Vasectomies are on the increase in recent years.

Irish Family Planning Association

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The Dept. of Public Service has recently agreed to give female public servants the right to opt out of working with VDUs (Visual Display Units), during pregnancies. The scheme, negotiated with the public service group of unions, also limits the number of hours VDU operatives work, and will monitor the health of VDU operators over a two year period. This agreement is the first of its kind in Ireland and represents an official acknowledgement that there are health hazards associated with working with VDUs. In America and Canada a high incidence of miscarriages and birth defects has been detected in children born to VDU operators.

Social welfare allowances for women going on maternity leave, were quietly cut by 12.5% from April last. The cut takes the form of a decrease in the maximum amount payable (from 80% down to 70% of average weekly pay in the previous tax year), and a standstill in the minimum amount paid to women in low-earner jobs. The minimum of £64.88, was held static, despite its reduced value, due to high inflation. And this is a country that apparently cares about women and children!

Valium is the most profitable drug in history, and the most widely prescribed in the world, according to the Guinness Book of Records. In Ireland valium is the second most widely prescribed drug in the General Medical Services. In 1982 one-third of a million prescriptions were written for it within the scheme. Valium users are mainly women who are often unaware that the drug can be addictive, and that withdrawal effects may be severe. Tranx Release is a self-help group for those who want to cut down or cut out their use of tranquillisers. The group can be contacted at P.O. Box 1378, Sheriff Street, Dublin.

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Notebook

Irish Womyn for Disarmament are having a Peace Camp in Dublin during Reagan's visit where womyn can come together and express their vision for a peaceful world, in the spirit of non-violence and creativity. The Peace Camp will be as wonderful and unique as each womyn makes it and so we are asking you to come as self sufficiently as possible and bring wool, candles, balloons, cloth, flowers and all symbols of life.

Wed. May 30 - Gathering - Getting to know each other. Affinity Groups and legal briefing.

Thurs. May 31 - Picnic at 12 noon. Music, Theatre, Food and Fun. N.V.D.A. workshops in the afternoon. Evening Gathering, Song and Dance.

Fri. June 1 - N.V.D.A. Workshops. Discussion on Ireland, the Nuclear threat and Neutrality. All night candlelight vigil for peace - American Ambassador's Residence in the Phoenix Park.

Sat. Fri 2 - Creative Day - making visuals, banners, flowers, webs, peacesymbols, messages of Peace to Reagan.

Sun. June 3 - Day of Action - Silence and Keening.

Mon. June 4 - Day of Action - Sound and Drumbeat. Evening - Workshops "Feminist Spirituality" and "Reclaim the Earth". Party -sleep.

Tues. June 5 - Reclaim Dublin Day - Street Theatre

Wed.June 6 - Celebration Breakfast. Clean up - Goodbyes.

For information ring: Women's Centre, 710088, AFRI, 724632

OTHER EVENTS SURROUNDING REAGAN'S VISIT

Sat. June 2 - Deconferring Ceremony in Galway when Reagan is being conferred.

Sun, June 3 - Ring Around Reagan. Meets 6 pm GPO. Speakers - street theatre - music. Circles Dublin Castle culminating at GPO.

Mon, June 4 - Protest by Reagan Reception Campaign, 10 am Leinster House during Reagan's address to the Oireachtais.

Anti-Reagan T shirts. If you would like to wear one during his visit, or while running the women's mini-marathon, contact Martha at the Women's Centre, 710088. Price £2.50.