

Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),
55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

Signed Articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson.

The Birth of the United Nations

On January 29th, at the Interval Club, Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, introduced by Miss Ursula Buckmaster, gave a brilliant summary of the aims and procedure of UNO. She told us that in 1920 the League opened its first Session in Geneva on January 10th. On January 10th, 1946, in London, UNO had its first session at the Central Hall, Westminster. Some of the delegates present were the same as those who had attended the first League of Nations, notably Dr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese delegate who, in spite of all the blood and turmoil through which his country had passed, had managed to keep his high ideals of a peaceful and united world. A great many social occasions had marked the opening of UNO, as was fitting, starting with the banquet given by H.M. the King, and the Central Hall had been made as pleasant and comfortable as it was possible to make it. Fifty-one nations are represented, each one with a quota of five delegates. Among over five hundred delegates there are only seventeen women delegates, including alternates and advisers. Miss Parnell said she did not know how many Catholics were among the delegates but there must be quite a fair number. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster had already entertained them.

Monsieur Bidault, the French Foreign Minister, is a notable Catholic, democrat and internationalist—he it was who reminded the Assembly that thirteen European countries are not represented at UNO. This is very different from the meetings of the League of Nations, where the European countries tended to overshadow the others. The meetings of UNO, apart from minor clashes, have so far been fairly quiet and businesslike; there have been no really great speeches and perhaps little to kindle the imagination; the committees and sessions might almost be called workaday and drab. One reason for this is the fact that most of the nations represented are psychologically stunned by war, bloodshed and destruction. Delegates are trying to wrest peace from a disordered and distressed world, still disunited, and they need all our prayers and thoughts to help them in this stupendous task. They are battling slowly on and with great pain and difficulty groping for the light and we should not expect spectacular things from this gathering. It must also be remembered that this meeting of UNO was primarily called to start the machinery and to get on with the business of carrying out the elections and appointments of officials. It is essentially a business meeting. However circumstances have forced problem after problem on to the Conference, besides the considerations of business. For example, Great Britain has raised the question of UNRRA and its future, and the

Atom Bomb Commission has been set up to decide how to cope with this revolutionary form of power. Then the World Federation of Trades Unions has put in a demand that it should be directly represented at the Assembly—but this raises a precedent because other organisations could put in a claim for similar representation, and if these claims were allowed the whole composition of the United Nations would be changed and the Charter would have to be altered. There are also the problems of various countries which UNO has been asked to consider—Persia versus Russia, Britain versus Greece and Indonesia. Persia is a test case. Then there is the admission of Albania to be considered. But routine business has to go on alongside all these considerations and the set up of the organisation has progressed satisfactorily.

The Security Council of UNO represents eleven nations, the five great powers—China, France, Great Britain, the U.S.A., and the U.S.S.R.—besides six other nations. It is there to hold a watching brief for any sudden outbreak of aggression and to deal with it promptly; in effect it is responsible for keeping the peace of the world and it holds its power on behalf of all the nations represented in UNO. The Military Staff Committee of military, naval and air experts is to decide the quota of planes, ships, armaments, etc., which are to be put aside for the use of UNO in keeping the peace.

Besides this Council there is the Economic and Social Council which does work of promoting human rights, employment, health, etc. It is representative of eighteen nations and is a most important body which is, no doubt, going to do excellent work. It is hoped that it will take over the social, humanitarian and technical spheres of the League of Nations so that the work the League laid down may be happily continued. The Economic and Social Council desires the help and advice of independent organisations, international or national, and it is here that the women's organisations, among them St. Joan's, can step in and do the great work of supplying their specialised knowledge.

Then there is the Trusteeship Council which is to take over the work of the Mandates Commission of the League, but it will work in a wider sphere for pledges have been made in its name to millions of inhabitants in all non self-governing territories as well as in the mandated territories. It is to issue detailed questionnaires on the political, economic, social and educational advancement of peoples under its care.

To sum up, said Miss Parnell, UNO already has a record of good solid work behind it, there is a sure groping towards that peace and brotherhood which must ultimately be God's purpose for the world.

Notes and Comments

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood is to move a resolution in the House of Lords "that women should be eligible to be made Peers on the same terms as men."

Mrs. J. L. Stocks, principal of Westfield College whom we know as a fellow-worker in the suffrage campaign, will stand as an Independent candidate in the Combined Universities by-election caused by the death of Miss Eleanor Rathbone.

We congratulate Miss Dorothy Knight Dix who makes history by becoming the first woman judge in England, with power to try everything but murder, manslaughter or treason. Miss Dix will act as Recorder of Deal in the sessions beginning January 25th, as deputy for Mr. Christmas Humphreys, who has gone to Tokio for the Japanese war trials. Mr. Humphreys chose her as his deputy because he was impressed by her work as a barrister.

Miss Dix was called to the bar in 1934. She has an extensive common law and criminal practice and was the first woman to act as defence counsel in a murder trial—the trial of Leslie Walter Hammond in 1941, who was convicted but afterwards reprieved. She has written two books—one, "In the Eyes of the Law," explains legal procedure to the man in the street. It was reviewed in this paper and is now in the office library.

The *News Chronicle* celebrated its centenary on January 21st when it published a message of congratulation from the Prime Minister and quoted the appreciations published in other papers. Charles Dickens founded the *Daily News* in 1846, intending that it should "stand for those ideals of social progress which were dear to his heart." In the course of the century the *Daily News* has absorbed the *Morning Star*, the *Morning Leader*, the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Daily Chronicle*. The policy of the *Daily News* was always to uphold humanitarian and progressive ideals and among other causes it championed votes for women. The *Westminster Gazette* and the *News Chronicle* likewise upheld this cause, so we offer our thankful congratulations to the *News Chronicle* on the keeping of its centenary. Moreover we recall with pride that distinguished relatives of our Hon. Editor served the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Daily Chronicle* in their hey-day, so that, as our Editor, she carries on a worthy family tradition.

We have learned with satisfaction that waiters and waitresses serving in the House of Commons receive equal pay.

Members are urged to attend a **Conference on the Social Insurance Bill** at the Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1, on Saturday, February 23rd, 10.30 to 12.30 and 2 to 4. The conference is called jointly by the Women's Freedom League, the Open Door Council, St. Joan's Alliance and the National Union of Women Teachers. The position of the housewife, inequalities and exclusions in the Government Bill will be discussed and a resolution will be submitted on women's demand for equality in Social Insurance.

If any readers have spare copies of the *Catholic Citizen* for February and April 1944, also August-September 1945, we should be grateful for them for our files.

International Notes

We mourn the death of Miss McMahon, "a wonderful supporter" who joined the Alliance many years ago in London and whose work for married women's nationality rights led to the foundation of the **Australian** section of the **Alliance**. She died just before Christmas and her last communication with St. Joan's was a letter of good wishes for the Victory party the Alliance held in **Australia**. Miss Flynn writes: "She was a wonderful person and said she missed St. Joan's meetings more than anything else when no longer able to go out. She was our very oldest member." We feel sure our members will remember her in their prayers.—R.I.P.

Argentine. The *Southern Cross* (South Africa) quotes extensively from articles written by the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Gustavo Franceschi in his magazine *Criterion*, which is published in Buenos Aires. Monsignor Franceschi discusses the intensive campaign recently undertaken in Argentine for votes for women. He recalls that during the Middle Ages women actively took part in the guilds and in municipal and regional elections. Under the benevolent tutelage of the Church they were ambassadors; they taught law in the Universities of Padua and Bologna and mathematics in Milan. Monsignor Franceschi goes on to affirm that the Pontificate has supported woman suffrage and that the Church has never opposed woman suffrage. He ends by quoting Pope Benedict XV: "We wish to see women voters everywhere." This statement was made by His Holiness to our member, Miss Annie Christitch and reported in the *Catholic Citizen* (July, 1919).

Miss Gisele Shaw has written to us to say how much she appreciates the *Catholic Citizen*. She tells us she has opened a Sanatorium in **Buenos Aires** for women who have been in gaol or a reformatory or simply detained by the police. She has room for 30 girls with facilities for medical care and care for their babies. The girls have various classes and Miss Gisele has placed twenty quite satisfactorily. They return to the clinic for medical care. We wish all success to this venture.

Belgium. The Belgian Government asserts that it is technically impossible to arrange for women to vote in the March, 1946, elections. Some political groups, including the new Christian Social Party, have protested against this assumption. The Government has agreed in principle to woman suffrage and is making plans for the extension of the ballot to women on the same terms as men by 1947. We feel that there is no reason why the women should not vote this March and consider it is rather a poor effort on the part of the Belgian Government not to have arranged for them to do so, especially as women are eligible for election. (*Worldover Press*).

France. We welcome the reappearance of *La Francaise* (Paris) under new management. It is crammed full of interesting articles and beautiful photographs and is magnificently produced. We recognise some familiar names among the authors and we note especially M'le. Lamblin who, herself a member of the Paris Municipal Council, has written on the part women can play in these Councils. M'le. Lamblin is a member of the Constituent Assembly.

Eleanor Rathbone.

Eleanor Rathbone, who died on January 2nd, will be remembered by many people for many things. Feminists will remember her championship of woman suffrage; she was an active member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and she succeeded Mrs. Fawcett as President of the National Council for Equal Citizenship. She came of a Liverpool family which had a great tradition of public service and quite early in her life, in 1897, she became secretary of the Liverpool Women's Industrial Council and was responsible for many industrial investigations. In 1913 this body became the Liverpool Women Citizens' Council and Eleanor Rathbone was made its President. She was elected first woman member of the Liverpool City Council in 1910, where she remained till 1934.

Throughout her life Eleanor Rathbone was interested in the economic status of the wage-earning woman and her enquiries into economic and industrial matters no doubt helped her to the conclusion that some form of family endowment was of prime importance. The conception and promotion of her scheme for family allowances became her main interest and her principal achievement. Both in pamphlets and in her book, "The Disinherited Family" (1924), Miss Rathbone made out the case for her scheme as the only one which could secure both "the living wage" and "equal pay for equal work." She managed to work her plan into the public mind so that the reform passed into the programmes of all parties and Sir William Beveridge was able to place his social security scheme on its foundation. Last summer saw the translation of family allowances into an Act of Parliament and this reform may be laid at the door primarily of Eleanor Rathbone.

Miss Rathbone was elected to Parliament in 1929 as Independent member for the Combined Universities. She was re-elected every following election with a

rising vote. In Parliament she fought ceaselessly for the causes nearest to her heart, for family allowances, for the underdog. She was never discouraged by indifference and mockery and was in consequence one of the most respected of the women Members of Parliament. Throughout the war she passionately championed the refugees and she spent much time during the few months before her death in writing and speaking on the future of the Jews and the state of displaced persons in Europe. She was deeply concerned with the fate of the starving peoples of Europe. On the morning of the day on which she died she drafted an appeal for contributions to the Food Relief Fund for distressed Europe.

Though St. Joan's Alliance did not see eye to eye with Eleanor Rathbone on every subject, she shared in a special way our concern with the plight of African women and in the House, at our request, she raised the question of forced marriages of African girls. When we organised a meeting on this subject with Archdeacon Owen of Kavirondo as the chief speaker, Eleanor Rathbone spoke on the same platform for us. None of the women's organisations ever appealed to her in vain for help in the House and she will be missed sorely in this connection. Those who heard her speak at many meetings will also miss her power of forceful statement and her kindly sense of humour. Indeed it was impossible to listen to her without catching a glimpse of the fundamental humanity and kindness which was the mainspring of the life she spent working for the betterment of others. Her outstanding qualities were courage, tenacity and selflessness and withal her deep humility, and she was one of the outstanding figures of our day. At the memorial service at St. Margaret's, Westminster, Miss Barry represented the Alliance and Miss Mary Parnell represented the Liverpool branch.

C. S.

EMILIE GOURD

The news of Mlle. Emilie Gourd's death was received with deep regret and a sense of personal loss by women all over the world. Her whole heart was in her work for women. Her paper, *Le Mouvement Féministe*, was a torch in her own country; she gave herself not only to the suffrage movement but to many social and educational activities. As Hon. Secretary of the International Alliance she was known and loved at its many congresses from Paris to Istanbul, from Rome to Copenhagen. Mlle. Gourd added to her wisdom and tenacity much wit and kindness. Those of her opponents who suffered from her wit and ridicule would hardly have recognised the charming hostess in the adored country house facing the glory of Mont Blanc. She had tremendous personal courage and a great gift for friendship and the pen of the ready writer. She had faith in democracy and in fundamental human rights and in her self discipline and high moral sense she was a tower of strength to others. The funeral cortege and the tributes paid her by women of all sections of social work in Switzerland showed how deep and wide were her sympathies. No other woman could inspire so many. It is indeed tragic that owing to the backwardness of her country she could not render it the services which Eleanor Rathbone was free to give here.

Le Mouvement Féministe, of January 19th is devoted to the memory of Mademoiselle Gourd. The co-editors feel that the best memorial they can make to Emilie Gourd is to continue publication of the journal which she ran herself and to which she was so devoted and the present number contains biographical notes and appreciations of a very great woman. M. C. A.

MARIA LAUGHTON

We ask prayers for the repose of the soul of Maria Laughton, mother of our former chairman, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, Director of the W.R.N.S.—R.I.P. Lady Laughton died on January 13th. She was widow of Sir John Laughton and daughter of Eugenio de Alberti of Cadiz, the de Alberti family claiming descent from the Florentine genius, Leon Battista de Alberti. Her sister, Leonora de Alberti, one of the pillars of the Alliance, was our beloved and able Editor for 19 years. Lady Laughton was a keen member of the Alliance up till the time of her death. In the early days of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society she ran the Wimbledon branch of the Society and gave lavish hospitality on its behalf. The last function Lady Laughton attended was a recent St. Joan's meeting when Miss Mabel Strickland spoke on Malta.

St. Joan's Alliance was represented at the Requiem Mass and funeral by our Hon. Secretary, Miss Barry, and flowers were sent on behalf of the Alliance.

We offer our deep sympathy to Dame Vera Laughton Mathews; and to Lady Laughton's sister, Amalia de Alberti, also to Elvira, Christopher and David her grandchildren. May she rest in peace.

The 35th Annual Meeting will be held in St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square, on Saturday, March 16th, at 2.30, Miss P. C. Challoner presiding. Among the speakers will be Miss Grace Conway, Mrs. Garrard, Miss Helen Leslie, Mrs. de Rouffignac, Mrs. W. M. Russell, Miss Brigid de Vine and Mrs. Whittles.

Subscriptions (minimum 5s.) are now due.

THE UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY

The Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations, of which St. Joan's (International) Alliance is one of the constituent bodies, has sent a formal request to the Secretary of the United Nations that in conformity with Article 71 of the Charter "suitable arrangements for consultation" be made by the Economic and Social Council with the Liaison Committee and/or its component bodies.

A deputation from the Committee was most sympathetically received by the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, when the machinery for implementing the equality clauses of the Charter was discussed. The Committee deprecated the idea of another Enquiry into the Status of Women fearing this might take years and only serve to delay what women really wanted, namely, the removal of "discriminations on grounds of sex" in all countries. The possibility of a Convention on these lines was discussed. Should a subsidiary body on the Status of Women be set up under the Commission on Human Rights (the necessity for which many women doubted) then it should be a committee of both men and women.

A panel of names has been drawn up by the Liaison Committee of women whom they think suitable to serve on the Commission on Human Rights, and more particularly on the proposed subsidiary Committee on the Status of Women.

As in the old far off days of the League of Nations at Geneva, our indefatigable secretary has followed closely, and with vigilance, the work of the Assembly, more particularly of those committees of the Social and Economic Council and of the Trusteeship System, to which the aims of St. Joan's Alliance are related, so that it may continue to do useful work with the United Nations.

The following are the women delegates to the Assembly of the United Nations:

- Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic*—H.E. Mrs. Evodokia I. Uralova.
- Dominican Republic*—Miss Minerva Bernardino.
- New Zealand*—Miss Jean R. McKenzie.
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*—The Rt. Hon. Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.
- United States of America*—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- Alternate Delegates:*
- Czechoslovakia*—Madame O. Hilova and Madame Sekaninova.
- Denmark*—Madame Bodil Begtrup.
- France*—Madame Lefauchaux.
- Netherlands*—Mrs. Dr. H. Verwey.
- Norway*—Miss Frieda Dalen.

Three meetings have taken place between the Liaison Committee and the women members of the delegations and have proved very helpful.

HERE AND THERE

A recent number of *The Catholic Digest* (U.S.A.) includes a condensed excerpt from a book by Joseph Holzner on "Paul of Tarsus." In reading these excerpts describing the coming of Christianity to Macedonia by way of Philippi we are reminded how large a part women played in the establishment of the Faith. There is Lydia, "a wealthy business woman, who had probably taken over her deceased husband's trade in purple. . . . She immediately decided to be baptised" and "became one of the pillars of the primitive Church; she was the maternal friend of the Apostle and of all the messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"Who would have thought the Gospel would make such a quiet and unassuming entry into Europe? It did not come solemnly as before the philosophers on the Areopagus, nor dramatically as then on Cyprus

before the statesmen; it came in an idyllic scene, one summer morning when the sky was red in the East. When the Gospel came to Europe it spoke first to the women, because the men were not present, just as with the Samaritans it was a woman to whom Jesus spoke about the mystery of the kingdom of God. The women were the last ones to remain by the cross, and they were the first at the empty tomb. The Gospel tells a sad story of hypocrisy, hatred, persecution, calumny, treason and cowardly flight, but these things are never told about women."

Liverpool and District Branch. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. de Rouffignac, 31 Gorsedale Road, Liverpool 18.

A meeting was held in the Bluecoat Chambers on January 28th, when Mrs. Dodd gave an interesting talk on the work done by the "Women of Westminster." Members heard with regret that Miss Hickey had been obliged to resign the hon. secretaryship of the branch, owing to ill-health. A hearty vote of thanks was passed for her loyal work during the last two years. Mrs. de Rouffignac kindly agreed to take on the secretaryship. A resolution was passed asking "the Merseyside M.P.s to press the Government to consider the payment of post-war credits and war damage claims to all persons over the age of 65, regardless of means test." The next meeting will be on February 25th at Bluecoat Chambers, when the speaker will be Mr. Clancy, secretary of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society.

We offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Arnold on the death of her son in India.—R.I.P.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Leonora de Alberti in the "Catholic Citizen,"
February, 1921.

"We are told that the proposal for the endowment of maternity violates Christian principles, and it has been suggested that to combat it is a fine piece of work for certain Catholic women to do. Now it seems to me that there is a very good way of testing whether a proposed piece of legislation really violates Christian principles, or whether it does not. We have but to ask ourselves whether if it became law, Catholics would be prohibited from participating in the fruits of it. It seems pretty obvious that if this or any other State were to decree that every child was entitled to maintenance, or part maintenance, from the State, no such prohibition would be issued to Catholics."—*Christians and the Endowment of Maternity.*

THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN & ST. ELIZABETH



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