

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society).  
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Price Sixpence.

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*

## Commemoration of the First Instalment of Women's Suffrage

By Shirley Williams

The anniversary of the first instalment of women's suffrage in Britain (granting the vote to women over thirty) was commemorated by a crowded and enthusiastic meeting on February 8th in the Alliance Hall. So successful was the meeting, which was held under the auspices of the Fawcett Society, the Women's Freedom League and St. Joan's Alliance, that many members of the audience stood throughout, and others perched on tables since all the seats available were filled.

The chairman, Mrs. Mary Sticks, opened the meeting with a brief history of the fight for women's right to vote. She described the efforts of the constitutional suffragists, and the growth of militancy, together with the reluctance of both Conservative and Liberal politicians to make any concessions. Her description of the suffrage movement, illuminated as it was with sudden shafts of wit and phrases that summed up the characters of many of those involved, brought history alive even for those who had never shared in the battle.

The main speaker of the evening was a woman Member of Parliament already famous for her charm and her incisive intelligence, Miss Joan Vickers, Member for Devonport. Miss Vickers began by quoting Canon Charles Raven's remark: "Among all the achievements of the past century, those discoveries and developments that have transformed the life of man and altered the very meaning of time and space, it may be doubted whether any is so profoundly significant and in the long run so beneficial as the emancipation of women." Miss Vickers paid tribute, on behalf of herself and those like her who had benefited from women's suffrage but had been too young to share in its achievement, to the many women who had suffered and worked for it—a tribute that was undoubtedly much appreciated by the numerous campaigners in the audience.

There was sometimes, Miss Vickers went on to say, a feeling of disappointment among those who had led the women's freedom movement in the use their own sex had made of the vote. Many

women still took little interest in politics. She herself, when canvassing, had come across women who replied to her question "May I count on your support?" by saying: "I don't know, dear, but I'll ask my husband when he comes in." Nor had women realised, by and large, that there were still many smaller inequalities to be righted. In certain spheres of the law, a woman is still regarded as a chattel on which a value can be put: for instance, divorce law makes it possible for a judge to value a woman's services to her husband, and to charge these as damages to the co-respondent in cases of adultery, yet the opposite does not apply. The tax law still discriminates against the earnings of a married woman, first by adding it to her husband's earnings, and secondly by refusing a woman any allowance for the domestic help that may make her earnings possible although an unmarried man or a widower can claim the cost of help in the house. The result of this is often highly undesirable; couples whose joint earnings put them in the higher ranges of tax often find it cheaper not to marry at all. Nor is there yet equal pay in many spheres of industry and the professions.

Yet in spite of these disabilities, women had achieved a great deal, Miss Vickers continued. Seventy-five women had been M.Ps, and twelve of these Ministers. Five women were now in the House of Lords, and five had been made Privy Councillors. There was still progress to be made by women politicians. Very few have reached Cabinet level, none has ever been a Whip, and none a chairman of a Parliamentary committee.

Outside the political field, women had distinguished themselves on Royal Commissions and committees—the recent report of Lady Almarle's Youth Commission was a case in point—as representatives at the United Nations, and in the armed services. One woman had become head of a mixed Royal Air Force establishment. In the sciences, in teaching, and in the arts, women had achieved great eminence. However, there were some notable gaps. Only a tiny handful of women

have reached the top in industry, and in the law. There are no women Ambassadors, no women Judges of the High Court, no women at the highest levels of the Colonial Service, and, of course, no women in the hierarchies of the Established Churches. Why was this? The main reason, Miss Vickers argued, was that women had to be better than their male competitors to get a job. There was still considerable prejudice against them. She gave an example from her own experience of an occasion when the chairman of a Conservative Association rang up her home full of enthusiasm for the fine record of a person called Vickers who had applied to be considered for selection as a Parliamentary candidate. The chairman was extremely laudatory, and most anxious that the application should go forward. He was speaking to Miss Vickers' brother, evidently under the impression that this was the gentleman responsible for the application. As soon as the brother told him that the application—and the record—was not his, but his sister's, the chairman lost interest completely, excused himself, and rang off.

Miss Vickers gave several more telling examples of this kind of prejudice. She had found, for instance, that a recent Bill to provide scholarships for students from the Commonwealth made no provision for women students at all—she was now fighting to have this put right. The phrase: "You think like a man," was intended as a compliment, when said by a man to a woman. What was needed, however, was not women who thought like men, but women who could make their own special contribution to the world, in terms of their own interests and their own attitudes. This was something that had to be learned by the great majority of women who lacked interest in the problems of their times, yet had benefited vastly from the pioneer work of other women, in suffrage, in welfare, in education and in many other fields, on their behalf.

Miss Vickers' speech, which was delivered with great grace and charm, was followed by questions from the audience. One questioner pointed out that there were many women working on local councils, and this was a contribution of real importance to the government of the country. After the questions, a vote of thanks to Miss Vickers was moved by Mrs. Shirley Williams, seconded by Miss Watts, and an appeal for funds was made by Miss Marian Reeves. The collection more than covered the expenses of the meeting.

The anniversary of Gabrielle Jeffery, founder of The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society falls on March 19th and that of Leonora de Alberti, first editor of *The Catholic Citizen* on March 26th. We feel sure that our members will remember them with affection and gratitude in their prayers.

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

St. Joan's Alliance sent congratulations and best wishes to Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on the birth of the new prince, and received a gracious acknowledgement.

\* \* \*  
**In Parliament.** On 25th February, in reply to Mr. Pannell, Mr. Butler said: "The number of convictions for living on immoral earnings in the Metropolitan Police District during 1959 was 138. The following table shows the countries of origin of the offenders:—

United Kingdom ...	52
Malta ...	39
West Indies ...	27
West Africa ...	8
Cyprus ...	2
Irish Republic ...	2
East Africa ...	1
Aliens ...	7

A correspondent in Switzerland, who is half British, writes in high indignation of the tasteless initiation tests of which she heard over the French radio. These include bringing to their officers by young recruits, intimate articles of women's wear signed and dated, and gaining admission to nudist camps and securing photographs.

We were glad to be able to inform our correspondent that the Under-Secretary of State for War, Mr. Hugh Fraser, stated in Parliament on February 24th that: "An Army Council Instruction was published in 1956 forbidding escapades of this kind and a reminding letter was sent to Commands in October last year. The initiation tests referred to were in contravention of these instructions. Suitable action is being taken."

It is disturbing that such an instruction and reminder was necessary. Our correspondent asks: "Why don't British women give these training officers a good ducking in the Thames?"

\* \* \*  
 In an attempt to prevent some unfair consequences of the law which taxes husband and wife as one, a Bill has been introduced by Mr. Peyton, with a single clause: "Estate Duty should not be payable on the portion of an estate which passes on the death of one spouse to the other in those cases where the incomes of husband and wife have up to the time of that death been treated as one for income tax purposes."

\* \* \*  
 When Highfield Boys' and Girls' Schools, Blackpool, combine in 1961, the Head will be Miss Dora Bloomer, the present headmistress of the Girls' School, and her deputy will be the present headmaster of the Boys' School, Mr. O. B. Burgess.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "The Catholic Citizen"

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## Forty-Eighth Annual Report

for the year ended 31st December, 1959

The year was over-shadowed by the illness and death of Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, whose life-long service to the woman's movement found its earliest inspiration in the Women's Social and Political Union and the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and its happiest, though by no means its only, expression through St. Joan's Alliance.

As chairman from 1932 till 1939, when she became Director of the Women's Royal Naval Service, and as international president, she directed the policy of the Alliance. The affection and esteem in which she was universally held was shown by the attendance at her Requiem in Westminster Cathedral. The Queen Mother and the Duchess of Kent were represented and the nave of the Cathedral was filled with high-ranking officers of the Royal Navy, the Women's Royal Naval Service, Sea Rangers and Girl Guides, representatives of women's organisations, national and international, and her own St. Joan's. Her loss to the Alliance is irreparable. R.I.P.

The Alliance has little of a satisfactory nature to report in the political field. The passing of the *Street Offences Bill* was a bitter blow. The Bill was designed to implement the findings of the Wolfenden Report and in the words of Mr. Butler, the Home Secretary "to help to clean the streets." Sir Hugh Linstead, who was a member of the Wolfenden Committee interpreted the Government's point of view clearly in the House of Commons, when he said, "in fact, one cannot meet the claims of public decency and at the same time do justice to the prostitute, as a woman and a citizen."

Women hereditary peeresses are still debarred from the *House of Lords*. On January 21st, a motion, introduced by the Marquis of Reading, was passed to enable hereditary peeresses to have "seat, place and voice" in the House of Lords, as do hereditary peers, but the Government would have none of it. At the close of the year, it was announced that Dame Florence Horsbrugh was to have a seat in the Lords, thus bringing the number of women life peers to five.

It was disappointing that the *Domicile Bill* which would have given a married woman the right to her own domicile, after passing its third reading in the House of Lords without amendment, was dropped owing to controversial clauses regarding taxation.

A gleam of light came from the older universities. Oxford and Cambridge have both taken a further step in granting women equal status with men in the universities. In Oxford women may now act as proctors and at Cambridge a woman has been nominated as a member of the Court of Discipline for senior members of the university.

\* Subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting.

### Street Offences Bill

A great deal of time was taken up by intensive work on this Bill. Early in the year, a letter was sent to the Prime Minister asking for the withdrawal of the Bill and the substitution of a measure applying equally to both sexes and necessitating evidence from the person annoyed.

On January 26th, at the invitation of the Home Secretary, representatives of a number of women's organisations attended at the Home Office to discuss the Bill before its second reading. The Alliance was represented by the chairman and hon. secretary. The deputation was profoundly dissatisfied and left Mr. Butler in no doubt as to its views on the injustice of the Bill, particularly the retention of the term "common prostitute"; the omission of the need to prove annoyance; and the excessive power given to the police.

The Bill passed its second reading on January 29th by 225 votes to 88. It was sent to standing committee F, where the opponents of the Bill fought every inch of the way and introduced many amendments. The Opposition was allowed a free vote but the Government was determined to get the Bill through; the Government whips were on and discussion was stifled by the closure. The only amendment accepted was one to increase the maximum penalty for those living on immoral earnings from five to seven years imprisonment.

The Bill passed through the Commons and work was concentrated on the House of Lords. Here, in spite of adverse criticism from all sides of the House, the Bill was passed, again with the Government whips on, and the Royal Assent given on July 16th. The Act came into force on August 16th.

The following resolution was passed by the Executive Committee and sent to the Right Honourable R. A. Butler, C.H., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department:

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance deplors the passage into law of the Street Offences Bill and the fact that it was forced through Parliament, despite amendments expressing strong opposition from all sides in both Houses of Parliament.

In particular, the Alliance protests against Clause 1 (1), which, by retaining the term "common prostitute," discriminates against one class of citizen and violates the principle that the law should apply equally to all citizens, both men and women; and Clause 1 (3), which places excessive power in the hands of the police.

During the passage of the Bill, members of the Alliance were active in approaching their Members of Parliament and representatives of the Alliance attended the debates in both Houses and in standing committee F.

The Alliance is grateful to all those Members of Parliament who spoke and voted against the unjust clauses of the Bill—more particularly Mr. Anthony Greenwood, Mrs. Jeger, Mr. Elwyn Jones, Q.C., Miss Joan Vickers (who voted against her party) and Mrs. White. In the Lords, we are especially grateful to Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a lifelong supporter of the equal moral standard, who moved amendments and voted against his party. To Lord Brabazon of Tara, Lord Denning, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Lord Rea, Lord Reading, Baroness Ravensdale and Baroness Wootton, a debt of gratitude is also due.

The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene led the fight against the Bill and provided the ammunition.

#### General Election

According to tradition, on behalf of the Alliance Mass was offered at Westminster Cathedral on polling day, October 8th, to beg divine guidance on the electors.

The manifesto of the Status of Women Committee, signed by the chairman, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, was sent to every Parliamentary candidate, asking for the abolition of the remaining legal discriminations against women. An encouraging number of replies was received.

A letter and questionnaire was sent by the Alliance to the headquarters of the three political Parties. All members were asked to approach their candidates, to press particularly for the repeal of Clause I (1) of the Street Offences Act 1959 and the substitution of a clause applicable to all citizens who cause annoyance by loitering or soliciting in the streets and public places. They were also asked to urge that the income of husband and wife be separately taxed; that a married woman be entitled to her own domicile and have equal rights of guardianship with her husband over their children; that a married woman insured in her own right receive the same unemployment and sickness benefit as a single woman; that the retirement age be the same for men and women; and that women hereditary peers be given a seat, vote and voice in the House of Lords.

Twenty-five women were elected to Parliament, three less than in the last Parliament; two members of the Alliance unsuccessfully contested the Election—Lady Hills (L. Hendon North) and Mrs. Shirley Williams (Lab. Southampton Test). Congratulations were sent to the three new women Members and to those Members returned to Parliament who had worked for specific points on our programme. Letters were sent to Miss Elaine Burton and Mrs. Lena Jeger, regretting that their help in the House would no longer be available.

#### Co-operation With Other Organisations

The Alliance is represented on the following committees: British Commonwealth League, British Vigilance and National Committee for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons, the Catholic Committee for Overseas Students, the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, the Status of Women Committee, the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association, and as Observer, the Women's Council Co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Indonesia.

Representatives attended the Annual Meetings of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Open Door Council.

The reception given to His Eminence, Cardinal Godfrey, by the Catholic Women's League on April 24th was attended by the hon. secretary. Members were present at the annual gathering at Westminster Abbey on February 6th to commemorate Dame Millicent Fawcett and on July 14th to celebrate the birthday of Mrs. Pankhurst at Victoria Tower Gardens, when flowers were laid at the foot of her statue.

On July 13th, a distinguished gathering which included Lady Astor and Lord Pethick-Lawrence met once more at the site of Mrs. Pankhurst's statue for the unveiling of the memorial to Dame Christabel Pankhurst by the Lord

Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir. The ceremony was presided over by Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, chairman of the memorial fund committee, and her gracious and inspiring speech was the last she was to make.

Representatives of the Alliance attended various functions of the British Commonwealth League, including the annual council meeting held in the House of Commons on June 23rd. At the annual conference of the League which considered "Human rights throughout the Commonwealth," Miss Challoner spoke on the age of marriage.

Under the auspices of the Catholic Committee for Overseas Students at the chaplaincy, 41, Holland Park, on May 8th, the Alliance gave a successful party for women overseas students.

On February 9th, a reception to Mrs. Pandit, High Commissioner for India, organised by the Women's Council Co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Indonesia was held at the Overseas Club and attended by representatives of the Alliance, as was a gathering at the Indonesian Embassy to celebrate the birthday of their national heroine, Kartini.

Members were present on April 27th at Old St. Pancras churchyard, when the Fawcett Society laid a wreath on the tomb of Mary Wollstonecraft to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of her birth.

In May, at an informal party given by the Married Women's Association to discuss the economic position of married women, representatives stated the policy of the Alliance namely: "That it is the right of husband and wife to make their own arrangements for the finances of the home. It should be legally recognised that both are partners and each of them entitled to a share of the family income."

Congratulations were sent on the occasion of its golden jubilee to the National Union of Women Teachers, with whom the Alliance has co-operated in many campaigns. The hon. secretary was an honoured guest at their jubilee dinner in the House of Commons.

#### United Nations

Representatives attended meetings of the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association to exchange views and to hear reports from Miss Hornsby Smith and Lady Petrie, United Kingdom delegates to the 1958 and 1959 General Assembly.

The chairman and hon. secretary had interviews with officials at the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Health, urging action by the United Kingdom delegate to the World Health Assembly concerning the undertaking of a study of the medical aspects of ritual mutilations. The matter was also brought up by St. Joan's Alliance at the meetings of women's organisations held in the House of Commons with Miss Ruth Tomlinson, United Kingdom delegate to the Status of Women Commission. Later, an approach was made to the Medical Women's Federation.

#### Activities.

The forty-eighth annual meeting was held on March 21st at 27, Wilfred Street, Westminster, S.W.1, with Dr. Shattock in the chair. The Annual Report was read by Miss Guessard and the report of *The Catholic Citizen* by Miss Spender. The speakers were Mrs. Halpern, Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell and Miss Elizabeth Cape (New South Wales). The chairman, in her address, urged unremitting hard work in gnawing away at opposition. An appeal for funds was made by Miss Margaret Clarke, which resulted in a collection of £68 at the meeting. Dame Vera Laughton Mathews then introduced the resolutions. These dealt with women peers, street offences, domicile, equal guardianship of infants, equal pay, age of retirement, taxation and education and were passed unanimously after slight amendments. For the text of the resolutions see *The Catholic Citizen*, April 1959. The members of the executive committee were re-elected *en bloc* as no new nominations had been received.

On St. Joan's Day, members attended Mass at Westminster Cathedral and placed the traditional wreath on her shrine. Mass was offered at St. Patrick's for Dame Vera during her illness and on October 25th (month's mind) for the repose of her soul and the souls of all deceased members, associates and benefactors of the Alliance.

On June 16th at the Convent of Our Lady of Sion, a meeting was held to welcome overseas students, and on October 21st, a film made by Miss Joan Morris entitled "Fight for the Right," on the work of Dr. Agnes McLaren and the Medical Mission Sisters was shown at the Interval Club under the auspices of St. Joan's Alliance.

#### Press

An observant eye has been kept on the press. Letters from our press secretary were published in *The Tablet* and *The Universe* concerning the Street Offences Bill. *The Tablet*, *The Universe*, the *Catholic Herald* and the *Catholic Times* published information supplied by the Alliance concerning Dame Vera's work for the woman's movement to supplement their obituary notices.

Copies of *The Catholic Citizen* were displayed at the Exhibition of Catholic magazines, in Middlesbrough, organised by the Knights of St. Columba.

#### Correspondence

The office has dealt with numerous requests for information and has sent letters to the appropriate authorities concerning the Legitimacy Bill, the Widowed Mothers' Allowances, Domicile of Married Women, Women Peers, the Cambridge University Chaplaincy.

#### Visitors from Overseas

We have been happy to welcome during the year—from Australia, Dr. Nell McMahon (New South Wales); Miss J. D. Parker (South Australia); Miss Judy Browne (Queensland); from Canada, Dr. Aileen Noonan; from Kenya, Mrs. E. D. Hughes; from South Africa, Mrs. Steele; and from Switzerland, Mrs. Rimondini Schnitter.

#### Obituary

The Alliance records with sorrow the death of the following associate members: The Right Reverend Monsignor John H. Filmer, K.C.O.R., and Don Luigi Sturzo, whose generous support over many years has been of inestimable value to the Alliance. Also the following members: Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E., president of St. Joan's International Alliance; Mademoiselle Marie Lenoël, vice-president of St. Joan's International Alliance; Miss Gertrude Gaffney, Mrs. Blanche Hand, Mademoiselle Marie Leblanc, Miss I. Mackenzie, Miss Mantach, Miss Agnes Quinlan. By the death of Father Bernard Delany, O.P., the Alliance has lost a good friend. May they rest in peace.

#### "The Catholic Citizen"

It is gratifying that subscriptions and sales increased last year and that no grant from the general fund was required. The deficit of £30 was made up by the proceeds of the summer sale.

In March a letter from the Holy Father was published sending his Apostolic Blessing in reply to our letter of homage.

A special memorial number contained very moving tributes to Dame Vera Laughton Mathews from organisations and individuals in many countries.

Specialised articles were contributed by Mademoiselle Baetens (Belgium); Dr. Bardenhewer (Germany); Miss Chave Collisson (A.M.S.H.); Mrs. Dixon (Ireland); Mrs. Fogarty (Queensland); Miss McGillicuddy (U.S.A.); Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, and Mrs. Williams, to all of whom our thanks are due. We are indebted to Mr. Julius Lewin of the South African Institute of Race Relations for kindly allowing us to publish the findings of the Committee set up to inquire into the Legal Status of African Women, of which he was chairman.

Attention was drawn in an editorial to reactionary views concerning women expressed nationally and internationally by certain Catholic organisations.

We are grateful to Mrs. Halpern for her much appreciated "Month in Parliament" and to our numerous book reviewers. To Miss Challoner a special debt is owing for her indefatigable help at all times.

During the year an advertisement was inserted in the personal column of *The Catholic Herald* offering a free copy of *The Catholic Citizen* to women interested in political and social questions of the day. A good response followed and some new members and subscribers were obtained.

The paper has continued to give detailed information on the various Parliamentary Bills in which the Alliance is interested and on the work of the United Nations and the International Labour Office. The regular item "International Notes" reports news of interest from all over the world. Contributions in French have been very welcome.

Our thanks are again due to Mrs. Coast for kindly addressing wrappers and to Miss Graham and Miss Hope Robson who are tireless in helping to send out the paper.

The circulation of the paper is steadily increasing. Australian subscriptions continue to be encouraging and many libraries are in receipt of the paper, as are Convents, Missions, Clubs, and women's organisations.

#### Hon. Treasurer's Report

The year ended with a balance of £28 in the general fund as against £4 last year. The withdrawal from the Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial Fund was £150 as against £170 the year before. Subscriptions and donations show an increase of £250, chiefly owing to the very generous donation from a kind American friend of a thousand dollars towards the office rent.

Two sales were held during the year, one in the summer for *The Catholic Citizen* resulted in £30. The annual Christmas Sale at St. Patrick's, Soho, with donations in cash, realised £130. We are grateful to all who, in their various ways, so generously assisted in these money-making efforts.

We are greatly indebted to our band of voluntary workers, Miss Brandt, Miss Challoner and Miss Jameson, without whose regular help throughout the year the Alliance would be unable to carry on. Valuable occasional help has also been given by Miss Katharine Davis and Miss Madge Cave. We are also grateful to Miss I. E. Fleming for so kindly auditing the accounts.

#### Merseyside Branch

Hon. Secretary: Miss M. C. Brady, 10 Fairfield Street, Liverpool 7.

In April, we were pleased to welcome to Merseyside Miss P. C. Challoner, vice-president of St. Joan's International Alliance, who spoke to us on the aims and work of the Alliance. In connection with the Second Reading of the Street Offences Bill, letters were sent to all Merseyside Members of Parliament, objecting to Clause I (1) and (3) of the Bill. Letters from individual members were sent to Members of Parliament, protesting against the proposed broadcast of the Anglican Bishop of Southwark on behalf of the Family Planning Association. Our speaker in July was Miss Hughes, a boarding-out officer for the Liverpool Catholic Children's Protection Society. At our December meeting, Miss R. Williamson gave a highly informative account of her visit to America as a delegate to the Congress of Our Lady's Sodality. This meeting was preceded by a Requiem Mass at St. Philip Neri's for Dame Vera Laughton Mathews. We ask the prayers of our members for Miss McMahon who died during the year and who had been a member of the branch for many years. R.I.P.

Mrs. Ruddy, our delegate to the Liverpool Standing Conference of Women's Organisations, reports regularly at meetings.

**ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE**

St. Joan's International Alliance has suffered a double loss by the death of its president, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews and of its first vice-president, Marie Lenoël. Dame Vera's wisdom in guiding the policy of the Alliance and her devotion in carrying it out were of immeasurable value. Some of the tributes from far and near and an account of the widely representative gathering that attended her Requiem in Westminster Cathedral were published in *The Catholic Citizen*.

Marie Lenoël founded the French Section of the Alliance in 1931, and was instrumental in bringing St. Joan's International into being. She also founded *La Revue de l'Alliance Sainte Jeanne d'Arc* which bore witness to her feminist ideals and work for African women.

On December 8th, Madame Magdeleine Leroy-Boy was elected president by the national sections. The Alliance is fortunate in obtaining the services of so distinguished a Catholic feminist, who has been a valued member for many years.

The Sixteenth Council Meeting was held in Geneva. Dame Vera presided with all her usual warm-heartedness and alertness of mind. She opened the proceedings on June 27th and welcomed those present. Resolutions passed at former Council Meetings were re-affirmed and new resolutions discussed. (For the text of the resolutions see *The Catholic Citizen* August 1959.)

Reports of National Sections were given from the United Kingdom, France, Victoria, Germany, New South Wales, Transvaal and the Netherlands. Mademoiselle Archinard reported on her work at the United Nations in Geneva.

Reactionary views concerning women expressed by certain Catholic organisations national and international, were discussed and national sections urged to take action where any such statements appeared.

With a view to the needs and conditions of today, discussion took place as to the opportunities for the laity to render service to the Church.

**United Nations**

St. Joan's International Alliance has consultative status with ECOSOC and is on the I.L.O. special list of Non-Governmental Organisations and also on the register of organisations with which the Director General of UNESCO has "informal relations."

**Status of Women Commission**

Resolutions passed at the Council Meeting of the Alliance in Brussels 1958 were sent to the Thirteenth Session of the Commission. Those on the minimum age of marriage and ritual operations were circulated to the Commission. (E/CN.6/NGO/64) and (E/CN.6/NGO/65). Soeur Marie-André du Sacré Coeur and Miss F. McGillicuddy represented the Alliance at the Commission and made interventions concerning The Status of Women in Private Law.

The Council Meeting held in Geneva passed the following resolution:

St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance welcomes the resolution passed by the Status of Woman Commission at its 13th Session re-iterating its request that the Secretary-General shall prepare for the Fourteenth Session of the Commission a draft Convention, dealing with a minimum age of marriage; requirement of free consent of both parties to a marriage; and compulsory registration of marriages. The Alliance regrets that the words "preferably of not less than sixteen years" (minimum age of marriage) have been omitted from the Resolution; and trusts that these words will be re-inserted when the Draft Convention is under consideration.

**W.H.O.**

A letter was sent to the World Health Assembly requesting the W.H.O. to supply medical information on *ritual mutilations* and National Sections of the Alliance approached their Governments in support of this request.

The following resolution was passed by the Council Meeting:

St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance regrets the decision of the World Health Assembly not to accede to the request of the Economic and Social Council to undertake "a study of the persistence of customs which subject girls to ritual operations and of the measures adopted or planned for putting a stop to such practices."

The Alliance believes that the possession of documented factual information on the consequences of female circumcision on physical and mental health, is a necessary preliminary to any measures designed to deal with these practices.

**Social Commission**

At the thirteenth session of this Commission held in New York, Mrs. Grabinska represented the Alliance and made an intervention concerning the Traffic in Persons. At the Council Meeting in Geneva St. Joan's welcomed the Report prepared by the Secretariat on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and recommended the National Sections to make a study of this Report. (E/CN.5/338). In Geneva, in July, Mademoiselle Archinard, on behalf of the Alliance made a Statement on the same subject before the Committee of ECOSOC on Non-Governmental Organisations.

**E.C.A.F.E.**

At the fifteenth Session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, held at Broadbeach, Australia in March, the Alliance was represented by Mrs. Fogarty, vice-president of the St. Joan's, Queensland Section, who kindly wrote a report of the Conference for *The Catholic Citizen*.

**N.G.O. Conference on Eradication of Prejudice and Discrimination**

Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, Mademoiselle Archinard and Miss Barry attended this Conference in Geneva in June. The Conference considered the techniques to be used for eliminating prejudice and discrimination. St. Joan's delegates took an active part in the discussions of the working groups and in the plenary sessions.

**I.L.O.**

A Statement was sent to the Panel of Women Consultants set up by the I.L.O. to deal with the problem of women workers, which met in October. At the Fifth Session of the I.L.O. Advisory Committee on Salaried Employees and Professional Workers, held in Cologne in November, the Alliance was represented by Dr. Bardenhewer, president of the German Section of the Alliance.

**Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations**

As a constituent member of the Liaison Committee the Alliance is represented on the Committee in London and in the groups in New York, Paris, Geneva and Australia.

At the Conference of the *International Federation of University Women at Helsinki*, Dr. Aileen Noonan brought fraternal greetings from the Alliance. Miss Retchford attended the Board meetings of the *International Council of Women* in Vienna as observer. Miss K. Jameson attended the Conference of *The Country Women of the World* in Edinburgh as fraternal delegate,

**La Femme et le Salut du Monde**

**La Femme et le Salut du Monde.** By Paul Evdokimov. (Casterman, Paris.)

In the introduction to this Christian anthropological study of woman's vocation, of her spiritual gifts, or *charismes*, the author tells us that a vocation is a mystery which defies explanation.

Evdokimov's erudition is impressive; he seems equally at home in Eastern and Western tradition, in the interpretation of Biblical texts, the literature, philosophy and psychological thought of most cultures, and expresses his opinions in such engaging terms, with so much humility, that the reader would wish to approve the conclusions to which this learned argument is tending.

The reviewer finds herself unable to do so when it becomes clear that the author treats "womanhood" collectively, creates an imaginary prototype and constrains all women into one mould, to conform them more closely, so he believes, to their archetype, to Our Lady. He chooses the virtues he considers typical of the ideal woman and draws an imaginary line, almost a barrier, to separate her and her exalted model from man and his ideal of perfection, St. John the Baptist.

Virtues are apportioned in more or less traditional ways, humility and inwardness are considered truly feminine, more virile gifts are reserved to man—the toiler, constructor, leader, whose decisions are dictated by reason rather than intuition. It cannot surprise the reader that such artificial barriers are overstepped by the author on many occasions. He does so when he draws attention to the diversity of vocations of women saints and mentions St. Joan's among others; when he speaks of the truly "feminine" tenderness of St. Francis of Assisi (page 214), of the bisexuality inherent in every human being (page 156).

When the author discusses what he believes to be good and what he deplors in woman's emancipation, he shows remarkable insight in realising that untoward circumstances may incline a woman to hide her gifts, if these do not conform with the traditions and prejudices of her environment, a false shame but a very compelling motive which only the pioneer and saint may withstand. In spite of this insight Evdokimov misses the point that traditionally feminine virtues can flourish where more 'virile' ones would be totally unacceptable, and it would require real heroism to exercise them.

His condemnation of the traditional assumption of male superiority is scathing: even moral values have been usurped and the term virtue has been derived from vir. Rabbinic traditions have

inflicted a deep scar on Christian tradition "le purisme juif" is to blame for many distressing and well-documented events quoted by Evdokimov (page 176).

After this valiant attack on prejudice it is sad to record that only a page or two later the author is caught in its meshes. How else to explain his saying "woman's professional formation, similar to that of man, falsifies her nature, flatters her but does not prepare her for partnership in human society"? Or again: "Her desire for equality makes her the rival," and: "If she accumulates intellectual treasure this will give her no pleasure." These arid conclusions are depressing and the reader who has enjoyed the fascinating sidelights of Evdokimov's learned argument may conclude that both he and the author have wasted their time. But this is not so, as Evdokimov must be taken seriously, not only because he possesses an amazing fund of knowledge, but because he illustrates a technique employed with less distinction by others, namely, an initial choice of gifts and prerogatives which are deemed adequate, admirable and truly feminine (versus truly masculine) followed by judgments based on their possession. This is an old, almost venerable procedure, the subdivision of the human race into categories which do not bear the straightforward obvious headings, man, woman, but more sophisticated labels of which the author quotes examples (and one could think of others): logos and eros, verbum and esse, omega (end) and alpha (source). The insistence on woman's "being" rather than her striving and willing seems dangerous, for is her vocation not this, to strive to make what she is, that which she believes is God's will she should *become*?

In conclusion it must be said that Evdokimov's praises of the ideal woman are excessive; if some women are more attentive to divine prompting, more successful in combating evil (and communism), surely these are individual achievements, not those of one sex? The author's goodwill is obvious and engaging and one dislikes criticising his deductions, but women have had a long experience of excessive praise and fear it as much as detraction. While thanking Evdokimov for his fascinating study and for his kindly feelings we would ask him to believe that women vary widely from one another; if their greater regard for others is in some way related to an actual or potential maternity, as Evdokimov believes, they still wish to remain free to develop other aspects of their personality, even though this development should be deemed by him to be less truly feminine.

F. Mackenzie Shattock

## HERE AND THERE

## Husband "should view wife as partner"

Commissioner Sir Harry Trusted, Q.C., granting a woman a decree on the grounds of her husband's cruelty, said at Bristol Divorce Court yesterday:

"The husband has said he wanted to be master in his own home. The days when that view was generally accepted have passed, I suppose, and the position now is that the husband should regard himself as a partner with his wife in his own house, so that there may be between husband and wife a certain give and take, each trying to comply with the reasonable wishes and desires of the other."—*The Guardian*.

\* \* \*

"A Family Fast Day" organised by the National Board of Catholic Women was held on March 11th when every member of the family was asked to make an act of self denial and send the money saved to feed the hungry people of the world. Under the auspices of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, Catholic women in many countries have adopted a particular area. Last year Austria collected the equivalent of £50,000 in one day. This country has adopted the island of Dominica, B.W.I., where the Social League of Catholic Women, under Sister Mary Alicia has courses for mothers—and also for fathers.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

- Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church.** By Hubert Jedin. (Nelson, 21s.)
- Apparitions of Our Lady.** By Louis Lochet. (Nelson, 15s.)
- The Empty Shrine.** By William E. Barrett. (Heinemann, 18s.)
- The Religious Orders of Men.** By Jean Canu. (Burns Oates, 8s. 6d.)
- What is Canon Law?** By René Metz. (Burns Oates, 8s. 6d.) Both Faith and Fact Books.

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