

WOMEN'S SERVICE  
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THE

# 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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Price Twopence.

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.

## What a Frenchwoman Thinks

By MAGDELEINE LEROY

In France it was Olympe de Gouges who in 1791 (one year before Mary Woolstonecraft in England) was the protagonist of the feminist movement. But her ideas were still too new to conquer public opinion. Napoleon acted as extinguisher: some articles of his code evoke for feminists the inscription over the gates of Dante's *Inferno* "Leave here all hope." The principal articles of the French law affecting women are in flagrant contradiction with the famous principles of liberty, equality and sovereignty of the people, which were proclaimed in 1789 and developed during the nineteenth century.

Frenchwomen, however, were not long discouraged. The first important feminist association in France was the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes*, which was founded in 1870 and patronised by Victor Hugo. Development had begun. And in spite of the disciplinary rod held out by the Code Napoléon, no woman in the world has ever been better educated and, in fact if not in law, more emancipated than was the Frenchwoman at the end of the nineteenth century. The first woman doctor and the first woman lawyer of modern times were French.

The changes which occurred everywhere last century recall the fable of the frog and mark man's failure. Not only could he no longer supply the needs of the unmarried women of his family, but, circumstances having made his own struggle for life severe, he said to all women: "Get a living for yourselves as best you can but don't compete with me; my fight is too hard already. Content yourselves with the badly paid work we men don't want, or else find yourselves a protector, and then keep quiet. We men are stronger than you."

For while the origin of anti-feminism is psychological and the origin of feminism philosophical, the reasons for the expansion of feminism are economic. Because of the new economic conditions, woman from the nineteenth century onwards has not been satisfied with the influence she has exercised on man in private life from the beginning of time.

A problem poses itself in our day: is it preferable to adapt psychology to economy, demanding of men that they regard women as their competitors and give them fair play, or to adapt economy to psychology? The latter solution has two variants only: either woman must be sent back, literally, to her spindle, a clean sweep being made of all technical progress and mediaeval economy being restored; or else—a yet more brutal alternative—the Hitlerian conception which regards woman as the provider of warriors must be adopted.

Totalitarian propaganda has undoubtedly been more effective than is alleged, for there are those who still discuss seriously what rights women are to have in public

life in the future. Yet these very debaters have accepted the large part played by women in public life during the war and the occupation, have asked them to assume responsible positions, to take up arms, to run the risk of torture, deportation and death. Are the works of peace less important than the works of war? It is natural to ask whether the men who are drawing up anti-feminist plans are numbered among the heroes of the war and the resistance. One recalls the "Kermesse Héroïque"—the men who gave up their privileges as males while there was danger, and were ready to claim them more violently than ever once the time of trial had passed.

I have not declared war on men, first because that is not the way to convince them of the value of women's co-operation, but also because, more and more, they are becoming feminist. Not indeed for love of justice! They are feminist when they are strong enough not to be afraid of women and when their vanity does not blind them to their own interest.

In the labour world, the International Labour Office and the trades unions are now supporting women's claims. Workers know that the conditions of economic life in general, and those of the labour world in particular, are not improved by shifting the incidence of unemployment, and they are acquainted with the moral and economic disasters which follow on discrimination against women, whether by underpaying them, by restricting their work or otherwise.

As for family life: an increasing number of men of all classes, the clergy included, are supporting the feminist organisations—not only fathers of families who would rather give a dowryless daughter the chance of independence than find her a rich husband, not only intending husbands who fear lest their economic situation be their principal attraction, but all those men who have at last understood that the prestige of the family can be neither maintained nor raised while this institution is based on an injustice to one of its co-founders, the mother's personality being diminished in that she is obliged to cede part of her value as a human being.

A Dominican has written: "To renounce this self-development is always disastrous, both as it affects the husband or wife, neither of whom should ever exhaust the intellectual and psychological resources of his mate, and as it affects the children, whose culture, however broad it may be in point of things known, should never outclass their parents' culture in point of quality and depth of judgment."\*

\*Father Carré in *Vie Intellectuelle*, 25th December, 1936, p. 350.

## Notes and Comments

Answering questions in the House of Commons on 26th September by Mrs. Cazalet Keir, Mrs. Tate and Mr. W. J. Brown, the Prime Minister said, "I am glad to be able to announce that Mr. Justice Asquith will act as Chairman of the Royal Commission (on Equal Pay) and I hope to be able to give the names of members of the Commission in a short time." He rejected a subsequent suggestion by Mrs. Cazalet Keir that he should consider accepting the recommendations of the Committee of 1919 and thus avoid further delay.

Once more we express our indignation at the Government's procrastination, more especially as victory is now in sight, and the post-war settlement should not be held up by argument on principles of justice which should have been settled long ago. Has not the government within the last eight years been defeated twice on this issue? Are we not fighting a war for democracy?

The Government scheme for social security has been published as a White Paper (Cmd. 6550) in order that Parliament and people may express their views on it. We ask our readers to buy (price 6d.) and study it and to communicate their views to their M.P.s and to us. Our own preliminary and cursory reading has shown us that the basic injustice of inequality, between men and women, of contributions and benefits, which is in our present insurance law and in the Beveridge Plan, persists in the new scheme. As regards married women: under this scheme, if they are not gainfully employed, they are not directly insured and receive no sickness or unemployment benefit; if they are gainfully employed, and live with their husbands, they receive these benefits at a lower rate than spinsters, separated wives and men. "These conditions," says the White Paper, referring to special regulations for married women, "may seem elaborate and in some respects restrictive." We suggest that such character might be avoided by the direct insurance of married women, as this was recommended in a resolution passed at our meeting on the Beveridge Plan (see *Catholic Citizen* December 1943). The provisions of the new scheme which affect widows are questionable. Like the Beveridge Plan it fixes the age of retirement at 65 for men and at 60 for women (Why?). It goes counter to the considered opinion of the women's organisations where it suggests paying family allowances through the father. On the other hand, it seems to correct the failure of the Beveridge Plan definitely to provide for the children of unmarried women. Further study of the new scheme would doubtless evoke further criticism.

Another White Paper (Cmd. 6551 Price 3d.) expounds the new government scheme for insurance against industrial injury. This would award benefits to women on the same basic rates as to men, flat rate benefits being paid for injury and not for loss of earning power. On the ground that the proposed allowances for dependents are payable mainly to, or in respect of, the dependents of male workmen, women's contributions are fixed at a lower rate than those of men. The scheme recognises that single women as well as single men may have adult dependents, in respect of whom allowances and pensions will be payable on equal terms.

We received, too late for our last issue, a moving appeal from the women of Poland. We welcome the expression in the Prime Minister's speech on 29th September of his hope and belief that Poland would be assured "those conditions of strength, sovereignty and independence as we have all three (the great powers) proclaimed as our aim and as our resolve."

## International Notes

### DON LUIGI STURZO

Members will be pleased to know that in honour of Don Sturzo's Golden Jubilee the Luigi Sturzo Foundation for Sociological Studies has been established in the U.S.A. "People and Freedom" tells us that Don Sturzo's jubilee was "made the occasion of a public manifestation in expression of admiration and esteem for the greatest living Christian Democrat." Don Sturzo has transferred all personal gifts received from friends in America to the endowment fund of the new foundation which bears his name. St. Joan's Alliance will always remember with gratitude that in the programme of the Italian Popular Party, which he founded, "Votes for Women" was given a prominent place. We congratulate Don Sturzo, whom we are proud to number among our members, on the liberation of Central and Southern Italy.

**Africa.** Congratulations to Miss Alakija, the first West African woman to pass the London School of Economics Social Science Examination. We wish her every success in her future work.

**British West Indies.** In the debate on colonial administration on July 20th, Dr. Morgan revealed that the St. Kitt's sugar factory has for the last thirty years never earned less than 100 to 1,000 per cent. a year. "Yet the wages of the workers, especially the women, remain at a shilling a day. . . . They dare not leave because there is no other sugar factory on the island. There is no housing on the estate because there is no land available—it is all used for sugar."

**Eire.** The four women recently elected to the new Dail are widows of deputies and were returned for their husbands' seats. So far, not one of these members has shown any interest in the Woman's Movement. In the Senate, Mrs. Concannon topped the vote in the National University election. She is a strong party woman and well able to express independent views. The two other women in the Senate were nominated by Mr. De Valera (who nominates eleven members), Miss Margaret Pearse, sister of Patrick Pearse, the leader of the 1916 insurrection, who was executed, and Miss M. Kennedy.

**India.** We are glad to note that in the reconstruction plans Mr. Amery stated that the education plans aim at the provision over a number of years of universal compulsory free education for all boys and girls from the ages of six to fourteen.

**Morocco.** *Le Mouvement Féministe* (Geneva) reports a welcome reform in the organisation of schools for little Muslim girls, by a decree passed on 17th November, 1943, by the French Committee of Liberation. The curriculum is to be the same as in primary schools for boys. The difficulty of the lack of Muslim women teachers has been temporarily overcome by the appointment of men teachers until women have been trained.

**U.S.A.** The National Council of Catholic Women has once again opposed the Equal Rights Amendment to be incorporated in the Constitution of the United States of America. They are entitled to their opinion, but their statement that such an amendment would "endanger the home and working woman" is fantastic. We take our stand rather with the Rev. Francis J. Haas, former chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, who says: "Experience has abundantly shown that what justice demands—namely, equality of opportunity and absence of segregation and discrimination in the field of employment—is amply practicable." Father Haas, it is true, was speaking of race discrimination, but the principle he states applies also to sex discrimination.

## Protest Against Maisons Tolérées

The following letter was sent on July 20th by the Alexandria Council of Churches to the Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Ships in Algiers. A copy has been received by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. The letter is so revealing that we publish it in full with no comment, saving that we express our admiration for the Council's action. Our support goes without saying.

"At a meeting of the Alexandria Council of Churches held on 6th May, 1944, and attended by His Beatitude Christoforos II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, Church of England, Church of Scotland, American Presbyterian Church, Coptic Church, also by representatives of the Chaplains' Departments of the R.A.F. and Army, it was decided to protest to the British Naval Authorities against the existence in Alexandria of "Controlled Houses"—i.e., brothels intended for the use of British Naval personnel and inspected by Naval Surgeons.

"I am therefore directed to represent to you the following views of the Council.

"The Council, realising that arguments may be advanced in favour of the continuation of such houses on the grounds of expediency, considers that principles are at stake which cannot be surrendered. We are confessedly

at war to end the reign of policies of expediency in national and international affairs; our propaganda tells us continually that we are fighting for the maintenance of Christian civilisation. The existence of such houses lays the sincerity of our professions open to question.

"Still more important in the views of the Council, however, is the effect of the existence of such houses on men coming out from home to serve on this station. All chaplains and civilian clergy can testify to the fact that many men who have lived clean and decent lives at home, and might well have continued to do so here, have been tempted by the existence of such houses to betray their wives and families. This temptation owes its strength to the assurance that such houses are 'safe,' as also to the fact that men illogically reason that since the Naval Authorities have approved them, there can be nothing wrong in frequenting them. Thus their existence tends to pervert a man's moral outlook.

"The Council is informed that Alexandria is the only station where such houses exist. It earnestly requests you, therefore, to take action to close them, believing that though we shall emerge from this war as victors, if in the meantime we sever ourselves from the basis of our civilisation and culture, we shall not have achieved the end for which we have been at war."

### THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S CHARTER

On March 1st, 1944, a deputation from certain Australian women's organisations presented the Australian Women's Charter at Canberra and discussed its various clauses with the appropriate Ministers.

The Charter, designed to focus public attention on reforms for which women are striving, is based on resolutions adopted by a conference of ninety women's organisations throughout Australia, held in the previous autumn under the chairmanship of Mrs. Jessie Street of Sydney.

Among its twenty-eight clauses, many deal with the equality programme common to feminist organisations throughout the world—equal status, equal pay, equal nationality rights, etc.

As regards the position of mothers and/or home makers, the Charter, "believing that economic independence strengthens character and develops a greater sense of responsibility, whereas dependent economic status denies liberty and opportunity and justice to the individual," recommends a minimum personal endowment of thirty shillings a week, allotted on the same principle as child endowments.

Comprehensive programmes for health, education and housing are outlined and suggestions made for increase in the birthrate.

The Charter comes down uncompromisingly against all forms of regulated prostitution and in favour of adequate facilities for the free and secret treatment of venereal diseases.

It demands that the Aborigines be provided with all means for a secure and prosperous life, that the potential equality of the Aboriginal race be recognised, that their education be directed to their preparation for the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship and include technical and other training, and that they have the opportunity to use this training.

We understand that the Charter was discussed at a Conference in Melbourne at the end of September, at which delegates from St. Joan's Alliance were present. We await with interest their report and any amendments which may have been incorporated in the Charter.

### WELCOME HOME TO DR. SUMMERSKILL

A meeting of women's organisations, called by the Married Women's Association to welcome home Dr. Summerskill from her mission to Australia and New Zealand as the woman delegate of the Empire Parliamentary Union, was held on the 21st September at the Y.W.C.A. Two-minute speeches were made by the representatives of the organisations present, including St. Joan's Alliance.

Dr. Summerskill told the meeting that during her trip she had covered 25,000 miles. She had had the honour of being the first British woman M.P. to address the United States Senate and Congress and she had addressed the various Australian Parliaments.

In Australia and New Zealand she received an "overwhelming welcome." She said that the women of Australia are politically minded and very hard working and that they follow closely the activities of the British women's organisations.

St. Joan's Alliance was glad to have good news of Dame Enid Lyons.

**Czechoslovakian Party.** The Council of Czech Women in Great Britain gave, on September 15th, a delightful party which the Chairman and Secretary of the Alliance attended. Madame Jurneckova-Vorel, M.P., who presided, said that of the first party of Czechs who are to return to their country—they are on the eve of departure—thirty-five are women. They are led by a distinguished botanist who is temporarily giving up her scientific work here in order to help in the restoration of her country. Thanks were expressed to those who had made possible the training of Czech women in social work, among them the Liaison Committee, and Miss Youngusband who was in charge of the studies. Mrs. Bompas referred to the tragic loss the International Women's Movement had suffered by the execution of Madame Plaminkova. She pleaded for a just balance of the sexes in post-war organisation. The President said that she hoped the friendly relations established between the women of Czechoslovakia and of Great Britain would always continue.

## REVIEWS

**The Reed of God.** By Caryll Houselander. (Sheed & Ward, 6s.).

It is difficult to find words in which to convey the unique quality of this book. In the mirror held up by Miss Houselander those things which are for our good become the things we want. Religion is too often thought of in a merely negative way, even by those who are of the household of the Faith—as a number of prohibitions, a saint being the one who keeps the rules best. But: "His meaning is Love." Saints are the great lovers; a little love of this kind serves to set the world on fire.

"The Reed of God" is Our Lady. "She was a reed through which the Eternal Love was to be piped as a shepherd's song." We contemplate her and "in contemplating her we find intimacy with God, the law which is the lovely yoke of the one irresistible love."

The beauty and originality, the singular integrity of approach must refresh our war jaded spirits. This book contains more than mere beauty however, for in it may be found "a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting." C.S.

**From One Generation to Another—1839-1944**

By Hilda Martindale, C.B.E. (Allen and Unwin, 12/6).

This book contains the memoirs of three remarkable women, a mother and her two daughters.

Mrs. Louisa Martindale, born in Victoria's reign, realised early in life that the world was very unjust to women. As a pioneer of great activity she set to work to right this wrong and has left her name to later generations as that of a great and successful reformer. She joined the suffrage ranks early in her career, but was always a non-militant, working as a rule from her home at Horsted Keynes in Sussex.

Her great keenness for the usefulness and success of her daughters would have been gratified by their careers. The elder, Louise, is at the moment the well-known Harley street surgeon, and holds many degrees as well as the decoration of the C.B.E. Her second daughter, Hilda, the author of this book, has proved herself a very gifted Civil Servant, who has worked untiringly, first as a Factory Inspector, and later at the Home Office and Treasury, where she used her experience. Late in life, Mrs. Martindale had the great pleasure of journeying, accompanied by both her daughters, to Toronto, to attend a great Women's International Congress. Here she heard her two daughters address crowded meetings, the one choosing as her subject—"Women in Medicine" and the other "Women in the Civil Service." We warmly recommend this book to our members and their friends, as well as to those who are contemplating entering the medical profession or are aiming at reaching the higher branches of the Civil Service. K.F.G.

Mr. Ernest Oldmeadow, in his book on Cardinal Bourne (volume II), pays a tribute to our Alliance for its "correctness and Catholic loyalty." We wish he could have found space to mention, in his chapter on Cardinal Bourne as papal legate to the quinqucentenary celebrations in Rouen of Saint Joan's martyrdom, that the Cardinal was president of the English *amende honorable*, which was organised from our office.

We note that the first holder of the new Chair of Child Welfare is unlikely to be a woman because "there are not many women who have the specialised knowledge and also the ability to pass it on".

Lady Astor's silver jubilee as first woman M.P. to sit in the House of Commons occurs on December 1st. The committee which organised the silver jubilee of Votes for Women is organising a presentation from the women's organisations to her on that date (4 to 6 p.m.). All particulars will be in our next issue.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Annual Mass at St. Patrick's, Soho, for the deceased members, associates and benefactors of St. Joan's Alliance will be at 10.30 on Sunday, November 5th.

Miss MARGARET BOND

Hon. Secretary of the Hansard Society, will speak on

## PARLIAMENT DAY BY DAY

At the INTERVAL CLUB, 22 Dean Street, Soho  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd at 7 p.m.

Mrs. HALPERN in the Chair.

DINNER (2/6) at 6-15 for those who notify Miss Barry before October 30th.

\* \* \*

Will members book the date, Saturday, December 9th, from 12.30 until blackout, for our **Bring-and-Buy Christmas Sale** at St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square? The Secretary would be grateful for early offers of help in selling and in preparing and serving refreshments.

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

From the "Catholic Citizen," October 15th, 1919.

It is with the profoundest relief that we are able to record that the iniquitous "packet system" is condemned by this influential committee (Inter-Departmental Committee on Infectious Diseases in Connection with Demobilisation). They find that the issue of prophylactic packets tends to give rise to a false sense of security, and thus to encourage the taking of risks which would not be otherwise incurred, and the neglect of facilities for early treatment when available, and, in certain circumstances, might even increase the spread of disease. They call special attention to the failure of the Contagious Diseases Act in reducing disease, a method no less vaunted in its time than is the use of prophylactic packets at the present time. . . . The Chairman states that he has been asked, on behalf of all the representatives of the different Departments who assisted at various times in the deliberations on this subject, to record their unanimous view that the true safeguard against these diseases is individual continence and a high standard of moral life. . . . By the decisions of this Committee the materialists, who think only of the physical and ignore the spiritual welfare of the nation, have suffered a heavy defeat; and they have been defeated not only on moral but on scientific and medical grounds.—Leonora de Alberti in "A Defeat for the Materialist."

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