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THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

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Photo by
W. A. Mansell & Co.
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“ST. JOAN OF ARC, PRAY FOR US.”

St. Joan of Arc.

By BARBARA BARCLAY CARTER.

It is now five hundred years since, on May 30th, Joan the Maid, the country child to whom her King owed crown and kingdom, was burned alive in the market place of Rouen.

She was then sixteen. For six years her Saints had been her guides and counsellors, since the day when at noon in her father's garden a great light shone, and the voice of Michael the Archangel told her of "the great pitifulness of the realm of France," telling her also how salvation would come only when she herself led the French hosts against the English invaders, till conviction came to her that "for this she was born." At seventeen she had set forth—knowing even then that she would "last but a year or a little more," though it seems that at times she dreamed of a great Crusade of united Christendom against the menacing Turks. All she had prophesied had come to pass; the deliverance of Orleans, the crowning of the Dauphin at Rheims, while those other prophecies, the reconquest of Paris, a France clean of invasion, fruits of her sowing she might not live to see, would be accomplished before many years had gone by.

She had passed as a vision from a fairer age among the rough soldiers of her time. They would tell afterwards, with something of awe, of her grace and beauty, her gay countenance and ready tears, her valiant spirit, her quick compassion even for her foes, her endurance and power in leadership, and how men were "set on fire by her words, by the love of God that was in her"; till she seems to incarnate all the dreams of chivalry, then fading from

the world—she, whom Merlin, so legend told, had foreseen as a warrior maid 'sent for the healing of nations.'

Austerer trial than battle awaited her—the long months when she lay in prison and in chains, abandoned by her own party, placed by an ecclesiastical tribunal at the mercy of her English enemies, begging in vain to be allowed to hear Mass, for the Sacraments, denied her till the very morning of her death. Neither the pitiless interrogation, nor the threat of torture, nor the imminent flame, could shake her loyalty to the King who had forsaken her, or wring from her denial of her Voices, of that God-given certitude that from God they came. It was for the sake of truth, in the name of truth she died.

"In flame to the end," said Brother Isambart, the Dominican who held the cross before her eyes, "she never ceased to confess the Holy Name of Jesus, imploring the aid of the Saints of Paradise. And when she gave up the ghost and her head fell, she proffered the Holy Name of Jesus."

Three months before her Voices had prophesied this culmination in veiled words, promising her for that very day "deliverance with great victory," bidding her: "Set no store by your martyrdom you will come thereby to the Kingdom of Paradise." "What do you mean by your martyrdom?" Cauchon had asked her, and she had answered: "I suppose the pain and sorrow I suffer in prison." She had not understood then the manner of that deliverance, nor how great her victory.

Notes and Comments.

We rejoice to be able to inform our readers that on the 30th of this month, the 500th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of our Patron, the first number of the French edition of *The Catholic Citizen* will be published in Paris. It will bear the title "Ste. Jeanne d'Arc, Organe de l'Alliance Féministe et civique Ste. Jeanne d'Arc."

* * * *

The French section of the Alliance will have the same objects as ours, but since our sisters in France are still voteless, the first object will be, the vote on the same terms as it is or may be given to men. We owe this new foundation to the zeal and energy of our member, Mlle. Lenoël of Orleans.

* * * *

As we go to press we hear the glad news that His Eminence Cardinal Bourne has been appointed Papal Legate at the Commemoration of the Quincentenary of St. Joan of Arc in Rouen.

* * * *

St. Joan's S.P.A. is sending ten delegates to Rouen. The foundation stone of the new Chapel of St. Joan will be blessed in the Cathedral by the Archbishop of Rouen, on May 30th, in the presence of Cardinal Bourne, and many bishops from other countries. A full report of the Quincentenary Celebrations will be given in next month's issue.

* * * *

We offer our sincere thanks to the "Woman's Leader" of May 1st, for a fine article on our Patron Saint in which a very generous tribute is paid to our Alliance.

* * * *

We note with pleasure that the women of Bermuda have had some effect on the Colonial Office, if not on their own Government. Lord Passfield in a dispatch to the Government of Bermuda alludes to the small proportion of registered electors in Bermuda, less than six per cent. of the total population, an abnormally low figure. He points out also that the franchise has now been very generally granted to women in the British Empire, and that in this respect the position in Bermuda would appear to call for review. Lord Passfield further says that he would be gratified if the Bermuda Legislature could see its way in the

near future to consider the advisability of such an extension of the local franchise as would bring it into closer conformity with contemporary British institutions elsewhere. We hope the women of Bermuda will soon be celebrating their enfranchisement.

* * * *

Since the above was written the "Times" of the 5th May reports that the House of Assembly has refused to approve of Lord Passfield's suggestion that women should be given the vote. The Opposition contributed nothing to the debate except to remark "Nonsense" to the speakers' arguments, and otherwise observed a contemptuous silence. Some women are considering how to take drastic action.

* * * *

We are glad to note the serious manner in which the Minister of Health spoke of maternal mortality in the House recently. In the existing state of knowledge it was impossible he said, to justify the death of 3,000 mothers a year, it made maternity the most dangerous occupation in the country. Not less than one half, if not more, of these maternal deaths were preventable, it was a national scandal which the public could not continue to tolerate. In the three months since he had issued a circular to local authorities, something was being done to co-operate with the Ministry. Mr. Greenwood enumerated the ways in which many local authorities were improving their maternity services. He was keeping in touch with local authorities to see that, as far as possible, they lived up to their responsibilities.

* * * *

Our member Mme. Gemähling represented the Alliance at the International Congress, held at Strasbourg-Colmar, from April 30 to May 2nd. The subjects discussed were the general position of prostitution in Europe and Colonies, free or compulsory treatment of venereal disease, the traffic in women.

* * * *

We offer our cordial good wishes to the Westminster Catholic Federation, which celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year. There will be Solemn High Mass on 21st June, at Westminster Cathedral, a Spiritual Conference in the Cathedral Hall, etc., particulars from the Secretary, 5 Chancery-lane, W.C.2.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181

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

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St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

Readers of the "Catholic Citizen" are well acquainted with the manifold activities of St. Joan's S.P.A., formerly the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, but this month we hope to reach a new audience, who may wonder why there should be further need of a feminist society. Suffrage they say is granted, what do these women want now? Many people, of course, even outside the feminist movement, know different. The late Rabbi Schonfeld, for instance, has recorded his opinion that those who regard votes for women as a solution of the problem of women's position, might just as well try and stop a volcano with a cork from a wine bottle. We attach more importance to a vote than that, none the less we are glad to remember that suffrage speakers in the old days always emphasised the fact that the vote was a weapon which women needed if they were to win the reforms in which they were particularly interested. Anyone who worked as a voteless agitator, will fully realise the difference now, when women are able to question prospective members of Parliament, as citizens, whose votes count. Many Bills have reached the Statute Book, which would have been still-born, but for the backing of women voters. But much remains to be done.

The object of St. Joan's S.P.A. is to band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social, and economical equality between men and women and to further the work of Catholic women as citizens. A wide field, indeed, giving scope for the energies of any Catholic man or woman who realises the importance of citizenship, and of being politically alert.

Last month we published the resolutions passed at our Annual Meeting, these dealt with equal political rights—peeresses in their own right are still excluded from the House of Lords; equal moral standard; St. Joan's S.P.A. asks for the repeal of the Solicitation Laws, under which women may be arrested upon a charge of molesting men, and convicted on the evidence of the police alone, the persons alleged to have been annoyed not being summoned to court. The injustice of these laws was demonstrated a few weeks ago, when a perfectly innocent woman, waiting for her husband, was arrested by the police and kept in the cells till 12.25 a.m. St. Joan's S.P.A. stands for the abolition of the iniquitous system of State Regulation of Vice, and of special laws directed solely against prostitutes, which simply bolster up a double standard of morality.

Other subjects on our programme are the question of maternal mortality, in which Catholics ought to take special interest, the high death rate among mothers is a disgrace, and has been shown to be largely preventable; unemployment among women, slavery which still exists in parts of the British Empire; nationality of married women; Catholic Education, and the menace of Birth Control.

Besides these many questions, St. Joan's S.P.A. works to obtain for women equal pay and equal opportunities, the most difficult of all to achieve. Among the many ramifications of this problem, the freedom of married women to decide for themselves whether or not they shall engage in paid employment, and the protective legislation, which handicaps

International Notes.

La Bonne Parole (March), Montreal, has an article on the reform of the Civil Law dealing with a Bill recently passed by the Legislature putting a married woman in a far better position than formerly, especially as regards her right to her own salary and wages. She is not, of course, dispensed from contributing to the upkeep of the household according to her means, but no longer says *La Bonne Parole*, will a husband who has disappeared, be able on his return to go to the bank and seize his wife's deposit in his right as Head of the family community, nor will he be able to seize the furniture and house acquired by his wife's industry. *La Fédération Saint Jean Baptiste*, and other Societies have been working for many years to obtain this and other legal reforms to improve the position of women in Quebec.

* * * *

According to press reports the new government of Spain has appointed Señorita Victoria Kent, a well-known barrister, to be Director-General of Prisons. The Señorita Kent distinguished herself at the Yaca trial in which she defended one of the accused officers.

* * * *

Equal Rights, organ of the National Women's Party, reports that the Cotton Textile Institute of Georgia, discontinued night work for women last March as a protective measure. Miss Casey, a member of the Industrial Council of the National Women's Party, is organising the women thus deprived of their work to agitate against this kindly protection.

* * * *

The Policewomen's Review for April, gives a picture and an account of the largest woman's prison in Europe, the Maria Nostra Prison in Hungary, lying amongst the Carpathian Mountains. It is under the sole charge of Nuns, the gate-keeper being the only man employed on the premises. It is not unusual to find Nuns on a prison staff in Catholic countries, but in this case the Mother Superior is the Governor with fifty-five sisters under her to perform all duties. The doctors are women. The Review says: "There must be a specially harmonious atmosphere created by a staff vowed to service."

The same issue contains an interesting article on Children's Courts abroad.

A.A.B.

women in industry, are, perhaps the most important. St. Joan's S.P.A. believes in protection for industrial workers, but knows that to impose restrictions on women only, is to treat them permanently as minors, and to lower their status as workers. Therefore, with other feminist societies, we declare that the only policy which safeguards individual liberty and responsibility is that of basing all labour regulations and restrictions upon the nature of the work and not upon the sex of the worker.

There is also the international side of St. Joan's S.P.A., we have already many contacts in different countries, and we know that our work here, and the "Catholic Citizen" are a great help to numbers of Catholics in many parts of the world. In another column we report the foundation of a French Section of the Alliance, and a French edition of the "Catholic Citizen."

Founded on March 25th, 1911, with St. Joan of Arc as our Patron, we celebrate our 21st birthday next year.

In her presidential address to the Women's Freedom League recently, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence sounds a warning, she says, very rightly, that a very determined attack is being made upon the whole position of women, in the professional, business, and industrial world, she points to the jealousy of trade unions, the jealousy existing in the teaching profession, and elsewhere, but says if our struggle is bound up, as we believe, with the eternal principles of justice, our ultimate victory is assured. We of St. Joan's S.P.A. hold that belief, and, holding it, confidently call for new helpers.

L. DE ALBERTI.

By E. SYLVIA PANKHURST

SAVE THE MOTHERS

"This is one of the most important questions of the day, and is surrounded by a certain amount of obscurity."

"I have looked with much interest through the proposals you are putting forward dealing with Maternal Welfare."

"Your suggestions are admirable."

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, ARTHUR HENDERSON, and MARGARET McMILLAN, respectively, in letters to the author.

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Reviews.

SOME MORAL QUESTIONS.

The noisy propaganda of the advocates of artificial birth control, has evoked some very pertinent replies from those who knowing it to be morally wrong, can see the evils which must necessarily follow.

Catholic speakers and writers on this subject cannot do better than to study the two books of Father Henry Davis, S.J.—*Birth Control Ethics* (1s.), and *Birth Control, the fallacies of Dr. M. Stopes* (1s. 6d.), both published by Messrs. Burns, Oates and Washbourne. Father Davis writes with commendable frankness and his arguments are the stronger because never put forward in acrimonious language.

We have also received a paper read by Dr. M. I. Finucane at a debate on Constructive Birth Control, in December, 1929. Dr. Finucane spoke mainly as a medical man with long years of experience among women and children of the working classes, with special experience of midwifery, and in the light of that experience (and in the name of moral law) emphatically condemned the philosophy, teaching and practice of the advocates of Constructive Birth Control.

"Into Their Company," by a Medical Woman, a girl and a wife, Burns, Oates and Washbourne (1s. 6d.). This book is intended to do for girls what in the Difficult Commandment, Father Martindale, S.J., who writes the introduction, has done for young men. The writers have treated a difficult subject well, and have good advice to give. We do not wish to be churlish, but in spite of protest we do feel that they are a little afraid of the modern woman and her independence. The meaning is not clear of the paragraph (p.81) in which we are told that "in some periods of history women have been treated as servants; in others, there will be—as at present—a tendency to stress the absolute equality of the sexes, and insist on the right of women to enter any profession. The Catholic Church stands firm on the truth midway between both extremes; woman was not made to be man's servant but 'his equal' and his mate." What does "midway" mean here? Since the Church teaches that woman is man's equal, why jib at the word equality? As to the professions the Church claims no right to decide which of the learned professions are suitable for women. A modern girl will wonder why this paragraph was thought necessary.

L. de A.

COUNCIL FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The Annual Report of the Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, to which St. Joan's S.P.A. is affiliated, proves once more the utility of such a body. No opportunity is lost in pressing for the appointment of women as delegates to the Assembly, or to the Conference of the International Labour Office, or for the advancement of women in the Secretariat. The resolutions passed at the last Annual Meeting dealt with such matters, and also urged that women should be included among the technical advisers who accompany the British representative to the Council of the League.

Early in the year, following on the Conference on Slavery organized by the C.R.W.L.N., a deputation from the Council, which included Miss Rathbone, M.P., and Miss Nina Boyle, was received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Lord Cecil, the speaker, urged that the domestic slavery of women should be included in the terms of reference of any Commission set up to consider the question of slavery, and that women should be included on any such Commission.

We congratulate the Governors of the Birmingham General Hospital on their reversal of the decision taken last year that married women should not be eligible for appointment on the medical staff, and that those marrying during their tenure of office should be dismissed. Letters of protest against this decision had been received from the Medical Women's Federation, the Birmingham and District Medical Women's Association and other societies of women. The Bishop of Birmingham spoke strongly in favour of married women being allowed to retain their positions, he did not believe a modern community would permanently accept the principle that a woman should be dismissed from a position she was well qualified to hold solely because she had children following marriage. Dr. Ethel Shakespear put forward the view we have always taken that the woman herself, in conjunction with her husband, is the right person to decide whether or no she can carry on her profession.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

OPEN MEETING

at

St. Patrick's Club Room,
SOHO SQUARE, W.

(Entrance in porch of Church.)

Monday, June 8th, 1931,

at 6 p.m.

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Dr. Fairfield, C.B.E., & others

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LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

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The meeting of the month was held on March 6th at 49 Falkner Street (by kind invitation of Mrs. Johnstone), when we had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Davsen, an Indian research student at Liverpool University, speak on "The Growth of the Nationalist Movement in India."

Nine members of the Branch attended the Annual Meeting in London on March 14th, and returned with glowing accounts of their experiences. We should like to express our thanks to the London members for their warm welcome and hospitality.

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TREASURER'S NOTE.

Many thanks to those who have sent subscriptions and donations during the past month.

We are planning to have a jumble sale shortly, so will members kindly remember the Alliance when they are overhauling their wardrobes. Particulars of the sale will be given in next month's issue.

PAULINE M. BRANDT,
Hon. Treasurer.

This note was inadvertently dropped last month:

It would be a great encouragement to the new Hon. Treasurer if those who have not yet paid subscriptions for this year would do so promptly, and thus save the office both time and trouble and expense in sending reminders.

We regret that in the list of subscriptions and donations for last year, which was published with the CITIZEN last month, there was a printer's error. On the first page, the last item in the second column should be: Miss C. M. Gordon, £5 2s. 6d., and not per Miss C. M. Gordon, £3.

PAULINE M. BRANDT.

* * * *

On May 4th the French Circle of the Lyceum Club gave a dinner in honour of St. Joan of Arc, to which the officers of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance were invited. The speakers were Mrs. Laughton Mathews, Mr. Wickham Steed, and Mr. Edward Garnett. H.E. the French Ambassador responded to the toast "H.M. the King," "The President of the French Republic," proposed by the President of the Circle Madam Robert Duché.

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Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold

Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

OBJECT.

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

MEMBERSHIP.

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 1s. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.