

THE  
CATHOLIC CITIZEN

VOLUME X., 1924.



ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,  
55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

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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.*

Vol. X, No. 1.

JANUARY 15th, 1924.

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.

## Policewomen and Immoral Offences.

INSPECTOR MRS. HAMILTON MORE NISBETT. Women's Auxiliary Service.  
(*Scottish Propaganda Officer.*)

The Women's Auxiliary Service came into being in August, 1914, under the title: "Women Police Volunteers." This title was changed in 1915 to "Women Police Service," and in May, 1921, was once more altered to the present title, which will be permanent.

The pioneer of this great reform was Miss Margaret Damer Dawson, O.B.E., the Founder and first Commandant of the Service, who died in May, 1920. Her successor, Commandant Allen, O.B.E., carries on the traditions of the Service in the same way, and is greatly beloved and respected by the officers and rank and file of the Service.

What are the traditions of the Women's Auxiliary Service?

Primarily to inaugurate a system of women police, as an official body, working with policeman, under orders of a Chief Constable, but with women officers as inspectors from time to time. The Women's Auxiliary Service would like to supply women to the Men's Police Force, just as the Q.M.A.A.C. supplied women to the Army—for women's work. Police women should be attached to every police force to undertake the following duties:

- (1) To have entire charge of women while they are detained in a police station.
- (2) To take statements from women and children, especially in cases of indecent assault.

- (3) To attend cases heard "in camera" where a woman or little girl is concerned, in order to give moral support to them.
- (4) To travel with female offenders.
- (5) To staff juvenile courts.
- (6) To patrol for the protection of children and young women.

I do not propose in this short article to deal with the five first reasons, but owing to the fact that women patrolling have been subject to pretty severe criticism, it might be as well to say a few words on the subject.

It is generally understood that women patrol for the sole purpose of cautioning, censuring, and even arresting those unfortunate members of their own sex who have transgressed the moral law, and this point of view is one where the Women's Auxiliary Service and the London Metropolitan Patrols differ very considerably. The laws dealing with so-called prostitutes are admittedly unjust to the female sex, and, on that account, members of the W.A.S. are very reluctant to administer them. Does the man who forgets the dignity of his manhood sufficiently to indulge in promiscuous sexual intercourse realise, I wonder, the penalty which his partner in sin will have to undergo if she is found out, while he is allowed to go free and unashamed? If he did, surely the most degenerate would have enough of the quality known as chivalry to make him hesitate

before subjecting the wretched girl to the one-sided treatment meted out by the law for this offence. She can be (and is) arrested merely for being a common prostitute and for loitering and importuning passengers for the purpose of prostitution. Once a woman is labelled "a Common Prostitute," she ceases to remain a woman or a citizen. From henceforth she is a segregated being, dealt with under laws especially drawn up to deal with her kind, regarded as something too depraved to frequent a public thoroughfare or to be a credible witness, or to be tolerated inside a public-house. While the loss of her character deprives her of the chance of making a respectable livelihood, the law decrees, that if she offers her body in the market of men's lust (where, however diseased, depraved, or unsightly she may be, she will always, sooner or later, find a purchaser), she will be imprisoned as a punishment.

How then is she to live? Well may it be said of the girl brought before a court for the first time and charged with importuning: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!" She is sent to prison for sixty days, and on the sixty-first day what is to become of her? She must live, she must sleep somewhere, she must clothe herself, but how? The only way is to offer herself on the streets again. And so the farce goes on, and presently this woman, made in the image of God Himself, becomes a hopeless, degraded, hardened, diseased jail-bird, despised and rejected by all sections of the Community except by one or two religious rescue-workers, who will hold out a kindly hand to the most degraded individual, but who are apt to lose sight of the fact that you cannot force a soul to conversion, or even to a belief in God.

And what of the man who has offered the money for the acceptance of which the woman has been so heavily punished? The law as it stands at present cannot touch him. He goes free, probably (we will hope) unconscious of the grievous treatment meted out to the woman he has sinned with. Is it any wonder that, owing to the ghastly inequality of the laws dealing with prostitution, members of the Women's Auxiliary Service shrink from administering them?

What is the remedy for prostitution?

Well, it might be made an offence for the

man to offer money for such a purpose. If it is illegal for a woman to accept money, surely it is illegal for a man to offer it? I can see no difference between that and what is known as "reset of theft," whereby the party who receives stolen goods is held as guilty as the person who steals them.

But as far as fornication itself is concerned, what right has man-made law to interfere? We cannot hope to tame the fierce passions of men and women by Act of Parliament; only the grace of God can do that. No good purpose is served by the imprisonment of women only, nor would the equal arrest of the man cause any diminution of this offence. By all means have the existing law, which forbids a man to molest a woman in the street under the Breach of Peace Act, extended to women—but as women, not as "prostitutes." Tighten up the laws dealing with sexual offences against children and young people and mental deficiencies of *both sexes*, but let us work to sweep away the laws which penalise women only and set some of them apart as "common prostitutes." So long as the young are protected and the streets kept clean and decent, man-made law has achieved all that it is able to do.

Policewomen then should patrol for the protection of little girls, for the chaperonage of respectable girls who are obliged to be out late, and incidentally, for the prevention (where possible) of sexual crime. No good purpose can be served by the meddling fussiness of well-meaning persons who interfere *when the law is not being broken*.

To ventilate hidden ulcers which eat into the private life of the Community, to hold aloft high ideals of chastity, love and marriage, and the dignity of sex; to provide a friend for the fallen, the troubled, the tempted, the destitute, to expose the inequalities of laws dealing with sexual crime, and incidentally to abolish the segregation of women as "prostitutes," and to impress upon persons of both sexes the enormous importance of an equal moral standard for men and women. These reasons, in addition to the selecting and training of suitable women for police work, underlie the enthusiasm of all members of the Women's Auxiliary Service to "carry on" by the grace of God and the help of the community.

## Notes and Comments.

### Mgr. Canon Giesswein, D.D., M.P.

In connection with Mrs. More Nisbett's article, it is important to remember that the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, appointed by the League of Nations, recommended that women police should be employed to deal with prostitution, and this recommendation was endorsed by the 4th Assembly.

The new body of experts recently appointed by the Council of the League to carry out an investigation into the question of the traffic in women and children will meet early this year. The investigation in question was first suggested by Miss Abbott, who represented the United States on the Advisory Committee. The investigation is being financed by the Bureau of Social Hygiene, U.S.A., and Dr. Abram Flexner is chairman. Unfortunately the British Government has nominated a man, Mr. W. S. Harris, of the Home Office, to represent Great Britain. We mean no personal affront to Mr. Harris when we say that we feel a woman should have been appointed. Italy, as we have already reported, is to be represented by Princess Christina Bandini.

\* \* \* \*

To whatever party they may belong, feminists will rejoice in the election to Parliament of Mr. Pethick Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence's work for the suffrage cause is too well known to our readers to need its being recalled in these columns; to have so staunch a champion of equality in the House is a great gain for women.

\* \* \* \*

We offer our cordial congratulations to our member, Miss E. Fortey, on her election to the Leicester City Council. Miss Fortey was elected unopposed in place of a retiring councillor.

### Annual Subscriptions.

Subscriptions to the C.W.S.S. and the "Catholic Citizen" are due on January 1, 1924. It saves great trouble at the office if subscribers pay punctually. The subscription to the "Catholic Citizen" is now 2/6 post free. The minimum to the Society, 1/-.

By the death of Mgr. Giesswein, of Budapest, member of the Hungarian Parliament, Chairman of the Hungarian Peace Society, and founder of the Christian Socialist Organisation in Hungary, the S.J.S.P.A. has lost one of its most faithful friends. In these troubled days his loss is indeed an irreparable one. For during the war and throughout the difficult years which have followed, he stood, with rare courage, for the principles of Christian peace and justice, as applied to practical politics, especially in international relations. So lately as last October he was among us, taking part in the Catholic Conference at Reading. The members of our Society who were present on that occasion will never forget his personal friendliness, and the warm encouragement of our aims and objects which he expressed. On one other occasion since the war, Mgr. Giesswein had visited England. He came as a delegate to the International Peace Congress and took part in the Peace Demonstration in Hyde Park. It was during this visit to London that our Society gave a dinner in his honour, and organised a meeting, at which he spoke on Peace in relation to the woman's movement. The future peace of the world, he maintained, would be ensured only when women took their full share in public life, carrying the spirit of the Christian family into the political sphere. For this reason he was an ardent feminist. At the Congress of the International Suffrage Alliance, held at Budapest in 1913, he spoke strongly in support of woman suffrage. During the last few years much of his time was spent in attending international conferences in the interests of peace. Catholic women have lost in him a true friend, loyal throughout all difficulties, unflinching in his support and sympathy when obstacles were thickest. The Catholic world as a whole has lost one of its most passionate advocates in the cause of peace.—R.I.P.

M. B.

## 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.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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MISS ISABEL WILLIS, Hon. Press Secretary.

## A New Chapter.

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Catholic Citizen* we give a few details of the work of some of our members during the Election. The policy of the Society is to help women candidates of any party, or of no party, who give satisfactory replies to the questionnaire submitted to them by the Executive Committee of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

As far as we are concerned as a Society, the chief result of the strange Election is the return to Parliament of eight women members. It is important to note that they belong to the three great parties respectively. It is generally believed that if a Labour Government assumes power, we shall see women Cabinet Ministers in Great Britain.

Whether this is so or not, it seems clear that the Election has opened a new Chapter in the Women's Movement.

Things have moved so fast in these last three years that one can scarcely conjure up the atmosphere of the days when the suffrage fight was still raging. Half-hearted supporters would tell us then that they feared once women had won the suffrage they would want to get into Parliament. Our reply was usually, that women could not creep into Parliament, through a key-hole or a window, they would have to be sent there by the electorate, and in a democratic country electors were entitled to choose their representatives.

Who among us expected to see the day when a British electorate would send women to Parliament?

This election, in which women have won seats for their parties, must definitely break down the barriers and make the road to the House of Commons easier for those who follow after.

Of the new women M.P.'s. the work of Miss Bondfield and Miss Susan Lawrence is no doubt known to our readers. The Duchess of Atholl, Conservative, is well known for social work; Lady Terrington, Liberal, says that it has been the aim of her life to represent women and children, as well as men, in Parliament; Miss Dorothy Jewson, Labour, was a keen suffragist, and is organising secretary of the National Society of Women Workers.

Lady Astor, Mrs. Wintringham, and Mrs. Phillipson, will rejoice as heartily as ourselves at being reinforced by this band of able women.

We offer our cordial congratulations to our eight women M.P.'s., and know that their election will make the fight for equality much easier.

L. DE ALBERTI.

## Annual Meeting for Members of St. Joan's S.P.A. only.

The Annual Meeting will be held on March 15; the place will be announced later. Resolutions for Agenda and nominations for Committee, duly proposed and seconded, should reach the Secretary not later than February 1. No nomination can be accepted unless the consent of the nominee shall have been previously obtained.

## International Notes.

The "Conference number" of *Equal Rights* (Nov. 24) is full of the wonderfully successful Women's Conference just held in Washington, with the deputation to President Coolidge, which evoked an unexpectedly cordial reply. To non-American women the most important incident of the Conference was undoubtedly the adoption of a resolution, moved by Mrs. Belmont, that the National Women's Party should summon and organise on a large scale, an International Women's Parliament a year hence, for the discussion of all subjects of importance to women. We shall look forward with much interest to the development of this ambitious project, which we believe our American sisters quite capable of carrying to a successful issue.

We particularly regret to note that the National Council of Catholic Women, so we gather from their *Bulletin*, are opposed to the Equal Rights amendment to be brought before Congress.

Mme. Avril de Sainte-Croix has been contributing a series of articles to *La Française* on her recent experiences in the Balkan countries. She writes with enthusiasm of the Roumanian women in their many and eager activities, especially of the National Council of Roumanian women and their President, Princess Cantacuzene. So far Roumanian women have only been promised, not given, the vote, but Mme. de Ste. Croix thinks the matter cannot be much longer delayed, and an active suffrage propaganda is in progress.

The *Mouvement Féministe* (Geneva) gives a most useful summary of the work of the International Labour Conference, more especially in relation to the question of women factory inspectors.

*Le Travail Féminin* deplores the tendency, showing itself, unhappily, in Geneva as elsewhere, to drive down women's wages to a low pre-war standard, and appeals to women to stand by each other and on no account to accept a lower salary where it is only needed as pocket-money.

It is interesting to learn from *La Femme Belge* that the cantonal authorities in Swit-

zerland have been doing a great deal for the education of girls out of work during the period of serious unemployment through which the country has been passing. St. Gall went so far as to organise a boarding school for unemployed work-girls, which was highly successful until, unhappily, the central authorities at Berne intervened and ordained that all girls out of work should be shoved, whether they liked it or not, into domestic service.

Curiously enough, eight women have recently been elected to the Austrian Chamber, precisely the same number as has been elected to our own House of Commons.

V. M. C.

## SUFFRAGE IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER.

It seems, as we go to press, that French women are not as near their political enfranchisement as we had all begun to hope. The discussion of M. Justin Godard's Suffrage Bill in the Chamber has become hopelessly involved by the simultaneous introduction of a Vote Familial Bill by M. Roulleaux-Dugage. Unhappily the Chamber is showing itself much more favourable to the latter than to the former scheme, and it has been accorded parliamentary precedence. As far as we can understand—French parliamentary procedure is so different from our own, that it is not easy to follow—M. Godard's Bill has now no chance even of discussion. The proposed Vote Familial measure is, from the Suffrage standpoint, thoroughly unsatisfactory, and here we are completely in accord with the views vigorously expressed by Mme. Jane Misme in *La Française*. It is true the Bill will confer the vote on women at 21, but it gives to the husband alone an extra vote for every child his wife bears him. It is only as a widow that a mother can dispose of her children's votes. Moreover, we hear on good authority that the Senate is most unfavourably disposed towards the Vote Familial, and will certainly reject any Suffrage Bill on such lines. In that case nothing more could be done till after the General Election next March, when the whole controversy will have to be started afresh in the new Chamber.

## St. Joan's S.P.A. and the Election.

### ELECTIONEERING FOR LADY ASTOR.

The contest in the Sutton Division of Plymouth between Lady Astor, Conservative, and Captain Brennan, Labour, had some lively moments in it, as the latter, with his supporters, fought furiously for the seat.

The Catholics, I am pleased to state, were this time, with few exceptions, ready to vote for Lady Astor, therefore they left me free to canvass "doubtfuls."

The people of Plymouth—I fell in love with them—have a natural kindness and simplicity which is refreshing to the Londoner.

Young mothers, under thirty, having from one child to four, were numerous. One beautiful mother with three equally charming infants, thought it a pity that the Government should insult the "best half," she knew more of politics than her "silly husband" did, and he just had to do as she told him.

I managed to induce two women to take Captain Brennan's face out of their windows; one said her husband would replace it when he came home, but she would have it down every time he went out; another outwitted this. "My husband has Brennan in that side window, I'll have Astor in this"; I had to write in large letters, *Father—Mother*, which were placed over the two pictures to show whose choice each was.

Polling day was the most exciting. I had charge of Mount Street Committee Rooms, and voting took place in the schoolrooms opposite. At eight in the morning the voters began a steady flow to and from the school-room, and the women turned up splendidly, also early.

Local helpers were keen to work, and Plymouth is not behind in this respect; they showed a spirit of service and intense interest and zealotry all through the fight; and on polling day they never tired till all was over. Those who had promised to vote for our member had to be reminded till they did it. Sick, lame and aged folk, were fetched in cars.

The blue pencil with which we marked our votes grew shorter and shorter as the marking went on, and it needed no count to tell us who the winner was.

Let us not forget all our first woman M.P. has done. I am grateful to St. John's S.P.A. for making me personally acquainted with her.

GRACE BUMPSTEED.

### ELECTIONEERING FOR MISS BONDFIELD

Northampton! A pleasant market-town it seems, which makes boots and shoes as an after-thought—keeps them well in the back-

ground, and its churches and cobble-paved squares well in the foreground. Drapery Street and Mercers Row, Ladies' Lane, Monk's Pond Street, and best of all, Scarletwell Lane—are not such names a joy, and has not such a town a soul? The folk, too, are a happy, cheery folk—friendly and easy-going—even indifferent, one would say, to the political crisis—but one would be wrong. Northampton had made up its mind, and knew what it was about—under the quiet there was decision—and the polling was very heavy.

Northampton's member, too, has a soul. There were no personalities—no recriminations—the Party conflict was lifted to a higher plane, and kept there. When women of the Bondfield type permeate *all* parties (and a good beginning has been made) then indeed we may look confidently for better things. And her workers caught the same spirit—one felt the old suffrage sense of loyalty, of comradeship, of strong personalities, sunk in the one cause—and the result was the splendid organisation which left nothing to chance.

Two pictures stand out—one: "Margaret" on a chair in a miserable court—women crowding round her at their doors, as she speaks simply of the great issues, and what they meant in their own hard lives; the other: the counting of the votes; the tense moment of suspense before the splendid result is announced—the cheering crowd outside—the clear woman's voice ringing out above it.

Altogether a great experience—for my little share in which I shall never cease to be grateful to our dear St. Joan and her Alliance.

M. HAVERS.

### ELECTIONEERING IN LOUTH FOR MRS. WINTRINGHAM.

It is a charmingly quaint little town—Louth dates back to Saxon times—where the air is particularly bracing; where thrilling memories remain of "the Great Flood of 1920" caused by a mysterious "cloud-burst"; and where the clear-skinned children have very bright eyes and a rather unusually intelligent realisation of the difference between "turn to the right" and "turn to the left."

This last strikes one pleasantly in a perfectly strange place, where one must ask one's way at every turn, as one goes—first to the Liberal Headquarters, then to the addresses of each of half-a-dozen Catholic voters which are there given to one; then on to others obtained from their friends.

Some of the Catholic voters were chary of deciding how to vote until, Sunday being over, they had been assured by the parish priest that "both candidates had answered the three test questions on education in an equally satisfactory manner." I received his courteous permission to sell our non-party leaflet, "Why I should Vote," and the "Catholic Citizen," outside the church on Sunday morning. He is still a sufferer from having been badly gassed in the great war; appreciative non-Catholics tell me this wherever I go.

On the Sunday night, I was fortunate enough to get a message from Mr. T. P. O'Connor at the dinner given in his honour by the Irish Literary Society of London: "Tell Mrs. Wintringham she *must* be elected . . . the House of Commons can't do without her . . ."

Back from town to Louth early on Monday and working amongst the remaining Catholic voters until Tuesday noon. The friendly words of the veteran "Father of the House" helped very much here. To the waverers I was able to tell what magnificent services both Mrs. Wintringham and Lady Astor had rendered to those neglected "causes" known as "Women and Children's," which good men are so afraid to touch! But, alas! the fetish that "woman's proper place is at home" survives, more especially amongst the sheltered, well-to-do Catholic women; and it is difficult to interest them in the idea of the homeless women and of those children who are worse than homeless.

Afterwards, I worked on the purely Free Trade canvass. Here, as at the one big meeting held in Louth by the Conservative and Liberal candidates respectively, the high standard of intelligence shown by the questions was noticeable. I am told that this acuteness of understanding also characterised the audiences at the meetings held in the outlying districts. Of these Mrs. Wintringham addressed no fewer than three every night. Yet her magnificent vitality and her exquisite voice showed little traces of the strain, even at the end of the fight.

What a scene it was—that outside the Louth Town Hall—when we knew she was to go to Westminster again, inspired by the backing of a bigger majority than she had ever received before!

A great fight and a splendid victory. A noble Cause and a woman to stand for it of whom her constituents were justly proud.

But, over and above that picture of the beautiful and innately sincere and gracious personality of the elected candidate—of her enthusiastic political supporters and devoted friends—there abides with me the most grateful memory of her constituents.

Clearer of all, of the patience, the courage and the unfailing good manners—the *fine breeding* in the best sense of that phrase—of those good and gallant men and women of Louth who live by the labour of their hands. I thank them all for having received me, a stranger, so kindly; and pray that God may be good to them and bless their New Year with the fulness of His Divine Love and of human joy.

MARY WALL.

### LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary:—Miss N. S. Parnell, 91 Bedford Street, Liverpool.

At the Annual Meeting held on January 2nd, the only change made in the Committee was due to the resignation of Mrs. Thomas from the office of Hon. Secretary and the election of Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A., in her stead. The No More War Demonstration Committee are organising a Cake and Candy Sale to pay off the deficit of £9 on last year's demonstration. As our branch participated in the demonstration, but were unable to make the customary contribution of £1 for lack of funds, the Committee are arranging to hold a stall, and it is hoped that members will assist by sending in suitable articles to Mrs. Parnell, 91 Bedford Street, and by attending the sale in person. Members will be notified later as to exact time, date and place.

### DONATIONS TOWARDS RENT AND ELECTION WORK EXPENSES, ETC.

DECEMBER 1st—27th.

	£	s.	d.
Anderson, Mrs. and Miss	...	...	2 0
Atkinson, Miss N. F.	...	...	6 0
Barry, Miss F.	...	...	5 0 0
Beer, Mrs. Margrieta	...	...	4 0
Gorry, Miss	...	...	1 0
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Hill, Mrs. Scott	...	...	10 0
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