

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

*Organ of St. Joan's Alliance (formerly The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society).
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Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson

They made History A Tribute to the Women's Freedom League

By P. D. Cummins

On October 14th, 1961, at a special meeting, the decision was taken to disband the Women's Freedom League—its remaining one hundred and fifty members have received the last issue of the Bulletin. So, after fifty-four years of devoted service, one of the greatest women's organisations of the century passes into history where it will occupy for all time its own special niche of honour.

The Women's Freedom League came into being on September 10th, 1907, when at a meeting in Essex Hall, London, Mrs. Pankhurst announced that the Annual Conference fixed for October 12th would not take place, and that she intended to assume the leadership. Cries of "We want the Constitution!" arose on all sides, and the dissident members seceded. They banded themselves together into a democratic society with Mrs. Despard as president, carried on the Annual Conference which Mrs. Pankhurst had decided to abandon, and in November, 1907, drew up a constitution, chose for themselves the name of the Women's Freedom League, and formed thirteen branches, with the addition of a National Branch for unattached members.

The new League was indeed fortunate in having a President of the calibre of Mrs. Despard. She had the great qualities of courage and vision, and with her abounding vitality, her gaiety, her tireless devotion to a cause in which she passionately believed, she was an inspiration to all. She and her adherents were prepared to fight to the last ditch, but the tactics they adopted were far less flamboyant than those of Mrs. Pankhurst and her supporters; the members of the League maintained that militant action should not be taken against private persons and private property, and the campaign on which they embarked against the Government was largely a war of nerves—a war that was to prove highly effective.

The opening phrase of this war was the refusal by Mrs. Despard and many of her members to pay their taxes—taxes and representation must go together, she declared. One can imagine the head-

ache this caused to the harassed officials. Mrs. Despard's possessions were seized, but no auctioneer could be found to put them up for sale. Finally, one agreed to auction a piece of plate; the successful bidder promptly handed it back to Mrs. Despard who accepted it on behalf of the League. She was several times threatened with imprisonment for non-payment of taxes, but these threats were never enforced. Many women who belonged to the League *did* enjoy His Majesty's hospitality, however, amongst them, Clemence Housman, sister of A.E. and Lawrence Housman, and an Ipswich member who had refused to pay her dog-licence.

It was a member of the Women's Freedom League who symbolized by her action the entire battle for women's rights. On October 28th, 1908, Muriel Matters—how many of us, I wonder, remember her name?—chained herself to the iron grille in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons, the grille behind which women visitors sat as if they were so many lepers. Muriel Matters had fastened herself so securely to it that the Members found themselves on the horns of a dilemma: they were forced to choose between suspending the business of the House or removing the intruder *and* the grille! They opted for the latter, and the grille was removed, never to be replaced—it is now in the Suffragette Collection in the London Museum. Muriel Matters was certainly an original—it was she who sailed over London in a balloon, dropping the leaflets the League had been forbidden to distribute.

Another notable phase in the League's campaign was the picketing of the House of Commons in 1909, after Mr. Asquith's categorical refusal to receive a deputation of its members. From July to November, no matter what the weather, the women of the League picketed the House—this went on for fifteen weeks, a total of fourteen thousand hours. There followed the League's refusal to co-operate in the Census of 1911. "As the Government doesn't recognize our existence, we certainly don't exist for the purpose of the census," was the entirely logical

slogan. On the crucial night, women up and down the country left their homes, and the census enumerators called in vain.

In the space of a short article, it is quite impossible to give more than a sketchy picture of the Women's Freedom League's unceasing activities in the battle for women's rights. Partial victory came in 1918 when women of thirty and over were given the vote, but the League was determined to fight on until they were enfranchised, as were men, at the age of twenty-one. In 1920, through the good offices of that staunchest of supporters, Doctor Elizabeth Knight, the Minerva Club was opened in Brunswick Square. At last, men and women who were agitating for the extension of the franchise had headquarters from which they could plan and carry on their battle, a battle that lasted another eight years. In 1928, Mrs. Despard came over from Ireland—she was then in her eighty-fourth year—and, accompanied by Doctor Knight, went to the House of Lords to hear the reading of the Royal Assent to the Equal Franchise Act. The long, exhausting war had reached its triumphant end.

The annals of the Women's Freedom League are studded with names that will never be forgotten. One of its most stalwart champions was, of course, Doctor Elizabeth Knight, who became Hon. Treasurer of the League in 1913 and held this office till her death in 1933. She trained at the London School of Medicine for Women at the same time as Doctor Louise Garrett Anderson, worked at various hospitals, and was beloved alike by patients and staff. She was one of the earliest members of the League, and an uncompromising fighter for the recognition of an equal moral standard for men and women. Another equally remarkable woman was Miss Florence Underwood, for over thirty years the General Secretary of the League. Through her, in 1931, the League was instrumental in getting the Serpentine Lido open for mixed bathing—perhaps this sounds comparatively unimportant, but Florence Underwood believed passionately that women should be on a parity with men in every respect, no matter how small. After Doctor Knight's death, great responsibility fell on her, and the fact that the League succeeded in carrying on was largely due to her devotion and determination. She was utterly modest, utterly selfless, and to the end of her life, gave of herself without stint. Finally, we come to Marian Reeves, the last President of the Women's Freedom League who died suddenly at Killarney on August 30th of this year. It was fitting that a few days before her death, she had led a group of women who were attending the Congress of the International Alliance in Dublin, to lay a wreath on the grave of Charlotte Despard in Glasnevin. Not only did Marian Reeves make the Minerva Club a home for the residents, she also made it a focal point for all matters that were of concern to women.

Through the years, St. Joan's Alliance has co-operated not only happily but fruitfully with the W.F.L., to whom it now says *Ave atque vale*.

The Women's Freedom League is no more, the Minerva Club has ceased to exist, but—make no mistake—the soul of the W.F.L. goes marching on. "Our generation has had its day," says the editor of the Bulletin, Theresa Garnet, in the final issue. May I say that she is wrong, totally wrong—the day of the valiant has no end, it endures for ever.

BERLIN WEEK

The *Deutscherstaatsbürgerinnen - Verband* organized from October 16th-21st, a "Berlin-Woche", with two days given over to the activities of the *Gesamtdeutsche Fragen* Section. The Week was a courageous effort by the women of West Germany to bring home the social, cultural and industrial importance of their great city, and to illustrate the disastrous effects of the cruel cleavage which has been effected by the East German authorities. Forty guests, amongst them personalities known to St. Joan's Alliance, had been specially invited from Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Great Britain, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland.

While *The Catholic Citizen* is not a suitable medium for a discussion of the German situation, no Christian heart can fail to ache at the knowledge of the misery that has been caused by the raising of the Wall—mothers parted from their children, grandparents from the younger members of their families, lovers torn asunder. It was both heart-rending and terrifying to drive past barriers that rose more forbiddingly hour by hour, to see families perched on high apartment roofs in West Berlin seeking with the help of binoculars to distinguish the faces of relatives isolated in the Eastern sector, patrolled ceaselessly by armed guards.

The spirit and determination shown by the women of West Berlin in the face of these trials and dangers were truly remarkable. The visitors to the Week heard at first hand stories of refugees who had made good their escape despite what appeared to be insuperable difficulties. It was an uplifting experience to see with one's own eyes with what kindness such refugees were treated, and to learn that teachers in the East Zone were prepared to risk their lives in the attempt to reach the West rather than betray their sacred trust of teaching their pupils the truth—better death than the inculcation, at the bidding of the Soviet rulers, of the image of the State as supreme lord of the conscience, in other words, the absolute negation of morality and freedom. The women of Berlin are to be congratulated on their unanimous stand which demonstrates their absolute determination never again to allow the principles from which spring both Nazi and Communist forms of tyranny, to take root amongst them.

M. Qhave Collisson

Notes and Comments

Italy. Under Article 559 of the Italian Penal Code, adultery by a wife is a crime punishable by gaol, while adultery by the husband is not so punishable, unless he keeps a mistress in his own house or in a public and notorious way. A defendant in an adultery case heard at Ancona pleaded that Article 559 was unconstitutional because it violated the principle of equality between the sexes, but the Constitutional Court to which the case was referred has ruled that Article 559 does not contradict Article 29 of the Constitution which establishes the equality of all citizens before the law, nor Article 3 in which the principle of non-discrimination between the sexes is inscribed. The Court has stated Articles 29 and 3 cannot prevent the legislator from making different provisions for different situations, and that there is nothing discriminatory in Article 559 of the Penal Code, since "adultery committed by a wife is a far more serious offence than adultery committed by a husband." How horrifying it is to find a double moral standard written into the Penal Code of a Catholic country under a Christian Democrat Government—one cannot but stigmatize it as doubly immoral.

Since we wrote the above, the *Osservatore Romano* has come out against this law. It says: "The guilt morally applies to both men and women . . . for every woman who contaminates her blood there is always a man who participates in that contamination—and that man enjoys immunity from consequences."

A Bill is under consideration by the Minister of Justice which would apply equally to adulterous husbands and wives.

At the recent by-election in Queen's University, Belfast, a Catholic barrister, Miss Sheelagh Murnaghan (Lib.) was elected, defeating the Unionist candidate, Dr. Samuel Rodgers, by two hundred and two votes. It will be remembered that the late Dr. Eileen Hickey, a member of the Alliance, represented Queen's University as an Independent from 1949 - 1958.

On November 2nd, at Church House, Westminster, the Fawcett Society held its second discussion, the subject of which was Educating Daughters. Miss Joan Vickers, M.B.E., M.P., was in the chair.

Miss Margaret Miles, headmistress of Mayfield Comprehensive School, Putney, gave a most stimulating address on the importance of providing the kind of education that corresponds with the requirements of the individual—she made it very clear that to draw a sharp line of distinction, and say: "This is suitable for a boy, that is suitable for a girl" would indeed be a flaw in the educational

system. We note with particular interest that Miss Miles will be one of the members of the British Delegation which Sir David Eccles will lead to the forthcoming Commonwealth Education Conference at New Delhi.

Members of St. Joan's Alliance and their friends will be glad to know that the Christmas Sale was a great success—the total takings were £93 5s. 6d. Goods are still on sale at 119 Oxford Street, and it is very much hoped that a target of one hundred pounds will be reached.

Most grateful thanks to all those whose efforts brought about such a very satisfactory result. Miss Carr and her team of assistants worked wonders—delicious lunches appeared in a flash, and so did teas and refreshments. Once again, the O'Connor children carried on the family tradition, and did splendidly with their Lucky Dips.

A special words of thanks to the Marmite Company and the Simoniz Floor Polish Company for their generous co-operation.

AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Members and Readers:

May I, as the new editor of *The Catholic Citizen*, have a word with you? It is with the greatest diffidence that I assume the duties so long and so faithfully carried out by Miss Christine Spender. Miss Spender became editor after the death of Leonora de Alberti on March 26th, 1934, and carried on until March, 1943 when, owing to the pressure of her war work, she was forced to resign. Her place was taken by Helen Douglas Irvine, who edited *The Catholic Citizen* for the next two and a half years. At the end of this period, she resigned as she had to return to Chile, and in July, 1945, Miss Spender was once more back in the editor's chair—it was not until October of this year that she decided to relinquish it for good.

The measure of the work that Miss Spender has done for *The Catholic Citizen* can be gauged by the tributes that have been received from every corner of the world, praising the paper for its factual information and its accuracy. For myself, I will only say that I shall do my utmost to conform to the high standard she has always set, and I shall regard her as my inspiration.

Suggestions from members and readers will always be welcome, and suitable articles gratefully received. Please feel free to criticize.

Your new editor,

P. D. Cummins

ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE

BRITISH SECTION OF ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE
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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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I.A.W. Congress, Dublin, 1961

Two hundred and fifty delegates, observers and individual members of the International Alliance of Women assembled in Dublin for the XIX Triennial Congress of the Alliance, from August 21st to September 2nd, 1961.

Now that all is over, those concerned, and many outside friends, as well as critics of the whole woman's movement, ask "What was accomplished in exchange for so great an expenditure of time, money, and strength, perhaps particularly of strength, for Congresses are undeniably tests of endurance for those who take them seriously?"

The answer is complex, but satisfying.

First, the renewal of friendships, and the making of important new contacts; second, the review of progress or backsliding in the old, old struggles familiar to all within the woman's movement; third, the opening of new horizons, accompanied by the sense of strength and courage given by that great host of members standing behind those actually able to share in the proceedings.

As Sylvia Haymon wrote in the *Guardian* of August 30th, "women of differing cultures from differing climates have undertaken their long journeys to report progress and plan new strategy towards the attainment of a common goal . . . equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women, and—inescapable corollary—women's unequivocal acceptance of equal responsibilities; no evasion on grounds of sex, no alibis, no contracting out of the human dilemma that confronts all equally, men and women alike."

The renewal of friendships; here were friends from Greece, for example, led by Board member Madame Marie Thanopoulos, Doctor of Law, bringing the greetings of that famous fighter Mme. Theodoropoulos, to the Congress, meeting Mrs. Corbett Ashby, seventy-nine year old Hon. President, with at least four languages at ready command, both prepared to welcome, and hear respectfully newcomers; here Dr. Hanna Rydh, author of thirty-five books, archaeologist, greeting the German delegates (to whom, immediately after the

last war she hastened with material and moral help in rebuilding the German woman's movement). New contacts . . . the young journalist resistance worker . . . the Nigerian leaders, headed by Mrs. Ogundipe, meeting Mrs. Helen Judd, London School of Economics, who acted as Deputy-Chairman of the Nigerian Seminar organized in August 1960 by the Women's Improvement Society and the Council of Women's Societies, Nigeria, sponsored by the I.A.W., aided by Unesco.

Heading and leading the work, presenting a magnificent record of visits to affiliates in Australia, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Nepal, Pakistan and Turkey, with stopovers in Lebanon and the Philippines in addition to much else, was the President, Ezlynn Deraniyagala, first Asian woman to head an international organization of this kind, graduate of Oxford, barrister of the Inner Temple, one of the first women to practise law in Ceylon. Young, well accustomed to prominence in public gatherings, full of purpose, Ezlynn Deraniyagala planned with the Board, and carried through, the varied programme; Reports and Resolutions from the five Standing Committees, for Economic Rights, International Understanding, Civic and Political Rights, Equal Educational Rights, Equal Moral Standards, were submitted and keenly discussed, with emphasis on responsibilities and duties related to the developments of the present-day world. Thus the second result, reviews of progress or of backsliding in the old, old struggles, of plans for new developments, was plain to see and hear.

Opening of new horizons was emphasised in many ways. The actual presence of United Nations official representatives was for many newer members most enlightening. The I.A.W. holding consultative status B. with ECOSOC, was honoured by the presence and speeches of Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver, Head of the Secretariat section dealing with the Status of Women: a name became a living presence; the widening demands of the United Nations for co-operation from non-governmental

THE CHURCH AND AFRICA

A Conference on the Church and Africa, covered by the Africa Committee of the Sword of the Spirit and the Africa Centre Limited, met in the Livery Hall, Guildhall, London, on November 20th and 21st in the presence of Archbishop Kiwanuka of Uganda and Archbishop Hurley, O.M.I. of Natal; Mr. Patrick H. B. Wall, M.P., was in the chair. The opening day was devoted to group discussions of the subject from four different angles: Personal Service, the Catholic in African Society, Africans in Europe, and Education and Information. The second day was given up to reports from the chairmen of the groups and to discussions from the floor. The Development Committee then outlined its future plans and the ways and means of achieving them.

The Conference, which owed much of its success to the work of the Secretary, Miss Margaret Feeny, was of great interest, and was attended by a number of clergy, by representatives of Missionary Orders, and by representatives of Societies pledged to help and support African Bishops and missions through personal service. The laymen present, English and African, alike, made it abundantly plain that they would do all that lay in their power to uphold the Church in Africa in the difficult days that undoubtedly lie ahead.

Obviously, conditions vary greatly in the different countries, and stress was laid on the immense tact and understanding of local customs required by those men and women of goodwill who are prepared to devote themselves to the furthering of African aspirations in this particular field. They must be ready to cope with new situations, situations which, as the Pastoral of an African Bishop points out, will bring forth fresh riches from the infinite resources of the Church. The important part that Catholic Africans must play was clearly brought out; they must take their places in political life without leaning on the clergy, and apply the Christian principles they have been taught. The complex question of leadership was also discussed, and the danger of an *élite* fully recognized. It is to be hoped that true leaders will emerge, leaders who will not lose contact with the people, and on whom these same people may safely depend.

The importance of the contribution made by the women of Africa in these times of change was certainly acknowledged, though this subject was not discussed. There appeared to be no African woman present to voice the African woman's point of view—one could not help wondering whether such a spokeswoman had been invited to the Conference. The representative of St. Joan's Alliance, who was happy to be present, was naturally concerned, since it is her earnest wish that African women should advance *pari passu* with their menfolk, and be free to make their contribution to the future of the Church and their country.

organizations invoked pictures of what that co-operation can mean for progress among thousands of women who may never yet have heard of the I.A.W., but are eagerly asking for help in development within the fields of civic life.

Other viewpoints came from the special African "Baraza" (the term used in some parts of Africa to denote the gathering of members of a community for discussion) when the African women present (five from Nigeria, one from Liberia, three from Sierra Leone) discussed the urgent need for educational progress; and from two other special sessions. The first under the Chairmanship of Begum Munirwar Ali, of Pakistan, covered problems of Legal Aid (led by Israel), Marriage Contracts, with emphasis on the new Family Law of Pakistan, a summary of the Women's Charter of Singapore (presented by Winifred Holmes, just returned from two years in Malaya), and Prostitution (Street Offences Act analysed by M. Chave Collisson); the second, with Karen Sofie Brynnildsen (Norway) presiding offered opening speeches from Germany and the Philippines on Children born out of Wedlock, followed by delegate discussion.

Technical problems of methods of progress were discussed in a session chaired by Anna Lord Strauss (U.S.A.); affiliates gave three minute speeches on the work in their own areas in yet another meeting. An experiment tried with the Equal Moral Standard Committee members proved most helpful: twice, in addition to the meeting of the formal sessions, all who were interested shared picnic luncheons, so that Chairman and those concerned grew to know each other better. Very able work was also done through other Committee contacts; while the presence of Miss Pippa Harris from Unesco, the Unicef Report from Mrs. Stephens, the remarkable and speedy pressures exerted through the able leader of the Australian Delegation, Eileen Power, by cable to Australia, the knowledgeable help and advice of Nell Hinder, former worker in industrial China, and later with refugees, and the presence of Viola Smith whose compendium on United Nations Conventions is endlessly useful, added much spice to discussion and gatherings.

Brilliant social functions gave needed light relief. The Congress was much indebted to His Grace, the Most Reverend the Archbishop of Dublin for the use of the Dublin Institute of Sociology, and to the Reverend Mother prioress of the Dominican Convent for the Congress Hall.

The death of Marian Reeves was a sad blow deeply felt; but that fighter for women had paid her last tribute to the woman's movement at the grave of Mrs. Despard, and died, as she had lived, with the sure sense of friends of that movement around her.

The Congress was young in outlook, fresh in approach, and deeply fruitful in the germination of ideas binding together older fighters and newer generations.

M. Chave Collisson

P. C. Challoner

The Month in Parliament

Social Research

A Bill to establish two Councils with functions relating to the training of Health Visitors and Social Workers was presented by Mr. Enoch Powell and read for the first time. The Bill seeks to extend the powers of the Minister of Health, the Secretary of State and Local Authorities with regard to research into Social Welfare (November 2nd).

Housing

Mr. Michael Stewart moved a resolution regretting that the Queen's Speech contained no proposals to provide an adequate supply of houses, or to take measures to prevent profiteering in land and house property. Mr. Stewart suggested that part of the capital gains made from the sale of land should be passed to Local Authorities desperately needing money for housing purposes. Mr. Mellish added that in his view it was immoral for a person to own a considerable amount of housing property, to be able to make vast profits out of it, and to be able to threaten people with eviction if they could not pay the exorbitant rents demanded (November 6th).

Turnstiles

In a written reply to Dame Irene Ward, Dr. Hill, Minister of Housing and Local Government, said: "I am satisfied that such turnstiles (in public lavatories) are unsatisfactory and I am making permanent the temporary ban announced recently on the granting of a loan sanction for their installation. I am asking local authorities to remove the existing turnstiles as soon as they can." (November 6th.)

Colonies

The Tanganyika Independence Bill and the Southern Rhodesia (Constitution) Bill were given a second reading.

Mr. John Taylor said that we were fortunate in that Tanganyika is blessed with a Prime Minister of the calibre of Mr. Nyerere, whose policy is to create a country where Africans, Asians and Europeans can live and work in harmony. Miss Joan Vickers also praised the good qualities of Mr. Nyerere especially his modesty. She also paid tribute to Lady Twining who did a tremendous amount of work, especially on behalf of women, in Tanganyika, and to Abdul Karimjee, the Asian president of the National Assembly. Miss Vickers noted that the right of women to take part in Parliamentary affairs had been recognized since the early days of the Legislature. There are several women, representing all races, in the National Assembly. (November 8th.)

Family Allowances and National Insurance

The Minister, Mr. Boyd-Carpenter, moved the second reading of the Bill embodying modifications and changes in order to bring the national scheme up to date. By the new Bill a widow who cohabits with another man will not lose her pension for life,

but only for the period of cohabitation. Another clause allows incapacitated children to qualify for family allowances up to the age of sixteen. Mr. Houghton expressed gratitude for a slight concession in the case of younger widows by which they may benefit from increments earned by the husband while the wife was still under sixty years of age. He also said he "would like to see in the Bill the removal of the quite unjustified anomaly, in these days, of paying married women lower unemployment and sickness benefit than single women . . . the country depends today on married women and where they opt to go into the scheme, I see no reason why we should stigmatize them or discriminate against them." Mr. Ross, noting the complications involved in connection with widows' pensions, suggested that the scheme should be simplified. Mr. Sharples, Joint Parliamentary Secretary, explained that if widows, who were ten or more years younger than their husbands, were to be placed in a much more favourable position, "The single man, who already pays the same contribution as a married man, might well consider it unreasonable to have to contribute towards the greater expenditure on younger wives—also there is, of course, the case of the spinster." (November 9th.)

Education

The Education Bill was read a second time. It aims to reform the system of grants to University students, and to reduce the number of school-leaving dates. (November 13th.)

Social Services

The Health Visitors and Social Workers Training Bill was given its second reading. Dame Irene Ward vigorously attacked the Bill on the grounds of the Government's niggardly approach. She also criticized the appointment of Sir John Wolfenden as chairman of one of the Councils, but only because "the great man" has too many responsibilities thrust upon him. She offered to provide a list of suitable persons for this office. Mrs. White deplored the fact that there had been no debates on the Reports on which the Bill is based. Commenting on the poor reception that the House had given the Bill, she said: "I hope the Minister is feeling very uncomfortable."

Private Members' Bills

Among the Private Members' Bills introduced by Members successful in the ballot, are the National Insurance (Widowed Mothers) Bill to abolish the earnings rule for widowed mothers presented by Mr. W. Griffiths, and the Law Reform (Husband and Wife) Bill to amend the law with respect to civil proceedings between husband and wife, presented by Mr. Rawlinson. Both Bills are down for second reading on February 9th.

C. M. Cheke

GOOD NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

As is well known, Switzerland is the only country in Europe which has not yet introduced women's suffrage on the national scale. In the last three years, however, women in three of the twenty-two Cantons have been given political rights. In addition, they may also participate on an equal footing with men in the elections for the *Bürgerrat*, the Citizens' Council of the City of Basle and of a village in that Canton.

Last year's elections in Neuchâtel in which women participated for the first time, brought four women into the Cantonal Parliament. In addition to these, sixty-two women now hold seats in local parliaments in the Canton of Neuchâtel.

In November 1961 the women of Geneva also exercised the vote for the first time in the elections for the Cantonal Parliament. No fewer than nine women were elected out of a total of one hundred members. In the same period, elections were held for the local parliaments in thirty-eight of the three hundred and eighty-six communes in the Canton de Vaud. In Lausanne, fourteen women were elected. The Canton de Vaud now has one hundred and fifty-four women in local parliaments, and supplementary elections will be held in the near future.

Elections for the Basle *Bürgerrat* also took place in November 1961, and one-third of the Council now consists of women—i.e. thirteen women out of a total of forty members.

It is interesting to note that all the women who have been elected are highly qualified and represent various political parties—in Basle, for instance, there are six political parties. Wherever women participated in the elections, it is significant that the Communist Party lost one or more of their few seats. On the other hand, however, the Communists elected a relatively large number of women—three, for instance, were returned in Geneva. It was in Geneva that the *Partie Radicale*, the Liberal Party, lost ten seats, and only one woman who represented it was elected. Note that this Party alone opposed the introduction of woman's suffrage up to the eleventh hour, and that the more conservative parties and the socialists won the majority of seats.

There was a marked swing to the right in the Canton de Vaud; both the Communists and the Socialists lost many seats. In Basle, the Christian parties, Catholic and Protestant, won the majority of seats. Many of the women returned represented the Christian parties. From the woman's point of view, as well as that of the Christian, the results of the elections were highly satisfactory.

Let us hope that in the near future other Cantons will at last introduce women's suffrage, and that within a few years, the women of Switzerland will obtain their political rights on the national scale.

Dr. Lotti Ruckstuhl.

LEBANON

En Liban on y aura beaucoup parlé de l'Alliance Internationale cet automne! . . . Ce fut d'abord grâce à Mme Pesson-Depret, vice-présidente, et à Mlle Lydie Dolcerocca, membre de la section française, qui commencèrent leur pèlerinage en Terre Sainte par un séjour à Beyrouth. Elles y furent accueillies par une aimable adhérente de l'Alliance: Mme Laure Moghaizel, une jeune avocate qui avait représenté son pays aux réunions du Jubilé à Londres, en mai dernier. A l'émotion du pèlerinage et au plaisir du tourisme dans des paysages magnifiques, nos deux amies françaises purent ainsi ajouter l'intérêt d'un contact plus profond avec la population elle-même dans des rencontres organisées avec des personnalités particulièrement actives dans le domaine social. Mlle Dolcerocca, assistante sociale dans les cadres de la police parisienne, entretint pendant plus d'une heure une assistance nombreuse et choisie de son fructueux travail à Saint-Lazare auprès des femmes victimes de la prostitution, et elle put même expliquer à la Télévision l'importance de la récente loi française sur la protection des mineures pour la lutte contre ce fléau social.

Peu de temps après, Mme Moghaizel recevait toujours aussi aimablement Mme M. Leroy-Boy, présidente internationale, et, en son honneur, elle organisait en quelques heures une petite réunion avec des représentantes de l'élite chrétienne de Beyrouth: juristes, professeurs, journalistes, dirigeantes d'institutions sociales, toutes personnes au dynamisme impressionnant!

Ces contacts avec une civilisation profondément raffinée, produit d'un brassage de cultures à travers des millénaires, ont été des plus enrichissants pour nos trois voyageuses. L'Alliance veut y voir aussi un heureux présage pour l'éclosion d'une nouvelle section. . . .

TWO RELIGIOUS FILMS

King of Kings. Produced by Samuel Bronston and directed by Nicholas Ray. M.G.M. Pictures.

The main fault of this spectacular film lies in presenting it as a life of Christ, which it is not. Rather is it a "story" of the people and times of Jesus, concerned largely with Jewish rebellion against Roman rule. At the end Christ is crucified because the followers of Barabbas yelled the loudest for his release; Barabbas in fact is a hero, and Pilate and Herod have equally important parts. Jeffrey Hunter plays our Lord. He is young, blue-eyed and handsome but lacks power and strength, and seems too weak and soft to dominate as he should. At times the script is terrible, various gospel phrases are almost dragged in with seeming irrelevance, other phrases are omitted for no reason; one example is sufficient: when Christ is dying, with Mary (Siobhan McKenna, perhaps the best casting in the whole film)

and John standing at the foot of the Cross, he says "Woman, behold thy son," but since he does *not* add "Son, behold thy Mother" the intonation implies the meaning "Woman look what they have done to me." Points like this, which frequently occur, are most irritating. However the colours, scenery and settings are superb and some of the episodes are beautifully conceived, particularly the infancy scenes at the beginning—admittedly rather Christmas-cardy but lovely just the same. Many in the audience at the Press showing were obviously very deeply moved at the Crucifixion scenes, but these finer moments are too few and too short. On the whole the film presents a few attractive vignettes strung together by material which falls far short of expectations, and is, in fact, at times embarrassing and irritating. But in spite of all that, I would still say it was worth seeing, if you have three hours to spare!

C.L.M.

Francis of Assisi. Cinemascope film released by 20th Century Fox.

The film starts off magnificently with pictures of the life of St. Francis by Giotto, as a background to the "Titles", the names of those contributing to the film. Then with colourful medieval pageantry the film carries you along convincingly for a while. The scenes in the shop of the father of St. Francis, the departure of the cavalry, romantic, but rightly so, are acceptable. As soon as the serious and spiritual part starts, neither text, nor actor nor presentation comes up to the mark. I would like to mention the exception of the scene of St. Francis at the Vatican before the Pope, splendidly played by Finlay Currie.

I do not intend to give here a comprehensive survey of the film, but I would like to say a few words on a point that concerns *The Catholic Citizen*, and that is the rôle of St. Clare. Dolores Hart is a beautiful blonde, really very beautiful. St. Clare may have been very beautiful too. She certainly was not that soft, sugary, seductive, honey-voiced personality that Dolores Hart has been made to portray. Worse, of course, is the whole interpretation of St. Clare as an infatuated follower of St. Francis, without any real conviction of her own. There is no hint of the strength of character she must have had to establish the Rule of the Poor Clares, up against the opinions of the religious circles of her time. There is no sign of her own interior life and faith. She is only a sweet consoler of a feeble Francis.

Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis.

Joan Morris

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